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Course given by

from _______________ to _______________

SUBJECT:
Thesis
Poetry of the Age
of Pope
Pope.

Spirit of the Age of Pope.

A. Intellectual Condition.
   I. Age of Science.
   2. Age of classical knowledge.
   3. Classics were being read and imitated.
   4. Attention being paid to form instead of thought.
   5. All were concerned with the outward life.
   6. Poetry was reaching the intellect instead of the emotions.
   7. England was following French thought.

B. Conditions of the Court.
   I. Different from Elizabeths reign.
   2. No unity in the nation.
   4. Charles brought in French thought and custom.
      A Science advanced in France.

II. Representative writer of this age.

A. Alexander Pope.
   I. Pope's Rape of the Lock which shows,
      a. Pope as a delineator of society.
      b. Pope as a representative of exactress and firmness of expression.
      c. Pope as excelling in terseness.

B. Pope's Translations.
   I. Iliad; compare with original.
III. Comparison of Pope.

A. Dryden.
   I. No poem corresponding to Rape of the Lock.
      2. Drydens Aenid.
         a. Compare with original and Pope.
         a. McFlecknoe.
         b. Hind and the Panther.

B. Prior.
   I. Sonnets.
      2. Epigrams.

C. Akenside.
   I. On the Winter Solstice.

D. Dyer.
   I. Grongar Hill.

E. Thomson.
   I. A Snow Scene.
      2. Castle of Indolence.

F. Parnell.
   I. Night Piece on Death.
      2. A Hymn to Contentment.
Conclusion.


References.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Age</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9th. Century</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Amer. Review</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward’s English Poets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnsons Lives of the Poets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taine’s English Literature 374.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeQuincey</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of 18th. Century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Gosse 105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popes Works.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popes Iliad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drydens Translations and Satires.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Poetry of the Age of Pope.

The last half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century may be regarded as the Augustian Age of English Literature. To be lively, if not witty, always to have a smart saying on the tongue, was the aim of all who wished to be recognized as persons of any literary merit. These feelings were brought about by many causes and we will first consider the intellectual conditions of the time.

Until the time of Bacon, science had made really little advancement. Before this men had thought that all knowledge about the universe could be gained in possibly a life time but after Bacon's work, there came a decided change. From now on the tendency was toward the scientific and intellectual. All things appealed to the intellect instead of the soul. Science told men that poetry could follow certain laws and as the age was intellectual the poetry must be intellectual also or it would not appeal to the intelligence of the people. Several causes made poetry what it came to be later. It was a time when the classic were being read more and more, and their form was being adopted. Ben Johnson now dead was the great dictator of the age and had given all his influence to change the form to the classic and the heroic-couplet came nearest to this. There were many rhymes up to this time but few couplets. They were found inadvertently in Chaucer, Marlow, Spencer, Shakespeare and Johnson. Shakespeare saw the tendency and his "Tempest" conforms more nearly than his other plays. In France science was allpowerful and the couplet of Comile was the model which produced the same effect as the classics.

During the reign of Elizabeth we saw that all was conducive to good literature. The subjects loved their queen and she was the inspiration to many poets.
There was no wars and all was unity in the kingdom. Affairs were entirely different in the reign of James and Charles. Every one was guilty of treachery at one time or another. People were betrayed on every hand. The Revolution was the great turning point of English history. Charles had just returned from the French court and had brought in French taught and French customs.

During the period from the Restoration to the French Revolution, the poetical aim and principle was the desire to obtain perfection of form. England wished for a more refined manner of expression. French rules of criticism became largely the accepted rules by which English productions were judged. The age was supposed to be too refined to be pleased with what had pleased the preceding age. English writers were beginning to perceive that there was such an art as the art of writing; that it was not enough to put words down in any fashion provided they conveyed your meaning; that pleasure as well as instruction could be given by the arrangement of words. A poem was no longer a story told with picturesque imagery but was to be a composition in symmetry and exactness. A thought was to be reduced to its simplest expression. Condensation, terseness, neatness and finish had to be studied. Manner as well as matter was pleasing. After this became recognized as the correct standard of form known, it became necessary and the writers who neglected these qualities, found their works rejected by the public. The writers lacked inspiration, lofty sentiment, love and sympathy and had little thought but what thought they had, they tried to express in the neatest, most terse and pointed form possible. They showed that a couplet could do the work of a page and a single line produce effects which before this had required sentences.
The essential thought is contained in the couplet and the rest is left to the readers imagination. The natural style had became unnaturally. The writers put passion aside and wrote of things in which the intellectual, the political and social instincts of men, were interested.

The most prominent literary man of this age, the one who influenced poetry for one hundred years, the one who excelled in the artificial style and in the use of the couplet was Alexander Pope, whose life extended from 1688 to 1744. Circumstances had prepared the way for Pope's popularity. Misfortunes had made the people sceptical and doubting; they were ready to accept artificiality. In an artificial age we must have an artificial poet and in this line Pope exceeded all others. Nature seems to have fitted him especially well for his work; he was sickly deformed and of a disposition that would easily imbibe the prevailing fashion of the day: affection and admiration fed the craving of his heart. If he had been strong, he would have been better able to resist the spirit of the age. The required style took too much trouble to gain but Pope was willing to take this trouble. He gave all his time to become the writer of finished verse. Any idea was suitable but it had to be changed until it had been reduced to its neatest and most epigrammatic form. He excelled in two lines that of condensing and pointing his meaning and in drawing the utmost harmony of sound out of the couplet. He wrote best about the court and town of his time. When he went away from the manner, passion, prejudices and sentiments of his time, he fell below his usual merit.

