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# ART OF POETRY

THE POETICAL TREATISES OF

HORACE, VIDA, AND BOILEAU

WITH THE TRANSLATIONS BY

HOWES, PITT, AND SOAME

EDITED

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*

BY

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TO

JACOB COOPER

PROFESSOR OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
IN RUTGERS COLLEGE

IN GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE REGARD





## P R E F A C E.



A COLLECTION in some respects similar to this was made by the Abbé Batteux in 1771, and published at Paris in two volumes. Besides Horace, Vida, and Boileau, it contained Aristotle's Poetics, and was entitled *Les Quatre Poëtiques*. The translations were by Batteux, and in French prose. The notes are partly original and partly selected; some are in Latin, some in French; and they are of all degrees of helpfulness. Batteux's collection is now virtually inaccessible, and, were it common, would not appeal strongly to the English-speaking student. Considering the historic importance and intrinsic value of these treatises, there seemed, then, a sufficient reason for joining them anew. The exclusion of Aristotle has been dictated by the impossibility of sufficiently illustrating his treatise within the necessary limits of space, and by the fact that the Latin tradition admits of clearer exposition when segregated from the chief source of Hellenic theory.

For the text of Horace I have relied chiefly upon Wickham, though I have collated Orelli's third edition, and have here and there adopted a reading of his. The analytical summaries in the notes are also by Wickham. The notes to this part include, as will be seen, the chief paraphrases by Pope and Byron of passages from the *Ars Poetica*, as contained respectively in the *Essay on Criticism* and the *Hints from*

Horace. They are not only various renderings, but are often interpretative of the text, and serve to illustrate the continuity of Horatian influence in the English verse of the last two centuries. The whole of the Horatian part—text, translation, and notes—has been read in proof by my friend and colleague, Professor Edward P. Morris, and may therefore be assumed to have passed the scrutiny of a much more considerable expert in these matters than I can, in reason, ever hope to become.

For the text of Vida I have had before me four editions: Tristram's second edition (Oxford, 1723), the London edition of 1732, Pope's *Selecta Poemata Italorum* (London, 1740), and Batteux's *Les Quatre Poëtiques* (Paris, 1771). For the loan of the latter to the Yale Library I am indebted to the Librarian of the Boston Athenæum. These texts are substantially the same, the only important variant that I have noted being in Bk. 2, l. 97, where the first and third mentioned have *et*, and the others *aut*. In words like *lacryma* and *simulacrum*, the first and third have *ch*, the others *c*. Unimportant differences are *Tibur*, Batteux, *Tybur*, all the others; *cæco*, ed. 1723, *cæco*, all the others, etc. The translation has been taken from Scott's edition of Dryden, Vol. xv. pp. 230–265, one or two obvious errors having been corrected. The notes are drawn from no one source, though much assistance has been derived from the edition of 1723.

About the text of Boileau there is virtually no question. Chalmers' *English Poets* has furnished the translation. The chief single source of information for the notes was found in the Amsterdam edition of 1718.

The punctuation of texts and translations has been freely changed in the interest of perspicuity, and the orthography of the English versions has been brought to a common and modern standard.

In conclusion, I venture to hope that the present compilation may do something to promote a sounder knowledge of poetic processes and theory, as much by incitement to independent thought as by the imposition of authoritative canons. Nay, unless it incite to independent thought, how can any canon impose itself on a free and active intelligence?

ALBERT S. COOK.

YALE UNIVERSITY,  
July 4, 1892.





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# INTRODUCTION.



THERE can be no doubt that after Roman authors had been schooled by Grecian art, they forfeited in large measure so much of instinctive sublimity as was theirs by birthright. Had it ever been at their command — and such writers as Lucretius, nay, even Catullus, show that the assumption is not an idle one — the ‘large utterance of the early gods’ was gone with the coming of the foreign Olympians and of all that the latter represented. Henceforth, save for the frigid mouthings of imperfectly naturalized Spaniards, the ideal of the poet was grace, moderation, fine workmanship.

But not only did the Romans lose with their political and literary independence a large share of their ancient earnestness and fervor, but they failed to acquire some of the most important qualities in which their Greek masters excelled. It would be too much to say that they were cheated, or that they cheated themselves, in their appropriation of Hellenic spoils, but it cannot be gainsaid that, in their quest for beauty, proportion, and delicacy in style and composition, they omitted certain of the weightier matters which they might have found in their models, the simplicity, rapidity, and sustained nobleness of the Greek epic, the opulence, elevation, strength, and swiftness of the Greek triumphal ode.

In a certain sense, then, the Hellenic discipline made the Romans un-Hellenic. Nor is the explanation far to seek. The imitable and compassable qualities of a work of art are always



matters of detail, rarely or never the vital and animating principle. Hence, where grandeur is present in a composition, it springs directly from the soul of the artist. Taking thought will add no cubit to the moral stature of the thinker, and just as little to that of his literary product. The labor of the file confers no majesty, and indeed we have seen works, like those of Michael Angelo in the Chapel of the Medici, in which the sublimest ideality is attained by incompleteness. Self-restraint may be the condition of irreproachable beauty, but a certain splendid audacity is essential to the expression of sublimity. This view is abundantly confirmed by the writers of the Augustan age of Rome. Where is Virgil most impressive? Is it not in passages where the lines are dictated by a proud patriotism, passages which fling a scornful defiance at the elder civilization? Is it not where he reverts to the ancient Roman strain, and falls back upon that which was primitive and fundamental in the Roman nature, the consciousness of imperial function and destiny?

*Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera,  
Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore vultus,  
Orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus  
Describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:  
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;  
Hae tibi erunt artes — pacisque inponere morem,  
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*

Horace was most assiduous in polishing his compositions, and recommends, as his Art of Poetry teaches us, a similar labor to others, but he was well aware that industry is no substitute for native endowment, and confesses as much in the Second Ode of the Fourth Book, where he compares himself with Pindar.

*He who to Pindar's height attempts to rise,  
Like Icarus, with waxen pinions tries  
His pathless way, and from the venturous theme  
Falling shall leave to azure seas his name.*

As when a river, swollen by sudden showers,  
 O'er its known banks from some steep mountain pours,  
 So in profound, unmeasurable song  
 The deep-mouthed Pindar, foaming, pours along.

Well he deserves Apollo's laureled crown,  
 Whether new words he rolls enraptured down  
 Impetuous through the dithyrambic strains,  
 Free from all laws but what himself ordains;

Whether in lofty tone sublime he sings  
 The immortal gods or god-descended kings  
 With death deserved who smote the Centaurs dire,  
 And quenched the fierce Chimaera's breath of fire.

\* \* \* \* \*

But, like a bee, which through the breezy groves  
 With feeble wing and idle murmurs roves,

Sits on the bloom, and with unceasing toil  
 From thyme sweet-breathing culls his flowery spoil,  
 So I — weak bard! — round Tiber's lucid spring,  
 Of humbler strain laborious verses sing.

And where in Horace shall we meet with the passion that  
 breathes in Sappho's immortal ode?

Speechless I gaze. The flame within  
 Runs swift o'er all my quivering skin;  
 My eyeballs swim; with dizzy din  
     My brain reels round;  
 And cold drops fall; and tremblings frail  
 Seize every limb; and grassy pale  
 I grow; and then — together fail  
     Both sight and sound.

Where, in any Latin poet, shall we listen to the ethereal rapture,  
 the melodious intoxication, of the Chorus of Aristophanes in  
 the Birds?



Cease, my mate, from slumber now;  
 Let the sacred hymn-notes flow,  
 Wailing with thy voice divine,  
 Long-wept Itys, mine and thine.  
 So, when thy brown beak is thrilling  
 With that holy music-trilling,  
 Through the woodbine's leafy bound  
 Swells the pure melodious sound  
 To the throne of Zeus; and there  
 Phœbus of the golden hair  
 Hearing, to thine elegies  
 With awakened chords replies  
 On his ivory-claspèd lyre,  
 Stirring all the Olympian quire;  
 Till from each immortal tongue  
 Of that blessèd heavenly throng  
 Peals the full harmonious song.

What the Augustan poets learned from the Greeks, then, was so much of literary art as can be taught — as can be taught to an alien race, endowed by nature with gifts at once greater than and inferior to those of their teachers. The virile force which conquered the world they could learn to subdue in expression, to manipulate as the energies of steam are manipulated through the complexities of cunning machinery, to expend upon the carving of the cherry-stones of verse, or even upon the construction and elaboration of an epic like the *Æneid*. Horace is the schoolmaster of this doctrine, and there can be no question that, in assuming this function, he rendered an essential service to his people, and to the races whom they, in their turn, were to instruct in civility. The elements of poetic criticism, the higher mechanics of verse, the necessity of unity, of proportion, of fidelity to the obvious and unmistakable traits of nature — meaning by that human nature — this is the substance of Horace's teaching. The Latin formulas of artistic verse-making were, if not fully wrought out, at least sketched or suggested

in this somewhat rambling epistle which, from the time of Quintilian, some three-quarters of a century later, has borne the title of the Art of Poetry.

Horace's little treatise is full of 'winged words.' Many phrases and single lines, illustrating his 'callida junctura,' or remarkable as the adequate and almost inevitable expression of an enduring thought, linger in the memory. Who does not know these proverbial catchwords, such as 'purpureus pannus,' 'jus et norma loquendi,' 'decies repetita placebit'? They are as nails fastened by a master of assemblies, meant to stay where they were fixed, and fulfilling in this sense the purpose of their author.

The Revival of Learning is often thought of as a return to the Greek. Yet it was, in its main current and tendency, rather a renewal of interest in the Latin as literature. Upon this point the testimony of Mark Pattison ('Isaac Casaubon,' pp. 507, 510, 523) will be regarded as weighty: "In the fifteenth century, 'educated Europe' is but a synonym for Italy. What literature there was outside the Alps was a derivative from, or dependent of, the Italian movement. The fact that the movement originated in the Latin peninsula was decisive of the character of the first age of classical learning (1400-1550). It was a revival of Latin, as opposed to Greek literature. It is now well understood that the fall of Constantinople, though an influential incident of the movement, ranks for nothing among the causes of the Renaissance. What was revived in Italy of the fifteenth century was the taste of the schools of the early Empire—of the second and third century. . . . As Italy had been the home of classical taste in the first period, France became the home of classical learning in the second. . . . It needed two centuries more of speculative effort in Europe, before philologists could go back to Greek philosophy with the key of it in their hands. It is only indeed within the present century that learning has grown strong enough to cope with the exposi-



tion of Aristotle, and an edition of the Aristotelic encyclopædia is still a vision of the future."

By the middle of the sixteenth century the French were imitating the Art of Poetry, and more than a quarter of a century earlier Vida was adapting Quintilian and extracting rules from the practice of Virgil, that Italy might not go astray in the composition of its epics, whether Latin or Italian. Aristotle was not wholly ignored, but neither was he well understood by those whom the nations recognized as the supreme arbiters of taste. The 'Augustan' ages of Italy, France, and, we may add, England, were Roman in sentiment and aspiration. Exceptions seem only to prove the rule. Ronsard imitated Pindar and Anacreon, but Malherbe quickly blighted his fame, and restrained the too impetuous soarings of the Gallic Muse. Not till the French Romantic school of the first half of our century threw off the shackles of the Latin tradition was Ronsard rehabilitated in public esteem. Shakespeare, at his best a Greek in limpidity and pregnancy of utterance, was too bold and irregular for Pope and Addison. The Greek genius had breathed, like Spring, for a few lovely days over Western Europe, and the thickets were becoming alive with jubilant voices, when all too quickly matron Summer, in the person of the world-weary literature of the Empire, swept majestically up, struck drought to the heart of the year, hushed the wild warblings, and diffused a uniform soberness and serenity over meadow and woodland. Pegasus was put into harness, and set to drawing vulgar loads. In simple prose, poetry was forced to become pedestrian, regular, methodical.

It would be an error to regard this restraint and sobriety as an unmixed evil. The northern nations had become habituated to the sway of Roman Christianity, and were not yet prepared for the more primitive and elementary forms of their faith. No more, when just emergent from the Middle Ages and the mediæval conceptions of literature, were they fully ripe for the





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# ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS.



## I. HORACE.

[BATTEUX, *Les Quatres Poëtiques*, 1. 1-3.]

Of all the ancient poets there is none who is more read than Horace, and of all the poems of Horace there is none which better deserves to be read and pondered with care than his Art of Poetry. It is the code of reason for all the arts in general; it is good taste reduced to principles.

Notwithstanding, the poet did not intend to give us in this work a complete treatise on poetry. We must not suffer ourselves to be misled. It is an epistle that he addressed to Lucius Piso, a man of taste, one of the first men in Rome, and to his two sons, the elder of whom was a man grown, perfectly capable of doing his own thinking and of directing himself. It was accordingly not a time to dwell upon details, reason on the nature of poetry, distinguish its genera and species, examine the mode of constructing plots or poetic actions, etc. Piso and his sons did not need the instructions of Horace upon all these points, which were everywhere explained, by all the masters, in all the treatises on poetry, Greek and others, of which there were then no lack. What was expected from Horace was acute opinions, but not more acute than profound, select rules, the observations of a genius, the judgments of a master,—in a word what the most cultivated talent of the most cultivated



century of Rome would teach if he should condescend to give instruction, and what the ablest masters, and even the best books, did not teach.

[SELLAR, *Horace and the Elegiac Poets*, pp. 110–115.]

In the *Ars Poetica* Horace assumes the office of a literary critic more formally than either in the *Epistle to Augustus* or in that to *Florus*. The epistolary has developed into the didactic form ; or rather there is a kind of compromise between them. Three-fifths of the poem are almost purely didactic ; the style in that part of the poem is more compact, sententious, and impersonal, than in any of the other *Epistles* ; the irony and the conversational manner of his other *Epistles* are alike absent. This purely didactic part seems to be a *résumé* of Greek criticism on the drama, ultimately, perhaps, based on the doctrines of Aristotle, but, according to Porphyry, really made up of selections from an Alexandrian critic, Neoptolemus of Parium. It contains general precepts applicable to all artistic creation, particularly to poetry as representative of action ; and many technical directions, specially applicable to tragedy, are given. Attention is also drawn to the style suitable to the satyric drama. Though much of the illustration of this part of the poem is probably due to Horace himself, yet in the general principles which he lays down he seems to be a mere exponent of the canons of Greek criticism. How far, besides being an exponent, he is also a translator, can only be conjectured, but certain phrases, such as ‘*dominantia nomina*,’ and ‘*communia*’ in the phrase ‘*difficile est proprie communia dicere*,’ look like translations ; and the arrangement of the materials suggests the notion of a composition based on selections from a continuous work, rather than of an organic whole growing out of a definite conception of his subject and a definite plan of exposition. Perhaps we should not be wrong in



referring the general principles applicable to all poetry, such as those on the paramount importance of the choice and conception of the subject, and on the dependence of the method of treatment on that conception —

Cui lecta potenter erit res,  
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo —

as well as the technical precepts on the functions of the chorus, the division of the play into five acts, etc., to the Greek original; while the directions as to expression, where he reverts again to the old controversy on the relative merits of the new and old poets, may be regarded as Horace's own contribution to criticism, based on his own practice and that of the best of his contemporaries. In any case we have in the first part of the poem not indeed a methodical treatise on the art of poetry, nor a perfectly planned and articulated didactic poem, but a series of sound principles on the conception of a dramatic action, the evolution of a plot, the consistent presentation of character, propriety and variety of style, regularity and variety of metrical effect, which might serve as a guide to those who were endeavoring to substitute for the old tragedy of Ennius and Accius a more legitimate drama, not servilely following, but more nearly conforming to, the great models of the Attic stage. If the Roman drama was to rise to as high a degree of perfection as Roman epic and lyric poetry had attained in the Augustan age — and to enable it to attain that degree of perfection is the motive of the poem — it could only do so on the same conditions as those on which epic and lyric poetry had been perfected, by a thorough comprehension of and rigorous adherence to the methods of the Greek masters. In the Epistle to Augustus, Horace, while seeming to despair of a revival of the acted drama on the Roman stage, and while disclaiming for himself all thought of dramatic writing, yet assigns the very highest place in literature to the successful dramatist —

Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur  
 Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,  
 Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,  
 Ut magus, et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.

The occasion of the young Piso following or aspiring to follow the fashion set by Pollio and Varius, prompts Horace to embody in a treatise written primarily for his guidance the results of his reading and of his own reflexion on dramatic criticism ; and he proceeds in the remainder of the poem more in his own familiar, sometimes ironical style, to offer advice which seems as much intended to dissuade him from as to encourage him in his task. He glides almost insensibly from the earlier to the latter part of his subject. Starting from a reference to the careless workmanship of Roman poets in their use of Greek metres, and the careless criticism of their audiences, he proceeds to show in his own language and from his own observation what goes to the making of a poet, and what constitutes good and bad taste —

Unde parentur opes, quid alat formetque poetam,  
 Quid deceat, quid non, quo virtus quo ferat error.

It is in keeping with all the serious convictions of his later years that he bases all good writing on a true criticism of life in its ethical relations —

Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons —

and that he ranks first in these relations the duties of patriotism and friendship —

Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat et quid amicis.

The poet's aim should be to combine pleasure with instruction. A few minor faults may be excused in a long poem, yet poetry is the one accomplishment in which mediocrity is intolerable. You are not called upon to be a poet, he says to



Piso, and you have too much sense to undertake anything against the grain of your natural capacity —

*Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva.*

Yet if you do write, submit your work to experienced critics, and ‘keep it back for nine years’ before publishing it. Poetry in days of old was purely a divine gift. It was by ‘the sacred poet, the revealer of the will of the Gods,’ that the elements of civilization were introduced —

*Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque  
Carminibus venit.*

Next Homer and Tyrtæus roused men by their verse to battles ; then oracles were uttered in verse ; finally lyrical poetry and the drama came as the solace of men resting from their labors. Genius, the divine gift, is thus the first condition of poetic success ; but mere genius, without art, is ineffective —

*ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
Nec rude quid possit video ingenium.*

Yet though success in every other accomplishment is sought by discipline, labor, and self-denial, men appear to think that they can write without taking any trouble. If any one read his poems to Quintilius, he frankly pointed out the faults, and urged correction of them. If the author defended his faults, he left him in his self-satisfaction and took no more interest in him. An honest critic will put a mark against lines that are lifeless, harsh, unpolished or obscure, and will insist on the pruning of all unnecessary ornament. He will become an Aristarchus, and will not fear giving offense to his friend. Sensible men do not like to have anything to do with poets who cannot submit to criticism. They let them go their own course and come to grief in their own way. The bad poet scares away the educated and uneducated alike by his persecution. If he does

secure a listener, he sticks to him like a leech and bores him to death by his recitations —

*tenet occiditque legendo*

*Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo.*

The work as a whole is hardly to be judged either as a systematic didactic poem, or as a familiar epistle. The one form imperceptibly passes into the other. It has sometimes been supposed that the work was left unfinished and published posthumously. There is no evidence to establish this conclusion. In point of execution the work is as finished as any in Latin literature. It is the maturest specimen of that style which Horace uses in serious discussion and exposition, but more compact and sententious than in the other literary Epistles. The doctrines themselves and their expression bear the mark of having been long weighed and considered. The expression of them has an authoritative, almost oracular character. The difficulty in tracing a connected line of argument or one definite aim in the poem may be attributed rather to his love of conciseness, and his preference of a familiar to a more formal style of exposition, than to any want of completeness in working out his plan. Horace was not a systematic reasoner like Lucretius. It was a principle of art with him to avoid or make the most sparing use of those formulæ, so largely used by Lucretius and after him by Virgil, by which the transitions from one line of thought to another are clearly marked. He may have begun the poem with the intention of writing a systematic didactic poem on tragedy. For this he found an example in the old national literature — the *Didascalica* of Accius — and for some of his materials and method he may have had recourse to an Alexandrian model, as Virgil had to more than one in the composition of his didactic poem. But before completing more than half his task he falls back, without ceasing to be didactic, into the more familiar attitude of one offer-





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of diffuseness cannot justly be found either with Boileau or Pope. Both these writers are clear, correct, terse, and to the point. They are elegant, but do not sacrifice other qualities to elegance. They both have a large share of the sense and judgment of the Latin writer. They are not without his liveliness ; at any rate, the English poet is not. While Horace owes little or nothing to Aristotle's Poetics, the two modern authors owe very much to Horace, and Boileau in particular is a close imitator. As Pope says of him, 'He still in right of Horace sways.' Indeed, parts of his Art are almost translations of Horace, and happy ones too. Boileau, like Horace, does not deny that genius is necessary for a poet, but dwells much on the importance of art. He is the strong advocate of common sense, and of the avoidance of all extremes. He is quite the writer of the Augustan age of France, and has a relation to Louis XIV. not altogether unlike that of Horace to Augustus. He has the same distaste for pompous pretensions in poetry. He warns poets against flatterers as strongly as Horace does. He also speaks of the various kinds of poetry, and their difference. He follows his master closely and happily in his description of the characteristics of the ages of men. For all that, curiously enough, he gives only four lines to the expression of Horace, to whom he owes so much, lines too without any particular point in them. Voltaire, who styles the Satires of Boileau the failure of his youth, speaks of his Epistles as fine, and of his Art of Poetry as admirable. The praise is deserved, and comes from one who on such a subject as the Epistles of Horace is a good judge, though on many other subjects, as on the Bible, Shakespeare, and Calderon, a very bad one. Still, though Boileau, like Horace, is clear, neat, sensible, correct, though to both writers may be applied the line :

*Si j'écris quatre mots, j'en effacerai trois,*

yet is he wonderfully inferior to the Roman poet, and leaves, at



least on an Englishman, the impression of weariness, caused no doubt in part by the want of variety in his style, and by a lack of vigor and spirit.

Most that may be said of Boileau's production is applicable to Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, a treatise composed in the same style and manner. Pope is the writer of the Augustan age of England. In order and regularity and the completeness of his plan, Pope is superior to Horace; some of his lines are models of neatness of expression; specially, in his illustration of the manner in which the sound should be an echo to the sense, he has written some of the most perfect lines in any poetry;<sup>1</sup> he feels, and admirably expresses his feeling, that to make a good critic the heart should be right as well as the head; and that pride, prejudice, and envy are almost as great a hindrance to a true judgment in literature, as dulness and ignorance. And yet even Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, with all its merits, is wanting in the variety, the life, the playfulness, the graceful negligence, the happy ease, of the inimitable Latin author.

Lord Byron's *Hints from Horace* is an adaptation of the *Art of Poetry* in the manner of Pope; or, as he himself curiously expresses it, *An Allusion in English Verse to the Epistle Ad Pisones de Arte Poetica*. The work is a complete failure, though written by a great poet; it is for the most part commonplace and dull; it wants the ease and delicacy of Horace, Pope's epigrammatic felicity of phrase and command of antithesis, and the concise and studied carefulness of workmanship common to both the earlier poets. For the poetical genius of Byron, though more powerful and splendid than that of Horace or Pope, is yet deficient in their peculiar excellencies: and perhaps the consciousness of this deficiency was in a great measure the cause of that extravagant admiration of Pope which Byron felt throughout his life. It is remarkable that Byron himself preferred the *Hints from Horace* to the first two cantos

<sup>1</sup> But in this he was anticipated by Vida. — ED.



of Childe Harold, which he had written about the same time ; and after an interval of nine years, during which he had written most of those works which have given him his fame, he says, alluding to these Hints, ' I wrote better then than now.' This preference for their inferior writings has been not uncommon with poets ; so Milton preferred his *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost*, and Petrarch his *Latin Poems* to his *Sonnets*. Notwithstanding his veneration of Pope, Byron seems to have had little sympathy with Horace, any more than with Virgil. In the latter poet he can only see ' that harmonious plagiary and miserable flatterer,' and of the former he speaks as ' Horace, whom I hated so ' ; and he goes on to speak of ' the curse ' that it is,

To comprehend, but never love thy verse.

Yet in the same passage he well describes the characteristic of Horace's style of satire (in words somewhat similar to those of Persius), as

Awakening without wounding the touched heart.

Horace was a Greek scholar, an admirer of Greek literature, and yet we cannot account him as one able to enter into the spirit of such writers as *Æschylus* or *Sophocles*. His rules about poetry are not applicable to all classical, still less are they prospectively to modern, poetry, except to a certain part of it.

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.

With such a poet as that, Horace's criticisms have no relation. And even the artificial style of poetry owes but little to criticism. Racine would not learn much from the sensible advice of Boileau.<sup>1</sup> Genius inspires the poet, not merely with noble thoughts, but with untaught shapes, the forms in which suitably to clothe these thoughts. The good that criticism can do is negative rather than positive. It is something to deter those

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve thinks otherwise on this point. — ED.

who have no genius for writing poetry from trying to be poets, and to warn such that heaven and earth and booksellers alike condemn mediocrity in poetry. And if good poets are rare, so are good critics. Compositions such as those of Boileau and Pope, in which sense, wit, terseness of expression are found, give pleasure. And Horace's Art of Poetry is full of information on subjects long past, is not unworthy of the author of the Satires and Epistles, is full of kindly wit and lively wisdom, and has furnished succeeding ages with many a quotation applied to subjects quite different from that on which the line was originally written.

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## 2. VIDA.

[POPE, *Essay on Criticism*, 697-708.]

But see! each Muse, in Leo's golden days,  
 Starts from her trance and trims her withered bays;  
 Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,  
 Shakes off the dust and rears his reverend head.  
 Then Sculpture and her sister arts revive,  
 Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live;  
 With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;  
 A Raphael painted and a Vida sung —  
 Immortal Vida, on whose honored brow  
 The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow;  
 Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,  
 As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!

[DRYDEN, *Discourse on Satire*.]

But in an epic poet, one who is worthy of that name, besides an universal genius is required universal learning, together with all those qualities and acquisitions which I have named above, and as many more as I have through haste or negligence omitted.



And, after all, he must have exactly studied Homer and Virgil as his patterns, Aristotle and Horace as his guides, and Vida and Bossu as their commentators, with many others (both Italian and French critics) which I want leisure here to recommend.

[ROSCOE, *Life of Leo the Tenth*, 2. 154-157.]

Marco Girolamo Vida was a native of Cremona. Some diversity of opinion has arisen as to the time of his birth, which event has generally been placed about the year 1470, whilst some have contended that it could not have occurred until the year 1490. The reasons adduced by different authors have served to refute the opinions of their opponents, without establishing their own; and as Vida was, as it will hereafter appear, certainly born some years after the first-mentioned time, and some years before the latter, his nativity may be placed with sufficient accuracy about the middle of these two very distant periods. His family was of respectable rank, and, although his parents were not wealthy, they were enabled to bestow upon their son a good education, for which purpose he was successively sent to several of the learned academies with which Italy was then so well provided. The first specimen of the talents of Vida in Latin poetry appeared in a collection of pieces on the death of the poet Serafino d'Aquila, which happened in the year 1500; towards which he contributed two pieces, which were published in that collection at Bologna, in the year 1504. In this publication he is named by his baptismal appellation, Marc Antonio, which, on his entering into regular orders, he changed to that of Marco Girolamo. The memorable combat between thirteen French and thirteen Italian soldiers, under the walls of Barletta, in the year 1503, afforded him a subject for a more extensive work; the loss of which is to be regretted, not only as the early production of so elegant a writer, but as a curious historical document. After having



made a considerable proficiency in the more serious studies of philosophy, theology, and political science, he repaired to Rome, where he arrived in the latter part of the pontificate of Julius II., and appears to have been a constant attendant on those literary meetings which were then held in that city, and were continued in the commencement of the pontificate of Leo X. Of his larger works, on which his reputation as a Latin poet is at this day founded, his three books *De Arte Poetica* were probably the first produced, and these were soon afterwards followed by his poem on the growth of silkworms, entitled *Bombyx*, and by his *Scacchiæ Ludus*, a poem on the game of chess. On the last of these poems being shown to Leo X., he was delighted beyond measure with the novelty of the subject, and with the dignity, ease, and lucid arrangement with which it was treated, which appeared to him almost beyond the reach of human powers. He therefore requested to see the author, who was accordingly introduced to him by Giammatteo Ghiberti, bishop of Verona, who appears to have been his earliest patron, and whom he has celebrated in terms of the warmest affection in several of his works. Vida was received by the pontiff with particular distinction and kindness, admitted as an attendant on the court, and rewarded with honors and emoluments ; but that upon which the poet appears chiefly to have congratulated himself was that his works were read and approved by the pontiff himself. Whether Leo was merely desirous of engaging Vida in a subject that might call forth all his talents, or whether he wished to raise up a rival to Sannazaro, who, he probably suspected, was not favorable to his fame, certain it is that at his suggestion Vida began his *Christiad*, which he afterwards completed in six books, but which the pontiff was prevented, by his untimely death, from seeing brought to a termination. The future patronage of this work was therefore reserved for Clement VII., under whose auspices it was first published in the year 1535, with an apolo-



getical advertisement at the close of the work, in which the author excuses the boldness of his attempt by informing the reader that he was induced to begin and to persevere in his undertaking by the solicitations and munificence of the two pontiffs, Leo X. and Clement VII., to whose exertions and liberality he ascribes the revival of literature from its long state of torpor and degradation.

In order to stimulate the poet to terminate this work, or to reward him for the progress he had made in it, Clement had already raised him to the rank of apostolical secretary, and in the year 1532 conferred on him the bishopric of Alba. Soon after the death of that pontiff Vida retired to his diocese, and was present at its defense against the attack of the French in the year 1542, where his exhortations and example animated the inhabitants successfully to oppose the enemy. After having attended in his episcopal character at the council of Trent, and taken an active part in the ecclesiastical and political transactions of the times, he died at his see of Alba, on the twenty-seventh day of September, 1566, more respected for his talents, integrity, and strict attention to his pastoral duties than for the wealth which he had amassed from his preferments.

Of all the writers of Latin poetry at this period, Vida has been the most generally known beyond the limits of Italy. This is to be attributed, not only to the fortunate choice of his subjects, but to his admirable talent of uniting a considerable portion of elegance, and often of dignity, with the utmost facility and clearness of style, insomuch that the most complex descriptions or abstruse illustrations are rendered by him perfectly easy and familiar to the reader. Of his Virgilian eclogues, the third and last is devoted to commemorate the sorrows of Vittoria Colonna, on the death of her beloved husband, the Marquis of Pescara. Among his smaller poems, his verses to the memory of his parents, who both died about the same time, and while he was engaged in the successful pursuit of preferment at





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In his poem of the *Christiad* Vida has avoided the error into which Sannazaro has fallen in mingling the profane fables of the heathen mythology with the mysteries of the Christian religion, and, like Milton, seeks for inspiration only from the great fountain of life and truth. Although he placed Virgil before him as his principal model, and certainly regarded him with sentiments next to adoration, as may appear from the conclusion of the third book of his *Poetics*, yet he knew how to fix the limits of his imitation ; and, whilst he availed himself of the style and manner, and sometimes even of the language of the great Mantuan, he sought not to give to his writings a classic air by the introduction of such persons and imagery as could only violate probability, nature, and truth. Hence, whilst the poem of Sannazaro seems to be the production of an idolater who believes not in the truths which he affects to inculcate, and frequently verges on the confines of indecency or incongruity, the writings of Vida display a sincere and fervent piety, a contempt of meretricious ornament, and an energetic simplicity of language, which will secure to them unmingled and lasting approbation.

[SYMONDS, *Renaissance in Italy*, The Revival of Learning,  
pp. 471-476.]

Vida won his first laurels in the field of didactic poetry. Virgilian exercises on the breeding of silkworms and the game of chess displayed his faculty for investing familiar subjects with the graces of a polished style. Such poems, whether written in Latin, or, like the *Api* of Rucellai, in Italian, gratified the taste of the Renaissance, always appreciative of form independent of the matter it invested. For a modern student Vida's metrical treatise in three books on the Art of Poetry has greater interest, since it illustrates the final outcome of classic studies in the age of Leo. The *Poetica* is addressed to Francis,



Dauphin of France, in his Spanish prison. . . . After this dedication Vida describes the solace to be found in poetry, and adds some precepts on the preparation of the student's mind. A rapid review of the history of poetry — the decline of Greek inspiration after Homer, and of Latin after Virgil ; the qualities of the Silver Age, and the revival of letters under the Medici at Florence — serves to show how narrow the standard of Italian culture had become between the period of Poliziano, who embraced so much in his sketch of Literature, and that of Vida, who confined himself to so little. The criticism is not unjust ; but it proves that the refinement of taste by scholarship had resulted in restricting students to one or two models, whom they followed with servility. Having thus established his general view of the poetic art, Vida proceeds to sketch a plan of education. The qualities and duties of a tutor are described ; and here we may notice how far Vittorino's and Guarino's methods had created an ideal of training for Italy. The preceptor must above all things avoid violence, and aim at winning the affections of his pupil ; it would be well for him to associate several youths in the same course of study, so as to arouse their emulation. He must not neglect their games, and must always be careful to suit his methods to the different talents of his charges. When the special studies to be followed are discussed, Vida points out that Cicero is the best school of Latin style. He recommends the early practice of bucolic verse, and inculcates the necessity of treating youthful essays with indulgence. These topics are touched with more or less felicity of phrase and illustration ; and though the subject-matter is sufficiently trite, the good sense and kindly feeling of the writer win respect. The first book concludes with a peroration on the dignity and sanctity of poets, a theme the humanists were never weary of embroidering. The second describes the qualities of a good poem, as these were conceived by the refined but formal taste of the sixteenth century. It should begin quietly, and manage to excite with-



out satisfying the curiosity of the reader. Vain displays of learning are to be avoided. Episodes and similes must occur at proper intervals ; and a frugal seasoning of humor will be found agreeable. All repetitions should be shunned, and great care should be taken to vary the narrative with picturesque descriptions. Rhetoric, again, is not unworthy of attention, when the poet seeks to place convenient and specious arguments in the mouths of his personages.

It is difficult in a summary to do justice to this portion of Vida's poem. His description of the ideal epic is indeed nothing more or less than a refined analysis of the *Æneid* ; and students desirous of learning what the Italians of the sixteenth century admired in Virgil, will do well to study its acute and sober criticism. A panegyric of Leo closes the second book. From this peroration some lines upon the woes of Italy may be read with profit, as proving that the nation, conscious of its own decline, was contented to accept the primacy of culture in exchange for independence. . . .

The third book treats of style and diction. To be clear and varied, to command metaphor and allusion, to choose phrases colored by mythology and fancy, to suit the language to the subject, to vary the metrical cadence with the thought and feeling, and to be assiduous in the use of the file are mentioned as indispensable to excellence. A peroration on Virgil, sonorous and impassioned, closes the whole poem, which, rightly understood, is a monument erected to the fame of the Roman bard by the piety of his Italian pupil. The final lines are justly famous. . . .

Vida's own intellect was clear, and his style perspicuous ; but his genius was mediocre. His power lay in the disposition of materials and in illustration. A precise taste, formed on Cicero and Virgil, and exercised with judgment in a narrow sphere, satisfied his critical requirements. Virgil with him was first and last, and midst and without end. In a word, he shows

what a scholar of sound parts and rhetorical aptitude could achieve by the study and imitation of a single author.

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### 3. BOILEAU.

[POPE, *Essay on Criticism*, 709-722.]

But soon by impious arms from Latium chased,  
 Their ancient bounds the banished Muses passed;  
 Thence arts o'er all the northern world advance,  
 But critic-learning flourished most in France;  
 The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys,  
 And Boileau still in right of Horace sways.  
 But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised,  
 And kept unconquered, and uncivilized;  
 Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,  
 We still defied the Romans, as of old.  
 Yet some there were, among the sounder few  
 Of those who less presumed, and better knew,  
 Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,  
 And here restored wit's fundamental laws.

[SAINTE-BEUVE, *Causeries du Lundi*, Vol. 6.]

Within the last twenty-five or thirty years the point of view with regard to Boileau has greatly changed. When at the Restoration, that splendid hour of hope and gallant endeavor, new generations arrived, and attempted to renovate literary species and forms, to broaden the circle of literary ideas and comparisons, they experienced resistance on the part of their predecessors. Authors estimable indeed, but lagging behind the age, other writers much less commendable, and who, in the lifetime of Boileau, would have been among the first to receive castigation at his hands, hoisted the banner of this 'lawgiver of



Parnassus,' and, without considering the difference in the age, quoted his lines on all occasions like the articles of a code. We did then, we who were young — and I only half repent of our doings — what it was natural to do. We took Boileau's works by themselves; though few in number, they are unequal in vigor; there are those which betray the youth, and others which betray the age of their author. While rendering justice to the sound and beautiful portions, our praise was somewhat faint, and our hearts did not cleave to the spirit of the man. Boileau, as personage and authority, is much more important than his work, and a certain effort is necessary to reconstitute him in his integrity. In a word, we did not then make a full historical study of him, and were half way involved in the controversies of the period.

At this later day, the circle of experimentation having been rounded, and discussion being exhausted, we return to him with pleasure. If I may be permitted to speak of myself, Boileau is one of the men with whom I have been the most occupied since I have been engaged in criticism, and with whom I have most constantly lived in thought. . . . Boileau realized, and made his friends realize, that 'admirable lines do not entitle one to disregard those which are to form their context.' Such, rightly defined, is his literary achievement. . . . Do you know what, in our own time, has been wanting to our poets, so full of natural abilities at their first appearance, so rich in promise and felicitous suggestion? They have needed two things — a Boileau and an enlightened monarch, the one seconding and hallowing the other. For lack of them these men of talent, conscious of living in an age of anarchy and indiscipline, have not been slow to conduct themselves accordingly; in literal terms, they have conducted themselves, not like noble geniuses, nor even like men, but like students off on a vacation. The results we have witnessed.



[MABIE, *Short Studies in Literature*, pp. 5-7.]

So long as literature was a well defined art in the hands of such critics as Boileau or of Pope, and their schools, it was readily characterized. Certain qualities of form supplied a test easily applied — a kind of folding measure which the most scantily equipped critic could carry about in his pocket. But this portable system of mensuration failed to take the dimensions of a number of notable poets, and among them Shakespeare ; and it is quite impossible to leave Shakespeare out of account in any definition of literature. One can imagine with what horror Boileau would have looked over Carlyle — he could hardly have looked through him. Among all the literary specimens arranged with Gallic precision to illustrate the principles which ought to underlie literature, Carlyle would have found no place. Boileau would have ruthlessly excluded him from the neat, precise, and very diminutive Pantheon of which he constituted himself the custodian. And yet it is evident that Carlyle belongs to literature ; to some of us he was the first to reveal the real scope of literature.

What would Boileau have done with the Kalevala, the Nibelungen Lied, the Russian popular epics, the Scotch Ballads? These wild, free, spontaneous growths from the soil of common life would have fared badly at the hands of a critic accustomed to the smooth elegance of the Alexandrine verse, to the orderly unfolding of the French drama, to the self-conscious, conventional, and artificial conception of art of which he made himself the mouthpiece ; and yet it is clear enough that these artless works of earlier and unknown poets are not only literature, but literature of a very significant and interesting kind. If Boileau had been living at the close of the last century, how sorely his spirit would have been tried by the interest in Hindu literature, then for the first time brought within the knowledge of Europeans ! That one should prefer the Sakoontala of



Kalidasa to the Bérénice of Racine would have filled him with deep and painful perplexity. Evidently literature means a great deal more to us than it meant to Boileau ; it means so much that the task of defining it with scientific accuracy is quite beyond us. We have long ago rid ourselves of the idea that any particular form or set of forms furnishes an unfailing test of the presence or absence of the quality which constitutes literature in a book. The essential thing, so far as form is concerned, is not a reproduction of any accepted model, but the excellence which makes a form expressive of beauty or power.

[MORLEY, *First Sketch of English Literature*, pp. 667–668.]

Boileau's influence became supreme upon the publication of his Art of Poetry (L'Art Poétique), in 1673. Its four cantos embodied his main doctrine as the Poet of Good Sense. In idea and execution it was inspired by Horace's Art of Poetry ; but its polished maxims, applied specially to French poetry, are more systematically arranged. The order of its cantos is : —

1. General rules, with a short digression on the history of French poetry from Villon to Malherbe.
2. Rules and characteristics of the eclogue, elegy, ode, sonnet, epigram, balade, madrigal, satire, and vaudeville.
3. Rules of tragedy, comedy, and epic.
4. General advice to poets on the use of their powers ; choice of a critic ; origin, rise, and decline of poetry ; praise of Louis XIV.

The critical shortcomings of this work, which may be said to have given the law for some years to French and English literature, nearly all proceed from a wholesome but too servile regard for the example of the ancient classic writers. The chief authors of Greece and Rome were to be as much the models of good literature as the Latin language was a standard of right speech. This led, indeed, to a sound contempt of empty trivialities, but it left the critic with faint powers of recognition for a Dante, a Shakespeare, or a





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[SCOTT, *Life of Dryden*, ed. Saintsbury, pp. 440-442.]

About the time of the Restoration, the cultivation of letters was prosecuted in France with some energy. But the genius of that lively nation being more fitted for criticism than poetry, for drawing rules from what others have done, than for writing works which might be themselves standards, they were sooner able to produce an accurate table of laws for those intending to write epic poems and tragedies according to the best Greek and Roman authorities, than to exhibit distinguished specimens of success in either department ; just as they are said to possess the best possible rules for building ships of war, although not equally remarkable for their power of fighting them. When criticism becomes a pursuit separate from poetry, those who follow it are apt to forget that the legitimate ends of the art for which they lay down rules are instruction or delight, and that these points being attained, by what road soever, entitles a poet to claim the prize of successful merit. Neither did the learned authors of these disquisitions sufficiently attend to the general disposition of mankind, which cannot be contented even with the happiest imitations of former excellence, but demands novelty as a necessary ingredient for amusement. To insist that every epic poem shall have the plan of the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, and every tragedy be fettered by the rules of Aristotle, resembles the principle of an architect who should build all his houses with the same number of windows and of stories. It happened too, inevitably, that the critics, in the plenipotential authority which they exercised, often assumed as indispensable requisites of the drama or epopeia circumstances which, in the great authorities they quoted, were altogether accidental and indifferent. These they erected into laws, and handed down as essentials to be observed by all succeeding poets, although the forms prescribed have often as little to do with the merit and success of the originals from which they are taken, as the shape



of the drinking-glass with the flavor of the wine which it contains. 'To these encroachments,' says Fielding, after some observations to the same purpose, 'time and ignorance, the two great supporters of imposture, gave authority; and thus many rules for good writing have been established, which have not the least foundation in truth or nature, and which commonly serve for no other purpose than to curb and restrain genius, in the same manner as it would have restrained the dancing-master, had the many excellent treatises on that art laid it down as an essential rule that every man must dance in chains.' It is probable that the tyranny of the French critics, fashionable as the literature of that country was with Charles and his courtiers, would have extended itself over England at the Restoration, had not a champion so powerful as Dryden placed himself in the gap.

[DEMOGEOT, *Histoire de la littérature française*, pp. 426-430.]

While Racine and Molière were enriching France with their masterpieces, their friend Boileau Despreaux was teaching the public to understand and admire them. Before his day, taste, lacking fixed standards, had indiscriminately sanctioned the excellent and the mediocre. A multitude of authors without merit blocked up the highway of the great writers. Scudéry was admired side by side with Corneille; false wit, though ridiculed by Molière, was not categorically proscribed and condemned. The public venerated the memory of Voiture, and applauded the conceits of Saint Amand and Chapelain. It had not yet 'left' to Spain and 'to Italy'

The dazzling folly of all their false splendors.

The great Corneille himself is perhaps the most striking example of this blending of the worthless with the excellent, of bad taste with sublimity. In a word, there were models, but



no theory. It was the task of Boileau to 'disentangle the confused art' of the seventeenth century, and to assign to each man and to every production its proper place in public esteem. It is his glory to have done this with almost infallible judgment, with unshrinking courage, and, what is more, to have pronounced his decisions in so felicitous a form, and in such perfect language, that we should no more think of recasting than of invalidating them.

The worship of good sense, the supremacy of reason in matters of taste, such is the lasting merit of Boileau's teaching. This is the common feature which links him with the other great men of that age. It is the spirit of Descartes transferred to poetry.

No less do we recognize in his criticism the more transient and accidental characteristics of his epoch. Fond above all things of order and regularity, he disciplines poetry as Louis XIV. does society, establishes a rigorous system of caste in the productions of genius, preaches the nobility of language, and insists upon the etiquette of the hemistich and the right divine of the cæsura. His mind is just rather than broad, judicial rather than profound. He likes to see things in their most salient aspect, though it be the narrowest. If he wishes to praise Molière for that justness of language which never sacrifices the idea to its expression, he admiringly asks him 'where he finds his rimes.' If it is a question of difficulty in conceiving a plan, the totality of a work of art, in effecting the mutual subordination of the various parts, in forming a series, a connected chain, whose every link, as Buffon says, shall represent an idea, he exclaims, 'It is a task that kills me by the multitude of transitions, which constitute, in my judgment, the most difficult achievement of poetry.'

We are prepared to believe that in a century ruled exclusively by the spirit of society, and whose poets, as a rule, were insensible to nature, Boileau formed no exception. It might



seem at first glance as if this defect would be of small consequence in a satirical poet ; nevertheless his criticism suffered the consequences of this limitation. A disciple of the ancients, he recommends a mythology which he does not understand. He mistakenly interprets that pantheism of universal life which is the soul of Greek poetry as a system of abstract allegories. Not much better does he comprehend the poetic grandeur of Catholicism. He rejects the marvelous element in Christianity as at once too sacred and too dull, thus calumniating in one breath both poetry and Christian dogma. Boileau, in common with his contemporaries, had no appreciation of the Middle Ages. He betrays a disdainful ignorance of all our old national poetry, and would be willing to exclaim, with Louis XIV., 'That's too old-fashioned' ; or, better still, 'Out of my sight with those Chinese monstrosities.'

But we must not censure the critic too severely for this aversion to the age that was passing away. Progress is only to be had at this price. New ideas do not assert themselves save by the negation of the old ; aloofness passes into hostility. Descartes scorned the whole of antiquity ; this was merely an exaggerated form of the supremacy of reason. So Christianity in its inception had persecuted polytheism, even in the literature which reflected it. It was in the name of the modern spirit that Boileau abjured the whole feudal society, its arts and poetry. More Christian than Catholic, more religious than pietistic, it was through independence that he subjected himself to the discipline of our old masters, the Greeks and the Latins. Authority, indeed, he found there, but an authority freely chosen and freely interpreted.

The poetical career of Boileau may be divided into three periods. In the first, from 1660 to 1668, the young satirist attacked bad poets with all the impetuosity of his age, and strove to the uttermost against the false taste imported from Spain and Italy. It was at this time that he published nine



Satires, four of which are exclusively literary, while the others directed against the scribblers a multitude of hits, all the more piquant for being unexpected. 'The Satires belong,' says Voltaire, 'to the first manner of this great painter, very inferior, it is true, to the second, but very superior to that of all the writers of his time, if we except Racine.' Let us add that the ninth satire, addressed to his 'Esprit,' is equal to the best work that Boileau ever did.

In the second period, from 1669 to 1677, Boileau laid satire aside. He had been overthrowing, and was now concerned to reconstruct. At this time, in 1674, appeared his *Art Poétique*, in which he formulated and co-ordinated the literary doctrines to which he had just assured a triumph. The same year he published the first four songs of the *Lutrin*, an ingenious and elegant sally, and a masterpiece of versification worthy of a less trivial subject. Already a milder temper animated the critic, and his raillery was more sprightly. He now wrote the first nine Epistles, of which the third, addressed to Racine, combines in the highest degree all the excellent qualities which assure the glory of the great French satirist.

After this work, Boileau, appointed, in conjunction with Racine, historiographer to the king, interrupted, like his colleague, his poetical labors. During the sixteen years that followed, he contented himself with publishing, in 1681, the last two cantos of the *Lutrin*. He did not re-enter his career until 1693; but, less fortunate than his illustrious friend, he was then far from discovering a new vein. It is here that the third period of his life begins. He reappeared before the public with the Ode to Namur, a feeble and unfortunate lyrical essay. He composed three frigid satires, against Women, on Honor, and against Equivocation; finally he composed his last three epistles, one of which, that which closes the collection, and has as its subject the Love of God, no longer offers anything attractive either in inspiration or style. Sage as he was, he



lacked that rarest gift of wisdom, the knowledge of when to stop.

Boileau is a tremendous fact in the history of literature. He established the national taste, and was able to isolate and place in relief its most vital, most permanent characteristic, its witty, bantering good sense. He ennobled the ancient French spirit of Villon and Marot by teaching it the elegant language of classical antiquity and all the proprieties of the wittiest of courts. He is the citizen of Paris in the great gallery of Versailles.

These advantages were purchased at some cost. The belief has been too prevalent that Boileau traced the definitive limits of art. There has been too much calling of him 'the lawgiver of Parnassus.' Rather was he the teacher of his century; and, in his century itself, he taught the writers less than the public. Without doubt his conversations must have been precious to his illustrious friends, in whom he instilled discontent with themselves and whom he taught to 'rime with pains'; but his writings are especially designed to train the reader, and they are perfectly adapted to that object. His criticism is clean cut, simple, intelligible to all, more negative than inspiring; it reduces the principles of art to those of common sense. It is piquant, bantering, calumnious, wholly free from technical terms. Finally, it casts its precepts into imperishable verse, as resplendent with metaphors as with reason; it coins them into proverbs, and stamps them, whether we will or no, upon the memory.

[BRUNETIÈRE, *L'Esthétique de Boileau*, in the *Revue des deux Mondes* 93 (1889). 662-663, 680-685.]

There are greater names in our literary history than Boileau's, and happily many of them; others are more popular, others certainly more beloved; but I do not know that there is any more in vogue, nor perhaps, in certain respects, more eminent.



Half of his verses became maxims or proverbs at their birth, entered into use or into the current of the language, and constitute still a part of the vocabulary of conversation. Three or four generations of industrious versifiers, including a few poets, have recognized him as 'the lawgiver of the French Parnassus.' His teachings, crossing our frontiers, have gone out to form schools in England and Germany. His very enemies, by their passionate, intemperate, and, above all, clumsy attacks, have contributed, as much or more than his deserts, to engrave, to character his name in the memory; and if there be any one who, not only for us who belong to his race, but also for foreigners, represents the French, or rather the classic spirit, with its qualities, but likewise with the defects which are the price or the obverse of these qualities, it is neither Molière, nor La Fontaine, nor Racine; it is he, it is Boileau, it is the author of the Satires and the Art of Poetry. . . . If there has been, from the Renaissance to the French Revolution, a classical ideal common to all Europe, to him belongs the honor of having conceived, defined, and fixed it more clearly than any one else. ✓

Boileau understood only what he loved; he loved only what he thought himself capable of realizing at need in his own poetry; and thus it happened that, being destitute of sensibility, imagination, and a strong constitution, he at first assigned too inconsiderable a part in his doctrine to the picturesque, to the senses, and to emotion.

If in truth it is by virtue of thought that we are men, as we must fain agree with him that it is, still we are by no means pure intelligences, but are linked to a body; and our 'animality' --- which can only be distinguished by an effort of abstraction --- is not separate from our 'humanity.' The representation of the inferior parts of human nature, the portrayal even of the tumult, the disorder, or the delirium of the senses, is only to be forbidden to art in so far as there is mingled with it, as in some of our contemporary 'naturalists,' an evident intention





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tendency to mitigate its excessive virility, and the excessive hardness resulting from such excessive virility. . . .

Another error lay in his ignoring the power of the imagination. Here again, Boileau undoubtedly knew by memorable examples that nothing is more dangerous for the poet than to write, as some one has said, with his imagination only, and to allow himself to be carried away by all the ardor of this deceptive power. . . . And we, who are contemporary with the Fall of an Angel and the Legend of the Ages, with Lamartine and Victor Hugo, know this still better. But for having turned upside down the truth of things, and for failing to recognize that, in spite of all its excesses, the imagination, that is to say the faculty of transcending nature, of even seeing in it what is not there, provided only that he make us see it, that imagination remains the supreme faculty of the poet, his original aptitude, one whose place can be supplied by no other, without which one may indeed be artist, writer, orator, but never poet — for this it is that we are bound to upbraid him. The reason is that he himself was not a poet. . . .

Originality, in Boileau's sense of the word, never existed save as originality of expression or of form ; and in truth it is something, if one must think like all the rest of the world, at least to speak or write like oneself. But this alone will not suffice. Taken literally, and followed by artists less upright than himself, the theory of Boileau could not fail to result in the glorification of the commonplace under the name of the 'universal,' or in the apotheosis of common sense under the name of 'good sense.' But the question is to know what is common sense, and whether it were not oftentimes better to call it common error or common lunacy. . . .

If we look for the secret of Boileau's enduring authority, we shall find it nowhere else than in this concurrence, this entire agreement, this almost perfect coincidence of his qualities or his defects with the customary defects and the average quali-



ties of the French character, bourgeois and classic. The very qualities which we most prize to-day — good sense and perspicuity, logic and naturalness, wit and reason — are those that he possessed ; and as for his faults, we still hold by them. What Frenchman is there, for example, whom the vast imagination of a Hugo does not astound or scandalize much more than it excites his admiration? And how many are there of us who — I do not say understand, but who appreciate, who enjoy, who love English ‘humor’ or German ‘gemüth.’ . . . Contemporary with Louis XIV, this

Fils, frère, oncle, cousin, beau-frère de greffiers,

imitating the prince whose policy it was to open to the third estate the way to great civil employments, has substituted for a hundred and fifty years his bourgeois ideal for the wholly aristocratic ideal of the poets who preceded him. . . . Whatever we may say, this ideal, French as it is, must have been somewhat human as well, since for two centuries foreigners have been seeking to bend their genius to its yoke.

[BRUNETIÈRE, *L'Évolution des Genres*, I. 14-18.]

If we look more closely at the matter, we shall discover that it is not two or three periods, vaguely distinguished from one another by chronology, that we have to study in the history, however cursory, of criticism, but that there are at least seven or eight, characterized by very precise traits. . . .

