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CRITICISM OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PERIODICALS, 1700-1760

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of the Department of English
Municipal University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

Janet B. Marks

July, 1938

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Should it not be with bared head and every outward show of reverence that a critic of criticism approaches the age of Prose and Reason--the age of of criticism par excellence, covering the long period from the middle of the seventeenth century till near the end of the eighteenth? This, above all others, was an age of respect for learning and authority, when literature was at last reduced to law and order, and its rules interpreted by men 'born to judge.' It had but to be granted that the ancient writers did all things better than the rest of the world, and that the moderns could only excel in proportion as they successfully imitated them; and it followed that he who knew best the rules of the ancients was best qualified to discern the merits of a modern. To challenge the authority of the classics was to separate oneself from culture. It was a mark of civilization to submit to the laws of Aristotle and Horace as codified by the French.......Corneille, Racine, Boileau and Le Bossu, by example or precept, laid down the rules of correct writing, and woe to the writer who ignored them !.........The critics in those days, sharpened their weapons. It was a good thing, perhaps, that they did so, for there was much grammar yet to be learned; and the harm which they did in suppressing genius must have been slight, for they, too, were the product of their age--an aristocratic age--which, since it could tolerate this criticism, naturally could not stimulate a more forceful art.

(R. A. Scott-James, The Making of Criticism, 129-130)

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Introduction--Part I

The eighteenth century probably will be called the age of reason and classicism as long as English literature is studied. Reason prevailed not only in literature but in almost all of the phases of life; religion, politics, social intercourse and domestic relations, all were brought under the sway of reason. "A literature which is essentially rational is not the work of a generation; it can come fully into its own, be securely established, only after a process of inurement, through whith the average instincts have been adapted to it, and every perceptible difficulty has been smoothed away. One may say that the age of Pope lives more fully, more spontaneously at the pitch of that dominant intellectuality, whih during the preceding age was chiefly an irresistible impulse, a kind of contagious intoxication. The Restoration had turned Reason herself into a free, adventurous guide; classicism now makes her a clear and calm adviser."[1] Clearness and calmness, those two words seem to describe the ideals of the writers of the first half of the century. To them the two words are inseparable; clearness of thought and calmness of expression are to be the important criteria in the producing of their own works and in the judging of the works of their contemporaries.

Despite the fact that with the Restoration of Charles II the Puritans had seeming been suppressed, they and their philosophy of restraint in everything continued to dominate the middle classes

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1. Legouis and Cazamian, A History of English Literature (1935), 736; hereafter this work will be referred to as Legouis and Cazamian.

of English society. It would not appear that the austerity of the Puritians would in any way be fusible with the extreme licentiousness of the English court when it returned from France; however, when it returned from its exile it brought with it something more than a fondness for French manners and fashions. While in France the king and his friends had become intimately acquainted with French literature, and when they returned to England they brought with them what they had learned from the French writers. The French were in the midst of their period of veneration for the classics, and this ideal of submitting the national spirit to the subduing influence of the authors of ancient Greece and Rome was brought to England with the Restoration. But it did not gain its full momentum until the upper middle classes had become convinced of its worth and supported it; they in turn handed it down to the lower middle classes who by temperament were ready to receive it.

"The classical ideal of art, elaborated under the Restoration in an atmosphere of aristocratic elegance, finds full realisation during the reigns of Queen Anne and George I in a broadened society, whose members are growing more numerous and so diverse, but where the spirit of the literature is undergoing no essential change. The upper middle classes are converted to this ideal; at a later date, they will become its zealous supporters, they will even uphold it against the first onslaughts of romanticism.[2]

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2. Ibid., 736-7

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the classical spirit was in full sway in England. Never before has a literary movement met with such response and accord from the public at large; this public was not confined to any one class but was composed of all people who could read, whether nobleman or common laborour. The application of the classical spirit to manners and social relations began, even within the very citadel of reason, another and a counter movement which in the later years of the century was to become rabid sentimentalism.

> The logical or rational movement conclusively invades expression; Pope and Arbuthnot, Defoe and Mandeville, Addison, all have this trait; and, after A Tale of a Tub, Swift has it. Rigid bounds are impossible: we can but chronicle some of the representatives of classicism, and observe how the classical prose was crowned under the new conditions of politics and society. The concentration of the audience reacted upon style. A great body of metropolitan listeners exacted clearness, consequence, and a polite bearing towards themselves. The tones of reverie, of solitary exploring thought, are lost or deadened. Prose returns into contact with the living speech of affairs, that has been churned smooth for the slingers in the surf of debate. The passion for improving the arsenal of aggressive language increases on every hand. To verse the same influences are transferred. The apartness of the poetical temper is gone; poetry is in the world, sometimes on the town. The work done is the refinement and full articulation of the rhetorical forms prepared by Dryden or Butler. [3]

The concentration of the audience in London was not the only effect that that city had upon the literary style of the time; however, the other element of influence is also to a certain extent

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3. Oliver Elton, The Augustan Ages (1899), 265-6

an outgrowth of the concentration of the population in London. It is human nature for people to gather together in congenial groups, and during the eighteenth century the large population and the increasing popularity of the new drink, coffee, led to the establishment of many new public houses or (as they were called) coffee-houses; it was in these places that men began to gather in large numbers and to band together into what they called clubs.

> In England the coffee-houses replace the 'salons'. They play a part of the same order, in a relative sense. They offer to a class the social influence of which tends to increase, the material means to come together, to define its tastes and to take stock of them. Here it is that public affairs, literary news, fashions, scandals, are discussed; an average opinion is created, and formulated; it is already, in certain essential elements, the middle-class opinion which will hold undisputed sway in the nineteenth century. As yet it is not bold enough to impose its own influence. It aims at a compromise between the aristocratic temper of moral freedom, which the Restoration had carried to a licentious excess, and the Puritan spirit, which the excesses of the Commonwealth had brought into disrepute.[4]

The club, during the first part of the eighteenth century, provided not only a place for the ordinary citizen to meet and exchange pleasantries and ideas with his neighbors, but it also provided a means for men of like literary and political beliefs to organize. The framework of these organizations was quite different from that which the modern person conceives of as a club. Generally there was no set of rules governing procedure, acquisition of new members,

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4. Legouis and Cazamian, A History of English Literature, 803-4

conduct or any other of the many regulations that the modern club has. Because of like beliefs, ideas or prejudices, men united more or less spontaneously into groups which usually met in various coffee-houses and taverns. By thus banding together these men[5] could express their ideas without fear of persecution, if the ideas were political, and without fear of undue ridicule, if the ideas were literary.

The club established at Button's by Addison is the one that is of especial interest in the present discussion. It was composed of men of both the same literary and political leanings. "It was Addison who from his commanding position in both politics and letters undertook to establish such a Whiggish society.......His happiness depended on living in a company that admired him, to whom he could talk, confident that no unfriendly ear was listening. The coterie of friends who made up the club had begun worship at Addison's shrine as early as 1710."[6] Their significance as a club lies in the fact that though bound together partly by politics--they were in varying degrees Whiggish--they stood together on critical matters, helped each other in various literary projects, and

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5. In the second half of the century Johnson has a criticism to make of one type of men who frequent coffee-houses, the men who are too lazy to form their own opinions. "I have been informed," he writes, " by a letter from one of the universities, that among the youth from whom the next swarms of reasoners is to learn philosophy, and the next flight of beauties to hear elegies and sonnets, there are many, who, instead of endeavouring by books and meditation to form their own opinions, content themselves with the secondary knowledge which a convenient bench in a coffee-house can supply; and without any examination or distinction, adopt the criticisms and remarks, which happen to drop from those, who have risen, by merit or fortune, to reputation and authority." Rambler, No. 121

6. R. J. Allen, The Clubs of Augustan London (1933), 240

on occasion even fought each other's battles."[7] The membership was not definitely fixed, but the group which was in most regular attendance was composed of the following: Addison, Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Tickell, Hughes, Davenant, Young and Colonel Brett. With the exception of Addison and Steele, none of the others is of more than secondary importance as writers. Pope was for a time a frequent visitor at Button's, but after his quarrel with Philips and Addison over the issues on pastoral poetry in the Guardian his visits became more and more rare, finally ceasing altogether.

There may have been more than a political reason for Addison's not becoming more friendly with the better known writers of this period, such writers as Swift, Arbuthnot, Prior and Gay. "Addison seems to have been one of those who, perhaps from shyness or from sensitiveness to criticism, prefer to associate with intimates at least slightly inferior in position or ability."[8] At the gatherings at Button's as at other clubs of the same type, the works of the members were discussed, new ideas for group projects were suggested and the productions of rival writers were criticised. The bases of criticism, however, would be much the same in any of the clubs no matter what their affiliations.

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7. Ibid., 239
8. George Sherburn, The Early Career of Alexander Pope (1934), 115

> In the unanimity of doctrine which prevailed throughout the Eighteenth Century, criticism dealt principally with terminology. Little originality showed itself, the orthodox and the rebellious being alike conventional in their arguments. Interest descends chiefly to the use of special words, the catch-words of neo-classicism: nature, imitation, invention, wit, imagination. All the effort is expended in deciding what is meant by terms the authority of which is beyond dispute. It is as though men had agreed to statements in a foreign language and were busy looking up the definitions of their words. So entangled became the situation at last that one might safely aver that 'original genius' might disregard the 'rules' if he also said that 'nature should be 'followed.' He might judge that 'imitation' alone could not make a writer great if he also decreed that only 'original genius' might dare disregard 'ancient' 'example' and 'rule'. Presently, in Johnson, the very antithesis of neo-classicism emerges from his own arguments, like an unaccountable result on an adding machine.......However it be with poetry, with criticism an old era ends and a new begins with Wordsworth.[9]

With the improvement of the financial conditions of the people, there was more leisure time to devote to education; and as education came to have more importance, more and more people learned how to read. With the increasing of the reading public, a field was opened for the first attempts of producing a type of writing that would supply the news of the day, and also supply knowledge of various other kinds that might interest the public. Defoe

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9. The Great Critics, ed. Smith and Parks, xvii

was one of the first to recognise the possibility of making money by this means. The Athenian Mercury of Dunton, The Review of Defoe, the Post-boy and others of the general-information type soon became popular. Steele's Tatler was founded upon this general type; the first few numbers were devoted to foreign, national and literary news. Soon Steele began to change and included more and more issues to the reformation of what he considered the various abuses and shortcomings of society. It was no doubt from the meetings of various clubs with which Steele may have been familiar that he became convinced of the advisability of including a criticism of contemporary manners in his Tatler. "Steele, whether remonstrating with himself or others, always appeals to some right central code of action, recognisable at once as soon as stated. This idea of some canon for gentlemen is, with all Steele's profuse play and whim, the spring of his writings."[10] Steele was soon joined by Addison on the Tatler, and later the two published the Spectator and the Guardian. The periodicals that were published after the Tatler and Spectator were, for the most part, patterned after them in that their main interest was the reformation of manners. However, there was some variety in the issues, the various periodicals interspersing from time to time criticism of literature, contemporary, near-contemporary and ancient. The criticism of the contemporary writers is to be the main interest of this paper.

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10. Oliver Elton, The Augustan Ages, 294

Ambrose Philips

The contemporary author who receives the most attention from Addison and Steele is Ambrose Philips, who upon leaving the university became intimate with them. Addison devotes the greater part of three Spectators to Philips's Distressed Mother and mentions various other of his works in nine other issues; Steele's Guardian[1] devotes four issues to the discussion of Philips's Pastorals. A fifth issue, written in burlesque of the other four, was contributed to the Guardian by Pope. The reaction to this attempt of Pope to revenge his injured dignity caused the break in the already strained relations between Pope and Addison.[2] Philips is also mentioned in two numbers of the Tatler.

The first reference made by Steele to Philips is in Tatler No. 12. In this number Steele publishes a poem addressed by Philips to the Earl of Dorset, and makes the following comment upon it.

> The following poem comes from Copenhagen, and is as fine a winter-piece as we have ever had from any of the schools of the most learned painters. Such images as these give us a new pleasure in our sight, and fix upon our minds traces of reflection, which accompany us whenever the like objects occur. In short excellent poetry and description dwell upon us so agreeably, that all the readers of them are made to think, if not write, like men of wit. But it would be injury to detain you longer from this excellent performance, which is addressed to the Earl of Dorset by Mr. Philips, the author of several choice poems in Mr. Tonson's new Miscellany.

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1. It is generally assumed that Tickell wrote these artifles, although no positive proof has been found to support this conjecture. Throughout this paper, however, he will be accepted as the author.
2. The seemingly unethical competition with Pope by Addison and Tickell in the translation of the Iliad had caused a dislike to develop between the two sides. This dislike was finally put into print by Pope in the Guardian No. 40 and in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

Chronologically the next mention of Philips comes in the Spectator where he is first given notice for his translations of Sappho. The issue which contains Mr. Spectator's first reference to Philips is devoted to a discussion of Sappho and her poetry. An ode entitled An Hymn to Venus is singled out for special mention.

> After having given this short Account of Sappho so far as it regards the following Ode, I shall subjoin the Translation of it as it was sent me by a Friend, whose admirable Pastorals and Winter-Piece have been already so well received. The Reader will find in it that Pathetick Simplicity which is so peculiar to him, and so suitable to the Ode he has here Translated. This Ode in the Greek.......has several harmonious Turns in the Words, which are not lost in the English. I must further add, that the Translation has preserved every Image and Sentiment of Sappho, notwithstanding it has all the Ease and Spirit of an Original. In a word, if the Ladies have a mind to know the manner of Writing practised by the so much celebrated Sappho, they may here see it in its genuine and natural Beauty, without any foreign or affected Ornaments.[3]

A few numbers later Addison publishes another of Philips's translations and compares it favourably, of course, with translations of the same fragment by two other authors; "the first is a Translation by Catullus, the second by Monsieur Boileau, and the last by a Gentleman, whose Translation of the Hymn to Venus has been so deservedly admired. ....Instead of giving any character of this last translation, I shall desire my learned reader to look into the criticisms which Longinus had made upon the original. By that means he will know to which of the translations he ought to give the preference. I shall

3. Spectator, No. 223

only add, that this translation is written in the very spirit of Sappho, and as near the Greek as the genius of our language will possibly suffer."[4] The implication that Addison makes is that Philips's translation is better than that of either Catullus or Boileau because it more closely adheres to Longinus's criticism than the other two.

Turning to the Pastorals, Steele praises Philips for the modesty of his expression; a selection from one of his Pastorals is compared with Dryden's description of Cleopatra's barge in All for Love.

> Here [Dryden's description of Cleopatra's barge] the Imaginat on is warmed with the Objects presented, and yet there is nothing that is luscious, or what raises any Idea more loose than that of a beautiful Women set off to Advantage. The like, or a more delicate and careful Spirit of Modesty, appears in the following Passage in one of Mr. Philips's Pastorals.[5]

Philips is here judged superior to Dryden not because he is a writer of technically more correct verse, but because he is the more modest of the two. A few numbers later Addison commends the Pastorals because they use English folk stories instead of "antiquated Fables."

> If any are of Opinion, that there is a Necessity of admitting these Classical Legends into our Serious Compositions, in order to give them a more poetical turn; I would recommend to their Consideration the Pastorals of Mr. Philips. One would have thought it impossible for this kind of Poetry to have subsisted without Fawns and Satyrs, Wood-Nymphs and Water-Nymphs, with all the Tribe of Rural Deities. But we see he has given a new Life, and a more natural Beauty to this way of Writing, by substituting in the Place of................

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4. Ibid., No. 229
5. Ibid., No. 400

> these antiquated Fables, the superstitious Mythology which prevails among the Shepherds of our own Country.[6]

Brief mention is also made of a translation of some Persian tales which Philips had recently published. Mr. Spectator says "I was mightily pleased with a Story in some measure applicable to this Piece of Philosophy [Locke's statement that it is consciousness alone, and not an identity of substance which makes personal identity], which I read the other Day in The Persian Tales, as they are lately very well translated by Mr. Phillips.........";[7] Addison then proceeds to retell one of the stories in an abbreviated form.

The work of Phillips to which Mr. Spectator devotes most time and space is The Distressed Mother.[8] It is sometimes difficult to know whether the reviewer was more impressed with the sentiments expressed by Racine or with the dramatic style of Phillips. If, as has been said, The Distressed Mother is "a slightly modified translation of Andromaque,"[9] then most of the dramatic action and characterization must have been Racine's rather than Phillips's. "Philips doubtless owed much of his initial success to the popular tone of moralizing sentiment, but in following Racine he contributed to the strengthening of classical influences."[10] In any event, whether the "tone of moralizing sentiment"

6. Ibid., No. 523. The same idea is expressed in the Guardian No. 30 when Tickell says "the difference of the climate is also to be considered, for what is proper in the climate of Arcadia, or even in Italy, might be very absurd in a colder country. By the same rule the difference of the soil of fruits and flowers, is to be observed. And in so fine a country as Britain, what occasion is there for that profusion of hyacinths and Paestan roses, and that cornucopia of foreign fruits which the British shepherds never heard of?"
7. Ibid., No. 578
8. The title is spelled several ways: The Distressed Mother, The Distrest Mother, and The Distress'd Mother.
9. G. H. Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1932), 179
10. Ibid., [illegible]

was partly contributed by Philips or not, the play met with the approval of Addison and Steele and no doubt with that of the active reformers of the stage.[11] Certainly the sentiments in the play coincided with those expressed in the Spectator, and the desire to translate the play may have been the outcome of conversations with and encouragements by Addison and the other members of the group at Button's. The play "could hardly escape the kind attentions of the Spectator, for Steele wrote the Prologue, and Addison and Budgell the Epilogue."[12] If Mr. Spectator had this much to do with the play, it is not impossible that he had something to do with the play proper.

The first mention of The Distressed Mother in the Spectator was before the play had been produced, and presents Mr. Spectator's reactions to the reading of the play by the actors. At the request of the actors, he had been taken to the reading of the "new Tragedy," by his friend Will Honeycomb. Several days after this experience he presents his opinion of the play to the public. The passions of the characters still retain a vivid picture in his imagination, and he congratulates "the Age, that they are at last to see Truth and humane Life represented in the Incidents which concern Heroes and Heroines. The Stile of the Play is such as becomes those of the first Education, and the Sentiments worthy those of the highest Figure." In fact Mr. Spectator derived an "exquisite Pleasure" from watching the actors weep as they read lines which had "irresistible Touches of the imagined Sorrow." After having discussed the sentiments of the play he turns to an

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11. Jeremy Collier, Tate, and others.
12. Spectator, No. 335; note in the Everyman Edition

appraisal of the main character, Andromaque, or the distressed mother.