The poem which shows Pope at his best in describing society, is "The Rape of the Lock", a mock-heroic poem, which form can best treat of the petty actions of society.
In this are shown two of the greatest powers of an author: new things are made familiar and familiar things are told as new. The subject of the poem is an event out of the arraye incidents of common life: nothing real is introduced that has not been seen so often, we pay no longer any attention to it yet woman's life is brought before us with so much grace and fancy that we are anxious to see that which we have passed by so many times. In "The Rape of the Lock" Lord Petre had cut a lock of hair, belonging to a fashionable beauty and out of this trifle, Pope has made one of his greatest poems. The opening is as follows:

"Say what strange motive goddess could compel
A well bred lord 't' assault a gentle belle?
Or say what stranger cause yet unexplored
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?"

The remainder of the poem can be almost guessed from what the sun sees-

"Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,
And ope'd those eyes that must eclipse the day.
Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing shake
And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,
And the pressed watch returned the sound".

The baron wishes the lock very much and so he builds an alter to Love, the process of which is told in the following words:

"The adventurous bacon, the bright locks admired,
He saw, he wished and to the prize aspired,
For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implored
Propitious Heaven and every power adored."
But chiefly Love- to Love an altar built
Of twelve vast French romances neatly gild.
There lat three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billet-doux, he lights the pyre,
And breaths three amorous sighs to raise the fire,
Then prostrate falls and begs with earnest eyes,
Soon to obtain and long possess the prize".

When the lock has been cut, we can picture the maidens feelings for
"Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies,
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast
When husbands or when lapdogs breathe thier last;
Or when rich china vessels fallen from high
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie
Then she collect the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs and passions, and the war of tongues,
A vial next she falls with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs and flowing tears.
O wretched maid she spread her hands and cried
Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin comb and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with torturing iron's wreath'd around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head?
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?"
"Restored the lock" the vaulted roofs rebound
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain".

Jove is called to decide the case, now
"Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the mens wit against the ladies hair,
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side,
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside."

In the Rape of the Lock Pope has been severely criticised for his satire against women: he says of them-

"Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear
And best distinguished by black, brown or fair."

The tea-table is described clearly

"For lo the board with cups and spoons is crowned
The berries crackle and the mill turns around:
On shining alters of Japan they rise
The silver lamp: the fury spirits blaze
From silver spouts the graceful liquors glide
While Chinas earth receives the smoking tide".

On the dressing table we find that

"------ files of pins extend their shining rows
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux"

and the accessories are thus told,

"This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabis breathes from yonder box,
The tortoise here and elephant unite
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white".
The vanity of woman is told to us,
"Think not when woman's transient breath is fled
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards
And though she plays no more or looks the cards.
Then gay ideas crowd the vacent brain,
With varying vanities from every part,
They shift the moving toyshops of their heart
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive
Beaux banish beaux and coaches coaches drives".

The ladies eyes are compared thus,
"Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike
And like the sun, they shine on all alike
Yet graceful ease and sweetness void of pride
Might hide her faults if belles had faults to hide
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face and you wou'll forget'em all".

We have a good description of a teapot;
"Here living teapots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this and that the spout".

Pope makes this daring reference to the Queen;
"Here, thou great Anna whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take-- and sometimes tea".

The sylphs neglect their duty and this ingenious punishment is assigned to them,
"Whatever spirit carless of his charge
His post neglects or leaves the fair,"
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon oertake his sins
Be stopped in veals or transfixed with pins;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkins eye
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow
And tremble at the sea that froths below".

The following verses describes a gossiping conversation,
"A third interprets motions looks and eyes
At every word a reputation dies".

We have considered different phases of this poem and to get a
general view of its merits we will summarize the qualities and take
opinions from some other authors. In this poem Pope shows more charac-
teristics of a poet perhaps than in any other of his writings. He is
the poet of society, the delineator of manners and in this work he has
had the opportunity to use his ability in a way which ranks this poem as
one of the purest works of fancy. Macauley calls it "Popes best poem"
and DeQuincey declares it "the most exqutsite monument of playful fancy
that universal literature offers". Someone has said that the charm of
this poem lies in the fact that for the first time Pope is writing of
that which he know, of the life he saw and the people with whom he lived.
Satire, wit, elegance and finish are blended throughout. Notice this
expression for smoothness,
"Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes
While ever beam new transient colours flings
Colours that change when'er they wave their wings".
The frivolity of women is skillful told. They reverse the importance of things; the little is great and the great little. This poem stands as the best example of fashionable society and for wit and fancy, invention and keeping, has never been excelled. In other poems Pope may have shown more force, more thought but nowhere such fancy and finish. Even the bitterest critics allow this to be a masterpiece of delicate fancy.

From this light dainty piece, we turn to an opposite phase of Pope's work. It was the translation of Homers Iliad that Pope owed a large share of his fame. To be able to judge of a good translation it is necessary to know the requisites of one. Critics say. "The translator is a literary slave: the humblest or the boldest attempt at originality of thought or expression on his part must be viewed as an imperfection or a crime. He is bound to follow his master with servile fidelity, to copy defects as well as merits, with a kind of Chinese accuracy. He is a deal in nothing but words, an artist only in style and metrical arrangement; he has no right to any idea of his own and it is high treason in him to alter or modify those of another, though it be only to mend them". With these critics verbal, if it gives not only line for line but word for word, it is held up as the only faithful translation, the only copy that gives one a true idea of the original. Longfellow does not agree with them and he says,"As a translator his first purpose is to produce a beautiful English poem; his second to preserve the lineaments of the original so far as the difference between the two languages and the attainment of the former and higher object will admit. Its spirit, harmony, and grace, its ease and finish are to be transferred or imitated, or the copy will resemble nothing more than an exquisite piece of tapestry when viewed on the wrong side, every thread appearing in its due place, while the artistic effect of the whole has entirely disappeared."
"The true law of poetical translation is this--To produce such a work on the given topic and with the given materials of thought as the author probably would have written if he had been of the same country and had spoken the same language as the translator".