1. In the first period — which may be made to extend from 1550 to about 1605, and which is terminated by the names and work of Du Bellay at one extreme, and of Malherbe at the other — criticism, still uncertain of its object and its methods, and confronted with ancient masterpieces which had been known, it is true, for a long while, but which are now understood for the first time, endeavors to recognize, to analyze, to



define, to catalogue the means, the reasons, and the causes of the impression which these works produce.

2. These reasons and these causes being once recognized, criticism endeavors to transform them into rules of art. Since analysis discovers that the Terentian comedy, for example, or the Virgilian epic, please because and by means of certain merits, well and duly labeled, the attempt is made to find means, recipes, or processes for reproducing these merits, and thus to introduce beauties into works along with rules. This second period in the history of French criticism lasted from 1610 to about 1660, or — if you prefer titles and names — from the publication of Chapelain's Preface to the *Adone* and the first Letters of Balzac to the appearance of the first Satires of Boileau.

3. For Boileau takes a step in advance; and these rules whose sole pretension had hitherto been that they had been observed by the ancients, these rules it is the real originality of the 'lawgiver of Parnassus' to have sought to establish at once in nature and reason. Boileau endeavors to show that if the rules agree with the practice of Homer and Pindar, still more do they with the truth of nature as observation reveals it to us, and with the authority of reason, such as all men agree in recognizing by that name. This is a third period, and it extends from 1660 to 1680 or 1690, from the triumphal entry of Boileau on the stage to the first attacks directed against his doctrines by the champions of the Moderns.

4. With the Dispute between the Ancients and the Moderns, from 1680 to about 1730, and from Perrault to Voltaire, we have a new period as interesting as any, and yet but imperfectly known. A few wits — of whom it must unfortunately be said that they seem in general to have been rather eccentric than courageous — declare war on the ancients, in other words on tradition, and, in the name of a confused idea of progress, demand for the author the right to belong to his own



age, which is quite right, and to belong to no other, which is much more contestable. They only half way fail, but then they only half way succeed. The reasons for this partial success are various, as we shall see ; at present we may say that the principal ones are : (1) their personal inability to equal those ancients whom they attack, to overcome by their Eclogues those of Theocritus, and by St. Paulinus the Odyssey ; (2) the perplexity into which Boileau had thrown them from the outset, by postulating the imitation of nature as the foundation and measure of the rules in his Art of Poetry ; (3) and finally, the error which they perpetrate concerning the nature and scope of the idea of progress.

5. This decides Voltaire, the chief literary authority of the eighteenth century, to take his stand — though after some hesitation — on the side of Boileau. If certain independents, like Diderot, for example, strive to resist, without very well knowing why, their protestations remain ineffectual. It is necessary to wait not only until Rousseau shall appear, but until a new generation shall perceive the consequences of his views. Meanwhile, it is Voltaire who is followed ; it is from Voltaire that the Marmontels and Laharpes derive ; in a word, it is the principles and ideas of Boileau — often contracted, but sometimes expanded by Voltaire — which continue to rule in criticism, and to occupy the fifth period, that which we will accordingly extend from 1730 to 1780 or 1790.

6. Here begins the history of modern criticism, and with it a new period. I will note its chief divisions by saying :

A. That with Madame de Staël and Chateaubriand, at the beginning of the century, a knowledge, still quite superficial, of foreign literatures, and a knowledge hardly more exact of an older past, oblige our authors, by giving them the idea of new beauties, which are to be found neither in our national classics nor in the ancients, to verify for the first time the validity and the substance of their rules.



B. That with Villemain — from whose name, in this conquest, those of Guizot and Cousin can hardly be separated — there is added to the change of taste caused by the knowledge of foreign literatures and of history a change no less profound wrought by a wider, exacter, and, one may say, totally new knowledge of the relations between literary productions and the epochs, institutions, form and structure of the society whose expression they are.

C. That with Sainte-Beuve the foundation is widened, the point of view shifted, and the methods of criticism transformed by psychology, physiology, and the consideration of how each work is related not only to its epoch, but to its author, his temperament and his education.

D. Finally, that with Taine criticism aspires to become a science, even if it does not succeed ; and that, in any event, it seeks to supplement its means of information by the means — if I may use the term — by the methods and processes, of natural history.

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#### 4. THE TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLATORS.

[*Dictionary of National Biography.*]

Howes, Francis (1776–1844), translator, fourth son of the Rev. Thomas Howes of Morningthorpe, Norfolk, by Susan, daughter of Francis Linge of Spinworth in the same county, was born in 1776, and was educated at the Norwich grammar school. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1794, graduated B.A. in 1798 as eleventh wrangler, and proceeded M.A. in 1804. In 1799 he obtained the members' prize. His chief college friend was John (afterwards Sir John) Williams, the judge, who subsequently allowed him 100*l.* a year. He held various curacies, and in 1815 became a minor



canon of Norwich Cathedral, afterwards holding the rectories successively of Alderford (from 1826) and of Framingham Pigot (from 1829). He died at Norwich in 1844, and was buried in the west cloister of the cathedral. He married early Susan Smithson, and left issue; one of his sisters, Margaret, married Edward Hawkins, and was the mother of Edward Hawkins, provost of Oriel.

Howes published the following translations into English verse: 1. *Miscellaneous Poetical Translations*, London, 1806, 8vo. 2. *The Satires of Persius; with Notes*, London, 1809, 8vo. 3. *The Epodes and Secular Ode of Horace*, Norwich, 1841, 8vo, privately printed. 4. *The First Book of Horace's Satires*, privately printed, Norwich, 1842, 8vo. After his death his son, C. Howes, published a collection of his translations, London, 1845, 8vo. The merit of his translations was recognized by Conington in the preface to his version of the satires and epistles of Horace. Howes composed epitaphs for various monuments in Norwich Cathedral.

[JOHNSON, *Life of Pitt.*]

Christopher Pitt, of whom whatever I shall relate, more than has been already published, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. Warton, was born in 1699 at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed. He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance, and, at his removal to New College in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a complete version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe. This is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded. The suppression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circumstances, is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable to load libraries with



superfluous books, but incitements to early excellence are never superfluous, and from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had resided at his College three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimpern in Dorsetshire (1722), by his relation, Mr. Pitt, of Stratfeildsea in Hampshire; and, resigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Master of Arts (1724). He probably about this time translated Vida's Art of Poetry, which Tristram's splendid edition had then made popular. In this translation he distinguished himself, both by its general elegance and by the skilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expressed, a beauty which Vida has with great ardor enforced and exemplified. He then retired to his living, a place very pleasing by its situation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet, where he passed the rest of his life, revered for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. Before strangers he had something of the scholar's timidity or distrust, but when he became familiar he was in a very high degree cheerful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honorable, neither too great for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he composed his miscellany, published in 1727, it is not easy nor necessary to know; those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise above mediocrity.

The success of his Vida animated him to a higher undertaking, and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the *Æneid*. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he some time afterwards added three or four more, with an advertisement in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a progress of which himself was hardly conscious. This can hardly be true, and, if true,





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[SCOTT, *Edition of Dryden*, 15. 229.]

This piece [the translation from Boileau] was inserted among Dryden's Works, upon authority of the following advertisement by his publisher Jacob Tonson.

“This translation of Monsieur Boileau's Art of Poetry was made in the year 1680, by Sir William Soame of Suffolk, Baronet; who, being very intimately acquainted with Mr. Dryden, desired his revisal of it. I saw the manuscript lie in Mr. Dryden's hands for above six months, who made very considerable alterations in it, particularly the beginning of the Fourth Canto; and it being his opinion that it would be better to apply the poem to English writers than keep to the French names, as it was first translated, Sir William desired he would take the pains to make that alteration; and accordingly that was entirely done by Mr. Dryden.

“The poem was first published in the year 1683. Sir William was after sent ambassador to Constantinople, in the reign of King James, but died in the voyage. — J. T.”

To give weight to Tonson's authority, it may be added that great part of the poem bears marks of Dryden's polishing hand, and that some entire passages show at once his taste in criticism, principles, and prejudices.



**HORACE.**







# HORACE'S ART OF POETRY.

WITH THE TRANSLATION BY HOWES.



**S**UPPOSE some painter, for the whim, should trace  
A horse's neck with human head and face,  
And limbs from various animals expressed  
In plumage of as various hues invest,  
So that the same fantastic piece may show  
A fair maid upwards, a foul fish below, —  
Were you admitted to the motley sight,  
Methinks you'd laugh, my friends, and well you might.  
Yet not less strange, my Pisos, to the ear  
Of sober sense that poem must appear,  
Which deals in shapes extravagant and vain,  
Wild as the phantoms of a feverish brain ;  
Where, no two members to one whole referred,  
All is grotesque, incongruous, and absurd.  
'Painters (you'll say) and bards, the world agrees,

**H**UMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas  
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum  
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne,  
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?  
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum  
Persimilem, cujus velut ægri somnia vanæ  
Fingentur species, ut nec pes nec caput uni  
Reddatur formæ. 'Pictoribus atque poetis



Are privileged to dare what flights they please.'  
 We own that much is due for license' sake,  
 And give it freely as we freely take ;  
 But let them stop where nature stops at least,  
 Nor couple tame with savage, bird with beast.  
 Poems of high attempt and promise vast  
 Oft dwindle to a dreary void at last,  
 With here and there a purple remnant found  
 Tagged on to throw a tawdry glare around.  
 Diana's shrine embowered in tufted shades,  
 With streamlets trickling through the verdant glades,  
 The stately Rhine, the bow that spans the sky,  
 By turns, like tinsel trappings, catch the eye.  
 Not that such themes, well-timed, are void of grace ;  
 They are not bad ; but they are out of place.  
 Say 'tis your knack to draw a cypress-tree —  
 What then? you're hired to paint a storm at sea  
 For some wrecked sailor. If the wheel begin  
 A vase, why starts me up a nipperkin?  
 In short, to mark this maxim never cease —  
 Let all you write be one and of a piece.

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.' 10  
 Scimus et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim,  
 Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, non ut  
 Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agni.  
 Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna professis  
 Purpureus, late qui splendeat, unus et alter 15  
 Adsuitur pannus, cum lucus et ara Dianæ  
 Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros  
 Aut flumen Rhenum aut pluvius describitur arcus.  
 Sed nunc non erat his locus. Et fortasse cupressum  
 Scis simulare; quid hoc, si fractis enatat exspes 20  
 Navibus ære dato qui pingitur? Amphora cœpit  
 Institui; currente rota cur urceus exit?  
 Denique sit quod vis simplex dumtaxat et unum.



Dear sire, and offspring worthy of your sire !  
 We bards are dupes to what ourselves admire.  
 Would I be brief, I grow confused and coarse ;  
 • Who aims at smoothness, fails in fire and force ;  
 In him who soars aloft, bombast is found ;  
 Who fears to face the tempest, crawls aground.  
 Who courts variety, and fain would ring  
 A thousand changes on the selfsame string,  
 Will paint, as 'twere in fancy's wildest mood,  
 Boars in the wave and dolphins in the wood.  
 Thus even error, shunned without address,  
 Breeds error different in its kind, not less.

The meanest hand at sculpture shall not fail  
 To hit the waving hair or mold a nail,  
 Yet mars the *tout-ensemble*, since his soul  
 Lacks energy to grasp a perfect whole.

Genius thus circumscribed, should I aspire  
 To works of taste, I would no more desire,  
 Than shock with hideous nose each passer-by,  
 Praised for my jetty hair and sloe-black eye.

• First, ye that write, mark well your proper field ;

Maxima pars vatum, pater et juvenes patre digni,  
 Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro, 25  
 Obscurus fio; sectantem levia nervi  
 Deficiunt animique; professus grandia turgēt;  
 Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellæ.  
 Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,  
 Delphinum silvis appingit, fluctibus aprum. 30  
 In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.

Æmiliū circa ludum faber imus et unguēs  
 Exprimet et molles imitabitur ære capillos,  
 Infelix operis summa, quia ponere totum  
 Nesciet. Hunc ego me, si quid componere curem, 35  
 Non magis esse velim, quam naso vivere pravo,  
 Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.

Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam



Let each select some theme which he can wield ;  
 And, ere he tax his shoulders, weigh with care  
 What freight they can and what they cannot bear.

His pen shall words a ready host attend,  
 And method light him to his journey's end.

Of method this I deem the pride and grace —  
 Whate'er is said, to say it in due place,  
 Much to reserve till apt occasion call,  
 Take this, leave that, and fitly time it all.

In choice of diction would you be admired,  
 Nice care and shrewd adroitness is required.  
 Sometimes a dextrous phrase shall cheat the view,  
 And lend to well-known words the air of new.  
 But if need be abstruser thoughts to dress,  
 And in new terms new notions to express,  
 We'll grant you now and then to frame a word  
 Which the high-girt Cethegi never heard ;  
 Nor shall such freedoms, if discreetly used  
 And taken with reserve, be e'er refused.  
 But those least shock the ear which trace their course,  
 With slight deflexion, from a Grecian source.

Viribus, et versate diu quid ferre recusent,  
 Quid valeant humeri: cui lecta potenter erit res, 40  
 Nec facundia deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.

Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,  
 Ut jam nunc dicat jam nunc debentia dici,  
 Pleraque differat et præsens in tempus omittat;  
 Hoc amet, hoc spernat promissi carminis auctor. 45

In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis  
 Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum  
 Reddiderit junctura novum. Si forte necesse est  
 Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,  
 Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis 50  
 Continget, dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter;  
 Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si  
 Græco fonte cadent, parce detorta. Quid autem





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Such are thy noblest works, and such decay ;  
 And shall the shadowy tribes of language stay ?  
 Shall speech alone resist Time's envious tooth,  
 And live and flourish in perennial youth ?  
 Full many a word, now lost, again shall rise,  
 And many a word shall droop which now we prize,  
 As shifting fashion stamps the doom of each,  
 Sole umpire, arbitress, and guide of speech.

What numbers suit the daring bard who sings  
 Embattled hosts and kings encountering kings,  
 Homer has shown. — In couplets short and long  
 First pensive sorrow poured her plaintive song ;  
 In after-times, although the wish were gained  
 And tears gave place to smiles, the verse remained ;  
 But elegy's soft lay who first struck out,  
 Critics still argue and the court's in doubt. —  
 Rage gave Archilochus a loftier tone,  
 And armed him with iambs all his own.  
 These did the sock and these the buskined muse,  
 As suited to discourse alternate, choose, —  
 A measure for life's bustling action fit

Doctus iter melius, mortalia facta peribunt,  
 Nedum sermonum stet honos et gratia vivax.  
 Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere, cadentque  
 Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,  
 Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

70

Res gestæ regumque ducumque et tristia bella  
 Quo scribi possent numero monstravit Homerus.  
 Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,  
 Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.

75

Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiserit auctor,  
 Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.  
 Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo ;  
 Hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni,  
 Alternis aptum sermonibus, et populares

80



And towering o'er the thunder of the pit. —  
 To the bold lyre the favoring Muse has given  
 To chant the powers and progeny of Heaven,  
 The champion crowned, the conquering courser's line,  
 Love's tender cares, and joys of generous wine.

To give each piece its marked specific hue,  
 Hit the nice shades and keep the coloring true,  
 If niggard nature feels a task too hard,  
 Why am I honored with the name of bard?  
 Why blush to learn, if ignorant, and prefer,  
 Rather than mend my error, still to err?  
 The comic scene revolts at being told  
 In verse of tragic texture strong and bold;  
 Nor less Thyestes' horrid feast disdains  
 The sock's light chit-chat and colloquial strains.  
 Let but each style enjoy its proper place,  
 Each shall appear with dignity and grace.  
 Yet Comedy at times her voice can raise,  
 And wrathful Chremes rails in swelling phrase.  
 The tragic hero too, subdued by woes,  
 Stoops from his height to wail in homely prose :

Vincentem strepitus et natum rebus agendis.  
 Musa dedit fidibus divos puerosque deorum  
 Et pugilem victorem et equum certamine primum  
 Et juvenum curas et libera vina referre.

85

Descriptas servare vices operumque colores  
 Cur ego si nequeo ignoroque poeta salutor?  
 Cur nescire pudens prave quam discere malo?  
 Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt.  
 Indignatur item privatis ac prope socco  
 Dignis carminibus narrari cena Thyestæ.  
 Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decentem.  
 Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit,  
 Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore;  
 Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri

90

95



Peleus and Telephus, forlorn and poor,  
Spout their loud fustian and big words no more,  
Would they one throb of sympathy impart,  
And touch with kindred pangs the hearer's heart.

'Tis not enough that poetry combine  
All fancy's charms in every sounding line ;  
Impassioned let her be, and melt at will  
The soul to pity, or with horror thrill.  
From face to face as smiles contagious creep,  
So weeps the according eye with those that weep ;  
Who claims my tears, must first display his own,  
Then shall I catch his pangs and share his moan.  
But if ye rant as if no grief were nigh,  
If in your speech your sufferings ye belie,  
Ye exiled heroes ! maugre all your woes,  
'Tis ten to one I either laugh or doze.  
Sad words befit the brow with grief o'erhung ;  
Anger, that fires the eyeball, bids the tongue  
Breathe proud defiance ; sportive jest and jeer  
Become the gay ; grave maxims the severe.  
For nature, working in our nice machine,  
First molds the passions to life's fitful scene,

Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exsul uterque  
Proicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,  
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia suntu,  
Et quocumque volent animum auditoris agunto.

100

Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adsunt  
Humani voltus: si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi; tunc tua me infortunia lædent,  
Telephe vel Peleu; male si mandata loqueris,  
Aut dormitabo aut ridebo. Tristia mæstum  
Voltum verba decent, iratum plena minarum,  
Ludentem lasciva, severum seria dictu.

105

Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem



Gladdens, or goads to wrath, or, fraught with care,  
 Drags down to earth and wings us with despair ;  
 Anon a herald in the tongue she finds  
 Prompt to proclaim each movement of our minds.  
 But if the actor play not to the life,  
 If with his words his fortunes seem at strife,  
 Him knights and commons, horse and foot, shall scoff,  
 And tittering thousands hoot the blunderer off.

Each speaker let his speech characterize :  
 For sure a broad and glaring difference lies,  
 Whether a god or hero mount the stage ;  
 The brisk young spark or man mature in age ;  
 The dame of rank or nurse of prattling vein ;  
 The wandering seaman or the peaceful swain ;  
 One that Assyria or that Colchis fed ;  
 He that at Argos or at Thebes was bred.

In painting characters, or follow fame,  
 Or keep your fancy-piece throughout the same.  
 If haply to the stage you summon back  
 Great Peleus' son, adhere to Homer's track :  
 Proud, stern, relentless, brave, the hero draw,  
 His title conquest, and the sword his law.

Fortunarum habitum ; juvat aut impellit ad iram,  
 Aut ad humum mærore gravi deducit et angit ; 110  
 Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.  
 Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,  
 Romani tollent equites peditesque cachinnum.

Intererit multum divusne loquatur an heros,  
 Maturusne senex an adhuc florente juventa 115  
 Fervidus, et matrona potens an sedula nutrix,  
 Mercatorne vagus cultorne virentis agelli,  
 Colchus an Assyrius, Thebis nutritus an Argis.

Aut famam sequere aut sibi convenientia finge.  
 Scriptor honoratum si forte reponis Achillem, 120  
 Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer  
 Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.



Fierce be Medea and untamed by ill ;  
 Ixion treacherous and ungrateful still ;  
 Ino a mourner o'er her slaughtered child ;  
 Io an outcast ; and Orestes wild.  
 But if you dare to launch upon the stage  
 Originals that ne'er graced poet's page,  
 Let them one tenor to the last pursue,  
 Consist throughout and to themselves be true.  
 With truth's discriminating traits to fill  
 A general outline, asks no vulgar skill ;  
 And safer shall the bard his pen employ,  
 With yore, to dramatize the Tale of Troy,  
 Than, venturing trackless regions to explore,  
 Delineate characters untouched before.  
 Yet here and there the public ground shall yield  
 Of private property an ample field,  
 If neither in the trite routine you plod,  
 There only treading where the rest have trod,  
 Nor word for word with servile care translate,  
 Nor, closely copying, leap into a strait  
 Whence fear of shame and your own rule to boot  
 Forbid you to release your tangled foot.

Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,  
 Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.

Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis et audes

125

Personam formare novam, servetur ad imum

Qualis ab incepto processerit et sibi constet.

Difficile est proprie communia dicere; tuque

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,

Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.

130

Publica materies privati juris erit, si

Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem,

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus

Interpres, nec desilies imitator in artum,

Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.

135



Profess not with the Cyclic bard to sing  
 'Of Ilium's far-famed war and hapless king.'  
 What are this boaster's proud pretensions worth?  
 The mountain teems, and gives a titmouse birth!  
 Mark with what simple majesty the strain  
 Of *him* begins who never vaunts in vain —  
 'Sing, Muse! the man who, when Troy's bulwarks fell,  
 Trod various realms and marked their manners well.'  
 With him no transient blaze in smoke expires,  
 But from the smoke burst forth abiding fires,  
 From which, as fancy works, new wonders rise  
 To flash amazement on the ravished eyes, —  
 Antiphates, Charybdis' howling wave,  
 The dogs of Scylla, and the Cyclops' cave.  
 Nor does he run his subject out of breath  
 In dry detail from Meleager's death  
 To Diomed's return; nor yet begins  
 The Trojan war from Leda and her twins;  
 But posting onwards, brooking no delay,  
 To the mid-theme he boldly bursts his way.  
 Much he anticipates as if 'twere known;

Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclicus olim:  
 'Fortunam Priami cantabo et nobile bellum.'  
 Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?  
 Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.  
 Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte: 140  
 'Dic mihi Musa virum, captæ post tempora Trojæ  
 Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.'  
 Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem  
 Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat, 145  
 Antiphaten Scyllamque et cum Cyclope Charybdin;  
 Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,  
 Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.  
 Semper ad eventum festinat et in medias res  
 Non secus ac notas auditorem rapit, et quæ  
 Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit; 150



' Much that he feels would tire he lets alone ;  
 And so adroitly mingles false with true,  
 So with his fair illusions cheats the view,  
 That all the parts — beginning, middle, end —  
 In one harmonious compound sweetly blend.

Hear now what I and all the town demands,  
 If you would have your audience clap their hands,  
 In patience seated till the curtain draws  
 And the last speaker bows and begs applause.  
 Mark in each stage of life how nature veers,  
 The temper varying with the varying years.  
 What time the tongue has mastered every sound,  
 And steadier footsteps learn to print the ground,  
 Behold the schoolboy frolicsome and gay  
 Scampering to join his comrades at their play,  
 Vexed for a straw, but soothed as soon as vexed,  
 In tears this moment and in smiles the next.  
 The beardless youth, his freedom proud to gain,  
 Loves horses, hounds, and Mars's sunny plain ;  
 Ductile as wax to vice his yielding soul,  
 Deaf to the warning voice of dull control,  
 Profuse of purse, impatient of delay,

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
 Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi.

Si plausoris eges aulæa manentis et usque  
 Sessuri donec cantor 'Vos plaudite' dicat,

155

Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,  
 Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.

Reddere qui voces jam scit puer et pede certo  
 Signat humum, gestit paribus colludere, et iram  
 Colligit ac ponit temere, et mutatur in horas.

160

Imberbus juvenis, tandem custode remoto,  
 Gaudet equis canibusque et aprici gramine campi,  
 Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,





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All facts which in the fable have a share  
 Pass on the stage, — or are recorded there.  
 Those which a tale shall through the ear impart  
 With fainter characters impress the heart  
 Than those which, subject to the eye's broad gaze,  
 The pleased spectator to himself conveys.  
 Yet drag not on the stage each horrid scene,  
 Nor shock the sight with what should pass within.  
 This let description's milder medium show,  
 And leave to eloquence her tale of woe.  
 Let not the cruel Colchian mother slay  
 Her smiling infants in the face of day ;  
 Nor Atreus crown the board with impious food,  
 And feast a brother with congenial blood ;  
 Nor Procne's form the rising plumage take ;  
 Nor Cadmus sink into a slimy snake.  
 Much that were only passing strange if heard,  
 When seen, revolted sense declares absurd.

To five acts lengthened be the piece, not more,  
 That asks the long applause and loud encore ;  
 Nor in the unraveling be a god displayed,  
 Save where the knot disdains all humbler aid ;

*Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur.*  
*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem* 180  
*Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ*  
*Ipsæ sibi tradit spectator. Non tamen intus*  
*Digna geri promes in scenam, multaque tolles*  
*Ex oculis quæ mox narret facundia præsens.*  
*Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,* 185  
*Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus,*  
*Aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.*  
*Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.*

Neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu  
 Fabula, quæ posci volt et spectata reponi. 190  
 Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus



Nor in distracting dialogue engage  
At once four speakers on the crowded stage.

The Chorus should an actor's part sustain,  
Join in the busy scene nor join in vain ;  
Nor chant between the acts what does not tend  
To aid the theme and with the action blend.  
A ready patron still on virtue's side,  
With friendly love her votaries let it guide,  
Greet those who fear to swerve from duty's path,  
And curb with bold rebuke revenge and wrath ;  
Let it the tribute of its praise afford  
To sober diet and the simple board ;  
Espouse fair justice, the support of states,  
Law's righteous sword, and peace with open gates ;  
Hold fast the secret trusted to its care ;  
And to the gods put up a fervent prayer  
That fickle Fortune may at their behest  
Turn from the oppressor to relieve the oppressed.

The pipe in days of yore, not brazen-bound  
As now, nor rivaling the trumpet's sound,  
But of few stops and slender compass, still  
Served to support the Chorus, and to fill  
A narrow line of seats that with no crowd

*Inciderit: nec quarta loqui persona laboret.*

*Actoris partes chorus officiumque virile  
Defendat, neu quid medios intercinat actus  
Quod non proposito conducat et hæreat apte. 195  
Ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice,  
Et regat iratos et amet peccare timentes;  
Ille dapes laudet mensæ brevis, ille salubrem  
Justitiam legesque et apertis otia portis;  
Ille tegat commissa, deosque precetur et oret 200  
Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.*

*Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta, tubæque  
Æmula, sed tenuis simplexque foramine pauco  
Adspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque*



Of countless hearers hitherto o'erflowed —  
 Seats, where a people thin in numbers yet,  
 Decent and chaste and plain and frugal, met.  
 But when by war the realm was wider grown,  
 And walls of ampler circuit girt the town ;  
 When, on a day of revels, to begin  
 The feast from noontide was no more a sin,  
 A larger license and a scope less rude  
 Both to the music and the verse accrued.  
 For what should that mixed audience have of taste,  
 Clown grouped with cit, and boors by nobles placed ?  
 Thus did the piper superadd erelong  
 The charms of gesture to the powers of song,  
 With pantomimic grace his sense expressed,  
 And trailed along the boards the floating vest.  
 Thus too, its tones increased, the lyre severe  
 Poured richer warblings on the ravished ear ;  
 The muse in loftier numbers learned to soar,  
 Imped her bold plume for flights untried before,  
 And, fraught with fire prophetic, bade each line  
 Rival the raptures of the Delphian shrine.

Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia flatu; 205  
 Quo sane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus,  
 Et frugi castusque verecundusque coibat.  
 Postquam cœpit agros extendere victor et urbes  
 Latior amplecti murus vinoque diurno  
 Placari Genius festis impune diebus, 210  
 Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major.  
 Indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum  
 Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?  
 Sic priscae motumque et luxuriam addidit arti  
 Tibicen traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem; 215  
 Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,  
 Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia præceps,  
 Utiliumque sagax rerum et divina futuri  
 Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.



He that in tragic lay late strained his throat  
 To win the paltry prize — a shaggy goat,  
 Soon bared upon the stage a sylvan crew  
 And brought the wanton satyrs forth to view ;  
 The solemn tone not wholly laid aside,  
 To humor and burlesque his hand applied ;  
 And sought by grateful novelty of song  
 To rivet to their seats a boozy throng  
 From festive rites and revels just set free,  
 Ripe for loose pranks and full of tipsy glee.  
 Yet so to shift from grave to gay 'twere fit,  
 So temper the light satyrs' saucy wit,  
 That not each god, each hero, that of late  
 Stalked forth in purple robes and royal state,  
 Anon should all his pomp of speech let down  
 To the low slang and gabble of a clown,  
 Or, steering heavenwards his flight too fast,  
 Grasp empty clouds and soar into bombast.  
 The Tragic Muse, with bashfulness severe,  
 Disdaining the base gibe and trivial jeer,  
 Will, like a matron whom the priest perchance  
 Calls at some solemn festival to dance,

Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,  
 Mox etiam agrestes Satyros nudavit, et asper  
 Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit, eo quod  
 Illecebris erat et grata novitate morandus  
 Spectator, functusque sacris et potus et exlex.  
 Verum ita risores, ita commendare dicaces  
 Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo,  
 Ne quicumque deus, quicumque adhibebitur heros,  
 Regali conspectus in auro nuper et ostro,  
 Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas,  
 Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet.  
 Effutire leves indigna tragœdia versus,  
 Ut festis matrona moveri jussa diebus,

220

225

230



Amid the skittish satyrs still be seen  
 Distinguished by her staid and sober mien.  
 Were I, my friends, to write satyric plays,  
 Not wholly to low terms and homely phrase  
 Would I restrict my pen ; nor so refuse  
 The richer coloring of the tragic muse,  
 As that no difference should be marked between  
 What waggish Davus in the comic scene  
 Or Pythias prates, when in her knavery bold  
 She bubbles simple Simo of his gold, —  
 And what Silenus, when he steps abroad  
 The foster guardian of the nursling god.  
 Some well-known legend should support my theme ;  
 This with such art I'd trace, that each should deem  
 He too could match the verse, — then task his brain,  
 And toiling long confess his efforts vain.  
 Such merit is to plan and structure due !  
 To vulgar themes such glory may accrue !  
 But let the fauns, still mindful what they are,  
 Fetched from the woods, by my advice beware  
 (As if at Rome they all their life had led,  
 Born in our streets and in our Forum bred)

Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.  
 Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum  
 Verbaque, Pisones, Satyrorum scriptor amabo;  
 Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori,  
 Ut nihil intersit, Davusne loquatur et audax  
 Pythias, emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,  
 An custos famulusque dei Silenus alumni.  
 Ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quivis  
 Speret idem, sudet multum frustra que labore  
 Ausus idem: tantum series junctura que pollet,  
 Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris.  
 Silvīs deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,  
 Ne velut innati triviis ac pæne forenses

235

240

245



They tattle in a languid, love-sick style,  
 Or bolt unseemly jests and ribald vile.  
 For each that boasts birth, rank, and consequence,  
 At such low trash is apt to take offense,  
 Nor all with patience hears or deigns to crown  
 That with the nut-and-gray-pease tribe goes down.

Two syllables, first short, then long, combine  
 To frame the light iambus ; whence the line,  
 Though to the ear six several beats it bears,  
 Was surnamed trimeter, and scanned by pairs.  
 This measure, as its pristine form was cast,  
 Flows uniformly on from first to last.  
 But after no long time, to greet the ear  
 With more majestic grace and weight severe,  
 The foot, its birthright waived, generous and free,  
 Took in joint partnership the grave spondee,  
 One special privilege reserving still —  
 That every even place itself should fill.  
 ‘Not so (says one) march the bold trimeters  
 Of Accius, Ennius ; there it scarce occurs.’  
 Yet, maugre such high names, that author’s page

*Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus unquam,  
 Aut immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.  
 Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus et pater et res,  
 Nec, si quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emptor,  
 Æquis accipiunt animis donantve corona.*

250

*Syllaba longa brevi subjecta vocatur iambus,  
 Pes citus; unde etiam trimetris accrescere jussit  
 Nomen iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus  
 Primus ad extremum similis sibi. Non ita pridem,  
 Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad aures,  
 Spondeos stabiles in jura paterna recepit  
 Commodus et patiens, non ut de sede secunda  
 Cederet aut quarta socialiter. Hic et in Acci  
 Nobilibus trimetris apparet rarus, et Enni  
 In scenam missos cum magno pondere versus*

255

260



Who thus with ponderous cadence loads the stage,  
Speaks either gross neglect and slovenly haste,  
Or ignorance of his art and want of taste.

Not every reader, it is true, has skill  
To judge if verse be modulated ill ;  
And too indulgent Rome has fondly nursed  
This laxness in her poets from the first.

But what of that ? If readers will be fools,  
Must I run riot and despise all rules,  
Safe in that fault, forsooth, which, even if seen  
By all the world, long use perhaps shall screen ?  
Poor boast, to say, ' I have escaped from blame,  
But after all to praise can urge no claim !'

*Your* standard then be Greece ! Her models bright  
By day peruse, and reperuse by night !

Our forefathers, good-natured, easy folks,  
Extolled the numbers and enjoyed the jokes  
Of Plautus, prompt both these and those to hear  
With tolerant — not to say with tasteless — ear ;  
At least if you and I with sense are blest  
To tell a clownish from a courtly jest,  
Or, by the finger's aid and ear's to boot,

Aut operæ celeris nimium cura que carentis

Aut ignoratæ premit artis crimine turpi.

Non quivis videt immodulata poemata judex,

Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.

Idcircone vager scribamque licenter? an omnes

Visuros peccata putem mea, tutus et intra

Spem veniæ cautus? Vitavi denique culpam,

Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Græca

Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.

At vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros et

Laudavere sales: nimium patienter utrumque,

Ne dicam stulte, mirati, si modo ego et vos

Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,

265

270





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Nor would the name of Latium stand renowned  
 On martial more than on Parnassian ground,  
 Were not our every bard so loth the while  
 To brook the pause and labor of the file.  
 Praise *you* no piece, my noble friends, but what  
 Has been through many an hour and many a blot  
 Corrected, ten times poised in judgment's scale,  
 And smoothed like sculpture to the critic nail !

Because Democritus thinks fit to call  
 Art nothing-worth, and genius all in all,  
 And sternly bids each sober muse's son  
 Renounce the verdant heights of Helicon,  
 There are in whom a wondrous whim prevails  
 Neither to trim their beard nor pare their nails ;  
 Where crowded baths invite, they come not nigh,  
 But to lone caves and silent deserts fly.  
 For oh ! he shines a bard confessed, be sure,  
 Whose poll (which three Anticyras could not cure)  
 To barber Licinus was ne'er consigned !  
 Fool that I am, who, though to verse inclined,  
 Purge every spring the wit-inspiring bile !  
 How matchless, but for this, had been my style !

Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis  
 Quam lingua Latium, si non offenderet unum-  
 Quemque poetarum limæ labor et mora. Vos, o  
 Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non  
 Multa dies et multa litura coercuit atque  
 Perfectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

290

Ingenium misera quia fortunatius arte  
 Credit et excludit sanos Helicone poetas  
 Democritus, bona pars non unguis ponere curat,  
 Non barbam; secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.  
 Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poetæ,  
 Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile nunquam  
 Tonsori Licino commiserit. O ego lævus,  
 Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam!

295

300



No matter ; mine be like the whetstone's aid,  
 Which, blunt itself, lends sharpness to the blade.  
 While others practise, precept I'll impart,  
 And, though no artist, prove a friend to art.  
 Whence all the bard's resources flow, I'll teach ;  
 What his just functions, and how far they reach ;  
 What kindles and what fans the sacred fire ;  
 What course must train him, and what themes inspire ;  
 What breeds the foul, and what the fair befriends ;  
 And whither fitness, whither failure tends.

In the philosophy of man to excel  
 Is the prime root and spring of writing well.  
 Matter the page Socratic best can show ;  
 That once provided, words will freely flow.  
 When lore has opened to the poet's view  
 To country what, and what to friends is due ;—  
 In what just portion man beneath the names  
 Of parent, brother, host, affection claims ;—  
 To what the senator, the judge, is bound,  
 Or chief pavilioned high on tented ground ;—  
 Doubt not but he each character shall scan  
 And shrewdly fit the manners to the man.

Non alius faceret meliora poemata. Verum  
 Nil tanti est. Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum  
 Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi;  
 Munus et officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo,  
 Unde parentur opes, quid alat formetque poetam,  
 Quid deceat, quid non; quo virtus, quo ferat error.

305

SCRIBENDI RECTE SAPERE EST ET PRINCIPIUM ET FONS:  
 Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ,  
 Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.  
 Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat et quid amicis,  
 Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes,  
 Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium, quæ  
 Partes in bellum missi ducis, ille profecto  
 Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

310

315



Besides, to copy nature to the life,  
 Go, mark the world, explore its busy strife ;  
 To living scenes for truth's expression look ;  
 There dip your pen, and make mankind your book.  
 Oft has the play wherein these virtues dwell,  
 Set off with sentiment and mannered well,  
 Though else uncouth and rude in every part,  
 Devoid of strength, wit, elegance, or art,  
 More charmed an audience, more their hearts surprised,  
 Than faithless grace and nonsense harmonized.

Genius to Greece, to Greece the pride of phrase  
 Heaven gave, of nothing covetous but praise.  
 Not so our youth, who, cramped by hopeful drilling,  
 Learn into fifty parts to split one shilling.  
 Let young Albinus solve the problem sought :  
 ' Take one from five-pence ; what results ? ' — ' A groat.'  
 ' Good ! you're the boy to thrive ! But come, explain,  
 If added, what ? ' — ' A tester.' — ' Good again ! ' —  
 Where hearts thus trained to petty pelf we find,  
 And rust like this has cankered o'er the mind,  
 Who'd look for finished poems, wrought with toil,

Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo  
 Doctum imitatore[m] et vivas hinc ducere voces.  
 Interdum speciosa locis morataque recte  
 Fabula nullius veneris, sine pondere et arte,  
 Valdius oblectat populum meliusque moratur  
 Quam versus inopes rerum nugæque canoræ.

320

Grais ingenium, Grais dedit ore rotundo  
 Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.  
 Romani pueri longis rationibus assem  
 Discunt in partes centum diducere. ' Dicat  
 Filius Albini: Si de quincunce remota est  
 Uncia, quid superat? Poteras dixisse.' ' *Triens.*' ' Eu !  
 Rem poteris servare tuam ! Redit uncia, quid fit ?'  
 ' *Semis.*' At hæc animos ærugo et cura peculi  
 Cum semel imbuerit, speramus carmina frigi

325

330



Worthy the cypress case and cedar oil?

To teach — to please — comprise the poet's views,  
Or else at once to profit and amuse.

In precept be concise. What thus is told

The mind shall grasp with ease, with firmness hold ;

While all that's heaped superfluous shocks the taste,  
From memory's tablet fades, and runs to waste.

Let fancy's wild creation, though designed

Less to improve than to amuse the mind,

Copied at least from nature's scene appear,

And to a semblance of the truth adhere,

Nor tax the reader's faith too far, or draw

The breathing infant from the goblin's maw.

Graybeards will damn what fails in useful truth ;

Dry commonplace will pall on buxom youth ;

But he who precept with amusement blends,

And charms the fancy while the heart he mends,

Wins every suffrage. Rarely shall he miss

To enrich the Sosii with a piece like this ;

Seas shall it traverse, and the writer's page

Hand down his glories to a distant age.

*Posse linenda cedro et levi servanda cupresso?*

• *Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetæ,*

*Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.*

*Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta*

*Percipiant animi dociles teneantque fideles.*

*Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.*

*Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris,*

*Ne quodcunque velit poscat sibi fabula credi,*

*Neu pransæ Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo.*

*Centuriæ seniorum agitant expertia frugis;*

*Celsi prætereunt austera poemata Ramnes:*

*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,*

*Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo;*

*Hic meret æra liber Sosiis; hic et mare transit*

*Et longum noto scriptori prorogat ævum.*

835

340

345



Yet there occur in almost every book  
 Specks which the nicest taste must overlook.  
 For neither always will the minstrel's lyre  
 Give back the note his ear and hand require ;  
 He asks a grave, the chord a sharp remits ;  
 The archer aims, the bow not always hits.  
 If then a poem charm me in the main,  
 Slight faults I'll not too rigidly arraign,  
 Which frail humanity has here and there  
 Let fall from oversight or want of care.  
 To draw the line, then, thus our case will stand :  
 As that transcriber who, with pen in hand,  
 Though warned of lapses past, repeats the same,  
 With no fair plea can parry off the blame ;—  
 As all would flout the lyrist who should ring  
 Harsh discord always on the selfsame string ;—  
 Such is to me the ever-blundering bard.  
 He sinks a Chœrilus in my regard,  
 In whom perceiving haply once awhile  
 Some casual gleams of wit, I start and smile ;  
 Vexed, on the other hand, if now and then  
 Short fits of slumber creep on Homer's pen, —

Sunt delicta tamen quibus ignovisse velimus ;  
 Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem volt manus et mens,  
 Poscentique gravem persæpe remittit acutum,  
 Nec semper feriet quodcumque minabitur arcus. 350  
 Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
 Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,  
 Aut humana parum cavit natura. Quid ergo est?  
 Ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque,  
 Quamvis est monitus, venia caret; ut citharœdus 355  
 Ridetur, chorda qui semper oberrat eadem :  
 Sic mihi, qui multum cessat, fit Chœrilus ille,  
 Quem bis terve bonum cum risu miror; et idem  
 Indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.



Howbeit at times the noblest bard, I think,  
 In works of long attempt may fairly wink.  
 For poems are like pictures : some appear  
 Best in the distance, others standing near ;  
 This loves the shade, while that the light endures,  
 Nor shuns the nicest ken of connoisseurs ;  
 This charms for once, and then the charm is o'er,  
 While that, the more surveyed, still charms the more.

Hear, elder youth ! and mark my maxim well  
 (Though by a father's lessons you excel  
 In judgment sound, and all his taste inherit) :  
 A middling worth, a modicum of merit  
 To certain arts the world may well concede.  
 In court or chamber, this, perhaps, shall plead,  
 Short of Messala's skill, his client's cause,  
 That, short of Aulus' depth, expound the laws,  
 Yet each of use, each in request may be ;  
 Retained, consulted, each may earn his fee.  
 But of poetic worth a moderate share  
 Not men, not gods, not booksellers can bear.

Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum. 360  
 Ut pictura, poesis; erit quæ, si propius stes,  
 Te capiat magis, et quædam, si longius abstes;  
 Hæc amat obscurum; volet hæc sub luce videri,  
 Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen;  
 Hæc placuit semel, hæc decies repetita placebit. 365

O major juvenum, quamvis et voce paterna  
 Fingeris ad rectum et per te sapis, hoc tibi dictum  
 Tolle memor, certis medium et tolerabile rebus  
 Recte concedi. Consultus juris et actor  
 Causarum mediocris abest virtute disertis 370  
 Messalæ, nec scit quantum Cascellius Aulus,  
 Sed tamen in pretio est; mediocribus esse poetis  
 Non homines, non di, non concessere columnæ.



As music out of tune at festive board,  
 Seed-cakes of honey from Sardinia stored,  
 Or unguents void of scent, each guest displease,  
 Because the feast might well dispense with these ;  
 So verse, whose office and essential end  
 Is to delight the soul, — unless it tend  
 To aid, not mar, the purpose of its birth,  
 Fails in the balance and is nothing-worth.  
 He that ne'er joined the lists in Mars's field,  
 Forbears to take up arms he cannot wield ;  
 He that ne'er pitched the quoit nor tossed the ball  
 Nor whirled the troque, shuns to contend at all,  
 Fearing the titter of the crowded ring ; —  
 Yet *he* sings verse who never learned to sing.  
 ' Why not ' (says one), ' of knight's estate secure,  
 Of liberal birth, fair fame, and morals pure ? '  
 Nought e'er will *you*, I'm sure, in nature's spite,  
 (Such is your sense and prudence) speak or write.  
 But, if at some chance hour you aught compose,  
 See 'tis correct ere to the world it goes ;  
 Submit it first to Tarpa's critic ears,

Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors  
 Et crassum unguentum et Sardo cum melle papaver 375  
 Offendunt, poterat duci quia cena sine istis :  
 Sic animis natum inventumque poema juvandis,  
 Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad imum.  
 Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis,  
 Indoctusque pilæ discive trochive quiescit, 380  
 Ne spissæ risum tollant impune coronæ ;  
 Qui nescit versus tamen audet fingere. ' Quidni ?  
 Liber et ingenuus, præsertim census equestrem  
 Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.'  
 Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva ; 385  
 Id tibi iudicium est, ea mens. Si quid tamen olim  
 Scripseris, in Mæci descendat iudicis aures





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Embattled hosts. In verse were now made known  
 Fate's high behests, in verse life's duties shown.  
 By tuneful flatteries every muse's son  
 The smile of mighty monarchs sought and won ;  
 And verse supplied, at labor's welcome close,  
 A cheering pastime and a sweet repose.  
 Thus much, lest haply by a blush you wrong  
 The choir Pierian and the god of song.

'Tis asked, if this same knack its rise must owe  
 To plodding art, or from boon nature flow.  
 To me nor art without rich gifts of mind,  
 Nor yet mere genius rude and unrefined,  
 Seems equal to the task. They each require  
 The aid of each, and must as friends conspire.  
 He who to Pisa's goal would foremost run,  
 Much from his youth has suffered, much has done ;  
 Has sweated, shivered, patient to resign  
 The soul-enfeebling joys of love and wine.  
 The Pythian piper has been fain to plod  
 The weary task, and shrunk beneath the rod.  
 But in this art, forsooth, one needs but say —

Versibus exacuit; dictæ per carmina sortes,  
 Et vitæ monstrata via est; et gratia regum  
 Pieriis tentata modis, ludusque repertus  
 Et longorum operum finis: ne forte pudori  
 Sit tibi Musa lyræ sollers et cantor Apollo.

405

Natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte  
 Quæsitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
 Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium; alterius sic  
 Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice.

410

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,  
 Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit,  
 Abstinit venere et vino. Qui Pythia cantat  
 Tibicen, didicit prius extimuitque magistrum.

415

Nunc satis est dixisse: 'Ego mira poemata pango;



‘ I’m born a poet ; blockheads, clear the way !  
 Plague take the hindmost ! Genius scorns to own  
 Dull precept’s aid, or what’s unlearnt unknown.’

As some sly mountebank with trumpet loud  
 To buy his wares invites a gaping crowd,  
 So would-be poets, rich in purse and land,  
 Tempt with fine pennyworths the flattering band.  
 Is there a scribbler who can well afford  
 With luscious cates to crown a smoking board,  
 Can bail the wretch whose credit flags, and draw  
 The foot of beggary from the noose of law,  
 ’Twere passing strange if such a coxcomb knew  
 The difference ’twixt a false friend and a true.  
 Be then advised ; and — does the varlet live  
 To whom you ought have given or mean to give,  
 Brimful of gratitude for favors past,  
 With hopes those favors shall not prove the last —  
 Him, when to friends you would some piece rehearse,  
 Ask not to sit in judgment on your verse.  
 For ‘ good ! rare ! charming ! ’ will be all his cry,  
 While tears of transport trickle from his eye ;  
 Anon enraptured from his seat he’ll bound,

*Occupet extremum scabies; mihi turpe relinqui est  
 Et quod non didici sane nescire fateri.’*

*Ut præco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas,  
 Assentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poeta*

420

*Dives agris, dives positus in fenore nummis.*

*Si vero est unctum qui recte ponere possit,*

*Et spondere levi pro paupere, et eripere atris*

*Litibus implicitum, mirabor, si sciet inter-*

*Noscere mendacem verumque beatus amicum.*

425

*Tu seu donaris, seu quid donare voles cui,*

*Nolito ad versus tibi factos ducere plenum*

*Lætitiæ; clamabit enim ‘ Pulchre ! bene ! recte ! ’*

*Pallescet super his, etiam stillabit amicis*



Change color, clap his hands, and stamp the ground.  
 As with hired mummers in a funeral train,  
 Who feel the grief rant less than those who feign ;  
 So will the laugher-in-his-sleeve appear  
 More moved than one whose praises are sincere.  
 Wise kings, 'tis said, who prudently intend  
 To prove the courtier ere they call him friend,  
 Ply him with copious bumpers, till the bowl  
 Has gently wrung each secret from the soul.  
 Bards ! watch your critics, lest a borrowed skin  
 With specious covering mask the fox within.

If to Quintilius you recited aught,  
 ' Pray change,' he'd say, ' this word ; retouch that thought.'  
 If you protested that the passage penned  
 You twice or thrice had toiled in vain to mend,  
 ' Blot out then,' he'd reply, ' the ill-wrought strain !  
 Back to the anvil with this trash again !'  
 If you choose rather to dispute his taste  
 Than mend your piece, no further would he waste  
 Or time or pains, but leave you to admire  
 Yourself and doggerel to your heart's desire.

*Ex oculis rorem, saliet, tundet pede terram.* 430

*Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt  
 Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo, sic  
 Derisor vero plus laudatore movetur.*

*Reges dicuntur multis urgere culullis  
 Et torquere mero quem perspexisse laborant,* 435

*An sit amicitia dignus : si carmina condes,  
 Nunquam te fallant animi sub volpe latentes.*

*Quintilio si quid recitares, ' Corrige sodes  
 Hoc,' aiebat, ' et hoc ; ' melius te posse negares  
 Bis terque expertum frustra, delere jubebat* 440

*Et male tornatos incudi reddere versus.  
 Si defendere delictum quam vertere mallets,  
 Nullum ultra verbum aut operam insumebat inanem,  
 Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.*



The genuine critic will with honest zeal,  
 Feigning no raptures which he does not feel,  
 Trim all redundant ornament away,  
 On the obscure let in a lucid ray,  
 Blot the ambiguous, blame the loosely penned,  
 And prove the Aristarchus in the friend.  
 Nor will he say — ‘Why rudely should I tease  
 The friend I love for trifles such as these?’  
 For know, these trifles, while you lack the will  
 To speak plain truth, oft lead to serious ill,  
 As to his cost that friend erelong shall own,  
 When made the butt and byword of the town.

As the lorn wretch whom leprous scabs devour  
 Or jaundice gilds, one by Diana’s power  
 Moon-stricken, or by Pan convulsed with fits,  
 Such is the poet who has lost his wits.

The wise all shun him, while a heedless throng  
 Hoot at his heels where’er he prowls along.  
 Bellowing his verse with head upreared, his eye  
 ‘Rolling in frenzy fine’ from earth to sky,  
 If (like a fowler on his feathered prey

Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertes, 445  
 Culpabit duros, incomptis adlinet atrum  
 Transverso calamo signum, ambitiosa recidet  
 Ornamenta, parum claris lucem dare coget,  
 Arguit ambigue dictum, mutanda notabit,  
 Fiet Aristarchus; non dicet, ‘Cur ego amicum 450  
 Offendam in nugis?’ Hæ nugæ seria ducent  
 In mala derisum semel exceptumque sinistre.

Ut mala quem scabies aut morbus regius urget,  
 Aut fanaticus error et iracunda Diana,  
 Vesanum tetigisse timent fugiuntque poetam 455  
 Qui sapiunt; agitant pueri incautique sequuntur.  
 Hic, dum sublimis versus ructatur et errat,  
 Si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps



Intent) he chance to encounter in his way  
 Some ditch or pit, he long enough may shout  
 ‘ Help, neighbors, ho ! ’ — for none will haul him out.  
 But, were there some whom pity moved to fetch  
 A rope and drag to life the crack-brained wretch,  
 ‘ Hold, sirs ! ’ I’d cry. ‘ For aught that you can tell,  
 The madcap plunged on purpose in this well,  
 And wishes not to live.’ Anon the fate  
 Of Sicily’s famed poet I’d relate :  
 ‘ Empedocles with lore celestial fraught,  
 A deathless god aspiring to be thought,  
 Leaped into fiery Ætna in cold blood. —  
 These bards are licensed (be it understood)  
 To perish as they list. Against his will  
 To save a soul were barbarous as to kill.  
 Nor is it his first freak ; and, were it crossed  
 By your kind zeal, ’twere still but labor lost ;  
 He’d soon relapse, soon play the same mad game,  
 And by self-slaughter seek a deathless name. .  
 Nor is it altogether clear, why first  
 His bosom with this scribbling itch was cursed.  
 Who knows but vengeance bade him thus atone

In puteum foveamve; licet ‘ Succurrite ’ longum  
 Clamet, ‘ Io cives ! ’ non sit qui tollere curet.

460

Si curet quis opem ferre et demittere funem,

‘ Qui scis an prudens huc se projecit atque  
 Servari nolit ? ’ dicam, Siculique poetæ

Narrabo interitum. ‘ Deus immortalis haberi

Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Ætnam

465

Insiluit. Sit jus liceatque perire poetis;

Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.

Nec semel hoc fecit, nec, si retractus erit, jam

Fiet homo et ponet famosæ mortis amorem.

Nec satis apparet, cur versus factitet; utrum

470

Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental



Sins of deep dye? who knows but he has thrown  
 Some dread 'bidental' from its hallowed base,  
 Or to a father's ashes done disgrace?  
 One thing is plain: he has his fits of rage,  
 And then, as if some bear had burst its cage,  
 With loathsome recitation puts to flight  
 Learnèd and simple. Woe betides the wight,  
 Who meets his clutch at that unlucky time, —  
 Him will he read to death and stun with rime;  
 A very leech that drains our vital flood,  
 Nor quits his ruthless hold till gorged with blood !'

*Moverit incestus: certe furit, ac velut ursus  
 Objectos caveæ valuit si frangere clathros,  
 Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus;  
 Quem vero arripuit, tenet occiditque legendo,  
 Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo.'*









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# VIDA'S ART OF POETRY,

WITH THE TRANSLATION BY PITT.



## BOOK I.

**G**IVE me, ye sacred Muses, to impart  
The hidden secrets of your tuneful art ;  
Give me your awful mysteries to sing,  
Unlock and open wide your sacred spring ;  
While from his infancy the bard I lead  
And set him on your mountain's lofty head,  
Direct his course, and point him out the road  
To sing in epic strains a hero or a god.

What youth, whose generous bosom pants for praise,  
Will dare with me to beat those arduous ways,  
O'er high Parnassus' painful steeps to go,  
And leave the groveling multitude below, —  
Where the glad Muses sing and form the choir,  
Where bright Apollo strikes the silver lyre ?

