

Johnson gave law to the world of letters, and was well nigh all that Dryden had been for the decade that preceded and the decade which succeeded the Revolution ; and a second, though lesser blank, representative of the times during which Burns and Cowper flourished, and in which the school of Pope gave place to a more national, natural, and less elaborate school. Among what may be termed the episodes of the work, we would specially instance a dissertation on what we may term the boundary limits of prose and poetry, which we deem by far the ablest and most satisfactory which we have yet seen on the subject. Much has been written on what may be termed the conterminous limits of the two provinces ; and the *suits* have been many that have originated in an erroneous drawing of the line. As in the famous case between Dandy Dinmont and Jack Dawson of the Cleugh, one party affirms that "the march rins on the tap o' the hill, where the wind and water sheers ;" while another "contravenes that, and says that it hauds down by the auld drove road ; and that makes an unco difference ;"—some critics so draw the line, that, like Bowles in his controversy with Campbell, they almost wholly exclude poets such as Pope and Dryden from their own proper domains ; while others affirm that there exists no line between the two domains at all, but that whatever in thought or feeling finds expression in verse, may with equal propriety be expressed in prose. Byron's terse couplet on Wordsworth, whom it describes as a writer

"Who, both by precept and example, shows  
That prose is verse, and verse is only prose,"

has, though in a somewhat exaggerated form, made this special view better known than even the men who assert it. Certainly there are broad grounds common to both prose and verse ; and such is the groundwork of truth in Byron's satirical couplet, though in a widely different sense from that