We will compare some of the most prominent passages of the Iliad translation with Popes rendering.

The restlessness of the sea is described thus, "When on the echoing beach the sea wave lifteth up itself in close array before the driving of the west wind; out on the deep doth it first rise its head and belloweth aloud and goeth with aching crest about the promontories, and speweth the foaming brine afar: even so" etc.

Pope's version is,

"As when the winds ascending by degrees,
First move the whitening surface of the sea,
The billows float in order to the shore,
The waves behind roll on the waves before;
Till, with the growing storm, the deeps arise
Foam o'er the rocks and thunders to the skies".

In these quotations, Pope's is much the weaker, "aching crest" and "speweth the foaming brine afar" gives more expression and action to the description. In one place Homer says "So his life departed him". Pope gives the same in, "The soul comes floating a tide of gore" but this is characteristic because at this time it must be the poetical word "gore" and none other.

We have the flight of Paris and the figure of a freed horse but we receive the better picture from the prose. "Neither lingered Paris long in his lofty house but clothed on his brave armour belight with bronze and hastened through the city, trusting to his nimble feet."
Even as when a stalled hrose full fed at the manger, breaketh his tether and speadeth at the gallop accrose the plains, being want to bathe himself in the far flowing stream exultingly: and holdeth his head on high and his mane floateth about his shoulders and he trusteth in his glory and nimbly his limbs bear him to the haunts and pasturage of mares."

"But now longer deaf to honor's call
Forth issues Priam from the palace wall,
In brazen ars that cast a gleaming ray
Swift through the town the warrior bends his way.
The wanton courser thus with reins unbound,
Breaks from his stall and beats the trembling ground.
Pampered and proud he seeks the wonted tides
And laves in height of blood, his shining sides;
His head now freed he now tosses to the skies;
His mane dishevelled o'er dis shoulders flies:
He sniffs the females in the distant plains,
And springs to his field again".

We have description of Nestor the shepherd—"Then went he himselfe after Nestor the shepherd of the host whom he found by his hut and black ship in his soft bed; beside him lay his fair right arms, a shield and two spears and a shining helmet. Beside him lay a glittering girdle wherewith the old man was wont to gird himselfe when he harnesed him for war, the bare of mer, and led on the host for he yielded not to grievous old age". 
The poetical translation reads thus:

"The king to Nestor's sable ship repairs:
The sage protection of the Greeks he found
Stretched in his bed, with all his arm around,
The various coloured scarf the shield he rears
The shining helmet and the pointed spear:
The dreadful weapons of the warriors rage
That old in age, desdained the peace of age."

The words "girdle" "harnessed" "grevous old age" are Greek words while "scarf" "sable ship" are entirely English.

The parting of Hector and Andromache is perhaps the most familiar scene so we will quote from both: "So now he smiled and gazed at his boy silently and Andromache stood by his side weeping and clasped her hand in his and spake and called upon his name. And her husband had pity to see her and caressed her with his hand and spaked and called upon her name, "Dear one I pray thee be not of oversorrowful heart; no man against my fate shall hurl me to Hades: only destiny I ween, no man hath escaped, be coward or be valiant, when once he hath been born. But go thou to thine house and see to thy own tasks, the loom and distaff and bid thine handmaidens ply their work: but for war shall men provide and I'm chief of all men that dwell in Ilios."

"Silent the warrior smiled and pleased resigned,
To tender passions all his mighty mind;
His beauteous princess cast a mournful look
Hung on his hand and then dejected spoke
Her bosom laboured with a boding sigh
And the big tear stood trembling in her eye.
Andromache my soul's far better part
Why with untimely sorrows heave thy heart?
Till fate condemns me to the silent tomb
No hostile hand can antedate my doom
Fixed is the term to all the race of earth.
No force can then resist, no flight can save,
All sink alike, the fearful and the brave.
No more - but haster to thy tasks at home
There guide the spindles and divert the loom.
Me, glory summons to the martial scene
The field of combat is the sphere for men.
Where heroes war, the foremost place, I claim
The first in danger as the first in war".

In the passage from Homer we have the parting of husband and wife for perhaps the last time Hector is kind and tender to Andromache and looks upon life and death as the ideal Greek warrior would look. We do not have this family picture in Pope. It is only the warrior we see and not the husband and father. He looks upon life as a philosopher and tries to console Andromache with this mode of reasoning.

From these few comparisons we see that Pope did not catch entirely the Greek spirit. In order to keep the style and versification perfect he has gone too far from the original. He uses so much art that we do feel the sympathy, simplicity and directness of the prose. As we read it is impossible not to admire the exquisite poetical finish yet we feel we are getting a greater acquaintance of English style than of Greek warriors. There is no doubt that his version of the Iliad gave power and melody to the English language. Admirers of Pope in defending him say, "he wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiment of his author: he
therefore made them graceful but last some of their sublimity". Some critics say, "he rendered Homer's great thoughts and noble passages with all the fidelity and exactness that a great poet would desire. No literal translation can be just to an excellent original in a superior language nor can a rash paraphrase make amends for this general defect, which is no less in danger to lose the spirit of an ancient by deviating into the modern manners of expression." Others say "Pope's Homer is not approached by any other single poem of like proportions between Paradise Lost and The Excursion". Pope himself said that he felt unable to do justice to Homer but only hoped to give a more tolerable copy of him than any entire translation in verse had yet done. In his translations it was his custom to correct his own work by the original text, then by other translations and lastly to give it a reading for versification only.