**S**IT fas vestra mihi vulgare arcana per orbem,  
Pierides, penitusque sacros recludere fontes,  
Dum vatem egregium teneris educere ab annis,  
Heroum qui facta canat, laudesve Deorum,  
Mente agito, vestrique in vertice sistere montis.

Ecquis erit juvenum, segni qui plebe relictâ  
Sub pedibus, pulchræ laudis succensus amore,  
Ausit inaccessæ mecum se credere rupi,  
Lætæ ubi Pierides, cithara dum pulcher Apollo  
Personat, indulgent choreis, et carmina dicunt?



Approach thou first, great Francis, nor refuse  
 To pay due honors to the sacred Muse ;  
 While Gallia waits for thy auspicious reign,  
 Till age completes the monarch in the man.  
 Meantime the Muse may bring some small relief,  
 To charm thy anguish and suspend thy grief,  
 While guilty fortune's stern decrees detain  
 Thee and thy brother in the realms of Spain,  
 Far, far transported from your native place,  
 Your country's, father's, and your friends' embrace !  
 Such are the terms the cruel fates impose  
 On your great father, struggling with his woes,  
 Such are their hard conditions : — they require  
 The sons to purchase and redeem the sire.  
 But yet, brave youth, from grief, from tears, abstain,  
 Fate may relent and Heaven grow mild again ;  
 At last, perhaps, the glorious day may come,  
 The day that brings our royal exile home ;  
 When, to thy native realms in peace restored,  
 The ravished crowds shall hail their passing lord ;  
 When each transported city shall rejoice,  
 And nations bless thee with a public voice ;

Primus ades, Francisce, sacras ne despice Musas,  
 Regia progenies, cui regum debita sceptras  
 Gallorum, cum firma annis accesserit ætas.

Hæc tibi parva ferunt jam nunc solatia dulces,  
 Dum procul a patria raptum, amplexuque tuorum,  
 Ah dolor ! Hispanis sors impia detinet oris,  
 Henrico cum fratre. Patris sic fata tulerunt  
 Magnanimi, dum fortuna luctatur iniqua !

Parce tamen puer o lachrymis ; fata aspera forsan  
 Mitescent, aderitque dies lætissima tandem,  
 Post triste exilium, patriis cum redditus oris,  
 Lætitiâ ingentem populorum, omnesque per urbes  
 Accipies plausus, et lætas undique voces,

15

20





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Apollo's answers from the Pythian cave.

But ere you write, consult your strength, and choose  
 A theme proportioned justly to your Muse.  
 For though in chief these precepts are bestowed  
 On him who sings a hero or a god,  
 To other themes their general use extends,  
 And serves in different views to different ends.  
 Whether the lofty Muse, with tragic rage,  
 Would proudly stalk in buskins on the stage ;  
 Or in soft elegies our pity move,  
 And show the youth in all the flames of love ;  
 Or sing the shepherd's woes in humble strains,  
 And the low humors of contending swains ;  
 These faithful rules shall guide the bard along  
 In every measure, argument, and song.

Be sure, whatever you propose to write,  
 Let the chief motive be your own delight  
 And well-weighed choice. A task enjoined refuse,  
 Unless a monarch should command your Muse

*Phemonoes, quæ prima dedit, si vera vetustas,  
 Ex adyto haud aliis numeris responsa per orbem.*

Tu vero ipse humeros explorans consule primum,  
 Atque tuis prudens genus elige viribus aptum. 40  
 Nam licet hic Divos, ac Diis genitos heroas  
 In primis doceam canere, et res dicere gestas,  
 Hæc tamen interdum mea te præcepta juvabunt,  
 Seu scenam ingrediens populo spectacula præbes,  
 Sive elegis juvenum lachrymas quibus igne medullas 45  
 Urit amor, seu pastorum de more querelas  
 Et lites Siculi vatis modularis avena ;  
 Sive aliud quodcunque canis, quo carmine cunque,  
 Nunquam hinc, ne dubita, prorsum inconsultus abibis.

Atque ideo quodcunque audes, quodcunque paratus 50  
 Aggrederis, tibi sit placitum, atque arriserit ultro  
 Ante animo; nec jussa canas, nisi forte coactus  
 Magnorum imperio regum, siquis tamen usquam est



(If we may hope those golden times to see,  
 When bards become the care of majesty).  
 Free and spontaneous the smooth numbers glide,  
 Where choice determines and our wills preside ;  
 But, at command, we toil with fruitless pain,  
 And drag the involuntary load in vain.

Nor, at its birth, indulge your warm desire,  
 On the first glimmering of the sacred fire ;  
 Defer the mighty task, and weigh your power,  
 And every part in every view explore ;  
 And let the theme in different prospects roll  
 Deep in your thoughts, and grow into the soul.

But ere with sails unfurled you fly away,  
 And cleave the bosom of the boundless sea,  
 A fund of words and images prepare,  
 And lay the bright materials up with care,  
 Which, at due time, occasion may produce,  
 All ranged in order for the poet's use.  
 Some happy objects by mere chance are brought  
 From hidden causes to the wandering thought,

*Primores inter nostros qui talia curet.*

*Omnia sponte sua, quæ nos elegimus ipsi,*

55

*Proveniunt, duro assequimur vix jussa labore.*

*Sed neque cum primum tibi mentem inopina cupido,  
 Atque repens calor attigerit, subito aggrediendum est  
 Magnum opus; adde moram, tecumque impensius ante  
 Consule, quicquid id est, partesque expende per omnes  
 Mente diu versans, donec nova cura senescat.*

60

*Ante etiam pelago quam pandas vela patenti,  
 Incumbasque operi incipiens, tibi digna supellex  
 Verborum rerumque paranda est, proque videnda  
 Instant multa prius, quorum vatum indiget usus;  
 Illis tempus erit mox cum lætabere partis.*

65

*Sponte sua, dum forte etiam nil tale putamus,  
 In mentem quædam veniunt, quæ forsitan, ultro*



Which, if once lost, you labor long in vain  
To catch the ideal fugitives again.

Nor must I fail their conduct to extol,  
Who, when they lay the basis of the whole,  
Explore the ancients with a watchful eye,  
Lay all their charms and elegancies by,  
Then to their use the precious spoils apply.

At first without the least restraint compose,  
And mold the future poem into prose,  
A full and proper series to maintain,  
And draw the just connection in a chain,  
By stated bounds your progress to control,  
To join the parts, and regulate the whole.

And now 'tis time to spread the opening sails  
Wide to the wanton winds and flattering gales ;  
'Tis time we now prescribe the genuine laws  
To raise the beauteous fabric with applause ;  
But first some method requisite appears  
To form the boy, and mold his tender years.  
In vain the bard the sacred wreath pursues,

*Si semel exciderint, nunquam revocata redibunt,  
Atque eadem studio frustra expectabis inani.  
Nec mihi non placeant, qui, fundamenta laborum  
Cum jaciunt, veterum explorant opera inclyta vatum  
Noctes atque dies, passimque accommoda cogunt  
Auxilia, intentique aciem per cuncta volutant.*

70

*Quin etiam prius effigiem formare solutis  
Totiusque operis simulachrum fingere verbis  
Proderit, atque omnes ex ordine nectere partes,  
Et seriem rerum, et certos tibi ponere fines,  
Per quos tuta regens vestigia tendere pergas.*

75

*Jamque hic tempus erat dare vela vocantibus Euris,  
Condendique operis primas præscribere leges :  
At prius ætati teneræ quæ cura colendæ  
Dicendum, quantus puero labor impendendus.*

80





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The vile disgrace and lumber of the schools.  
 In vain the circling youths, a blooming throng,  
 Dwell on the eternal jargon of his tongue ;  
 Deluded fools ! The same is their mistake,  
 Who at the limpid stream their thirst may slake,  
 Yet choose the tainted waters of the lake.  
 Let no such pest approach the blooming care,  
 Deprave his style, and violate his ear ;  
 But far, oh far, to some remoter place  
 Drive the vile wretch to teach a barbarous race !

Now to the Muse's stream the pupil bring,  
 To drink large draughts of the Pierian spring,  
 And from his birth the sacred bard adore  
 Nursed by the Nine on Mincio's flowery shore,  
 And ask the gods his numbers to inspire  
 With like invention, majesty, and fire.  
 He reads Ascanius' deeds with equal flame,  
 And longs with him to run at nobler game.

Conventu in medio, septique impube corona,  
 Insolito penitus fandi de more magistri, 100  
 Obscuras gaudent in vulgum spargere voces  
 Irrisi, foedam illuviem, atque immania monstra.  
 Non minus a rectæ mentis ratione feruntur  
 Decepti, quam qui, liquidi cum pocula fontes  
 Sufficiant, malunt grave-olentem haurire paludem. 105  
 Ne mihi, ne teneræ talis se admoverit auri,  
 Sed procul o procul ista ferat, natosque Getarum  
 Imbuat, aut si qua est gens toto obtusior orbe.

Jamque igitur mea cura puer penetralia vatum  
 Ingrediatur, et Aonia se proluat unda: 110  
 Jamque sacrum teneris vatem veneretur ab annis,  
 Quem Musæ Minci herbosis aluere sub antris,  
 Atque olim similem poscat sibi numina versum,  
 Admirans artem, admirans præclara reperta.  
 Nec mora, jam favet Ascanio, tactusque dolore 115  
 Impubes legit æquales, quos impius hausit



For youths of ages past he makes his moan,  
 And learns to pity years so like his own,  
 Which with too swift and too severe a doom  
 The fate of war had hurried to the tomb.  
 His eyes for Pallas and for Lausus flow,  
 Mourn with their sires, and weep another's woe.  
 But when Euryalus, in all his charms,  
 Is snatched by fate from his dear mother's arms,  
 And, as he rolls in death, the purple flood  
 Streams out, and stains his snowy limbs with blood,  
 His soul the pangs of generous sorrow pierce,  
 And a new tear steals out at every verse.  
 Meantime with bolder steps the youth proceeds,  
 And the Greek poets in succession reads ;  
 Seasons to either tongue his tender ears ;  
 Compares the heroes' glorious characters ;  
 Sees how Æneas is himself alone,  
 The draft of Peleus' and Laertes' son,  
 How by the poet's art in one conspire  
 Ulysses' conduct and Achilles' fire.

But now, young bard, with strict attention hear,

Ante diem Mavors, et acerbo funere mersit.  
 Multa super Lauso, super et Pallante perempto  
 Multa rogat, lachrymas inter quoque singula fundit  
 Carmina, crudeli cum raptum morte parenti  
 Ah! miseræ legit Euryalum, pulchrosque per artus  
 Purpureum, leto dum volvitur, ire cruorem.  
 Nec non interea Graios accedere vates  
 Audeat, et linguam teneris assuescat utramque  
 Auribus, exercens nunc hanc, nunc impiger illam.  
 Nulla mora est, nostro Æneæ jam conferet igneis  
 Æaciden flagrantem animis, Ithacumque vagantem,  
 Atque ambos sæpe impellet concurrere vates.

120

125

Nunc geminas, puer, huc aures, huc dirige mentem.  
 Nam, quia non paucos parte ex utraque poetas

130



And drink my precepts in at either ear ;  
 Since mighty crowds of poets you may find,  
 Crowds of the Grecian and Ausonian kind,  
 Learn hence what bards to quit or to pursue,  
 To shun the false, and to embrace the true.  
 Nor is it hard to cull each noble piece,  
 And point out every glorious son of Greece,  
 Above whose numbers Homer sits on high,  
 And shines supreme in distant majesty ;  
 Whom with a reverent eye the rest regard,  
 And owe their raptures to the sovereign bard ;  
 Through him the god their panting souls inspires,  
 Swells every breast, and warms with all his fires.  
 Blest were the poets, with the hallowed rage,  
 Trained up in that and the succeeding age ;  
 As to his time each poet nearer drew  
 His spreading fame in just proportion grew ;  
 By like degrees the next degenerate race  
 Sunk from the height of honor to disgrace.  
 And now the fame of Greece extinguished lies,  
 Her ancient language with her glory dies ;  
 Her banished princes mourn their ravished crowns,

*Nostrosque, Graiosque tibi se offerre videbis,*

*Quos hic evites, quibus idem fidere tutus*

*Evaleas, dicam, ne quis te fallere possit.*

*Haud multus labor autores tibi prodere Graios,*

*Quos inter potitur sceptris insignis Homerus:*

135

*Hunc omnes alii observant, hinc pectore numen*

*Concipiunt vates, blandumque Heliconis amorem.*

*Felices quos illa ætas, quos protulit illi*

*Proxima. Divino quanto quisque ortus Homero*

*Vicinus magis, est tanto præstantior omnis.*

140

*Degenerant adeo magis ac magis usque minores,*

*Obliti veterum præclara inventa parentum.*

*Jamque fere Inachiæ restincta est gloria linguæ*





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And sets to view the principles of things ;  
 Each part was fair, and beautiful the whole,  
 And every line was nectar to the soul.  
 By such degrees the verse, as ages rolled,  
 Was stamped to form, and took the beauteous mold ;  
 Ausonia's bards drew off from every part  
 The barbarous dregs, and civilized the art ;  
 Till, like the day, all shining and serene,  
 That drives the clouds and clears the gloomy scene,  
 Refines the air and brightens up the skies,  
 See the majestic head of Virgil rise,  
 Phœbus' undoubted son ! — who clears the rust  
 Of the rough ancients, and shakes off their dust.  
 He on each line a nobler grace bestowed ;  
 He thought and spoke in every word a god.  
 To grace this mighty bard, ye Muses, bring  
 Your choicest flowers, and rifle all the spring.  
 See how the Grecian bards, at distance thrown,  
 With reverence bow to this distinguished son !  
 Immortal sounds his golden lines impart,  
 And naught can match his genius but his art ;

Explorare ausi, cecinerunt carmine dulci,

Omnia Pierio spargentes nectare vates.

160

Atque ita deinde rudes paulatim sumere versus

Cœperunt formam insignem, penitusque Latini

Agrestem exuerunt morem, liquidissima donec

Tempestas veluti cœli post nubila, et imbres,

Extulit os sacrum, soboles certissima Phœbi,

165

Virgilius, qui mox, veterum squalore situque

Deterso, in melius mira omnia rettulit arte,

Vocem animumque Deo similis: date lilia plenis,

Pierides, calathis, tantoque assurgite alumno!

Unus hic ingenio præstanti gentis Achivæ

170

Divinos vates longe superavit, et arte,

Aureus! immortale sonans! stupet ipsa, pavetque,



Even Greece turns pale and trembles at his fame,  
Which shades the lustre of her Homer's name.

'Twas then Ausonia saw her language rise  
In all its strength and glory to the skies ;  
Such glory never could she boast before,  
Nor could succeeding poets make it more.  
From that blest period the poetic state  
Ran down the precipice of time and fate ;  
Degenerate souls succeed, a wretched train,  
And her old fame at once drew back again.  
One to his genius trusts in every part,  
And scorns the rules and discipline of art,  
While this an empty tide of sound affords,  
And roars and thunders in a storm of words.  
Some, musically dull, all methods try  
To win the ear with sweet stupidity,  
Unruffled strains for solid wit dispense,  
And give us numbers when we call for sense.  
Till, from the Hesperian plains and Tiber chased,  
From Rome the banished Sisters fled at last,  
Driven by the barbarous nations, who from far

Quamvis ingentem miretur Græcia Homerum.

Haud alio Latium tantum se tempore jactat :

Tunc linguæ Ausoniæ potuit quæ maxima virtus

175

Esse, fuit; cœloque ingens se gloria vexit

Italiæ: sperare nefas sit vatibus ultra.

Nulla mora, ex illo in pejus ruere omnia visa,

Degenerare animi, atque retro res lapsa referri.

Hic namque ingenio confisus posthabet artem :

180

Ille fuit strepitu, tenditque æquare tubarum

Voce sonos, versusque tonat sine more per omnes;

Dant alii cantus vacuos, et inania verba

Incassum, sola capti dulcedine vocis;

Pierides donec Romam, et Tyberina fluenta

185

Deseruere, Italis expulsæ protinus oris.



Burst into Latium with a tide of war.  
 Hence a vast change of their old manners sprung,  
 The slaves were forced to speak their master's tongue ;  
 No honors now were paid the sacred Muse,  
 But all were bent on mercenary views ;  
 Till Latium saw with joy the Aonian train  
 By the great Medici restored again.  
 The illustrious Medici, of Tuscan race,  
 Were born to cherish learning in disgrace,  
 New life on every science to bestow,  
 And lull the cries of Europe in her woe.  
 With pity they beheld those turns of fate,  
 And propped the ruins of the Grecian state ;  
 For, lest her wit should perish with her fame,  
 Their care supported still the Argive name.  
 They called the aspiring youths from distant parts,  
 To plant Ausonia with the Grecian arts ;  
 To bask in ease, and science to diffuse,  
 And to restore the empire of the Muse.  
 They sent to ravaged provinces with care,

Tanti causa mali Latio gens aspera aperto  
 Sæpius irrumpens: sunt jussi vertere morem  
 Ausonidæ victi, victoris vocibus usi  
 Cessit amor Musarum; artes subiere repente  
 Indignæ, atque opibus cuncti incubuere parandis.  
 Jampridem tamen Ausonios invisere rursus  
 Cœperunt, Medicum revocatæ munere, Musæ;  
 Tuscorum Medicum, quos tandem protulit ætas  
 Europæ in tantis solamen dulce ruinis.

190

195

Illi etiam, Graiæ miserati incommoda gentis,  
 Ne Danaum penitus caderet cum nomine virtus,  
 In Latium advectos juvenes, juvenumque magistros,  
 Argolicas artes quibus esset cura tueri,  
 Securos Musas jussere, atque otia amare.  
 Illi etiam captas late misere per urbes,

200





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The blameless tutor from a thousand choose,  
 One from his soul devoted to the Muse ;  
 Who, pleased the tender pupil to improve,  
 Regards and loves him with a father's love.  
 Youth, of itself to numerous ills betrayed,  
 Requires a prop, and wants a foreign aid ;  
 Unless a master's rules his mind incline  
 To love and cultivate the sacred Nine,  
 His thoughts a thousand objects will employ,  
 And from Parnassus lead the wandering boy.  
 So trusts the swain the saplings to the earth,  
 So hopes in time to see the sprouting birth ;  
 Against the winds defensive props he forms,  
 To shield the future forest from the storms,  
 That each emboldened plant at length may rise  
 In verdant pride, and shoot into the skies.

But let the guide, if e'er he would improve  
 His charge, avoid his hate and win his love,  
 Lest in his rage wrong measures he may take,

Sicubi Musarum studiis insignis, et arte,  
 Qui curas dulces, carique parentis amorem  
 Induat, atque velit blandum perferre laborem. 220  
 Illa suis niti nondum ausit viribus ætas,  
 Externæ sed opis, alienæque indiga curæ est.  
 Nam puerum, ni præsentis vis fida regentis  
 Adsit, et hunc dulcem studiorum infundat amorem,  
 Illecebræ sacris avertant mille Camœnis, 225  
 Deceptum falsa melioris imagine curæ.  
 Sic quoque ubi cultis plantas defodit in hortis  
 Agricola, et teneras telluri credidit almæ,  
 Fraxineos contos subito erigit, et sua cuique  
 Robora, ut innixæ ventos cœlique ruinam 230  
 Contemnant, surgantque leves impune per auras.

Ille autem, pueri cui credita cura colendi  
 Artibus egregiis, in primis optet amari,  
 Atque odium cari super omnia vitet alumni:



And loathe the Muses for the teacher's sake.  
 His soul then slackened from her native force,  
 Flags at the barrier and forgets the course.  
 Nor by your anger be the youth o'erawed,  
 But scorn the ungenerous province of the rod ;  
 The offended Muses never can sustain  
 To hear the shriekings of the tender train,  
 But, stung with grief and anguish, hang behind.  
 Damped is the sprightly vigor of the mind ;  
 The boy no daring images inspire,  
 No bright ideas set his thoughts on fire ;  
 He drags on heavily the ungrateful load,  
 Grown obstinately dull, and seasoned to the rod.

I know a pedant, who to penance brought  
 His trembling pupils for the lightest fault,  
 His soul transported with a storm of ire,  
 And all the rage that malice could inspire ;  
 By turns the torturing scourges we might hear,  
 By turns the shrieks of wretches stunned the ear.  
 Still to my mind the dire ideas rise,

Ne forte et sacrās simul oderit ille Camœnas 235

Imprudens, et adhuc tantæ dulcedinis expers;  
 Deficientque animi studiorum in limine primo.

Ponite crudeles iras et flagra, magistri,  
 Fœda ministeria, atque minis absistite acerbis.

Ne mihi ne, quæso, puerum quis verbera cogat 240

Dura pati; neque enim lachrymas, aut dulcis alumni  
 Ferre queunt Musæ gemitus, ægræque recedunt;

Illiusque cadunt animi, nec jam amplius audet

Sponte sua quicquam egregium, ingratumque laborem

Invitus trahit ægre, animoque ad verbera durat. 245

Vidi ego, qui semper levia ob commissa vocabat

Ad pœnam pueros, furiis insurgere, et ira

Terribilem, invisos veluti sæviret in hostes;

Hinc semper gemitus, hinc verbera dira sonabant.

Atque equidem memini, cum formidatus iniquis 250



When rage unusual sparkled in his eyes ;  
 When with the dreadful scourge insulting loud,  
 The tyrant terrified the blooming crowd.  
 A boy, the fairest of the frightened train,  
 Who yet scarce gave the promise of a man,  
 Ah dismal object ! idly passed the day  
 In all the thoughtless innocence of play ;  
 When lo ! the imperious wretch, inflamed with rage,  
 Fierce, and regardless of his tender age,  
 With fury storms ; the fault his clamors urge ;  
 His hand high-waving brandishes the scourge ;  
 Tears, vows, and prayers, the tyrant's ears assail,  
 In vain ; nor tears, nor vows, nor prayers, prevail.  
 The trembling innocent from deep despair  
 Sickened, and breathed his little soul in air.  
 For him beneath, his poplar mourns the Po,  
 For him the tears of hoary Serius flow,  
 For him their tears the watery sisters shed,  
 Who loved him living, and deplored him dead !  
 The furious pedant, to restrain his rage,  
 Should mark the example of a former age,

Urgeret pœnis, solitoque immanior ille  
 Terreret turbam invalidam, (miserabile visu!)  
 Forte puer prima signans nondum ora juventa,  
 Insignis facie ante alios, exegerat omnem  
 Cum sociis ludens lucem, oblitusque timoris  
 Posthabuit ludo jussos ediscere versus. 255  
 Ecce ! furens animis multa increpat ille, minisque  
 Insurgens sævo pavitatem territat ore  
 Horrendum, et loris dextram crudelibus armat.  
 Quo subito terrore puer miserabilis acri 260  
 Corripitur morbo ; parvo is post tempore vitam  
 Crescentem blanda cœli sub luce reliquit.  
 Illum populifer Padus, illum Serius imis  
 Seriadesque diu Nymphæ flevere sub undis.  
 Tempore jam ex illo, vatem cum dura jubentem 265





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But gifts proposed will urge them best to rise ;  
 Fired at the glorious prospect of a prize,  
 With noble jealousy the blooming bard  
 Reads, labors, glows, and strains for the reward,  
 Fears lest his happy rival win the race,  
 And raise a triumph on his own disgrace.

But when once seasoned to the rage divine,  
 He loves and courts the raptures of the Nine,  
 The sense of glory, and the love of fame,  
 Serve but as second motives to the flame ;  
 The thrilling pleasure all the bard subdues,  
 Locked in the strict embraces of the Muse.  
 See ! when harsh parents force the youth to quit,  
 For meaner arts, the dear delights of wit,  
 If e'er the wonted warmth his thoughts inspire,  
 And with past pleasures set his mind on fire,  
 How from his soul he longs, but longs in vain,  
 To haunt the groves and purling streams again ;  
 No stern commands of parents can control,  
 No force can check the sallies of his soul.

*Pollicitus, celeremve canem, pictamve pharetram.*

*Continuo videas studio gestire legendi*

*Ardentem, ac sera sub nocte urgere laborem,*

*Dum timet alterius capiti spectare coronam.*

285

*Ast ubi sponte sua studia hæc assuerit amare,*

*Jam non laudis amor, non illum gloria tantum*

*Sollicitat, sed mira operum dulcedine captus*

*Musarum nequit avelli complexibus arctis.*

*Nonne vides, duri natos ubi sæpe parentes*

290

*Dulcibus amorunt studiis, et discere avaras*

*Jusserunt artes, mentem siquando libido*

*Nota subit, solitaque animum dulcedine movit,*

*Ut læti rursum irriguos accedere fontes*

*Ardescant studiis, et nota revisere Tempe?*

295

*Exultant animis cupidi, pugnantque parentum*

*Imperiis; nequit ardentes vis ulla morari.*



So burns the courser seasoned to the rein,  
 That spies his females on a distant plain,  
 And longs to act his pleasures o'er again ;  
 Fired with remembrance of his joys, he bounds,  
 He foams, and strives to reach the well-known grounds ;  
 The goring spurs his furious flames improve,  
 And rouse within him all the rage of love ;  
 Plied with the scourge he still neglects his haste,  
 And moves reluctant when he moves at last,  
 Reverts his eye, regrets the distant mare,  
 And neighs impatient for the dappled fair.  
 How oft the youth would long to change his fate,  
 Who, high advanced to all the pomp of state,  
 With grief his gaudy load of grandeur views,  
 Lost at too high a distance from the Muse !  
 How oft he sighs by warbling streams to rove,  
 And quit the palace for the shady grove ;  
 How oft in Tibur's cold retreats to lie,  
 And gladly stoop to cheerful poverty,  
 Beneath the rigor of the wintry sky !

But yet how many curse their fruitless toil,

*Sic assuetus equus jam duris ora lupatis,  
 Forte procul notis si armenta aspexit in arvis,  
 Huc veterum ferri cupit haud oblitus amorum,* 300  
*Atque hic atque illic hæret, frænisque repugnat,  
 Quove magis stimulis instas, hoc acrius ille  
 Perfurit; it tandem multo vix verbere victus  
 Cœptum iter: ipsa tamen respectans crebra moratur  
 Pascua, et hinnitu late loca complet acuto.* 305  
*Ah! quoties aliquis sacros reminiscitur æger  
 Fontes incassum, et lucos suspirat amatos  
 Dulcibus ereptus Muis puer, atria ut alta  
 Incoleret regum rebus præfectus agendis!*  
*Tybure quam mallet, gelido aut sub Tusculo iniquam* 310  
*Pauperiemque pati, et ventos preferre nivales!*

Contra autem vanum multi effudere laborem,



Who turn and cultivate a barren soil !  
 This, ere too late, the master may divine  
 By a sure omen and a certain sign ;  
 The hopeful youth, determined by his choice,  
 Works without precept, and prevents advice,  
 Consults his teacher, plies his task with joy,  
 And a quick sense of glory fires the boy.  
 He challenges the crowd ; the conquest o'er,  
 He struts away the victor of an hour.  
 Then, vanquished in his turn, o'erwhelmed with care,  
 He weeps, he pines, he sickens with despair ;  
 Nor looks his little rivals in the face,  
 But flies for shelter to some lonely place,  
 To mourn his shame, and cover his disgrace.  
 His master's frowns impatient to sustain,  
 Straight he returns, and wins the day again.  
 This is the boy his better fates design  
 To rise the future darling of the Nine ;  
 For him the Muses weave the sacred crown,  
 And bright Apollo claims him for his own.  
 Not the least hope the unactive youth can raise,

Quos frustra excoluisse solum male pinguis arenæ  
 Pœnituit, ventisque viam tentasse negatis.

Quod ne cui sero contingat forte docenti,

315

Continuo poterit certis præsciscere signis.

Namque puer nullis rectorum hortatibus ipse

Sponte sua exercetur, amatque, rogatque docentes

Primus, inardescitque ingenti laudis amore.

Provocat hinc socios pulchra ad certamina primus,

320

Exultatque animo victor; superatus amaris

Mordetur curis, latebrasque, et sola requirit

Infelix loca; ad æquales pudet ire, gravesque

Vultus ferre nequit cari rectoris inultus.

Nec lachrymis penitus caruerunt ora decoris.

325

Hic mihi se Divis, fatisque volentibus affert,

Huic Musæ indulgent omnes, hunc poscit Apollo.





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Hunt the fleet mountain-goat or forest-hind.  
 Meantime the youth, impatient that the day  
 Should pass in pleasures unimproved away,  
 Steals from the shouting crowd, and quits the plains,  
 To sing the sylvan gods in rural strains,  
 Or calls the Muses to Albunea's shades,  
 Courts and enjoys the visionary maids.  
 So labored fields, with crops alternate blest,  
 By turns lie fallow and indulge their rest ;  
 The swain contented bids the hungry soil  
 Enjoy a sweet vicissitude from toil,  
 Till earth renews her genial powers to bear,  
 And pays his prudence with a bounteous year.

On a strict view your solid judgment frame,  
 Nor think that genius is in all the same.  
 How oft the youth, who wants the sacred fire,  
 Fondly mistakes for genius his desire,  
 Courts the coy Muses, though rejected still,  
 Nor Nature seconds his misguided will !  
 He strives, he toils with unavailing care,

*Veloces capreas, aut tendat retia cervis.*

*Non ille interea penitus patietur inanem*

345

*Ire diem; comitum cœtu se subtrahet ultro*

*Interdum, et sola secum meditabitur umbra*

*Agrestem Faunis laudem, Musasque sub alta*

*Consulet Albunea vitreas Anienis ad undas.*

*Nempe etiam alternis requiescere foetibus arva*

350

*Permittunt sponte agricolæ, et cessare novales:*

*Interea vires tellus inarata resunit,*

*Quique subit largis respondet frugibus annus.*

*Verum non eadem tamen omnibus esse memento*

*Ingenia. Inventus sæpe est, cui carmina curæ,*

355

*Cui placeant Musæ, cui non sit læva voluntas;*

*Nititur ille tamen frustra, et contendit inani*

*Delusus studio, vetitisque accingitur ausis:*



Nor Heaven relents, nor Phœbus hears his prayer.  
 He with success, perhaps, may plead a cause,  
 Shine, at the bar, and flourish by the laws ;  
 Perhaps discover Nature's secret springs,  
 And bring to light the originals of things.  
 But sometimes precept will such force impart,  
 That Nature bends beneath the power of art.

Besides, 'tis no light province to remove  
 From the rash boy the fiery pangs of love,  
 Till, ripe in years, and more confirmed in age,  
 He learns to bear the flames of Cupid's rage.  
 Oft hidden fires on all his vitals prey,  
 Devour the youth, and melt his soul away  
 By slow degrees, blot out his golden dreams,  
 The tuneful poets and Castalian streams.  
 Struck with a secret wound, he weeps and sighs ;  
 In every thought the darling phantoms rise ;  
 The fancied charmer swims before his sight,  
 His theme all day, his vision all the night ;  
 The wandering object takes up all his care,

*Numina læva obstant, precibusque vocatus Apollo.  
 Orabit melius causas fors ille, animoque  
 Naturam, et cæcos rerum scrutabitur ortus.  
 Sæpe tamen cultusque frequens, et cura docentum  
 Imperat ingeniis, naturaque flectitur arte.*

360

*Nec labor ille quidem rectoribus ultimus acres  
 Incauto juveni stimulos avertere amoris,  
 Donec crescentem doceat maturior ætas  
 Ferre jugum, atque faces, sævique Cupidinis iras.  
 Sæpe etenim tectos immitis in ossibus ignes  
 Versat amor, mollesque est intus cura medullas,  
 Nec miserum patitur vatum meminisse, nec undæ  
 Castaliæ: tantum suspirat vulnere cæco.*

365

*Ante oculos simulachra volant noctesque diesque  
 Nuntia virginei vultus, quem perditus ardet.  
 Nec potis est alio fixam traducere mentem*

370



Nor can he quit the imaginary fair.  
 Meantime his sire, unconscious of his pain,  
 Applies the tempered medicines in vain ;  
 The plague, so deeply rooted in his heart,  
 Mocks every slight attempt of Pæan's art ;  
 The flames of Cupid all his breast inspire,  
 And in the lover's quench the poet's fire.

When in his riper years, without control,  
 The Nine have took possession of his soul ;  
 When, sacred to their god, the crown he wears,  
 To other authors let him bend his cares,  
 Consult their styles, examine every part,  
 And a new tincture take from every art.  
 First study Tully's language and his sense,  
 And range that boundless field of eloquence ;  
 Tully, Rome's other glory, still affords  
 The best expressions and the richest words ;  
 As high o'er all in eloquence he stood,  
 As Rome o'er all the nations she subdued.  
 Let him read men and manners, and explore

Saucius: ignari frustra miscere parentes 375  
 Pæonios succos, medicasque Machaonis artes  
 Consulere: interea penitus calor ille relinquit  
 Pierius: torquent alii cor molle calores.

Cum vero jam pubescens mente altius hausit  
 Musarum dulcem sanctique Heliconis amorem, 380  
 Et sese Phœbo addixit, propriumque sacravit,  
 Haud tantum exploret vatum monumenta, sed idem  
 Consulat, atque alios autores discat, ut acri  
 Nulla sit ingenio quam non libaverit artem.

Proderit in primis linguam Ciceronis ad unguem 385  
 Fingere, et eloquii per campos ire patentes.  
 Ille, decus Latii, magnæ lux altera Romæ,  
 Ore effundit opes fandi certissimus autor:  
 Tantum omnes superans præclaræ munere linguæ,  
 Quantum iit ante alias Romana potentia gentes. 390





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That would but call them from their former road,  
 To spend an age in banishment abroad ;  
 Too late returning from the dangerous main,  
 To see their countries and their friends again.

Still be the sacred poets your delight,  
 Read them by day, consult them in the night ;  
 From those clear fountains all your raptures bring,  
 And draw forever from the Muses' spring.  
 But let your subject in your bosom roll,  
 Claim every thought, and draw in all the soul ;  
 That constant object to your mind display,  
 Your toil all night, your labor all the day.

I need not all the rules of verse disclose,  
 Nor how their various measures to dispose ;  
 The tutor here with ease his charge may guide  
 To join the parts and numbers, or divide.  
 Now let him words to stated laws submit,  
 Or yoke to measures, or reduce to feet ;  
 Now let him softly to himself rehearse  
 His first attempts and rudiments of verse ;

*Et circumfusus longum terat otia terris :* 405  
*Sat fuerit portus, extremaque littora tantum*  
*Explorasse : secus toto vagus exulet ævo,*  
*Et serus natos dulces, patriamque reviset.*

*Nulla dies tamen interea tibi, nulla abeat nox,*  
*Quin aliquid vatum sacrorum e fontibus almis* 410  
*Hauseris, ac dulcem labris admoveris amnem.*  
*Sed tibi præsertim princeps tunc hæreat illa*  
*Cura animo, noctem atque diem te te excitet una,*  
*Omnem quam propter libuit perferre laborem.*

*Non hic te quibus aut pedibus spatiisve monebo* 415  
*Tendantur ducti versus : labor iste regentum*  
*Postulat haud multum curæ, qui sæpe morando*  
*Ipsa minutatim metiri carmina sectis*  
*In partes membris, et tempora certa docebunt.*  
*Continuo, edico, jam tunc animosus alumnus.* 420



Fix on those rich expressions his regard  
 To use made sacred by some ancient bard.  
 Tossed by a different gust of hopes and fears,  
 He begs of Heaven an hundred eyes and ears,  
 Now here, now there, coy Nature he pursues,  
 And takes one image in a thousand views.  
 He waits the happy moment that affords  
 The noblest thoughts and most expressive words ;  
 He brooks no dull delay, admits no rest ;  
 A tide of passion struggles in his breast ;  
 Round his dark soul no clear ideas play,  
 The most familiar objects glide away.  
 All fixed in thought, astonished he appears,  
 His soul examines and consults his ears  
 And racks his faithless memory, to find  
 Some traces faintly sketched upon his mind.  
 There he unlocks the glorious magazine,  
 And opens every faculty within,  
 Brings out with pride their intellectual spoils,  
 And with the noble treasure crowns his toils ;

In numerum incipiat sub leges cogere verba :

Jam tunc summissa meditetur carmina voce,  
 Sermonum memor, antiquis quos vatibus hausit.

Tum votis sibi centum aures, tum lumina centum  
 Exoptat dubius rerum, metuensque pericli.

425

Dividit huc illuc animum, cunctamque pererrat  
 Naturam rerum, versatque per omnia mentem ;  
 Quis rebus dexter modus, aut quæ mollia fandi  
 Tempora : vertuntur species in pectore mille.

Nec mora, nec requies ; dubio sententia surgit

430

Multa animo, variatque ; omnes convertitur anceps  
 In facies, nescitque etiam notissima, et hæret

Attonitus : nunc multa animum, nunc consulit aures,

Secum mente agitans siqua olim audita recursent

Sponte sua ; et memorem mentem excitat, atque repostas

435

Thesauris depromit opes, lætusque laboris



And oft mere chance shall images display,  
 That strike his mind engaged a different way.  
 Still he persists, regrets no toil nor pain,  
 And still the task he tried before in vain  
 Plies with unwearied diligence again.  
 For oft unmanageable thoughts appear,  
 That mock his labor and delude his care ;  
 The impatient bard, with all his nerves applied,  
 Tries all the avenues on every side,  
 Resolved and bent the precipice to gain,  
 Though yet he labors at the rock in vain.  
 By his own strength and Heaven with conquest graced,  
 He wins the important victory at last ;  
 Stretched by his hands the vanquished monster lies,  
 And the proud triumph lifts him to the skies.  
 But when even chance and all his efforts fail,  
 Nor toils, nor vigilance, nor cares prevail,  
 His past attempts in vain the boy renews,  
 And waits the softer seasons of the Muse ;  
 He quits his work, throws by his fond desires,

Ipse sui parto fruitur: multa ecce! repente  
 Fors inopina aperit cunctanti, aliudque putanti.  
 Jamque hæc, jamque illa attentat, texitque retexitque,  
 Et variis indefessus conatibus instat.

440

Sæpe etenim occurrunt haud dictu mollia, ubi hæret  
 Cura diu, multoque exercita corda labore.

Nunc hos, nunc illos aditus vestigat, et omnia  
 Attentans scopulo longum luctatur iniquo,  
 Dum se qua ostendat facilis via: denique multa  
 Aut vi, aut cœli et fortunæ munere victor  
 Exultat, domitoque animis it ad æthera monstro.

445

Ast ubi nulla viam nec vis, nec dextra aperit fors,  
 Nec prodest vires fessas renovare, nec aptum  
 Nunc hic, nunc illic captare ad carmina tempus,  
 Invitus cura absistit, tristisque relinquit  
 Cœpta infecta, pedem referens: ceu forte viator

450





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But, till the soul enlarged in strength appears,  
 Indulge the boy, and spare his tender years ;  
 Till, to ripe judgment and experience brought,  
 Himself discerns and blushes at a fault.

For if the critic's eyes too strictly pierce,  
 To point each blemish out in every verse,  
 Void of all hope the stripling may depart,  
 And turn his studies to another art.

But if, resolved his darling faults to see,  
 A youth of genius should apply to me,  
 And court my elder judgment to peruse  
 The imperfect labors of his infant Muse,  
 I should not scruple, with a candid eye,  
 To read and praise his poem to the sky,  
 With seeming rapture on each line to pause,  
 And dwell on each expression with applause.  
 But when my praises had inflamed his mind,  
 If some lame verse limped slowly up behind,  
 One, that himself, unconscious, had not found,  
 By numbers charmed and led away by sound ;

*Est monitis opus: ingeniis nam parcere multa  
 Fas teneris, donec paulatim attollere sese  
 Incipiant animi, videantque in carmine labem  
 Per se ipsi, et tacito rubeant ultro ora pudore. 470  
 Nam maculas si forte omnes per carmina monstret  
 Quæsitior serus, adjiciant spem protinus omnem,  
 Atque alias animo potius vertantur ad artes.  
 Nostrum igitur si forte adeat puer indole limen  
 Egregia, ut consulta petat, parere paratus, 475  
 Quique velit sese arbitrio supponere nostro,  
 Excipiam placidus: nec me juvenile pigebit  
 Ad cœlum vultu simulato extollere carmen  
 Laudibus, et stimulos acres sub pectore figam,  
 Post tamen, ut multa spe mentem arrexit ardens, 480  
 Si quis forte inter, veluti de vulnere claudus,  
 Tardus eat versus, quem non videt inscius ipse*



I should not fear to minister a prop,  
 And give him stronger feet to keep it up,  
 Teach it to run along more firm and sure ;  
 Nor would I show the wound before the cure.  
 For what remains : the poet I enjoin  
 To form no glorious scheme, no great design,  
 Till, free from business, he retires alone,  
 And flies the giddy tumult of the town,  
 Seeks rural pleasures and enjoys the glades,  
 And courts the thoughtful silence of the shades  
 Where the fair Dryads haunt their native woods,  
 With all the orders of the sylvan gods.  
 Here in their soft retreats the poets lie,  
 Serene, and blest with cheerful poverty ;  
 No guilty schemes of wealth their souls molest,  
 No cares, no prospects, discompose their rest,  
 No scenes of grandeur glitter in their view ;  
 Here they the joys of innocence pursue,  
 And taste the pleasures of the happy few.

From a rock's entrails the barbarian sprung,

*Delususque sonis teneras fallacibus aures,  
 Haud medicas affere manus, ægroque mederi  
 Addubitem, et semper meliora ostendere pergam.*

485

*Quod superest, etiam moneo, creberque monebo,  
 Ne quisquam nisi curarum, liberque laborum  
 Inchoet egregium quicquam; verum procul urbis  
 Attonitæ fugiat strepitus, et amœna silentis  
 Accedat loca ruris, ubi Dryadesque puellæ,  
 Panesque, Faunique, et montivagi Sylvani.*

490

*Hic læti haud magnis opibus, non divite cultu  
 Vitam agitant vates: procul est sceleratus habendi  
 Hinc amor, insanæ spes longe, atque impia vota,  
 Et nunquam diræ subeunt ea limina curæ:  
 Dulcis et alma quies, ac paucis nota voluptas.*

495

At nimium trux ille, ferisque e cautibus ortus,



Who dares to violate the sacred throng  
 By deeds or words. The wretch, by fury driven,  
 Assaults the darling colony of Heaven !  
 Some have looked down, we know, with scornful eyes  
 On the bright Muse who taught them how to rise,  
 And paid, when raised to grandeur, no regard  
 From that high station to the sacred bard.  
 Uninjured, mortals, let the poets lie,  
 Or dread the impending vengeance of the sky ;  
 The gods still listened to their constant prayer,  
 And made the poets their peculiar care.  
 They, with contempt, on fortune's gift look down,  
 And laugh at kings who wear an envied crown.  
 Raised and transported by their soaring mind,  
 From their proud eminence they view mankind  
 Lost in a cloud ; they see them toil below,  
 All busy to promote their common woe.  
 Of guilt unconscious, with a steady soul,  
 They see the lightnings flash, and hear the thunders roll ;  
 When, girt with terrors, Heaven's almighty sire  
 Lanches his triple bolts and forked fire,  
 When o'er high towers the red destroyer plays,

Qui sanctos, genus innocuum, populumque Deorum,  
 Aut armis audet vates, aut lædere dictis.

Vidi ego, qui ad summos Musarum munere honores  
 Evecti, mox ingratos contemnere Musas,  
 Nec vates saltem alloquio dignarier ipsos.

500

Parcite, mortales, sacros vexare poetas :

Ultiores sperate Deos, sub numine quorum  
 Semper vita fuit vatum defensa piorum.

505

Illi omnes sibi fortunas posuere volentes

Sub pedibus, regumque et opes, et sceptris superba  
 Ingenti vincunt animo, ac mortalia rident.

Non illis usquam scelerum mens conscia cæcos

Horrescit cœli crepitus, ignemve coruscum,

510





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A prize — the noblest gift he could bestow,  
 Next to the fire, on human race below. ●  
 At length the Immortals reconciled resigned  
 The fair celestial sisters to mankind,  
 Though, bound to Caucasus with solid chains,  
 The aspiring robber groaned in endless pains ;  
 By which deterred, for ages lay supine  
 The race of mortals, nor invoked the Nine,  
 Till Heaven in verse showed man his future state,  
 And opened every distant scene of fate.  
 First, the great father of the gods above  
 Sung in Dodona and the Libyan grove ;  
 Next, to the inquiring nations Themis gave  
 Her sacred answers from the Phocian cave ;  
 Then Phœbus warned them from the Delphic dome  
 Of future time and ages yet to come ;  
 And reverend Faunus uttered truths divine  
 To the first founders of the Latian line.  
 Next the great race of hallowed prophets came,  
 With them the Sibyls of immortal fame,

Post ignem nil posse, animumque ad callida movit  
 Furta vigil. Dii mox cœlestia dona volentes  
 Concessere, doli licet audentissimus ipse  
 Autor Caucaseo sævas det vertice pœnas.

Quo terrore, nisi multo post tempore, inertes

530

Non ausi dias homines accersere Musas :

Sed ventura prius pandebant carmine soli

Cœlicolæ, dubiisque dabant oracula rebus.

Ipsè pater Divum Dodonæ carmina primus

Et Libycis cecinit lucis, mox Phocidis antro

535

Insonuit Themis alma, suos quoque pulcher Apollo

Responsis monuit Delphos, nec defuit olim

Antiquis Faunus caneret qui fata Latinis.

Tum Solymum prisca vates, tum sacra Sibyllæ

Nomina divinas cœli in penetralia mentes

540



Inspired with all the god ; who, rapt on high,  
 With more than mortal rage unbounded fly,  
 And range the dark recesses of the sky.  
 Next, at their feasts, the people sung their lays  
 (The same their prophets sung in former days),  
 Their theme a hero and his deathless praise.

What has to man of nobler worth been given  
 Than this the best and greatest boon of Heaven?  
 Whatever power the glorious gift bestowed,  
 We trace the certain footsteps of a god.  
 By thee inspired, the daring poet flies,  
 His soul mounts up, and towers above the skies ;  
 Thou art the source of pleasure, and we see  
 No joy, no transport, when debarred of thee.  
 Thy tuneful deity the feathered throng  
 Confess in all the measures of their song ;  
 Thy great commands the savages obey,  
 And every silent native of the sea ;  
 Led by thy voice the starting rocks advance,  
 And listening forests mingle in the dance.  
 On thy sweet notes the damned rejoice to dwell,  
 Thy strains suspended all the din of Hell ;

*Arripuere, Deumque animis hausere furentes.  
 Nec mora, quæ primum Fauni vatesque canebant  
 Carmina, mortales passim didicere per urbes,  
 Post epulas laudes heroum, et facta canentes.*

*Quid mirandum homini cœlo divinitus æque  
 Concessum ! mortale genus tua numina sentit,  
 Quisquis es ille, Deus certe ! qui pectora vatum  
 Incolis, afflatasque rapis super æthera mentes.  
 Te sine nil nobis lætum, nec amabile quicquam.*

*Ipsæ etiam volucres vario tua numina cantu  
 Testantur : pecudesque feræ, mutæque natantes  
 Ad tua jussa citæ properant ; tua munera saxa  
 Dura movent, sylvasque trahunt hinc inde sequentes.*

545

550



Lulled by the sound, the furies raged no more,  
 And Hell's infernal porter ceased to roar.  
 Thy powers exalt us to the realms above,  
 To feast with gods, and sit the guests of Jove !  
 Thy presence softens anguish, woe, and strife,  
 And reconciles us to the load of life.  
 Hail, thou bright comfort of these low abodes,  
 Thou joy of men and darling of the gods !  
 As priest and poet, in these humble lays  
 I boldly labor to resound thy praise ;  
 To hang thy shrines this gift I bring along,  
 And to thy altars guide the tender throng.

Te quoque senserunt olim impia Tartara, et umbræ

Pallentes stupuere: minas tibi janitor Orci

555

Oblitus, sævas posuere et Erinnyes iras.

Tu Jovis ambrosiis das nos accumbere mensis:

Tu nos Diis æquas superis: tu blanda laborum

Sufficis et duræ præsens solatia vitæ.

Salve hominum dulcis requies, Divumque voluptas!

560

Ipse tuæ egregios audax nunc laudis honores

Ingredior vates idem, Superumque sacerdos,

Sacraque dona fero teneris comitatus alumni.





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Heaven's kinder bounty and peculiar care,  
 A glorious train of images may find,  
 Preventing hope and crowding on the mind.  
 The other task, to settle every part,  
 Depends on judgment and the powers of art ;  
 From whence in chief the poet hopes to raise  
 His future glory and immortal praise.

This as a rule the noblest bards esteem,  
 To touch at first in general on the theme,  
 To hint at all the subject in a line,  
 And draw in miniature the whole design.  
 Nor in themselves confide, but next implore  
 The timely aid of some celestial power ;  
 To guide your labors and point out your road,  
 Choose, as you please, your tutelary god ;  
 But still invoke some guardian deity,  
 Some power, to look auspicious from the sky ;  
 To nothing great should mortals bend their care,  
 Till Jove be solemnly addressed in prayer.  
 'Tis not enough to call for aid divine,  
 And court but once the favor of the Nine ;  
 When objects rise that mock your toil and pain,

*Sæpe suis subito invenient accommoda votis.*

*Altera nempe arti tantum est obnoxia cura,*

15

*Unde solent laudem in primis optare poetæ.*

*Vestibulum ante ipsum, primoque in limine semper*

*Prudentes leviter rerum fastigia summa*

*Libant, et parcis attingunt omnia dictis,*

*Quæ canere statuere: simul cœlestia Divum*

20

*Auxilia implorant, propriis nil viribus ausi.*

*Quos ores autem non magni denique refert,*

*Dum memor auspiciis cujusquam cuncta Deorum*

*Aggrediere: Jovis neque enim nisi rite vocato*

*Numine fas quicquam ordiri mortalibus altum.*

25

*Nec sat opem implorare semel, Musasque ciere,*



Above the labor and the reach of man,  
 Then you may supplicate the blest abodes,  
 And ask the friendly succor of the gods.  
 Shock not your reader, nor begin too fierce,  
 Nor swell and bluster in a pomp of verse ;  
 At first all needless ornament remove,  
 To shun his prejudice and win his love ;  
 At first you find most favor and success  
 In plain expression and a modest dress ;  
 For if too arrogant you vaunt your might,  
 You fall with greater scandal in the fight,  
 When on the nicest point your fortune stands,  
 And all your courage, all your strength demands.  
 With gradual flights surprise us as we read,  
 And let more glorious images succeed,  
 To wake our souls, to kindle our desire  
 Still to read on, and fan the rising fire.  
 But ne'er the subject of your work proclaim  
 In its own colors and its genuine name ;  
 Let it by distant tokens be conveyed,

*Sed quoties, veluti scopuli, durissima dictu  
 Objicient sese tibi, non superanda labore  
 Mortali, Divos toties orare licebit.*

*Incipiens odium fugito, facilesque legentum  
 Nil tumidus demulce animos, nec grandia jam tum  
 Convenit aut nimium cultum ostentantia fari;*

*Omnia sed nudis prope erit fas promere verbis:  
 Ne, si magna sones, cum nondum ad praelia ventum,  
 Deficias medio irrisus certamine, cum res  
 Postulat ingentes animos, viresque valentes.*

*Principiis potius semper majora sequantur:  
 Protinus illectas succende cupidine mentes,  
 Et studium lectorum animis innecte legendi.*

*Jam vero cum rem propones, nomine nunquam  
 Prodere conveniet manifesto: semper opertis*

30

35

40



And wrapped in other words, and covered in their shade.  
 At last the subject from the friendly shroud  
 Bursts out, and shines the brighter from the cloud ;  
 Then the dissolving darkness breaks away,  
 And every object glares in open day.  
 Thus great Ulysses' toils were I to choose  
 For the main theme that should employ my Muse,  
 By his long labors of immortal fame  
 Should shine my hero, but conceal his name ;  
 As one who, lost at sea, had nations seen,  
 And marked their towns, their manners, and their men,  
 Since Troy was leveled to the dust by Greece —  
 Till a few lines epitomized the piece.

But study now what order to maintain,  
 To link the work in one continued chain,  
 That, when the Muse displays her artful scheme  
 And at the proper time unfolds the theme,  
 Each part may find its own determined place,  
 Laid out with method and disposed with grace ;  
 That to the destined scope the piece may tend,

Indiciis, longe et verborum ambage petita  
 Significant, umbraque obducunt: inde tamen, ceu  
 Sublustri e nebula, rerum tralucet imago  
 Clarius, et certis datur omnia cernere signis. 45

Hinc si dura mihi passus dicendus Ulysses,  
 Non illum vero memorabo nomine, sed qui  
 Et mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes  
 Naufragus, eversæ post sæva incendia Trojæ.  
 Addam alia, angustis complectens omnia dictis. 50

Ergo age quæ vates servandi cura fatiget  
 Ordinis intentos operi, cum carmine aperto  
 Rem tempus narrare, loco ut disposta decenti  
 Omnia sint opere in toto, nec meta laborum  
 Usquam dissideat ingressibus ultima primis. 55  
 Principio invigilant non expectata legenti





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The promised region he with joy had spied,  
 Vast tracks of oceans from his reach divide ;  
 Still must he backward steer his lengthened way,  
 And plough a wide interminable sea.

No skilful poet would his Muse employ,  
 From Paris' vote to trace the fall of Troy,  
 Nor every deed of Hector to relate,  
 While his strong arm suspended Ilion's fate —  
 Work for some annalist, some heavy fool,  
 Correctly dry and regularly dull !  
 Best near the end those dreadful scenes appear ;  
 Wake then, and rouse the furies of the war,  
 But for his ravished fair at first engage  
 Peleides' soul in unrelenting rage.