> We have seldom had any Female Distress on the Stage, which did not, upon cool Imagination, appear to flow from Weakness rather than from Misfortune of the Person Represented; But in this Tragedy you are not entertained with the ungoverned Passions of such as are enamoured of each other meerly as they are Men and Women, but their Regards are founded upon high Conceptions of each other's Virtue and Merit; and the Character which gives Name to the Play, is one who has behaved her self with heroick Virtue in the most important Circumstances of female Life, those of a Wife, a Widow, and a Mother.[13]

He concludes his discussion of the heroine's character by saying that her faithfulness to her deceased husband and her devotion to her son are "what cannot but be venerable even to such an Audience as at present frequents the English Theatre." The rest of the characters in the play are also of the highest quality; their greatness is not represented by physical grandeur, but "appears in greatness of Sentiments, flowing from Minds worthy their Condition. To make a Character truly Great, this Author[14] understands that it should have its Foundation in superior Thoughts and Maxims of Conduct." Commenting upon the play itself, Mr. Spectator said that it everywhere followed Nature. Here he uses that much abused word of the eighteenth century — nature; nature to them meant copying the ancients and selecting from nature only those things which were good, true, and beautiful; to us it means the exact copying of everything as it is; this forms the basis of naturalism. Mr. Spectator concludes this issue by urging the town to see the play.

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13. Ibid., No. 290; the other quotations in this paragraph are from the same issue.
14. It appears from this statement that Philips was given credit for the entire writing of the play and not merely the translation of it.

> The Town has an Opportunity of doing it self Justice in supporting the Representations of Passion, Sorrow, Indignation, even Despair it self, within the Rules of Decency, Honour, and good Breeding; and since there is no one who can flatter himself his Life will be always fortunate, they may here see Sorrow as they would wish to bear it whenever it arrives.

Mr. Spectator takes his friend Sir Roger to see the play. The last time that Sir Roger had gone to the theatre was twenty years before when he went to see the Committee, which he would not have done had he not been assured "before-hand that it was a good Church of England Comedy."[15] When Sir Roger found out that the main character in the new play was Hector's widow, he was very much pleased because when he was a school-boy, he had read Hector's life "at the end of the Dictionary." The entire issue is devoted to a report not of the play itself, but to a report of the audience's reactions and especially the reactions of Sir Roger. Mr. Spectator was very attentive to his friend's remarks, because he "looked upon them as a Piece of Natural Criticism." Sir Roger's remarks are those that Addison had probably heard many times in the theatre in connection with other plays. Mr. Spectator had expressed his opinion earlier, and now he gives expression to the opinions of others less erudite than himself. It is safe to say that the remarks of Sir Roger represented the remarks of the average theatre-goer. For one thing he could not imagine how the play was going to end; also he was concerned for the fate of the characters, Andromache, Hermoine and Pyrrhus especially. A little later he puts the play in terms of his own experience when he notes Andromache's "obstinate Refusal to her Lover's Importunities" by saying

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15. This and the following quotations are from Spectator No. 335.

"with a more than ordinary Vehemence, You can't imagine, Sir, what 'tis to have to do with a Widow." The remembrance of his own difficulties stayed with him until the third act when he whispered to his friend "These Widows, Sir, are the most perverse Creatures in the World." During the fourth act he does what theatre goers frequently do; he confuses characters and mistakes one of Andromache's pages for her son. Between the acts of the play Sir Roger mingles with the groups that are discussing the play and the players and adds his remarks to theirs.

> Sir Roger hearing a Cluster of them praise Orestes, struck in with them, and told them, that he thought his Friend Pylades was a very sensible Man; As they were afterwards applauding Pyrrhus, Sir Roger put in a second time, And let me tell you, says he, though he speaks but little, I like the old Fellow in Whiskers as well as any of them.

At the conclusion of Orestes's recital of Pyrrhus's death Sir Roger tells his friend that he was glad that that bloody piece of work was done off stage. When Orestes goes mad, Sir Roger takes occasion to moralize upon an evil conscience. There is, however, one thing that puzzles Sir Roger, and which Mr. Spectator never has time to explain to him.

> But pray, says he, you that are a Critick, is the Play according to your Dramatick Rules, as you call them? Should your People in Tragedy always talk to be understood? Why, there is not a single Sentence in this Play that I do not know the Meaning of.

Remarks such as these made by a man of simple thoughts and rustic life would be almost sure to please or amuse the readers of the Spectator.

Another means of keeping Philips's play before the readers was the device of two letters supposedly written by witnesses of it. The first letter, signed by Physibulus, is in protest against "facetious" epilogues to serious plays. The writer of the letter had had the pleasure

of sitting near Mr. Spectator and Sir Roger when they had gone to see the play, and until the entrance of the epilogue he had approved of the Knight's reflections; Sir Roger's approval of the epilogue drew from the writer of the letter the statement that "Nature, I found, play'd her Part in the Knight pretty well, 'till at the last concluding Lines she entirely forsook him."[16] Physibulus continues by saying that when he has paid his money to see "as much of the pleasing Melancholy as the Poet's Art can afford me, or my own Nature admit of," he wanted to go home in a serious frame of mind. For that reason he always left before the epilogue, which was usually humorous, because if he did not his emotions would be in a very confused state. With specific reference to the Distressed Mother, he says that "the Impression, believe me, Sir, was so strong upon me, that I am perswaded, if I had been let alone in it, I could at an Extremity have ventured to defend yourself and Sir Roger against half a score of the fiercest Mohocks: But the ludicrous Epilogue in the Close exstinguish'd all my Ardour, and made me look upon all such noble Atchievements as downright silly and romantick." Physibulus continues by telling Mr. Spectator that if at the end of the epilogue he had died and his soul had descended to the poetical shades in the "Posture it was then in," it would have made a strange figure among the rest. "They would not have known what to have made of my mottley Spectre, half Comic and half Tragic, all over resembling a ridiculous Face, that at the same Time laughs on one Side and cries o't'other." The only good he can see of the practice of tacking a "Comic Tail to the Tragic Head," is that the average person in the audience might not be able to

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16. Spectator, No. 338; the following quotations in this paragraph are from the same issue.

digest tragedy undiluted and that because of this there might be serious consequences. However, he thinks that there is an evil of more importance than that small virtue. "What makes me more desirous to have some Reformation of this Matter, is because of an ill Consequence or two attending it: For a great many of our Church-Musicians being related to the Theatre, they have, in Imitation of these Epilogues, introduc'd in their farewell Voluntaries a sort of Musick quite foreign to the Design of Church-Services, to the great Prejudice of well-dispos'd People........" As an introduction to this letter Mr. Spectator wrote the following lines.

> I find the Tragedy of the Distrest Mother is publish'd to Day; the Author of the Prologue, I suppose, pleads an old Excuse I have read somewhere, of being dull with Design,[17] and the Gentlemen[18] who wrote the Epilogue, has, to my Knowledge, so much of greater Moment to value himself upon, that he will easily forgive me for publishing the Exceptions made against Gayety at the End of serious Entertainments, in the following Letter: I should be more unwilling to pardon him then any Body, a Practice which cannot have any ill Consequence, but from the Abilities of the Person who is guilty of it.

Three numbers later this letter of objection was replied to by Eustace Budgell with the probable help of Addison and Steele. Despite the fact that the Spectator in which the letter of complaint appears has not definitely been assigned to any author, it is not impossible to imagine that both this letter and its answer were the products of those at Button's who were interested in making Philips's play a suc-

17. "pleads an old Excuse.......": the excuse alludes to a passage at the end of Tatler No. 38.
18. The "Gentleman" may be Eustace Budgell, a cousin of Addison. Addison is said to have done all he could to help establish Budgell, even going to the extent of substituting Budgell's name for his as the author of the epilogue for the Distressed Mother. If Budgell is the "Gentleman" mentioned, then Addison is probably the author of this issue of the Spectator (No. 338).

cess. The second letter, signed by Philomedes, upholds "facetious epilogues," in general and the epilogue to the Distressed Mother in particular. The writer says

> I am amazed to find an Epilogue attacked in your last Friday's Paper, which has been so generally applauded by the Town, and received such Honours as were never before given to any in an English Theatre.
>
> The Audience would not permit Mrs. Oldfield to go off the State the first Night till she had repeated it twice; the second Night the Noise of Ancoras was as loud as before, and she was again obliged to speak it twice; the third Night it was still called for a second time; and, in short, contrary to all other Epilogues, which are dropped after the third Representation of the Play, this has already been repeated nine times.
>
> I must own, I am the more surprised to find this Censure in Opposition to the whole Town, in a Paper which has been hitherto famous for the Candour of its Criticisms.[19]

Following this Philomedes traces the origin of the comic epilogues and prologues to serious plays, and for the balance of the letter answers Physibulus's other objections.

A modern critic has the following to say of the efforts of Mr. Spectator and his friends at Button's to make Philips's play a success.

> The whole occasion gives a pleasing picture of how loyally the little senate[20] worked for the glory of its individual member, and with what a gentle hand Addison ruled his friends. Finally, when some pedantic curmudgeon who wrote to The Spectator protesting against the epilogue, the letter was printed to be suitably pulverized in a later number.[21]

Two other short references are made to the play in the Spectator. One is in an issue devoted to a discussion of the various types of voices needed to represent various emotions. The part of Andromache is

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19. Spectator, No. 341; Budgell here takes an opportunity to return the compliment that had been paid him in No. 338.
20. Pope called the club at Button's "the little senate."
21. Allen, 271-272; quoted from Bonamy Dobree, Essays in Biography.

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cited, with a quotation of pertinate lines, to illustrate a voice of sorrow and complaint, which voice should be "flexible, slow, interrupted, and modulated in a mournful Tone.........we have...a fine Example of this in the whole Part of Andromache in the Distrest Mother."[22] The final reference to Philips's play is made in the eighth volume in an essay discussing the proper actions of widows.

> There is something so great and so generous in this State of Life, when it is accompanied with all its virtues, that it is the Subject of one of the finest among our modern Tragedies in the Person of Andromache; and hath met with an universal and deserved Applause, when introduced upon our English Stage by Mr. Philips.[23]

According to Genest the play was acted about nine times. If this is true it seems that all of the puffing done by Mr. Spectator did not procure any phenomenal success for the Distressed Mother.[24] These criticisms of Philips's play and the criticisms of his poetry which follow make Addison and his friends in their dealings with contemporary writers open to the charge of partisanship and literary hypocrisy. One can almost say with Pope that they "damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer."[25]

Even more fulsome than the flattery heaped upon Philips in the Spectator is the series of four essays in the Guardian upon his pastoral poetry.[26] Here the praise is so extreme that one wonders how anyone could have ever read the essays with any great degree of ser-

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22. Spectator, No. 541; written by John Hughes.
23. Spectator, No. 614; written by Eustace Budgell.
24. The leading parts in the play were played by the following actors: Orestes, Mr. Powell; Pyrrhus, Mr. Booth; Andromache, Mrs. Oldfield; and Hermoine, Mrs. Porter.
25. "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"
26. A first reference is made by Steele in the Tatler (No. 10) when he says (in the person of Jenny Distaff) that Tonson's Sixth Miscellany contains "a collection of the best pastorals that have hitherto appeared in England."

iousness. Because of the sycophancy of these four essays it is easy to see why Pope yielded to the temptation of writing the famous Guardian No. 40; even a person with a kinder disposition than his would have found it difficult to withstand the impulse to bring the writer of the other numbers back to earth. Also the extravagance of the four "serious" numbers makes it understandable why Pope's essay could be published without detection by Steele or any of the others connected with the Guardian. Neither Tickell's nor Pope's criticisms, therefore, are of much value in dispassionately judging the Pastorals; one is too lavish with praise, and the other is too generous with the sarcasm of injured dignity.

In the first of the four essays[27] a general discussion of the pastoral is given with the three following reasons for liking pastorals: all mankind loves ease; man has a secret approbation of i nocence; and, despite the place they live, most men have a love for the country and rural things.

In the next Guardian, three characteristics of the pastoral are

27. Guardian, No. 20

given,[28] and Philips is found to excel almost every other writer of pastorals in these three things.

> If ever a reflection be pardonable in pastorals, it is where the thought is so obvious, that it seems to come easily to the mind; as in the following admirable improvement of Virgil and Theocritus:
>
> Fair is my flock, nor yet uncomely I,
> If liquid fountains flatter not. And why
> Should liquid fountains flatter us, yet shew
> The bordering flow'rs less beauteous than they grow?
>
> A second characteristic of a true shepherd is simplicity of manners or innocence. This is so obvious from what I have before advanced, that it would be but repetition to insist long upon it. I shall only remind the reader, that as the pastoral life is supposed to be where nature is not much depraved, sincerity and truth will generally run through it. Some slight transgressions for the sake of variety may be the simplicity of it in general. I cannot better illustrate this rule than by the following example of a swain who found his mistress asleep:
>
> Once Delia slept on easy moss reclin'd,
> Her lovely limbs half-bare, and rude the wind:
> I smooth'd her coats, and stole a silent kiss:
> Condemn me, shepherds, if I did amiss.
>
> A third sign of a swain is, that something of religion, and even superstition is part of his character. For we find that those who have lived easy lives in

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28. In the 1717 edition of his Pastorals, Pope included a Preface in which he discussed the qualities that made a pastoral. At this time Pope was no longer on friendly terms with Addison, or with Addison's intimate friends; inasmuch as Pope was not quick to forget a real or imagined insult it is not at all impossible that the Preface was another way to avenge himself for the issues on pastoral poetry in the Guardian which had appeared several years before. There were seven points that Pope stressed in his Preface: (1) a pastoral should have simplicity, brevity, and delicacy, (2) the author should have a knowledge of things rural; (3) the shepherds should be presented as they were "when the best of men followed the employment," and they should have some skill in astronomy; (4) the best side of the shepherd's life should be exposed; (5) the above rules were drawn from the practice of the best of pastoral poets—Theocritus and Virgil; (6) the most successful moderns were Tasso and Spenser who have endeavored to follow the ancients; and (7) his own pastorals follow all the rules drawn by critics from Theocritus and Virgil.

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> the country, and contemplate the works of Nature, live in the greatest awe of their author. Nor doth this humour prevail less now than of old. Our peasants sincerely believe the tales of goblins and fairies, as the heathens those of fauns, nymphs, and satyrs. Hence we find the works of Virgil and Theocritus sprinkled with left-handed ravens, blasted oaks, witchcrafts, evil eyes, and the like. And I observe with great pleasure that our English author of the pastorals I have quoted hath practised this secret with admirable judgment.[29]

Theocritus and Virgil are allowed merit only once, when they use "left-handed ravens, blasted oaks, witchcrafts, evil eyes, and the like." Philips excels all pastoral poets in the use of the other two characteristics of pastorals; Tickell even went so far as to say that Philips made an "admirable improvement of Virgil and Theocritus," which statement amounts almost to heresy in that time of reverence for the ancients.

In the next number devoted to pastorals a reference is made to Pope which probably angered him more than if he had received no mention at all. After a discussion of the differences of climate and of fruits and flowers between Italy and England, and after a decision that the natural settings of Philips's *Pastorals* were more pleasing to an English reader than those of Italy and Greece, the critic turns to the theology of the pastoral.

> The theology of the ancient pastoral is so very pretty, that it were pity indeed entirely to change it; but I think that part only is to be retained which is universally known, and the rest to be made up out of our own rustical superstition of hobthrushes, fairies, goblins, and witches. *The fairies are capable of being made very entertaining persons, as they are described by several of our poets; and particularly by Mr. Pope*..........................The reason why such changes from

29. *Ibid.*, No. 23; the first four quoted verses are from the first pastoral of Philips, entitled *Lobbin*; and the second four quoted verses are from his sixth pastoral, entitled *Geron, Hobbinol, and Langrett*. The italics are my own.

> the ancients should be introduced is very obvious; namely, that poetry being imitation, and that imitation being the best which deceives the most easily, it follows that we must take up the customs which are most familiar or universally known, since no man can be deceived or delighted with the imitation of what he is ignorant of.
>
> It is easy to be observed that these rules are drawn from what our countrymen Spenser and Philips have performed in this way. I shall not presume to say any more of them, than that both have copied and improved the beauties of the ancients,[30] whose manner of thinking I would above all things recommend. As far as our language would allow them, they have formed a pastoral style according to the Doric of Theocritus, in which I dare not say they have excelled Virgil ! but I may be allowed, for the honour of our language, to suppose it more capable of that pretty rusticity than the Latin. _To their works I refer my reader to make observations upon the Pastoral style: where he will sooner find that secret than from a folio of criticisms._[31]

In this number it is admitted that all of the rules for the writing of pastorals have been drawn from what "Spenser and Philips have performed in this way;" this remark comes just after the mention of Pope and seems to imply that about all that he can contribute to the English pastoral is the ability to make fairies "very entertaining persons." Two numbers later this statememt is made even more irritating to Pope when Tickell confesses that since ancient times there have been but four pastoral poets worthy of the name.

> Amyntas and Amaryllis lived a long and happy life, and governed the vales of Arcadia. Their generation was very long-lived, there having been but four descents in above two thousand years. His heir was called Theocritus, who left his dominions to Virgil; Virgil left his to his son Spenser; and Spenser was succeeded by his eldest born Philips.[32]

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30. Something of the same thought is expressed by Edward Young when he says "let us build our Compositions with the spirit, and in the taste, of the antients; but not with their materials." _Conjectures on Original Composition_ (1759); quoted from _The Great Critics_, ed. Smith and Parks, 361

31. _Guardian_, No. 31; the italics are my own.

32. Ibid., No. 32

Nowhere in these four essays has Pope been admitted to the sanctum-sanctorum of pastoral poets, nor has he been allowed any but the meanest of talents.