We find that Pope tried his skill in many directions and not the least of these is his satire. It was an age of satire and intrigue and any grievance against writers or other prominent people, was usually made public by means of a satire. Pope wrote three satires, The Dunciad, Essay On Criticism and Essay On Man, which last however is more philosophical than satirical. Pope had been attacked by many unimportant authors and these attacks led to The Dunciad, one of his great pieces. It is a personal satire against these authors in which he censures the trade of authorship. The growth of the poem was not wholly new yet it was little understood by common readers. Many of the illusions required illustration, the names were often expressed only by the initials and the subject itself had nothing of general interest. To understand it fully one must be familiar with the writers of that time since it deals rather with the individual than the class. Perhaps we can obtain no better idea of the contents of this satire, than by taking quotations, many of
which are self explanatory.

"She sees a mob of metaphors advance
Pleased with the madness of the mazy dance
How tragedy and comedy embrace
How farce and epic gets a jumbling race."

The fate of the dramatists is thus told,
"Here lay poor Fletcher half eat scenes and her
The frippery of crucified Moliere;
There hapless Shakespeare, yet of Tibbald sore
Wished he had blotted for himself before."

He says to those aspiring to wit,
"Or if to wit a coxcomb makes pretence
Guard the sure barrier between that and sense.
Or quite unravel all the reasoning thread
And hang some curious cobwebs in its stead."

The union of a fool and a wit is aptly told,
"Never was clashed out at one luck hit
A fool so just a copy of a wit."

The following verses do not apply to any one in particular and have no particular explanation yet they show the intellectuality and the great skill in the combination of words.

"Blockheads with reason wicked wit abhor,
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war."

"But Oh with One immortal One disperse
The source of Newton's light of Bacons sense."
"Heberian politics, O Swift the fate,
And Pope's ten years to comment and translate."

"Beneath her footstool Science groans in chairs,
And Wit dreads exile, penalitus and pains.
There foamed rebellious Logic gagged and bound;
There stript fair Rhetoric languished on the ground.
There to her head sad Tragedy addrest,
The dagger wont to pierce the tyrants breast;
But sober History restrained her rage
And promised vengeance on a barbarous age."

Pope's Essay On Criticism is somewhat on the same plan as The Dunciad only not so personal. He gives the key note of the essay in this stanza:

"Tis hard to say if greater want of skill
Appears in writing or in judging ill:
But of the two less dangerous is the offence
To tire our patience than mislead our sense."

We may say that the Essay On Criticism is a collection of independent maxims of no material order. Almost any line may be taken separately. It is full of clear thought compactly expressed. Some of the expressions have become proverbs as,

"A little learning is a dangerous thing" or "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." He views men's charaters as seen through their manners. In this essay there are something less than 400 couplets and we will consider a few of the most general. Judgments are compared

"Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike yet each believes his own."
He says of the critics' taste:

"In poets as true geniuses is but is but rare
True taste as seldom is the critics share
Authors are partial to their wits, tis true
But are not critics to their judgments too?"

He marks the distinction between wits and fools and gives this advice,

"Some have at first for wits then poets past,
Turned critics next and proves plain fools at last.
Launch not beyond your depth but be discreet
And mark that where sense and dulness meet."

All things are referred to nature as the primitive source,

"First follow Nature and your judgment frame
By her just standard which is still the same;
Unerring Nature still divenely bright
On clear, unchanged and universal light
Life force and beauty must to all impart
At once the source and end and test of art."

Pride appears to balance the loss of worth for he says,

"Whatever Nature has in worth denied
She gives in large recruits of needful pride."

Perfection never can be gained for

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."
True wit and expression are described as

"True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."

"Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."

"In words as fashion the same rule will hold
Alike fantastic if too new or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are tried
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

"At every trifle scorn to take offence
That always shows great pride or little sense."

"Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot."

Pope believes in consistency for "The sound must give expression to the sense." His technical skill made manner correspond with matter. This correspondance of sound to sense is skillfully shown where the lines more slowly or rapidly, harshly or smoothly in accordance with the idea to be conveyed.

"Tis not enough no harshness give offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyrs gently blows,
And the smooth strem in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sourding shore
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw
The line too labors and the words move slow:
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er the unbounding corn and skirres along the main."

In the Essay On Criticism we find an excellent example of a stuents' progress in science with the journey of a traveller in the Alps' and is perhaps the best to be found in English poetry. A simile to be perfect should both illustrate and also ennable the subject, must show it in a clearer view and present it to the fancy with greater dignity: but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. It must exhibit independent of its references a pleasing image. The figure as given by Pope is surely worthy of admiration,

"So pleased at first, the towering Alps we try  
Mount o'er vales and seem to tread the sky;  
The eternal snow appears already past,  
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:  
But those attained, we tremble to survey  
The growing labors of the lengthened way:  
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes:  
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

The Essay On Man is supposed to be the finest example of philosophical poetry which has ever been written. It is eloquent, polished finished yet it does not show Pope at his best nor does it impress the reader greatly. The theme of the poem is"know thyself" for he says,  

"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan:  
The proper study of mankind is man."

The predominating principles of human nature are,  
"Two principles in human nature reign,  
Self-love to urge and reason to restrain."
Self-love the spring of motion, acts the soul; Reason's comparing balance rules the whole."

His description of vice has become a common quotation, "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien As to be hated needs but to be seen: Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face We first endure then pity, then embrace."

The following short quotations have become household proverbs. "Order is Heaven's first law." "Honor and shame from no conditions arise Act well your part for there all honor lies." "Worth makes the man and want of it the fellow." "Virtue alone, is happiness below."

In the edition of the Essay On Man, Popes name was carefully suppressed. Aside from the general system of morality supposed to be contained in the essay, it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life. Into this poem some historical events are introduced and also some well known characters while with some other events it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious. There is a great diversity of opinion as to the merits of this essay and the severest criticism seems to be that a subject worthy of such discriminating thought and able treatment, should be written in almost the same style as "Rape of the Lock" or some other society poem. It is a subject ill suited to poetry yet Pope says "I choose verse because I found that I could express my ideas more shortly this way than in prose." It would be difficult to find a more condensed style and we are safe in saying that no one ever labored more skillfully to introduce philosophy
into current conversation of society. If his arguments had been written in prose there is no doubt that they would have been much less read. Although we may not admire the treatment of the subject, we cannot fail to appreciate the subject which Pope manifested in being able to reduce such a subject to poetry.