Be this the cause that every Phrygian flood  
 Swells with red waves, and rolls a tide of blood,  
 That Xanthus' urns a purple deluge pour,  
 And the deep trenches float with human gore.  
 Nor former deeds in silence must we lose,  
 The league at Aulis, and the mutual vows,  
 The Spartan raging for his ravished spouse,

*Longa procul longo via dividit in via tractu :  
 Flectendi retro cursus, via plurima eunti  
 Restat adhuc, multumque illi maris æquor arandum.  
 Haud sapiens quisquam, annales ceu congerat, Ilii  
 Inchoet excidium veteri pastoris ab usque  
 Judicio, memorans ex ordine singula, quicquid  
 Ad Trojam Argolicis cessatum est Hectore duro.  
 Conveniet potius prope finem prælia tanta  
 Ordiri, atque graves iras de virgine rapta  
 Aversi Æacidæ præmittere : tum fera bella  
 Consurgunt, tum pleni amnes Danaumque, Phrygumque,  
 Xanthusque, Simoisque, et inundant sanguine fossæ.  
 Haud tamen interea quæ præcessere silendum,  
 Aulide jurantes Danaos, vectasque per æquor*

75

80



The thousand ships, the woes which Ilium bore  
 From Greece, for nine revolving years before.  
 This rule with judgment should the bard maintain,  
 Who brings Laërtes' wandering son again  
 From burning Ilium to his native reign.  
 Let him not launch from Ida's strand his ships,  
 With his attendant friends, into the deeps,  
 Nor stay to vanquish the Ciconian host ;  
 But let him first appear (his comrades lost)  
 With fair Calypso on the Ogygian coast.  
 From thence, a world of toils and dangers past,  
 Waft him to rich Phæacia's realms at last,  
 There at the feast his wanderings to relate,  
 His friends' dire change, his own relentless fate.  
 But if the bard of former actions sings,  
 He wisely draws from those remoter springs  
 The present order and the course of things.

As yet unfold the event on no pretense,  
 'Tis your chief task to keep us in suspense ;  
 Nor tell what presents Atreus' son prepares,

Mille rates, raptusque Helenes, et conjugis iras, 85  
 Quæque novem Troja est annos perpessa priores.

Atque etiam in patriam siquis deducere adortus  
 Errantem Laertiaden post Pergama capta,  
 Non illum Idæo solventem e littore classem  
 Cum sociis primum memoret, Ciconesque subactos: 90

Sed jam tum Ogygiam delatum sistat ad alta  
 Virginis, amissis sociis, Atlantidos antra.

Exin post varios Phæacum in regna labores  
 Inferat: hic positus demum ipse miserrima mensis,  
 Erroresque suos narret, casusque suorum. 95

Ante tamen si gesta canunt, ab origine causas  
 Expediunt, quis dehinc status, et [aut] quæ tempora rerum.

Primus at ille labor versu tenuisse legentem  
 Suspensum, incertumque diu qui denique rerum  
 Eventus maneant: quo tandem durus Achilles 100



To reconcile Achilles to the wars,  
 Or by what god's auspicious conduct led,  
 From Polyphemus' den Ulysses fled.  
 Pleased with the toil, and on the prospect bent,  
 Our souls leap forward to the wished event ;  
 No call of nature can our search restrain,  
 And sleep, and thirst, and hunger, plead in vain ;  
 Glad we pursue the labor we embraced,  
 And leave reluctant when we leave at last.  
 See how the bard, triumphant in his art,  
 Sports with our passions and commands the heart !  
 Now here, now there, he turns the varying song,  
 And draws at will the captive soul along ;  
 Racked with uncertain hints, in every sense  
 We feel the lengthened anguish of suspense.  
 When Homer once has promised to rehearse  
 Bold Paris' fight in many a sounding verse,  
 He soon perceives his reader's warm desire  
 Wrapped in the event, and all his soul on fire.  
 The poet then contrives some specious stay,

Munere placatus regi rursum induat arma

In Teucros: cujusve Dei Laertius heros

Auxilio, Polypheme, tuis evadat ab antris:

Lectores cupidi expectant, durantque volentes,

Nec perferre negant superest quodcunque laborum, 105

Inde licet fessos somnus gravis avocet artus,

Aut epulis placanda fames, Cererisque libido:

Hoc studium, hanc operam sero dimittimus ægri.

Nonne vides ut sæpe aliquis nimis arte superbit

Improbus, et captis animis illudere gaudet, 110

Et nunc huc, deinde huc mentes deducit hiantes,

Suspenditque diu miseros, torquetque legentes?

Ille quidem si te magnum certamen Atridæ

Et Paridis, multo promissum carmine nuper,

Expectare avidum sævaque cupidine captum 115

Senserit, usque moras trahet ultro, et differet arma,





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But raise his mind with prospects of success,  
 And give the promise of a lasting peace.  
 This knew the hero when he sought the plains,  
 Sprung from his ships and charged the embattled swains,  
 Hewed down the Latian troops with matchless might  
 (The first auspicious omen of the fight),  
 And at one blow gigantic Theron killed,  
 Bold, but in vain, and foremost of the field.  
 Thus too Patroclus with his latest breath  
 Foretold his unregarding victor's death ;  
 His parting soul anticipates the blow  
 That waits brave Hector from a greater foe.  
 Thou too, poor Turnus, just before thy doom,  
 Couldst read thy end and antedate a tomb,  
 When o'er thy head the baleful fury flew,  
 And in dire omens set thy fate to view ;  
 A bird obscene, she fluttered o'er the field,  
 And screamed thy death, and beat thy sounding shield.  
 For lo ! the time, the fatal time is come,  
 Charged with thy death, and heavy with thy doom, —  
 When Turnus, though in vain, shall rue the day,

*Spem tamen incendunt animo, firmantque labantem,  
 Spondentes meliora, et res in fine quietas.*

*Ipse quoque agnovit per se, cum in limine belli  
 Navibus egressus turmas invasit agrestes,*

135

*Atque (omen pugnae) prostravit Marte Latinos,  
 Occiso, ante alios qui sese objecerat, hoste.*

*Fata Menœtiades etiam prædixerat olim*

*Victori moriens majori instare sub hoste,*

*Quamvis haud fuerit res credita. Tu quoque, Turne,*

140

*Prævidisse tuos poteras, heu ! perditæ, casus*

*Longe ante exitium, cum crebro obscœna volucris*

*Per clypeum, perque ora volans stridentibus alis*

*Omne turbavit mentem, admonuitque futuri.*

*Hinc tibi tempus erit, magno cum optaveris emptum*

145



Shall curse the golden belt he bore away,  
 Shall wish too late young Pallas' spoils unsought,  
 And mourn the conquest he so dearly bought.  
 The event should glimmer through its gloomy shroud,  
 Though yet confused, and struggling in the cloud ;  
 So, to the traveller, as he journeys on  
 To reach the walls of some far distant town,  
 If, high in air, the dubious turrets rise,  
 Peep o'er the hills and dance before his eyes,  
 Pleased the refreshing prospect to survey,  
 Each stride he lengthens, and beguiles the way,  
 More pleased (the tempting scene in view) to go,  
 Than pensively to walk the gloomy vales below.

Unless the theme within your bosom roll,  
 Work in each thought, and run through all the soul,  
 Unless you alter with incessant pain,  
 Pull down, and build the fabric o'er again,  
 In vain, when rival wits your wonder raise,  
 You'll strive to match those beauties which you praise.

To one just scope with fixed design go on ;

Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia aurea baltei  
 Oderis, atque tibi haud stabit victoria parvo.  
 Nam juvat hæc ipsos inter præscisse legentes,  
 Quamvis sint et adhuc confusa, et nubila porro.  
 Haud aliter longinqua petit qui forte viator 150  
 Moenia, si positas altis in collibus arces  
 Nunc etiam dubias oculis videt, incipit ultro  
 Lætior ire viam, placidumque urgere laborem,  
 Quam cum nusquam ullæ cernuntur, quas adit, arces,  
 Obscurum sed iter tendit convallibus imis. 155

Tuque ideo, nisi mente prius, nisi pectore toto  
 Crebra agites quodcunque canis, tecumque premendo  
 Totum opus ædifices, iterumque iterumque retractes,  
 Laudatum alterius frustra mirabere carmen.

Nec te fors inopina regat, casusque labantem : 160



Let sovereign reason dictate from her throne,  
By what determined methods to advance,  
But never trust to arbitrary chance.

Where chance presides, all objects wildly joined  
Crowd on the reader, and distract his mind ;  
From theme to theme unwilling is he tossed,  
And in the dark variety is lost.

You see some bards, who bold excursions make  
In long digressions from the beaten track,  
And paint a wild unnecessary throng  
Of things and objects foreign to the song,  
For new descriptions from the road depart,  
Devoid of order, discipline, and art.

So, many an anxious toil and danger passed,  
Some wretch returns from banishment at last ;  
With fond delay to range the shady wood,  
Now here, now there, he wanders from the road ;  
From field to field, from stream to stream he roves,  
And courts the cooling shelter of the groves.  
For why should Homer deck the gorgeous car,

*Omnia consiliis provisa, animoque volenti*

*Certus age, ac semper nutu rationis eant res.*

*Quandoquidem sæpe incerti huc, illucque vagamur,*

*Inque alia ex aliis inviti illabimur orsa,*

*Dum multa ac varians animis sententia surgit.*

165

*Sæpe vides primis ut quidam longius orsis*

*Digrediuntur, et obliti quasi cœpta priora*

*Longe aliis hærent nulla sermonibus arte,*

*Et longos peragrant tractus aliena canentes.*

*Ac velut in patriam peregrina si quis ab ora*

170

*Ire cupit, post exilium, durosque labores,*

*Ille tamen recto non qua via tramite ducit*

*Carpit iter, sed nunc vagus hac, nunc errat et illac,*

*Undique dum studio fontes invisit inani,*

*Fontesque, fluviosque, et amœnos frigore lucos.*

175

*Nam quid opus gemmis armatos pingere currus,*





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Till in the pedant all the bard is lost.  
 Such without care their useless lumber place ;  
 One black, confused, and undigested mass  
 With a wild heap encumbers every part,  
 Nor ranged with grace, nor methodized with art ;  
 But then in chief, when things abstruse they teach,  
 Themes too abstracted for the vulgar reach :  
 The hidden nature of the deities,  
 The secret laws and motions of the skies,  
 Or from what dark original began  
 The fiery soul, and kindled up the man.  
 Oft they in odious instances engage,  
 And for examples ransack every age,  
 With every realm ; no hero will they pass,  
 But act against the rules of time and place.  
 Avoid, ye youths, these practices ; nor raise  
 Your swelling souls to such a thirst of praise.  
 Some bards of eminence there are, we own,  
 Who sing sometimes the journeys of the Sun,  
 The rising stars, and labors of the Moon,

Indignum referam? sunt qui, ut se plurima nosse  
 Ostentent, pateatque suarum opulencia rerum,  
 Quicquid opum congesserunt, sine more, sine arte  
 Irrisi effundunt, et versibus omnia acervant: 195  
 Præcipue siquid summotum, siquid opertum,  
 Atque parum vulgi notum auribus, aut radiantis  
 De cœli arcana ratione, Deumve remota  
 Natura, aut animæ obscuro impenetrabilis ortu.  
 Sæpe etiam accumulunt antiqua exempla virorum, 200  
 Carminis ingratum genus! hinc atque inde petita,  
 Quamvis sæpe illis tempusque locusque repugnet.  
 Ne, pueri, ne talem animis inducite morem,  
 Nec vos decipiat laudis tam dira cupido.  
 Haud sum animi dubius magnos memorare poetas 205  
 Interdum Solisque vias, Lunæque labores,



What impulse bids the ocean rise and fall,  
 What motions shake and rock the trembling ball,  
 Though foreign subjects had engaged their care,  
 The rage, the din and thunder of the war  
 Through the loud field ; the genius of the earth,  
 Or rules to raise the vegetable birth ;  
 Yet 'tis but seldom, and when time and place  
 Require the thing, and reconcile to grace.  
 Those foreign objects necessary seem,  
 And flow, to all appearance, from the theme ;  
 With so much art so well concealed they please,  
 When wrought with skill, and introduced with ease.  
 Should not Anchises, such occasion shown,  
 Resolve the questions of his godlike son, —  
 If souls deprived of Heaven's fair light repair  
 Once more to day, and breathe the vital air,  
 Or if from high Olympus first they came,  
 Inspired with portions of ethereal flame,  
 Though here encumbered with the mortal frame?  
 Tire not too long one subject when you write,  
 For 'tis variety that gives delight ;

*Astrorumque ortus, qua vi tumida æquora surgant,  
 Unde tremor terris; quamvis illi orsa sequantur  
 Longe alia, aut duri cantantes prælia Martis,  
 Aut terræ mores varios, cultusque docentes.*

210

*At prius invenere locum, dein, tempore capto,  
 Talia subjiciunt parci, nec sponte videntur  
 Fari ea: rem credas hoc ipsam poscere, ita astum  
 Dissimulant, aditusque petunt super omnia molles.*

*Cur pater Anchises natum opportuna rogantem  
 Non doceat, rursusne animæ semel æthere cassæ  
 Ad cœlum redeant, blandique ad luminis auras?  
 Igneus anne ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo*

215

*Seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant?  
 Quandoquidem, ut varium sit opus (namque inde voluptas*

220



But when to that variety inclined,  
 You seek new objects to relieve the mind,  
 Be sure let nothing forced or labored seem,  
 But watch your time, and steal from off your theme,  
 Conceal with care your longing to depart —  
 For art's chief pride is still to cover art.  
 So Mulciber, in future ages skilled,  
 Engraved Rome's glories on Æneas' shield,  
 On the bright orb her future fame enrolled,  
 And with her triumphs charged the rising gold ;  
 Here figured fights the blazing round adorn,  
 There his long line of heroes yet unborn.  
 But if a poet of Ausonian birth  
 Describes the various kingdoms of the Earth  
 Wide interspersed — the Medes, or swarthy Moors —  
 The different natures of their soils explores,  
 And paints the trees that bloom on India's shores,  
 On his own land he looks with partial eyes,  
 And lifts the fair Hesperia to the skies ;

Grata venit) rebus non usque hærebis in iisdem.

Verum ubi vis animis varius succurrere fessis,

Ingredierisque novas facies, rerumque figuras,

Paulatim capto primis delabere cœptis

Tempore, nec positis insit violentia rebus: 225

Omnia sponte sua veniant, lateatque vagandi

Dulcis amor, cunctamque potens labor acculat artem.

Sic olim Æneæ venturi haud inscius ævi

Rec Italum in clypeo, Romanorumque triumphos

Fecerat Ignipotens, pugnataque in ordine bella, 230

Stirpis ab Ascanio quondam genus omne futurum.

Tum si quis Latio cretus de sanguine vates

Prosequitur varias oras, moresque locorum,

Medosque, Æthiopasque, et dices arboris Indos;

Immemor ille nimis patriæ, oblitusve suorum, 235

Si non Italiæ laudes æquaverit astris;





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Thus, were the bees the subject of my Muse,  
 Their laws, their natures, and celestial dews,  
 Poor Aristæus should his fate disclose,  
 His mother's counsel should assuage his woes ;  
 Old Proteus here should struggle in his chain,  
 There in soft verse the Thracian bard complain  
 (As Philomela on a poplar bough  
 Bewails her young, melodious in her woe) ;  
 Pangæan steep his sorrows should return,  
 And vocal Thrace with Rhodope should mourn,  
 Hebrus should roll, low-murmuring, to the deep,  
 And barbarous nations wonder why they weep.  
 Thus too the poets who the names declare  
 Of kings and nations gathering to the war,  
 Sometimes diversify the strain, and sing  
 The wondrous change of the Ligurian king ;  
 While for his Phaëton his sorrows flow,  
 And his harmonious strains beguile his woe,  
 O'er all the man the snowy feathers rise,  
 And in a tuneful swan he mounts the skies.  
 Thus too Hippolytus, by Dian's care

Me nulla idcirco quiret vis sistere quin, post  
 Naturas et apum dictas et liquida mella,  
 Tristis Aristæi questus, monitusque parentis  
 Prosequerer dulci sermone, et Protea vinctum.

255

Addam Threicii carmen miserabile vatis,  
 Qualis populea queritur Philomela sub umbra,  
 Ut Rhodope, ut Pangæa fleant, Rhesi ut domus alta,  
 Atque Getæ, atque Hebrus, et Actias Orithyia.

Non aliam ob causam reges qui in prælia euntes  
 Dinumerant, populosque, moram traxere canentes  
 Aut Ligurum regi, ob casum Phaethontis amati  
 Dum gemit, et mœstum musa solatur amorem,  
 In sylvis cano natas in corpore plumas :

260

Aut rursus Hippolytum superas venisse sub auras

265



And Pæan's art, returns to upper air.  
 The bards now paint the arms their heroes wield,  
 And each bold figure on the glittering shield ;  
 Great Aventinus, great Alcides' son,  
 Wore the proud trophy which his father won ;  
 An hundred serpents o'er the buckler rolled,  
 And Hydra hissed from all her heads in gold.  
 Now blooming Tempe's cool retreats they sing,  
 And now with flowery beauties paint the spring.  
 Now with a sylvan scene the floods they hide,  
 Or teach the famed Eridanus to glide,  
 Or sport on fabled Acheloüs' side,  
 Or hoary Nereus' numerous race display,  
 The hundred azure sisters of the sea ;  
 With them the nymphs that haunt their native woods,  
 And the long orders of the sylvan gods.

With gay descriptions sprinkle here and there  
 Some grave instructive sentences with care,  
 That touch on life, some moral good pursue,  
 And give us virtue in a transient view —

*Pæoniis revocatum herbis, et amore Dianæ.*

*Nec vero interea quæ cuique insignia, quæ arma  
 Prætereunt; pingunt clypeos, atque Hercule pulchro  
 Pulcher Aventinus satus olim insigne paternum  
 Centum angues, cinctamque gerit serpentibus Hydram.* 270

*Sæpe etiam loca amœna canunt, et frigida Tempe.*

*Nunc variis pingunt cum floribus auricamum ver;*

*Nunc virides liquidis inducunt fontibus umbras,*

*Crebraque fluviorum in ripis spatiantur aquas,*

*Aut Veneti Eridani, aut Achei Acheloi.* 275

*Addunt et Panas, Pæonias, Dryasque pedias,*

*Et centum angues Hydram, cunctasque venenas.*

*Sæpe etiam amœna loca, et frigida Tempe*

*Pingunt cum floribus auricamum ver;*

*Virides liquidis inducunt fontibus umbras,* 280



Rules which the future sire may make his own,  
And point the golden precepts to his son.

Sometimes on little images to fall,  
And thus illustrate mighty things by small,  
With due success the licensed poet dares :  
When to the ants the Phrygians he compares,  
Who, leaving Carthage, gather to the seas,  
Or the laborious Tyrians to the bees.  
But swarming flies, offensive animals,  
That buzz incessant o'er the smoking pales,  
Are images too low to paint the hosts  
That roll and blacken o'er Ausonia's coasts ;  
The lofty Muse who sung the Latian war  
Would think such trivial things beneath her care.  
How from his majesty would Virgil fall,  
If Turnus, scarce repelled from Ilion's wall,  
Retiring grimly with a tardy pace,  
Had e'er been figured by the patient ass !  
Whom unregarded troops of boys surround,  
While o'er his sides their rattling strokes resound ;

Quodque olim jubeant natos meminisse parentes.

At non exiguis etiam te insistere rebus  
Abnuerim, si magna voles componere parvis,  
Aut apibus Tyrios, aut Troja ex urbe profectos  
Formicis, Libycum properant dum linquere littus.

285

Sed non Ausonii recte foedissima musca

Militis æquarit numerum, cum plurima mulctram  
Pervolitat; neque enim in Latio magno ore sonantem  
Arma, ducesque decet tam viles decidere in res.

Nec dictis erit ullus honos, si cum actus ab urbe

290

Daunius hostili Teucris urgentibus heros

Vix pugna absistit, similis dicetur asello,

Quem pueri læto pascentem pingua in argo

Ordea stipitibus duris detrudere tendunt

Instantes, quatiuntque sudes per terga, per armos :

295





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And Glaucus talks of brave Bellerophon,  
 Doomed for a lawless passion not his own,  
 Sets forth the hero's great exploits to view,  
 How the bold chief the dire Chimæra slew,  
 The Solymæan host, and Amazonian crew.  
 For those surprising fictions are designed  
 With their sweet falsehoods to delight the mind ;  
 The bards expect no credit should be given  
 To the bare lie, though authorized by Heaven,  
 Which oft with confidence they vent abroad,  
 Beneath the needful sanction of a god.  
 'Twas thus the roasted heifers of the Sun  
 Spoke o'er the fire with accents not their own ;  
 'Twas thus Achilles' steed his silence broke,  
 And Trojan ships in human voices spoke ;  
 As wrought by Heaven these wonders they relate,  
 All airy visions of the ivory gate !

Speak things but once, if order be your care,  
 For more the cloyed attention will not bear,  
 And tedious repetitions tire the ear ;

*Crimine damnati falso alter Bellerophontis  
 Facta refert, magna domitam virtute Chimæram,  
 Et victos pariter Solymos, et Amazonas armis.  
 Nam quæ multa canunt ficta, et non credita vates,  
 Dulcia quo vacuas teneant mendacia mentes,  
 Illis nulla fides, quam nec sibi denique aperti  
 Exposcunt, nec dissimulant, licet omnia obumbrent  
 Relligione Deum, quæ non credenda profantur.  
 Idcirco Solis perhibent armenta loquuta  
 Mortua, et in veribus Vulcano tosta columnis,  
 Ut minus acris equos itidem miremur Achillis,  
 Verbaque veliferas rostris fudisse carinas;  
 Omnia quæ porta veniunt insomnia eburna.*

315

320

Disce etiam, pulchri tibi si cura ordinis ulla est,  
 Res tantum semel effari: repetita bis aures  
 Ferre negant; subeunt fessas fastidia mentes:

325



In this we differ from the Grecian train,  
 Who tell Atrides' visions o'er again.  
 'Tis not enough with them we know the cause  
 Why great Achilles from the war withdraws,  
 Unless the weeping hero, on the shore,  
 Tells his blue mother all we heard before.  
 So much on punctual niceties they stand,  
 That, when their kings dispatch some high command,  
 All, word for word, the ambassadors rehearse  
 In the same tenor of unvaried verse.  
 Not so did Venulus from Arpi bring  
 The final answer of the Ætolian king.

Let others labor on a vast design,  
 A less, but polished with due care, be thine ;  
 To change its structure be your last delight ;  
 Thus spend the day and exercise the night,  
 Incessant in your toil. But if you choose  
 A larger field and subject for your Muse,  
 If scanty limits should the theme confine,

Quanquam etiam hic nostris cernes differe Pelasgos.  
 Nam tibi non referent semel illi somnia Atridæ:  
 Nec sat erit, si rettulerint quid fortis Achilles  
 Mente dolens Danaum sese subduxerit armis,  
 Ipse iterum Æacides nisi solo in littore ponti  
 Flens eadem æquoreæ narraverit omnia matri.  
 Quin etiam reges, cum dant mandata ferenda,  
 Cuncta canunt prius ipsi, eadem mox carmine eodem  
 Missi oratores repetunt, nihil ordine verso.  
 Non sic Ausonius Venulus, legatus ab Arpis  
 Cum redit, Ætoli referens responsa tyranni.

Altum aliis assurgat opus: tu nocte dieque  
 Exiguum meditator, ubi sint omnia culta,  
 Et visenda novis iterumque iterumque figuris.  
 Quod si longarum cordi magis ampla viarum  
 Sunt spatia, angustis cum res tibi finibus arcta,  
 In longum trahito arte: viæ tibi mille trahendi,

330

335

340



Learn with just art to lengthen the design  
 Beyond its native bounds. The roving mind  
 A thousand methods to this end may find ;  
 Unnumbered fictions may with truths be joined ;  
 Nature supplies a fund of matter still ;  
 Then cull the rich variety at will.

See how the bard calls down the embattled gods,  
 All ranged in factions, from their bright abodes !  
 Who, fired with mutual hate, their arms employ,  
 And in the field declare for Greece or Troy,  
 Till Jove convenes a council to assuage  
 Their rising fury, and suspend their rage —  
 Though the blest gods, removed from human eyes,  
 Live in immortal ease within the distant skies.  
 And now the infernal realm his theme he makes,  
 The reign of Pluto, the Tartarean lakes,  
 The Furies dreadful with their curling snakes.  
 He gathers omens from each bird that flies,  
 And signs from every wing that beats the skies.  
 He now describes a banquet, where the guest  
 Prolongs with narratives the royal feast ;

Mille modi: nam ficta potes multa addere veris, 345  
 Et petere hinc illinc variarum semina rerum.  
 Nonne vides, ut nostra Deos in prælia ducant,  
 Hos Teucris, alios Danais socia arma ferentes,  
 Certantesque inter se odiis, donec pater ipse  
 Concilium vocet, atque ingentes molliat iras? 350  
 Cum segura tamen penitus natura Deorum  
 Degat, et aspectu nostro summota quiescat.  
 Addunt infernasque domos, regna invia vivis,  
 Tartareosque lacus, Ditemque, et Erinnyas atras.  
 Tum volucrum captant cantus, atque omina pennæ: 355 .  
 Sæpe etiam hospitibus convivia læta receptis,  
 Regalesque canunt epulas, ubi multa repostis  
 Narrantur dapibus vario sermone vicissim.





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When beasts by herds, and men by nations die ;  
 Or the fierce flames that Ætna's jaws expire,  
 Her melted rocks, and deluges of fire,  
 When from her mouth the bursting vapor flies,  
 And, charged with ruin, thunders to the skies,  
 While drifts of smoke in sooty whirlwinds play,  
 And clouds of cinders stain the golden day.  
 See ! as the poet sounds the dire alarms,  
 Calls on the war, and sets the hosts in arms,  
 Squadrons on squadrons driven, confusedly die,  
 Grim Mars in all his terrors strikes the eye ;  
 More than description rising to the sight,  
 Presents the real horrors of the fight.  
 A new creation seems our praise to claim  
 (Hence Greece derives the sacred poet's name) ;  
 The dreadful clang of clashing arms we hear ;  
 The agonizing groan, the fruitless prayer,  
 And shrieks of suppliants thicken on the ear.  
 Who, when he reads a city stormed, forbears  
 To feel her woes, and sympathize in tears ?  
 When o'er the palaces the flames aspire

*Corpora, multa hominum leto data: sive Sicana  
 Dicendum quantis terra tonet Ætna ruinis,  
 Prorumpens atram cœli usque ad sidera nubem,* 375  
*Turbine fumantem piceo, et candente favilla.*  
*Vidisti cum bella canunt horrentia, et arma,  
 Arma fremunt, miscentque equitum peditumque ruinas;  
 Ante oculos Martis sese offert tristis imago,  
 Non tantum ut dici videantur, sed fieri res,* 380  
*Unde ipsis nomen Graii fecere poetis:*  
*Armorum fragor audiri, gemitusque cadentum,  
 Cædentumque ictus, et inania vota precantum.*  
*Quis quoque, cum captas evolvunt hostibus urbes,  
 Temperet a lachrymis? tectorum ad culmina sævas* 385  
*Ire faces, passimque domos involvere flammæ*



From wall to wall, and wrap the domes in fire ;  
 The sire, with years and hostile rage oppressed ;  
 The starting infant clinging to the breast.  
 The trembling mother runs, with piercing cries,  
 Through friends and foes, and shrieking rends the skies ;  
 Dragged from the altar, the distracted fair  
 Beats her white breast, and tears her golden hair ;  
 Here in thick crowds the vanquished fly away,  
 There the proud victors heap the wealthy prey,  
 With rage relentless ravage their abodes,  
 Nor spare the sacred temples of the gods.  
 O'er the whole town they run with wild affright,  
 Tumultuous haste, and violence of flight.

Why should I mention how our souls aspire,  
 Lost in the raptures of the sacred fire ?  
 For even the soul not always holds the same,  
 But knows at different times a different frame ;  
 Whether with rolling seasons she complies,  
 Turns with the Sun, or changes with the skies ;  
 Or through long toil, remissive of her fires,  
 Droops with the mortal frame her force inspires ;

Cernere erit, trepidosque senes, puerosque parentes  
 Amplexos, flentesque ipsas ad sidera matres  
 Tollentes clamorem, hostes interque suosque :  
 Abstractasque nurus adytis, arisque Deorum,  
 Et crinem laniare, et pectora tundere palmis :  
 Hos fugere, ast illos ingentem abducere prædam,  
 Perque domos perque alta ruunt delubra Deorum,  
 Atque huc atque illuc tota discurritur urbe.

390

Quid cum animis sacer est furor additus, atque potens vis? 395  
 Nam variant species animorum, et pectora nostra  
 Nunc hos, nunc illos, multo discrimine, motus  
 Concipiunt; seu quod cœli mutatur in horas  
 Tempestas, hominumque simul quoque pectora mutant;  
 Seu quia non iidem respondent sæpe labore  
 Sensus effœti, atque animus cum corpore languet;

400



Or that our minds alternately appear  
 Now bright with joy, and now o'ercast with care.  
 No ! but the gods, the immortal gods supply  
 The glorious fires ; they speak the deity.  
 Then blest is he who waits the auspicious nod,  
 The warmth divine, and presence of the god ;  
 Who his suspended labors can restrain,  
 Till Heaven's serene indulgence smiles again.  
 But strive, on no pretence, against your power,  
 Till time brings back the voluntary hour.  
 Sometimes their verdant honors leave the woods,  
 And their dry urns defraud the thirsty floods ;  
 Nor still the rivers a full channel yield,  
 Nor Spring with flowery beauties paints the field :  
 The bards no less such fickle changes find ;  
 Damped is the noble ardor of the mind ;  
 Their wonted toil her wearied powers refuse ;  
 Their souls grow slack and languid to the Muse,  
 Deaf to their call, their efforts are withstood ;  
 Round their cold hearts congeals the freezing blood.

Seu quia curarum interdum, vacuique doloris ;

Interdum tristes cæco intus tundimur æstu.

Dii potius nostris ardorem hunc mentibus addunt,

Dii potius: felixque ideo qui tempora quivit,

405

Adventumque Dei, et sacrum expectare calorem,

Paulisperque operi posito subducere mentem,

Mutati donec redeat clementia cœli.

Sponte sua veniet justum (ne accersite) tempus.

Interdum et sylvis frondes, et fontibus humor

410

Desunt, nec victis semper cava flumina ripis

Plena fluunt, nec semper agros ver pingit apricos.

Sors eadem incertis contingit sæpe poetis.

Interdum exhaustæ languent ad carmina vires,

Absumptusque vigor, studiorumque immemor est mens;

415

Torpescent sensus; circum præcordia sanguis

Stat gelidus; credas penitus migrasse Camœnas,





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Nor can the raging flames themselves contain,  
 For the whole god descends into the man ;  
 He quits mortality, he knows no bounds,  
 But sings inspired in more than human sounds,  
 Nor from his breast can shake the immortal load,  
 But pants and raves impatient of the god ;  
 And, rapt beyond himself, admires the force  
 That drives him on reluctant to the course.  
 He calls on Phœbus, by the god oppressed  
 Who breathes excessive spirit in his breast ;  
 No force of thirst or hunger can control  
 The fierce, the ruling transport of his soul.  
 Oft in their sleep, inspired with rage divine,  
 Some bards enjoy the visions of the Nine —  
 Visions themselves with due applause may crown,  
 Visions that Phœbus or that Jove may own ;  
 To such a height the god exalts the flame,  
 And so unbounded is their thirst of fame.

But here, ye youths, exert your timely care,  
 Nor trust the ungovernable rage too far ;  
 Use not your fortune, nor unfurl your sails,  
 Though softly courted by the flattering gales ;

Oblitusque hominem mirum sonat: haud potis ignem 435  
 Excutere, invitum miratur se ire, rapique  
 Præcipitem, te, Phœbe, vocans, te, Phœbe, prementem  
 Vociferans, plenusque Deo, stimulisque subactus  
 Haud placidis; non ille dapum, non ille quietis  
 Aut somni memor, hanc potis est deponere curam. 440  
 Sæpe etiam in somnis memores Phœbeia versant  
 Munera, et inventi quidam qui sæpe sopore  
 In medio Musis cecinere et Apolline digna.  
 Tantus amor famæ, præsentis tanta Dei vis!

Ne tamen ah! nimium, puer o ne fide calori: 445  
 Non te fortuna semper permittimus uti,  
 Præsentique aura, sævum dum pectore numen



Refuse them still, and call your judgment in,  
 While the fierce god exults and reigns within.  
 To reason's standard be your thoughts confined,  
 Let judgment calm the tempest of the mind ;  
 Indulge your heat with conduct, and restrain,  
 Learn when to draw, and when to give, the rein ;  
 But always wait till the warm raptures cease,  
 And lull the tumults of the soul to peace ;  
 Then, nor till then, examine strictly o'er  
 What your wild sallies might suggest before.

Be sure from Nature never to depart ;  
 To copy Nature is the task of art.  
 The noblest poets own her sovereign sway,  
 And ever follow where she leads the way.  
 From her the different characters they trace,  
 That mark the human or the savage race,  
 Each various and distinct. In every stage  
 They paint mankind — their humors, sex, and age.  
 They show what manners the slow sage become,  
 What the brisk youth in all his sprightly bloom ;

*Insidet: at potius ratioque, et cura resistat.  
 Fræno siste furentem animum, et sub signa vocato,  
 Et premere, et laxas scito dare cautus habenas.  
 Atque ideo semper tunc expectare jubemus  
 Dum fuerint placati animi, compressus et omnis  
 Impetus: hic recolens sedato corde revise  
 Omnia, quæ cæcus menti subjecerit ardor.*

450

*Præterea haud lateat te nil conarier artem,  
 Naturam nisi ut assimulet, propiusque sequatur.  
 Hanc unam vates sibi proposuere magistram:  
 Quicquid agunt, hujus semper vestigia servant.  
 Hinc varios moresque hominum, moresque animantum,  
 Aut studia imparibus diversa ætatibus apta  
 Effingunt faciè verborum, et imagine reddunt  
 Quæ tardosque senes deceant, juvenesque virentes,*

455

460



In every word and sentiment explain  
 How the proud monarch differs from the swain.  
 I nauseate all confounded characters,  
 Where young Telemachus too grave appears,  
 Or reverend Nestor acts beneath his years.  
 The poet suits his speeches, when he sings,  
 To proper persons and the state of things ;  
 On each their just distinctions are bestowed,  
 To mark a male, a female, or a god.  
 Thus when in Heaven seditious tumults rise,  
 Amongst the radiant senate of the skies,  
 The sire of gods and sovereign of mankind  
 In a few words unfolds his sacred mind.  
 Not so fair Venus, who at large replies,  
 And pities Troy, and counts her miseries,  
 Woes undeserved. But with contention fired,  
 And with the spirit of revenge inspired,  
 Fierce Juno storms amidst the blest abodes,  
 And stuns with loud complaints the listening gods.

Fœmineumque genus, quantum quoque rura colenti,  
 Aut famulo distet regum alto e sanguine cretus. 465  
 Nam mihi non placeat, teneros si sit gravis annos  
 Telemachus supra, senior si Nestor inani  
 Gaudeat et ludo, et canibus, pictisve pharetris.  
 Et quoniam in nostro multi persæpe loquuntur  
 Carmine, verba illis pro conditione virorum  
 Aut rerum damus, et proprii tribuuntur honores, 470  
 Cuique suos, seu mas, seu fœmina, sive Deus sit.  
 Semper enim summus Divum pater atque hominum rex  
 Ipse in concilio fatur, si forte coorta  
 Seditio, paucis: at non Venus aurea contra  
 Pauca refert, Teucrum indignos miserata labores. 475  
 Ingreditur furiis, atque alta silentia rumpit,  
 Acta furore gravi, Juno, ac fœta usque querelis.  
 Cumque etiam juveni gliscat violentia major,





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How in this Dido is that Dido lost;  
 Who late received the Trojans on her coast,  
 And bade them banish grief, and share her throne,  
 Dismiss their fears, and think her realms their own !

Next the great orators consult, and thence  
 Draw all the moving turns of eloquence :  
 That Sinon may his Phrygian foes betray,  
 And lead the crowd, as fraud directs the way ;  
 That wise Ulysses may the Greeks detain,  
 While Troy yet stood, from measuring back the main.  
 Need I name Nestor, who could talk to peace,  
 With melting words, the factious kings of Greece,  
 Whose soft address their fury could control,  
 Mold every passion, and subdue the soul?  
 These soothing arts to Venus sure were known,  
 To beg immortal arms to grace her son ;  
 Her injured spouse each thrilling word inspires,  
 With every pang of love to second her desires ;  
 With nicest art the fair adulteress draws  
 Her fond addresses from a distant cause,

Quæ quibus anteferat; quantum ah! distabit ab illa  
 Didone, excepit Teucros quæ nuper egentes,  
 Solvere corde metum, atque jubens secludere curas,  
 Invitansque suis vellent considerare regnis !

495

Nec te oratores pigeat, artisque magistros  
 Consuluisse, Sinon Phrygios quo fallere possit  
 Arte, dolis quocunque animos impellere doctus;  
 Quove tenere queat Graios fandi autor Ulysses  
 Stante domum Troja tandem discedere certos.

500

Quid tibi nunc dulcem præ cunctis Nestora dicam,  
 Qui toties inter primores Argivorum  
 Ingentes potuit verbis componere lites,  
 Et mulcere animos, et mollia fingere corda?  
 Artibus his certe Cytherea instructa, dolisque,  
 Arma rogat nato genitrix, et adultera læsum  
 Vulcanum alloquitur, dictisque aspirat amorem.

505



And all her guileful accents are designed  
 To catch his passions and ensnare his mind.  
 'Tis hence the poet learns in every part  
 To bend the soul, and give with wondrous art  
 A thousand different motions to the heart ;  
 Hence, as his subject gay or sad appears,  
 He claims our joy or triumphs in our tears.  
 Who, when he sees how Orpheus' sorrows flow,  
 Weeps not his tears, and answers woe for woe ?  
 When he his dear Eurydice deploras  
 To the deaf rocks and solitary shores,  
 With the soft harp the bard relieves his pain ;  
 For thee, when morning dawns, prolongs the strain,  
 For thee, when Phœbus seeks the seas again.  
 Or when the young Euryalus is killed,  
 And rolls in death along the bloody field ;  
 Like some fair flower beneath the share he lies,  
 His head declined, and drooping as he dies ;  
 The reader's soul is touched with generous woe,  
 He longs to rush with Nisus on the foe ;

Nam causas petit ex alto indepreſa, virique  
 Circuit occulta verborum indagine mentem.

Discitur hinc etenim ſenſus mentesque legentum  
 Flectere, diverſosque animis motus dare, ut illis  
 Imperet arte potens, dictu mirabile, vates.

510

Nam ſemper, ſeu læta canat, ſeu triſtia mœrens,  
 Affectas implet tacita dulcedine mentes.

Quem non Threicii quondam ſors aſpera vatis  
 Molliat, amiſſam dum ſolo in littore ſecum,  
 Eurydice, ſolans ægrum teſtudine amorem,  
 Te, veniente die, te, decedente, vocaret ?

515

Quid ? puer Euryalus cum pulchros volvitur artus,  
 Ad dolor ! inque humeros lapſa cervice recumbens  
 Languescit moriens, ceu flos ſuccisus aratro :  
 Ardet adire animus lectori, et currere in ipſum

520



He burns with friendly pity to the dead,  
 To raise the youth, and prop his sinking head,  
 And strives in vain to stop the gushing blood,  
 That stains his bosom with a purple flood.

But if the bard such images pursues  
 That raise the blushes of the virgin muse,  
 Let them be slightly touched and ne'er expressed,  
 Give but a hint and let us guess the rest.  
 If Jove commands the gathering storms to rise,  
 And with deep thunders rends the vaulted skies,  
 To the same cave together may repair  
 The Trojan hero and the Tyrian fair —  
 The poet's modesty must add no more.  
 Enough that Earth had given the sign before,  
 The conscious ether was with flames o'erspread,  
 The nymphs ran shrieking round the mountain's head.  
 Nor let young Troilus, unhappy boy,  
 Meet fierce Achilles in the plains of Troy,  
 But show the unequal youth's untimely fall  
 To great Æneas on the Tyrian wall ;

Volscentem, puerique manum supponere mento  
 Labenti, ac largum frustra prohibere cruorem  
 Purpureo niveum signantem flumine pectus.

525

Postremo, tibi siqua instant dicenda, ruborem  
 Quæ tenerum incuterent Muis adaptata, chorisque  
 Virgineis, molli vel præterlabere tactu

Dissimulans, vel verte alios, et rem suffice fictam.

Si pater omnipotens tonitru cœlum omne ciebit,

530

Speluncam Dido, dux et Trojanus eandem

Deveniant: pudor ulterius nihil addere curet.

Nam sat erit, Tellus quod prima, et conscius Æther

Connubii dent signum, ululentque in vertice Nymphæ.

Neve aliis, impar nimium, ne Troilus armis

535

Ah! puer infelix facito concurrat Achilli,

Quam quibus in Libyco conspexit littore pictum





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While Latium's sons improve her best designs,  
Till by degrees each polished labor shines,  
While Rome advances now in arts, as far  
Above all cities, as of old in war.

Ye gods of Rome, ye guardian deities,  
Who lift our nation's glory to the skies,  
And thou, Apollo, the great source of Troy,  
Let Rome at least this single palm enjoy,  
To shine in arts supreme, as once in power,  
And teach the nations she subdued before,  
Since discord all Ausonia's kings alarms,  
And clouds the ancient glories of her arms.  
In our own breasts we sheath the civil sword,  
Our country naked to a foreign lord ;  
Which lately, prostrate, started from despair,  
Burned with new hopes, and armed her hands for war,  
But armed in vain. The inexorable hate  
Of envious Fortune called her to her fate ;  
Insatiate in her rage, her frowns oppose  
The Latian fame, and woes are heaped on woes.

*Omnia rettulerint, dum longe maxima Roma* 555

*Ut belli studiis, ita doctis artibus omnes,  
Quot Sol cunque videt terrarum, anteiverit urbes.*

*Dii Romæ indigetes, Trojæ tuque autor, Apollo,*

*Unde genus nostrum cœli se tollit ad astra,*

*Hanc saltem auferri laudem prohibete Latinis:* 560

*Artibus emineat semper, studiisque Minervæ*

*Italia, et gentes doceat pulcherrima Roma ;*

*Quandoquidem armorum penitus fortuna recessit,*

*Tanta Italos inter crevit discordia reges.*

*Ipsi nos inter sævos dstringimus enses,* 565

*Nec patriam pudet externis aperire tyrannis.*

*Spes tamen Italiæ prostratæ affulserat ingens*

*Nuper, et egregiis animos erexerat ausis :*

*Heu frustra ! invidit laudi fors læva Latinæ,*



Our dread alarms each foreign monarch took,  
 Through all their tribes the distant nations shook,  
 To Earth's last bounds the fame of Leo runs :  
 Nile heard, and Indus trembled for his sons,  
 Arabia heard the Medicean line,  
 'The first of men, and sprung from race divine.  
 The sovereign priest, and mitred king, appears  
 With his loved Julius joined, who kindly shares  
 The reins of empire and the public cares ;  
 To break their country's chains, the generous pair  
 Concert their schemes and meditate the war.  
 On Leo Europe's monarchs turn their eyes,  
 On him alone the western world relies,  
 And each bold chief attends his dread alarms,  
 While the proud crescent fades before his arms.  
 High on his splendid car, immortal Rome,  
 Thine eyes had seen the holy warrior come,  
 Lord of the vanquished world, in triumph home ;

*Necdum fata malis Italum exaturata quierunt.* 570  
*Jam gentes longe positæ trepidare, ducesque*  
*Externi: jam dives Arabs, jam Nilus, et Indus*  
*Audierant longe Tusci decora alta Leonis,*  
*Audierant Medicumque genus, stirpemque Deorum:*  
*Jam tum ille egregias curas accinxerat ardens* 575  
*Pro patriæ decore, pro libertate sepulta*  
*Antiquæ Ausoniæ, germano fretus Iulo,*  
*Quicum partitus curarum ingentia semper*  
*Pondera commissas rerum tractabat habenas*  
*Idem regnatorque hominum, Divumque sacerdos.* 580  
*Jamque illum Europæ reges, gensque omnis in unum*  
*Conversique oculos, conversique ora tenebant:*  
*Jamque duces animis illum concordibus omnes*  
*Velle sequi trepidos in Turcas arma parantem.*  
*Illum quadrijugo invectum per mœnia curru,* 585  
*Roma, triumphato vidisses protinus orbe:*  
*Illum, Tybri pater, lætanti spumeus alveo*



Thy streams, old Tiber, swelled with conscious pride,  
 Had borne thy kindred warrior down thy tide,  
 While, crowded up in heaps, thy waves admire  
 The captive nations, and their strange attire.  
 Behind his wheels should march a numerous train  
 Of sceptred slaves, reluctant to the chain,  
 Forget their haughty threats, and boast in vain ;  
 Though the proud foe, of Jewry's realm possessed,  
 Has spread his wide dominion through the East,  
 Sees his dread standard there at large unfurled,  
 And grasps in thought the empire of the world,  
 And now, ye gods ! increased in barbarous power,  
 His armies hover o'er the Hesperian shore.  
 To see the passing pomp, the ravished throng  
 Through every street should flow in tides along ;  
 The sacred father, as the numbers rolled,  
 Should his dear citizens again behold,  
 High o'er the shouting crowds enthroned in gold ;  
 Should show the trophies of his glorious toils,  
 And hang the shrines with consecrated spoils ;  
 Piles of barbaric gold should glitter there,  
 The wealth of kingdoms and the pomp of war.

Exciperes, Tuscus Tuscum, veheresque per undas  
 Miratas habitusque novos, hominumque figuras.

Issent post currus capti longo ordine reges :

590

Oblitusque minas minor iret barbarus hostis,

Qui victis Solymis nunc, atque oriente subacto

Exultat fidens, orbisque affectat habenas

Efferus, atque Italæ jam jam, scelus ! imminet oræ.

Visendi studio passim Romana juvenus

595

Per fora, perque vias, festa discurreret urbe.

Ipsè suos solio fulgens pater aureus alto

Aspiceret cives longo post tempore visos ;

Barbaricumque aurum, prædæque juberet acervos

Sacratis adytis, penitusque alta arce reponi.

600





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## BOOK III.

**W**HAT style, what language, suits the poet's lays,  
 To claim Apollo's and the Muses' praise,  
 I now unfold. To this last bound I tend,  
 And see my promised labors at an end.  
 First then, with care a just expression choose,  
 Led by the kind indulgence of the Muse  
 To dress up every subject when you write,  
 And set all objects in a proper light.  
 But lest the distant prospect of the goal  
 Should damp your vigor and your strength control,  
 Rouse every power, and call forth all the soul.  
 See how the Nine the panting youth invite,  
 With one loud voice to reach Parnassus' height !  
 See how they hold aloft the immortal crown,  
 To urge the course, and call the victor on !  
 See from the clouds each lavish goddess pours,  
 Full o'er thy head, a sudden spring of flowers,  
 And roses fall in odoriferous showers ;

**N**UNC autem linguæ studium, moremque loquendi,  
 Quem vates, Musæque probent, atque autor Apollo,  
 Expediam, curam extremam, finemque laborum.  
 Discendum indicia, et verborum lumina quæ sint  
 Munere Pieridum lustrandis addita rebus.  
 Ne te, opere incepto, deterreat ardua meta;  
 Audendum, puer, atque invicto pectore agendum.  
 Jam te Pierides summa en! de rupe propinquum  
 Voce vocant, viridique ostentant fronde coronam  
 Victori, atque animo stimulos hortatibus addunt.  
 Jamque rosas calathis spargunt per nubila plenis  
 Desuper, et florum placido te plurima nimbo







Quit your pursuit and choose a different way,  
Till, breaking forth, the voluntary ray  
Cuts the thick darkness and lets down the day.

Since then a thousand forms you may pursue,  
A thousand figures rising to the view,  
Unless confined and straitened in your scheme,  
With the short limits of a scanty theme,  
From these to those with boundless freedom pass,  
And to each image give a different face ;  
The readers hence a wondrous pleasure find,  
That charms the ear and captivates the mind.  
In this the laws of Nature we obey,  
And act as her example points the way,  
Which has on every different species thrown  
A shape distinct, and figure of its own ;  
Man differs from the beast that haunts the woods,  
The bird from every native of the floods.

See how the poet banishes with grace  
A native term to give a stranger place !

Non datur hinc, te verte alio, lumenque require  
Nunc hac, nunc illac, donec diffulserit ultro,  
Claraque tempestas cœlo radiarit aperto.

30

Quin etiam, angustis si non urgebere rebus,  
Cum fandi tibi mille viæ, tibi mille figuræ  
Occurrent, tu mille vias, tu mille figuras,  
Nunc hanc, nunc aliam ingredere, et mutare memento,  
Jamque hos jamque alios haud segnis sumere vultus.  
Nempe inde illectas aures immensa voluptas  
Detinet, et dulci pertentat pectora motu.

35

Ergo omnem curam impendunt, ut cernere nusquam  
Sit formas similes, naturæ exempla sequuti,  
Dissimili quod sint facie quæcunque sub astris  
Vitales carpunt auras, genus omne ferarum  
Atque hominum, pictæ volucres, mutæque natantes.

40

Nonne vides, verbis ut veris sæpe relictis





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Pleased with the borrowed charms, the readers find  
 A crowd of different images combined  
 Rise from a single object to the mind.

So the pleased traveler from a mountain's brow  
 Views the calm surface of the seas below ;  
 Though wide beneath the floating ocean lies  
 The first immediate object of his eyes,  
 He sees the forests tremble from within,  
 And gliding meadows paint the deeps with green,  
 While to his eyes the fair delusions pass  
 In gay succession through the watery glass.

'Tis thus the bard diversifies his song ;  
 Now here, now there, he calls the soul along ;  
 The rich variety he sets to sight

Cloyes not the mind, but adds to our delight.

Now with a frugal choice the bard affords

The strongest light and energy of words ;

While humble subjects he contrives to raise

With borrowed splendors and a foreign blaze.

This, if on old tradition we rely,

Was once the current language of the sky,

*Tum specie capti gaudent spectare legentes;*

*Nam diversa simul datur e re cernere eadem*

*Multarum simulachra animo subeuntia rerum.*

*Ceu cum forte olim placidi liquidissima ponti*

*Æquora vicina aspectat de rupe viator,* 65

*Tantum illi subjecta oculis est mobilis unda;*

*Ille tamen sylvas, interque virentia prata*

*Inspiciens miratur, aquæ quæ purior humor*

*Cuncta refert, captosque eludit imagine visus.*

*Non aliter vates nunc huc traducere mentes,* 70

*Nunc illuc, animisque legentum apponere gaudet*

*Diversas rerum species, dum tædia vitat.*

*Res humiles ille interea non secius effert,*

*Splendore illustrans alieno, et lumine vestit,*

*Verborumque simul vitat dispendia parcus.* 75



Which first the Muses brought to these abodes,  
 Who taught mankind the secrets of the gods ;  
 For in the court of Jove their choirs advance,  
 And sing alternate, as they lead the dance,  
 Mixed with the gods ; they hear Apollo's lyre,  
 And from high Heaven the panting bard inspire.  
 Nor bards alone, but other writers reach  
 This bold, this daring privilege of speech ;  
 In chief the orators, to raise their sense,  
 In this strong figure dress their eloquence,  
 When with persuasive strokes they plead a cause,  
 And bridle vice, and vindicate the laws ;  
 Or on the dreadful verge of death defend,  
 And snatch from fate, a poor devoted friend.  
 Even the rough hinds delight in such a strain,  
 When the glad harvest waves with golden grain,  
 And thirsty meadows drink the pearly rain ;  
 On the proud vine her purple gems appear,

Hunc fandi morem, si vera audivimus, ipsi  
 Coelicolæ exercent cœli in penetralibus altis,  
 Pieridum chorus in terras quem detulit olim,  
 Atque homines docuere Deum præclara reperta.  
 Illæ etenim Jovis ætherea dicuntur in aula  
 Immixtæ Superis festas agitare choreas,  
 Et semper canere alternæ, Phœbique fruuntur  
 Colloquio, vatumque inspirant pectora ab alto.  
 Nec tamen haud solis fugit hæc me nota poetis,  
 Verum etiam autores alii experiuntur, et audent,  
 Præcipue orantes causas, fandique magistri,  
 Seu sontes tendant legum compescere habenis,  
 Seu caros cupiant atris e mortis amicos  
 Faucibus eripere, et defletos reddere luci.

80

85

Quin etiam agricolas ea fandi nota voluptas  
 Exercit, dum læta seges, dum trudere gemmas  
 Incipiunt vites, sitientiaque ætheris imbrem

90



The smiling fields rejoice, and hail the pregnant year.  
 First from necessity the figure sprung ;  
 For things that would not suit our scanty tongue,  
 When no true names were offered to the view,  
 Those they transferred that bordered on the true ;  
 Thence by degrees the noble license grew ;  
 The bards those daring liberties embraced,  
 Through want at first, through luxury at last ;  
 They now to alien things, at will, confirm  
 The borrowed honors of a foreign term.  
 So man, at first, the rattling storm to fly,  
 And the bleak horrors of the wintry sky,  
 Raised up a roof of osiers o'er his head,  
 And closed with homely clay the slender shed ;  
 Now regal palaces of wondrous size,  
 With brazen beams, on Parian columns rise  
 That heave the pompous fabric to the skies.  
 But other writers sprinkle here and there  
 These bolder beauties with a frugal care ;  
 So vast a freedom is allowed to none,

*Prata bibunt, ridentque, satis surgentibus, agri.*

*Hanc vulgo speciem propriæ penuria vocis*

*Intulit, indictisque urgens in rebus egestas.* 95

*Quippe, ubi se vera ostendebant nomina nusquam,*

*Fas erat hinc atque hinc transferre simillima veris.*

*Paulatim accrevere artes, hominumque libido :*

*Quodque olim usus inops reperit, nunc ipsa voluptas*

*Postulat, hunc addens verborum rebus honorem.* 100

*Sic homines primum venti vis aspera adegit,*

*Vitandique imbres, stipulis horrentia tecta*

*Ponere, et informi sedem arctam claudere limo :*

*Nunc altæ æratis trabibus, Pariisque columnis*

*Regifico surgunt ædes ad sidera luxu.* 105

*Parcius ista tamen delibant, et minus audent*

*Artifices alii, nec tanta licentia fandi*

*Cuique datur, solis vulgo concessa poetis :*





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Bacchus for wine, and Neptune for the main ;  
 Or from the father's name point out the son ;  
 Or for her people introduce a town :  
 So when alarmed her natives dread their fates,  
 Pale Afric shakes, and trembles through her states ;  
 And some, by Acheloüs' streams alone,  
 Comprise the floods of all the world in one.