This brings us to the issue written by Pope[33] which, to the later embarrassment of Addison and Steele, was published as a fifth of the series by Tickell. Despite the ludicrousness of the others, it is, however, difficult to understand why Pope's intent was discovered after and not before publication. But then it may be that foreknowledge makes the authorship of this issue seem so unmistakable and so impossible of confusion. One is glad, however, that Steele's obtuseness in this matter allowed posterity to be amused by this delicious satire of Pope's, even though Pope displays a complete lack of modesty when speaking of himself. He says "our other pastoral writer, in expressing the same thought, deviates into downright poetry, and "the other modern (who it must be confessed hath a knack of versifying) hath it as follows," and "after all that hath been said, I hope none can think it any injustice to Mr. Pope, that I forebore to mention him as a pastoral writer; since, upon the whole, he is of the same class with Moschus and Bion, whom we have excluded that rank; and of whose eclogues, as well as some of Virgil's, it may be said, that according to the description we have given of this sort of poetry, they are by no means pastorals, but 'something better.'"

Pope begins his essay as follows:

> I designed to have troubled the reader with no farther discourse of pastorals; but, being in-

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33. Guardian, No. 40

> formed that I am taxed of partiality in not mentioning an author, whose eclogues are published in the same volumes with Mr. Philips's, I shall employ this paper in observations upon him, written in the free spirit of criticism, and without apprehension of offending that gentleman, whose character it is, that he takes the greatest care of his works before they are published, and has the least concern for them afterward.

Pope then uses two of Tickell's rules for pastorals: the first, that the idea of a pastoral should be taken from the manners of the golden age, and second, that the moral should be formed upon the representation of innocence. The article continues by adding a few qualifications (Pope's, of course) for writers of pastorals, the first of which is great reading; Pope, because of his lack of a university education does not know how to use what knowledge he has of the ancients with order and method as Philips does. In fact Philips's "whole third pastoral is an instance how well he hath studied the fifth of Virgil, and how judiciously reduced Virgil's thoughts to the standard of pastoral; and his contention of Colin Clout and the Nightingale, shews with what exactness he hath imitated Strada." Pope then says that when he (the writer of the other articles) decreed the use of flowers and fruits of native origin, he did not mean this to apply to animals because "Philips hath with great judgment described wolves in England in his first pastoral;" and also the flowers need not bloom in the right season because "Mr. Philips, by a poetical creation, hath raised up finer beds of flowers than the most industrious gardener; his roses, lilies, and daffodils, blow in the same season."

The entire article is sprinkled with the worst examples of Philips's poetry that Pope could find; for example, the two lines given to illustrate

Philips's "beautiful rusticity."

> O woful day! O day of woe, quoth he,
> And woful I, who live the day to see?[34]

Pope comments upon this by saying that the "simplicity of diction, the melancholy flowing of thé numbers, the solemnity of the sound, and the easy turn of the words, in this dirge (to make use of our author's expression) are extremely elegant."

If Pope's querulousness had gone no further than this, posterity would view it as no more than an amusing satire of the articles by Tickell, but he let the neglectful mention of him as a pastoral writer rankle in his soul until he had magnified that and other disagreements into a bitter quarrel which was climaxed by the publication of translations of the Iliad by Pope and Tickell. Pope continued for several years to heap his abuse upon Addison, Tickell, and their friends in his poems.

In all of the above criticism, Pope's included, not one mention is made of the poems by which Philips is remembered today—the poems addressed to private persons. Johnson, whose first poems were published before Philips died, said, "The poems of Philips which please best are those which from Pope or Pope's adherents procured him the name of Namby-Pamby, the poems of short lines by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole, the steerer of the realm, to Miss Pultney in the nursery."[35] Much later Edmund Gosse wrote that

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34. This is remindful of Shakespeare's burlesque in the tradesmen's play "Pyramus and Thisbe," in MidSummer Night's Dream, Act V, Scene I
    O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
    O night, which ever art, when day is not!
    O night, O night, alack, alack, alack.
35. This was quoted from the Cambridge History of English Literature, ( ), IX, 184

> The reputation of Ambrose Philips has undergone some curious reverses. His Epistle to the Earl of Dorset, which Steele pronounced "as fine a piece as we ever had," and Goldsmith "incomparably fine," seems to us as frigid and as ephemeral as its theme; the Distressed Mother, in which he made Racine speak with the voice of Rowe, no longer holds a place, even in memory, on the tragic stage; his translations of Sappho, once thought so brilliant and so affecting, seem to modern readers ludicrously mean, nor is criticism any longer concerned to decide whether the pastorals of Philips or Pope are the more insipid. But while all these works, on which his contemporary reputation was founded, are forgotten, his odes to private persons; and in particular to children, which won him ridicule from his own age, and from Henry Cary the immortal name of Namby-Pamby, have a simplicity of versification and a genuine play of fancy which are now recognised as rare gifts in the artificial school of Addison in which he was trained. Ambrose Philips is moreover to be praised, not in these odes only, but in his poems generally, for an affectionate observation of natural beauty."[36]

Another more modern critic says that in Philips's poetry

> One can see a sign of the same order, an obscure, timid need of renovation through the suppleness of grace, in the affected versicles of Ambrose Philips, which have the fault of being very consciously puerile, but which convey something of the charm of childhood, and with their rhythm know how to recall the Milton of L'Allegro. And the softness of his pastorals relaxes and lightens the language of classicism into a rather pleasant fluidity.[37]

His tragedy, the Distressed Mother, receives the following notice in a book on eighteenth century drama.

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36. The English Poets, ed. Thomas Humphrey Ward (1893), III, 130
37. Legouis and Cazamian, 766

> The direct influence of Racine upon English tragedy appears in Edmund Smith's Phaedra and Hippolytus (1707), modelled on Phedre, and Ambrose Philips's Distrest Mother (1712), a slightly modified translation of Andromaque. Addison wrote a prologue for the first and an epilogue for the second, while Steele's comments in The Spectator increased the vogue of The Distrest Mother. Philips doubtless owed much of his initial success to the popular tone of moralizing sentiment, but in following Racine he contributed to the strengthening of classical influences.[38]

By an examination of the contemporary and modern criticism of Philips it is seen that he was vastly more popular in his own day than he is now. Also it seems that perhaps the assiduous efforts of his friends made his popularity seem greater than it really was.

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38. Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century, 179

Joseph Addison

Appropriately enough Addison is the contemporary writer to whom the next greatest amount of space in the Tatler, Spectator and Guardian is devoted. The one work of Addison which obtained the most frequent comment was Cato, to which Steele devoted the greater part of four Guardians and to which reference was made in two Spectators. The first criticism in the Guardian will be quoted in full because it is not only a good example of Steele's type of criticism, but because it expresses the general ideals of the man.

> I have made it a rule to myself, not to publish any thing on a Saturday, but what shall have some analogy to the duty of the day ensuing. It is an unspeakable pleasure to me, that I have lived to see the time where I can observe such a law to myself and yet turn my discourse upon what is done at the playhouse. I am sure the reader knows I am going to mention the tragedy of Cato. The principal character is moved by no consideration but respect to that sort of virtue, the sense of which is retained in our language under the word Public Spirit. All regards to his domestic are wholly laid aside, and the hero is drawn as having, by this motive, subdued instinct itself, and taken comfort from the distresses of his family, which are brought upon them by their adherence to the cause of truth and liberty. There is nothing uttered by Cato but what is worthy the best of men; and the sentiments which are given him are not only the most warm for the conduct of this life, but such as we may think will not need to be erased, but consist with the happiness of the human soul in the next. This illustrious character has its proper influence on all below it: the other virtuous personages are, in their degree, as worthy, and as exemplary, as the principal; the conduct of the lovers (who are more warm, though more discreet, than ever yet appeared on the stage) has in it a constant sense of the great catastrophe which was expected from the approach of Caesar. But to see the modesty of a heroine, whose country and family were at the same time in the most imminent danger, preserved, while she breaks out into the most fond and open expressions of her passion of

for her lover, is an instance of no common address. Again, to observe the body of a gallant young man brought before us, who, in the bloom of his youth, in defence of all that is good and great, had received numberless wounds: I say, to observe that this dead youth is introduced only for the example of his virtue, and that his death is so circumstantiated, that we are satisfied, for all his virtue, it was for the good of the world, and for his own family, that his warm temper was not to be put upon farther trial, but his task of life ended while it was yet virtuous, is an employment worthy the consideration of our young Britons. We are obliged to the authors, that can do what they will with us, that they do not play our affections and passions against ourselves; but to make us so soon resigned to the death of Marcus, of whom we were so fond, is a power that would be unfortunately lodged in a man without the love of virtue.

Were it not that I speak, on this occasion, rather as a Guardian than a critic, I could proceed to the examination of the justness of each character, and take notice that the Numidian is as well drawn as the Roman. There is not an idea in all the part of Syphax which does not apparently arise from the habits which grow in the mind of an African; and the scene between Juba and his general, where they talk for and against a liberal education, is full of instruction. Syphax urges all that can be said against philosophy, as it is made subservient to ill ends, by men who abuse their talents; and Juba sets the lesser excellences of activity, labour, patience of hunger, and strength of body, which are the admired qualifications of a Numidian, in their proper subordination to the accomplishments of the mind. But this play is so well recommended by others, that I will not for that, and some private reasons, enlarge any farther. Doctor Garth has very agreeably rallied the mercenary traffic between men and women of this age in the epilogue, by Mrs. Porter, who acted Lucia. And Mr. Pope has prepared the audience for a new scene of passion and transport on a more noble foundation than they have before been entertained with, in the prologue. I shall take the liberty to gratify the impatience of the town by inserting these two excellent pieces, as earnests of the work itself, which will be printed within a few days.[1]

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1. _Guardian_ No. 33

The fact that Pope wrote the prologue for Cato would indicate that he had not resented the first issues on pastoral poetry, because the issue in which the first review of Cato occurs directly follows the last essay by Tickell on pastoral poetry. Pope's reply to these essays did not come until seven issues after the first mention of Cato, so that Pope must have made up his mind to be angry in a relatively short time.

The remainder of the criticism in the Guardian of Cato is in the form of letters, two from the Lizard family, the successors of the 'staff' family in the Tatler, two from Oxford and one signed with the same initials as one of the letters from Oxford. The method followed here is much the same as that used in the Spectator for the criticism the Distressed Mother; the direct criticism is followed by letters and reported conversations discussing the play. The first letter[2] is from Mary Lizard who had been taken the night before by her brother to see Cato. She asks Mr. Ironside, as Steele calls himself in the Guardian, to come and see the family the next morning because they want to discuss the play with him, and she especially wants to discuss the two women characters in the play, because last night she was for Marcia, but by morning she prefers Lucia. She says "you will tell me whether I am right or no when I see you." She concludes the letter by again urging him to come and settle the questions they have. This letter is no doubt an attempt to enlist the support of the women in making Cato a success. It indicates not so much that Steele thought that the women could understand and appreciate the play unaided, but that he thought

2. Ibid., No. 43

that with guidance and instruction from one who was more learned in the ways of drama and human conduct, they would find pleasure in it. The next letter was from Mary's brother, William, who was not only a scholar but a divinity student at Oxford. Steele says in connection with this letter that

> the tragedy of Cato has increased the number of my correspondents, but none of them can take it ill, that I give preference to the letters which come from a learned body, and which on this occasion may not improperly be termed the Plausus Academici.[3]

In the letter itself William thanks Mr. Ironside for the gift of a copy of the play, and says that he has read it over several times with the greatest pleasure. He then proceeds to give his opinions of <u>Cato</u>, which opinions it seems that Mr. Ironside had asked for in a previous letter in which he had complimented William on his knowledge of the ancient poets.

> Perhaps you may not allow me to be a good judge of them, when I tell you, that the tragedy of Cato exceeds, in my opinion, any of the dramatic pieces of the ancients......................I scarce thought any modern tragedy could have mixed suitable with such serious studies, and little imagined to have found such exquisite poetry, much less such exalted sentiments of virtue, in the dramatic performance of a contemporary.

He continues by commenting upon part of a speech by Portius, and Cato's soliloquy which comes at the beginning of the fifth act. Of this Lizard says that "such virtuous and moral sentiments were never before put into the mouth of a British actor". He thinks that the reception that his countrymen have given to the play has cleared them of the imputations

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3. <u>Ibid.</u>, No. 59

which a late writer had thrown upon them in his 502d speculation."[4] He concludes by saying that no matter how different the opinions may be in other things, "all parties agree in doing honour to a man who is an honour to our country." This is on a par with the unrestrained praise of Philips Pastorals, and shows that when Steele's friends were concerned he did not stint his commendation.

The first letter from Oxford is unsigned and is addressed to Mr. Ironside from "Christ-church."

> You are, I perceive, a very wary old fellow, more cautious than a late brother-writer of yours who at the rehearsal of a new play,[5] would, at the hazard of his judgment, endeavour to prepossess the town in its favour; whereas you very prudently waited until the tragedy of Cato had gained a universal and irresistible applause, and then with great boldness venture to pronounce your opinion of it to be the same with that of all mankind. I will leave you to consider whether such a conduct becomes a Guardian, who ought to point out to us proper entertainments, and instruct us when to bestow our applause.[6]

The writer forgives Mr. Ironside, however, for his lapse of duty, because the play was so obviously an excellent one. He continues by saying that none had been "earlier or louder in their praises of Cato,"

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4. The speculation referred to is the 502d Spectator which was written by Steele. In it he says of the English audiences that "the gross of an audience is composed of two sorts of people, those who know no pleasure but of the body, and those who improve or command corporeal pleasures, by the addition of fine sentiments of their mind. At present the intelligent part of the company are wholly subdued by the insurrections of those who know no satisfactions but what they have in common with all other animals."
5. Addison's criticism of Philips's Distressed Mother.
6. Guardian, No. 59

than those at Christ-Church.

The second letter from Oxford is also addressed to Mr. Ironside and is dated from Wadham College. The letter begins by saying that if the seat of the muses were silent while London was so "loud in their applause of Cato, the University's title to that name might very well be suspected;--in justice therefore to your Alma Mater, let the world know our opinion of that tragedy here."

> The author's other works had raised our expectation of it to very great height, yet it exceeds whatever we could promise ourselves from so great a genius.
>
> Caesar will no longer be a hero in our declamations. This tragedy has at once stripped him of all the flattery and false colours, which historians and the classic authors had thrown upon him, and we shall for the future treat him as a murderer of the best patriot of his age, and a destroyer of the liberties of his country. Cato, as represented in these scenes will cast a blacker shade on the memory of that usurper, than the picture of him did upon his triumph. Had this finished dramatic piece appeared some hundred years ago, Caesar would have lost so many centuries of fame, and monarchs had disdained to let themselves be called by his name. However it will be an honour to the times we live in, to have had such a work produced in them, and a pretty speculation for posterity to observe, that the tragedy of Cato was acted with general applause in 1713.[7]

The postscript to this letter stated that "the French translation[8] of Cato now in the press, will, I hope, be In Usum Delphini." Considering the fact that the play is seldom read today, one finds it

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7. Ibid., No. 59

8. Cato was translated into French, Italian and German, and the Jesuits translated it into Latin.

rather difficult to believe that Steele actually thought that if *Cato* had been published a hundred years earlier it would have changed the course of history. That statement reminds one of some of the grossly exaggerated remarks that appear in certain of the modern newspapers and other periodicals.

The final letter relative to *Cato*, and signed A. B., criticises the play on the basis of poetry, and the author of the letter comes to the conclusion that in this respect it is also excellent.

> Though every body had been talking or writing on the subject of Cato, ever since the world was obliged with that tragedy, there had not, methinks, been an examination of it, which sufficently shews the skill of the author merely as a poet. There are peculiar graces which ordinary readers ought to be instructed how to admire; among others, I am charmed with his artificial expressions in well-adapted similes: there is no part of writing in which it is more difficult to succeed, for, on sublime occasions, it requires at once the utmost strength of the imagination, and the severest correction of the judgment.[9]

A. B. cites two examples to illustrate his remarks; the first is a few lines from a speech of Syphax, and the second is a few lines from a speech of Sempronius.

The references to t e play in the *Spectator* are both from volume eight, and are used to illustrate two papers on ethical subjects, one on Infinitude and Eternity and the other on Dreams. The first re-

9. *Guardian*, No. 65

ference[10] is the inclusion of two versions of a speech of Cato upon his contemplation of suicide. The first version of the speech is in Latin, and the second is in English.[11] The second reference[12] is also a quotation from the play and is a bit of dialogue between Marcia and Lucius. The paper in which the quotation is included presents Addison's belief that if one did not lead a virtuous life during the day, one would have unpleasant dreams. In the quotation is the line spoken by Lucius stating that "sweet are the Slumbers of the virtuous Man."

In four numbers of the Spectator are included divine poems by Addison. In each case the essay accompanying them is by Addison also. The only remarks made about these poems is that the public received them kindly. The first[13] of the four numbers contains a translation of the twenty-third Psalm; the second,[14] an essay on gratitude and the ways various people express it in poetry, includes a divine poem by Addison, "When all they mercies, O my God"; the third[15] contains a letter prompted by Addison's essay concerning the pleasures

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10. Spectator, No. 628
11. In the Everyman Edition of the Spectator there is the following note on this passage. "The passage from Addison's Cato printed in the text is almost the entire first scene of the fifth Act, which is a soliloquy by Cato..........Regarding the Latin translati n, Nichols supplies an interesting note. 'This beautiful translation, which fame and Dr. Kippis have attributed to Bishop Atterbury.........I afterwards found reason to ascribe to Dr. Henry Bland, headmaster of Eton school, provost of the college there, and dean of Durham (to whom it is also without hesitation ascribed by the last and best biographer of Addison); and have since had the honour of being assured by Mr. Walpole that it was the work of Bland; and that he has more than once heard his father, Sir Rober Walpole, say, that it was he himself who gave that translation to Mr. Addison, who was extremely surprised at the fidelity and beauty of it.'"
12. Spectator, No. 593
13. Spectator, No. 441
14. Spectator, No. 453
15. Spectator, No. 489

of the imagination and especially upon greatness as a source of pleasure. This suggests to the writer of the lett r the reason he has always been pleased by the sea. He includes in his letter "a divine ode made by a gentleman upon the conclusion of his travels." This ode is said to have been written by Addison after the boat on which he was a passenger had weahtered a severe storm in the Mediterranean in December, 1710;[16] the fourth number[17] has the hymn, "When, rising from the bed of death", which is supposedly written by a man in holy orders who has just recovered from a serious illness.