These are Pope's longest poems although we might mention the Temple of Fame, which however receives little attention. His Pastorals have reference to the time of the day, the seasons of the year and the periods of human life. In his shorter poems, we see the same exactness, terseness, balance and finish. A few examples will give the general trend of his thought in his shorter poems, many of which are of the proverbial order.

"No creature smarts so little as a fool."

"A fool quiet angry is quiet innocent
Alas tis ten tomes worse when they repent."

"If time improves our wit as well as wine
Say at what age a poet grows divine?"

England's policy is thus described,

"But Britain changeful as a child at play,
Now calls in princes and turns away.
Now Whig now Tory, what we loved we hate."

Pope is not a nature poet yet in one or two places, he has some very pretty nature descriptions. Art was more congenial to than nature. He liked painting and poetry but practised most and was best satisfied with himself in poetry.
Because poetry is not always a code of morals we often say that there is no connection at all between poetry and morality, and that all art is good which is for the moment agreeable. Morality and art are not independent, though not identical for both are only admirable when they are the expression of healthful and noble natures. Pope's description of the flight of a pheasant is worth noticing,

"See from the brake the whirring pheasant springs
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings
Ah what avail his glossy varying dyes,
His purple crest and scarlet circled eyes
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold
His painted wings and breast that flame with gold."

A landscape reflected in the water is described in Windsor Forest,

"Oft in her glass the musing shepherd spies
The headlong mountains and the downward skies,
The watery landscape of the pendant woods
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath."

A study of Pope would be incomplete without some reference to the famous literary quarrel of Pope and Addison. The quarrel arose through jealousy brought about by a slight mention of Pope's Pastorals in preference to a glowing tribute given to the Pastorals of Philips. No open quarrel resulted but soon new troubles began. Pope and Tickell both translated the Iliad and Addison is supposed to have favored Tickell. Addison had already revised the first book of Tickell's so would not revise the same of Pope's but consented to revise Pope's second book and praised it highly. Pope submitted the first draught of the Rape of the Lock to Addison who advised him to leave it unchanged. This made Pope think that Addison did not wish to have the poem improved.
It is difficult to get a just estimert of the trouble except that it seems certain beyond a doubt that Pope forged letters to meet his own purpose. Perhaps we may obtain no better idea of that quarrel than by hearing in full the satire which Pope wrote upon Addison.

"Peace to all such, but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please
And born to write, converse and live with ease;
Should a man, too fond to rule alone
Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne:
View him with scornful yet with jealous eye,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike;
Just hint a fault and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to praise or to commend
A timorous foe and a suspicious friend
Dreading even fools by flatterous besieged,
And obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish of praise;
Who would not laugh if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atlicus were he?"
It is our plan to compare Pope with Dryden in translations and satire and with the other writers of the age in general qualities. Before we take up this comparison, it may be well to review hastily Pope's characteristics. All agreed that he carried versification beyond the point attained by anyone else and influenced people more than anyone else of this age: no one so impressed his peculiarities of style and diction upon his followers. It was easy to catch his manner, the balancing of the two divisions of the line, the antithesis of clause and meaning, and in measure the almost monotonous melody which was soon carried to excess by his followers. There is scarcely a poet of the age in whom we do not find some trace of Pope. He was most accurate in expression and crowded the utmost amount of thought into his smallest space. The thought was turned over and over until it was brought out almost perfect. His method was to write his first thoughts in his words, then gradually to expand, correct and refine them. By continued practise language had become in his mind a systematic arrangement: he had word so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. His publications were never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press until it had been two years under his inspection. He consulted his friends and for the most part listened with great willingness to criticism: he deliberated with himself and allowed nothing to pass against his own judgment. He was not content to gratify his readers but he desired to excel and and always endeavored to do his best. It is seldom found that he altered without adding vigor, lucidity and elegance. His first production could hardly be recognized in the finished copy.

Next to Pope stands John Dryden a man of great talent: he did more than all others to introduce French standards in taste and principles in criticism and it was upon Dryden, his favorite English poet, that Pope
laid his foundation. With Dryden literature was a study rather than an inspiration: his style is exact and simple, being quiet free of affectation and ornamentation and it is to him perhaps that we owe the improvement if not the completion of the metre.

Dryden has no poem to correspond to the "Rape of the Lock." While he wrote upon many subjects, he never attempted anything like mock-heroic. The most important of Dryden’s translations is the Aenid which we will compare with Pope’s Iliad. We found Pope such an extremest in the literary art that he often wandered far from the original and in some places lost the Greek spirit entirely but this is not the case in Dryden’s translation since he followed the original more closely and in many places improved the passage nor did he at any time intend to give an exact translation. A few illustrations from the original and from Dryden will show this:

"Such are the toils that keep the commonwealth of bees at work in the sun among the flowery meads when summer is new, what time they lead out the nations hope, the young now grown or mass together honey clear and flowing and strain the cells to bursting with its nectarous sweets."

"Such is the toils and such their busy pains,
As exercise the bees in flowery plains,
When winter past and summer scarce begun
Invites them forth to labour in the sun.
Some lead their youth abroad while some condense
Their liquid store and some in sells disperse
Some at gate stand ready to receive
The golden burden and their friends relieve."

The quotation "I fear a Greek even with a gift in his hand," given by Dryden as "Trust not their presents," is inferior to the prose version
which has almost become a proverb.