Lo ! now they start aside, and change the strain  
 To fancied converse with an absent swain ;  
 To grotts and caverns all their cares disclose,  
 Or tell the solitary rocks their woes ;  
 To scenes inanimate proclaim their love,  
 Talk with a hill, or whisper to a grove.  
 On you they call, ye unattentive woods,  
 And wait an answer from your bordering floods.

Sometimes they speak one thing, but leave behind  
 Another secret meaning in the mind ;  
 A fair expression artfully dispense,  
 But use a word that clashes with the sense :

Quid cum Neptunum dicunt mare, vina Lyæum,  
 Et Cererem frumenta, patrumque e nomine natos  
 Significant, memorantque urbes pro civibus ipsis? 125  
 Atque ideo timor attonitos cum invaserit Afros,  
 Africa terribili tremit horrida terra tumultu.  
 Nec deerit tibi, pro fluviis, proque omnibus undis  
 Pocula qui pressis Acheloia misceat uvis.

Ecce! autem subitis conversi vocibus ultro 130  
 Sæpe aliquem longe absentem, desertaque et antra,  
 Et solos montes affantur, sæpe salutant  
 Sylvasque fluviosque, et agros, sensuque carentes  
 Speluncas, velut hæc sint responsura vocata,  
 Et vos o vacui compellant nomine saltus. 135

Præterea verbis inimicos addere sensus  
 Oppositis, dum dissimulant, aliudque videbis  
 Sæpe loqui, atque aliud simulata condere mente.  
 Egregia interea conjux ita nocte suprema



Thus pious Helen stole the faithful sword,  
 While Troy was flaming, from her sleeping lord ;  
 So glorious Drances towered amid the plain,  
 And piled the ground with mountains of the slain,  
 Immortal trophies raised from squadrons killed,  
 And with vast spoils ennobled all the field.

But now to mention farther I forbear,  
 With what strong charms they captivate the ear.  
 When the same terms they happily repeat,  
 The same repeated seem more soft and sweet :  
 This, were Arcadia judge, if Pan withstood,  
 Pan's judge, Arcadia, would condemn her god.

But though our fond indulgence grants the Muse  
 A thousand liberties in different views,  
 Whene'er you choose an image to express  
 In foreign terms, and scorn the native dress ;  
 Yet be discreet, nor strain the point too far,  
 Let the transition still unforced appear,  
 Nor e'er discover an excess of care.  
 For some, we know, with awkward violence  
 Distort the subject and disjoint the sense,

Deiphobo fidum capiti subduxerat ensem. 140

Nec minus insignis Drances cum stragis acervos  
 Tot dedit, et claris insigniit arva trophæis.

Quid sequar ulterius, quanta dulcedine captas  
 Detineant aures, vocem cum rursus eandem

Ingeminant, modo non verborum cogat egestas? 145

Pan etiam Arcadia neget hoc si iudice præsens,  
 Pan, etiam Arcadia dicam te iudice vanum.

Hæc adeo cum sint, cum fas audere poetis

Multa modis multis, tamen observare memento,

Si quando haud propriis rem mavis dicere verbis, 150

Translatisque aliunde notis, longeque petitis,

Ne nimiam ostendas quærendo talia curam.

Namque aliqui exercent vim duram, et rebus iniqui



Quite change the genuine figure, and deface  
 The native shape with every living grace,  
 And force unwilling objects to put on  
 An alien face and features not their own.  
 A low conceit in disproportioned terms  
 Looks like a boy dressed up in giant's arms :  
 Blind to the truth, all reason they exceed  
 Who name a stall the palace of the steed,  
 Or grass, the tresses of great Rhea's head.  
 'Tis best sometimes an image to express  
 In its own colors and its native dress,  
 The genuine words with happy care to use,  
 If nicely culled and worthy of the Muse.

Some things alternately compared are shown,  
 Both names still true, and mutually their own —  
 But here the least redundance you must shun ;  
 Tell us, in short, from whence the hint you drew,  
 And set the whole comparison to view,  
 Lest, mindless of your first design, you seem  
 To lead the mind away, and rove from theme to theme.

*Nativam eripiunt formam, indignantibus ipsis,  
 Invitasque jubent alienos sumere vultus.* 155

*Haud magis imprudens mihi erit, et luminis expers,  
 Qui puero ingentes habitus det ferre gigantis,  
 Quam si quis stabula alta lares appellet equinos,  
 Aut crines magnæ genitricis gramina dicat.*

*Præstiterit vero faciem spilla et sua cuique* 160  
*Linquere, et interdum propriis rem prodere verbis,  
 Indiciisque suis, ea sint modo digna Camœnis.*

*Res etiam poteris rebus conferre vicissim,  
 Nominibusque ambas verisque suisque vocare;  
 Quod faciens, fuge verborum dispendia, paucisque* 165  
*Includas numeris, unde illa simillima imago  
 Ducitur, et breviter confer, ne forte priorum  
 Oblitus sermonum alio traducere mentem,  
 Inque alia ex aliis videare exordia labi.*





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To those eternal monuments repair,  
 There read, and meditate forever there.  
 If o'er the rest some mighty genius shines,  
 Mark the sweet charms and vigor of his lines ;  
 As far as Phœbus and the heavenly powers  
 Smile on your labors, make his diction yours,  
 Your style by his authentic standard frame,  
 Your voice, your habit and address, the same.  
 With him proceed to cull the rest, for there  
 A full reward will justify your care ;  
 Examine all, and bring from all away  
 Their various treasures as a lawful prey.  
 Nor would I scruple, with a due regard,  
 To read sometimes a rude unpolished bard,  
 Among whose labors I may find a line,  
 Which from unsightly rust I may refine,  
 And, with a better grace, adopt it into mine.  
 How often may we see a troubled flood  
 Stained with unsettled ooze and rising mud,

*Crebra oculis animoque legens, et multa voluta.  
 Tum quamvis, longe siquis supereminet omnes,  
 Virtutem ex illo, ac rationem discere fandi  
 Te jubeam, cui contendas te reddere semper  
 Assimilem, atque habitus gressusque effingere euntis,  
 Quantum fata sinunt, et non aversus Apollo :  
 Haud tamen interea reliquum explorare labores  
 Abstiteris vatum, moneo, suspectaque dicta  
 Sublegere, et variam ex cunctis abducere gazam.  
 Nec dubitem versus hirsuti sæpe poetæ  
 Suspensus lustrare, et vestigare legendo,  
 Sicubi se quædam forte inter commoda versu  
 Dicta meo ostendant, quæ mox melioribus ipse  
 Auspiciis proprios possim mihi vertere in usus,  
 Detersa prorsus prisca rubigine scabra.  
 Flumina sæpe vides immundo turbida limo;*

190

195

200



Which, if a well the bordering natives sink,  
 Supplies the thirsty multitude with drink ;  
 The trickling stream by just degrees refines,  
 Till in its course the limpid current shines,  
 And, taught through secret labyrinths to flow,  
 Works itself clear among the sands below.  
 For nothing looks so gloomy, but will shine  
 From proper care and timely discipline ;  
 If, with due vigilance and conduct, wrought  
 Deep in the soul, it labors in the thought.  
 Hence on the ancients we must rest alone,  
 And make their golden sentences our own ;  
 To cull their best expressions claims our cares,  
 To form our notions and our styles on theirs.  
 See how we bear away their precious spoils,  
 And with the glorious dress enrich our styles,  
 Their bright inventions for our use convey,  
 Bring all the spirit of their words away,  
 And make their words themselves our lawful prey !  
 Unshamed in other colors to be shown,  
 We speak our thoughts in accents not our own.  
 But your design with modest caution weigh,

Haurit aquam tamen inde frequens concursus, et altis  
 Important puteis ad pocula, desuper illa  
 Occultis diffusa canalibus influit, omnemque  
 Illabens bibulas labem exuit inter arenas.

205

Nil adeo incultum, quod non splendescere possit :  
 Præcipue si cura vigil non desit, et usque  
 Mente premas, multumque animo tecum ipse volutes.

Atque ideo ex priscis semper quo more loquamur  
 Discendum, quorum depascimur aurea dicta,

210

Præcipuumque avidi rerum populamus honorem.

Aspice ut exuvias veterumque insignia nobis  
 Aptemus : rerum accipimus nunc clara reperta,

Nunc seriem atque animum verborum, verba quoque ipsa :

215



Steal with due care, and meditate the prey,  
 Invert the order of the words with art,  
 And change their former site in every part.  
 Thus win your readers, thus deceive with grace,  
 And let the expression wear a different face ;  
 Yourself at last, the glorious labor done,  
 Will scarce discern his diction from your own.  
 Some, to appear of diffidence bereft,  
 Steal in broad day, and glory in the theft,  
 When with just art, design and confidence,  
 On the same words they graft a different sense,  
 Preserve the unvaried terms and order too,  
 But change their former spirit for a new,  
 Or, with the sense of emulation bold,  
 With ancient bards a glorious contest hold ;  
 Their richest spoils triumphant they explore,  
 Which, ranged with better grace, they varnish o'er,  
 And give them charms they never knew before.  
 So trees that change their soils more proudly rise,  
 And lift their spreading honors to the skies ;

*Nec pudet interdum alterius nos ore loquutos.*

*Cum vero cultis moliris furta poetis,*

*Cautius ingredi, et raptus memor occule versis*

*Verborum indiciis, atque ordine falle legentes*

*Mutato: nova sit facies, nova prorsus imago.*

220

*Munere (nec longum tempus) vix ipse peracto*

*Dicta recognosces veteris mutata poetæ.*

*Sæpe palam quidam rapiunt, cupiuntque videri*

*Omnibus intrepidi, ac furto lætantur in ipso*

*Deprensi: seu cum dictis, nihil ordine verso,*

225

*Longe alios iisdem sensus mira arte dedere,*

*Exueruntque animos verborum impune priores:*

*Seu cum certandi priscis succensa libido;*

*Et possessa diu, sed enim male condita, victis*

*Extorquere manu juvat, in meliusque referre:*

230

*Ceu fata mutatoque solo felicius olim*





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Nor follow where the ancients point the way.  
 While from the theft their cautious hands refrain,  
 Vain are their fears, their superstition vain,  
 Nor Phœbus' smiles the unhappy poet crown ;  
 The fate of all his works prevents his own.  
 Himself his moldering monument survives,  
 And sees his labors perish while he lives ;  
 His fame is more contracted than his span,  
 And the frail author dies before the man.  
 How would he wish the labor to forbear,  
 And follow other arts with more successful care ?

I like a fair allusion nicely wrought,  
 When the same words express a different thought ;  
 And such a theft true critics dare not blame,  
 Which late posterity shall crown with fame ;  
 Void of all fear, of every doubt bereft,  
 I would not blush, but triumph in the theft.  
 Nor on the ancients for the whole rely,  
 The whole is more than all their works supply ;

Temperat heu! nimium, atque alienis parcere crevit  
 (Vana superstitio!) Phœbi sine numine cura.

250

Haud longum tales ideo lætantur, et ipsi  
 Sæpe suis superant monumentis, illaudatique  
 Extremum ante diem fœtus flevere caducos,  
 Viventesque suæ viderunt funera famæ.

Quam cuperent vano potius caruisse labore,  
 Eque suis alias didicisse parentibus artes!

255

Sæpe mihi placet antiquis alludere dictis,  
 Atque aliud longe verbis proferre sub iisdem:  
 Nec mea tam sapiens per sese prodita quisquam  
 Furta redarguerit, quæ mox manifesta probabunt  
 Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis:

260

Tantum absit, pœnæ metuens infamis ut ipse  
 Furta velim tegere, atque meas celare rapinas.  
 Non tamen omnia te priscis fas fidere, qui non  
 Omnia sufficient: quærenti pauca labore

265



Some things your own invention must explore,  
Some virgin images untouched before.

New terms no laws forbid us to induce,  
To coin a word, and sanctify to use ;  
But yet admit no words into the song,  
Unless they prove the stock from whence they sprung,  
Point out their family, their kindred trace,  
And set to view the series of their race.  
But where you find your native tongue too poor,  
Transport the riches of the Grecian store ;  
Inform the lump, and work it into grace,  
And with new life inspire the unwieldy mass ;  
Till, changed by discipline, the word puts on  
A foreign nature, and forgets its own.  
So Latium's language found a rich increase,  
And grew and flourished from the wealth of Greece ;  
Till use in time had rifled Argos' stores  
And brought all Athens to the Hesperian shores.  
How many words from rich Mycenæ come,  
Of Greek extraction, in the dress of Rome,  
That live with ours, our rights and freedom claim,

*Attentanda tuo, nondum ulli audita, supersunt.*

*Nos etiam quædam idcirco nova condere nulla  
Relligio vetat, indictasque effundere voces.*

*Ne vero hæc penitus fuerint ignota, suumque  
Agnoscant genus, et cognatam ostendere gentem  
Possint, ac stirpis nitantur origine certæ.*

270

*Usque adeo patriæ tibi si penuria vocis  
Obstabit, fas Grajugenum felicibus oris  
Devehere informem massam, quam incude Latina  
Informans patrium jubeas dediscere morem.*

275

*Sic quondam Ausoniæ succrevit copia linguæ:  
Sic auctum Latium, quo plurima transtulit Argis  
Usus, et exhaustis Itali potiuntur Athenis.*

*Nonne vides mediis ut multa erepta Mycenis,  
Graia genus, fulgent nostris immixta, nec ullum*

280



Their nature different, but their looks the same !  
 Through Latium's realms in Latium's garb they go,  
 At once her strangers and her natives too ;  
 Long has her poverty been fled, and long  
 With native riches has she graced her tongue.  
 Nor search the poets only, but explore  
 Immortal Tully's inexhausted store ;  
 And other authors, born in happier days,  
 Shall answer all your wants, and beautify your lays.

Oft, in old bards, a verse above the rest  
 Shines, in barbaric spoils and trophies dressed :  
 Thus Gaul, her victor's triumph to complete,  
 Supplies those words that paint her own defeat ;  
 And vanquished Macedon, to tell her doom,  
 Gives up her language with her arms to Rome.  
 Then can we fear with groundless diffidence  
 A want of words that shall express our sense ?

But, if compelled by want, you may produce  
 And bring an antiquated word in use,  
 A word erst well received in days of yore,

Apparet discrimen? eunt insignibus æquis  
 Undique per Latios et civis et advena tractus.  
 Jamdudum nostri cessit sermonis egestas:  
 Raro uber patriæ tibi raro opulencia deerit.  
 Ipse suis Cicero thesauris omnia promet,  
 Autoresque alii nati felicibus annis  
 Omnia sufficient, nec solis crede poetis.

285

Sæpe etiam vidi veterum inter carmina vatum  
 Barbarico versus cultu, gazaque superbos;  
 Belgicaque immisit trans Alpes esseda Gallus  
 In Latium, et longe Macedum venere sarissæ:  
 Et metuam ne deficiat me larga supellex  
 Verborum, angustique premat sermonis egestas?

290

Quin et victa situ, si me penuria adaxit,  
 Verba licet renovare, licet tua, sancta vetustas,  
 Vatibus indugredi sacraria: sæpius olli

295





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May match with more success such words as these,  
Heap hills on hills, and bid the structure rise,  
Till the vast pile of mountains prop the skies.

What words soever of vast bulk we view,  
One of less size may sometimes split in two ;  
Sometimes we separate from the whole a part,  
And prune the more luxuriant limbs with art.  
Thus when the names of heroes we declare,  
Names whose unpolished sounds offend the ear,  
We add, or lop some branches which abound,  
Till the harsh accents are with smoothness crowned  
That mellows every word, and softens every sound :  
By such a happy change, Sicharbas came  
To sink his roughness in Sichæus' name.  
Hence would I rather choose those dire alarms  
Of vast Enceladus, and Heaven in arms,  
And the bold Titan's battles to rehearse —  
Harmonious names, that glide into the verse —  
Than count the rough, the barbarous nations o'er,  
Which Rome subdued of old from shore to shore.

Talia connubia, et tales celebrent Hymenæos :  
Ter geminas immane struant ad sidera moles,  
Pelion addentes Ossæ, et Pelio Olympum.

315

At verbis etiam partes ingentia in ambas  
Verba interpositis proscindere, seque parare,  
Deterere interdum licet, atque abstraxe secundo  
Exiguam partem, et strinxisse fluentia membra.

320

Idcirco siquando ducum referenda virumque  
Nomina dura nimis dictu, atque asperrima cultu,  
Illa aliqui, nunc addentes, nunc inde putantes  
Pauca minutatim, levant, ac mollia reddunt,  
Sichæumque vocant mutata parte Sicharbam.

325

Hinc mihi Titanum pugnas, et sæva gigantum  
Bella magis libeat canere, Enceladique tumultus,  
Quam populos Itala quondam virtute subactos,  
Atque triumphatas diverso a littore gentes.



Let things submit to words on no pretense,  
 But make your words subservient to your sense,  
 Nor for their sake admit a single line  
 But what contributes to the main design ;  
 Through every part most diligently pierce,  
 And weigh the sound and sense of every verse.  
 Unless your strictest caution you display,  
 Some words may lead the heedless bard away,  
 Steal from their duty, and desert their post,  
 And skulk in darkness, indolently lost ;  
 Or, while their proper parts their fellows ply,  
 Contribute nought but sound and harmony.  
 This to prevent, consult your words, and know  
 How far their strength, extent, and nature go ;  
 To all, their charges and their labors fit,  
 To all, their several provinces of wit.  
 Without this care, the poem will abound  
 With empty noise and impotence of sound,  
 Unmeaning terms will crowd in every part,  
 Play round the ear, but never reach the heart.  
 Yet would I sometimes venture to disperse

Sed neque, verborum causa, vis ulla canentem,  
 Consilium præter, cogat res addere inanes, 330  
 Nomina sed rebus semper servire jubeto,  
 Omnia perpendens versus resonantia membra.  
 Verba etenim quædam ignarum te fallere possunt,  
 Ni vigiles, mandatum et munus obire recusent,  
 Furenturque operi clam sese, et inertia cessent, 335  
 Cætera dum labor exercet concordia jussus,  
 Quæque suos: tantum illa dabunt numerumque sonumque.  
 Atque ideo quid ferre queant, quid quæque recusent  
 Explorare prius labor esto, et munera justa  
 Mandato, ac proprium cunctis partire laborem. 340  
 Obscuros aliter crepitus, et murmura vana  
 Miscebis, ludesque sonis fallacibus aures.  
 Nec tamen interdum vacuas, animoque carentes



Some words, whose splendor should adorn my verse —  
 Words that to wit and thought have no pretense,  
 And rather vehicles of sound than sense —  
 Till in the gorgeous dress the lines appear,  
 And court with gentle harmony the ear.  
 Nor with too fond a care such words pursue,  
 They meet your sight, and rise in every view.  
 Oft from its chains the shackled verse unloose,  
 And give it liberty to walk in prose ;  
 Then be the work renewed with endless pain,  
 And join with care the shattered parts again ;  
 The lurking faults and errors you may see,  
 When the words run unmanacled and free.

Attend, young bard, and listen while I sing :  
 Lo ! I unlock the Muse's sacred spring ;  
 Lo ! Phœbus calls thee to his inmost shrine ;  
 Hark ! in one common voice the tuneful Nine  
 Invite and court thee to the rites divine.  
 When first to man the privilege was given  
 To hold by verse an intercourse with Heaven,

Addubitem ipse volens incassum fundere voces,  
 Verbaque quae nullo fungantur munere sensus: 345  
 Dives ut egregio tantum et conspectus amictu  
 Versus eat, dulcique sono demulceat aures.

Atque adeo quae sint ne vero quære: profecto  
 Illa tibi se sponte dabunt per se obvia passim.  
 Sæpe autem ruptis vinclis exempta volutes 350  
 Membra, et compactum quæsitior disjice versum,  
 Post iterum refice, et partes in pristina redde  
 Partibus avulsas: nunquam te libera vinclis  
 Incautum fallent, resoluta carmine, verba.

Huc ades, hic penitus tibi totum Heliconæ recludam: 355  
 Te Musæ, puer, hic faciles penetralibus imis  
 Admittunt, sacrisque adytis invitat Apollo.  
 Principio quoniam magni commercia cœli  
 Numina concessere homini, cui carmina curæ,





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This swiftly flies, and smoothly skims away ;  
 That, vast of size, his limbs huge, broad, and strong,  
 Moves ponderous, and scarce drags his bulk along.  
 This blooms with youth and beauty in his face,  
 And Venus breathes on every limb a grace ;  
 That, of rude form, his uncouth numbers shows,  
 Looks horrible, and frowns with his rough brows ;  
 His monstrous tail in many a fold and wind,  
 Voluminous and vast, curls up behind ;  
 At once the image and the lines appear  
 Rude to the eye, and frightful to the ear.  
 Nor are those figures given without a cause,  
 But fixed and settled by determined laws ;  
 All claim and wear, as their deserts are known,  
 A voice, a face, and habit of their own.  
 Lo ! when the sailors steer the ponderous ships,  
 And plough with brazen beaks the foamy deeps,  
 Incumbent on the main that roars around,  
 Beneath their laboring oars the waves resound,  
 The prows wide-echoing through the dark profound :

*Molle viam tacito lapsu per levia radit :*

*Ille autem membris, ac mole ignavius ingens*

375

*Incedit tardo molimine subsidendo.*

*Ecce aliquis subit egregio pulcherrimus ore,*

*Cui lætum membris Venus omnibus afflat honorem.*

*Contra alius rudis, informes ostendit et artus,*

*Hirsutumque supercilium, ac caudam sinuosam,*

380

*Ingratus visu, sonitu illætabilis ipso.*

*Nec vero hæ sine lege datæ, sine mente figuræ,*

*Sed facies sua pro meritis, habitusque sonusque*

*Cunctis, cuique suus, vocum discrimine certo.*

*Ergo ubi jam nautæ spumas salis ære ruentes*

385

*Incubuerè mari, videas spumare reductis*

*Convulsum remis, rostrisque stridentibus æquor.*

*Tunc longe sale saxa sonant, tunc et freta ventis*



To the loud call each distant rock replies,  
 Tossed by the storm the frothy surges rise,  
 While the hoarse ocean beats the sounding shore,  
 Dashed from the strand the flying waters roar,  
 Flash at the shock, and, gathering in an heap,  
 The liquid mountains rise, and overhang the deep.  
 See through her shores Trinacria's realms rebound,  
 Starting and trembling at the bellowing sound ;  
 High-towering o'er the waves the mountains ride,  
 And clash with floating mountains on the tide.  
 But when blue Neptune from his car surveys  
 And calms at one regard the raging seas,  
 Stretched like a peaceful lake the deep subsides,  
 And o'er the level light the galley glides.  
 The poet's art and conduct we admire,  
 When angry Vulcan rolls a flood of fire,  
 When on the groves and fields the deluge preys,  
 And wraps the crackling stubble in the blaze.  
 Nor less our pleasure, when the flame divides  
 And climbs aspiring round the caldron's sides ;

*Incipiunt agitata tumescere: littore fluctus  
 Illidunt rauco, atque refracta remurmurat unda* 390  
*Ad scopulos, cumulo insequitur præruptus aquæ mons.  
 Nec mora, Trinacriam cernas procul intremere omnem  
 Funditus, et montes concurrere montibus altos.  
 Cum vero ex alto speculatus cærula Nereus  
 Leniit in morem stagni, placidæque paludis,* 395  
*Labitur uncta vadis abies, natat uncta carina.  
 Hinc etiam solers mirabere sæpe legendo,  
 Sicubi Vulcanus sylvis incendia misit,  
 Aut agro, stipulas flamma crepitante cremari.  
 Nec minus exultant latices, cum tæda sonore* 400  
*Virgea suggeritur costis undantis aheni.  
 Carmine nec levi dicenda est scabra crepido.  
 Tum, si læta canunt, hilari quoque carmina vultu*



From the dark bottom work the waters up,  
 Swell, boil, and hiss, and bubble to the top.  
 Thus in smooth lines smooth subjects we rehearse,  
 But the rough rock roars in as rough a verse.  
 If gay the subject, gay must be the song,  
 And the brisk numbers quickly glide along  
 When the fields flourish, or the skies unfold  
 Swift from the flying hinge their gates of gold.  
 If sad the theme, then each grave line moves slow,  
 The mournful numbers languishingly flow,  
 And drag, and labor, with a weight of woe,  
 If e'er the boding bird of night, who mourns  
 O'er ruins, desolations, graves, and urns,  
 With piercing screams the darkness should invade,  
 And break the silence of the dismal shade.  
 When things are small the terms should still be so,  
 For low words please us when the theme is low.  
 But when some giant, horrible and grim,  
 Enormous in his gait, and vast in every limb,  
 Stalks towering on, the swelling words must rise  
 In just proportion to the monster's size ;  
 If some large weight his huge arms strive to shove,

*Incedunt, lætumque sonant haud segnia verba :*

*Seu cum vero novo rident prata humida; seu cum* 405

*Panditur interea domus omnipotentis Olympi.*

*Contra autem sese tristes inamabile carmen*

*Induit in vultus, si forte invisâ volucris*

*Nocte sedens serum canit importuna per umbras,*

*Ut quondam in bustis, aut culminibus desertis.* 410

*Verba etiam res exiguas angusta sequuntur,*

*Ingentesque juvant ingentia: cuncta gigantem*

*Vasta decent, vultus immanes, pectora lata,*

*Et magni membrorum artus, magna ossa, lacertique.*

*Atque adeo, siquid geritur molimine magno,* 415

*Adde moram, et pariter tecum quoque verba laborent*





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His unavailing javelin at the foe  
 (His blood congealed, and every nerve unstrung),  
 Then with the theme complies his artful song ;  
 Like him the solitary numbers flow  
 Weak, trembling, melancholy, stiff, and slow.  
 Not so young Pyrrhus, who with rapid force  
 Beats down embattled armies in his course ;  
 The raging youth on trembling Ilium falls,  
 Bursts her strong gates and shakes her lofty walls,  
 Provokes his flying courser to his speed  
 In full career to charge the warlike steed ;  
 He piles the field with mountains of the slain,  
 He pours, he storms, he thunders through the plain.  
 In this the poet's justest conduct lies,  
 When with the various subjects he complies,  
 To sink with judgment, and with judgment rise,  
 We see him now, remissive of his force,  
 Glide with a low and inoffensive course ;  
 Stripped of the gaudy dress of words he goes,  
 And scarcely lifts the poem up from prose :  
 And now he brings with loosened reins along

*Invalidus jacit, et defectis viribus æger?*

*Nam quoque tum versus segni pariter pede languet:*

*Sanguis hebet, frigent effœtæ in corpore vires.*

435

*Fortem autem juvenem deceat prorumpere in arces,*

*Evertisse domos, præfractaque quadrupedantum*

*Pectora pectoribus perrumpere, sternere turres*

*Ingentes, totoque ferum dare funera campo.*

*Nulla adeo vatum major prudentia, quam se*

440

*Aut premere, aut rerum pro majestate canendo*

*Tollere: nunc illos animum summittere cernas*

*Verborum parcos, humilique obrepere gressu,*

*Textaque vix gracili deducere carmina filo,*

*Nunc illos, verbis opulentos, divite vena*

445

*Cernere erit fluere, ac laxis decurrere habenis*



All in a full career the boundless song ;  
 In wide array luxuriantly he pours  
 A crowd of words, and opens all his stores ;  
 The lavish eloquence redundant flows,  
 Thick as the fleeces of the winter snows,  
 When Jove invests the naked Alps, and sheds  
 The silent tempest on their hoary heads.  
 Sometimes the godlike fury he restrains,  
 Checks his impetuous speed, and draws the reins ;  
 Balanced and poised, he neither sinks nor soars,  
 Ploughs the mid space, and steers between the shores,  
 And shaves the confines ; till, all dangers passed,  
 He shoots with joy into the port at last.

For what remains unsung : I now declare  
 What claims the poet's last and strictest care.  
 When, all adventures passed, his labors tend  
 In one continued order to their end,  
 When the proud victor on his conquest smiles,  
 And safe enjoys the triumph of his toils,  
 Let him by timely diffidence be awed,  
 Nor trust too soon the unpolished piece abroad.

Fluxosque ingentesque : redundat copia læta  
 Ubere felici, verborumque ingruit agmen,  
 Hibernarum instar nivium, cum Juppiter Alpes  
 Frigidus æreas, atque alta cacumina vestit. 450

Interdum vero cohibent undantia lora,  
 Non humiles, non sublimes, media inter utrumque  
 Littus arant veluti spatia, et confinia radunt :  
 Sic demum portu læti conduntur in alto.

Quod superest, quæ postremo peragenda poetæ, 455  
 Expediam. Postquam casus evaserit omnes,  
 Signaque perpetuum deduxit ad ultima carmen  
 Exultans animo victor, lætusque laborum ;  
 Non totam subito præceps segura per urbem  
 Carmina vulgabit : ah ! ne sit gloria tanti, 460



O may his rash ambition ne'er inflame  
 His breast with such a dangerous thirst of fame !  
 But let the terror of disgrace control  
 The warm, the partial fondness of the soul,  
 And force the bard to throw his passion by,  
 Nor view his offspring with a parent's eye,  
 Till his affections are by justice crossed,  
 And all the father in the judge is lost.  
 He seeks his friends, nor trusts himself alone,  
 But asks their judgment and resigns his own ;  
 Begs them, with urgent prayers, to be sincere,  
 Just and exact, and rigidly severe,  
 Due verdict to pronounce on every thought,  
 Nor spare the slightest shadow of a fault ;  
 But, bent against himself, and strictly nice,  
 He thanks each critic that detects a vice ;  
 Though charged with what his judgment can defend,  
 He joins the partial sentence of his friend.  
 The piece thrown by, the careful bard reviews  
 The long-forgotten labors of his Muse ;  
 Lo ! on all sides far different objects rise,

*Et dulcis famæ quondam malesuada cupido :*

*At patiens operum semper, metuensque pericli*

*Expectet, donec sedata mente calorem*

*Paulatim exuerit, foetusque abolerit amorem*

*Ipse sui, curamque alio traduxerit omnem.*

465

*Interea fidos adit haud securus amicos,*

*Utque velint inimicum animum, frontisque severæ*

*Dura supercilia induere, et non parcere culpæ,*

*Hos iterum atque iterum rogat; admonitusque latentis*

*Grates lætus agit vitii, et peccata fatetur*

470

*Sponte sua, quamvis etiam damnetur iniquo*

*Judicio, et falsum queat ore refellere crimen.*

*Tum demum redit, et post longa oblivia per se*

*Incipit hic illic veterem explorare laborem.*





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If some unfinished numbers limp behind,  
 When the warm poet rages unconfined,  
 Then when his swift invention scorns to stay,  
 By a full tide of genius whirled away —  
 He brings the sovereign cure their failings claim,  
 Confirms the sickly, and supports the lame.  
 Oft as the seasons roll, renew thy pain,  
 And bring the poem to the test again :  
 In different lights the expression must be ranged,  
 The garb and colors of the words be changed,  
 With endless care thy watchful eyes must pierce,  
 And mark the parts distinct of every verse.  
 In this persist ; for oft one day denies  
 The kind assistance which the next supplies ;  
 As oft, without your vigilance and care,  
 Some faults detected by themselves appear ;  
 And now a thousand errors you explore  
 That lay involved in mantling clouds before.  
 Oft, to improve his Muse, the bard should try,  
 By turns, the temper of a different sky ;

Tum siqua est etiam pars imperfecta relicta, 490  
 Olim dum properat furor, ingeniique morari  
 Tempestas renuit, suppletque, et versibus affert  
 Invalidis miseratus opem, claudisque medetur.  
 Nec semel attrectare satis, verum omne quotannis  
 Terque, quaterque opus evolvendum, verbaque versis 495  
 Æternum immutanda coloribus: omne frequenti  
 Sæpe revisendum studio per singula carmen.  
 Quod non una dies, fors afferet altera, et ultro,  
 Nullo olim studio, nulla olim in carmine cura,  
 Deprensæ per se prodentur tempore culpæ, 500  
 Quæque latent variæ densa inter nubila pestes.  
 Quin etiam doctum multum juvet ille laborem,  
 Qui varies cœli creber mutaverit oras.  
 Namque etiam mutant animi, genioque locorum  
 Diversas species, diversos pectora motus 505



For thus his genius takes a different face  
 From every different genius of a place.  
 The soul too changes, and the bard may find  
 A thousand various motions in his mind ;  
 New gleams of light will every moment rise,  
 While from each part the scattering darkness flies ;  
 And, as he alters what appears amiss,  
 He adds new flowers to beautify the piece.  
 But here, even here, avoid the extreme of such  
 Who with excess of care correct too much,  
 Whose barbarous hands no calls of pity bound,  
 While with the infected parts they cut the sound,  
 And make the cure more dangerous than the wound ;  
 Till, all the blood and spirits drained away,  
 The body sickens, and the parts decay,  
 The native beauties die, the limbs appear  
 Rough and deformed with one continued scar.  
 No fixed determined number I enjoin,  
 But when some years shall perfect the design,  
 Reflect on life ; and, mindful of thy span,  
 Whose scanty limit bounds the days of man,

*Concipiunt, nostrisque novæ se mentibus offert  
 Ultro aliquid semper lucis, tenebræque recedunt,  
 Atque novos operi semper fas addere flores.*

*Verum esto hic etiam modus: huic imponere curæ*

*Nescivere aliqui finem, medicasque secandis*

510

*Morbis abstinuisse manus, et parcere tandem*

*Immites, donec macie confectus et æger*

*Aruit exhausto velut omni sanguine fœtus,*

*Nativumque decus posuit, dum plurima ubique*

*Deformat sectos artus inhonesta cicatrix.*

515

*Tuque ideo vitæ usque memor brevioris, ubi annos*

*Post aliquot (neque enim numerum, neque tempora pono*

*Certa tibi) addideris decoris satis atque nitoris,*

*Rumpe moras, opus ingentem dimitte per orbem,*



Wide o'er the spacious world, without delay,  
 Permit the finished piece to take its way,  
 Till all mankind admires the heavenly song,  
 The theme of every hand and every tongue.  
 See ! thy pleased friends thy spreading glory draws,  
 Each with his voice to swell the vast applause ;  
 The vast applause shall reach the starry frame,  
 No years, no ages, shall obscure thy fame,  
 And Earth's last ends shall hear thy darling name.  
 Shall we then doubt to scorn all worldly views,  
 And not prefer the rapture of the Muse ?

Thrice happy bards ! who, taught by Heaven, obey  
 These rules, and follow where they lead the way,  
 And hear the faithful precepts I bestowed,  
 Inspired with rage divine, and laboring with the god.  
 But art alone, and human means, must fail,  
 Nor these instructive precepts will prevail,  
 Unless the gods their present aid supply,  
 And look, with kind indulgence from the sky.  
 I only pointed out the paths that lead  
 The panting youth to steep Parnassus' head ;

Perque manus, perque ora virum permitte vagari. 520

Continuo læto te dulces undique amici

Gratantes plausu excipient: tua gloria cælo

Succedet, nomenque tuum sinus ultimus orbis

Audiet, ac nullo diffusum abolebitur ævo.

Et dubitamus opes animo contemnere avari, 525

Nec potius sequimur dulces ante omnia Musas?

O fortunati! quibus olim hæc numina dextra

Annuerint præcepta sequi, quæve ipse canendo

Jussa dedi plenus Phœbo, attonitusque furore:

Quando non artes satis ullæ; hominumque labores, 530

Et mea dicta parum prosint, ni desuper adsit

Auxilium, an præsens favor omnipotentis Olympi.

Ipsæ viam tantum potui docuisse repertam





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Trembling and fainting on the verge of age,  
 To help their wearied master shall they run,  
 And lend their friendly hands to guide him on ;  
 Through blooming groves his tardy progress wait,  
 And set him gently down at Phœbus' gate,  
 The while he sings before the hallowed shrine  
 The sacred poets and the tuneful Nine.

Here then in Roman numbers will we rise,  
 And lift the fame of Virgil to the skies —  
 Ausonia's pride and boast ; who brings along  
 Strength to my lines, and spirit to my song.  
 First how the mighty bard transported o'er  
 The sacred Muses from the Aonian shore,  
 Led the fair sisters to the Hesperian plains,  
 And sung in Roman towns the Grecian strains ;  
 How in his youth to woods and groves he fled,  
 And sweetly tuned the soft Sicilian reed ;  
 Next, how, in pity to the Ausonian swains,  
 He raised to Heaven the honors of the plains,  
 Rapt in Triptolemus's car on high,  
 He scattered peace and plenty from the sky ;  
 Fired with his country's fame, with loud alarms

Sæpe trahent, ultroque ferent per amœna locorum,  
 Et summi invalidum sistent ad limina Phœbi,  
 Cantantem Musas, vatumque inventa piorum.

Virgilio ante omnes læti hic super astra feremus  
 Carminibus patriis laudes; decus unde Latinum,  
 Unde mihi vires, animus mihi ducitur unde:

Primus ut Aoniis Musas deduxerit oris,  
 Argolicum resonans Romana per oppida carmen:  
 Ut juvenis Siculas sylvis inflarit avenas:

Utque idem, Ausonios animi miseratus agrestes,  
 Extulerit sacros ruris super æthera honores,  
 Triptolemi invectus volucris per sidera curru:  
 Res demum ingressus Romanæ laudis, ad arma



At last he roused all Latium up to arms,  
 In just array the Phrygian troops bestowed,  
 And spoke the voice and language of a god.  
 Father of verse ! from whom our honors spring,  
 See from all parts our bards attend their king,  
 Beneath thy banners ranged, thy fame increase,  
 And rear proud trophies from the spoils of Greece !  
 Low, in Elysian fields, her tuneful throng  
 Bow to thy laurels and adore thy song ;  
 On thee alone thy country turns her eyes,  
 On thee her poets' future fame relies.  
 See how in crowds they court thy aid divine —  
 For all their honors but depend on thine ! —  
 Taught from the womb thy numbers to rehearse,  
 And sip the balmy sweets of every verse.  
 Unrivalled bard ! all ages shall decree  
 The first unenvied palm of fame to thee ;  
 Thrice happy bard ! thy boundless glory flies,  
 Where never mortal must attempt to rise ;  
 Such heavenly numbers in thy song we hear,  
 And more than human accents charm the ear !

Excierit Latium omne, Phrygumque instruxerit alas,  
 Verba Deo similis : decus a te principe nostrum  
 Omne, pater ! tibi Grajugenum de gente trophæa  
 Suspendunt Itali vates, tua signa sequuti.

565

Omnis in Elysiis unum te Græcia campis  
 Miraturque, auditque ultro, assurgitque canenti,  
 Te sine, nil nobis pulchrum : omnes ora Latini  
 In te, oculosque ferunt versi : tua maxima virtus  
 Omnibus auxilio est : tua libant carmina passim  
 Assidui, primis et te venerantur ab annis.

570

Ne tibi quis vatum certaverit : omnia cedant  
 Secla, nec invideant primos tibi laudis honores.  
 Fortunate operum ! tua præstans gloria famæ,  
 Quo quenquam aspirare nefas, sese extulit alis.

575



To thee, his darling, Phoebus' hands impart  
 His soul, his genius, and immortal art.  
 What help or merit in these rules are shown,  
 The youth must owe to thy support alone —  
 The youth, whose wandering feet with care I led  
 Aloft, o'er steep Parnassus' sacred head,  
 Taught from thy great example to explore  
 Those arduous paths which thou hast trod before.  
 Hail, pride of Italy! thy country's grace!  
 Hail, glorious light of all the tuneful race!  
 For whom we weave the crown, and altars raise,  
 And with rich incense bid the temples blaze;  
 Our solemn hymns shall still resound thy praise.  
 Hail, holy bard, and boundless in renown!  
 Thy fame, dependent on thyself alone,  
 Requires no song, no numbers, but thy own.  
 Look down propitious, and my thoughts inspire!  
 Warm my chaste bosom with thy sacred fire!  
 Let all thy flames with all their raptures roll,  
 Deep in my breast, and kindle all my soul!

Nil adeo mortale sonas: tibi captus amore  
 Ipse suos animos, sua munera lætus Apollo  
 Addidit, ac multa præstantem insigniit arte. 580  
 Quodcunque hoc opis, atque artis, nostrique reperti  
 Uni grata tibi debet præclara juvenus,  
 Quam docui, et rupis sacræ super ardua duxi,  
 Dum tua fida lego vestigia, te sequor unum  
 O decus Italiæ! lux o clarissima vatum! 585  
 Te colimus, tibiserta damus, tibi tura, tibi aras  
 Et tibi rite sacrum semper dicamus honorem  
 Carminibus memores: salve sanctissime vates!  
 Laudibus augeri tua gloria nil potis ultra,  
 Et nostræ nil vocis eget: nos aspice præsens, 590  
 Pectoribusque tuos castris infunde calores  
 Adveniens, pater! atque animis te te insere nostris.





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BOILEAU'S ART OF POETRY,  
WITH THE TRANSLATION BY SOAME.

CANTO I.

**R**ASH author, 'tis a vain presumptuous crime  
To undertake the sacred art of rime ;  
If at thy birth the stars that ruled thy sense  
Shone not with a poetic influence,  
In thy strait genius thou wilt still be bound,  
Find Phœbus deaf, and Pegasus unsound.  
You, then, that burn with a desire to try  
The dangerous course of charming poetry,  
Forbear in fruitless verse to lose your time,  
Or take for genius the desire of rime ;  
Fear the allurements of a specious bait,  
And well consider your own force and weight.

**C'**EST en vain qu'au Parnasse un téméraire auteur  
Pense de l'art des vers atteindre la hauteur ;  
S'il ne sent point du ciel l'influence secrète,  
Si son astre en naissant ne l'a formé poëte,  
Dans son génie étroit il est toujours captif ;  
Pour lui Phébus est sourd, et Pégase est rétif.  
O vous donc qui, brûlant d'une ardeur périlleuse,  
Courez du bel esprit la carrière épineuse,  
N'allez pas sur des vers sans fruit vous consumer,  
Ni prendre pour génie un amour de rimer ;  
Craignez d'un vain plaisir les trompeuses amorces,  
Et consultez longtems votre esprit et vos forces.



Nature abounds in wits of every kind,  
 And for each author can a talent find :  
 One may in verse describe an amorous flame,  
 Another sharpen a short epigram ;  
 Waller a hero's mighty acts extol,  
 Spenser sing Rosalind in pastoral.  
 But authors, that themselves too much esteem,  
 Lose their own genius, and mistake their theme :  
 Thus in times past Dubartas vainly writ,  
 Alloying sacred truth with trifling wit ;  
 Impertinently, and without delight,  
 Described the Israelites' triumphant flight ;  
 And, following Moses o'er the sandy plain,  
 Perished with Pharaoh in the Arabian main.

Whate'er you write of pleasant or sublime,  
 Always let sense accompany your rime ;  
 Falsely they seem each other to oppose, —  
 Rime must be made with reason's laws to close ;

La nature, fertile en esprits excellens,  
 Sait entre les auteurs partager les talens :  
 L'un peut tracer en vers une amoureuse flamme, 10  
 L'autre d'un trait plaisant aiguïser l'épigramme ;  
 Malherbe d'un héros peut vanter les exploits,  
 Racan chanter Philis, les bergers et les bois.  
 Mais souvent un esprit qui se flatte et qui s'aime  
 Méconnoit son génie, et s'ignore soi-même : 20  
 Ainsi tel autrefois qu'on vit avec Faret  
 Charbonner de ses vers les murs d'un cabaret,  
 S'en va, mal à propos, d'une voix insolente  
 Chanter du peuple hébreu la fuite triomphante,  
 Et, poursuivant Moïse au travers des déserts, 25  
 Court avec Pharaon se noyer dans les mers.

Quelque sujet qu'on traite, ou plaisant, ou sublime,  
 Que toujours le bon sens s'accorde avec la rime ;  
 L'un l'autre vainement ils semblent se haïr, —





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Sometimes an author, fond of his own thought,  
 Pursues its object till it's overwrought :  
 If he describes a house, he shows the face,  
 And after walks you round from place to place ;  
 Here is a vista, there the doors unfold,  
 Balconies here are balustered with gold ;  
 Then counts the rounds and ovals in the halls,  
 'The festoons, friezes, and the astragals ;'  
 Tired with his tedious pomp, away I run,  
 And skip o'er twenty pages, to be gone.  
 Of such descriptions the vain folly see,  
 And shun their barren superfluity.

All that is needless carefully avoid ;  
 The mind once satisfied is quickly cloyed.  
 He cannot write who knows not to give o'er,  
 To mend one fault he makes a hundred more :  
 A verse was weak, you turn it much too strong,  
 And grow obscure for fear you should be long ;

La raison pour marcher n'a souvent qu'une voie.

Un auteur quelquefois, trop plein de son objet,  
 Jamais sans l'épuiser n'abandonne un sujet :

S'il rencontre un palais, il m'en dépeint la face ;

Il me promène après de terrasse en terrasse ;

Ici s'offre un perron, là règne un corridor,

Là ce balcon s'enferme en un balustre d'or.

Il compte des plafonds les ronds et les ovales ;

'Ce ne sont que festons, ce ne sont qu'astragales ;'

Je saute vingt feuillets pour en trouver la fin,

Et je me sauve à peine au travers du jardin.

Fuyez de ces auteurs l'abondance stérile,

Et ne vous chargez point d'un détail inutile.

Tout ce qu'on dit de trop est fade et rebutant ;

L'esprit rassasié le rejette à l'instant.

Qui ne sait se borner ne sut jamais écrire.

Souvent la peur d'un mal nous conduit dans un pire :

Un vers étoit trop foible, et vous le rendez dur ;

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Some are not gaudy, but are flat and dry ;  
Not to be low, another soars too high.

Would you of every one deserve the praise ?  
In writing vary your discourse and phrase ;  
A frozen style, that neither ebbs nor flows,  
Instead of pleasing, makes us gape and doze.  
Those tedious authors are esteemed by none,  
Who tire us, humming the same heavy tone.

Happy who in his verse can gently steer  
From grave to light, from pleasant to severe !  
His works will be admired wherever found,  
And oft with buyers will be compassed round.

In all you write be neither low nor vile ;  
The meanest theme may have a proper style.)  
The dull burlesque appeared with impudence,  
And pleased by novelty in spite of sense ;  
All, except trivial points, grew out of date ;  
Parnassus spoke the cant of Billingsgate ;

J'évite d'être long, et je deviens obscur ;  
L'un n'est point trop fardé, mais sa muse est trop nue ;  
L'autre a peur de ramper, il se perd dans la nue.

Voulez-vous du public mériter les amours,  
Sans cesse en écrivant variez vos discours ;  
Un style trop égal et toujours uniforme  
En vain brille à nos yeux, il faut qu'il nous endorme.  
On lit peu ces auteurs, nés pour nous ennuyer,  
Qui toujours sur un ton semblent psalmodier.

Heureux qui, dans ses vers, sait d'une voix légère  
Passer du grave au doux, du plaisant au sévère !  
Son livre, aimé du ciel, et chéri des lecteurs,  
Est souvent chez Barbin entouré d'acheteurs.

Quoi que vous écriviez, évitez la bassesse ;  
Le style le moins noble a pourtant sa noblesse.  
Au mépris du bon sens, le burlesque effronté  
Trompa les yeux d'abord, plut par sa nouveauté ;  
On ne vit plus en vers que pointes triviales ;



Boundless and mad, disordered rime was seen ;  
 Disguised Apollo changed to Harlequin.  
 This plague, which first in country towns began,  
 Cities and kingdoms quickly overran ;  
 The dullest scribblers some admirers found,  
 And the Mock Tempest was a while renowned.  
 But this low stuff the town at last despised,  
 And scorned the folly that they once had prized,  
 Distinguished dull from natural and plain,  
 And left the villages to Flecknoe's reign.  
 Let not so mean a style your muse debase,  
 But learn from Butler the buffooning grace,  
 And let burlesque in ballads be employed.

Yet noisy bombast carefully avoid,  
 Nor think to raise, though on Pharsalia's plain,  
 'Millions of mourning mountains of the slain ;'  
 Nor, with Dubartas, 'bridle up the floods,  
 And periwig with wool the baldpate woods.'  
 Choose a just style. Be grave without constraint,

Le Parnasse parla le langage des halles ;  
 La licence à rimer alors n'eut plus de frein ; 85  
 Apollon travesti devint un Tabarin.  
 Cette contagion infecta les provinces,  
 Du clerc et du bourgeois passa jusques aux princes,  
 Le plus mauvais plaisant eut ses approbateurs,  
 Et, jusqu'à D'Assouci, tout trouva des lecteurs. 90  
 Mais de ce style enfin la cour désabusée  
 Dédaigna de ces vers l'extravagance aisée,  
 Distingua le naïf du plat et du bouffon,  
 Et laissa la province admirer le Typhon.  
 Que ce style jamais ne souille votre ouvrage ; 95  
 Imitons de Marot l'élégant badinage,  
 Et laissons le burlesque aux plaisans du Pont Neuf.  
 Mais n'allez point aussi, sur les pas de Brébeuf,  
 Même en une Pharsale, entasser sur les rives  
 'De morts et de mourans cent montagnes plaintives.' 100





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Changed all, spoiled all, and had his way apart ;  
 His haughty muse all others did despise,  
 And thought in triumph to bear off the prize,  
 Till the sharp-sighted critics of the times  
 In their Mock Gondibert exposed his rimes,  
 The laurels he pretended did refuse,  
 And dashed the hopes of his aspiring muse.  
 This headstrong writer, falling from on high,  
 Made following authors take less liberty.

Waller came last, but was the first whose art  
 Just weight and measure did to verse impart,  
 That of a well-placed word could teach the force,  
 And showed for poetry a nobler course.  
 His happy genius did our tongue refine,  
 And easy words with pleasing numbers join ;  
 His verses to good method did apply,  
 And changed hard discord to soft harmony.

Marot bientôt après fit fleurir les ballades,  
 Tourna des triolets, rima des mascarades, 120  
 A des refrains réglés asservit les rondeaux,  
 Et montra pour rimer des chemins tout nouveaux.  
 Ronsard, qui le suivit par une autre méthode,  
 Réglant tout, brouilla tout, fit un art à sa mode,  
 Et toutefois longtemps eut un heureux destin ; 125  
 Mais sa muse, en françois parlant grec et latin,  
 Vit dans l'âge suivant, par un retour grotesque,  
 Tomber de ses grands mots le faste pédantesque.  
 Ce poëte orgueilleux, trébuché de si haut,  
 Rendit plus retenus Desportes et Bertaut. 130

Enfin Malherbe vint, et, le premier en France,  
 Fit sentir dans les vers une juste cadence,  
 D'un mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir,  
 Et réduisit la muse aux règles du devoir.  
 Par ce sage écrivain la langue réparée 135  
 N'offrit plus rien de rude à l'oreille épurée ;  
 Les stances avec grâce apprirent à tomber,



All owned his laws ; which, long approved and tried,  
 To present authors now may be a guide ;  
 Tread boldly in his steps, secure from fear,  
 And be, like him, in your expressions clear. (   
 If in your verse you drag, and sense delay,  
 My patience tires, my fancy goes astray,  
 And from your vain discourse I turn my mind,  
 Nor search an author troublesome to find.

There is a kind of writer pleased with sound,  
 Whose fustian head with clouds is compassed round —  
 No reason can disperse them with its light ;  
 Learn then to think ere you pretend to write.  
 As your idea's clear, or else obscure,  
 The expression follows, perfect or impure ;  
 What we conceive with ease we can express ;  
 Words to the notions flow with readiness.

Observe the language well in all you write, ✓  
 And swerve not from it in your loftiest flight.

Et le vers sur le vers n'osa plus enjamber.

Tout reconnut ses lois; et ce guide fidèle

Aux auteurs de ce temps sert encor de modèle; 140

Marchez donc sur ses pas; aimez sa pureté,

Et de son tour heureux imitez la clarté.

Si le sens de vos vers tarde à se faire entendre,

Mon esprit aussitôt commence à se détendre;

Et, de vos vains discours prompt à se détacher, 145

Ne suit point un auteur qu'il faut toujours chercher.

Il est certains esprits dont les sombres pensées

Sont d'un nuage épais toujours embarrassées —

Le jour de la raison ne le sauroit percer;

Avant donc que d'écrire, apprenez à penser. 150

Selon que notre idée est plus ou moins obscure,

L'expression la suit, ou moins nette ou plus pure;

Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement,

Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.

Surtout, qu'en vos écrits la langue révéree



'The smoothest verse and the exactest sense  
 Displease us, if ill English give offense ;  
 A barbarous phrase no reader can approve,  
 Nor bombast, noise, or affectation love.  
 In short, without pure language, what you write  
 Can never yield us profit or delight.

Take time for thinking ; never work in haste ;  
 And value not yourself for writing fast ;  
 A rapid poem, with such fury writ,  
 Shows want of judgment, not abounding wit.  
 More pleased we are to see a river lead  
 His gentle streams along a flowery mead,  
 Than from high banks to hear loud torrents roar,  
 With foamy waters, on a muddy shore.  
 Gently make haste, of labor not afraid ;  
 A hundred times consider what you've said ;  
 Polish, repolish, every color lay,

Dans vos plus grands excès vous soit toujours sacrée.  
 En vain vous me frappez d'un son mélodieux,  
 Si le terme est impropre, ou le tour vicieux ;  
 Mon esprit n'admet point un pompeux barbarisme,  
 Ni d'un vers ampoulé l'orgueilleux solécisme. 160  
 Sans la langue, en un mot, l'auteur le plus divin,  
 Est toujours, quoi qu'il fasse, un méchant écrivain.