Steele's sole reference to Addison in the Tatler is concerned with his poem "The Campaign" and contains his estimation of the celebrated simile of the angel.

> ....the sublime image that I am talking of, and which I really think as great as ever entered into the thought of man, is in the poem called 'The Campaign;' where the simile of a ministering angel sets forth the most sedate and the most active courage, engaged in an uproar of nature, a confusion of elements, and a scene of divine vengeance. Add to all, that these lines compliment the general and his queen at the same time, and h ve all the natural horrors heightened by the image that was still fresh in the mind of every reader.....
> ....The whole poem is so exquisitely noble and poetic, poetic, that I think it an honour to our nation and language........a wholly new, and a wonderful attempt to keep up the ordinary ideas of a march of an army, just as they happened, in so warm and great a style, and yet be at once familiar and heroic. Such a performance is a

16. Edinburgh Review, LXXVIII (July, 1843), 193-260.
17. Spectator, No. 513

> chronicle as well as a poem, and will preserve the memory of our hero, when all the edificies and statues erected to his honour are blended with common dust.[18]

If Steele knew that the huge "edifice" that Marlborough erected and called Blenheim serves his memory far better than "The Campaign" he problaby would be chagrined at the moderns lack of literary perceptiveness.

As in the case of Philips the modern critics are as restrained in their criticism of Addison's poetry as his friends were effusive. With the exception of his periodical essays his literary productions are seldom read. One modern critic says of "The Campaign" that "the poem, like all Addison's performances of the kind, shows facility and poetic sensibility, stopping short of poetic genius;" the same critic says of Addison's temperament that "his classical acquirements were but the appropriate accomplishment of a mind thoroughly imbued with the culture of his age, in which the classical spirit was regarded as the antithesis of Gothic obscurity." [19]Speaking of "The Campaign" and the other poems that preceded it another modern critic says that "these pieces reveal an estimable poet, a talent skilled enough to escape in a large measure the defects of his qualities; but the qualities of his defects are not vivid enough to redeem the essential artifice of such inspirations. These are very creditable aplications of the classical

18. Tatler, No. 43
19. Dictionary of National Biography, I,

recipe, but without any serious originality."[20] Still another critic says of his poetry that though Addison was

> possessed of an inimitable prose style, which makes him the most graceful of all social satirists, the creator of Sir Roger de Coverley rarely succeeds, as a poet, in impressing us with the sense--the true touchstone of poetical art--that what he is saying is expressed better in verse than it could be expressed in prose............ Addison's work is never more than second-rate ......the style of Addison's panegyrics on King William III is as artificial as the sentiments by which they were prompted. His sole conception of poetical compliment is hyperbole.....Yet with all Addison's deficiencies in poetical genius, his fine taste and blameless character were not without their effect on the course of our poetry........ if his poetry is not free from 'courtly stains,' it is at least animated by a genuine love of freedom; and his lines on Liberty are a fine expression of the Whig spirit of the times..........Addison's versification is pure though not vigorous; his treatment of the heoric couplet, in its antithesis and careful selection of apithet, marks the period of transition between the large and flowing style of Dryden and the compressed energy of Pope.[21]

Nettleton says that Cato won "a conspicuous triumph for classical drama, but he agrees with Dr. Johnson's remarks[22] (which he quotes) that "it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life.....The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow." Nettleton continues by saying that "<u>Cato</u> has the chill of a statue, a

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20. Legouis and Cazamian, 805-7
21. <u>The English Poets</u>, ed. T. H. Ward, III, 1-2
22. <u>Lives of the English Poets</u>, II, 132

Galatea without the touch of life that permits descent from the pedestal............*Cato* in reality chilled the 'native rage' of English tragedy with the classical restraints of Continental drama." [23]

However prejudiced the contemporary criticism presented from the *Tatler*, *Spectator* and the *Guardian* may seem, the estimation of Addison by his contemporary and friend, Edward Young, is both unbiased and just.

> Among the brightest of the moderns, Mr. Addison must take his place. Who does not approach his character with great respect?.....He had, what Dryden and Johnson wanted, a warm, and feeling heart.....Addison wrote little in verse, much in sweet, elegant, Virgilian, prose; so let me call it.....Addison's compositions are built with the finest materials, in the taste of the antients, and (to speak his own language) on truly Classic ground: And tho' they are the delight of the present age, yet am I persuaded that they will receive more justice from posterity. I never read him, but I am struck with such a disheartening ideas of perfection, that I drop my pen. And, indeed, far superior writers should forget his compositions, if they would be greatly pleased with their own.....They call him an elegant writer: That elegance which shines on the surface of his compositions, seems to dazzle their understanding, and render it a little blind to the depth of sentiment, which lies beneath: Thus (hard fate!) he loses reputation with them, by doubling his title to it.........."[24]

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23. Nettleton, *English Drama*, 179-182

24. Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition;* quoted from a selection in *The Great Critics*, ed. Smith & Parks

Alexander Pope

Pope, who is now considered one of the most noteworthy figures in the eighteenth century, received but scant attention in the periodicals conducted by Steele and Addison. And when he did receive mention the commendation was much more restrained than that given Philips or Addison. However, what the criticism lacks in excessive enthusiasm is compensated for by the in crease of discernment. Until the fatal fortieth issue of the Guardian Pope was on good terms with Addison and Steele and contributed from time to time to the Tatler and the Spectator. The first work of Pope's to receive attention was The Art of Criticism which was mentioned in the Spectator.

> In our own Country a Man seldom sets up for a Poet, without attacking the Reputation of all his Brothers in the Art. The Ignorance of the Moderns, the Scribblers of the Age, the Decay of Poetry, are the Topicks of Detraction with which he makes his Entrance into the World: But how much more noble is the Fame that is built on Candour and Ingenuity...............I am sorry to find that an Author, who is very justly esteemed among the best Judges, has admitted some Stroaks of this Nature into a very Fine Poem, I mean The Art of Criticism, which was published some Months since, and is a Master-piece in its Kind. The Observations follow one another like those in Horace's Art of Poetry, without that methodical Regularity which would have been requisite in a Prose Author. They are some of them uncommon, but such as the Reader must assent to, when he sees them explained with that Elegance and Perspicuity in which they are delivered. As for those which are the most known, and the most received, they are placed in so beautiful a Light, and illustrated with such apt Allusions, that they have in them all the Graces of Novelty, and make the Reader, who was before acquainted with them still more convinced of their Truth and Solidity.[1]

1. Spectator, No. 253

That criticism in view of the reputation Pope has today is sound and just. It shows that Mr. Spectator did have good taste and literary criteria, and that when it was not a question of the works of one of his friends his judgment was worthy of his position. The one fault in Pope that Mr. Spectator pointed out, the admission of "Topicks of Detraction" into his poems, is the same fault that his admirers today are forced to admit that he possessed.

A few numbers later Pope's "Messiah, a sacred Eclogue, compos'd of several Passages of Isaiah the Prophet. Written in Imitation of Virgil's Pollio." was published for the first time with the following comment.

> I will make no Apology for entertaining the Reader with the following Poem, which is written by a great Genius, a Friend of Mine in the country, who is not ashamed to employ his Wit in the Praise of his Maker.[2]

The next two references made to Pope are in connection with Tickell, and compare the poetry of the two as if they were writers of equal merit; in fact Addison applies the term "rising Genius" to both of them.

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2. Spectator, No. 378; this note appeared in the Everyman edition of the Spectator relative to the "Messiah". "This is the first appearance of the Messiah, which Pope had written at Binfield. Steele printed it in A as he received it, and on June 1st wrote to the author--'I have turned every verse and chapter, and think you have preserved the sublime heavenly spirit throughout the whole, especialy at Hark a glad voice, and the Lamb with wolves shall graze. There is but one line which I think below the original,

He wipes the tears for ever from our eyes.

You have expressed it with a good and pious, but not so exalted and poetical a spirit as the prophet, the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. If you agree with me in this, alter it by way of paraphrase or otherwise, that when it comes into a volume it may be amended. Your Poem is already better than the Pollio.' Pope accepted the advice, and altered the line in the octavo edition."

> I am always highly delighted with the Discovery of any rising Genius among my countrymen. For this Reason I have read over, with great Pleasure, the late Miscellany published by Mr. Pope, in which there are many excellant Compositions of that Ingenious Gentleman. I have had a Pleasure of the same Kind, in perusing a Poem that is just published on the Prospect of Peace, and which I hope will meet with such a Reward from its Patrons, as so noble a performance deserves.[3]

In the next reference[4] where the two are mentioned conjointly it is Steele who is speaking and praising himself for the good he had done by "animating a few young Gentlemen into worthy Pursuits, who will be a Glory to our Age." Two of these young gentlemen are Tickell and Pope. Steele says, "the former has writ me an excellent Paper of Verses in Praise, forsooth, of my self; and the other enclosed for my Perusal an admirable Poem, which, I hope, will shortly see the Light." In this same issue is a letter supposedly written by Pope which discusses the lines spoken by the Emperor Adrian on his deathbed. Pope seems to find that others are "agreed that it was a piece of gayety unworthy that prince in those circumstances." Pope continues, saying that he does not agree with this, and gives the reason for his dissension. He concludes his letter with "if you think me right in my notion of the last words of Adrian, be pleased to insert this in the Spectator; if not, to suppress it." Following this letter is the poem by Tickell in praise of Steele entitled "To the

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3. Spectator, No. 523
4. Ibid., No. 532

Supposed Author of the Spectator."

There are two other letters in the Spectator which are attributed to Pope. One[5] is by a "languishing Lover" who has presented to a Lady a fan upon which is painted the history of Procris and Cephalus; the history painted on the fan caused the lover th become poetical and he sends to Mr. Spectator the verses which are the result of this inspiration. The other letter[6] proposes two new projects to help Mr. Spectator increase the circulation of his paper. The first project is to include a weekly news-letter of whispers which would be analogous to the gossip columns in our modern newspapers. The second project was the compiling of a new anthology to be entitled An Acfount of the Works of the Unlearned. It seems that this work was to have been a joint product of the Scriblerus Club,[7] but instead the members substituted the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus. Pope carried out something of the same idea when he wrote his Dunciad where he portrayed the rulers and subjects of the Kingdom of Dulness.[8]

The last referencd[9] made to Pope in the Spectator, aside from the mention made in the issue devoted to acknowledgements (No. 555), is far from a flattering one, and would not, considering the space devoted to writers of lesser rank, have pleased Pope overmuch. The mention is made in the form of two letters, one from Abraham Dapperwit, and the other from S-----------r. The letter from Dapperwit says,

5. Spectator, No. 527; the following note relative to this letter is in the Everyman Ed.: "the last letter and verses are by Pope," but no evidence has been given.
6. Spectator, No. 457
7. Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, Prior and others were members.
8. Sherburn; Spectator, No. 457 is signed "C," the signature of Addison, but Sherburn attributes it to Pope.
9. Spectator, No. 534

> Pray, sir, it will serve to fill up a Paper, if you put in this which is only to ask whether that Copy of Verses, which is a Paraphrase of Isaiah, in one of your Speculations, is not written by Mr. Pope? Then you get on another Line by putting in, with proper Distances, as the end of a Letter.
>
> I am, Sir, etc.

The reply by S----------r which immediately follows is even briefer.

> I am glad to get another Line forward, by saying that excellent Piece is Mr. Pope's; and so, with proper Distances,
>
> I am, Sir, etc.

To the ordinary person this would probably have seemed amusing and nothing more, but Pope was not an ordinary person and it may well have hurt his feelings although we have no proof that it did. This issue was written in November, 1712, and the trouble between Pope and Addison and his friends began to be of serious proportions in the spring of 1713. It is quite possible that as early as the winter of 1712 the friendship was becoming strained.

If Pope has had less space devoted to him in the Tatler, the Spectator and the Guardian, at least what was said about him more nearly agrees with the opinion of the modern critics than what was said about the other contemporary writers. Addison and Steele really had but two things to say about Pope; one was that he was a great genius, and the other was that it was to be regretted that he allowed himself to attack "the Reputation of all his Brothers in the Art." To those statements anyone who is familiar with the works of Pope will agree; however, he has not received mention commensurable to his merit.

Discussing Pope's writing in general, one modern critic has the following to say:

> two opposing forces encourage Pope to write. One is that of dialectic, or the exposition of abstract manner; and this he conducts with noted skill, because of his great receptiveness. The same quality prevents him from really making his own the ideas that he seizes, so that the pleasure that we take in his poetical handling of ideas is at last of a low kind. In the second place, the demon of naturalism is already upon him; his mind is positive, detailed, and documentary; he can catch a scene, or the flying humours of conversation, and fix them in durable verse that seems to be effortless. There is the stuff of the novelist and observer in the lines on Villiers' death-bed, or in those on the dame with her cold coffee stranded in the country house: these are examples of the same power that produced the verse of Swift and the descriptions in Moll Flanders.[10]

It is difficult, however, to understand why Addison or Steele did not recognize Pope's ability "to catch a scene and fix" it in durable verse. It is for this quality that they themselves are famous; their skill in portraying human nature in contemporary scenes has endeared them to modern readers. It therefore seems strange that they could not recognize this same quality in Pope who was for a while their friend.

The Pastorals which caused trouble between Addison and Tickell and Pope are quite highly praised by another modern critic who thinks they may be called the masterpiece of Pope.

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10. Oliver Elton, The Augustan Ages, 307-8

> It has even been possible to say that the Pastorals remain in a sense the masterpiece of Pope. These little imitations of Virgil, adapted to modern life and English soil with very dexterous skill, stimulated by literary memories, and teeming with remininscences; but they also evidence a precocious talent, the sincerity of which is here indistinguishable from artifice. These lines of admirably easy flow, helped on by an already expert cleverness, which introduces charming arabesque work into their regular pattern, are genuine outpourings in a way; never was the language of poetry more liquid, nor its measure more even and smooth. [11]

With reference to Pope's "Messiah", which Steele called an "excellent piece", Mark Pattison says that

> Of this false taste his Messiah is an elaborate specimen. This poem is an adaptation of Virgil's fourth Eclogue, Pollio, to Christ, grafting upon the lines of the Latin poet the images supplied by the prophecies of Isaiah. The ingenuity with which the double imitation is carried through is only surpassed by the mastery shown over the melody of the couplet, and the exhibition of a complete poetical vocabulary..........Language experience, enforced by the precept and example of Wordsworth, makes our age too keenly feel that the pathos and sublimity of the Hebrew prophet are destroyed by the artificial embroidery with which Pope has overlaid them. Pope's Messiah reads to us like the sickly paraphrase, in which all the majesty of the original is dissipated. [12]

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11. Legouis and Cazamian, 745

12. Ward, English Poets, introduction to the selections from Pope

Miscellaneous--Prose and Poetry

In the first issue of the Tatler Steele's "honoured friend" Thomas D'Urfey[1] receives his first mention. Steele discusses the performance of "the celebrated comedy called Love for Love" which is being given for the benefit of Mr. Betterton. At the end of this discussion he inserts a notice that

> The town is at present in very great expectation of seeing a comedy now in rehearsal, which is the twenty-fifth production of my honoured friend Mr. Thomas D'Urfey; who, besides his great abilities in the dramatic, has a peculiar talent in the way of writing, and that with a manner wholly new and unknown to the ancient Greeks and Romans, wherein he is but faintly imitated in the translations of the modern Italian Operas.[2]

a few numbers later Steele reviews this new play which has the title of the Modern Poets [Prophets?], and which Steele says "is a most unanswerable satire against the late spirit of enthusiasm. The writer had by long experience observed that, in company, very grave discourses had been followed by bawdry; and therefore has turned the humour that way with great success, and taken from his audience all manner of superstition, by the agitations of pretty Mrs. Bignell, whom he has, with great subtlety, made a lay-sister, as well as a prophetess; by which means she carries on the affairs of both worlds

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1. D'Urfey was to have been a part of the satire contained in the Memoirs of Scriblerus; "it was Anthony Henley who wrote 'The life of his music master Tom Durfey'; a chapter by way of episode." Sherburn, The Early Career of Alexander Pope, 76
2. Tatler, No. 1

with great success. My friend designs to go on with another work against winter, which he intends to call, 'The Modern Poets,' a people no less mistaken in their opinions of being inspired, than the other."[3]

In this same article he goes on to describe two dances that Mr. D'Urfey had made; one represented an absolute government where there is "no gratification but giving the kick you receive from one above you, to one below you," and the other represented a free state where "if you put yourselves out, at the worst you only kick and are kicked, like friends and equals." It seems that the age of reason liked a little of what the moderns call slap-stick comedy. In another Tatler Steele admits that he has not completely understood the purpose of D'Urfey's play, The Modern Prophets.

> I write from hence[4] at present to complain, that wit and merit are so little encouraged by people of rank and quality, that the wits of the age are obliged to run within Temple-bar for patronage. There is a deplorable instance of this kind in the case of Mr. D'Urfey, who has dedicated his inimitable comedy, called 'The Modern Prophets,' to a worthy knight, to whom, it seems, he had before communicated the design of his play, which was, 'To ridicule the ridiculers of our established doctrine.' I have else where celebrated the contrivance of this excellent drama; but was not, until I read the dedication, wholly let into the re-

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3. Tatler, No 11
4. Most of the literary criticism was headed from Will's Coffee-House.

> ligious design of it. I am afraid, it has suffered discontinuance at this gay end of the town, for no other reason but the piety[5] of the purpose.[6]

The longest reference made to D'Urfey, however, was in the Guardian where one entire issue is devoted to him. This number is written by Addison and is an attempt to gain a good house for a benefit performance of one of D'Urfey's plays. According to Addison he had been responsible for getting "the playhouse" to act the Plotting Sisters, on June 15, 1713; he continues by saying

> My kindness to the agreeable Mr. D'Urfey will be imperfect, if after having engaged the players in his favour, I do not get the town to come into it. I must therefore heartily recommend to all the young ladies, my disciples, the case of my old friend, who has often made their grandmothers merry, and whose sonnets have perhaps lulled asleep many a present toast, when she lay in her cradle......[7]

Addison also describes how he (the Guardian) and D'Urfey had both "flourished together in King Charles the Second's reign," and how he remembers "King Charles the Second leaning on Tom D'Urfey's shoulder more than once, and humming over a song with him."