It is impossible not to admire the simple poetical rendering of Dryden. Dryden has expressed the conclusion of Book III so simply, "Thus to the listening queen the royal quest
His wandering course and all his toils expressed:
And here concluding retired to rest."

The description of Queen Dido is worth mention, "Her hair knotted up with gold, her purple robe fastened with a golden clasp."

"Her flowing hair a golden cauld restrains
A golden clasp the Tyrian robe sustains."

Both these descriptions suggest the wealth and luxury of the Orient. Dryden gives an accurate description of Fame.

"Fame the great ill from small beginings grows
Swift from the first; and every moment brings
New vigour to her flights, new pinions to her wings.
Millions of opening mouths to Fame belongs
And every mouth is furnished with a tongue
Things done relates, not done she feigns and mingles truth with lies.
Talk is her business."

The death of Dido is simply and directly told, "At once all heat parts from the frame and the life has passed into air."

"The struggling soul was loosed and life dissolved in air."

In the expression "the struggling soul," Dryden has given Dido a fitting epithet.

By these examples we see how closely Dryden keeps to the prose translation, yet how finished and exact is each line.
Pope says of Dryden, "his (Dryden's) translation of Virgil is the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language. One who translates is above all things to keep alive that spirit and fire which makes his chief characters; in the speeches a fullness and perspecuity."

"McFlecknoe" and "The Hind and Panther" are taken as two most prominent satires of Dryden. The former is individual and the latter general. The satire upon "McFlecknoe" is supposed to be one of the keenest personal satire ever written. It is direct against McFlecknoe a poet of small merit, who attempts to place Shadwell on the throne of Dulness. While it is extremely satirical, there is humor throughout as we read of the great powers of Shadwell and his imaginary coronation. Dryden gives his description in a telling and delicate style yet at the same time we must recognize the satire. The poem opens by saying all must leave sometime and even "Monarchs must obey", by which Dryden means Flecknoe himself and following this is the assertion "worn out with business, he retired", we easily see the slander in this for we know that Flecknoe was not over burdened with business. The daring and imposition of Flecknoe in giving something which was not in his power to give, is shown in this quotation:

"---------for nature pleads that he,
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity."

But Dryden says in one place,

"But Shadwells genuine light admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day".
Mary have contended that in this Fryden has done Shadweel an injustice for to a certain degree he was successful in comedy.

Shadwell was skilled in music and this gave Dryden a good opportunity, he says,

"At thy well sharpener thumb, from shore to shore, 
The trebles squeak for fear the basses roar".

In the coronation of Shadwell, Flecknoe is supposed to give an inaugural address which Dryden characterizes in this manner,

"Now empress Fame had published the renown
Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.
No Persian carpets spread the imperial way,
But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay,
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay
But loads of Shadwell almost choked the way".

It has been claimed that "The Hind and Panther" was begun with the idea of assisting in bringing about the reconciliation between the Panther representing the Church of England and the Hind representing the Church of Rome, but before it was finished Dryden saw that his attempt was useless. Dryden however says, that this satire is only aimed at the refractory and disobedient on either side. The first part consists in the narration of general character, the second is a dispute concerning church authority which is the conversation between the animals.

The different sects are described thus: Catholic Church is

"A Milk White hind, immortal and unchanged
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger for she knew no sin".

The Independents,

"The bloody Bear and independent beast,
Unlicked to form, ir groans her hate exprest".
The Quakers-

"Among the timorous kind the quaking Hare, 
Professed neutrality but would not swear".

The Atheist-

"Next her the buffon Ape as atheists use 
Mimicked all sects and had his own to choose".

He says of faiths,

"If then our faith, we for our guide admit 
Vain is the farther search of human wit. 
As when the building gains a surer stay 
We take the unuseful scaffolding away".

Man is described in these words

"And to distinguish man from all the rest 
Unlocked the sacred treasures of his breast; 
And mercy mixed with reason did impart 
One to his head and the other to his heart, 
Reason to rule but mercy to forgive".

"As long as words a different sense will hear, 
And each may be his own interpreter, 
Our airy faith will no foundation find: 
The world as weathercock for every wind: 
The Bear, the Fox, the Wolf by turns prevail".

Englands commercial spirit is satirized in this couplet,

"For with my country's pardon be it said, 
Religion is the least of all our trades".
This finishes the comparison of the two prominent representatives of the age and their greatest works. Perhaps it may be interesting to consider briefly some of the pieces published from the time of the publication of the "Rape of the Lock" to the death of Pope. No long poems of any great merit were published but there were many shorter pieces. During these next years we have a variety of poetry, a departing from the polished manner of Pope and a gradual returning to nature as a theme and which found its naturalness and spontaneity of expression in Robert Burns. We have the contempt for women and the artificiality shown in Prior; rural life in England and Scotland described by Gay and Ramsey; Akenside striving for the union of reason and imagination. Young with a tendency toward blank verse in form and morals in subject; Blair modeling his verse upon dramatic rather than poetic models; Thomson and Dyer finding their inspiration in nature and Parnell approaching Millin in a metre like that of Il Penserosa.

M. Prior showed generally an indifference to the serious aspects of life: his best qualities are shown in his lighter works: he was good in an epigram, an enigma or a song and he possessed the musical finesse and delicate touch. In his treatment of love and of women, he followed the times perfectly, as

"The pride of every grove I chose
The violet sweet and lily fair
The dapple pink and blushing rose,
To deck my charming Cloe's hair".

His idea of women is shown in these lines,

"Hans Carvel impotent and old
Married a las of London mould:
Handsome? enough; extremely gay:"
Loved music, company and play:
High flights she had and wit and will;
And so her tongue lay seldom still
She first of all the town was told
Where newest India things were sold:
An untouched Bible graced her toilet
No fear that thumb of hers should spoil it".

There was wit and grace shown in his works but no depth of thought. He had great skill in the epigram as a few examples will show.