Travaillez à loisir, quelque ordre qui vous presse,  
 Et ne vous piquez point d'une folle vitesse ;  
 Un style si rapide, et qui court en rimant, 165  
 Marque moins trop d'esprit, que peu de jugement.  
 J'aime mieux un ruisseau qui sur la molle arène  
 Dans un pré plein de fleurs lentement se promène,  
 Qu'un torrent débordé qui, d'un cours orageux,  
 Roule, plein de gravier, sur un terrain fangeux. 170  
 Hâtez-vous lentement ; et, sans perdre courage,  
 Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage ;  
 Polissez-le sans cesse et le repolissez ;  
 Ajoutez quelquefois, et souvent effacez.





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A sycophant will everything admire ;  
 Each verse, each sentence, sets his soul on fire ;  
 All is divine ! there's not a word amiss !  
 He shakes with joy, and weeps with tenderness ;  
 He overpowers you with his mighty praise.  
 Truth never moves in those impetuous ways.

A faithful friend is careful of your fame,  
 And freely will your heedless errors blame ;  
 He cannot pardon a neglected line,  
 But verse to rule and order will confine,  
 Reprove of words the too-affected sound, —  
 ' Here the sense flags, and your expression's round,  
 Your fancy tires, and your discourse grows vain,  
 Your terms improper ; make it just and plain.'  
 Thus 'tis a faithful friend will freedom use.

But authors partial to their darling muse  
 Think to protect it they have just pretense,  
 And at your friendly counsel take offense.

Aimez qu'on vous conseille, et non pas qu'on vous loue.

Un flatteur aussitôt cherche à se récrier ;

Chaque vers qu'il entend le fait extasier ;

Tout est charmant, divin ; aucun mot ne le blesse ;

Il trépigne de joie, il pleure de tendresse ;

Il vous comble partout d'éloges fastueux.

La vérité n'a point cet air impétueux.

Un sage ami, toujours rigoureux, inflexible,

Sur vos fautes jamais ne vous laisse paisible ;

Il ne pardonne point les endroits négligés,

Il renvoie en leur lieu les vers mal arrangés,

Il réprime des mots l'ambitieuse emphase ;

Ici le sens le choque, et plus loin c'est la phrase.

' Votre construction semble un peu s'obscurcir ;

Ce terme est équivoque, il le faut éclaircir, —

C'est ainsi que vous parle un ami véritable.

Mais souvent sur ses vers un auteur intraitable

A les protéger tous se croit intéressé,

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'Said you of this, that the expression's flat?  
 Your servant, sir, you must excuse me that,  
 He answers you. — 'This word has here no grace,  
 Pray leave it out.' — 'That, sir, 's the properest place.' —  
 'This turn I like not.' — ' 'Tis approved by all.'  
 Thus, resolute not from one fault to fall,  
 If there's a symbol of which you doubt,  
 'Tis a sure reason not to blot it out.  
 Yet still he says you may his faults confute,  
 And over him your power is absolute.  
 But of his feigned humility take heed,  
 'Tis a bait laid to make you hear him read;  
 And, when he leaves you, happy in his Muse,  
 Restless he runs some other to abuse,  
 And often finds; for in our scribbling times  
 No fool can want a sot to praise his rimes;  
 The flattest work has ever in the court

Et d'abord prend en main le droit de l'offensé. 210

'De ce vers,' direz-vous, 'l'expression est basse.' —  
 'Ah! monsieur, pour ce vers je vous demande grâce,'  
 Répondra-t-il d'abord. — 'Ce mot me semble froid;  
 Je le retrancherois.' — 'C'est le plus bel endroit!' —  
 'Ce tour ne me platt pas.' — 'Tout le monde l'admire.' 215

Ainsi toujours constant à ne se point dédire,  
 Qu'un mot dans son ouvrage ait paru vous blesser,  
 C'est un titre chez lui pour ne point l'effacer.  
 Cependant, à l'entendre, il chérit la critique;  
 Vous avez sur ces vers un pouvoir despotique; 220

Mais tout ce beau discours dont il vient vous flatter  
 N'est rien qu'un piège adroit pour vous les réciter.  
 Aussitôt il vous quitte; et, content de sa muse,  
 S'en va chercher ailleurs quelque fat qu'il abuse,  
 Car souvent il en trouve; ainsi qu'en sots auteurs, 225

Notre siècle est fertile en sots admirateurs;  
 Et, sans ceux que fournit la ville et la province,  
 Il en est chez le duc, il en est chez le prince.



Met with some zealous ass for its support ;  
And in all times a forward scribbling fop  
Has found some greater fool to cry him up.

L'ouvrage le plus plat a, chez les courtisans,  
De tout temps rencontré de zélés partisans;  
Et, pour finir enfin par un trait de satire,  
Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.





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And frightened nymphs dive down into the floods.

Opposed to this, another, low in style,  
 Makes shepherds speak a language low and vile ;  
 His writings, flat and heavy, without sound,  
 Kissing the earth and creeping on the ground ;  
 You'd swear that Randal, in his rustic strains,  
 Again was quavering to the country swains,  
 And changing, without care of sound or dress,  
 Strephon and Phyllis into Tom and Bess.

'Twixt these extremes 'tis hard to keep the right ;  
 For guides take Virgil and read Theocrite ;  
 Be their just writings, by the gods inspired,  
 Your constant pattern, practised and admired.  
 By them alone you'll easily comprehend  
 How poets without shame may condescend  
 To sing of gardens, fields, of flowers and fruit,  
 To stir up shepherds and to tune the flute ;  
 Of love's rewards to tell the happy hour,

*Et les nymphes, d'effroi, se cachent sous les eaux.*

Au contraire cet autre, abject en son langage,  
 Fait parler ses bergers comme on parle au village ;  
 Ses vers plats et grossiers, dépouillés d'agrément,  
 Toujours baisent la terre, et rampent tristement ;  
 On diroit que Ronsard, sur ses pipeaux rustiques,  
 Vient encor fredonner ses idylles gothiques,  
 Et changer, sans respect de l'oreille et du son,  
 Lycidas en Pierrot, et Philis en Toinon.

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Entre ces deux excès la route est difficile ;  
 Suivez, pour la trouver, Théocrite et Virgile ;  
 Que leurs tendres écrits, par les Grâces dictés,  
 Ne quittent point vos mains, jour et nuit feuilletés.  
 Seuls, dans leurs doctes vers, ils pourront vous apprendre  
 Par quel art sans bassesse un auteur peut descendre ;  
 Chanter Flore, les champs, Pomone, les vergers ;  
 Au combat de la flûte animer deux bergers ;  
 Des plaisirs de l'amour vanter la douce amorce ;

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Daphne à tree, Narcissus make a flower,  
 And by what means the eclogue yet has power  
 To make the woods worthy a conqueror ;  
 This of their writings is the grace and flight ;  
 Their risings lofty, yet not out of sight.

The Elegy, that loves a mournful style,  
 With unbound hair weeps at a funeral pile ;  
 It paints the lover's torments and delights,  
 A mistress flatters, threatens, and invites ;  
 But well these raptures if you'll make us see,  
 You must know love as well as poetry.

I hate those lukewarm authors, whose forced fire  
 In a cold style describes a hot desire ;  
 That sigh by rule, and, raging in cold blood,  
 Their sluggish muse whip to an amorous mood.  
 Their feigned transports appear but flat and vain ;  
 They always sigh, and always hug their chain,  
 Adore their prisons and their sufferings bless,

Changer Narcisse en fleur, couvrir Daphné d'écorce ;  
 Et par quel art encor l'églogue quelquefois  
 Rend dignes d'un consul la campagne et les bois.  
 Telle est de ce poëme et la force et la grâce.

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D'un ton un peu plus haut, mais pourtant sans audace,  
 La plaintive élégie, en longs habits de deuil,  
 Sait, les cheveux épars, gémir sur un cercueil.  
 Elle peint des amans la joie et la tristesse ;  
 Flatte, menace, irrite, apaise une maîtresse.  
 Mais, pour bien exprimer ces caprices heureux,  
 C'est peu d'être poëte, il faut être amoureux.

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Je hais ces vains auteurs, dont la muse forcée  
 M'entretient de ses feux, toujours froide et glacée ;  
 Qui s'affligent par art, et, fous de sens rassis,  
 S'érigent, pour rimer, en amoureux transis.  
 Leurs transports les plus doux ne sont que phrases vaines ;  
 Ils ne savent jamais que se charger de chaînes,  
 Que bénir leur martyre, adorer leur prison,

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Make sense and reason quarrel as they please.  
 'Twas not of old in this affected tone  
 That smooth Tibullus made his amorous moan,  
 Nor Ovid, when, instructed from above,  
 By nature's rule he taught the art of love.  
 The heart in elegies forms the discourse. ✓  
 ◡ The Ode is bolder and has greater force ;  
 Mounting to heaven in her ambitious flight,  
 Amongst the gods and heroes takes delight ;  
 Of Pisa's wrestlers tells the sinewy force,  
 And sings the dusty conqueror's glorious course ;  
 To Simois' streams does fierce Achilles bring,  
 And makes the Ganges bow to Britain's king.  
 Sometimes she flies like an industrious bee,  
 And robs the flowers by nature's chemistry,  
 Describes the shepherd's dances, feasts, and bliss,  
 And boasts from Phyllis to surprise a kiss,  
 ' When gently she resists with feigned remorse,

Et faire quereller les sens et la raison.

Ce n'étoit pas jadis sur ce ton ridicule.

Qu'Amour dictoit les vers que soupiroit Tibulle,

Ou que du tendre Ovide animant les doux sons,

Il donnoit de son art les charmantes leçons.

Il faut que le cœur seul parle dans l'élegie.

L'ode, avec plus d'éclat, et non moins d'énergie,

Élevant jusqu'au ciel son vol ambitieux,

Entretient dans ses vers commerce avec les dieux;

Aux athlètes dans Pise elle ouvre la barrière,

Chante un vainqueur poudreux au bout de la carrière;

Mène Achille sanglant au bord du Simois,

Ou fait fléchir l'Escaut sous le joug de Louis.

Tantôt, comme une abeille ardente à son ouvrage,

Elle s'en va de fleurs dépouiller le rivage;

Elle peint les festins, les danses et les ris;

Vante un baiser cueilli sur les lèvres d'Iris,

' Qui mollement résiste, et, par un doux caprice,

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Which in these writings the lame sense supplied,  
 Forbade a useless line should find a place,  
 Or a repeated word appear with grace.  
 A faultless sonnet, finished thus, would be  
 Worth tedious volumes of loose poetry.  
 A hundred scribbling authors, without ground,  
 Believe they have this only phœnix found,  
 When yet the exactest scarce have two or three,  
 Among whole tomes, from faults and censure free ;  
 The rest, but little read, regarded less,  
 Are shoveled to the pastry from the press.  
 Closing the sense within the measured time,  
 'Tis hard to fit the reason to the rime.

↳The Epigram, with little art composed,  
 Is one good sentence in a distich closed.  
 These points that by Italians first were prized,  
 Our ancient authors knew not, or despised ;  
 The vulgar, dazzled with their glaring light,

Lui-même en mesura le nombre et la cadence; 90  
 Défendit qu'un vers foible y pût jamais entrer,  
 Ni qu'un mot déjà mis osât s'y remonter.

Du reste, il l'enrichit d'une beauté suprême;  
 Un sonnet sans défauts vaut seul un long poëme. 95  
 Mais en vain mille auteurs y pensent arriver;

Et cet heureux phénix est encore à trouver;  
 A peine dans Gombaut, Maynard et Malleville  
 En peut-on admirer deux ou trois entre mille;  
 Le reste, aussi peu lu que ceux de Pelletier,  
 N'a fait de chez Sercy qu'un saut chez l'épicier. 100

Pour enfermer son sens dans la borne prescrite,  
 La mesure est toujours trop longue et trop petite.

L'épigramme, plus libre en son tour plus borné,  
 N'est souvent qu'un bon mot de deux rimes orné. 105

Jadis de nos auteurs les pointes ignorées  
 Furent de l'Italie en nos vers attirées.  
 Le vulgaire, ébloui de leur faux agrément,



To their false pleasures quickly they invite ;  
 But public favor so increased their pride,  
 They overwhelmed Parnassus with their tide.

↳ The Madrigal at first was overcome,  
 And the proud Sonnet fell by the same doom ;  
 With these grave Tragedy adorned her flights,  
 And mournful Elegy her funeral rites ;  
 A hero never failed them on the stage,  
 Without his point a lover durst not rage ;  
 The amorous shepherds took more care to prove  
 True to his point, than faithful to their love.  
 Each word, like Janus, had a double face,  
 And prose, as well as verse, allowed it place ;  
 The lawyer with conceits adorned his speech,  
 The parson without quibbling could not preach.

At last affronted reason looked about,  
 And from all serious matters shut them out,  
 Declared that none should use them without shame,

A ce nouvel appât courut avidement ;  
 La faveur du public excitant leur audace,  
 Leur nombre impétueux inonda le Parnasse. 110  
 Le madrigal d'abord en fut enveloppé ;  
 Le sonnet orgueilleux lui-même en fut frappé ;  
 La tragédie en fit ses plus chères délices ;  
 L'élegie en orna ses douloureux caprices ;  
 Un héros sur la scène eut soin de s'en parer, 115  
 Et sans pointe un amant n'osa plus soupirer :  
 On vit tous les bergers, dans leurs plaintes nouvelles.  
 Fidèles à la pointe encore plus qu'à leurs belles ;  
 Chaque mot eut toujours deux visages divers ;  
 La prose la reçut aussi bien que les vers ; 120  
 L'avocat au palais en hérissa son style,  
 Et le docteur en chaire en sema l'Évangile.

La raison outragée enfin ouvrit les yeux,  
 La chassa pour jamais des discours sérieux ;  
 Et, dans tous ces écrits la déclarant infâme, 125



Except a scattering in the epigram —  
 Provided that by art, and in due time,  
 They turned upon the thought, and not the rime. ✓  
 Thus in all parts disorders did abate ;  
 Yet quibblers in the court had leave to prate,  
 Insipid jesters and unpleasant fools,  
 A corporation of dull punning drolls.  
 'Tis not but that sometimes a dextrous muse  
 May with advantage a turned sense abuse,  
 And on a word may trifle with address ;  
 But above all avoid the fond excess,  
 And think not, when your verse and sense are lame,  
 With a dull point to tag your epigram.

Each poem his perfection has apart :  
 The British Round in plainness shows his art ;  
 The Ballad, though the pride of ancient time,  
 Has often nothing but his humorous rime ;  
 The Madrigal may softer passions move,

Par grace lui laissa l'entrée en l'épigramme,  
 Pourvu que sa finesse, éclatant à propos,  
 Roulât sur la pensée, et non pas sur les mots.  
 Ainsi de toutes parts les désordres cessèrent.

Toutefois à la cour les Turlupins restèrent, 130  
 Insipides plaisans, bouffons infortunés,  
 D'un jeu de mots grossier partisans surannés.

Ce n'est pas quelquefois qu'une muse un peu fine  
 Sur un mot, en passant, ne joue et ne badine,  
 Et d'un sens détourné n'abuse avec succès; 135  
 Mais fuyez sur ce point un ridicule excès,  
 Et n'allez pas toujours d'une pointe frivole  
 Aiguiser par la queue une épigramme folle.

Tout poëme est brillant de sa propre beauté :  
 Le rondeau, né gaulois, a la naïveté; 140  
 La ballade, asservie à ses vieilles maximes,  
 Souvent doit tout son lustre au caprice des rimes;  
 Le madrigal, plus simple et plus noble en son tour,





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Or of Sejanus' fall tells the approach ;  
 Or that he makes the trembling senate come  
 To the stern tyrant to receive their doom ;  
 Or Roman vice in coarsest habits shows,  
 And paints an empress reeking from the stews,  
 In all he writes appears a noble fire ;  
 To follow such a master then desire.

Chaucer alone, fixed on this solid base,  
 In his old style conserves a modern grace,  
 Too happy, if the freedom of his rimes  
 Offended not the method of our times.  
 The Latin writers decency neglect,  
 But modern authors challenge our respect,  
 And at immodest writings take offense,  
 If clean expression cover not the sense.  
 I love sharp satire from obscenity free,  
 Not impudence that preaches modesty.

Il brise de Séjan la statue adorée,  
 Soit qu'il fasse au conseil courir les sénateurs,  
 D'un tyran soupçonneux pâles adulateurs,  
 Ou que, poussant à bout la luxure latine, 165  
 Aux portefaix de Rome il vende Messaline,  
 Ses écrits pleins de feu partout brillent aux yeux.

De ces maîtres savans disciple ingénieux,  
 Régnier, seul parmi nous formé sur leurs modèles,  
 Dans son vieux style encore a des graces nouvelles; 170  
 Heureux, si ses discours, craints du chaste lecteur,  
 Ne se sentoient des lieux où fréquentoit l'auteur,

Et si, du son hardi de ses rimes cyniques,  
 Il n'alarmoit souvent les oreilles pudiques!

Le latin, dans les mots, brave l'honnêteté, 175  
 Mais le lecteur françois veut être respecté;  
 Du moindre sens impur la liberté l'outrage,  
 Si la pudeur des mots n'en adoucit l'image.

Je veux dans la satire un esprit de candeur, .  
 Et fuis un effronté qui prêche la pudeur. 180



Our English, who in malice never fail,  
 Hence in Lampoons and Libels learn to rail, —  
 Pleasant detraction, that by singing goes  
 From mouth to mouth, and as it marches grows ;  
 Our freedom in our poetry we see,  
 That child of joy begot by liberty.  
 But, vain blasphemer, tremble when you choose  
God for the subject of your impious muse ;  
 At last those jests which libertines invent  
 Bring the lewd author to just punishment.  
 Even in a song there must be art and sense ;  
 Yet sometimes we have seen that wine or chance  
 Has warmed cold brains, and given dull writers mettle,  
 And furnished out a scene for Mr. Settle.  
 But for one lucky hit that made thee please,  
 Let not thy folly grow to a disease,  
 Nor think thyself a wit ; for in our age  
 If a warm fancy does some fop engage,

D'un trait de ce poëme en bons mots si fertile,  
 Le François, né malin, forma le vaudeville,  
 Agréable indiscret, qui, conduit par le chant,  
 Passe de bouche en bouche et s'accroît en marchant ;  
 La liberté françoise en ses vers se déploie ; 185  
 Cet enfant de plaisir veut naître dans la joie.  
 Toutefois n'allez pas, goguenard dangereux,  
 Faire Dieu le sujet d'un badinage affreux ;  
 A la fin tous ces jeux que l'athéisme élève,  
 Conduisent tristement le plaisant à la Grève. 190  
 Il faut, même en chansons, du bon sens et de l'art ;  
 Mais pourtant on a vu le vin et le hasard  
 Inspirer quelquefois une muse grossière,  
 Et fournir, sans génie, un couplet à Linière.  
 Mais pour un vain bonheur qui vous a fait rimer, 195  
 Gardez qu'un sot orgueil ne vous vienne enfumer.  
 Souvent l'auteur altier de quelque chansonnette  
 Au même instant prend droit de se croire poëte ;



He neither eats nor sleeps till he has writ,  
But plagues the world with his adulterate wit.  
Nay 'tis a wonder if, in his dire rage,  
He prints not his dull follies for the stage,  
And, in the front of all his senseless plays,  
Makes David Loggan crown his head with bays.

Il ne dormira plus qu'il n'ait fait un sonnet;  
Il met tous les matins six impromptus au net.  
Encore est-ce un miracle, en ses vagues furies,  
Si bientôt, imprimant ses sottes rêveries,  
Il ne se fait graver au-devant du recueil,  
Couronné de lauriers par la main de Nanteuil.

200





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To move the passions and incline the heart.  
 If in a labored act, the pleasing rage  
 Cannot our hopes and fears by turns engage,  
 Nor in our mind a feeling pity raise,  
 In vain with learned scenes you fill your plays ;  
 Your cold discourse can never move the mind  
 Of a stern critic, naturally unkind,  
 Who, justly tired with your pedantic flight,  
 Or falls asleep or censures all you write.  
 The secret is, attention first to gain,  
 To move our minds and then to entertain,  
 That, from the very opening of the scenes,  
 The first may show us what the author means.

I'm tired to see an actor on the stage  
 That knows not whether he's to laugh or rage ;  
 Who, an intrigue unraveling in vain,  
 Instead of pleasing keeps my mind in pain.  
 I'd rather much the nauseous dunce should say

Aille chercher le cœur, l'échauffe et le remue.  
 Si d'un beau mouvement l'agréable fureur  
 Souvent ne nous remplit d'une douce terreur,  
 Ou n'excite en notre âme une pitié charmante,  
 En vain vous étalez une scène savante :  
 Vos froids raisonnemens ne feront qu'attiédir  
 Un spectateur toujours paresseux d'applaudir,  
 Et qui, des vains efforts de votre rhétorique  
 Justement fatigué, s'endort ou vous critique.  
 Le secret est d'abord de plaire et de toucher ;  
 Inventez des ressorts qui puissent m'attacher.

Que dès les premiers vers l'action préparée  
 Sans peine du sujet aplanisse l'entrée.  
 Je me ris d'un acteur qui, lent à s'exprimer,  
 De ce qu'il veut, d'abord ne sait pas m'informer,  
 Et qui, débrouillant mal une pénible intrigue,  
 D'un divertissement me fait une fatigue.  
 J'aimerois mieux encor qu'il déclînât son nom,

20

25

30



Downright, 'My name is Hector in the play,'  
 Than with a mass of miracles, ill-joined,  
 Confound my ears, and not instruct my mind.  
 The subject's never soon enough expressed.

Your place of action must be fixed, and rest.  
 A Spanish poet may with good event  
 In one day's space whole ages represent ;  
 There oft the hero of the wandering stage  
 Begins a child, and ends the play of age.  
 But we, that are by reason's rule confined,  
 Will that with art the poem be designed,  
 That unity of action, time, and place,  
 Keep the stage full, and all our labors grace.

Write not what cannot be with ease conceived ;  
 Some truths may be too strong to be believed.  
 A foolish wonder cannot entertain ;  
 My mind's not moved if your discourse be vain.  
 You may relate what would offend the eye ;

Et dit, 'Je suis Oreste ou bien Agamemnon,'  
 Que d'aller, par un tas de confuses merveilles  
 Sans rien dire à l'esprit, étourdir les oreilles :  
 Le sujet n'est jamais assez tôt expliqué.

35

Que le lieu de la scène y soit fixe et marqué.

Un rimeur, sans péril, delà les Pyrénées,  
 Sur la scène en un jour renferme des années ;

40

Là souvent le héros d'un spectacle grossier,  
 Enfant au premier acte, est barbon au dernier.

Mais nous, que la raison à ses règles engage,  
 Nous voulons qu'avec art l'action se ménage ;

Qu'en un lieu, qu'en un jour, un seul fait accompli  
 Tienne jusqu'à la fin le théâtre rempli.

45

Jamais au spectateur n'offrez rien d'incroyable ;  
 Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable.

Une merveille absurde est pour moi sans appas ;

L'esprit n'est point ému de ce qu'il ne croit pas.

50

Ce qu'on ne doit point voir, qu'un récit nous l'expose ;



Seeing indeed would better satisfy,  
 But there are objects which a curious art  
 Hides from the eyes, yet offers to the heart.

The mind is most agreeably surprised, {  
 When a well-woven subject, long disguised,  
 You on a sudden artfully unfold,  
 And give the whole another face and mold.

At first the Tragedy was void of art,  
 A song, where each man danced and sung his part,  
 And of god Bacchus roaring out the praise,  
 Sought a good vintage for their jolly days ;  
 Then wine and joy were seen in each man's eyes,  
 And a fat goat was the best singer's prize.

Thespis was first, who, all besmeared with lee,  
 Began this pleasure for posterity,  
 And with his carted actors and a song  
 Amused the people as he passed along.

Les yeux en le voyant saisiroient mieux la chose,  
 Mais il est des objets que l'art judicieux  
 Doit offrir à l'oreille et reculer des yeux.

Que le trouble, toujours croissant de scène en scène, 55  
 A son comble arrivé se débrouille sans peine.  
 L'esprit ne se sent point plus vivement frappé  
 Que lorsqu'en un sujet d'intrigue enveloppé,  
 D'un secret tout à coup la vérité connue  
 Change tout, donne à tout une face imprévue. 60

La tragédie, informe et grossière en naissant,  
 N'étoit qu'un simple chœur, où chacun, en dansant  
 Et du dieu des raisins entonnant les louanges,  
 S'efforçoit d'attirer de fertiles vendanges.

Là, le vin et la joie éveillant les esprits, 65  
 Du plus habile chantre un bouc étoit le prix.  
 Thespis fut le premier qui, barbouillé de lie,  
 Promena par les bourgs cette heureuse folie,  
 Et, d'acteurs mal ornés chargeant un tombereau,  
 Amusa les passans d'un spectacle nouveau. 70





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And raised the lawful heroes of the stage ;  
 Only the Athenian mask was laid aside,  
 And Chorus by the music was supplied.

Ingenious love, inventive in new arts,  
 Mingled in plays, and quickly touched our hearts ;  
 This passion never could resistance find,  
 But knows the shortest passage to the mind.  
 Paint then, I'm pleased my hero be in love,  
 But let him not like a tame shepherd move ;  
 Let not Achilles be like Thyrsis seen,  
 Or for a Cyrus show an Artamene ;  
 That, struggling oft, his passions we may find  
 The frailty, not the virtue of his mind.

Of romance heroes shun the low design,  
 Yet to great hearts some human frailties join.  
 Achilles must with Homer's heart engage —  
 For an affront I'm pleased to see him rage ;

Fit voir de ce projet la dévôte imprudence.  
 On chassa ces docteurs prêchant sans mission ;  
 On vit renaître Hector, Andromaque, Ilion ; 90  
 Seulement, les acteurs laissant le masque antique,  
 Le violon tint lieu de cœur et de musique.

Bientôt l'amour, fertile en tendres sentimens,  
 S'empara du théâtre ainsi que des romans ;  
 De cette passion la sensible peinture 95  
 Est pour aller au cœur la route la plus sûre.  
 Peignez donc, j'y consens, les héros amoureux,  
 Mais ne m'en formez pas des bergers doucereux ;  
 Qu'Achille aime autrement que Thyrsis et Philène ;  
 N'allez pas d'un Cyrus nous faire un Artamène ; 100  
 Et que l'amour, souvent de remords combattu,  
 Paroisse une foiblesse et non une vertu.

Des héros de roman fuyez les petites ;  
 Toutefois aux grands cœurs donnez quelques foiblesses.  
 Achille déplairoit, moins bouillant et moins prompt, 105  
 J'aime à lui voir verser des pleurs pour un affront ;



Those little failings in your hero's heart  
 Show that of man and nature he has part.  
 To leave known rules you cannot be allowed ;  
 Make Agamemnon covetous and proud,  
 Æneas in religious rites austere ;  
 Keep to each man his proper character.  
 Of countries and of times the humors know,  
 From different climates different customs grow ;  
 And strive to shun their fault, who vainly dress  
 An antique hero like a modern ass,  
 Who make old Romans like our English move,  
 Show Cato sparkish, or make Brutus love.  
 In a romance those errors are excused ;  
 There 'tis enough that, reading, we're amused,  
 Rules too severe would there be useless found ;  
 But the strict scene must have a jüster bound,  
Exact decorum we must always find.

If then you form some hero in your mind,

A ces petits défauts marqués dans sa peinture,  
 L'esprit avec plaisir reconnoît la nature.  
 Qu'il soit sur ce modèle en vos écrits tracé ;  
 Qu'Agamemnon soit fier, superbe, intéressé ; 110  
 Que pour ses dieux Énée ait un respect austère ;  
 Conservez à chacun son propre caractère.  
 Des siècles, de pays, étudiez les mœurs,  
 Les climats font souvent les diverses humeurs.  
 Gardez donc de donner, ainsi que dans Clélie, 115  
 L'air, ni l'esprit françois à l'antique Italie ;  
 Et, sous des noms romains faisant notre portrait,  
 Peindre Caton galant et Brutus dameret.  
 Dans un roman frivole aisément tout s'excuse ;  
 C'est assez qu'en courant la fiction amuse, 120  
 Trop de rigueur alors seroit hors de saison ;  
 Mais la scène demande une exacte raison,  
 L'étroite bienséance y veut être gardée.

D'un nouveau personnage inventez-vous l'idée ?



Be sure your image with itself agree,  
 For what he first appears he still must be.

Affected wits will naturally incline  
 To paint their figures by their own design ;  
 Your bully poets bully heroes write ;  
 Chapman in Bussy D'Ambois took delight,  
 And thought perfection was to huff and fight.

Wise nature by variety does please ;  
 Clothe differing passions in a differing dress :  
 Bold anger in rough haughty words appears ;  
 Sorrow is humble and dissolves in tears.

Make not your Hecuba with fury rage,  
 And show a ranting grief upon the stage,  
 Or tell in vain how ' the rough Tanais bore  
 His sevenfold waters to the Euxine shore.'  
 These swollen expressions, this affected noise,  
 Shows like some pedant that declaims to boys.  
 In sorrow you must softer methods keep,

Qu'en tout avec soi-même il se montre d'accord, 125  
 Et qu'il soit jusqu'au bout tel qu'on l'a vu d'abord.

Souvent, sans y penser, un écrivain qui s'aime  
 Forme tous ses héros semblables à soi-même :  
 Tout a l'humeur gasconne en un auteur gascon ;  
 Calprenède et Juba parlent du même ton. 130

La nature est en nous plus diverse et plus sage ;  
 Chaque passion parle un différent langage :  
 La colère est superbe et veut des mots altiers ;  
 L'abattement s'explique en des termes moins fiers.

Que devant Troie en flamme Hécube désolée 135

Ne vienne pas pousser une plainte ampoulée,  
 Ni sans raison décrire en quel affreux pays,  
 ' Par sept bouches l'Euxin reçoit le Tanais.'  
 Tous ces pompeux amas d'expressions frivoles  
 Sont d'un déclamateur amoureux des paroles. 140

Il faut dans la douleur que vous vous abaissiez ;  
 Pour me tirer des pleurs, il faut que vous pleuriez.





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In the narration of some great design  
 Invention, art, and fable all must join ;  
 Here fiction must employ its utmost grace ;  
 All must assume a body, mind, and face.  
 Each virtue a divinity is seen :  
 Prudence is Pallas, Beauty Paphos' queen ;  
 'Tis not a cloud from whence swift lightnings fly,  
 But Jupiter that thunders from the sky ;  
 Nor a rough storm that gives the sailor pain,  
 But angry Neptune plowing up the main ;  
 Echo's no more an empty airy sound,  
 But a fair nymph that weeps her lover drowned.  
 Thus in the endless treasure of his mind  
 The poet does a thousand figures find,  
 Around the work his ornaments he pours,  
 And strews with lavish hand his opening flowers.  
 'Tis not a wonder if a tempest bore  
 The Trojan fleet against the Libyan shore ;

D'un air plus grand encor la poésie épique, 160  
 Dans le vaste récit d'une longue action,  
 Se soutient par la fable, et vit de fiction.  
 Là pour nous enchanter tout est mis en usage ;  
 Tout prend un corps, une âme, un esprit, un visage.  
 Chaque vertu devient une divinité : 165  
 Minerve est la prudence, et Vénus la beauté ;  
 Ce n'est plus la vapeur qui produit le tonnerre,  
 C'est Jupiter armé pour effrayer la terre ;  
 Un orage terrible aux yeux des matelots,  
 C'est Neptune en courroux qui gourmande les flots ; 170  
 Écho n'est plus un son qui dans l'air retentisse,  
 C'est une nymphe en pleurs qui se plaint de Narcisse.  
 Ainsi, dans cet amas de nobles fictions,  
 Le poëte s'égayé en mille inventions,  
 Orne, élève, embellit, agrandit toutes choses, 175  
 Et trouve sous sa main des fleurs toujours écloses.  
 Qu'Énée et ses vaisseaux, par le vent écartés,



From faithless fortune this is no surprise,  
 For every day 'tis common to our eyes.  
 But angry Juno, that she might destroy  
 And overwhelm the rest of ruined Troy ;  
 That Æolus, with the fierce goddess joined,  
 Opened the hollow prisons of the wind ;  
 Till angry Neptune, looking o'er the main,  
 Rebukes the tempest, calms the waves again,  
 Their vessels from the dangerous quicksands steers, —  
 These are the springs that move our hopes and fears.  
 Without these ornaments before our eyes  
 The unsinewed poem languishes and dies,  
 Your poet in his art will always fail,  
 And tell you but a dull insipid tale.

In vain have our mistaken authors tried  
 To lay these ancient ornaments aside,  
 Thinking our God, and prophets that he sent,  
 Might act like those the poets did invent,

Soient aux bords africains d'un orage emportés ;  
 Ce n'est qu'une aventure ordinaire et commune,  
 Qu'un coup peu surprenant des traits de la fortune. 180  
 Mais que Junon, constante en son aversion,  
 Poursuive sur les flots les restes d'Ilion ;  
 Qu'Éole, en sa faveur, les chassant d'Italie,  
 Ouvre aux vents mutinés les prisons d'Éolie ;  
 Que Neptune en courroux, s'élevant sur la mer, 185  
 D'un mot calme les flots, mette la paix dans l'air,  
 Délivre les vaisseaux, des syrtes les arrache ;  
 C'est là ce qui surprend, frappe, saisit, attache.  
 Sans tous ces ornemens le vers tombe en langueur,  
 La poésie est morte, ou rampe sans vigueur ; 190  
 Le poëte n'est plus qu'un orateur timide,  
 Qu'un froid historien d'une fable insipide.

C'est donc bien vainement que nos auteurs déçus,  
 Bannissant de leurs vers ces ornemens reçus,  
 Pensent faire agir Dieu, ses saints et ses prophètes, 195



To fright poor readers in each line with hell,  
 And talk of Satan, Ashtaroth, and Bel.  
 The mysteries which Christians must believe  
 Disdain such shifting pageants to receive ;  
 The Gospel offers nothing to our thoughts  
 But penitence, or punishment for faults ;  
 And mingling falsehoods with those mysteries,  
 Would make our sacred truths appear like lies.  
 Besides, what pleasure can it be to hear  
 The howlings of repining Lucifer,  
 Whose rage at your imagined hero flies,  
 And oft with God himself disputes the prize ?

Tasso, you'll say, has done it with applause ;  
 It is not here I mean to judge his cause,  
 Yet though our age has so extolled his name,  
 His works had never gained immortal fame,  
 If holy Godfrey in his ecstasies  
 Had only conquered Satan on his knees,

Comme ces dieux éclos du cerveau des poètes ;  
 Mettent à chaque pas le lecteur en enfer ;  
 N'offrent rien qu'Astaroth, Belzébuth, Lucifer.  
 De la foi d'un chrétien les mystères terribles  
 D'ornemens égayés ne sont point susceptibles ;  
 L'Évangile à l'esprit n'offre de tous côtés  
 Que pénitence à faire et tourmens mérités ;  
 Et de vos fictions le mélange coupable  
 Même à ses vérités donne l'air de la fable.

200

Et quel objet enfin à présenter aux yeux  
 Que le diable toujours hurlant contre les cieux,  
 Qui de votre héros veut rabaisser la gloire,  
 Et souvent avec Dieu balance la victoire !

205

Le Tasse, dira-t-on, l'a fait avec succès.  
 Je ne veux point ici lui faire son procès,  
 Mais, quoi que notre siècle à sa gloire publie,  
 Il n'eût point de son livre illustré l'Italie,  
 Si son sage héros, toujours en oraison,

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Leave them their pious follies to pursue,  
 But let our reason such vain fears subdue,  
 And let us not, amongst our vanities,  
 Of the true God create a god of lies. ✕

In fable we a thousand pleasures see,  
 And the smooth names seem made for poetry, —  
 As Hector, Alexander, Helen, Phyllis,  
 Ulysses, Agamemnon, and Achilles ;  
 In such a crowd, the poet were to blame  
 To choose King Chilperic for his hero's name.  
 Sometimes the name, being well or ill applied,  
 Will the whole fortune of your work decide.

Would you your reader never should be tired,  
 Choose some great hero, fit to be admired,  
 In courage signal, and in virtue bright ;  
 Let even his very failings give delight ;  
 Let his great actions our attention bind,  
 Like Cæsar or like Scipio frame his mind,

Dans leur faux zèle iront chasser l'allégorie.  
 Laissons-les s'applaudir de leur pieuse erreur ;  
 Mais, pour nous, bannissons une vaine terreur,  
 Et, fabuleux chrétiens, n'allons point dans nos songes 235  
 Du Dieu de vérité faire un dieu de mensonges.

La fable offre à l'esprit mille agrémens divers ;  
 Là tous les noms heureux semblent nés pour les vers,  
 Ulysse, Agamemnon, Oreste, Idoménée,  
 Hélène, Ménélas, Pâris, Hector, Énée. 240

O le plaisant projet d'un poëte ignorant,  
 Qui de tant de héros va choisir Childebrand !  
 D'un seul nom quelquefois le son dur ou bizarre  
 Rend un poëme entier ou burlesque ou barbare.

Voulez-vous longtemps plaire, et jamais ne lasser ? 245  
 Faites choix d'un héros propre à m'intéresser,  
 En valeur éclatant, en vertus magnifique ;  
 Qu'en lui, jusqu'aux défauts, tout se montre héroïque ;  
 Que ses faits surprénans soient dignes d'être ouïs ;



And not like Ædipus his perjured race ;  
 A common conqueror is a theme too base.  
 Choose not your tale of accidents too full,  
 Too much variety may make it dull.

Achilles' rage alone, when wrought with skill,  
 Abundantly does a whole Iliad fill.

Be your narrations lively, short, and smart ;  
 In your descriptions show your noblest art,  
 There 'tis your poetry may be employed.  
 Yet you must trivial accidents avoid,  
 Nor imitate that fool, who, to describe  
 The wondrous marches of the chosen tribe,  
 Placed on the sides, to see their armies pass,  
 The fishes staring through the liquid glass ;  
 Described a child, who, ' with his little hand,  
 Picked up the shining pebbles from the sand.'  
 Such objects are too mean to stay our sight ;  
 Allow your work a just and nobler flight.

Qu'il soit tel que César, Alexandre, ou Louis, 250  
 Non tel que Polynice et son perfide frère.  
 On s'ennuie aux exploits d'un conquérant vulgaire.  
 N'offrez point un sujet d'incidens trop chargé :  
 Le seul courroux d'Achille, avec art ménagé,  
 Remplit abondamment une Iliade entière ; 255  
 Souvent trop d'abondance appauvrit la matière.

Soyez vif et pressé dans vos narrations ;  
 Soyez riche et pompeux dans vos descriptions,  
 C'est là qu'il faut des vers étaler l'élégance ;  
 N'y présentez jamais de basse circonstance. 260  
 N'imitiez pas ce fou qui, décrivant les mers,  
 Et peignant, au milieu de leurs flots entr'ouverts,  
 L'Hébreu sauvé du joug de ses injustes maîtres,  
 Met, pour les voir passer, les poissons aux fenêtres ;  
 Peint le petit enfant qui ' va, saute, revient, 265  
 Et joyeux à sa mère offre un caillou qu'il tient.'  
 Sur de trop vains objets c'est arrêter la vue.



Be your beginning plain ; and take good heed  
 Too soon you mount not on the airy steed,  
 Nor tell your reader, in a thundering verse,  
 ' I sing the conqueror of the universe.'  
 What can an author after this produce ?  
 The laboring mountain must bring forth a mouse.  
 Much better are we pleased with his address,  
 Who without making such vast promises,  
 Says in an easier style and plainer sense,  
 ' I sing the combats of that pious prince,  
 Who from the Phrygian coast his armies bore,  
 And landed first on the Lavinian shore.'  
 His opening muse sets not the world on fire,  
 And yet performs more than we can require.  
 Quickly you'll hear him celebrate the fame  
 And future glory of the Roman name,  
 Of Styx and Acheron describe the floods,  
 And Cæsars wandering in the Elysian woods.

Donnez à votre ouvrage une juste étendue.

Que le début soit simple et n'ait rien d'affecté.  
 N'allez pas dès l'abord, sur Pégase monté, 270  
 Crier à vos lecteurs d'une voix de tonnerre,  
 ' Je chante le vainqueur des vainqueurs de la terre.'  
 Que produira l'auteur après tous ces grands cris ?  
 La montagne en travail enfante une souris.  
 Oh ! que j'aime bien mieux cet auteur plein d'adresse 275  
 Qui, sans faire d'abord de si haute promesse,  
 Me dit d'un ton aisé, doux, simple, harmonieux,  
 ' Je chante les combats, et cet homme pieux  
 Qui, des bords phrygiens conduit dans l'Ausonie,  
 Le premier aborda les champs de Lavinie.' 280  
 Sa muse en arrivant ne met pas tout en feu,  
 Et pour donner beaucoup, ne nous promet que peu.  
 Bientôt vous la verrez, prodiguant les miracles,  
 Du destin des Latins prononcer les oracles,  
 De Styx et d'Achéron peindre les noirs torrens, 285





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All without trouble answers his intent,  
 Each syllable is tending to the event.  
 Let his example your endeavors raise ;  
 To love his writings is a kind of praise.

A poem where we all perfections find  
 Is not the work of a fantastic mind ;  
 There must be care, and time, and skill, and pains,  
 Not the first heat of inexperienced brains.  
 Yet sometimes artless poets, when the rage  
 Of a warm fancy does their minds engage,  
 Puffed with vain pride, presume they understand,  
 And boldly take the trumpet in their hand ;  
 Their fustian muse each accident confounds,  
 Nor can she fly, but rise by leaps and bounds ;  
 Till, their small stock of learning quickly spent,  
 Their poem dies for want of nourishment.  
 In vain mankind the hot-brained fool decries,

Son sujet de soi-même et s'arrange et s'explique ;  
 Tout, sans faire d'apprêts, s'y prépare aisément ; 305  
 Chaque vers, chaque mot court à l'événement.  
 Aimez donc ses écrits, mais d'un amour sincère ;  
 C'est avoir profité que de savoir s'y plaire.

Un poëme excellent, où tout marche et se suit,  
 N'est pas de ces travaux qu'un caprice produit ; 310  
 Il veut du temps, des soins ; et ce pénible ouvrage  
 Jamais d'un écolier ne fut l'apprentissage.

Mais souvent parmi nous un poëte sans art,  
 Qu'un beau feu quelquefois échauffa par hasard,  
 Enfant d'un vain orgueil son esprit chimérique, 315  
 Fièremment prend en main la trompette héroïque ;  
 Sa muse, dérégée en ses vers vagabonds,  
 Ne s'élève jamais que par sauts et par bonds ;  
 Et son feu, dépourvu de sens et de lecture,  
 S'éteint à chaque pas, faute de nourriture. 320

Mais en vain le public, prompt à le mépriser,  
 De son mérite faux le veut désabuser ;



No branding censures can unveil his eyes ;  
 With impudence the laurel they invade,  
 Resolved to like the monsters they have made.  
 Virgil, compared to them, is flat and dry,  
 And Homer understood not poetry.  
 Against their merit if this age rebel,  
 To future times for justice they appeal.  
 But, waiting till mankind shall do them right,  
 And bring their works triumphantly to light,  
 Neglected heaps we in bye-corners lay,  
 Where they become to worms and moths a prey ;  
 Forgot, in dust and cobwebs let them rest,  
 Whilst we return from whence we first digressed.

➤ The great success which tragic writers found  
 In Athens first the comedy renowned.  
 The abusive Grecian there, by pleasing ways,  
 Dispersed his natural malice in his plays ;  
 Wisdom and virtue, honor, wit, and sense,

Lui-même, applaudissant à son maigre génie,  
 Se donne par ses mains l'encens qu'on lui dénie.

Virgile, au prix de lui, n'a point d'invention ;

325

Homère n'entend point la noble fiction.

Si contre cet arrêt le siècle se rebelle,

A la postérité d'abord il en appelle.

Mais attendant qu'ici le bon sens de retour

Ramène triomphans ses ouvrages au jour,

330

Leur tas au magasin, cachés à la lumière,

Combattent tristement les vers et la poussière.

Laissons-les donc entre eux s'escrimer en repos,

Et, sans nous égarer, suivons notre propos.

Des succès fortunés du spectacle tragique

335

Dans Athènes naquit la comédie antique.

Là le Grec, né moqueur, par mille jeux plaisans,

Distilla le venin de ses traits médisans.

Aux accès insolens d'une bouffonne joie

La sagesse, l'esprit, l'honneur, furent en proie.

340



Were subject to buffooning insolence ;  
 Poets were publicly approved and sought,  
 That vice extolled and virtue set at naught ;  
 A Socrates himself, in that loose age,  
 Was made the pastime of a scoffing stage.  
 At last the public took in hand the cause,  
 And cured this madness by the power of laws,  
 Forbade, at any time or any place,  
 To name the persons or describe the face.  
 The stage its ancient fury thus let fall,  
 And comedy diverted without gall,  
 By mild reproofs recovered minds diseased,  
 And, sparing persons, innocently pleased.  
 Each one was nicely shown in this new glass,  
 And smiled to think he was not meant the ass.  
 A miser oft would laugh at first, to find  
 A faithful draught of his own sordid mind ;  
 And fops were with such care and cunning writ,

On vit par le public un poëte avoué  
 S'enrichir aux dépens du mérite joué ;  
 Et Socrate par lui, dans un chœur de nuées,  
 D'un vil amas de peuple attirer les huées.  
 Enfin de la licence on arrêta le cours ; 345  
 Le magistrat des lois emprunta le secours,  
 Et, rendant par édit les poëtes plus sages,  
 Défendit de marquer les noms et les visages.  
 Le théâtre perdit son antique fureur ;  
 La comédie apprit à rire sans aigreur, 350  
 Sans fiel et sans venin sut instruire et reprendre,  
 Et plut innocemment dans les vers de Ménandre.  
 Chacun, peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir,  
 S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y point voir.  
 L'avare, des premiers, rit du tableau fidèle 355  
 D'un avare souvent tracé sur son modèle ;  
 Et mille fois un fat, finement exprimé,  
 Méconnut le portrait sur lui-même formé.





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Youth, hot and furious, cannot brook delay,  
 By flattering vice is easily led away ;  
 Vain in discourse, inconstant in desire,  
 In censure rash, in pleasures all on fire.  
 The manly age does steadier thoughts enjoy ;  
 Power and ambition do his soul employ ;  
 Against the turns of fate he sets his mind,  
 And by the past the future hopes to find.  
 Decrepit age, still adding to his stores,  
 For others heaps the treasure he adores,  
 In all his actions keeps a frozen pace,  
 Past times extols, the present to debase ;  
 Incapable of pleasures youth abuse,  
 In others blames what age does him refuse.  
 Your actors must by reason be controlled ;  
 Let young men speak like young, old men like old.

Observe the town and study well the court,  
 For thither various characters resort.

Un jeune homme, toujours bouillant dans ses caprices, 375  
 Est prompt à recevoir l'impression des vices ;  
 Est vain dans ses discours, volage en ses désirs,  
 Rétif à la censure, et fou dans les plaisirs.  
 L'âge viril, plus mûr, inspire un air plus sage,  
 Se pousse auprès des grands, s'intrigue, se ménage, 380  
 Contre les coups du sort songe à se maintenir,  
 Et loin dans le présent regarde l'avenir.  
 La vieillesse chagrine incessamment amasse ;  
 Garde, non pas pour soi, les trésors qu'elle entasse ;  
 Marche en tous ses desseins d'un pas lent et glacé ; 385  
 Toujours plaint le présent et vante le passé ;  
 Inhabile aux plaisirs dont la jeunesse abuse,  
 Blâme en eux les douceurs que l'âge lui refuse.  
 Ne faites point parler vos acteurs au hasard,  
 Un vieillard en jeune homme, un jeune homme en vieillard. 390

Étudiez la cour et connoissez la ville ;  
 L'une et l'autre est toujours en modèles fertile.



Thus 'twas great Jonson purchased his renown,  
 And in his art had borne away the crown,  
 If, less desirous of the people's praise,  
 He had not with low farce debased his plays,  
 Mixing dull buffoonry with wit refined,  
 And Harlequin with noble Terence joined.  
 When in the Fox I see the tortoise hissed,  
 I lose the author of the Alchemist.

The comic wit, born with a smiling air,  
 Must tragic grief and pompous verse forbear ;  
 Yet may he not, as on a market-place,  
 With bawdy jests amuse the populace.

With well-bred conversation you must please,  
 And your intrigue unravelled be with ease ;  
 Your action still should reason's rules obey,  
 Nor in an empty scene may lose its way.  
 Your humble style must sometimes gently rise,  
 And your discourse sententious be and wise,

C'est par là que Molière, illustrant ses écrits,  
 Peut-être de son art eût remporté le prix,  
 Si, moins ami du peuple, en ses doctes peintures  
 Il n'eût point fait souvent grimacer ses figures,  
 Quitté, pour le bouffon, l'agréable et le fin,  
 Et sans honte à Térence allié Tabarin.

395

Dans ce sac ridicule où Scapin s'enveloppe,  
 Je ne reconnois plus l'auteur du Misanthrope.

400

Le comique, ennemi des soupirs et des pleurs,  
 N'admet point en ses vers de tragiques douleurs ;  
 Mais son emploi n'est pas d'aller, dans une place,  
 De mots sales et bas charmer la populace.

Il faut que ses acteurs badinent noblement ;

405

Que son nœud bien formé se dénoue aisément ;

Que l'action, marchant où la raison la guide,

Ne se perde jamais dans une scène vide ;

Que son style humble et doux se relève à propos ;

Que ses discours, partout fertiles en bons mots,

410



The passions must to nature be confined,  
 And scenes to scenes with artful weaving joined.  
 Your wit must not unseasonably play,  
 But follow business, never lead the way.  
 Observe how Terence does this evil shun :  
 A careful father chides his amorous son ;  
 Then see that son whom no advice can move,  
 Forget those orders, and pursue his love !  
 'Tis not a well-drawn picture we discover,  
 'Tis a true son, a father, and a lover.

I like an author that reforms the age,  
 And keeps the right decorum of the stage,  
 That always pleases by just reason's rule ;  
 But for a tedious droll, a quibbling fool,  
 Who with low nauseous bawdry fills his plays,  
 Let him be gone, and on two trestles raise  
 Some Smithfield stage, where he may act his pranks,  
 And make Jack-Puddings speak to mountebanks.

Soient pleins de passions finement maniées,  
 Et les scènes toujours l'une à l'autre liées.  
 Aux dépens du bon sens gardez de plaisanter ;  
 Jamais de la nature il ne faut s'écarter.  
 Contemplez de quel air un père dans Térence 415  
 Vient d'un fils amoureux gourmander l'imprudence ;  
 De quel air cet amant écoute ses leçons,  
 Et court chez sa maîtresse oublier ces chansons.  
 Ce n'est pas un portrait, une image semblable ;  
 C'est un amant, un fils, un père véritable. 420

J'aime sur le théâtre un agréable auteur  
 Qui, sans se diffamer aux yeux du spectateur,  
 Plait par la raison seule, et jamais ne la choque ;  
 Mais pour un faux plaisant, à grossière équivoque,  
 Qui, pour me divertir, n'a que la saleté, 425  
 Qu'il s'en aille, s'il veut, sur deux tréteaux monté,  
 Amusant le Pont Neuf de ses sornettes fades,  
 Aux laquais assemblés jouer ses mascarades.





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Of this new portico condemns the face,  
 And turns the entrance to a better place,  
 Designs the stair-case at the other end.  
 His friend approves, does for his mason send ;  
 He comes ; the doctor's arguments prevail ;  
 In short, to finish this our humorous tale,  
 He Galen's dangerous science does reject,  
 And from ill doctor turns good architect.

In this example we may have our part ;  
 Rather be mason ('tis a useful art)  
 Than a dull poet ; for that trade accursed  
 Admits no mean betwixt the best and worst.  
 In other sciences, without disgrace,  
 A candidate may fill a second place,  
 But poetry no medium can admit,  
 No reader suffers an indifferent wit ;

Déjà de bâtimens parle comme Mansard ;  
 D'un salon qu'on élève il condamne la face ; 15  
 Au vestibule obscur il marque une autre place ;  
 Approuve l'escalier tourné d'autre façon.  
 Son ami le conçoit, et mande son maçon.  
 Le maçon vient, écoute, approuve, et se corrige.  
 Enfin, pour abréger un si plaisant prodige, 20  
 Notre assassin renonce à son art inhumain,  
 Et désormais, la règle et l'équerre à la main,  
 Laisant de Galien la science suspecte,  
 De méchant médecin devient bon architecte.

Son exemple est pour nous un précepte excellent. 25  
 Soyez plutôt maçon, si c'est votre talent,  
 Ouvrier estimé dans un art nécessaire,  
 Qu'écrivain du commun et poète vulgaire.  
 Il est dans tout autre art des degrés différens,  
 On peut avec honneur remplir les seconds rangs ; 30  
 Mais dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire,  
 Il n'est point de degrés du médiocre au pire ;  
 Qui dit froid écrivain dit détestable auteur.



The ruined stationers against him bawl,  
 And Herringman degrades him from his stall.  
 Burlesque at least our laughter may excite,  
 But a cold writer never can delight.

The Counter-scuffle has more wit and art  
 Than the stiff formal style of Gondibert.

Be not affected with that empty praise  
 Which your vain flatterers will sometimes raise,  
 And, when you read, with ecstasy will say,  
 'The finished piece ! the admirable play !' —  
 Which, when exposed to censure and to light,  
 Cannot endure a critic's piercing sight.