D'Urfey is also one of the authors whose books are mentioned by Mr. Spectator as appearing in Leonora's library; the book mentioned was "Tales in Verse by Mr. Durfey: bound in red leather,

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5. This no doubt pleased Steele who was once unpopular because of the piety of his Christian Hero.
6. Tatler, No. 43
7. Guardian, No. 67

gilt on the back, and doubled down in several places."[8] The book had obviously been read, a fact of which most of the books in her library could not boast.

The modern critics are not nearly so generous in their criticism of D'Urfey as were Addison and Steele. One modern says of him that "Edward and James Howard, and 'sing-song' Thomas D'Urfey are perhaps sufficient examples of the prolix mediocrity of writers who lacked even the distinction of title."[9] Another critic says that

> ...another camp-follower was Thomas D'Urfey .... .who turned his hand to prose or verse, composed songs, elegies and panegyrics, wrote tales tragical and comical, contrived operas and pantomimes, satirised ministers, cultivated the friendship of kings, changed his politics as he changed his coat, and left behind him a vast number of boisterous farces and bombastic melodramas. A scurrilous fellow in his life and speech he was the familiar friend of all, was called "Tom" by high and low, and for nearly half a century played a part in the life of his time..................Of the virtues which should grace a comic poet D'Urfey had none. He showed not even a passing interest in human character; he knew no other wit than horseplay. In brief, save in the writing of songs, he was a man of very slender talent, and it is a high tribute to his amiable qualities that his memory has been so long and so clearly preserved.[10]

Speaking of his plays, G. H. Nettleton says that they were mainly adaptations of other plays, or else patchworks of farcical

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8. _Spectator_, No. 37
9. Nettleton, _English Drama_, 116
10. _Cambridge History of English Literature_, VIII, 198-200; Professor Felix Schelling

scenes taken from diverse sources......D'Urfey's works were numerous but they all have the same characteristics—a plentiful supply of theatrical wit, a large use of action for comic effect, a decided tendency to trust to previous productions rather than to original invention, and a considerable employment of spectacular and musical devices."[11] Another critic says that his plays "were not more licentious than Dryden's or Ravenscrotf's or others of their day, but few kept possession of the stage;............no modern reprint of his dramas has been attempted, the contemporary issue having been large enough to keep the market supplied. His songs have never lost popularity, and many are still sung throughout Scotland under the belief that they were native to the soil."[12] Another critic, one not quite so modern, says that "D'Urfey's Dramatic pieces, which are very numerous, were in general well received: yet within thirty years after his death, there was not one of them on the muster-roll of acting plays. The licentiousness of intrigue, looseness of sentiment, and indelicacy of wit, which were the strongest recommendations to the audiences for whom they were written, having very justly banished them from the stage in the periods of purer taste", the critic does not think that they will ever again obtain the popularity that they once had.

Another minor writer to attract the notice of Steele and

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11. Nettleton, English Drama, 249-250
12. The Dictionary of National Biography (1888), XVI, 254; the Rev. J. W. Ebsworth, F. S. A; hereafter this will be referred to as the DNB.
13. Alexander Chalmers, General Biographical Dictionary (1813), II, 518

Addison was Sir Richard Blackmore.[14] In the first reference made to him by Steele, he is ridiculed because of his poem entitled 'Instructions to Vanderbank; a Sequel to the Advice to the Poets; a Poem, occasioned by the glorious success of her Majesty's arms under the command of the Duke of Marlborough, the last year in Flanders'.[15] Steele says that "here you are to understand, that the author, finding the poets would not take his advice, troubles himself no more about them; but has met with one Vanderbank; who works in arras, and makes very good tapestry hangings." The issue continues by saying that now a poem can be worked just like a tapestry; "A whole poem of this kind may be ready against an ensuing campaign, as well as a space left in the canvas.......for the principal figure, while the underparts are working." He thinks also that this would be good advice for the weavers of cloth; they could make new patterns to celebrate famous events. "Do you think", asks Steele, "there is a girl in England, that would wear anything but the 'Taking of Lisle,' or, 'The Battle of Oudenarde?'" He concludes by saying that he will consult a "great critic employed in the custom-house," to see what taxes should be levied upon such articles, or any of those commodities which "bear mottoes, or are worked upon poetical grounds."

14. He was a fellow of the College of Physicians in London and physician in ordinary to King William and later to Queen Anne.
15. Tatler, No. 3

However, a few numbers later Steele apologises for the rather rough treatment that he had afforded Blackmore.

> ....my familiar...said..the age you live in is such, that a good picture of any vice or virtue will infallibly be misrepresented; and though none will take the kind descriptions you make so much to themselves, as to wish well to the author, yet all will resent the ill turn in the licence you must be obliged to take, if you point at particular persons. I took his admonition kindly and immediately promised him to beg pardon of the author of the 'Advice to the Poets,' for my raillery upon his work; though I aimed at no more in that examination, but to convince him, and all men of genius, of the folly of laying themselves out on such plans as are below their characters. I hope too it was done without ill-breeding, and nothing spoken below what a civilian (as it is allowed I am) may utter to a physician.[16]

The next reference that Steele makes to Blackmore is in the Spectator;[17] in this issue he gives a preliminary notice of the forthcoming publication of Blackmore's poem The Creation. Steele is regretting the prevailance of Wit over Honesty and Virtue; his one consolation is that this "false Beauty will not pass upon Men of honest Minds and true Taste. Sir Richard Blackmore is one of these men, and Steele credits him with saying "That he undertook

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16. Tatler, No. 14
17. The following note is given in the Everyman Edition of the Spectator on this issue. "Steele's approving reference supplements the Tatler's quizzical apology for the ridicule of the Advice to the Poets (Nos. 3, 14), and may be considered as a puff preliminary to Sir Richard's 'philosophical poem,' which Addison, prompted by stronger religious sympathies, praises in No.339 of the Spectator. This approval and that shown by Dennis, and later by Johnson (Lives, iii.74), stand in marked contrast to the contempt entertained for 'Quack Maurus' by Dryden, Swift, Pope, and Grub Street generally--a contempt which may not be entirely explained by Blackmore's attack on the coterie at Will's in his Satyr against Wit (1700). "

the writing of his Poem to rescue the Muses out of the Hands of Ravishers, to restore them to their sweet and chaste Mansions, and to engage them in an Employment suitable to their Dignity."

A year later Addison, at the conclusion of an article devoted to the criticism of Milton's Paradise Lost, gives a short criticism of Blackmore's poem.

> I cannot conclude this Book upon the Creation, without mentioning a Poem which has lately appear'd under that Title. The Work was undertaken with so good an Intention and is executed with so great a Mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble Productions in our English Verse. The Reader cannot but be pleased to find the Depths of Philosophy enlivened with all the Charms of Poetry, and to see so great a Strength of Reason, amidst so beautiful a Redundancy of the Imagination. The Author has shewn us that Design in all the Works of Nature, which necessarily leads to the Knowledge of its first Cause " [18]

The last reference to Blackmore was by Addison in the Spectator when at the conclusion of an article upon the wonder of the formation of the human body, he refers his readers to the "Sixth Book of the Poem Entitled Creation, where the Anatomy of the human Body is described with Great Perspicuity and Elegance. I have been particular on the Thought which runs through this Speculation, because I have not seen it enlarged upon by others."

The last criticism by Steele and Addison quite adequately make

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18. Spectator, No. 339; the poem was published February 28, 1712

up for the discomfort that Steele may have caused Blackmore when he reviewed 'The Advice to the Poets.' But if the criticism increased in approval for Blackmore it did not increa_e in accuracy; it serves as another illustration of the fact that Addison and Steele were not so much inte ested in the correctness of the writing as they were in the correctness of the morals. expressed by the author. The oblivion which Blackmore enjoys today is an echo of the epigram written by his contemporary John Gay.

> See who ne'er was or will be half-read;
> Who first sang Arthur, then sang Alfred.
> ....
> Then hissed from earth, grew heavenly quite;
> Made every reader curse the light,
> Undid creation at a jerk,
> And of redemption made damn'd work." [19]

A modern critic says in connection with Blackmore that there is a "certain noble ambition, which is too frequently given over to edifying nonsense, and loses itself in arid deserts, but which shows itself capable upon occasion of vigour, of subtle and compact argumentation of enthusiasm even, and eloquence",[20] but that the thing mo_t worthy of praise is his intentions. In the Dictionary of National Biography no criticism of his specific works is given; all that is said is that "he was attacked by Dryden, Garth, Tom Brown, Steele, Sedley, but ridicule was powerless to stop his literary aspirations."[21]

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19. Elton, The Augustan Ages, 310
20. Legouis and Cazamian, 733
21. DNB, V,129-131; A. H. Bullen

Another critic says that "he was certainly a man of considerable learning and abilities, and a most zealous advocate for the interests of religion and virtue. He wrote, indeed, too much, and was deficient in point of taste; nor had he taken sufficient time to polish his compositions.........and it is sufficiently manifest, that it was not his dulness which excited so much animosity against him. Hardly any author has ever been more satirized than Sir Richard Blackmore, and yet, so far as we can judge from his writings, there have been few, perhaps none, who have had better intentions...... the merit of his poem on Creation, and the excellency of his life might have procured him better usage...........But time will, generally, in a great degree, remove such prejudices [jealousies and animosities of contemporary authors]; and those who form an impartial estimate of the character and various productions of Blackmore, will acknowledge, that as a writer, with all his faults, he had considerable merit; that as a man, he was justly entitled to great applause."[22]

Swift is mentioned in the Tatler by Mr. Bickerstaff as Mr. Humphrey Wagstaff "that....ingenious kinsman of mine of the family of the staffs." Mr. Bickerstaff says that his kinsman has has written a poem exemplifying a "perfectly new way" of making poems; he has used no "fantastical descriptions, but has described "things exactly as they happen." To illustrate this new way of

22. Alexander Chalmers, General Biographical Dictionary (1812), V, 335-340

writing Mr. Bickerstaff includes Swift's poem of the description of the morning. Steele concludes this criticism by giving a word of warning to any who may try to imitate this style.

> All that I apprehend is, that dear Numps will be angry I have published these lines; not that he has any reason to be ashamed of them, but for fear of those rogues, the bane to all excellent performances, the imitators.........I forewarn also all persons from encouraging any draughts after my cousin; and foretell any man who shall be about to imitate him, that he will be very insipid.[23]

Some months Steele printed another of Swift's shorter poems and makes the following comment upon it.

> My ingenious kinsman, Mr. Humphry Wagstaff, who treats of every subject after a manner that no other author has done, and better than any other can do, has sent me the description of a City-shower. I do not question but the reader remembers my cousin's description of the Morning as it breaks in town, which is printed in the ninth Tatler, and is another exquisite piece of this local poetry.[24]

Earlier in the Tatler Swift had given a favourable comment upon Swift's treatise called A Project for the Advancement of Religion: dedicated to the Countess of Berkeley (1709).[25] The issue in which this occured was published during Holy Week, and because of the lack of other public diversions was read by a great number of people who, according to Steele, approved of it. The pamphlet has the air of having been written by a man "of wisdom as well as

23. Tatler, No. 9
24. Ibid., No. 238
25. Ibid., No. 5

piety," "without unseasonable passions," and one "to whom vice is thoroughly contemptible."

In the Spectator Swift receives but passing mention in several issues, and the most that is said of him is that he is a great wit. A few times short quotations from some of his works are used; aside from this he receives no other attention.

The amount of space devoted to criticism of Swift is small in comparison to that which is devoted to Philips;, but the estimate that Steele made of him is much more nearly that which Swift has today than the estimation that Steele made of Philips. While Swift's two poems, which were first published in the Tatler, are considered as examples of first rank poetry, they are considered (from Steele's standpoint), as a welcome relief from the "fantastical descriptions" in the sonnets on Phillis and Chloris," which were the type common at that time. It would seem from this that Steele's allowing the prejudiced criticisms of pastorals to appear in the Guardian was prompted not so much by his love of pastoral poetry as by his love for Philips.

A modern critic says that

> Swift's verses are at least as worthy of preservation as Addison's.........generally careless, often harsh, his versification is seldom laboured ....the other merits of our author's verse are those of his prose--condensation, pith, always the effect, generally the reality of sincere purpose, and with few exceptions simplicity and directness.............His pleasantry is rarely pleasant, and he is never at heart more gloomy than when he

> affects to be gay. Most of his occasional verses, written at intervals from 1690-1733, are either frigid compliments or thinly veiled invectives.......but Swift despised art: he rode rough-shod, on his ambling cynic steed, through bad double rhyme and halting rhythm, to his end. War with the cold steel of prose was his business; his poems are the mere side-lights and pastimes of a man too grim to join heartily in any game.[26]

Another modern critic says of Swift in general that he is the "greatest writer of the classical age by force of his genius; the concern for art and the care of form are not in his case the essential motive of creation. His work owes an exceptionally broad scope to the freedom and penetration of the thought. He carries the rational criticism of values to a point where it menaces and impairs the very reasons to live...........Attaining thus to the utmost limits of satire, he leaves the normal, simple plane of a literature of Reason........Beyond the spirit of classicism, of which he is the supreme mouthpiece, one perceives in Swift the latent powers of a virtual Romanticism; and further still, the audaciously humble solutions of the most modern wisdom.[27]

The same critic says of Swift's poetry that

> The personality of Swift is too strong not to break out in everything he writes. The interest of his lines is that they reveal him to us; and to judge them by the wealth of their thought, the forcefulness of their eloquence, the vigour and the bitterness of the intentions with which they are loaded, they ought to make up the work of a first-rate poet. But this work, considerable as it

26. English Poets, ed. T. H. Ward, introduction to selections from Swift by J. Nichol

27. Legouis and Cazamian, 783-4

> is, is three-quarters composed of rapid improvisations, fugitive poems, where one feels the verve of genius; where the form, on the other hand, has not received the minute care demanded by classical finish. Elsewhere, more polished poems, or pieces in which creation has been so direct and sure that the idea and the words were born, so to speak, in an indestructible unity, have a very high quality, and rank beside the most successful productions of Pope, among the masterpieces of the poetry of this time. The clearness of the thought, the terseness of the language, the nimble movement of the verse with its clever irony, the unexpected picturesque rhymes, remind us of Butler; but with Swift there is greater suppleness, a more natural gift, an exactness of expression which, without the slightest effort, achieves wonderful effects of robust, unadorned decisive simplicity; and the impression of art springs from this absolute propriety of terms. The measure, regular, and poor in its range of variations, adds nothing to this triumph of style save a mediocre musical value; and one can say that here classical poetry is, still more certainly than with Pope, a perfect prose, raised and carried forward by an adequate rhythm; by a cadence that is too sure, too imperious, not to force upon the inward ear an elementary prosodiacal feeling. To study the poetry of Swift would be to enter into the world of his mind.[28]

Various other contemporary authors receive mention in the _Tatler_, _Spectator_ and _Guardian_; some have not more than a sentence devoted to them, and others have their poems published. Gilbert Budgell is one of the latter. In an essay[29] said to have been written by his brother, Eustace Budgell, are included verses attributed to him. Eustace Budgell says that "since I am got upon the subject of Love, shall conclude this

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28. _Ibid._, 757-8
29. _Spectator_, No. 591

Paper with a Copy of Verses which were lately sent me by an unknown Hand, as I look upon them to be above the ordinary Run of Sonneteers."

In one number of the Tatler,[30] Steele begins a story about a nagging wife, but does not finish it because he is not in the mood; he concludes the issue by saying that "nothing in nature is so ungraceful as story-telling against the grain; therefore take it as the author has given it to you." The author was William Harrison, and the poem was "The Medicine: A Tale--For the Ladies."

The poet-laureate, Nahum Tate, has an epigram, "On the Spectator", published in that paper.

> When first the Tatler to a mute was turn'd,
> Great Britain for her censor's silence mourn'd;
> Robbed of his sprightly beams she wept the night,
> Till the Spectator rose, and blaz'd as bright.
> So the first man the sun's first setting view'd,
> And sigh'd till circling days his joys renew'd.
> Yet, doubtful how that second sun to name,
> Whether a bright successor, or the same,
> So we: but now from this suspense are freed,
> Since all agree, who both with judgment read,
> 'Tis the same sun, and does himself succeed.[31]

The poem was supposedly sent in by a reader who wondered that the epigram "has not a Place in any of your Papers; I think the Suffrage of our Poet-laureat should not be overlooked."

Mrs. Elizabeth Singer, afterward Mrs. Rowe, was cited by Mrs. Jenny Distaff (half-sister to Mr. Bickerstaff)[32] for one of her pastorals, a dialogue between Sylvia and Dorinda, which was in-

30. Tatler, No. 2
31. Spectator, No. 488
32. Tatler, No. 10

cluded in the sixth part of Tonson's Miscellany Poems. Mrs. Distaff says that in this poem "all our little weaknesses are laid open in a manner more just, and with truer raillery, than ever man yet hit upon."

The fifty-first Guardian contains an essay on Sacred poetry, and Steele says that "all other poesy must be dropped at the gate of death, this alone can enter with us into immortality; it will admit of an improvement only, not (strictly speaking) an entire alteration, from the converse of cherubim and seraphim. It shall not be forgotten, when the sun and moon are remembered no more; it shall never die, but 'if I may so express myself be the measure of eternity, and the laudable ambition of heaven." Quotations from the "Last Day" by Dr. Young are included to illustrate the text of this issue. This is another indication of how far fr m the truth Steele's enthusiasm could carry him. Not only would few people today read the poem, but few would even know who Dr. Young was.

In No. 693 of the Spectator are verses that have been ascribed to John Byrom, who invented a new system of shorthand. The verses were a pastoral poem "Colin to Phoebe."[33] Phoebe is said to be Joanna,[34] daughter to Dr. Bentley, who was Byrom's master at Cambridge. The poem occupies the entire issue except for this comment; "the following copy of verses comes from one of my correspondents, and has something in it so original,

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33. In the Spectator the name is spelled Phebe.

34. According to a note in the Everyman Edition of the Spectator, it was Joanna Bentley "sho told her son, Richard Cumberland, that her father (to whom the Spectator was read daily by his children) 'was so particularly amused by the character of Sir Roger de Coverley that he took his literary decease most seriously to heart.'"

that I do not much doubt but it will divert my readers."

Tickell's "Royal Progress" is also published in full in the Spectator; the poem is given a flattering criticism.

