

singular and acute, but the erudition of words is frequently found not to be allied to the sensibility of taste.—DEKAREL, ISAAC, 1791-1824, "Critical Sagacity," and "Happy Conjectures;" or, Bentley's Milton, *Crescivores of Literature*.

The great Bentley, when he undertook the editing of Milton, was far advanced in age, and soon after this work, which formed his last publication, his faculties discovered very evident decline. In many of his former works he has displayed a vigour and sagacity of mind, an extent and accuracy of erudition which are truly wonderful, and which, perhaps, have never been exceeded. But his edition of Milton, though it exhibits many characters of the great critic, must be pronounced to be altogether an egregious failure.—SYMONS, CHARLES, 1809-10, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 536, note.

His edition of Milton had the same merits as his other editions; peculiar defects it had, indeed, from which his editions of Latin classics were generally free; these, however, were due to no decay in himself, but to original differences in the English classic from any which he could have met with in Pagan literature. The romantic, or Christian, poetry was alien to Bentley's taste; he had no more sense or organs of perception for this grander and more imaginative order of poetry than a screaming peacock may be supposed to have for the music of Mozart. Consequently, whatsoever was peculiarly characteristic in it seemed to him a monstrous abortion; and had it been possible that passages in the same impassioned key should occur in the austere and naked words of the Roman or Grecian muse, he would doubtless have proscribed them as interpolations of monks, copyists, or scholiasts, with the same desperate look which operated so summarily on the text of "Paradise Lost." With these infirmities, and this constitutional defect of poetic sensibility, the single blunder which he committed was in undertaking such a province. The management of it did him honour; for he complied honestly with the constitution of his own mind, and was right in the sense of taking a true view, though undoubtedly from a false station.—DE QUINCY, THOMAS, 1830-57, *Richard Bentley*, Collected Writings, ed. Masson, vol. IV, p. 191.

Bentley's mind was saturated with the authors of antiquity. Their turn of thought, their style of expression, the niceties of their language had been his unceasing study from boyhood onwards. To the imaginative poets of England he was a stranger. He was neither accustomed to their ways of thinking, nor their modes of expression, and coming fresh to them when he was close upon seventy he tried them by a standard very unlike their own. An aged, unpliant haughty novice, it was much too late to qualify himself for the commission he had received.—ELWIN, WIRWELL, 1872, ed., *The Works of Alexander Pope*, vol. VIII, p. 283, note.

Of inspirations, of refined intelligence or delicacy of taste, of any trace of sympathy with the essentials of poetry, his emendations are totally devoid. If, as is sometimes the case, they are felicitous—ingenious, that is to say, without violating poetic propriety—it is by pure accident. In many instances they literally beggar, berlesque.—COLLINS, JOHN CURTISON, 1855, *Essays and Studies*, p. 284.

GENERAL

That new and brilliant light of Britain.—GRAEVES, JOHN GEORGE, 1897, ed. *Callimachus*, *Prolog.*

A certain Bentley, diligent enough in turning over lexicons.—ALGER, AVTRONT, 1888, ed. *Ægypt*.

To answer the reflection of a private Gentleman with a general abuse of the Society he belong'd to, is the manners of a dirty Boy, upon a Country-Green.—ATREBURY, FRANCIS? 1701, *A Short Review*. While Bentley, long to wrangling schools contend.

And but by books acquainted with mankind, Davies, in the fulness of the poet's pride, Rhyms, tho' no genius; tho' no judge, decide; Yet he, prime patron of the capious art, Out tithingding poor Tibbald, tops his part; Holds high the scourge o'er each fam'd author's head.

Nor see their graves a refuge for the dead; To Milton lending sense, to Horace wit; He makes them write what never poet writ; The Roman Muse strangles his unmeaning pens And Paradise by him is lost again. Such was his doom, imposed by Heaven's decree.

