

BELINDA'S TOILET

Introduction :- This is one of the most famous passage from "The Rape of the Lock". It has been written by famous poet "Alexander Pope". This extract is the concluding one of Canto I of "The Rape of the Lock". It presents the dressing table of Belinda the heroine. Pope has given us a satirical and yet charming description of an aristocratic lady's art of make-up and dressing.

* Satirical Element :- Belinda's toilet is humorously described. Belinda's the nymph, is dressing for the morning with the help of her maid, Betty. The poem exposes to ridicule the laziness, idleness, vanities, excessive interest in toilet by aristocratic ladies. The women's excessive pre-occupation with self-decoration becomes the target of satire.

The climax of satire in this passage comes in the line which describes puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet doux lying in confusion on Belinda's dressing Table.

SEMESTER-III

* **Theme** :- The opening lines of "The Rape of the Lock" state its theme. The theme is that affairs of love may lead to resentments and minor events may cause great conflicts.

"And now, unveil'd the Toilet stands displays'd
Each silver vase in mystic order laid"

* Belinda is described at her dressing table. Before starting her toilet operations, Belinda offered a prayer to cosmic powers. At her dressing table were the various offerings of the world.

* **Battle Imagery** :- The poet likens the details of a fashionable lady's toilet to the religious mysteries as if they were sacred. Belinda is compared to a warrior collecting all his weapons to get ready for the battles. The cosmetics and the jewels which Belinda is putting on are the weapons which this beautiful woman is employing in order to kill those men who come into contact with her. The poem sets out to describe a proud and beautiful lady's toilet but it has been described in a mock heroic manner.

x Balance Between Concealed Irony and the assured Gravity

The effect of this poem is excellent adjustment between the concealed irony and the assured gravity. It lies in showing the balance between the mock epic world and the everyday world.

x The climax is reached in the lines in which we are told that the busy sylphs surround their darling care, some setting her head, some arranging her hair, some folding the sleeve and some folding her gown, and Betty's praised for labours not her own.

x Conclusion :- So, in light of above discussion we can conclude that this poem is an important contribution to Pope's picture of eighteenth century life of high society which he has painted in this poem. This was the golden period of cosmetics.