> Having lately presented my reader with a Copy of Verses, full of the false Sublime, I shall here communicate to him an excellent Specimen of the True. Tho' it hath not been yet published, the judicious Reader will readily discern it to be the Work of a Master: An if he hath read that noble Poem of *The Prospect of Peace*,[35] he will not be at a Loss to guess at the Author.

Tickell, it will be remembered, was an excellent friend of Addison and Steele and was concerned with the essays on pastoral poetry in the *Guardian* and the translation of the *Iliad*.

In No. 618 of the Spectator[36] there is a letter explaining the epistolary form of verse, which the writer says "has not so much as been hinted at in any of the Arts of Poetry that have ever fallen into my hands, neither has it in any age, or any nation, been so much cultivated as the other several kinds of poesy." The writer continues with the statement that there are two types of epistolary verse: to one belong "love-letters, letters of friendship, and letters upon mournful occasions," and to the other belong "familiar, critical, and moral" letters. The only kinds of epistolary verse that he is speaking of at present, however, are those that were written by the ancients and which have been copied by the moderns. Of the ancients, Ovid wrote the first type of verse and Horace wrote the latter; these, says the author, "are the best originals we have left." At the conclusion of this letter Addison adds a rule

35. The poem of this title is mentioned in the *Spectator* No. 523

36. The author of this issue of the Spectator is not certainly known, but it does not seem improbable that it was written by Addison. It contains an evident knowledge of classic poetry, and it has a more serious and quiet tone than most of Steele's contributions. Also Eusden seems to have been more the friend of Addison than of Steele.

for epistolary verses which states that if the poet is induced by his enthusiasm into writing "seemingly unpremediated" descriptions and sentiments, he recollects himself, and falls "back gracefully into the natural style of a letter." He concludes the issue by stating that Mr. Eusden has just published an epistolary poem "on the king's accession to the throne; wherein, among many other noble and beautiful strokes of poetry, his reader may see this rule very happily observed."

To turn from poetry to prose, one of the first contemporary prose works to gain Steele's attention is a pamphlet called The Naked Truth, which earns by virtue of its title the following criticism from him.

> The idea any one would have of that work from the title was, that there would be much plain dealing with people in power, and that we should see things in their proper light, stripped of the ornaments which are usually given to the actions of the great; but the skill of this author is such, that he has under that rugged appearance, approved himself the finest gentleman and courtier that ever writ. The language is extremely sublime, and not at all to be understood by the vulgar. The sentiments are such as would make figure in ordinary words; but such is the art of the expression, and the thoughts are elevated to so high a degree, that I question whether the discourse will sell much.[37]

It is strange that while poetry had a very artificial and set vocabulary, prose was becoming more and more nearly what it is today—clear, simple and precise; it is also strange that in this era of artificial language that any prose writer who employed it was promptly criticised whereas the poets were criticised if they did not use it.

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37. Tatler, No. 17

Another treatise to gain notice from Steele was A Discourse of Freethinking, written by Anthony Collins. Collins defines free-thinking as the use of the understanding in an attempt to judge a thing only after all of the evidence for and against it has been presented. Steele remarks that "as soon as he has delivered this definition, from which one would expect he did not design to shew a particular inclination for or against any thing before he had considered it, he gives up all title to the character of a free thinker, with the most apparent prejudice against a body of men, whom of all other a good man would be most careful not to violate, I mean men in holy orders." [38]

In another paper in which Addison says that some of his correspondents have advised him to gain a greater circulation for his periodical by seasoning it with scandal, he mentions "T--m Br--wn of facetious Memory, who, after having gutted a Proper Name of all its intermediate Vowels, used to plant it in his Works, and make as free with it as he pleased, without any Danger of the Statute." [39]

Scant attention is given these writers by modern critics. If any criticism is given it is usually not too complimentary in nature. However no mention is made of Gilbert Budgell. If he did any writing other than the poem printed in the Spectator, it must not have been

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38. Guardian, No. 3
39. Spectator, No. 567

collected and published. It is quite probable that his work consisted of unsigned occasional poems published in contemporary periodicals for which his brother Eustace contributed essays.

William Harrison, the author of The Medicine, seems to have been a good friend of Addison and Steele, and to have died when still quite young. He also seems to have been a friend of Tickell, Young and Swift each of whom lamented his death in print. One critic says that he was "the excellent young man who figured both as an humourist and a politician in the fifth volume of the 'Tatler', of which (under the patronage of Bolingbroke, Henley and Swift) he was professedly the editor."[40] Another critic says of his connection with the Tatler, that "the Tatler which he edited in 1711 was reprinted in duodecimo in 1712 and in subsequent years as Steele's Tatler volume V."[41]

The poet-laureate, Nahum Tate, has not been treated so leniently by the moderns as he was by Mr. Spectator. True, Mr. Spectator did not say anything in favour of Tate, but neither did he say anything against, and silence is sometimes preferable to frankness. One modern critic says that "almost all of Tate's work is tacked on to that of someone else, either as an editor, or a translator or a colleague, or one of a company. Most of his poems are elegies or adulatory verses

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40. Chalmers, General Biographical Dictionary, XVI, 187
41. DNB, XXV, 47-48; W. P. Courtney

to great people, designed to attract pecuniary recognition."[42] It is recorded by another critic that "it is observed by Warburton, in the notes to the Dunciad, that he was a cold writer, with no invention, and translated tolerably when befriended by Dryden, with whom he sometimes wrote in conjunction."[43]

Little is said of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe who is mentioned by Mrs. Jenny Distaff in the Tatler. One critic said that "here most popular literary compositions took an epistolary form, which she employ d with much skill in verse mostly of a religious or moral kind."[44]

Young is perhaps the best known of these minor writers. He is best known today for his connection with the so-called grave-yard school of poets. He prefixed some "recommendatory verses" to Addison's Cato in 1713. "In the same year appeared Young's 'Poem on the Last Day', which is said to have been finished as early as 1710, before he was thirty, for part of it is printed in the "Tatler". It was inscribed to the queen, in a dedication, the complexion of which being political, he may have his reasons for dropping it in the subsequent editions of his works."[45] Leslie Stephen says that "his laboured and sententious style made a singular success when employed in the service of religious sentimentalism. Young claimed to add the orthodox element which was wanting in Pope's rationalistic 'Essay on Man', and the religious gloom was in edifying contrast to Pope's doctrine that what-

42. DNB, LV, 379-380; The Rev. Canon Leigh Bennett
43. Chalmers, XXIX, 152-153
44. DNB, XLIX, 338-339; Sidney Lee
45. Chalmers, XXXII, 402-408

ever is is right. He was an early representative of the sentimentalism which was combined with high genius in his friend Richardson......... Young's gloom was no doubt partly that of a disappointed preferment-hunter, but probably was genuine enough in its way, and as sincere as that of most writers who bring their churchyard contemplations to market."[46]

John Byrom contributed to the Spectator two papers on dreams, Nos. 586, 593 and perhaps 597. His poem "Colin and Phoebe" is said to have been very popular in his day. "Byrom had an astonishing facility in rhyming......Some poems are discussions of classical or theological criticism.....Byrom can be forcible, but frequently adopts a comic metre oddly innappropriate" to his more serious poems. "Some occasional poems in which his good-humoured sprightliness finds a natural expression have been deservedly admired, especially 'Colin and Phoebe.'"[47] Another less modern critic says that "the character of Byrom, as a poet, has been usually said to rest on his pastoral Colin and Phebe, which has been universally praised for its natural simplicity; but if we inquire what it is that pleases in this poem, we shall probably find that it is not the serious and simple expression of a pastoral lover, but the air of delicate humour which runs through the whole, and inclines us to think, contrary to the received opinion, that he had no other object in view.......................His muse is

46. DNB, LXIII, 368-373
47. DNB, VII, 129-132; Leslie Stephen

said to have been so kind, that he always found it easier to express his thought in verse than in prose.....He wrote with ease: it is more to his credit that he wrote in general with correctness, and that his mind was stored with varied imagery and original turns of thought which he conveys in flowing measure, always delicate and often harmonious."[48]

Tickell, the friend of Addison and Steele, was a thorough Latin student, but as an English poet he is not given much credit. His best known work is the elegy that he wrote on the death of his friend Addison. "Tickell, in the rest of his work, is an imitator, and indeed better than a mere follower. But his elegy To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison, is a justly famous poem, sincere in its emotion, which does not dare to be simple, and invests itself in pompous phraseology, but elevates it with the ardour of inspiration; and the music of his sentiment has here found for its suggestion a rhythm which is truly funereal, organ notes one might say, whilst the great images of death are evoked. None of the traits of elegiac romanticism is absent, not even the avowal of the bitter pleasure the poet finds in grief."[49]

Laurence Eusden was appointed poet laureate in 1718, the post having been vacated by the death of Rowe; he gained the post as a reward from the duke of Newcastle for a poem celebrating his marriage to Lady Henrietta Godolphin. Eusden took orders in 1722 and Gray,

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48. Chalmers, VII, 481-488
49. Legouis and Cazamian, 765

in a letter to Mason (December 19, 1757) said that Eusden "was a person of great hope in his youth, though at last he was turned out a drunken parson;'" this judgment was confirmed by Pope in his Dunciad. "Southey says his poetry is 'a strain of fulsome flattery in mediocre poetry..................but his poetical translations are sometimes eulogised for possessing some command of language and smoothness of versification.'"[50] Chalmers says that Eusden was ridiculed by Pope in the Dunciad, Cooke in the Battle of Poets, and Oldmixon in the Art of Logic and Rhetoric, and that he was very little known before his appointment to the laureateship. In the duke of Buckingham's Session of the Poets are the following lines upon his succeeding to the post of poet laureate:

> In rushed Eusden, and cried, who should have it
> But I the true laureat, to whom the king gave it?
> Apollo begg'd pardon, and granted his claim
> But vow'd that till then he ne'er heard of his name.[51]

Anthony Collins's Discourse of Free Thinking was published in 1713; "the book urges that all belief should be based upon free inquiry, and insinuates that such inquiry will be destructive of orthodox views. The book produced a vigorous reply from Bentley. Bentley destroyed any pretensions of Collins to thorough scholarship, exposed many gross blunders, and claimed Collins's principle of free inquiry as his own and that of all the orthodox believers. Swift attacked Collins in one of his best pieces of irony, 'Mr. Collins's Discourse of Freethinking put into plain English by way of Abstract, for the use of the Poor.'"[52]

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50 DNB, XVIII, 48-49; W. P. Courtney
51. Chalmers, XIII, 380-381
52. DNB, XI, 363-364; Leslie Stephen

Collins is of interest today more for his contributions to eighteenth century thought than he is for his contributions to English literature.

Tom Brown is little known today; he was a hack-writer and wrote with what one critic calls " an exuberance of criticism and mockery, where liberty of thought seems to be practised in a mood of self-satisfied display."[53]

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53. Legouis and Cazamian, 780

Miscellaneous--Drama and Periodicals

With the exception of the extended criticism of Philips's The Distressed Mother and Addison's Cato, the productions of specific dramatists did not receive much attention from Addison or Steele. The first numbers of the Tatler mentioned several plays to which the reformers were objecting—plays of the Restoration; these plays were being given mostly for the benefit of various actors, and, if Steele did not approve of the plays, he at least forgot his scruples long enough to recommend his followers to attend the benefit performances. Congreve's Love for Love[1] is called "the celebrated comedy", and his The Old Bachelor is called a "comedy of deserved reputation."

Two plays running contemporaneously are cited by Steele; one, called London Cuckolds,[2] he labels "that heap of vice and absurdity", and the other, called Earl of Essex, he says never fails to please "those who are not too learned in nature" despite the fact that it has "not one good line." These plays were produced a number of years before the advent of the Tatler.

In No. 15 of the Tatler Steele says "to-night was acted a second time a comedy, called 'The BusyBody'; this play is written by a lady." Four numbers later he has something further to say about the play.

> On Saturday last was presented 'The BusyBody,' a comedy, written (as I have heretofore remarked) by a woman. The plot and incidents of the play are laid with that subtlety of spirit which is

1. Congreve's Love for Love (Tatler, No.1) was acted for the benefit of Mr. Betterton. Other plays acted for benefits were Wycherley's Country Wife (Tatler, No. 3), for Mrs. Bignell, and Shadwell's Epsom Wells (Tatler No. 7), for Mr. Bullock.
2. Ravenscroft, London Cuckolds, Tatler No. 18; the play was first produced in 1682
3. John Banks, Earl of Essex, Tatler No. 14; produced in 1682. Nettleton gives the title as The Unhappy Favourite.

> peculiar to females of wit, and is very seldom well performed by those of the other sex, in whom craft in love is an act of invention, and not, as with women, the effects of nature and instinct.[4]

In the same number he notes that the next day the play called The Trip to the Jubilee will be acted; of the play itself he remarks that "this performance is the greatest instance that we can have of the irresistible force of proper action. The dialogue in itself has something too low to bear a criticism upon it."

Another contemporary play that he mentions is The Recruiting Officer. In his criticism he praises the acting of Richard Estcourt, and he says "there is not in my humble opinion, the humour hit in Serjeant Kite; but it is admirably supplied by his action."[5]

Addison in the Spectator devoted thirty issues in part or in entirety to the stage; actors, opera, tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, manners at the theatre, reactions of the audience and their ways of manifesting these reactions were the subjects of these discussions. Specific plays do not receive much attention in the Spectator. However, in one number a play of Cibber's is alluded to.

> I understood from common Report, that Mr. Cibber was introducing a French Play upon our Stage, and thought my self concerned to let the Town know what was his and what foreign. When I came to the Rehearsal, I found the House so partial to one of their own Fraternity, that they gave every thing what was said such Grace, Emphasis, and Force in their Action, that it was no easie Matter to make any Judgment of the Performance.

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4. Tatler, No. 19; the authoress was Mrs. Susannah Centlivre, and the play was produced in 1709.
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> ....Cibber himself took the Liberty to tell me that he expected I would do him Justice, and allow the Play well prepared for his Spectators, whatever it was for his Readers.[6]

The play was Ximena, or the Heroic Daughter and was founded upon Corneille's Cid. It was first acted at Drury Lane on November 28, 1712, and ran for a few nights.

In the Tatler Steele includes a brief comment upon the newspapers of the time, and he warns the editors of these various papers that their proclivity to exaggerate may take two or three ages to repair.

> There is another sort of gentlemen whom I am much more concerned for, and that is the ingenious fraternity of which I have the honour to be an unworthy member: I mean the newswriters of Great Britain, whether Post-men or Post-boys, of by what other name or title soever dignified or distinguished. The case of these gentlemen is, I think, more hard than that of the soldiers, considering that they have taken more towns, and fought more battles. They have been upon parties and skirmishes, when our armies have lain still; and given the general assault to many a place, when the besiegers were quiet in their trenches. They have made us masters of several strong towns many weeks before our generals could do it; and completed victories when our greatest captains have been glad to come off with a drawn battle. Where Prince Eugene has slain his thousands, Boyer[7] has slain his ten thousands. This gentleman can indeed be never enough commended for his courage and intrepidity during this whole war: he has laid about him with an inexpressible fury; and, like the offended Marius of ancient Rome, made such havoc among his countrymen, as must be the work of

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6. Spectator, No. 370; a note in the Everyman Edition of the Spectator gives the following quotation from Cibber's Apology, p. 239, ed. 1740. "He knew too the Obligations the Stage had to his Writings; there being scarce a Comedian of Merit, in our whole Company, whom his Tatlers had not made better, by his publick Recommendation of them. And many Days had our House been particularly fill'd by the Influence, and Credit of his Pen."
7. Abel Boyer, editor of the Post-boy

> two or three ages to repair. It must be confessed, the redoubted Mr. Buckley[8] has shed as much blood as the former; but I connot forbear saying (and I hope it will not look like envy), that we regard our brother as a kind of Drawcansir, who spares neither friend nor foe, but generally kills as many of his own side as the enemies.[9]

Sometime later Steele again mentions his rivals in the field of periodicals. He speaks of "a certain author" who has introduced the custom of beginning each paper with a Latin quotation, but he finds consolation in the fact that there are other "solid writers who are not guilty of this pedantry." But when he comes to the judgment of the papers "whose whole writings consist in interrogatories" and whose answers are questions as difficult as the original questions, he is rather sarcastic and thinks that the editors of them do not know as much as they pretend to. The last reference in the Tatler is when he comments upon four of the contemporary papers.

> The Post-man writes like an angel. The Moderator is fine reading. It would do you no harm to read the Post-boy with attention; he is very deep of late. He is instructive; but I confess a little satirical: a sharp pen ! he cares not what he says. The Examiner is admirable, and is become a brave and substantial author.[10]

However, in the Guardian Steele changed his opinion about the Examiner; the author of the Examiner had mentioned in a slighting manner a woman of quality, and Steele immediately took issue with him and came to her rescue. The quarrel continued and soon took on a political aspect which

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8. Samuel Buckley, printer of "The Gazette," and also of "The Daily Courant"
9. Tatler, No. 18
10. Tatler, No. 232

resulted in the dissolution of the Guardian. Steele, up to this time, had managed in his periodicals to keep from entering into any active quarrel over politics, but he seems to have been unable to keep this disagreement from becoming of that type. The quarrel began in the forty-first Guardian when Steele replied to an issue of the Examiner in which the editor had written disparagingly of Lady Charlotte Finch, the daughter of the Earl of Nottingham.[11] Three more issues of the Guardian were devoted to the controversy: No. 53, in which Steele acknowledges having written No. 41; No. 63, which is another letter signed by Steele and replies to the Examiner's reply to No. 53; and No. 80, in which Steele leaves the original cause for the quarrel and deals with the Examiner's uncomplimentary treatment of the Clergy.