A hundred authors' fates have been foretold,  
 And Shadwell's works are printed, but not sold.

Hear all the world ; consider every thought ;  
 A fool by chance may stumble on a fault.  
 Yet, when Apollo does your muse inspire,  
 Be not impatient to expose your fire ;

Boyer est à Pinchêne égal pour le lecteur ;  
 On ne lit guère plus Rampale et Mesnardière 35  
 Que Magnon, Du Souhait, Corbin et La Morlière.  
 Un fou du moins fait rire, et peut nous égayer,  
 Mais un froid écrivain ne sait rien qu'ennuyer.  
 J'aime mieux Bergerac et sa burlesque audace  
 Que ces vers où Motin se morfond et nous glace. 40

Ne vous enivrez point des éloges flatteurs  
 Qu'un amas quelquefois de vains admirateurs  
 Vous donne en ces réduits, prompts à crier, Merveille !  
 Tel écrit récité se soutint à l'oreille,  
 Qui, dans l'impression au grand jour se montrant, 45  
 Ne soutient pas des yeux le regard pénétrant.  
 On sait de cent auteurs l'aventure tragique :  
 Et Gombaut tant loué garde encor la boutique.

Écoutez tout le monde, assidu consultant ;  
 Un fat quelquefois ouvre un avis important. 50  
 Quelques vers toutefois qu'Apollon vous inspire,



Nor imitate the Settles of our times,  
 Those tuneful readers of their own dull rimes,  
 Who seize on all the acquaintance they can meet,  
 And stop the passengers that walk the street ;  
 There is no sanctuary you can choose  
 For a defense from their pursuing muse.

I've said before, be patient when they blame ;  
 To alter for the better is no shame.  
 Yet yield not to a fool's impertinence :  
 Sometimes conceited sceptics, void of sense,  
 By their false taste condemn some finished part,  
 And blame the noblest flights of wit and art.  
 In vain their fond opinions you deride,  
 With their loved follies they are satisfied,  
 And their weak judgment, void of sense and light,  
 Thinks nothing can escape their feeble sight.  
 Their dangerous counsels do not cure, but wound ;  
 To shun the storm they run your verse aground,

En tous lieux aussitôt ne courez pas les lire.  
 Gardez-vous d'imiter ce rimeur furieux,  
 Qui, de ses vains écrits lecteur harmonieux,  
 Aborde en récitant quiconque le salue, 15  
 Et poursuit de ses vers les passans dans la rue.  
 Il n'est temple si saint, des anges respecté,  
 Qui soit contre sa muse un lieu de sûreté.

Je vous l'ai déjà dit, aimez qu'on vous censure,  
 Et, souple à la raison, corrigez sans murmure. 60  
 Mais ne vous rendez pas dès qu'un sot vous reprend.  
 Souvent dans son orgueil un subtil ignorant  
 Par d'injustes dégoûts combat toute une pièce,  
 Blâme des plus beaux vers la noble hardiesse.  
 On a beau réfuter ses vains raisonnemens, 65  
 Son esprit se complait dans ses faux jugemens;  
 Et sa foible raison, de clarté dépourvue,  
 Pense que rien n'échappe à sa débile vue.  
 Ses conseils sont à craindre ; et, si vous les croyez,





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With pleasant join the useful and the sound ;  
 A sober reader a vain tale will slight,  
 He seeks as well instruction as delight.

Let all your thoughts to virtue be confined,  
 Still offering nobler figures to our mind.

I like not those loose writers, who employ  
 Their guilty muse good manners to destroy,  
 Who with false colors still deceive our eyes,  
 And show us vice dressed in a fair disguise.

Yet do I not their sullen muse approve,  
 Who from all modest writings banish love,  
 That strip the play-house of its chief intrigue,  
 And make a murderer of Roderigue ;  
 The lightest love, if decently expressed,  
 Will raise no vicious motions in our breast.

Dido in vain may weep, and ask relief ;  
 I blame her folly whilst I share her grief.  
 A virtuous author, in his charming art,

Partout joigne au plaisant le solide et l'utile.

Un lecteur sage fuit un vain amusement,  
 Et veut mettre à profit son divertissement. 90

Que votre âme et vos mœurs, peintes dans vos ouvrages,  
 N'offrent jamais de vous que de nobles images.

Je ne puis estimer ces dangereux auteurs  
 Qui de l'honneur, en vers, infâmes déserteurs,  
 Trahissant la vertu sur un papier coupable, 95  
 Aux yeux de leurs lecteurs rendent le vice aimable.

Je ne suis pas pourtant de ces tristes esprits  
 Qui, bannissant l'amour de tous chastes écrits,  
 D'un si riche ornement veulent priver la scène,  
 Traitent d'empoisonneurs et Rodrigue et Chimène. 100

L'amour le moins honnête, exprimé chastement,  
 N'excite point en nous de honteux mouvement ;  
 Didon a beau gémir et m'étaler ses charmes,  
 Je condamne sa faute en partageant ses larmes.

Un auteur vertueux, dans ses vers innocens, 105



To please the sense needs not corrupt the heart ;  
 His heat will never cause a guilty fire ;  
 To follow virtue then be your desire.  
 In vain your art and vigor are expressed,  
 The obscene expression shows the infected breast.

But, above all, base jealousies avoid,  
 In which detracting poets are employed.  
 A noble wit dares liberally commend,  
 And scorns to grudge at his deserving friend.  
 Base rivals, who true wit and merit hate,  
 Caballing still against it with the great,  
 Maliciously aspire to gain renown,  
 By standing up, and pulling others down.  
 Never debase yourself by treacherous ways,  
 Nor by such abject methods seek for praise.

Let not your only business be to write ;  
 Be virtuous, just, and in your friends delight.  
 'Tis not enough your poems be admired,

Ne corrompt point le cœur en chatouillant les sens ;  
 Son feu n'allume point de criminelle flamme.  
 Aimez donc la vertu, nourrissez-en votre âme ;  
 En vain l'esprit est plein d'une noble vigueur,  
 Le vers se sent toujours des bassesses du cœur. 110

Fuyez surtout, fuyez ces basses jalousies,  
 Des vulgaires esprits malignes frénésies.

Un sublime écrivain n'en peut être infecté ;  
 C'est un vice qui suit la médiocrité.

Du mérite éclatant cette sombre rivale 115  
 Contre lui chez les grands incessamment cabale,  
 Et, sur les pieds en vain tâchant de se hausser,  
 Pour s'égalier à lui, cherche à le rabaisser.

Ne descendons jamais dans ces lâches intrigues ;  
 N'allons point à l'honneur par de honteuses brigues. 120

Que les vers ne soient pas votre éternel emploi ;  
 Cultivez vos amis, soyez homme de foi.  
 C'est peu d'être agréable et charmant dans un livre,



But strive your conversation be desired.

Write for immortal fame, nor ever choose  
Gold for the object of a generous muse.  
I know a noble wit may, without crime,  
Receive a lawful tribute for his time,  
Yet I abhor those writers who despise  
Their honor, and alone their profits prize,  
Who their Apollo basely will degrade,  
And of a noble science make a trade.

Before kind reason did her light display,  
And government taught mortals to obey,  
Men, like wild beasts, did nature's laws pursue,  
They fed on herbs, and drink from rivers drew ;  
Their brutal force, on lust and rapine bent,  
Committed murder without punishment.  
Reason at last, by her all-conquering arts,  
Reduced these savages, and tuned their hearts,  
Mankind from bogs, and woods, and caverns calls,

Il faut savoir encore et converser et vivre.

Travaillez pour la gloire, et qu'un sordide gain 125  
Ne soit jamais l'objet d'un illustre écrivain.  
Je sais qu'un noble esprit peut, sans honte et sans crime,  
Tirer de son travail un tribut légitime ;  
Mais je ne puis souffrir ces auteurs renommés,  
Qui, dégoûtés de gloire, et d'argent affamés, 130  
Mettent leur Apollon aux gages d'un libraire,  
Et font d'un art divin un métier mercenaire.

Avant que la raison, s'expliquant par la voix,  
Eût instruit les humains, eût enseigné des lois, 135  
Tous les hommes suivoient la grossière nature,  
Dispersés dans les bois couroient à la pâture ;  
La force tenoit lieu de droit et d'équité ;  
Le meurtre s'exerçoit avec impunité.  
Mais du discours enfin l'harmonieuse adresse  
De ces sauvages mœurs adoucit la rudesse, 140  
Rassembla les humains dans les forêts épars,





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In easy numbers to rude men conveyed,  
 And pleasingly their precepts did impart,  
 First charmed the ear, and then engaged the heart ;  
 The Muses thus their reputation raised,  
 And with just gratitude in Greece were praised ;  
 With pleasure mortals did their wonders see,  
 And sacrificed to their divinity.

But want, at last, base flattery entertained,  
 And old Parnassus with this vice was stained ;  
 Desire of gain dazzling the poets' eyes,  
 Their works were filled with fulsome flatteries ;  
 Thus needy wits a vile revenue made,  
 And verse became a mercenary trade.  
 Debase not with so mean a vice thy art ;  
 If gold must be the idol of thy heart,  
 Fly, fly the unfruitful Heliconian strand !  
 Those streams are not enriched with golden sand ;  
 Great wits, as well as warriors, only gain

Fut, à l'aide des vers, aux mortels annoncée ; 160  
 Et partout des esprits ses préceptes vainqueurs,  
 Introduits par l'oreille, entrèrent dans les cœurs.  
 Pour tant d'heureux bienfaits, les Muses révérees  
 Furent d'un juste encens dans la Grèce honorées ;  
 Et leur art, attirant le culte des mortels, 165  
 A sa gloire en cent lieux vit dresser des autels.

Maïs enfin l'indigence amenant la bassesse,  
 Le Parnasse oublia sa première noblesse.  
 Un vil amour du gain, infectant les esprits,  
 De mensonges grossiers souilla tous les écrits ; 170  
 Et partout, enfantant mille ouvrages frivoles,  
 Trafiqua du discours et vendit les paroles.

Ne vous flétrissez point par un vice si bas.  
 Si l'or seul a pour vous d'invincibles appas,  
 Fuyez ces lieux charmans qu'arrose le Permesse ; 175  
 Ce n'est point sur ses bords qu'habite la richesse.  
 Aux plus savans auteurs, comme aux plus grands guerriers,



Laurels and honors for their toil and pain.

But what? an author cannot live on fame,  
Or pay a reckoning with a lofty name :  
A poet, to whom fortune is unkind,  
Who when he goes to bed has hardly dined,  
Takes little pleasure in Parnassus' dreams,  
Nor relishes the Heliconian streams ;  
Horace had ease and plenty when he writ,  
And, free from cares for money or for meat,  
Did not expect his dinner from his wit.

'Tis true ; but verse is cherished by the great,  
And now none famish who deserve to eat.  
What can we fear when virtue, arts, and sense,  
Receive the stars' propitious influence,  
When a sharp-sighted prince, by early grants,  
Rewards your merits, and prevents your wants?

Sing then his glory, celebrate his fame ;  
Your noblest theme is his immortal name.  
Let mighty Spenser raise his reverend head,

Apollon ne promet qu'un nom et des lauriers.

Mais quoi ! dans la disette une muse affamée  
Ne peut pas, dira-t-on, subsister de fumée ;  
Un auteur qui, pressé d'un besoin importun,  
Le soir entend crier ses entrailles à jeun,  
Goûte peu d'Hélicon les douces promenades :  
Horace a bu son·soûl quand il voit les Ménades,  
Et, libre du souci qui trouble Colletet,  
N'attend pas, pour dîner, le succès d'un sonnet.

Il est vrai ; mais enfin cette affreuse disgrace  
Rarement parmi nous afflige le Parnasse.  
Et que craindre en ce siècle, où toujours les beaux arts  
D'un astre favorable éprouvent les regards,  
Où d'un prince éclairé la sage prévoyance  
Fait partout au mérite ignorer l'indigence?

Muses, dictez sa gloire à tous vos nourrissons ;  
Son nom vaut mieux pour eux que toutes vos leçons.

180

185

190



Cowley and Denham start up from the dead,  
 Waller his age renew, and offerings bring ;  
 Our monarch's praise let bright-eyed virgins sing :  
 Let Dryden with new rules our stage refine,  
 And his great models form by this design.  
 But where's a second Virgil, to rehearse  
 Our hero's glories in his epic verse ?  
 What Orpheus sing his triumphs o'er the main,  
 And make the hills and forests move again ;  
 Show his bold fleet on the Batavian shore,  
 And Holland trembling as his cannons roar,  
 Paint Europe's balance in his steady hand,  
 Whilst the two worlds in expectation stand  
 Of peace or war, that wait on his command ?

But, as I speak, new glories strike my eyes,  
 Glories, which heaven itself does give and prize,  
 Blessings of peace ; that with their milder rays

Que Corneille, pour lui rallumant son audace, 195  
 Soit encor le Corneille et du Cid et d'Horace ;  
 Que Racine, enfantant des miracles nouveaux,  
 De ses héros sur lui forme tous les tableaux ;  
 Que de son nom, chanté par la bouche des belles,  
 Benserade en tous lieux amuse les ruelles ; 200  
 Que Segrais dans l'églogue en charme les forêts ;  
 Que pour lui l'épigramme aiguisé tous ses traits.  
 Mais quel heureux auteur, dans une autre Énéide,  
 Aux bords du Rhin tremblant conduira cet Alcide ?  
 Quelle savante lyre au bruit de ses exploits 205  
 Fera marcher encor les rochers et les bois ;  
 Chantera le Batave, éperdu dans l'orage,  
 Soi-même se noyant pour sortir du naufrage,  
 Dira les bataillons sous Mastricht enterrés,  
 Dans ces affreux assauts du soleil éclairés ? 210

Mais tandis que je parle, une gloire nouvelle  
 Vers ce vainqueur rapide aux Alpes vous appelle.  
 Déjà Dôle et Salins sous le joug ont ployé ;





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A strict observer of each noble flight,  
From the fine gold I separate the allay,  
And show how hasty writers sometimes stray ;  
Apter to blame, than knowing how to mend ;  
A sharp, but yet a necessary friend.

Mais aussi pardonnez, si, plein de ce beau zèle,  
De tous vos pas fameux observateur fidèle,  
Quelquefois du bon or je sépare le faux,  
Et des auteurs grossiers j'attaque les défauts ;  
Censeur un peu fâcheux, mais souvent nécessaire,  
Plus enclin à blâmer que savant à bien faire.



NOTES.









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2 15. 'Purple patches' is used at least five times in Saintsbury's *History of Elizabethan Literature*.

2 16-18. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Thus many a bard describes in pompous strain  
The clear brook babbling through the goodly plain,  
The groves of Granta and her Gothic halls,  
King's Coll., Cam's stream, stained windows, and old walls;  
Or, in adventurous numbers, neatly aims  
To paint a rainbow or — the river Thames.

2 23. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

In fine, to whatsoever you aspire,  
Let it at least be simple and entire.

3 24-31. 'Blunders in this matter proceed from the common failing, the incapacity to avoid one mistake without falling into its opposite. One wants art even to escape faults.'

3 24-30. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

The greater portion of the riming tribe  
(Give ear, my friend, for thou hast been a scribe)  
Are led astray by some peculiar lure.  
I labor to be brief — become obscure;  
One falls while following elegance too fast;  
Another soars, inflated with bombast;  
Too low, a third crawls on, afraid to fly,  
He spins his subject to satiety;  
Absurdly varying, he at last engraves  
Fish in the woods, and boars beneath the waves!

3 31. Longinus, *On the Sublime* 33: "But supposing now that we assume the existence of a really unblemished and irreproachable writer. Is it not worth while to raise the whole question whether in poetry and prose we should prefer sublimity accompanied by some faults, or a style which, never rising above moderate eloquence, never stumbles and never requires correction? . . . Let us take an instance: Apollonius in his *Argonautica* has given us a poem actually faultless; and in his pastoral poetry Theocritus is eminently happy, except when he occasionally attempts another style. And what then? Would you rather be a Homer or an Apollonius? Or take Eratosthenes and his *Erigone*; because that little work is without a flaw, is he therefore a greater poet than Archilochus, with all his disorderly profusion? greater than that impetuous, that god-gifted genius, which chafed against the restraints of law? . . ."



3 32-37. 'It is the same in sculpture. It is easier to work up some details than to conceive a whole. But it is as in the human face: a crooked nose spoils the effect of good eyes and hair.'

3 32-35. Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 243-252:

In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts  
Is not the exactness of peculiar parts;  
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,  
But the joint force and full result of all.  
Thus when we view some well-proportioned dome  
(The world's just wonder, and e'en thine, O Rome!),  
No single parts unequally surprise,  
All comes united to the admiring eyes;  
No monstrous height or breadth or length appear;  
The whole at once is bold and regular.

3 38-45. 'The key lies in choosing a subject within your powers. Once do that, and you will not fail either in finding plenty to say or in power to arrange it. By arrangement I mean knowing when to say a thing, when to omit or postpone it, the power to pick and choose.'

Thus rendered by Byron, *Hints from Horace*:

Dear authors! suit your topics to your strength,  
And ponder well your subject and its length;  
Nor lift your load, before you're quite aware  
What weight your shoulders will, or will not, bear.  
But lucid Order and Wit's siren voice  
Await the poet skilful in his choice;  
With native eloquence he soars along,  
Grace in his thoughts and music in his song.  
Let judgment teach him wisely to combine  
With future parts the now omitted line;  
This shall the author choose, or that reject,  
Precise in style and cautious to select.

4 46-6 72. 'That must be exercised in respect of *diction*. It is a very happy knack to make an old word new by a skilful conjunction. You may also invent words if it be necessary; but it must be in moderation, and you will do well to go to Greek as your well-spring. The old poets invented words, why may not modern? Words, like other human things, have their day, and pass and change.'

4 46-5 59. Byron, *Hints from Horace*:

Nor slight applause will candid pens afford  
To him who furnishes a wanting word.  
Then fear not, if 'tis needful, to produce



Some term unknown, or obsolete in use,  
 (As Pitt has furnished us a word or two  
 Which lexicographers declined to do) ;  
 So you indeed, with care — but be content  
 To take this license rarely — may invent.  
 New words find credit in these latter days  
 If neatly grafted on a Gallic phrase.  
 What Chaucer, Spenser did, we scarce refuse  
 To Dryden's or to Pope's maturer muse.  
 If you can add a little, say why not,  
 As well as William Pitt and Walter Scott?  
 Since they, by force of rime and force of lungs,  
 Enriched our island's ill-united tongues.  
 'Tis then — and shall be — lawful to present  
 Reform in writing, as in parliament.

4 48. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3. 2: "But the deception which we have in view is successfully effected if words are chosen from ordinary parlance, and combined, as is the practice of Euripides, and indeed is the practice of which he was the first to set an example." Look up Ruskin's comment on Milton's 'blind mouths' in *Sesame and Lilies*.

4 50. 'The Cethegi' is a concrete expression for 'the ancients' (Cethegus died B.C. 196; Horace lived B.C. 65–8). The best account of Cethegus will be found in Cicero, *Brutus* 15. 58–61 (*On Oratory and Orators*, in Bohn's series, pp. 277–278); add Cicero *On Old Age* 14. 50. The idea of 'high-girt' is well illustrated by the statement of Cacciaguida, Dante's great-great-grandfather, *Paradiso* 15. 97–135, but especially 112–113:

Bellincion Berti saw I go begirt  
 With leather and with bone.

5 53. Cicero agrees with Horace on this point; cf. his *Limits of Good and Evil* 3. 4. 15. And see Dryden, *Discourse of Epic Poetry*: "I will not excuse, but justify, myself for one pretended crime with which I am liable to be charged by false critics, not only in this translation, but in many of my original poems — that I Latinize too much. It is true that when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither borrow from the Latin nor any other language; but when I want at home, I must seek abroad. If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation which is never to return, but what I bring from Italy I spend in England. Here it remains and here it circulates; for if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living





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Whilst modest Comedy her verse foregoes  
 For jest and pun in very middling prose.  
 Not that our Bens or Beaumonts show the worse  
 Or lose one point, because they wrote in verse.

675–78. The following account of the elegy is largely based upon Christ's statements in his *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Alterthums-Wissenschaft* 7. 92 ff.; cf. Gleditsch, *Handbuch* 2. 518). The derivation of the word 'elegy' is uncertain. If Greek, it probably comes from the refrain εἰ λέγε εἰ λέγε εἰ (cf. Æschylus, *Agam.* 121); but it may be Phrygian, Carian, or ancient Armenian. The elegiac measure was first developed as melody only, before words were added; and this music was originally that of the flute. Later the poetry was either sung or recited. The unit of elegiac song or recitation was the distich, composed in dactylic verse. Its characteristic was the second line, which consisted of a Homeric hexameter abbreviated at its middle and end. This truncation gave the line a broken character which adapted it to the expression of grief, the pauses at the middle and end representing either the silence which follows a frantic outburst of sorrow, or the prolongation of the wail with which such a passionate exclamation would close. This line was preceded, in the distich, by a regular Homeric hexameter, and thus the couplet represented the alternations of uncontrollable grief and relative composure. The stately fluency of the hexameter, as contrasted with the interruptedness of the following pentameter, is well rendered in Coleridge's translation of Schiller's lines:

In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column,  
 In the pentameter aye falling in melody back.

Here was the origin of the strophe; the first step toward the creation of the stanza was taken in thus forming the elegiac distich. Whoever was the inventor of the elegy as a form of poetry, it certainly originated in Asiatic Ionia. The invention is often attributed to Callinus (first half of the seventh century); but it must have been older, for he manipulates it with too much skill to have been the originator of it.

An interesting parallel to the alternation of long with shorter lines for elegiac purposes is furnished by the Hebrew elegy, as described in Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 429–430: "The verse itself may consist of one or more members; but each member, which contains on an average of not more than five or six words, is divided by a *cæsura* into two unequal parts, the first being usually about the length of an ordinary verse-member, the second being decidedly shorter, and very



often not parallel in thought to the first. An example or two, even in a translation, will make the character of the rhythm apparent:

Lam. 1, 1 How doth the city sit solitary, — she that was full of people!  
 She is become as a widow, — she that was great among the nations:  
 The princess among the provinces, — she is become tributary.

3, 1-3 I am the man that hath seen affliction — by the rod of his wrath:  
 Me hath he led and caused to go — in darkness and not in light:  
 Surely against me he ever turneth his hand — all the day.

. . . The first member, instead of being balanced and reinforced by the second (as is ordinarily the case in Hebrew poetry), is echoed by it imperfectly, so that it seems, as it were, to die away in it, and a plaintive, melancholy cadence is thus produced. . . . It is, moreover, to be observed that the rhythm seems to be chosen intentionally, for in the context the *ordinary* poetical rhythm, with verse-members of equal length, is, as a rule, employed. . . . Probably also the elegiac rhythm which has been described was accompanied by a corresponding plaintive melody, and in any case it was connected with mournful associations. . . . Exquisite as is the pathos which breathes in the poetry of these dirges, they are thus, it appears, constructed with conscious art. They are not the unstudied effusions of natural emotion, they are carefully elaborated poems."

The language of the earlier elegies was decidedly Homeric. According to Symonds (*Greek Poets* 1. 15), the elegiac metre was first "used to express the emotions of love and sorrow, and afterwards came to be the vehicle of moral sentiment and all strong feeling. Callinus and Tyrtæus adapted the elegy to songs of battle. Solon consigned his wisdom to its couplets, and used it as a trumpet for awakening the zeal of Athens against her tyrants. Mimnermus confined the metre to its more plaintive melodies, and made it the mouthpiece of lamentations over the fleeting beauty of youth and the evils of old age. In Theognis the elegy takes wider scope. He uses it alike for satire and invective, for precept, for autobiographic grumblings, for political discourses, and for philosophical apothegms." And again (1. 68): "Three periods may be marked in the development of the early Greek elegiac poetry, — the martial, the erotic, and the gnomic."

The original elegy of lamentation gave rise to the epigram, which was originally an epitaph. Allied to the erotic was the symposiac, or drinking-song. Erotic elegy was revived in the Alexandrian period, and took on a learned cast. The most famous composer of the latter species is Callimachus. From Alexandria it passed to Rome, where we find it repre-



sented by Propertius, Catullus, and Ovid. The elegiac measure has been but little cultivated in English. The first who endeavored to reproduce it was Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Arcadia*. In our time it has been attempted by Swinburne, in the poem entitled *Hesperia*, which also has alternate rimes, and therefore does not represent the measure in its purity. The most famous of modern elegies are the *Roman Elegies* of Goethe.

The character of the Greek elegy is well summed up by Mahaffy, *Hist. Greek Lit.* 1. 158: "Perhaps there are three points, and three points only, which may be called permanent features in elegiac poetry. In the first place, it is *personal*, subjective as the Germans call it, and this feature comes out plainly enough even where the poet is discussing public topics, as in Solon's elegies, or narrating epic myths, as Antimachus in his *Lyde*. Even these were strictly personal poems. In the second place, it is almost always *secular*, religious poetry being either hexameter or strictly lyric in form. Thirdly, it is *Ionic*, and except in the case of epigrams or epitaphs, which are always of a local color, is restricted to the dialect where it first arose."

6 79. For Archilochus, see Symonds, *Greek Poets* 1. 98-104. Mahaffy says, *Hist. Greek Lit.* 1. 159: "In coarseness, terseness, and bitterness he may justly be called the Swift of Greek Literature."

6 79-7 82. The remarks of Aristotle and Quintilian on the iambic will serve to elucidate these lines. Aristotle, *Poet.* 4. 9: "In these [the Margites and the like] the iambic metre appropriately appears, a satire being now called an iambic poem because it was in this metre that they satirized each other; and some of the old poets became writers of heroics, some of iambics." *Poet.* 24. 5: "The iambic and trochaic are lively metres, the one suited for action, the other for dancing." *Poet.* 4. 14: "The metre [of the drama] was changed from trochaic tetrameter to iambic trimeter. At the first the trochaic was used through its being proper to Satyric dramas, and better suited for dancing; but when style arose, Nature herself discovered the proper metre, the iambic being of all metres the most like prose, as is proved by the fact that in conversation with each other we employ iambics most of all metres, hexameter seldom, and only when we depart from the harmony of prose." Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3. 1: ". . . The styles of prose and of poetry being distinct, as is shown by the fact that the writers of tragedies themselves have ceased to use the poetical style as once they did, and that, as they passed from the tetrameter to the iambic measure, as being the metre which bears the closest resemblance to prose," etc. . . . *Rhet.* 3. 8: "The iambic rhythm, on the other hand, is the very diction of ordinary life, and is therefore of all metres the most





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7 94. *Chremes*. A character in the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence. The passage referred to is probably Act 5, Scene 4.

8 96. Who were Telephus and Peleus?

8 99–105. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

'Tis not enough, ye bards, with all your art  
To polish poems, — they must touch the heart;  
Where'er the scene be laid, whate'er the song,  
Still let it bear the hearer's soul along;  
Command your audience or to smile or weep,  
Whiche'er may please you — anything but sleep.  
The poet gains our tears; but, by his leave,  
Before I shed them, let me see him grieve.  
If banished Romeo feigned nor sigh nor tear,  
Lulled by his languor, I should sleep or sneer.

8 99. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3. 7: "The conditions of propriety in a speech are that the style should be emotional and ethical and at the same time proportionate to the subject-matter. . . . A listener is always in sympathy with an emotional speaker, even though what he says is wholly worthless."

8 100. Horace is evidently criticizing poems which are

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
Dead perfection, no more.

8 108–9 113. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

For nature form'd at first the inward man,  
And actors copy nature — when they can.  
She bids the beating heart with rapture bound,  
Raised to the stars, or leveled with the ground;  
And for expression's aid, 'tis said or sung,  
She gave our mind's interpreter — the tongue;  
Who, worn with use, of late would fain dispense  
(At least in theatres) with common sense,  
O'erwhelm with sound the boxes, gallery, pit,  
And raise a laugh with anything — but wit.

9 115–116. Examples of all these are found, for example, in *Romeo and Juliet*.

9 119–10 127. 'In respect of *characters* you may follow tradition or invent. In either case you have your law. Traditional characters must keep their traditional features. Newly invented ones must be consistent with their own idea.'



Cf. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Or follow common fame, or forge a plot.  
 Who cares if mimic heroes lived or not ?  
 One precept serves to regulate the scene —  
 Make it appear as if it might have been.  
 If some Drawcansir you aspire to draw,  
 Present him raving and above all law ;  
 If female furies in your scheme are planned,  
 Macbeth's fierce dame is ready to your hand ;  
 For tears and treachery, for good and evil,  
 Constance, King Richard, Hamlet, and the Devil !  
 But if a new design you dare essay,  
 And freely wander from the beaten way,  
 'True to your characters till all be past,  
 Preserve consistency from first to last.

9 119 ff. For the whole subject of ancient plays see Moulton, *Ancient Classical Drama*.

9 120 ff. Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 14. 5: "We must not, however, destroy received stories, I mean *e.g.* that of Clytemnestra slain by Orestes, or Eriphyle by Alcmaeon, but invent for ourselves, and use tradition aright."

10 125. Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 9. 7: "In Agathon's *Flower* incidents and names are alike fictitious, and yet it pleases. So that we must not always seek to keep to the received stories with which tragedies are concerned. It would even be absurd to do so, since even the known events are few and yet please all."

10 128–135. 'Real originality in dealing with common things is so difficult that you are doing better to dramatize some of the Homeric story than to start a new plot. There is room for originality still within these limits, in the choice of your subject and in the freedom of your imitation.'

Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

'Tis hard to venture where our betters fail,  
 Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale ;  
 And yet perchance 'tis wiser to prefer  
 A hackneyed plot, than choose a new, and err ;  
 Yet copy not too closely, but record,  
 Most justly, thought for thought than word for word ;  
 Nor trace your prototype through narrow ways,  
 But only follow where he merits praise.

10 129. Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 9. 6: "In tragedy we keep to recorded names, the reason being that the possible is credible; what has not occurred



we no way believe to be possible, but what has occurred was plainly possible, or it would not have occurred.”

11 136–12 152. ‘Imitate Homer in the modesty of your beginning, in avoiding lengthy and prosaic introductions, in consistency of story.’

11 136. For the Cyclic poets cf. Mahaffy, *Hist. Greek Lit.* 1. 85–89.

11 140–152. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Not so of yore awoke your mighty sire  
The tempered warblings of his master-lyre ;  
Soft as the gentler breathing of the lute,  
‘ Of man’s first disobedience and the fruit ’  
He speaks, but, as his subject swells along,  
Earth, Heaven, and Hades echo with the song.  
Still to the midst of things he hastens on,  
As if we witnessed all already done ;  
Leaves on his path whatever seems too mean  
To raise the subject or adorn the scene ;  
Gives, as each page improves upon the sight,  
Not smoke from brightness, but from darkness — light,  
And truth and fiction with such art compounds,  
We know not where to fix their several bounds.

11 140–142. Addison, as well as Byron, gives this credit to Milton (*Spectator*, No. 303) : “These lines [the first six] are perhaps as plain, simple, and unadorned as any of the whole poem, in which particular the author has conformed himself to the example of Homer and the precept of Horace.”

11 141–142. A paraphrase of the first lines of the *Odyssey*.

11 145. For Antiphates see *Od.* 10. 76–132; for Scylla and Charybdis, *Od.* 12. 73–126, 222–259, 426–446; for the Cyclops, *Od.* 9. 105–566.

11 146. Wickham paraphrases: ‘He no more begins a Diomedea (*i.e.* would do so if he wrote one . . . ) . . . than he (actually) begins his *Iliad*,’ etc. Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 8. 3: “In writing the *Odyssey* he did not introduce everything that happened to Odysseus, *e.g.* his being wounded on Parnassus, or feigning madness when the army was assembling.”

12 151–152. Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 7. 2: “We have laid down that tragedy is the representation of whole and complete action of some compass. . . . A whole is that which has beginning and middle and end.” And see note on 1 1–9.

12 153–13 178. ‘The first point an audience cares for is a real discrimination of the characteristics of human nature in each of the stages of life. These must be well studied.’





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Aristotle divides otherwise (*Poetics*, chap. 12). Horace's division is followed by the tragedies of Seneca, which were largely imitated in the Renaissance period, and it is perhaps through this medium that it has reached the modern stage. The division of Roman *comedies* into five acts does not appear to be earlier than the fourth century A.D.

14 191. Aristotle does not approve of a *deus ex machina* at all (*Poet.* 15. 7): "It is plain, then, that the solution of the plot should arise out of the plot itself, and not be mechanical as in the *Medea* [of Euripides], or the passage about the sailing away from Troy in the *Iliad* [*Il.* 2. 155 ff.]. Mechanical means [*i.e.* divine intervention] should be used for things outside the play, whether what has happened before which it is impossible for a man to know, or what happens after which needs prophecy or reporting; to the gods we attribute omniscience."

15 192. Æschylus had introduced a second actor, Sophocles a third (Aristotle, *Poet.* 4. 13). Horace would allow no more on the stage at a time.

15 193-201. 'On the other hand, the Chorus must be treated as an integral part of the drama. Its business is to help on the action, and specially to take the moral and religious side in it.'

15 193. Aristotle, *Poet.* 19. 7: "The Chorus should be assumed to be one of the actors and part of the whole, engaging in the competition as in Sophocles, not as in Euripides. In other poets the songs have no more to do with the plot than with a different tragedy; wherefore they sing interludes, a practice first started by Agathon."

15 202-18 239. 'The lyrical part of the drama was simpler in old days. As audiences have become more mixed the music became more elaborate, the diction more stilted, the tone more oracular. (In the same way) the desire to interest a miscellaneous audience led to adding the Satyric drama to tragedy. But moderation and tact are necessary. Tragic characters must not be lowered in the following Satyric drama. Neither need they rant. Tragedy has its proper dignity; so has the Satyric drama itself. It is not tragedy, but neither is it comedy.'

For the Satyric drama, see Moulton, *Ancient Classical Drama*.

17 220-224. Thus translated by Goldsmith, *Essay on the Origin of Poetry*:

The tragic bard, a goat his humble prize,  
Bade satyrs naked and uncouth arise;  
His muse severe, secure, and undismayed,  
The rustic joke in solemn strain conveyed;  
For novelty alone he knew could charm  
A lawless crowd, with wine and feasting warm.



17 220 ff. The only Satyric drama which has been preserved to us is *The Cyclops* of Euripides. See the translation by Shelley, and the analysis in Moulton, *Ancient Classical Drama*, pp. 197-198. Dryden's account is as follows (*Discourse on Satire*): "Thespis, or whoever he were that invented tragedy (for authors differ), mingled with them a chorus and dances of Satyrs which had before been used in the celebration of their festivals, and there they were ever afterwards retained. The character of them was also kept, which was mirth and wantonness; and this was given, I suppose, to the folly of the common audience, who soon grow weary of good sense, and, as we daily see in our own age and country, are apt to forsake poetry, and still ready to return to buffoonery and farce. From hence it came that in the Olympic Games, where the poets contended for four prizes, the satiric tragedy was the last of them, for in the rest the Satyrs were excluded from the chorus. Amongst the plays of Euripides which are yet remaining, there is one of these satyrics, which is called *The Cyclops*, in which we may see the nature of those poems, and from thence conclude what likeness they have to the Roman satire.

"The story of this Cyclops, whose name was Polyphemus (so famous in the Grecian fables), was that Ulysses, who with his company was driven on the coast of Sicily, where those Cyclops inhabited, coming to ask relief from Silenus and the Satyrs, who were herdsmen to that one-eyed giant, was kindly received by them and entertained, till, being perceived by Polyphemus, they were made prisoners, against the rites of hospitality (for which Ulysses eloquently pleaded), were afterwards put down into the den, and some of them devoured; after which Ulysses (having made him drunk when he was asleep) thrust a great firebrand into his eye, and so revenging his dead followers, escaped with the remaining party of the living; and Silenus and the Satyrs were freed from their servitude under Polyphemus, and remitted to their first liberty of attending and accompanying their patron Bacchus.

"This was the subject of the tragedy, which, being one of those that end with a happy event, is therefore by Aristotle judged below the other sort, whose success is unfortunate. Notwithstanding which, the Satyrs (who were part of the *dramatis personæ*, as well as the whole chorus) were properly introduced into the nature of the poem, which is mixed of farce and tragedy. The adventure of Ulysses was to entertain the judging part of the audience, and the uncouth persons of Silenus and the Satyrs to divert the common people with their gross railleries."

18 237. *Davus*. A character in the *Andria* of Terence.



18 238. Pythias and Simo were probably characters in a comedy by Cæcilius, the former a slave girl, the latter her master.

18 239. For Silenus cf. *The Cyclops* of Euripides (note on 17 220 ff.).

18 240–243. ‘Do not look for an original story, only for freshness of treatment.’

18 240–242. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Whom nature guides, so writes that every dunce  
Enraptured thinks to do the same at once;  
But after inky thumbs and bitten nails  
And twenty scattered quires, the coxcomb fails.

18 241. Pascal, *Thoughts* 1. 3: “The best books are those that every reader thinks he might have written himself.”

18 244–19 250. ‘The chorus of satyrs must keep from low and coarse language; think of the better, not of the worse part of your audience.’

19 248–250. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

A vulgar scribbler, certes, stands disgraced  
In this nice age, when all aspire to taste;  
The dirty language and the noisome jest  
Which pleased in Swift of yore, we now detest.

19 251–20 269. ‘*Metre*. Avoid the great fault of the older Roman tragedians, heavy and spondaic verses. Roman poets have been demoralized by inartistic audiences. Neither presume on this nor be slavishly afraid of censure, but steep yourself in Greek models.’

19 251–20 262. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Peace to Swift's faults! his wit hath made them pass,  
Unmatched by all save matchless Hudibras!  
Whose author is perhaps the first we meet  
Who from our couplet lopped two final feet;  
Nor less in merit than the longer line,  
This measure moves a favorite of the Nine.  
Though at first view eight feet may seem in vain  
Formed, save in ode, to bear a serious strain,  
Yet Scott has shown our wondering isle of late  
This measure shrinks not from a theme of weight,  
And, varied skilfully, surpasses far  
Heroic rime, but most in love and war;  
Whose fluctuations, tender or sublime,  
Are curbed too much by long-recurring rime.





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Though you and I, who eruditely know  
To separate the elegant and low,  
Can also, when a hobbling line appears,  
Detect with fingers, in default of ears.

21 275–284. ‘The Greeks are the masters: they invented the drama and perfected it, tragedy and even comedy, from the too free criticism of the older type to the more sober and toothless new comedy of manners.’

21 275–277. Goldsmith, *Essay on the Origin of Poetry* :

Thespis, inventor of dramatic art,  
Conveyed his vagrant actors in a cart;  
High o'er the crowd the mimic tribe appeared,  
And played and sung, with lees of wine besmeared.

21 281–284. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Old comedies still meet with much applause,  
Though too licentious for dramatic laws;  
At least, we moderns, wisely, 'tis confessed,  
Curtail or silence the lascivious jest.

21 281. Aristophanes is the representative of the Old Comedy. An excellent translation of his *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Birds* is Frere's, published in Morley's Universal Library (Routledge).

21 285–22 294. ‘But our countrymen have imitated every phase, and have struck out lines of their own both in tragedy and comedy. Indeed, Rome would rival Greece in literature as in arms, were it not for our laziness in perfecting our work.’

Translated by Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Whate'er their follies, and their faults beside,  
Our enterprising bards pass naught untried;  
Nor do they merit slight applause who choose  
An English subject for an English muse,  
And leave to minds which never dared invent,  
French flippancy and German sentiment.  
Where is that living language which could claim  
Poetic more, as philosophic, fame,  
If all our bards, more patient of delay,  
Would stop, like Pope, to polish by the way?

22 295–301. ‘This laziness is reduced to a theory. Men undervalue art in comparison with the native gift, and look on that as the antithesis of common sense.’



22 296. Cf. Plato, *Phædrus* 245 (Jowett's translation, 2. 121-122): "There is also a third kind of madness, of those who are possessed by the Muses; which enters into a delicate and virgin soul, and there inspiring frenzy, awakens lyrical and all other numbers; with these adorning the myriad actions of ancient heroes for the instruction of posterity. But he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art — he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted; the sane man is nowhere at all when he enters into rivalry with the madman." See also my edition of Shelley's *Defense of Poetry*, notes on 40 23-25 and 23 6, and the discussion on pp. xx-xxv.

22 297. *Democritus*. Cicero, *Character of the Orator* 2. 46. 194: "I have often heard that no man can be a good poet (as they say is left recorded in the writings of both Democritus and Plato) without ardor of imagination, and the excitement of something similar to frenzy." Cf. Cicero *On Divination* 1. 37. 80.

22 297-298. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

But truth to say, most rimers rarely guard  
Against that ridicule they deem so hard;  
In person negligent, they wear, from sloth,  
Beards of a week and nails of annual growth;  
Reside in garrets, fly from those they meet,  
And walk in alleys rather than the street.

22 300. Anticyra, a town in Phocis, was celebrated for producing hellebore, believed to be a cure for insanity.

22 301-23 308. 'As I cannot follow them, I have given up writing poetry myself, but I am trying to teach others to write it, as a whetstone makes knives cut, though it cannot cut itself.'

23 304-308. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

But since (perhaps my feelings are too nice)  
I cannot purchase fame at such a price,  
I'll labor gratis as a grinder's wheel,  
And, blunt myself, give edge to others' steel,  
Nor write at all, unless to teach the art  
To those rehearsing for the poet's part;  
From Horace show the pleasing paths of song,  
And from my own example — what is wrong.

23 304. A similar use of the figure is ascribed to Isocrates, in the life of that orator formerly attributed to Plutarch. Being asked why he did not speak in public, since he taught the art of public speaking to others,



he is said to have replied (*Lives of the Ten Orators*, p. 838 E): "So whetstones cannot cut, but they give a cutting edge to steel."

23 309–24 318. 'Good writing begins in good thinking. Read Plato, understand human life, draw direct from that, and then your characters will speak like living beings.'

23 309–311. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Though modern practice sometimes differs quite,  
 'Tis just as well to think before you write;  
 Let every book that suits your theme be read,  
 So shall you trace it to the fountain-head.

23 309. Wickham says, in his note on the passage: "These lines seem to give a keynote to the *Ars Poetica*. It is the reconciliation of the breach, if it ever was a serious one, between Horace's literary and philosophical inclinations. . . . 'Sound poetry' ('*scribendi recte*' . . . ), so far from being the product of a crazed brain, has behind it sound thinking, the trained intelligence of the philosopher, at second hand from the study of books (v. 310), and at first hand from the study of life (v. 317)." And again in his edition of the *Works*, 2. 335: "*Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons* is the motto of the *Ars Poetica*. . . . It is as though Horace's two tastes and interests had run at last into one stream. Philosophy is no longer the rival of poetry, but has become her instructress."

Other Latin authors afford confirmation of Horace's statement. Thus Cato (Jordan's ed., p. 80): "Lay hold of the subject, and the words will follow" (*rem tene, verba sequentur*); Cicero, *Character of the Orator* 3. 31. 125: "Copiousness of matter produces copiousness of language" (the whole of the thirty-first chapter should be consulted). Nor have some of the best modern authors failed to echo this opinion. See, in particular, Lewes' *Principles of Success in Literature*. Thus Dryden, *Discourse on Epic Poetry*: "And whereas poems which are produced by the vigor of imagination only have a gloss upon them at the first (which time wears off), the works of judgment are like the diamond, the more they are polished the more lustre they receive. . . . Such a sort of reputation is my aim, though in a far inferior degree." And to the same effect Sir Walter Scott, *Life of Dryden* (ed. Saintsbury), pp. 402–403: "The distinguishing characteristic of Dryden's genius seems to have been the power of reasoning, and of expressing the result in appropriate language. This may seem slender praise; yet these were the talents that led Bacon into the recesses of philosophy, and conducted Newton to the cabinet of nature. The prose works of Dryden bear repeated evidence to his philosophical powers. . . ."





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Our boys (save those whom public schools compel  
 To 'long and short' before they're taught to spell)  
 From frugal fathers soon imbibe by rote  
 'A penny saved, my lad, 's a penny got.'  
 'Babe of a city birth! from sixpence take  
 The third, how much will the remainder make?' —  
 'A groat.'— 'Ah, bravo! Dick hath done the sum!  
 He'll swell my fifty thousand to a plum.'  
 They whose young souls receive this rust betimes,  
 'Tis clear, are fit for any thing but rimes;  
 And Locke will tell you that the father's right  
 Who hides all verses from his children's sight;  
 For poets (says this sage, and many more,)  
 Make sad mechanics with their lyric lore;  
 And Delphi now, however rich of old,  
 Discovers little silver and less gold,  
 Because Parnassus, though a mount divine,  
 Is poor as Irus, or an Irish mine.

24 319. Not so much 'set off with sentiment,' as with 'sentiments,' that is, 'maxims,' 'commonplaces,' 'gnomic sayings.' Shakespeare abounds in examples, such as *Oth.* 3. 3. 155–161. Most familiar quotations from him are of this sort; cf. Bartlett's or any similar dictionary.

24 323. *Ore rotundo*. Not 'orotund,' but 'well-rounded,' 'compact,' 'pithy,' 'polished.'

24 325 ff. Cf. the excessive time allotted to arithmetic in many of our American schools.

25 333–346. 'There are in truth two aims in poetry, instruction and pleasure. When you would teach remember the importance of brevity; when you would please remember the importance of verisimilitude. But if you would gratify all your audience you must combine both aims. This is the true classical poetry that lives.'

25 333–344. Byron, *Hints from Horace*:

Two objects always should the poet move,  
 Or one or both, — to please or to improve.  
 Whate'er you teach, be brief, if you design  
 For our remembrance your didactic line;  
 Redundance places memory on the rack,  
 For brains may be o'erloaded, like the back.  
 Fiction does best when taught to look like truth,  
 And fairy fables bubble none but youth;  
 Expect no credit for too wondrous tales,



Since Jonas only springs alive from whales!  
 Young men with aught but elegance dispense;  
 Maturer years require a little sense.  
 To end at once:—that bard for all is fit,  
 Who mingles well instruction with his wit.

25 333–334. (Cf. 343–344.) So Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 13 15 ff. (cf. note on 13 23–24), and Sidney, *Defense of Poesy* (see the Introduction to my edition, pp. xxviii–xxxix.). How, in the face of such a consensus of opinion, a modern writer on comparative literature can restrict the function of literature to the giving of pleasure, is not quite apparent. Posnett (*Comparative Literature*, pp. 18–19) defines literature “as consisting of works which, whether in verse or prose, are the handicraft of imagination rather than reflection, aim at the pleasure of the greatest possible number of the nation rather than instruction and practical effects, and appeal to general rather than specialized knowledge.” He refers to Palgrave (*Songs and Sonnets of Shakspeare*, p. 237) as saying that “pleasure is the object of poetry; and the best fulfilment of its task is the greatest pleasure of the greatest number.” One would wish to know how such sentiments can be reconciled with Matthew Arnold’s view of poetry as a criticism of life (in Ward’s *English Poets* 1. xix. ff., and elsewhere), and with Milton’s “fit audience find, though few” (*P. L.* 7. 31).

25 340. The ‘Lamia’ was ‘a monster said to feed on man’s flesh, a bugbear to frighten children with.’ See Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1177, and Keats’ *Lamia*.

25 345. *Sosii*. Brothers in partnership as booksellers.

26 347–359. ‘Do not suppose I expect an impossible perfection, but I draw a distinction between the bad poet who is occasionally good, and the good poet who is, if so be, occasionally less good.’

26 347 ff. Cf. 3 32–37.

26 347–353. Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 253–262:

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,  
 Thinks what ne’er was, nor is, nor e’er shall be.  
 In every work regard the writer’s end,  
 Since none can compass more than they intend;  
 And if the means be just, the conduct true,  
 Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due;  
 As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,  
 To avoid great errors must the less commit:  
 Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,  
 For not to know some trifles is a praise.



26 351-356. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Where frequent beauties strike the reader's view  
 We must not quarrel for a blot or two,  
 But pardon equally to books or men  
 The slips of human nature and the pen.  
 Yet if an author, spite of foe or friend,  
 Despises all advice too much to mend,  
 But ever twangs the same discordant string,  
 Give him no quarter, howsoe'er he sing.

26 357. *Chœrilus*. Of Iasos. Cf. Horace, *Ep.* 2. 1. 232-241 (Howes' translation).

Well had it been for Philip's warlike son  
 If Chœrilus had ne'er his favor won,  
 Nor to the conqueror of the world had sold  
 His doggerel lines for Macedonian gold.  
 For homely verse the purest fame will spot,  
 Sure as ink handled leaves behind a blot.  
 But he, in choice of bards so little nice,  
 Who such a poem bought at such a price, —  
 This very king, we're told, ordained by law  
 None but Apelles should his semblance draw,  
 And that Lysippus' hand should mold alone  
 Great Alexander's shape in brass or stone.

27 360-365. 'There is in poetry as in painting a difference between aims, between a sketch and a finished picture.'

27 360-364. Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 171-180:

Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear,  
 Considered singly, or beheld too near,  
 Which, but proportioned to their light or place,  
 Due distance reconciles to form and grace.  
 A prudent chief not always must display  
 His powers in equal ranks and fair array,  
 But with the occasion and the place comply,  
 Conceal his force, nay, seem sometimes to fly.  
 Those oft are stratagems which error seem,  
 Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.

With Pope's rendering may be compared that of Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

As pictures, so shall poems be; some stand  
 The critic eye, and please when near at hand,  
 But others at a distance strike the sight;





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Whate'er the weapon, cudgel, fist, or foil,  
 None reach expertness without years of toil;  
 But fifty dunces can, with perfect ease,  
 Tag twenty thousand couplets when they please.  
 Why not? — shall I, thus qualified to sit  
 For rotten boroughs, never show my wit?  
 Shall I, whose fathers with the quorum sate,  
 And lived in freedom on a fair estate;  
 Who left me heir, with stables, kennels, packs,  
 To all their income, and to — twice its tax;  
 Whose form and pedigree have scarce a fault,  
 Shall I, I say, suppress my Attic salt?

28 385–29 390. 'Do you remember it [see 374–384]. Do not write unless you are in the vein. What you write submit to some good critic, and do not be in a hurry to publish it.'

28 385. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Thus think 'the mob of gentlemen'; but you,  
 Besides all this, must have some genius too.

29 391–30 407. 'Poetry has had historically a high mission. It is not a thing to be thought scorn of.'

29 391 ff. Cf. Sidney, *Defense* 2 18 ff.; Shelley, *Defense* 5 20–6 26.

30 408–415. 'People ask sometimes which is necessary to a poet, natural gifts or artistic training. The answer is, *both*. You need the gift; but the gift without training will do no more in this art than in any other.' Cf. the discussion in Shelley, *Defense of Poetry* xx–xxv.

30 416–32 437. 'You can wrap yourself up in your conceit, or you can buy applause from interested critics; but you know how worthless this is and will beware of it.'

32 438–33 452. 'The picture of the honest and good critic, such as was Quintilius.'

32 434–439. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

Ye who aspire to 'build the lofty rime,'  
 Believe not all who laud your false 'sublime';  
 But if some friend shall hear your work, and say,  
 'Expunge that stanza, lop that line away,'  
 And, after fruitless efforts, you return  
 Without amendments, and he answers, 'Burn!'  
 That instant throw your paper in the fire,  
 Ask not his thoughts, or follow his desire.  
 Yet, if you only prize your favorite thought,  
 As critics kindly do, and authors ought;



If your cool friend annoy you now and then,  
 And cross whole pages with his plaguy pen ;  
 No matter, throw your ornaments aside, —  
 Better let him than the whole world deride.  
 Give light to passages too much in shade,  
 Nor let a doubt obscure one verse you've made.

32 441. The suggestion of the anvil has been beautifully elaborated by Lowell (*A Winter-Evening Hymn to my Fire*) :

How glows again  
 Through its dead mass the incandescent verse,  
 As when upon the anvils of the brain  
 It glittering lay, cyclopically wrought  
 By the fast-throbbing hammers of the poet's thought.

33 453–35 476. The picture of the self-willed and self-conceited poet.

34 465. For Empedocles see Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets*  
 I. 37–64.

33 457–34 467. Byron, *Hints from Horace* :

While such a minstrel, muttering fustian, strays  
 O'er hedge and ditch, through unfrequented ways,  
 If by some chance he walks into a well,  
 And shouts for succor with stentorian yell,  
 'A rope! help, Christians, as ye hope for grace!'  
 Nor woman, man, nor child will stir a pace ;  
 For there his carcass he might freely fling  
 From frenzy, or the humor of the thing.  
 Though this has happened to more bards than one,  
 I'll tell you Budgell's story, — and have done.  
 Budgell, a rogue and rimester, for no good  
 (Unless his case be much misunderstood),  
 When teased with creditors' continual claims,  
 'To die like Cato,' leapt into the Thames!  
 And therefore be it lawful through the town  
 For any bard to poison, hang, or drown.  
 Who saves the intended suicide receives  
 Small thanks from him who loathes the life he leaves ;  
 And, sooth to say, mad poets must not lose  
 The glory of that death they freely choose.

34 471. *Bidental*. A spot struck by lightning, consecrated by the haruspices, and enclosed.



# NOTES.

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## VIDA.

39 1 ff. Throughout his poem, Vida is frequently indebted for plan, thought, or similes, to Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*, which may be found in translation in Bohn's Library. Those interested in tracing out the sources should read the following chapters of the *Institutes*: Book 1, chaps. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8; Book 2, chaps. 1, 2, 3, 4; Book 8, chaps. 3, 6; Book 10, chaps. 1, 2, 3, 4; Book 11, chap. 3.