With ears that hear not, eyes shall not see; The low to revel, to revel the sublime, To blast all beauty, and deprave all rhyme.—MALLEY, DAVID, 1782, *Poem on Verbal Criticism*, Addressed to Mr. Pope.

Mistress! dismiss that rabble from your throne;

Arantius Aristarchus yet unknown; Thy mighty Scholiast whose unwarped pains Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains

Turn what they will to Verse, their soil is vain, Criton like us shall make it prose again. Roman said Greek Grammarian! know your better.

Author of something yet more great than What you ring o'er your Alphabet, like Saal, Stands our Duganama, and o'erflows them all.—POPE, ALEXANDER, 1742, *Dunciad*, bk. IV, l. 265-271.

To have it said and believed that you are the most learned man in England, would be no more than what was said of Dr. Bentley.—CHESTERFIELD, PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE EARL, 1750, *Letters to his Son*, No. 1.

Great as he was in learning, and eager in criticism.—COWLEY, WILLIAM, 1750, *Letter to Samuel Rose*, Feb. 2.

Its editor, [of Julius Pollux] Hemsterhuis—(for who at the age of eighteen under values himself?)—was well content with his work. In a short time he received a letter from Bentley, the British Aristarchus, in which the labor bestowed upon the edition by Hemsterhuis was highly commended, and at the same time Bentley's emendations were given of the citations made by Pollux from the comic authors. In restoring these passages Hemsterhuis himself had spared no pains, justly deeming it the most important part of his editorial duty. But, on the perusal of Bentley's emendations, he perceived his own labor to have been in vain, and that Bentley had accomplished the task with almost superhuman sagacity. And what do you suppose were the feelings of Hemsterhuis under these circumstances? He was so disturbed, so dissatisfied with himself, that he resolved to abandon the study of Greek for ever; nor did he, for two months, dare to touch a Greek author.—WOLF, FRIED. AUGUST, 1816, *Litterariæque Anales*.

A name dreaded as well as respected in literature.—SCOTT, SIR WALTER, 1854, *Richard Cumberland*.

In his emendations, as he calls them, both of Milton and of Horace, for one happy conjecture he makes at least twenty wrong, and ten ridiculous. In the Greek

poets, and sometimes in Terence, he, beyond the rest of the pack, was often brought into the trail by scenting an unsoundness in the metre. But let me praise him where few think of praising him; or even of suspecting his imperfection. He wrote better English than his adversary Middleton, and established for his university that supremacy in classical literature which it still retains.—LANDON, WALTER SAVAGE, 1828, *Imaginary Conversations*, *Third Series*, *Scottish and London*, p. 465.

In conclusion, I will venture to pronounce Dr. Bentley the greatest man amongst all scholars. In the complexion of his character and the style of his powers he resembled the elder Scaliger, having the same hardihood, energy, and elevation of mind. But Bentley had the advantage of earlier polish, and benefited by the advances of his age. He was, also, in spite of insinuations to the contrary, favourably distinguished from the Scaligers, father and son, by constitutional good-nature, generosity and placability. I should pronounce him, also, the greatest of actors, were it not that I remember Salmastius. Dr. Parr was in the habit of comparing the Phalaris Dissertation with that of Salmastius "De Lingua Hellenistica." For my own part, I have always compared it with the same writer's "Plineian Exercitationes." Both are among this difference, that the Salmastian work is crowded with errors; whilst that of Bentley, in its latest revision, is absolutely without spot or blemish.—DE QUINCY, THOMAS, 1830-57, *Richard Bentley*, Collected Writings, ed. Masson, vol. IV, p. 234.

His scheme for an edition of Homer was abandoned, but the germ of all the modern theories on the subject is distinctly developed in his writings. In an article on the Homeric writings, we have ventured to enter our dissent against the prevailing hypothesis of Wolf; but who, at all deeply interested in the writings of the great poet of antiquity, will refuse to acknowledge how infinitely their knowledge has been increased, their delight in the Homeric writings heightened, by the inquiries of that eminent scholar, of Heyne, and of Payne Knight; and what

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