Although Steele's criticism of the drama of his time often consisted of no more than a phrase or a sentence, he usually voices much the same opinion as the modern critics. Edward Ravenscroft, the author of London Cuckolds, began his career as an adapter of Shakespeare. His most successful work was the "outrageous farce, which under the title of The London Cuckolds (first acted in Dorset Garden in 1682, and printed in the following year), delighted the public in a long series of representations, which it ultimately became customary to give regularly on Lord Mayor's Day. In 1751 Garrick had the courage to lay it aside

11. Guardian, No. 41, April 28, 1713; Examiner, April 24, 1713, and April 21, 1713.

at Drury Lane, and it was discontinued at Covent Garden in 1754 Ravenscroft was assuredly not one of the 'great wits,' who............ oft'ner write to please themselves than the public. He borrowed so freely that Laingbaine's stricture that 'this rickety poet.......... cannot go without others' assistance,' and Dibdin's opinion that Ravenscroft's plays were 'a series of thefts from beginning to end,' are not so easy to controvert. Yet, to a certain extent..........he redeemed his character as a plagiary by his skill and cleverness in adaptation."[12]

John Banks, the author of the play which Steele calls the Earl of Essex, is not treated as gently by the modern critics as he was by Steele. The correct title of the play is The Unhappy Favourite, and it is based on the life of the earl of Essex. "This enjoyed considerable success, and Dryden wrote the prologue and the epilogue. It is a play, [which] although ill-written, showed a considerable power over the sensations of the audience, and Banks doubtless imagined that it was to be the precursor of a long theatrical success. He was, however, disappointed...................Banks is a dreary and illiterate writer, whose blank verse is execrable. It appears, however, that his scenes possessed a melodramatic pathos and one or two of his pieces survived most of the Restoration upon the stage." [13]

Mrs. Susannah Centlivre, whose play The Busy Body was given a

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12. DNB, XLVII, 316-318; A. W. Ward
13. DNB, III, 127-128; Edmund Gosse

favourable review by Steele, is still given a more or less kindly reception by the critics. One modern critic says that "the comedies of Mrs. Centlivre are often ingenious and sprightly, and the comic scenes are generally brisk. Mrs. Centlivre troubled herself little about invention,"..............and "so far as regards the stage, she may boast a superiority over almost all of her countrywomen since two of her comedies remain in the list of acting plays. More than one other work is capable with some alterations of being acted."[13] She was a keen politician, and she displayed a strong Whig bias, which may be one reason why Steele approved of her. Some of her most successful works were translated into French, German and other languages.

No information can be found about the play The Trip to the Jubilee; however, there is a play by Farquhar entitled The Constant Couple or A Trip to the Jubilee (1699), which, it seems probable, may be the play to which Steele was referring. Nettleton says of this play that it "was a highly successful comedy";[14] whether it was a success because of the acting, as Steele says, or whether it was a success because of the play itself, he does not say.

Nettleton, however, does not agree with Steele in his criticism of The Recruiting Officer. He says that the play was "animated by

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13. DNB, IX, 420-422; Joseph Knight
14. Nettleton, English Drama, 137

Farquhar's own military experiences," and that it "enlarges the bounds of comedy that had hitherto been too closely confined to city limits and the gallantries of its fops. The vigorous characters of Sergeant Kite and Captain Plume have the rough freedom of a country atmosphere."[15]

No definite criticisms can be found for Samuel Buckley or Abel Boyer. In fact nothing can be found about Buckley; Boyer is cited as the editor of the Post-Boy, a thrice-a-week news-sheet which began in 1705; he is also mentioned as having been put into the Dunciad by Pope.

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15. Nettleton, English Drama, 137

Introduction--Part II
Samuel Johnson

About the middle of the eighteenth century there was a change in the criticism that appeared in the periodicals. The change was not so much in the ideas of the men who were writing the papers, as it was a change in the lives of these men. There still were, to be sure, clubs in which men gathered to talk, and there still were political writers and politics and patronage; but a writer did not have slavishly to depend upon these elements to gain recognition. A man could gain prominence without belonging to the "right" club or political party, and he did not have to depend upon a single man or a party to be able to live. Because of this freedom from dependence criticism began to be based more upon the merit of the writer under discussion than upon his political, religious or social affiliation. An author was beginning to become a man to be respected and not a man to be used for the benefit of any cause. That does not mean that writers suddenly ceased to write about politics, religion or social abuses, but it does mean that what they said about these things was their own opinion and not that of a patron who was paying them to voice his beliefs in a convincing manner.

Steele, after he had felt out the preferences of his public, found that they enjoyed having their foibles discussed; Addison by his temperament was fitted for this type of criticism and contributed many of the issues devoted to this type to the Tatler as well as to the Spectator. The periodicals of the latter part of the century were modeled after these two; however, none of the papers which followed them was superior to and few if any were equal to the Tatler or the Spectator. Few of them attained the simplicity, urbaneness and friendliness of style which the combined efforts of Addison and Steele produced; but

(more than that) many of them lacked the variety of subject matter of their predecessors. Many of them devoted their attention exclusively to discussions of moral questions--discussions of "the necessity of labour to achieve excellence," the "necessity of proportioning punishments to crimes" and other topics of a like nature. Literary criticism was not, of course, entirely neglected, but it began to take on a more moral and impersonal tone. One seldom finds enthusiastic praise of a friend's work; also one finds that if a writer of periodicals is active in other fields of writing he presents his own works to the public with a becoming sort of hesitancy.

The first periodical of this period to be considered is the Rambler, published by Johnson from March, 1750, to March, 1752. "No questions occupied him so much as moral questions,"[1] and literary criticism of specific contemporary authors is seldom found.

A modern critic says that "there is nothing splendid about the Rambler............the more shining qualities of literature, except occasional eloquence, are conspicuously wanting in them. There is no imagination, little of the fancy, wit and readiness of illustration so omnipresent in Johnson's talk, little power of drawing character, very little humour. He often puts his essay into the form of a story, but it remains an essay still. His strength is always in the reflections, never in the facts related or the persons described..........His was a profounder mind than Addison's; but he could not have drawn Sir Roger de Coverley."[2] This quality of profoundness is present even in his essays on literary criticism; he seems to be not so much interested in

1. J. Bailey, Dr. Johnson and his Circle (1913), 27
2. Ibid., 195-196; the statement is made in disagreement with Sir Walter Raleigh's opinion that the Rambler was a "splendid repository of wisdom and truth."

what his contemporaries are actually writing, as he is in telling them what they ought to write and how they ought to write it. Because he has such an intense desire to instill correct moral virtues in his readers, he does more fault-finding than praising in these essays.

In an essay discussing pastoral poetry he says

> In writing or judging of pastoral poetry, neither the authors nor critics of latter times seem to have paid sufficient regard to the originals left us by antiquity, but have entangled themselves with unnecessary difficulties by advancing principles, which, having no foundation in the nature of things, are wholly to be rejected from a species of composition, in which, above all others, mere nature is to be regarded.[3]

He continues by saying that the pastoral admits of all ranks of persons because all people go to the country; "it excludes not, therefore, on account of the characters necessary to be introduced, any elevation or delicacy of sentiment; those ideas only are improper, which, not owing their original to rural objects, are not pastoral." Just how the sentiments proper to the rank of the person uttering them can be included and those ideas which do not owe their origin to rural objects could be excluded is difficult to understand. If, for example, a member of the aristocracy were visiting in the country surely he would have ideas which did not have their origin in rural objects. Johnson, however, to prove his argument quotes a few lines from Virgil with translations by Dryden and Pope; the sentiment in the original did not please Johnson; Dryden's translation was not much better, and Pope endeavouring to copy it "was carried to still greater impropreity."

3. Rambler, No. 37; No. 36 also dealt with pastoral poetry, stating the reasons why "there is scarcely any species of poetry that has allured more readers, or excited more writers, than the pastoral."

To Johnson the function of biography was to teach a moral lesson to its readers by pointing out the strength and virtues of its object. "Not only every man has, in the mighty mass of the world, great numbers in the same condition with himself, to whom his mistakes and miscarriages, escapes and expedients, would be of immediate and apparent use: but there is such a uniformity in the state of man, considered apart from adventitious and separable decorations and disguises, that there is scarce any possibility of good or ill, but is common to human kind."[4] After his general criticism he gives examples of biographies that do not serve this purpose; among them is Tickell's biography of Addison, of which he says "I know not well what advantage posterity can receive from the only circumstance by which Tickell has distinguished Addison from the rest of mankind, the irregularity of his pulse."

About the only real praise that he gives in the Rambler is to Addison, and that praise is qualified. The issue in which this praise occurs is entitled "The Danger of Succeeding a Great Author;" it is a criticism of the versification of Milton. In the course of his introduction he pays tribute to Addison and his essays on Milton's poetry.

> Addison, though he has considered this poem under most of the general topics of criticism, has barely touched upon the versification; not probably because he thought the art of numbers unworthy of his notice, for he knew with how minute attention ancient critics considered the disposition of syllables, and had himself given hopes of some metrical observations upon the great Roman poet; but being the first who undertook to display the beauties, and point out the defect, of Milton, he had many objects at once before him, and passed willingly over

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4. Rambler, No. 60

> those which were most barren of ideas, and required labour rather than genius.[5]

Another criticism of Addison appears in an issue entitled "The Prejudices and Caprices of Criticism." Johnson says that "critics, like the rest of mankind, are very frequently misled by interest..........Dryden was known to have written most of his critical dissertations only to recommend the work upon which he then happened to be employed; and Addison is suspected to have denied the expediency of poetical justice, because his own Cato was condemned to perish in a good cause."[6]

A further illustration of the moral purpose that criticism tended to have at this time is the letter written to the Rambler by Samuel Richardson, famous for his sentimentalizing of virtue. Richardson's comment is that the Rambler does not devote enough space to the chastisement of morals. He thinks that the Spectator is far superior to the Rambler in this respect. Of course, the morals in which Richardson is most interested are those of the women, and he hopes that if the Rambler will devote more attention to them, the actions of the women will be reformed.

In No. 4 of the Rambler, Johnson presents his theory of the novel, which theory briefly stated is that every novel worthy to be published should teach a moral lesson. Vice should be repugnant, and virtue should be made as attractive as possible. Nature should be followed, but anything in nature that would clash with the above principles should be eliminated.

> The works of fiction, with which the present generation seems more particularly delighted, are such as

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5. Ibid., No. 86; Addison devoted a number of the Spectator papers to the discussion of the poetry of Milton, especially Paradise Lost.
6. Ibid., No. 93

> exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind.
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> This kind of writing may be termed not improperly the comedy of romance, and is to be conducted nearly by the rules of comic poetry........................ Many writers, for the sake of following nature, so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages, that they are both equally conspicuous; and as we accompany them through their adventures with delight, and are led by degrees to interest ourselves in their favour, we lose the abhorrence of their faults, because they do not hinder our pleasure, or, perhaps, regard them with some kindness for being united with so much merit................Vice, for vice is necessary to be shown, should always disgust; nor should the graces of gaiety, or the dignity of courage, be so united with it, as to reconcile it to the mind.................... there are thousands of the readers of romances willing to be thought wicked, if they may be allowed to be wits. It is therefore to be steadily inculcated, that virtue is the highest proof of understanding, and the only solid basis of greatness; and that vice is the natural consequence of narrow thoughts; that it begins in mistake, and ends in ignominy.

From those remarks one can see that Johnson is going to approve of Richardson more than he is going to approve of Fielding, that _Pamela_ is going to be a more worthy novel than _Joseph Andrews_.

A little more than a year later Johnson devoted one issue to the discussion of the epistolary form of writing. In this form he includes not only prose writings but poetry as well. Because the material that can be included in this form is of less importance than that which can be used in other forms of writing, he thinks very careful rules should be set up and followed by all who wish to entertain the public by the writing of letters.

> Pleasure will generally be given, as abilities are displayed by scenes of imagery, points of conceit, unexpected sallies, and artful compliments. Trifles always require exuberance of ornament; the building

> which has no strength can be valued only for the grace of its decoration.[7]

But not only should the letters give pleasure; they should also give moral instruction; they should follow nature, but they should contain only those things selected from nature as will be useful to the readers. He introduces this essay by a quotation from Seneca; "it was the wisdom of ancient times, to consider what is most useful as most illustrious." The following anecdote told of Johnson illustrates his ability to ignore the unpleasant things in life as well as the evil nature possessed by all people in varying degrees.

> "A gentleman," she says, "who frequently visited him whilst writing his 'Idlers' (the "Idler" was partly composed in Gough Square in 1758) constantly found him at his desk, sitting on a chair with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Dr. Johnson never forgot its defect, but would either hold it in his hand or place it with great composure against some support, taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor." "It was remarkable in Dr. Johnson," she goes on, "that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence."[8]

Still using nature as his guidepost he comes to the defence of tragi-comedy. It is natural for emotions of sorrow and joy to be present in the same person, and the stage is for the representation of nature; therefore, it is proper for both tragedy and comedy to be mingled in the same play. But despite the fact that tragi-comedy is acceptable to the rules of nature, the author should use discretion in writing his play because he does not want to spoil the design by an indiscriminate use of comedy in a tragedy or of tragedy in a comedy.[9]

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7. Ibid., No. 152
8. Austin Dobson, Eighteenth Century Vignettes, p. 91 (Miss Reynolds is the "she" of the quotation.)
9. Rambler, No. 156

Even though Johnson has set himself up as a critic of literature he does not much approve of critics. He thinks that not only do they dispense criticism to better their own interests, but that they are following unsound rules that have been formed by other more ancient critics. The rules of criticism are often founded upon "the arbitrary edicts of legislators, authorized only by themselves."[10] If Johnson honestly believed this he denies the authority of all critics including himself, because all of the rules for writing and judging of writing have been formed arbitrarily by writers, readers and critics from the beginning of time to the present day.

Today scarcely anyone reads the Rambler, and Bailey says that "no one will now wonder that it never had a large circulation as a periodical, for it usually exhibits him at his gravest, and many of the essays are scarcely distinguishable from sermons..........The Rambler had no sixpenny magazines of triviality, no sensational half-penny papers, to compete with it, and it pursued an even course of modest success for its two years of life. The greatest pleasure it brought Johnson was the praise of his wife, who said to him, 'I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to this.'"

Further modern criticism of Johnson will be given in the chapter on Goldsmith who discusses him in The Citizen of the World, and the Bee.

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10. Bailey, Dr. Johnson and his Circle, pp. 99-100

Henry Fielding

In the Covent-Garden Journal, Fielding's essays are mostly of a moral nature but without the pessimism of Johnson. Fielding, in this periodical, styles himself Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knight Censor of Great Britain. As can be seen from his title he is to be the critic of every form of life, social, moral and literary; in the preface to his work he disclaims any intent to deal with any form of politics. It is in this paper that he presents to the public various evils that have come to his attention through his duties as justice of the peace for Westminster, to which post he was appointed in 1748. The idea of a court carried over into his literary criticism, and he established the Court of Censorial Inquiry;[1] it was before this court that his book Amelia was tried.

> The court of censorial Inquiry met according to Adjournment; and, after issuing forth Process to bring several Books into Court, among which was a Romance called Amelia.

Two issues later he presents his plea for his book and rather than enter a defence offers to make a compromise with the court.

> If you, Mr. Censor, are yourself a Parent, you will view me with Compassion when I declare I am the Father of this poor Girl the Prisoner at the Bar; nay when I go farther, and avow, that of all my Offspring she is my favourite Child. I can truly say that I bestowed a more than ordinary Pains in her Education; in which I will venture to affirm, I followed the Rules of all those who are acknowledged to have writ

1. The avowed purposes of the Court of Censorial Enquiry were to deal with any affairs that "relate to the Republic of Letters.........both the Theatres and all other Places of Diversion and Resort....the Statute of Good-Breeding....and the Statute of Gallantry; "however, the actual meetings of the Court dealt with matters connected with 'the Republic of Letters,'" and the theatres and the actors connected with them.-- Covent-Garden Journal, No. 6

> best on the Subject; and if her Conduct be fairly examined, she will be found to deviate very little from the strictest Observation of all those Rules; neither Homer nor Virgil pursued them with greater Care than myself, and the candid and learned Reader will see that the latter was the model, which I made use of on this Occasion.
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> I do not think my Child is entirely free from Faults. I know nothing human that is so; but surely she doth not deserve the Rancour with which she hath been treated by the Public. However, it is not my Intention, at present to make any Defence; but shall submit to a Compromise, which hath been always allowed in this Court in all Prosecutions for Dulness. I do, therefore, solemnly declare to you, Mr. Censor, that I will trouble the World no more with any Children of mine by the same Muse. [2]

Fielding kept to this promise; although he continued to write he did not produce any other novel.

Another book to be tried before the Court was The Female Quixote, or The Adventures of Arabella, written by Mrs. Charlotte Lenox. Fielding says that this novel, which is modeled after the Don Quixote by Cervantes, is better than the original for the following five reasons; "First, as we are to grant in both Performances, that the Head of a very sensible Person is entirely subverted by reading Romances, this concession seems to me more easy to be granted in the Case of a young Lady than of an old Gentleman......Secondly, the Character of Arabella is more endearing than that of Quixote.......Thirdly, the Situation of Arabella is more interesting.......Fourthly, here is a regular Story which, tho' possibly it is not pursued with that Epic Regularity which

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2. Covent-Garden Journal, No. 8

would give it the Name of an Action, comes much nearer to that Perfection than the loose unconnected Adventures in Don Quixote......... Fifthly, the Incidents, or, if you please, the Adventures, are much less extravagant and incredible in the English than in the Spanish Performance,......"[3] Fielding concludes the proceedings of the Court with a word of warning to the critics.

> Upon the whole, I do very earnestly recommend it as a most extraordinary and most excellent performance. It is indeed a work of true Humour, and cannot fail of giving a rational, as well as very pleasing, Amusement to a sensible Reader, who will at once be instructed and very highly diverted. Some Faults perhaps there may be, but I shall leave the unpleasing Task of pointing them out to those who will have more Pleasure in the Office. This Caution, however, I think proper to premise, that no Persons presume to find many: For if they do, I promise them, the Critic and not the Author will be to blame.[3]

A modern writer has taken issue with Fielding because of this statement; he has even gone so far as to use some of Fielding's own words against him.

> In spite of the verdict of Johnson and Fielding, —that is to say, in spite of the verdict of the Macaulay and Thackeray of the Eighteenth Century,— the Critic, it is to be feared, must be blamed to-day. Were Fielding alone, one might discount his opinion by assuming that he would naturally welcome a work of art which was on his side rather than on that of Richardson; but this would not account for the equally favourable opinion of

3. Covent-Garden Journal, No. 24. In The Covent-Garden Journal, ed. G. E. Jensen, p. 207, is the following note relative to Arabella: "Dr. Johnson wrote the Dedication for her Female Quixote and helped her on other occasions. Richardson admitted her to his circle, and Goldsmith, later, gave her his assistance. Fielding's review of her best work is an indication of his admiration for her."

