

**RHYMES ON ART; OR, THE
REMONSTRANCE OF A PAINTER: IN TWO
PARTS. WITH NOTES, AND A
PREFACE, INCLUDING STRICTURES ON
THE STATE OF THE ARTS, CRITICISM,
PATRONAGE, AND PUBLIC TASTE**

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Rhymes on Art; Or, The Remonstrance of a Painter: In Two Parts. With Notes, and a Preface, Including Strictures on the State of the Arts, Criticism, Patronage, and Public Taste by Martin Archer Shee

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BY

MARTIN ARCHER SHEE, R. A.

Quis leget hæc! — Nemo bercule, nemo. *Ferrius, Sat. 1.*

The Muse desponding, strikes her lyre in vain,

She finds no ear at leisure for the strain;

Art's toiling souls their slighted stores unfold,

Each eye is vacant, and each heart is cold. *Part II.*

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PREFACE.

FEW writers have the confidence to appear before the public for the first time, without attempting in some degree to excuse or account for their intrusion.

Why do you publish? is a question always anticipated from the reader; and to answer or evade it is most commonly the business of the preface.

To speak, indeed, with propriety, either from the press or the rostrum, requires qualifications from nature and education, which perhaps, it is some degree of arrogance to suppose we possess. He, therefore, who voluntarily presents himself in the character of an author,

“Who dares ask public audience*,”

should be sensible that he gives a proof of confidence in his own powers, which both occasions,

* Young.

and authorizes an examination of them, that no deprecating introduction can, or ought to prevent. If he will start from the crowd, jump on the literary pedestal, and put himself in the attitude of Apollo, he has no right to complain if his proportions are examined with rigour; if comparisons are drawn to his disadvantage; or if, on being found glaringly defective, he is hooted down from a station which he has so unnecessarily and injudiciously assumed.

A conviction of this perhaps, it is, which has so often occasioned young writers to assure the public with great eagerness, that they have come forward with reluctance; that they have been, as it were, thrust upon the stage, under all the embarrassment of conscious incapacity and anxious trepidation. In the hope of disarming censure by diffidence, and obviating the imputation of presumption, it became a kind of established etiquette for a virgin muse to bind up her blushes in an introductory bouquet, and present them to the reader as an offering of humility and conciliation.

But the good sense of the present day has in a great measure exploded as idle and impertinent, this species of literary affectation. Whatever a writer may profess, praise or profit will always be considered his real motive ; and when he has once overcome his feelings so far as to venture upon the public stage, if his other merits are only in proportion to his modesty, he will find that he has overrated his pretensions.

An author should disdain to fight under false colours, or owe his security to any thing but his strength ; his object is not to escape with impunity, but to acquit himself with credit ; and it can neither provoke his fate, nor prejudice his reception, to avow honestly, that he has more ambition than prudence ; that he pants for distinction, and pursues it at the hazard of disgrace.

His valour, surely, is not much to be respected who cries out "Quarter!" on coming into the field.

Under the impression of these sentiments, the