"To John I owed great obligation;
But John unhappily, thought fit
To publish it to all the nation;
Sure John and I are more than quit"

"Yes every poet is a fool:
By demonstration Ned can show it
Happy could Ned invert the rule
Prove every fool to be a poet".

Along a different line from Prior is Mark Akenside who wished the joining of imagination and reason and also desired to enlarge and harmonize the imagination. He used illustrations to show his truths. In his verse there is a certain dignity seriousness and loftiness of thought.

"The radiant ruler of the year
At length his wintry goal attains
soon to reverse the long careed
And northward bends his steady reins".

"But let not mans unequal views
Presume o'er Nature and her laws".
John Dyer was a lover of nature; a landscape, the river, the wood, a crumbling castle a small garden was what he wished for a subject.

He says

"The spacious plain
Of Sarum, spread like ocean's boundless round
Where solitary Stonehenge grey with moss
Ruin of ages nods".

He loved solitary musing yet at he also liked the activities of life, he says referring to this, "Tis art and toil give nature value".

"Now I gaze on the mountains brow,
What a landscape lies below
No clouds no vapours intervene
But the gay, the open scene.
Does all the face of nature show
In all the hues of heaven's bow:
And swelling to embrace the light
Spreads around beneath the sight".

"Below me trees unnumbered rise
Beautiful in various dyes:
The gloomy pine the poplar blue
The yellow beech the sable yew
The slender fir that taper grows.
The sturdy oaks with broad-spread boughs".

James Thomson did not have success with the heroic couplet and used rather the blank verse. There is a natural charm in his works as he selects subjects which appeal to all people and can be easily understood.
We quote from the "Snow Scene",

"Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends
At first, thin wavering: till at last the flakes
Fall broad and wide and fast dimming the day
With a continued flow. The cherished fields
Put on thin winter robe of purest white".

"The Castle of Indolence" is filled with pleasing bits of nature,

"Joined to the prattle of the purling rills
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud beating from the distant hills
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale".

"And up the hills on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines aye waving to and fro
Sent with a sleepy honor through the blood;
And where this valley winded out below
The murmuring main was heard and scarcely heard to flow.
A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half shut eye;
Near the pavilion where we slept, still ran
Soft tinkling streams and dashing waters fell
And sobbing breezes sighed".

In Parnell we find smoothness, gentleness, and a dignity and stateliness which are seldom to be found in short poems. The Night Piece on Death and a Hymn to Contentment show these qualities to the best advantage.
"How deep yon azure dyes the skies
Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie
While through their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide
The slumbering breeze forget to breath
The lake is smooth and clear beneath
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below".

From A Hymn to Contentment,

"Lovely, lasting peace appear
This world itself, if thou are here
Is once again with Eden blest
And man contains it in his breast"

This is his tribute to peace and contentment and is considered one of the best: The conclusion is,

"Go search among your idle dreams
Your busy or your vain extremes;
And find a life of equal bliss
Or own the next begins in this"

In conclusion we may say that Pope established a style of his own in which he is without a rival. He discovered the power of the English language for combination. He was the poet of art and of beauty, of exactness of intellectual expression, of perfect propriety of phrase and an example of how much success and permanence of reputation, depends upon conscientious finish as well as upon genius. He was the founder of an artificial style of writing which he use to express artificial modes of thinking and an artificial state of society.
He had genius a mind active ambitious and adventurous and also great strength of memory. Poetry was the business of his life and this he followed without allowing anything to divert his attention from it. He says "There are three advantages in being a genius to poetry: The agreeable power of self amusement when a man is idle or alone; the privilege of being admitted into the best company; and the freedom of saying as many careless things as other people without being so severely remarked upon". Pope was ambitious for high society and after he was introduced into the highest circles, he never lost his footing. He sought first to gain a reputation, then to keep it. DeQuincey says, "Pope did not belong to the French school but belonged rather to the school which was developed at a certain stage of progress in all nations alike, by the human heart as modified by the human understanding. It is a school depending on the peculiar direction given to the sensibilities by the reflecting faculty and by the new phases of society. Both Dryden and Pope knew little of the French language". Pope himself however described his manner as French and attributed it to the imitation of French fashion introduced into England at the Restoration.

Pope was not famous for correctness, there being no relation in his works except by contiguity. His defects in language were peculiar to himself. Each verse is almost a masterpiece when taken alone: ask him to paint anything and he has the exact phrase ready. His exact precision and balance, if the poem is of any length, is apt to become monotonous and tiring: it is artificial not natural harmony and the ear becomes wearied with such a regular recurrence of sound and pauses. Things were represented from the most insignificant point of view as in his satires and he clothed the little with mock dignity as in his poems on Fancy: he is not distinguished as a poet of lofty enthusiasm and strong imagination.
but as a wit a man of observation with a keen relish for the elegance of art. He was the poet not of nature but of art. He saw nature only dressed by art; he judged of beauty by fashion; he judged of the feelings of others by his own and his power was the power of indifference; he was in poetry what the subject is in religion.

Milton thinks that many use the rhyme to their own disadvantage, that it is merely the invention of a barbarous age. He says "This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may so to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in England of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rimming".

Byron called Pope the great moral poet of all times, of all climes, of all fellings and of all stages of existence. Ruskin says, "Pope is the most perfect representation we have since Chaucer of the true English mind". Pope excelled in qualities which are noticeable in Tennyson; finish and minuteness of detail and the elevation of common things to fanciful beauty. Since the time of the "Essay on Man", nowhere can we find so many wise and proverbial phrases as from him who says,

"Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all";

"Kind hearts are more than coronets
And simple faith than Normans blood;"

"Things seen are mightier than things heard".
Poetry of the Age of Pope.