40 11 ff. Francis was Dauphin of France, the eldest son of Francis I. Born Feb. 28, 1518, he was seven years of age when his father was defeated and taken prisoner by Charles V at the battle of Pavia. The next year he and his brother Henry were, by the Treaty of Madrid, left as hostages for their father upon his liberation. They were ransomed in 1529, and Francis died Aug. 12, 1536, at the age of eighteen, while his father was still alive. The Dauphin had been in captivity a year when this poem was published (1527).

41 33. On the Epic cf. Aristotle, *Poetics*, chap. 24, and Sidney, *Defense of Poesy* 30 27, and note.

42 37. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* (Bohn's trans.) 10. 5. 7: "But the greatest and most wide-spread fame attaches to Phe-monoe, who was the first priestess of Apollo, and the first who recited the oracles in hexameters." Also 10. 6. 7: ". . . The Delphians begged Apollo to shield them from the coming danger, and Phe-monoe (who was then priestess) gave them the following oracle in hexameters, 'Soon will Phoebus send his heavy arrow against the man who devours Parnassus, and the Cretans shall purify Phoebus from the blood, and his fame shall never die.'" Servius, the ancient commentator on Virgil, identifies her (on *Æn.* 3. 455) with the Cumæan Sibyl.

42 39-40. Cf. Hor. (3-4) 38-40.

44 75. Cf. Conington, *Life of Virgil* (*Works of Virgil* 1. xxv): "Suetonius preserves a very important notice regarding the manner in





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And ten low words oft creep in one dull line ;  
 While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,  
 With sure returns of still expected rimes :  
 Where'er you find ' the cooling western breeze,'  
 In the next line it ' whispers through the trees ;'  
 If crystal streams ' with pleasing murmurs creep,'  
 The reader's threatened (not in vain) with ' sleep.'  
 Then, at the last and only couplet fraught  
 With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,  
 A needless Alexandrine ends the song  
 That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow strength along.

52 193 ff. Cf. Roscoe's *Lorenzo de' Medici* and *Life of Leo X.*

53 205. Referring to the invitations extended to the French and Germans. Vida's work was published in the very year of the sack of Rome by the foreigners. For these invasions see such books as George Eliot's *Romola*, Benvenuto Cellini's *Memoirs*, and the standard histories.

54 227 ff. Vida from time to time imitates Plutarch, *Of the Training of Children* (*Morals*, ed. Goodwin, i. 3-32). The imitation here is from chap. 7.

56 263. The Serius, Ital. Serio, is a tributary of the Adda, which is itself a tributary of the Po. Rising in the mountains of the Valtelline, south of the Adda, and east of Lake Como, it flows south, passing just east of Bergamo.

56 265 ff. Cf. Apollodorus, 2. 4. 9: "Hercules was taught . . . to play the lyre by Linus, who was a brother of Orpheus. The latter came to Thebes and acquired citizenship there. On one occasion Hercules was irritated at being rebuked by Linus, and struck him dead with the lyre. Being arraigned for murder, he pleaded the law of Rhadamanthus, which says that he is guiltless who repels the unjust encroachments of another, and was allowed to go unpunished. Amphitryon, fearing that he might repeat the act, sent him away to herd cattle."

59 310. Tibur is the modern Tivoli, Tusculum the modern Frascati. See Baedeker's *Central Italy*.

62 349. The Anio formerly parted Latin from Sabine territory. It passes through Tivoli, and empties into the Tiber. For Albunea see note on 74 538; it was either a fountain or a forest, but neither this point nor its exact site has been determined.

62 354 ff. Cf. Hor. (27-28) 366-386.

69 462. Cf. Cruttwell, *Hist. Rom. Lit.* pp. 257-259.

69 463-464. For the *Batrachomyomachia* see Mahaffy, *Hist. Greek. Lit.*



1. 90–93. Chapman's translation, under the title, *The Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, may be referred to. See my edition of Addison's *Criticisms on Paradise Lost*, note on 10 31.

69 465. Possibly referring to the story of Arachne. See Ovid, *Metamorph.* 6. 1–145.

71 486 ff. Cf. Hor. *Ep.* 2. 2. 65–86.

74 529. Cf. Æschylus, *Prometheus Bound*.

74 534. *Odyssey* 14. 327–330 (cf. 19. 296–299): "He had gone, he said, to Dodona to hear the counsel of Zeus from the high leafy oak tree of the god, how he should return to the fat land of Ithaca after long absence, whether openly or by stealth." The site of Dodona was discovered in 1876. Cf. two books by C. Caraponos, *Mémoire sur Dodone et le culte de Jupiter*, Naxos, 1877, and *Dodone et ses ruines*, Paris, 1878.

74 536. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10. 5: "Many various legends are told about Delphi, and still more about the oracle of Apollo. For they say that in the most ancient times it was the oracle of Earth. . . . And we read that Earth delivered her own oracles. . . . But afterwards they say that Earth gave her share to Themis, and Apollo received it from Themis." Delphi was in Phocis.

74 538. *Faunus*. Cf. *Æn.* 7. 80–95: "These prodigies disturbed the king, and so he goes to the oracle of Faunus his prophetic sire, and consults the groves 'neath high Albunea, which is the greatest of woods, resounding with the murmur of its holy fountain, and breathing forth from its dark shade a strong mephitic exhalation. From this grove the nations of Italy, and all the land of Cœnotria, look for responses when in perplexity. Hither the priest brings his gifts, and as silent night draws on lies on a bed of skins and woos sleep; then he sees many phantoms flitting in wondrous wise, and hears manifold voices, and enjoys the converse of gods, and addresses the powers of Acheron let loose through deep Avernus. Here too at this time father Latinus, coming for oracular response, offered in due form an hundred woolly sheep, and lay raised on their skins and on a bed of fleeces; suddenly a voice came forth from the deep grove. . . ." Cf. the Fourth Canto of Scott's *Lady of the Lake*.

74 539. For the Sibyls see Sidney, *Defense* 5 33, note, and cf. their representations on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, by Michael Angelo. See also the line of the *Dies Iræ*, "Teste David cum Sibylla."

75 544. Cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1. 2. 3: "It was therefore late before poets were either known or received among us; though we find in Cato *De Originibus* that the guests used, at their entertainments, to sing the



praises of famous men to the sound of the flute." Cf. *Tusc. Disp.* 4. 2. 3; *Brutus* 19. 75.

74 551. Cf. Hor. (29) 391–396.

75 554 ff. Cf. Horace, *Od.* 3. 11. 13–20.

79 30 ff. Cf. Hor. (11) 136 ff.

80 46 ff. Referring to the *Odyssey*.

82 74 ff. Hor. (11) 146 ff.

83 90. *Od.* 9. 39–66.

83 100. *Il.* 19. 76–248.

84 102. *Od.* 9. 316–470.

84 113. *Iliad*, Bk. 3.

85 119. *Odyssey*, Bk. 21.

85 129. *Æn.* 6. 890 ff.; 3. 458 ff.; 6. 86 ff.

86 135–137. *Æn.* 10. 310–313.

86 138. *Il.* 16. 843–854.

86 142. *Æn.* 12. 842–868.

86 145. *Æn.* 10. 495–505.

88 176. *Il.* 5. 720–732.

89 180 ff. *Il.* 2. 210–277.

89 186–188. *Æn.* 11. 336–375, cf. 122–132, 376–444.

89 198–199. (On the assumption that Virgil was the standard, and that Homer was inferior as an epic poet, see Sellar, *Virgil*, pp. 66–67: “Dante combines the reverence for a great master, which seems to be more natural to the genius of Italy than to that of other nations, with a high self-confidence and a bold and original invention. Lucretius expresses a similar enthusiasm for Homer, Ennius, Empedocles, and Epicurus; and by Virgil the same feeling is, though not directly expressed, yet profoundly felt towards Homer and Lucretius. And in all these cases the admiration of their predecessors is an incentive, not to imitative reproduction, but to new creation. . . . The progress of modern poetry was for a long time accompanied—and it would be difficult to say whether it was thereby more obstructed or advanced—by a new undergrowth of Latin poetry, for the higher forms of which Virgil served as the principal model. Petrarch attached more importance to his epic poem of *Africa*, written in imitation of the rhythm and style of the *Æneid*, than to his Sonnets. The influence of Virgil on the later Renaissance in Italy is abundantly proved in the works of poets, scholars, and men of letters in that age. Ninety editions of his works are said to have been published before the year 1500. . . . It was discussed as an open question whether the *Iliad* or the *Æneid* was the greater epic poem; and it was then necessary for the admirers of





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(the glance of the swallow itself is clumsy and slow compared to the darting of common house-flies at play). . . . Whether it should be called courage, or mere mechanical instinct, may be questioned, but assuredly no other animal, exposed to continual danger, is so absolutely without sign of fear."

On similar comparisons Church says, *Essay on Dante*, pp. 141-144: "He employs without scruple and often with marvelous force of description any recollection that occurs to him, however homely, of everyday life; the old tailor threading his needle with trouble (*Inf.* 15); — the cook's assistant watching over the boiling broth (*Inf.* 21); — the hurried or impatient horse-groom using his curry-comb (*Inf.* 29); — or the common sights of the street or the chamber — the wet wood sputtering on the hearth . . . (*Inf.* 13); — the paper changing color when about to catch fire . . . (*Inf.* 25); — the steaming of the hand when bathed, in winter . . . (*Inf.* 30); — on the ways and appearances of animals — ants meeting on their path . . . (*Purg.* 26); — the snail drawing in its horns (*Inf.* 25); — the hog shut out of its sty, and trying to gore with its tusks (*Inf.* 30); — the dogs' misery in summer (*Inf.* 17); — the frogs jumping on to the bank before the water-snake (*Inf.* 9); — or showing their heads above water . . . (*Inf.* 22). It must be said that most of these images, though by no means all, occur in the *Inferno*; and that the poet means to paint sin not merely in the greatness of its ruin and misery, but in characters which all understand, of strangeness, of vileness, of despicableness, blended with diversified and monstrous horror."

On the general subject cf. Bossu, *Treatise of the Epic Poem*, Bk. 6, chap. 3: "We should not make comparisons between noble and ignoble, between great and inconsiderable things. But what is base and ignoble at one time and in one country is not always so in others. We are apt to smile at Homer's comparing Ajax to an ass in his *Iliad*. Such a comparison nowadays would be indecent and ridiculous, because it would be indecent and ridiculous for a person of quality to ride on such a steed. But heretofore this animal was in better repute; kings and princes did not disdain the beast so much as mere tradesmen do in our times. 'Tis just the same with many other similes which in Homer's time were allowable. We should now pity a poet that should be so silly and ridiculous as to compare a hero to a piece of fat; yet Homer does it in a comparison he makes of Ulysses. And the Holy Ghost himself, which cannot be supposed to have a wrong sense of things, begins the encomium of David by this idea: 'As is the fat taken away from the peace offering, so was David chosen out of the children of Israel' (Ecclesiasticus 47. 2). The reason



of this is that in these primitive times, wherein the sacrifices of the true religion as well as of the false were living creatures, the blood and the fat were reckoned the most noble, the most august, and the most holy things."

With the foregoing compare Addison, *Spectator* No. 160: "At the same time that we allow a greater and more daring genius to the ancients, we must own that the greatest of them very much failed in, or, if you will, that they were very much above, the nicety and correctness of the moderns. In their similitudes and allusions, provided there was a likeness, they did not much trouble themselves about the decency of the comparison; thus Solomon resembles the nose of his beloved to the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus; as the coming of a thief in the night is a similitude of the same kind in the New Testament. It would be endless to make collections of this nature. Homer illustrates one of his heroes encompassed with the enemy by an ass in a field of corn, that has his sides belabored by all the boys of the village without stirring a foot for it; and another of them tossing to and fro in his bed, and burning with resentment, to a piece of flesh broiled on the coals. This particular failure in the ancients opens a large field of raillery to the little wits, who can laugh at our indecency, but not relish the sublime in these sorts of writings. . . . In short, to cut off all caviling against the ancients, and particularly those of the warmer climates, who had most heat and life in their imaginations, we are to consider that the rule of observing what the French call the *Bienséance* in an allusion has been found out of latter years, and in the colder regions of the world; where we would make some amends for our want of force and spirit by a scrupulous nicety and exactness in our compositions. Our countryman Shakespeare was a remarkable instance of this first kind of great geniuses." The simile to which both Bossu and Addison refer is from the *Odyssey*, 20. 25-28: "And as when a man by a great fire burning takes a paunch full of fat and blood, and turns it this way and that and longs to have it roasted most speedily, so Odysseus tossed from side to side."

96 291. *Æn.* 9. 789-798, where Turnus in retreat is compared to a lion. In the translation, 'Ilion' is of course a mistake.

96 292. *Il.* 11. 558-565.

97 301 ff. Cf. note on 96 291.

97 306. Cf. Hor. (12) 151, (25) 338.

97 307-314. *Il.* 6. 119-237.

98 320. *Od.* 12. 395-396.

98 322. *Il.* 19. 404-417; cf. 17. 426-440.

98 323. *Æn.* 10. 225-245.



- 98 324. *Æn.* 6. 893-896; *Od.* 19. 562-565.  
 99 329. Cf. *Il.* 2. 23-33 with 60-70.  
 99 332. *Il.* 1. 364-392.  
 99 336. Cf. *Il.* 9. 122-157 with 264-299.  
 99 337. *Æn.* 11. 243-295.  
 100 347. *Iliad*, Bk. 5.  
 100 350. *Il.* 8. 1-27.  
 100 353. *Odyssey*, Bk. 11; *Æneid*, Bk. 6.  
 100 355. *Il.* 10. 272-277; 13. 821-823; 24. 290-321; *Od.* 24. 242-243; *Æn.* 1. 390; 12. 244-265.  
 100 356. *Od.* 8. 470-586; Bks. 9, 10, 11, 12; 13. 1-16; *Æn.* 1. 697-756; Bks. 2, 3.  
 101 359. *Iliad*, Bk. 23; *Æneid*, Bk. 5.  
 101 362. Apollodorus, 1. 4. 1; Hyginus, *Fable* 140.  
 101 363. *Æn.* 8. 184-305.  
 101 369. *Æn.* 1. 81-123; 3. 192-204.  
 101 372. *Æn.* 3. 137-142.  
 102 374 ff. *Æn.* 3. 571-582.  
 102 381. Cf. Sidney, *Defense of Poesy* 6 28 ff.  
 102 384-394. *Æn.* 2. 298-794.  
 107 449. Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 80-87:

Some, to whom Heaven in wit has been profuse,  
 Want as much more to turn it to its use;  
 For wit and judgment often are at strife,  
 Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.  
 'Tis more to guide than spur the Muse's steed,  
 Restrain his fury than provoke his speed;  
 The winged courser, like a generous horse,  
 Shows most true mettle when you check his course.

107 455 ff. Cf. Hor. (12-13) 156-178, (23-24) 312-318; Aristotle, *Poetics* 4. 2. 3: "To imitate is instinctive in man from his infancy. By this he is distinguished from other animals, that he is of all the most imitative, and through this instinct receives his earliest education. All men likewise naturally receive pleasure from imitation. This is evident from what we experience in viewing the works of imitative art; for in them we contemplate with pleasure, and with the more pleasure the more exactly they are imitated, such objects as, if real, we could not see without pain: as the figures of the meanest and most disgusting animals, dead bodies, and the like."

108 472-477. *Æn.* 10. 1-117.





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sions, which contribute so much to success in writing, are frequently made the causes and foundations of opposite failures." Gorgias' 'living sepulchres' are paralleled by Shakespeare's 'Our monuments Shall be the maws of kites' (*Macb.* 3. 4. 72-73).

Cf. Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 315-333:

Others for *language* all their care express,  
 And value books, as women men, for dress;  
 Their praise is still, — the style is excellent,  
 The sense they humbly take upon content.  
 Words are like leaves; and where they most abound  
 Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.  
 False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,  
 Its gaudy colors spreads on every place;  
 The face of Nature we no more survey;  
 All glares alike, without distinction gay.  
 But true expression, like the unchanging sun,  
 Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon;  
 It gilds all objects, but it alters none.  
 Expression is the dress of thought, and still  
 Appears more decent, as more suitable;  
 A vile conceit in pompous words expressed,  
 Is like a clown in regal purple dressed:  
 For different styles with different subjects sort,  
 As several garbs with country, town, and court.

128 163. Simile.

129 186 ff. Cf. 113 542 ff.

131 210 ff. Cf. Sidney, *Defense of Poesy*, note on 53 16, and Longinus, *On the Sublime* 13, 14; a part of the latter is quoted in my edition of Addison's *Criticisms on Paradise Lost*, note on 100 9.

133 234 ff. Cf. *Æn.* 4. 238-705.

135 267-301. Cf. Hor. (4-6) 48-72.

137 302 ff. Periphrase.

137 309. So Quintilian, 1. 5. 66. Cf. Sidney, *Defense* 55 25, note.

137 311. *Perterricrepas*. From Lucretius, 6. 129.

138 316. Tmesis.

138 324. The author's source is probably Servius on *Æn.* 1. 347.

140 355. From here to line 454 is perhaps the most original portion of Vida's work. Hallam says, *Lit. of Europe*, chap. 8: "It has been observed that he is the first who laid down rules for imitative harmony, illustrating them by his own example." Cf. Dryden's thought on this subject of harmony (*Discourse on Epic Poetry*): "But Virgil, who never



attempted the lyric verse, is everywhere elegant, sweet, and flowing in his hexameters. His words are not only chosen, but the places in which he ranks them for the sound; he who removes them from the station wherein their master sets them spoils the harmony. What he says of the Sibyl's prophecies may be as properly applied to every word of his — they must be read in order as they lie; the least breath discomposes them, and somewhat of their divinity is lost. I cannot boast that I have been thus exact in my verses; but I have endeavored to follow the example of my master, and am the first Englishman, perhaps, who made it his design to copy him in his numbers, his choice of words, and his placing them for the sweetness of the sound. On this last consideration I have shunned the cæsura as much as possibly I could; for wherever that is used it gives a roughness to the verse, of which we can have little need in a language which is overstocked with consonants. . . . The Italians are forced upon it once or twice in every line, because they have a redundancy of vowels in their language; their metal is so soft that it will not coin without alloy to harden it. On the other side, for the reason already named, it is all we can do to give sufficient sweetness to our language; we must not only choose our words for elegance, but for sound — to perform which a mastery in the language is required; the poet must have a magazine of words, and have the art to manage his few vowels to the best advantage, that they may go the farther. He must also know the nature of the vowels — which are more sonorous, and which more soft and sweet — and so dispose them as his present occasions require; all which, and a thousand secrets of versification beside, he may learn from Virgil, if he will take him for his guide."

So also in his *Discourse on Satire*: "But versification and numbers are the greatest pleasures of poetry. Virgil knew it, and practised both so happily that, for aught I know, his greatest excellency is in his diction. In all other parts of poetry he is faultless, but in this he placed his chief perfection." Note Pope's imitation of Vida in his *Essay on Criticism*, 362–383.

142 373. Cf. *Æn.* 4. 180.

142 374. See such lines as *Æn.* 5. 217.

142 375. See, for example, *Æn.* 3. 658; 4. 181.

142 377. *Æn.* 1. 588–591. .

142 379–381. I have not found Vida's original here. With 380 we may compare Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, 172:

Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

142 385. Cf. *Æn.* 1. 35.



- 142 386. Cf. *Æn.* 1. 84.  
 142 387. *Æn.* 5. 143; 8. 690; the better manuscripts of the *Æneid* have 'tridentibus.'  
 143 388-389. *Æn.* 5. 866; *Georg.* 1. 356-357.  
 143 390. *Æn.* 10. 291.  
 143 391. *Æn.* 1. 105.  
 143 392. *Æn.* 3. 581-582.  
 143 393. *Æn.* 8. 692.  
 143 395. *Æn.* 8. 87-88.  
 143 396. *Æn.* 8. 91; 4. 398.  
 143 399. *Æn.* 7. 74.  
 143 400-401. *Æn.* 7. 462-464.  
 144 406. *Æn.* 10. 1.  
 144 409-410. *Æn.* 12. 863-864.  
 144 414. *Æn.* 5. 422.  
 144 415. Probably referring to *Od.* 11. 593-600. 'Magno molimine' is found *Lucr.* 4. 902; *Ovid, Met.* 12. 357.  
 145 417-418. *Georg.* 2. 399-400.  
 145 419. *Æn.* 3. 549.  
 145 421-422. *Georg.* 3. 416-421.  
 145 423. *Æn.* 4. 594; 9. 37.  
 145 425. *Æn.* 2. 250. Longfellow has beautifully exemplified this line (*Sea-Weed*):

When descends on the Atlantic  
 The gigantic  
 Storm-wind of the equinox,  
 Landward in his wrath he scourges  
 The boiling surges,  
 Laden with sea-weed from the rocks.  
 . . . . .  
 From the tumbling surf, that buries  
 The Orkneyan skerries,  
 Answering the hoarse Hebrides;  
 And from wrecks of ships, and drifting  
 Spars, uplifting  
 On the desolate, rainy seas.

- 145 426. *Æn.* 5. 481; cf. note in Conington's edition.  
 145 429-430. *Æn.* 7. 6, 27-28.  
 145 432. *Æn.* 2. 544.  
 146 435. *Æn.* 5. 396.  
 146 437-438. *Æn.* 11. 614-615.





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# NOTES.

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## BOILEAU.

159 1-6. Cf. Hor. (27-28) 366-386.

159 7-12. Cf. Hor. (3-4) 38-41.

160 17. *Malherbe*. In his *Odes*. On these see Lalanne, *Notice Biographique sur Malherbe* (*Œuvres*, in *Les Grands Écrivains de la France*, l. xxiv): "Poetry to order, poetry inspired by the wish to obtain or repay a benefit or a favor, this forms the largest and most important part of his work from the moment when he established himself at Court; and, singular to observe, among this poetry is the most beautiful which flowed from his pen. If ever man had the constitution of an official poet, that man was Malherbe." The last sentence may be abundantly illustrated. Thus, beginning in the year 1609, when Henri IV. was fifty-six years of age, and Malherbe himself fifty-four, he wrote, by order of the King, a series of five poems, to assist the amorous sovran in his courtship, or to console him for the loss, of the young Charlotte de Montmorency, whom he had married in the same year to the Prince of Condé. The latter was obliged to escape with his bride from the Court. so violent was the King's passion. See also note on 166 131.

*Waller*. In such poems as *To my Lord Protector* (1656) and *To the King upon his Majesty's Happy Return* (1660). See Johnson's *Life of Waller*: "It is not possible to read, without some degree of contempt, poems of the same author, ascribing the highest degree of *power and piety* to Charles the First, then transferring the same *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell; now inviting Oliver to take the crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his testimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praises as the effusion of reverence; they could consider them but as the labor of invention and the tribute of dependence." See note on 166 131.

160 18. *Racan*. 1589-1670. In his pastoral drama, *Les Bergeries*, imitated from the *Astrée* of D'Urfé.



*Spenser.* See Eclogues 1, 4, 6 and 12 of the *Shepherd's Calendar*.

160 21. St. Amant is meant (1594–1661), author of the heroic idyl, as he himself calls it, of *Moïse Sauvé*. Cf. Saintsbury, *Hist. French Lit.* p. 279. Faret was a friend of St. Amant.

*Dubartas.* 1544–1590. A French Huguenot noble, author of several religious poems, of which the most noted was translated into English in 1598, by Joshua Sylvester, under the title of *Divine Weeks and Works*. Saintsbury praises him highly (*Hist. French Lit.* pp. 211–212). See also the account given in Morley's *First Sketch of Eng. Lit.*

160 27–161 38. Cf. Hor. (23) 309.

162 39. Batteux said (*Les Quatre Poétiques*): "There is not one of these ten lines which does not deserve to be meditated by every one who writes."

162 56. From Bk. 3 of Scudéry's *Alaric*, with the substitution of 'astragales' for 'couronnes.' In this Third Book, about 480 lines are taken up with the description of a palace, beginning with the façade, and ending with the garden.

162 62. Cf. Hor. (25) 337.

162 64. Cf. Hor. (3) 31.

162 65–163 68. Cf. Hor. (3) 25–28.

163 75–78. Cf. Hor. (25) 343–345. Line 76 is the original of Pope's line in the *Essay on Man*, 4. 380.

164 86. *Apollon travesti*. Referring to the *Virgile travesti* of Scarron. Tabarin was a celebrated mountebank of the period.

164 90. *D'Assouci*. 1604–1679(?). Translated into burlesque verse Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine*, and part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

*Mock Tempest*. "Written by Duffet, a low author employed by the players of the King's-house to compose parodies on the operas, by which the Duke's Company at one time attracted large audiences. Accordingly he wrote a 'Mock Tempest,' 'Psyche Debauched,' and other pieces of the same kind. The first was so indecent that in Dublin the ladies and people of rank left the house to the rabble when it was acted." (Note in Scott's Dryden.)

164 94. *Typhon*. By Scarron (1610–1660). See note on 164 86.

*Flecknoe*. See Dryden's poem of *MacFlecknoe*.

164 96. *Marot*. See 166 119. *Butler*. Samuel Butler (1612–1680), author of *Hudibras*.

164 98. The Pont Neuf was the customary resort of quacks and Punch-and-Judy showmen.

164 100. From Bk. 7 of Brébeuf's translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.



*Bridle up*, etc. From the *Second Week* (see note on 160 21), First Day, Fourth Part.

165 106. The line illustrates itself.

165 113 ff. These statements must be taken with much allowance. In some respects the later Middle Age, that nearer Boileau, was inferior to the earlier, and he was misled by confining his observations to the former. But, in general, he was too ignorant and unappreciative of the literature of the Middle Ages to entitle his judgment respecting the earliest masters of the several poetic species to uncritical acceptance.

165 117. *Villon*. This is a nickname by which is known a poet whose real name still remains in dispute, notwithstanding the numerous investigations of which it has been the subject. His date is 1431 (perhaps later)—ca. 1485. His poetry has of late been somewhat too highly praised. The best known of his poems is a ballade — he has been called ‘the prince of ballade-makers’ — with the refrain

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan ?

But where are the snows of yester-year ?

See Saintsbury, *Hist. French Lit.* pp. 156–158, or R. L. Stevenson's *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. His works have been translated into English by John Payne. Swinburne's version of his *Epitaph*, or *Ballade of the Gibbet*, may be found in Gleeson White's collection of *Ballades and Rondeaux*, p. 94. If Villon was the prince of ballade-makers, he was also the prince of rascals.

*Fairfax*. Edward Fairfax (d. 1635) published in 1600 his translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (reprint in the Carisbrooke Library, Routledge, New York, 1890); see the article by E. Koepfel in *Anglia* 12. 103–142. Dryden, *Preface to the Fables* (*Works*, ed. Scott, 11. 206–207): “For Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; great masters in our language, and who saw much farther into the beauties of our numbers than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal descents and clans as well as other families. . . . Milton has acknowledged to me that Spenser was his original; and many besides myself have heard Waller own that he derived the harmony of his numbers from *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, which was turned into English by Mr. Fairfax.”

166 118. *Marot*. Ca. 1497–1544. The last eminent representative of mediæval poetry in France. Spenser imitated him in pastoral. See Saintsbury, *Hist. French Lit.* pp. 172 ff.

*Ballades*. For the ballade, the triolet, and the rondeau, see Gleeson





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themselves or any of their contemporaries, till their last days, that Ronsard had failed."

166 131. *Malherbe*. 1555-1628. Saintsbury, pp. 275-276: "His first attempt was the overthrow of the Pléiade. He ridiculed their phraseology, frowned on their metres, and, being himself destitute of the romantic inspiration which had animated them, set himself to reduce poetry to carefully-worded metrical prose. . . . Malherbe is not worthy as a poet to unloose the shoe-latchet of Ronsard. . . . The influence of Boileau came rapidly to second that of Malherbe, and the result is that not a single poet — the dramatists are here excluded — of the seventeenth century in France deserves more than fair second-class rank." See notes on 160 17 and 166 23.

*Waller*. 1605-1687. Johnson, *Life of Waller*: "He certainly very much excelled in smoothness most of the writers who were living when his poetry commenced. The poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. . . . But he was rather smooth than strong; of the *full resounding line* which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given very few examples. . . . But of the praise of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought." See note on 160 17.

166 133. Coleridge, in his *Table Talk*, called poetry "the best words in the best order" (July 12, 1827).

167 147 ff. See Vida (119) 15 ff.

167 150. Cf. Hor. (4) 40-41, (23) 309 ff.

168 171. Boileau has translated the well-known proverb, *Festina lente*.

168 172 ff. Hor. (22) 292-294.

169 178. Hor. (12) 152.

169 180. Hor. (2) 23.

169 186 ff. Hor. (31-33) 419-452.

173 1-6. An exceptional instance of the employment of simile by Boileau in this poem.

173 5 ff. Almost the only kind of pastoral written at this time was the allegorical, where the great masqueraded as tuneful shepherds. How remote this practice was from that of Theocritus no student of Greek will need to be told. It is Virgil who is responsible for this conception of the pastoral, and consequently for the artificiality which it assumed upon its revival at the Renaissance. The idyl which Boileau has in mind may be approximately represented in English by Pope's Pastorals. Cf. the latter's *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry*. Batteux (*Les Quatre Poétiques*) would dis-



tinguish the eclogue from the idyl by attributing to the former more action and movement.

173 14. This line suggests Vauquelin de la Fresnaye's couplet in the 66th Idyl of his Second Book, where he is speaking of Virgil as pastoral poet:

Longtemps après qu'il eut quitté l'humble Musette,  
Pour faire retentir la superbe trompette.

These lines of Vauquelin apparently refer to those which, in some manuscripts, begin the *Æneid*:

Ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus avena  
Carmen et egressus silvis vicina coegi  
Ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono,  
Gratum opus agricolis: at nunc horrentia Martis.

The Virgilian lines have again been imitated by Spenser, at the beginning of the *Fairy Queen*:

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome did maske,  
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,  
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,  
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,  
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds.

174 21. In Ronsard's Eclogues, Catin, Carlin, and Henriot stand respectively for Catherine de' Medici, Charles IX, and Henry II. Besides these transformations, he employs rustic nicknames, such as Pierrot, Margot, etc. Cf. Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, in such lines as the opening of Eclogue 9:

Diggon Davie! I bidde her god day;  
Or Diggon her is, or I missaye.

Sidney says, *Defense of Poesy* 47 16-19: "That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow, since neither Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sannazzaro in Italian did affect it."

*Randal.* Scott says (edition of Dryden, 15. 239): "It is difficult to guess who is meant. Certainly the description does not apply to Thomas Randolph, whose pastorals are rather ornate, and duly garnished with classical names. . . . Probably Dryden, if he filled up this name, was content to speak at large, from a general recollection that Thomas Randolph, the adopted son of Ben Jonson, had written pastorals." Phyllis appears in Virgil's *Eclogues*, 3, 5, 7, 10; Lycidas in *Ecl.* 7; Strephon in Theocritus, Idyl 7.



175 31. In this and line 34 Boileau is apparently drawing reminiscences from Ovid, rather than from the pastoral poets.

175 35. Alluding to Virgil, *Ecl.* 4. 3:

Si canimus sylvas, sylvæ sint consule dignæ;

which is thus paraphrased by Conington: "If my theme is still to be the country, let it rise to a dignity of which a consul need not be ashamed."

175 38. For the elegy see Hor. (6) 75–78, and the note. Among its cultivators in France had been Marot, Ronsard, and Desportes. According to Vauquelin (*Art Poétique* 1. 523), it had been anciently represented by the French *lai*.

175 51. Probably referring to the "sonnet to Uranie, which stirred up a literary war."

176 54. Referring to Tibullus, 1. 7. 41; 4. 5. 11.

176 58. Cf. Hor. (7) 83–85, and the note. Ronsard, who revived the Pindaric Ode in France, and published a collection of them in 1550, claimed for himself the honor of introducing into French the name as well as the thing (*Œuvres*, ed. Blanchemain, 2. 10): ". . . et osay le premier des nostres enrichir ma langue de ce nom, Ode." But Thomas Sibilet, who had published an *Art Poétique* in 1549, had already used the word, and Jacques Pelletier had composed the species of poem as early as 1547, not to mention similar compositions of Mellin de Saint Gelais (Pellissier, *L'Art Poétique de Vauquelin de la Fresnaye*, p. xv): "C'est lui [Sibilet] qui le premier en introduisit le nom dans notre langue; cependant, dès l'année 1547, Pelletier composait des poèmes de ce genre, et Sibilet lui-même cite une chanson de Mellin qu'il ne craint pas de donner comme un modèle de l'ode." But the 'ode' of Mellin was amorous, and not in the least Pindaric. Ronsard confessed himself a disciple of Horace, as well as of Pindar. His theory of the subjects appropriate to the ode may be gathered from his Preface *Au Lecteur* (*Œuvres*, ed. Blanchemain, 2. 7): "Tu dois sçavoir que toute sorte de poésie a l'argument propre et convenable à son sujet: . . . la lyrique, l'amour, le vin, les banquets dissolus, les danses, masques, chevaux victorieux, escrime, joustes et tournois, et peu souvent quelque argument de philosophie." Cowley (1618–1667) published a volume of Pindaric Odes in 1656, a rather tardy following of Ronsard's example. Ben Jonson, however, had anticipated him in writing (1616?) his *Pindaric Ode on the Death of Sir H. Morison*, which is considered decidedly superior to any of those by Cowley or his school. It was Congreve who, by his *Discourse on the Pindaric Ode* (1705), was the first to display in English a sufficient comprehension of this form of verse,





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With gold and jewels cover every part,  
 And hide with ornaments their want of art.  
 True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,  
 What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

179 113. Boileau had in mind Mairet's *Sylvie*.

179 122. An Augustin preacher, called André, is specially intended.

180 140 ff. See Gleeson White's *Ballades and Rondeaux*.

180 143. *Madrigal*. There are two chief sorts of madrigals, the poetic and the musical. The etymology of the word is in dispute, but the derivation generally accepted is from the Greek *μάρδρα*, a sheepfold. Hence the earliest madrigals would have been shepherds' songs, and thus allied to the pastoral. Accordingly Carducci, the eminent Italian critic, thus defines the madrigal (*Studi Letterari*, p. 412): "The madrigal is properly an idyl wrought with little images, lively and elegant in proportion to the limitation of its space and the purity of its outline" (*Il madrigale è propriamente un idillio lavorato a piccole immagini, tanto più netto e vivace quanto più circoscritto lo spazio entro il quale si gira e più semplice il contorno*). As an art-form, the Italian madrigal originated in the earlier half of the fourteenth century, though it must have already existed for a considerable time as a rustic song. It so far partook of the nature of the Renaissance eclogue as to concern itself with the experiences of citizens during their sojourns in the country. Its original form consisted of either two or three tercets, followed by either one or two couplets; the lines were hendecasyllabics, corresponding in length to our blank verse. Petrarch was one of the early masters of the madrigal, as the following specimen, and its translation by Tomlinson (*The Sonnet*, London, 1874) will show:

Nova angeletta sovra l' ale accorta,  
 Scese dal cielo in su la fresca riva,  
 Là ond' io passava sol per mio destino;  
 Poi che senza compagna e senza scorta  
 Mi vide, un laccio, che di seta ordiva,  
 Tese fra l' erba, ond' è verde 'l cammino.  
 Allor fui preso e non mi spiacque poi,  
 Sì dolce lume uscia degli occhi suoi.

A beauteous angel, circumspect of wing,  
 From heaven descended to this verdant shore,  
 As I passed heedless to my fate unseen;  
 And seeing me guideless, friendless, wandering,  
 She stretched a silken snare my way before,



Where the fresh grass had made the pathway green.  
 Nor did it vex me to be made her prize,  
 So sweet the light that issued from her eyes.

The Italian madrigal was imitated in English by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Arcadia*, and the two examples there found may be regarded as the first genuine English madrigals. Drummond of Hawthornden also wrote several madrigals, and may be regarded as the chief English representative of this species. See Schipper, *Englische Metrik* 2. 886 ff.

The French madrigal has no such fixity of form, and is more apt to be of an amorous or gallant nature. An example is the celebrated one by Clement Marot:

Un doux nenni avec un doux sourire  
 Est tant honneste, il le vous faut apprendre ;  
 Quant est de cui, si veniez à le dire,  
 D'avoir trop dit je voudrois vous reprendre ;  
 Non que je sois ennuye d'entreprendre  
 D'avoir le fruit dont le désir me point ;  
 Mais je voudrois qu'en me le laissant prendre  
 Vous me disiez, ' Non, vous ne l'aurez point.'

Another is by Fontenelle, on the portrait of Madame Du Tort:

C'est ici Madame Du Tort  
 Qui la voit et ne l'aime a tort,  
 Mais qui l'entend en ne l'adore  
 A mille fois plus tort encore ;  
 Pour celui qui fit ces vers-ci,  
 Il n'eut aucun tort, Dieu merci.

Madrigals resembling the French, and often indistinguishable from the short love-poem, may be found in Lodge, Wither, Carew, and Suckling.

Already in Italian the madrigal was wont to assume an epigrammatic character (Casini, *Sulle forme metriche italiane*, p. 48), and in French the line between the two is frequently difficult to trace. Drummond associates the two in the title, *Madrigals and Epigrams*. An epigram with the structure of the madrigal may be found in Schipper, 2. 893.

It would appear that the musical madrigal ought to be distinguished from the poetical, though they may go back to a common source. In general these resemble the French rather than the Italian model. Their peculiarity is that they were written on purpose to be sung. They appeared in considerable numbers near the close of the Elizabethan period, and into the reign of James, and occur in such collections as those of Campion,



Bateson, Farmer, Pilkington, and Orlando Gibbons. An excellent selection may be found in Bullen's *Lyrics from the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age*, London, 1889.

181 147. For Lucilius (died ca. 103 B.C.) see Horace, *Satires* 1. 10; 2. 1; and the histories of Roman literature.

182 162. *Sat.* 10. 61-89.

182 163. *Sat.* 4. 72-149.

182 164. *Sat.* 4. 74-75.

182 166. *Sat.* 6. 115-132.

182 169. *Régnier.* 1573-1613. In the edition of Régnier's works in the *Bibliothèque Elzevirienne*, the celebrated French architect, Viollet le Duc, gives a History of Satire in France, covering fifty-five pages, in which he traces its obscure beginnings to the twelfth century, recognizes its spirit in the *Roman de la Rose*, sees in Marot's *Cog-à-l'âne* a homebred form of it, and calls Du Bellay's *Le poète courtesan* a true satire. Pellissier, in his edition of Vauquelin, considers the latter, however, to have been the founder of the satire regarded as the revival of an ancient species. Vauquelin himself (*Art Poétique* 2. 718) calls the Provençal *serventes* satires.

*Chaucer.* In Boileau's sense of the word, Chaucer is not a satirist. According to the common acceptation, the name of Joseph Hall (1574-1656) should be inserted here. In his *Virgidemiarum* (1597) he writes:

I first adventure; follow me who list,  
And be the second English satirist.

Warton, however, enumerates (*Hist. Eng. Poetry* 4. 364 ff.) four satirists who preceded Hall, namely, Wyatt, Gascoigne, Donne (1593, but not published till 1633), and Lodge.

183 182. The vaudeville takes its name from Vaux-de-Vire, valleys of the Vire. Its reputed author is Oliver Basselin, who lived in the fifteenth century, and on whom Longfellow has written a poem. His songs were ostensibly collected (ca. 1570) by Jean Le Houx, a lawyer of Vire, but the more recent historians of French literature ascribe little more than the impulse to Basselin, and believe that the vaudevilles which pass under his name are virtually the compositions of Le Houx. Only two or three of them are satiric. Of these I have translated one, the first in Du Bois's edition of 1821, and here subjoin it.

Sordid greed, come thou not near  
When my humble board is spread;  
My rich neighbor now lies dead





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187 34. Thus Euripides in his *Ion*, *Hecuba*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, and *Phœnician Damsels*.

187 35. Cf. Hor. (24) 322.

187 38 ff. Cf. Sidney, *Defense of Poesy* 47 28–49 18, and the notes.

187 39. Referring to Lope de Vega and Calderon. See the former's *Arte nuevo de hazer Comedias*.

187 42. Thus in Lope de Vega's *Valentine and Orson*.

187 45. See Corneille's *Discours III sur la Tragédie*.

187 47. Hor. (25) 338.

187 48. Aristotle, *Poetics* 9. 1: "It appears, further, from what has been said, that it is not the poet's province to relate such things as have actually happened, but such as might have happened — such as are possible, according either to probable or necessary consequence."

187 51 ff. Hor. (14) 182–188. The critics have much ado to extenuate the blinding of Gloucester on the stage in *King Lear* (Act 3, Sc. 7).

188 55–60. Aristotle, *Poetics* chaps. 10, 11: "Plots are of two sorts — simple and complicated; for so also are the actions themselves of which they are imitations. An action (having the continuity and unity prescribed) I call simple when its catastrophe is produced without either revolution or discovery; complicated, when with one or both. And these should arise from the structure of the plot itself, so as to be the natural consequences, necessary or probable, of what has preceded in the action. For there is a wide difference between incidents that follow from and incidents that follow only after each other.

"A revolution is a change (such as has already been mentioned) into the reverse of what is expected from the circumstances of the action, and that produced, as we have said, by probable or necessary consequence. . . . A discovery — as indeed the word implies — is a change from unknown to known, happening between those characters whose happiness or unhappiness forms the catastrophe of the drama, and terminating in friendship or enmity."

188 66. Hor. (17) 220.

188 67 ff. Hor. (21) 275 ff.

189 83 ff. Of this De Julleville says (*Les Mystères* 1. 14): "Les plus habiles s'en tenaient aux fameux vers de Boileau, ou chaque mot est une erreur." *Every word is an error* — this is a harsh sentence, but the most capable students of the Mysteries will hardly question its justice.

190 93 ff. The best commentary on this passage is Boileau's dialogue, *The Heroes of Romance*, which he composed in the style of Lucian. The romances satirized are those of D'Urfé, Gomberville, La Calprenède, Des-



màrets, and especially Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Of the latter the *Grand Cyrus* and *Clélie* are the best known. These romances had much influence upon the so-called heroic plays of France and England, the plots of the latter being often taken bodily from the former.

190 105. Hor. (9) 120–122.

190 106. *Il.* I. 348 ff.

191 115 ff. See note on 190 93, and Boileau's letter to Brossette, Jan. 7, 1703.

191 124 ff. Hor. (10) 125–127.

192 130. Juba is the hero of La Calprenède's *Cleopatre*.

192 133–134. Hor. (8) 105 ff.

192 135 ff. Alluding to the opening lines of Seneca's *Troades*.

192 138. The Latin is, *Septena Tanain ora pendentem bibit*.

192 142. Hor. (8) 102–103.

193 143–144. Hor. (7) 95 ff.

194 162. Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 9. 9: "From all this it is manifest that a poet should be a poet, or 'maker,' of plots rather than of verses, since it is imitation that constitutes the poet, and of this imitation actions are the object."

194 163 ff. Cf. Vida (126) 123 ff.

194 177 ff. *Æn.* I. 1–156.

195 195 ff. Cf. Dryden, *Discourse on Satire*: "It is objected by a great French critic as well as an admirable poet, yet living, and whom I have mentioned with that honor which his merit exacts from me (I mean Boileau), that the machines of our Christian religion in heroic poetry are much more feeble to support that weight than those of heathenism. Their doctrine, grounded as it was on ridiculous fables, was yet the belief of the two victorious monarchies, the Grecian and Roman. Their gods did not only interest themselves in the event of wars (which is the effect of a superior Providence), but also espoused the several parties in a visible corporeal descent, managed their intrigues and fought their battles, sometimes in opposition to each other; though Virgil (more discreet than Homer in that last particular) has contented himself with the partiality of his deities, their favors, their counsels or commands, to those whose cause they had espoused, without bringing them to the outrageousness of blows. Now our religion, says he, is deprived of the greatest part of those machines — at least, the most shining in epic poetry. Though St. Michael in Ariosto seeks out Discord to send her amongst the Pagans, and finds her in a convent of friars, where peace should reign (which indeed is fine satire); and Satan in Tasso excites Soliman to an attempt by night on the Christian





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show what powerful effects the moderns have elicited from this fertile type, over which a narrow criticism is even yet quarreling. We shall perhaps be presently led to call attention, in passing, to some features of this vast picture. Here we shall only say that, as a foil for the sublime, as a means of contrast, the grotesque is, in our opinion, the richest fountain that nature can open to art. Rubens undoubtedly felt the force of this fact when he decided to introduce into representations of royal processions, coronations, and glittering pageants, the hideous figure of some court dwarf. That universal beauty which antiquity solemnly spread over everything was not without monotony; the same impression, continually repeated, may at length cause fatigue. Sublimity upon sublimity is ill adapted to produce contrast, and we need to rest from everything, even from the beautiful. The grotesque, on the other hand, seems to be a halting-place, a term of comparison, a point of departure from whence to rise toward the beautiful with fresher and keener perception. The salamander is a foil to the undine; the gnome embellishes the sylph.

“And it would also be true to say that the touch of deformity has given to modern sublimity something purer, more lofty, and, so to say, more sublime, than the beautiful of ancient times. When art is in keeping with itself, it conducts everything with much greater certitude to its goal. If the Homeric Elysium falls far short of the ethereal charm and angelic delightfulness of Milton’s Paradise, it is because there is beneath Eden a hell whose horrors are far different from those of the pagan Tartarus. Does any one suppose that Francesca da Rimini and Beatrice would be so captivating in the hands of a poet who did not lock us into the Famine Tower, and force us to partake of Ugolino’s revolting feast?”

Upon this point the remarks of Brunetière (*L'Évolution des Genres*, pp. 181–182) are significant: “The restoration of the Christian ideal to its rights over sentiment and imagination we owe to Chateaubriand and the *Genius of Christianity*. . . . By the *Genius of Christianity* the precept of Boileau, who nevertheless knew the *Jerusalem Delivered*, if neither the *Divine Comedy* nor *Paradise Lost*, stands henceforth convicted of error; its purely heathen ideal is convicted of narrowness, of inadequacy, and especially of coldness. . . . Classical art, we have seen, is at bottom heathen. Its object and its ideal were fixed by the heathens of the Renaissance, and its models have remained for more than two centuries exclusively heathen. So that it was not merely Boileau who was here on trial, but, as it were, the Renaissance itself.”

196 209 ff. For Tasso see Sismondi, *Literature of the South of Europe*, (Bohn’s edition) I. 356–391, and Fairfax’s translation of the *Jerusalem Delivered* (Carisbrooke Library, Routledge, N.Y.).



196 213. But Godfrey was not 'always in prayer,' as those who have read Tasso know.

196 217. Referring to Ariosto.

198 241. The poet was Jacques Carel, Sieur de Sainte Garde; only four books of the poem were published, in 1666 and 1670. To us Boileau's objection seems almost childish.

199 251. The *Thebaid* of Statius sings the 'fraternal rage' of Polynices and Eteocles.

199 253. Batteux thinks the *Cid* of Corneille is open to this reproach.

199 259. Aristotle, *Poetics* 14. 11: "The diction should be most labored in the idle parts of the poem — those in which neither manners nor sentiments prevail; for the manners and sentiments are only obscured by a too splendid diction." See also my edition of Addison's *Criticisms on Paradise Lost*, 70 22 ff.

199 261 ff. Referring to Saint Amant, in the 5th part of his *Moïse Sauvé*. Cf. note on 160 21.

200 269 ff. Hor. (11) 136 ff.

200 272. The first line of Scudéry's *Alaric* (1654).

200 278–280. The opening lines of the *Aeneid*.

201 291. The *Orlando Furioso* (English translation by Rose, in Bohn's Library). Cf. note on 196 217.

201 296. Alluding to *Il.* 14. 187–223.

201 298. An adaptation of Ovid, *Metam.* Bk. 11, Fable 2.

202 306. Hor. (11) 148. Boileau was accustomed to cite, as a model of terseness, the speech of Chryses (*Il.* 1. 17–21): "Ye sons of Atreus and all ye well-greaved Achains, now may the gods that dwell in the mansions of Olympus grant you to lay waste the city of Priam, and to fare happily homeward; only set ye my dear child free, and accept the ransom in reverence to the son of Zeus, far-darting Apollo."

202 308. Imitated from Quintilian, 10. 1. 112, where it is said of Cicero.

202 313. Boileau specifically refers to Desmarets de Saint Sorlin, who wrote a poem entitled *Clouds*.

203 335 ff. Hor. (21) 281 ff.

204 343. In the *Clouds* of Aristophanes.

204 350. The New Comedy is here meant, of which Menander (342–291 B.C.) was the chief representative. His works, except a few fragments, are lost, but their manner is preserved with sufficient faithfulness in those of Terence.

204 364. *Otter*. A character in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman* (1609).

206 375 ff. Hor. (12) 161 ff.



207 388. See note on 164 88.

207 390. It is G ronte, and not Scapin, who wraps himself up in a bag. See *Les Fourberies de Scapin*.

*Tortoise.* "In the *Vaipone*, or *Far*, of Ben Jonson, Sir Politic Wouldbe, a foolish politician, as his name indicates, disguises himself as a tortoise, and is detected on the stage. — a machine much too farcical for the rest of the piece." (Scott's note.)

208 415. So Demea in the *Adelphi*, Simo in the *Andria*, and Chremes in the *Self-Tormentor*.

208 418. So Clitopho in the play last mentioned.

208 427. *Pont Neuf*. See note on 164 98.

209 1 ff. In this paragraph Boileau is satirizing Claude Perrault, not to be confounded with his more famous brother Charles.

210 14. *Mansard*. Fran ois Mansard (1598–1666). *Wren*. 1632–1723. The architect of St. Paul's, London.

210 29 ff. Hor. (27) 368 ff.

211 35. *Herringman*. See Dryden, *MacFlecknoe* 105.

211 39. *Bergerac*. 1620–1655. His *Journey to the Moon* suggests Lucian, Rabelais, and Swift.

*Counter-scuffle.* "A burlesque poem on a quarrel and scuffle in the Counter-prison, which occurs in Dryden's *Miscellanies*, Vol. III. It is written with considerable humor, though too long to be supported throughout." (Scott's note.)

211 40. For *Gondibert* see note on 166 123.

211 41 ff. Hor. (31) 428 ff.

211 48. *Shadwell*. 1640–1692. The rival and butt of Dryden.

212 53. *Settles*. See note on 183 194.

212 55. Hor. (35) 474.

212 57. Referring to an actual experience of Boileau with Charles Du Perrier, who one day talked incessantly in church about his own poetry, scarcely pausing at the elevation of the host. Pope has imitated Boileau in the well-known lines (*Essay on Criticism* 622–625):

No place so sacred from such fops is barred,  
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchyard;  
Nay, fly to altars; there they'll talk you dead;  
For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

212 59. Cf. 170 192.

213 71 ff. Hor. (28) 387, (32) 438 ff. Cf. Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 631–642:





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214 100. Boileau is aiming at the Port Royalist Nicole (1625–1695), who had expressed such views in his *Lettres sur les Visionnaires* and his *Traité de la Comédie*.

214 104. Similar opinions have been entertained concerning Racine's *Phèdre*.

215 110. See my edition of Newman's *Poetry, with Reference to Aristotle's Poetics* 22 18 ff.; Shelley's *Defense of Poetry* 42 25 ff.

215 111 ff. Imitated by Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 508–525:

If wit so much from ignorance undergo,  
 Ah, let not learning too commence its foe!  
 Of old, those met rewards who could excel,  
 And such were praised who but endeavored well;  
 Though triumphs were to generals only due,  
 Crowns were reserved to grace the soldiers too.  
 Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,  
 Employ their pains to spurn some others down,  
 And while self-love each jealous writer rules,  
 Contending wits become the sport of fools;  
 But still the worst with most regret commend,  
 For each ill author is as bad a friend.  
 To what base ends, and by what abject ways,  
 Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise!  
 Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,  
 Nor in the critic let the man be lost.  
 Good-nature and good-sense must ever join;  
 To err is human, to forgive, divine.

216 130. Corneille is said to have confessed that this was his case, when, on a certain occasion, Boileau congratulated him on the success of his tragedies.

216 133 ff. Hor. (29) 391 ff.

217 145 ff. Cf. Sidney, *Defense of Poesy* 2 18 ff.; Shelley, *Defense of Poetry* 5 20 ff.

217 152 ff. Cf. 74 534 ff., and the notes.

217 158. In his *Works and Days* (a translation by Chapman, and another in Bohn's Library).

218 167. At this point Boileau begins to lead up to his epilogue, which is also a panegyric. He here resumes, by way of contrast with the paraphrase of Horace, what was already virtually concluded in line 132.

218 181 ff. A paraphrase of Juvenal 7. 59–62; the Horatian ode referred to is 2. 19.



218 198. This is the most serious reproach that can be addressed to Racine.

218 200. For Benserade (1612–1691) see Saintsbury, *Hist. French Lit.* p. 278. He had a knack, in composing masques for the courtiers, of identifying the mythological characters of the piece with the actual characters of those who personated them.

219 183. Scott (edition of Dryden, 15. 263) prints 'Or,' which I have changed to 'Nor.'

220 201. Segrais is now chiefly remembered for his translation of the *Æneid*, to which Dryden frequently refers.

220 207. The French and English were allies in the war against Holland.

220 209. Maastricht capitulated in June, 1673.

220 213. Dôle, Salins, and Besançon, the three principal cities of Franche-Comté, reconquered by the French in 1674.

*Blessings of peace.* Charles II made peace with the Dutch in 1674.

221 215. In 1672 was formed a league offensive to France, into which entered Spain, Denmark, Holland, the Emperor, and all of Germany except Bavaria and Hanover.

221 215. *Now let, etc.* Does this refer to the fall of Shaftesbury (November, 1673)?

221 220. *Boutefeus.* "A Gallicism for *incendiary*; in Dryden's time it was a word of good reputation, but is now obsolete." (Scott's note.)

222 235. Pope has imitated these lines, *Essay on Criticism* 739–744:

Content, if hence the unlearned their wants may view,  
The learned reflect on what before they knew;  
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;  
Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame;  
Averse alike to flatter, or offend;  
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.









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