

Arquivo Virtual da Geração de Orpheu

BNP/E3, $18 - 42^{r}$



USTIESSNESS OF CRITICISM.

That good work slwsys comes to the fore is a worthless effirmation if it sply to really good work and by "coming to the fore" it refer to acceptence in its own time. That good work always comes to the fore in the course of its futurity, is true; that second rate good work slwsys comes to the fore in its own age, is also true.

For how is a ortic tojudge? What are the qualities that make, not the casual but, the competent critic? A knowledge of past art or literature, a teste refined by that knowledge, and an importial and judicious spirit. Anything meas than that is first to the true play of the critical faculties. Anything were then that is shready creative spirit, and therefore individuality, and individuality means self-centredness, and a certain imperviousness to the work of others.

Dees anyone persudde himself that if "Peradise Lost" were published to-day, or "Hamlet", or Shekespeare's or Hilton's Sanets, they would be rated above Mr. Kipling's postry, or Hr. Neyse', or that of any ather similarly quotidish gentleman? If anyone persuades himself of that, he is fool. The expression is hort, not sweet, but it is meant only tobe true.

On every side we hear the cry that the sgs media s great post. The control bolewness of all modern schievement is a thing rather felt then spoken about.... If his the great post were to spper, who would be where to notice him? Who can say whether he has not stredy sppered? The radiug public sees in the papers notices of the work of those man whose influence and friendships have med them known, or whose scondariness has med them eccepted of the drowd. The great post may have sppered elrendy; his work will here been noticed in a few Wient-departire" words in seme bibliographic summity of a criticel paper.

Transcrição

USELESSNESS OF CRITICISM.

That good work always comes to the fore is a worthless affirmation if it apply to really good work and by "coming to the fore" it refer to acceptance in its own time. That good work always comes to the fore on the course of its futurity, is true; that second rate good work always comes to the fore in its own age, is also true.

For how is a critic to judge? What are the qualities that make, not the casual, but the competent critic? A knowledge of past art or literature, a taste refined by that knowledge, and an impartial and judicious spirit. Anything less than that is fatal to the true play of the critical faculties. Anything more than that is already creative spirit, and therefore individuality; and individuality means self-centredness, and a certain imperviousness to the work of others.

How competent, however, is the competent critic? Let us suppose a deeply original work of art comes before his eyes. How does he judge it? By comparison with the works of art of the past. If it be original, however, it will depart in something - and the more original the more it will depart - from the works of art of the past. It will I have to conform to the aesthetic canon which the critic finds established in his mind. And if its originality, instead of lying in a departure from those old standards, lie in a use of them on more severely constructive lines - as Milton used the ancients - will the critic take that bettering to be a bettering, or the use of those standards to be an imitation? Will he rather see the builder than the user of the building materials? Why should he rather do one thing than the better other? Of all elements, constructiveness is the most difficult to determine in a work...... A fusion of past elements... Will the critic see the fusion or the elements?

Does anyone persuade himself that if "Paradise Lost" were published to-day, or "Hamlet", or Shakespeare's or Milton's Sonnets, they would be rated above Mr. Kipling's poetry, or Mr. Noyes', or that of any other similarly quotidian gentleman? If anyone persuades himself of that, he is a fool. The expression is short, not sweet, but it is meant only to be true.

On every side we hear the cry that the age needs a great poet. The central hollowness of all modern achievement is a thing rather felt than spoken about.... If teh the great poet were to appear, who would be where to notice him? Who can say whether he has not already appeared? The reading public sees in the papers notices of the work of those men whose influence and friendships have made them known, or whose secondariness has made them accepted of the crowd. The great poet may have appeared already; his work will have been noticed in a few "vient-de-paraître" words in some bibliographic summary of a critical paper.



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