The poetry of the *age* of Pope stands out so sharply in contrast with what had gone before that one must look closely to find how it developed from the greater poetry of the preceding hundred years.

Shakespeare's day was a day of great activity in both literary and national life. It was an era of reformation; the age of discovery and adventure, the period of national strife in which England stepped forth as a leading power in Europe; the age of chivalry and romance; the time of great action which had to find some spiritual expression. The whole nation was engaged in the struggle of asserting its independence against continental powers and this struggle resulted in the rise of Modern England. Poets were fired with the deep passions but went to excess in expression.

In the age that immediately followed the verse writers tried to revive the poetic spirit of Elizabeth's age by imitating these poetic excesses and exaggerations. They piled image on image and conceit on conceit until they carried this manner to an extreme of artificial expression. Here they were compelled to stop for poetry could develop no further in this direction.

While expression had reached its limit in the age of Dryden, the form of verse could be improved and this was left to the succeeding age of Pope. The tendency now was more and more towards the scientific and all the literature was made to appeal to the intellect instead of the soul. The Greek and Latin classics were being read and imitated. The poetical aim and principle was to obtain perfection of form: English writers had come to believe that literature was an art as well as an impulse; that pleasure could be given by the arrangement of words; that manner as well as matter was pleasing.
Owing to this tendency the natural became unnatural; writers put passion aside and wrote of the intellectual, political and social interests of men. There were many poets in this age each with his distinct characteristics, yet in nearly all there is some trace of Pope, the most prominent poet of the age.

The publication of the Rape of the Lock in 1712 marked the high tide of Pope's manner and the manner of the so called artificial age. The publication of Pope's translation of the Iliad and Odyssey show the tide at full flow and only the death of Pope and Swift more than twenty years later worked a change and an ebb. During these years we have Pope the delineator of society and the keen satirist; Akenside striving for the union of imagination and reason; Prior inclining towards the cynical and materialistic; Young with a tendency toward blank verse in form and morals in subject; Blair modeling his verse upon dramatic rather than poetical models; Thomson and Dyer finding their inspiration in nature; Gay and Ramsey depicting rural life in England and Scotland and Parnell approaching Milton in a metre like that of Il Penserosa.

From the death of Dryden until the publication of the "Rape of the Lock", there had been a pause in the writing of poetry. During these twelve years no poet had come to take the place left vacant by the great dictator and only in 1712 when Pope published the "Rape of the Lock" was it seen that a new king had arisen.

During the next ten years Pope, Gay, Prior, Ramsey, Watts, Young and Parnell each made several publications which we can easily group into four classes. Pope and Prior are more nearly alike in subject matter, in that they wrote of society, had a certain contempt for women and were inclined to be cynical.
In a second group Gay and Ramsey describe rural scenes with different settings; Gay brings before us the country life of the age of Queen Anne in England while Ramsey describes to us Scottish peasant life. Thirdly in Young and Parnell we find more dignity in form and greater seriousness and depth of thought. Watts the hymn writer stands alone in this decade, showing a fourth tendency, a passion for worship and tender love for mankind which found expression in his sweet songs. The manner in which this poetry reflects society and the kind of society reflected may be shown by quotations from Pope describing women:

"Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguished by black, brown or fair,
Think not when woman's transient breath is fled
That all her vanities at once are dead."

The attitude toward classic literature shown in popular translations is illustrated by the lines describing the death of Priam: Homer says, "So his life departed him", but Pope must render it as, "The soul comes floating in a tide of gore", and even in the parting of Hector and Andromache Pope paints the warrior thinking only of honor and glory with no touch of the husband and father leaving his home, his wife and his boy.

This was an age of party literature, of satire and wit. Writers strove to say the sharpest things in the most polished manner. Insults, injuries and slights were returned in keen satirical poetry. People were vindictive and poetry offered at this age, one of the best means of retaliation. The neater the epigram, the more biting the satire, the keener the sting in just so much was the poetry valued.
Hence we find such lines as,

"Some have at first for wits, then poets past
Turned critics next and proved plain fools at last."

This was also the artificial age both in literature and society. The small swords and elaborate wigs of the men, the flounces of the women all equalled in the circumlocution of poetry that could not call anything by its right name but must speak of tea as the "graceful liquor", the cups as "China's earth", and boiling chocolate as "the sea that froths below".

Side by side with the artificial in poetry there grew up a second tendency, that toward nature and natural expression. We have the works of Thomson and Dyer who succeeded from the kingdom of Pope as to form and subject. Thomson wrote of inaniment nature and yet the tyranny of poetic diction still held him and he could not speak of what he saw and felt in common terms. This was the beginning of the new school of the natural in poetry and Thomson was courageous in taking the first step. His poems appeal to all people; the subject to the masses and the form to the more highly educated. Dyer was a painter also and in his landscapes we see the touches of the artist; although it was an age of city poets these two men found their inspiration on the "hillside and by the stream". We quote from the "Snow Scenes",

"Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends
At first, thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continuels flow"

and again

"Near the pavilion where we slept, still ran
Soft tinkling streams and dashing waters fell
And sobbing breezes sighed".
The age of Pope stands as the period of English literature in which poetry reached perfection of form and finish. The age was artificial and the poetry conforms to the age. For one hundred years this artificiality governed the mass of writers yet during this time there was a gradual returning to the natural as a theme and to a natural style of poetry until it found naturalness and spontaneity of expression in Robert Burns.

The poetry of the age of Pope is valuable because it is exactly moulded to the spirit of the age; no other poetry written during any other age of English literature is so faithful in reflecting the spirit of the time. Society and poetry were both artificial and though each had become artificial through separate causes, the hollowness of each reflects the other. This age is also worthy for showing the power of the English language for accuracy, condensation, terseness and combination; how much depends upon conscientious finish as well as upon genius yet how easily finish and form may take the place of the natural and the spontaneous.