Johnson. Nor could it be laid entirely to the novelty of the attempt, for 'Tom Jones' and 'Clarissa' and 'Peregrine Pickle', masterpieces all, had by this time been written, and can still be read, which it is difficult to say of 'The Female Quixote; or, the Adventures of Arabella'.......There is an air of unreality about all this which, one would think, should have impeded its popularity in its own day. In the Spain of Don Quixote it is conceivable; it is intolerable in the England of Arabella. But there are other reasons which help to account for the oblivion into which the book has fallen. One is, that by neglecting to preserve the atmosphere of the age in which the book was written, it has missed an element of vitality which is retained even by such fugitive efforts as Coventry's 'Pompey the Little.' Indeed, beyond the...... references to Johnson and Richardson, and an obscure allusion to the beautiful Miss Gunnings who, at this date, divided the Talk of the Town with the Earthquake, there is scarcely any light thrown upon contemporary life and manners throughout the whole of Arabella's history. Another, and graver objection (as one of her critics, whose own admirable 'Amelia' had been but recently published, should have known better than any one) is that, in spite of the humour of some of the situations, the characters of the book are colourless and mechanical. Fielding's Captain Booth and his wife, Mrs. Bennet and Serjeant Atkinson, and Dr. Harrison and Colonel Bath, are breathing and moving human beings: the Glanvilles and Sir Charleses and Sir Georges of Mrs. Charlotte Lenox are little more than shrill-voiced and wire-jointed 'High-life puppets.[4]

In No. 15 the Censor gives his opinion in the "Cause of B——— T———, against whom there was an Information on the Statute of Dulness." In the notes the editor identifies B———T———as

4. Austin Dobson, Eighteenth Century Vignettes (1923), 56-57

Betty Thoughtless written by Mrs. Haywood.[5] The book was published in October, 1751, and was reviewed in the Monthly Review, "as nothing else than 'insipid'". "Moreover, there is in this book a biting attack on Fielding as a playwright, calling his Little Theatre, 'F——g's Scandal shop' and insinuating that he had won unmerited favor in later life.[6] The opinion that the Censor gave in the cause of this novel was "That this Court hath no Jurisdiction over any of the Subjects of Grubstreet, unless in Cases of Blasphemy, Sedition, Scurrility and Indecency." Evidently he did not consider that this novel came under any of these heads, for he had no mo e to say about it but devoted the remainder of his court proceedings to Grub-street and dulness. The Court did not meet many times; prints and print-sellers were tried in No. 11 for their connection with the trial of Molly Blandy for the murder of her father; In Nos. 9 and 10, Mr. Mosop was tried and acquitted of trying to usurp the role of Macbeth which Garrick had made famous; and in the last number[7] of the Covent-Garden Journal, Fielding indictes his enemy "John Hill, Doc. Soc. Burg. &c. alias Hill the Apothecary, alias Jack the Herb-gatherer, alias Player-Jack, alias................Jack the Trumpeter, alias Jack the Spectre of Great Brtain, &c. &c. &c......................."

At the conclusion of this indictment Fielding says "the Prisoner

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5. Austin Dobson must have missed this allusion because he says that "as far as we are aware, Fielding, who mentions Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, never once speaks of Mrs. Haywood, although, oddly enough, one of her earlier dramatic efforts had been (with the aid of Mr. Hatchett) to turn Fielding's 'Tragedy of Tragedies' into an opera".....Eighteenth Century Vignettes, III, 100
6. The Covent-Garden Journal, ed. Gerard Edward Jensen (1935), II, 190; note for I, 229.7
7. C.G.J., No. 72

pleaded to the Jurisdiction of the Court, that he was below its Notice, and his Plea was allowed." Hill[8] was the other party to the Paper-War which was conducted in the first five issues of the Journal.

In No. 23 Fielding traced the more recent years of the literary government, beginning with an aristocracy and ending with anarchy in his own time. "In the Reign of James I. the Literary Government was an Aristocarcy........it consisted only of four, namely, Master William Shakespear, Master Benjamin Johnson, Master John Fletcher and Master Francis Beaumont......The Wits in the Reign of Charles the Second, after many Struggles among themselves for superiority, at last agreed to elect John Dryden to be their King............. This King John had a very long Reign....and was succeeded by King Alexander, Surnamed Pope............After the Demise of King Alexander, the Literary State relapsed again into a Democracy or rather indeed into downright Anarchy." Referring to King Alexander, Fielding says "He is said to have been extremely jealous of the Affections of his Subjects, and to have employed various Spies, by whom if he was informed of the least Suggestion against his Title, he never failed of branding the accused Person with the Word DUNCE..1........and

8. "Conspicuous among all the leaders of the Grub-Street Army was John Hill, M.D., who styled himself at this time, Acad. Reg. Scient. Burd. etc. Soc., and after his receiving the Order of Vasa from the King of Sweden, Sir John Hill, etc. He was born at Peterborough in 1716, and was a clergyman's son(whence possibly his Saturday's sermons in his Inspector). He began his career (1716-1775) as an apothecary and studied botany as a side issue. Not satisfied with his trade, he tried acting and a grievous failure of it. In 1738 he sent Rich a copy of one of his attempts at play writing, Orpheus, and when this was refused, violently assailed him in print. From this time on, to his old age, he produced with great frequency a strange variety of books, pamphlets, and essays, most of which were mere trash, although his botanical studies were considered quite valuable in his day." It is in the Inspector that he records his quarrels with Fielding and others. C.G.J.,ed. Jensen, Introduction, 35

he did indeed put a total Restraint on the Liberty of the Press: For no Person durst read any Thing which was writ without his Licence and Approbation; and this Licence he granted only to four during his Reign, namely, to the celebrated Dr. Swift, to the ingenious Dr. Young, to Dr. Arbuthnot, and to one Mr. Gay, four of his principal Courtiers and Favourites."[9]

In No. 10 Fielding discusses the "present" taste in books and reading. He begins this issue with a quotation from Horace which he modernizes as follows:

> In former Times this tasteless, silly Town
> Too fondly prais'd Tom D'Urfey and Tom Brown.

Fielding expresses in this issue a thought similar to Johnson's when he says that there should be some aim in books beyond merely the desire to please. "Pleasantry (as the ingenious Author of Clarissa says of a Story) should be made only the Vehicle of Instruction." He names as the noteworthy masters of wit and satire the great "Triumvirate, Lucian, Cervantes, and Swift;" he admires these men because they have turned their satire against "those Follies and Vices which chiefly prevailed in their several Countries." Later

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9. Later (No. 59), in discussing the quarrels that literary men have had with their public, he says that Dryden for the most part kept silence, whereas "of all the chief Favourites and Prime Ministers of the Muses, the late ingenious Mr. Pope was most free from this scornful Silence. He employed a whole work for the purpose of recording such Writers as no one without his pains, except he had lived at the same Time and in the same Street, would ever have heard of." In No. 60 Fielding deals with his own enemies but without mentioning definite names.

in this issue he says "but surely it is astonishing, that such Scriblers as Tom Brown, Tom D'Urfey, and the Wits of our Age should find Readers, whilst the Writing of so excellent, so entertaining, and so voluminous an Author as Plutarch remain in the World, and, as I apprehend, are very little known." In Nos. 18 and 19 he again discusses humour; this time he compares it to two liquors--Perry and Champagne. Perry is "certain to depress, and render those who swallow any Quantity more heavy and dull. If, after a large Draught, hef you find yourself inclined to Irreligion and Blasphemy, never touch a Drop more, for this is a sure Sign of the very worst of all Perry.... The last odious Quality of this Kind of Perry is that it never fails to propagate gross Abuse and Scandal; so far indeed as to inspire Men to call Names, and to deal in all the Language of Billingsgate.. .....Now Champagne, on the contrary, is known to inspire Men not only with the most sparkling Wit, but with the highest good Humour; and is known in France as 'A FRIEND TO MANKIND.'

In another number[10] of the Journal Fielding looks ahead and imagines what a future historian might say about his contemporary England; after his imaginary historian has described the Hell-Fire Club and the abuses of the pamphleteers, Fielding has his historian say that

> The chief Argument which these Critics rest upon is this, that it is impossible to suppose a Nation arrived at such an enormous Degree of Cor-

10. Covent-Garden Journal, No. 12

> ruption and Prostitution, to have existed even a few Years upon the Face of the Earth. And this, I confess, would have some Weight, was it not overthrown by that Account of the thorough Reformation, which, according to the best Chronologists, happened in the Year 1753, brought about by one General DRAWCANSIR, who at the Head of a vast Army, set up his Standard in the Common Gardens, and with a certain Weapon called a Ridicule, or Ridicle, or as one conjectures a Wry-Sickle, brought the People by main Force to better Manners.

In No. 28 there is an "Elegy on the late prince of Wales" which Fielding says "should have been published the Middle of last Month, had it not been unfortunately mislaid. This we hope will be a sufficient Apology to the ingenious Author; our Readers, we doubt not, will thank us for giving it them at any time." The "ingenious Author" may be either William Mason or Christopher Smart, although there is no proof that is was written by either.[11]

A few numbers later Fielding devotes an issue[12] to a satire on pedantry and Shakespearean emendations. The play which he takes as an example is Hamlet, the lines of which he twists to suit his purpose. As a further example he takes part of Hamlet's soliloquy and improves it thus:

> Or to take Arms against a Sea of Troubles,
> And by opposing end them.

"The next Line is undoubtedly corrupt—to take Arms against a Sea, can give no man, I think, an Idea; whereas by a slight Alteration and Transposition all will be set right, and the undoubted Meaning

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11. The poem is signed Cantabrigiensis and both Mason and Smart went to Cambridge; Smart was a friend of Fielding and Mason was a friend of Gray whose poem is here imitated.
12. Covent-Garden Journal, No. 31

of Shakespeare restored."

> Or tack against an Arm 'oth' Sea of Troubles,
> And by composing end them.

He concludes his essay with this emendation.

> ....This the native Hue of Resolution,
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale Cast of Thought.

Read,

> ....Thus the native Blue of Resolution,
> Is pickled o'er in a stale Cask of Salt.

"This restores a most elegant Sentiment; I shall leave the Relish of it therefore with the Reader, and conclude by wishing that its Taste may never be obliterated by any future Alteration of this glorious Poet."

In an attempt to arouse interest in his advertised proposed translation of the works of Lucian (the translation to be made with the aid of the Rev. Mr. William Young), he devotes an entire number to the criticism of Lucian, the "father of true humour". He also couples Swift's name with Lucian's by saying "I can find no better way of giving the English Reader an Idea of the Greek Author, than by telling him, that to translate Lucian well into English, is to give us another Swift in our own Language."[15]

No. 62 of the Journal is given over to letters and answers. The first letter is headed from Bedlam, and is signed "Tragicomicus"; this letter discusses William Mason's tragedy Elfrida, written on the model

15. Covent-Garden Journal, No. 52

of Greek tragedy, and prefaced by five letters in which the author explains his designs.[14]

The next to the last issue of the Journal is devoted to the "war" between Rich of the Covent-Garden and Garrick of the Drury-Lane. Fielding describes as follows the town which plays an important part in the war:

> The Town (which perhaps all my Readers do not know) is a fair, large, and opulent City, situated between the two contending Parties, and extremely commodious to them both. Upon this Town they have both for Time immemorial laid what Taxes they please, and have by many Treaties, agreed to share it between them; but these Treaties, like those between other Potentates, have bound no longer than either Party hath thought himself strong enough to seize the whole; which both have often attempted, but have hitherto miscarried in their Attempt.[15]

He concludes by saying that "it is however believed by the most discerning, that instead of coming to a general Action, they will content themselves with levying Contributions on the Town as usual, in which he who succeeds the least, will most probably make a very comfortable Campaign."

Despite the fact that Fielding's contemporaries did not receive his novel *Amelia* with much praise, subsequent generations have afforded it the recognition that it deserved. However sure Fielding might have been that his own novel was good, he was not so accurate in judging

14. *C. G. J.*, ed. Jensen, II, 257-58
15. *Ibid.*, No. 71

the novels of Charlotte Lennox and Mrs. Haywood. Of the two writers Charlotte Lennox seems to have been most highly commended by the writers and critics of her day. Johnson as well as Fielding looked upon her work with favour. "Johnson, in admiration for her blameless life, thought extravagantly of her talents."[16] The modern critic from whom this quotation is taken also approves of her because he says that "her brightly written novel entitled The Female Quixote or the Adventures of Arabella, which appeared without her name, entitles her to rank as a woman of genius." Another modern critic says that

> The vogue of the French romances, like that of the heroic plays, died hard, and the bibliographies record many of their bastard offspring, who were born even after the true novel had appeared. In 1752 it was still possible for a burlesque of them to be popular. The Female Quixote, or the Adventures of Arabella, by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, is much less spirited than Fielding's Tom Thumb the Great, and, like the works that it travesties, is over-long. It belongs, like various enterprises of Smollett and of Graves, to the imitative Quixote-literature which so easily turn dreary. Arabella, though we hear that she is lovely and majestic, is altogether too crazy and undignified for a 'female Quixote': a being indeed, who can never be depicted until a female Cervantes has arisen. But her 'humour is very pleasantly kept up, and her arguments, and instances, and all-like evasions are inexhaustible. Mrs. Lennox herself had the Scuderys and their fellow-romancers at her fingers' ends, and has caught, for her Arabella, the mawkish long-winded manner of the best models. Arabella's most telling point, in answer to critics, is that the 'famous Scudery' has added far more than the ancient authorities to our historical knowledge.[17]

16. DNB, XXXIII, 50-51; W. A. J. Archbold
17. Oliver Elton, Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780(1928), 251-252

Mrs. Haywood, however, is treated more kindly by the modern critics than she was by Fielding. One critic says that "she owed her evil reputation to the freedom with which she followed the example of Mrs. Manley in introducing into her romances scandals about the leaders of contemporary society, whose names she very thinly veiled. ....Her earliest novels dealt conventionally, if at times somewhat licentiously, with the trials and temptations of virtuous ladies." The same critic continues by saying that "she wrote clearly and brightly, and her books sold rapidly."[18] She is another author whose fate it was to be impaled by Pope's satire in the Dunciad for the inspection of all future generations.

The next writer whom Fielding discusses and who has not been treated elsewhere in this paper is William Mason, whose tragedy Elfrida is mentioned in the Covent-Garden Journal. Mason became intimate with Gray, who says that Mason "reads little or nothing, writes abundance and that with a design to make a fortune by it."[19] In 1774 Mason published Gray's Life and Letters. Elfrida was brought out at Covent Garden on November 21, 1772 by Colman and again in 1779. The play, however, must have been published in 1752 or before because Fielding discusses it in his Journal. "Mason was a man of considerable abilities and cultivated taste who naturally mistook himself for a poet. He accepted the critical canons of his day, taking Gray and Hurd for his authorities and his serious attempts at poetry are

18. DNB, XXV, 313-315; Sidney Lee
19. DNB, XXXVI, 458-460; Leslie Stephen

written vapid perfections, to which his attempt to assimilate Gray's style gives an air of affectation."[19]

Fielding himself is, of course, well received by almost all of the modern critics. One in speaking of his style of writing says that "the English of Fielding is not too precise or carefully balanced; it is free from the Latinism and rhetoric of the period. Much as he quotes the classics, he does not try to be Sallustian or Ciceronian."[20] Another critic in speaking of his library tries to defend his claim to scholarship.

> For if Fielding was anything at all, he was a genuine scholar. He has been educated at Eton; and he is declared by his first biographer, Arthur Murphy, to have left that place 'uncommonly versed in the Greek authors, and an early master of the Latin Classics.'........It is perfectly conceivable tha the author of 'Joseph Andrews' may not have been unwilling to emphasize the fact that his literary equipment was something widely different from the stock-in-trade of those easy-moralled gentlemen of the pen, his contemporaries, who borrowed their artless Latinity from the mottoes to the 'Spectaor,' or subsisted fraudulently upon 'Proposals' for fresh translations from the Greek, out of the French of Madame Dacier................If Fielding had few novels and romances, he was fairly equipped with poets; and, as became the author of 'Pasquin' and 'Tom Thumb' he was rich in playwrights. In biography, science, philosophy, theology, he had many standard works, the dates of which frequently suggest that they must have been bought as they were first issued. But his largest and most important sections are in law and classical literature...............But when it is found that in his youth Fielding had been a fervent student

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19. DNB, XXXVI, 438-440; Leslie Stephen
20. Oliver Elton, Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780, 251-252

of the classics; that he remained through-
out life a voracious reader; and that his
works everywhere afford confirmation of both
these things, it is perhaps not unreasonable
to conclude that he made good use of the large
collection of Greek and Latin authors which
he left behind at his death, and that he was,
in reality, the scholar he has been affirmed
to be. In any case, the evidence for his
learning is a hundred times better than most
of that which for years past has been in-
dustriously brought forward in regard to some of
the less worshipful incidents of his career."[21]

21. Austin Dobson, Eighteenth Century Vignettes, 165-178

Oliver Goldsmith

Of the three periodical writers, Johnson, Fielding and Goldsmith, Goldsmith is perhaps the most nearly like his predecessors, Addison and Steele. His temperament is more like Steele's, for the simple reason perhaps that they were both Irish. His blitheness of spirit was combined with the ability to produce easy simple prose which was Addison's contribution to the partnership of Addison and Steele. He also had Addison's knack of consistently portraying the characters introduced into his periodicals--the Man in Black, Beau Tibbs and Mrs. Tibbs.

In the short-lived periodical, The Bee, his criticism is almost entirely devoted to the drama. He mentions two adaptions by Fielding from the French, The Miser and the Mock Doctor;[1] however, he seems more interested in the actors than in the qualities of the play. In the last issue of The Bee[2] he gives a rather extended criticism of the play High Life Below Stairs which was written by the Rev. James Townley of Merchant Taylor's School, and which was produced October 31, 1759, three days before the appearance of this issue of The Bee. In this he shows how far he has departed from the precepts laid down by Johnson a few years before. Speaking of the play he says,

> ....I found it formed on too narrow a plan to afford a pleasing variety. The sameness of the

1. The Bee, No. 1
2. Ibid., No. 5

> humour in every scene could not at last fail of being disagreeable. The poor affecting the manners of the rich might be carried on through one character, or two at the most, with great propriety; but to have almost every personage on the scene almost of the same character, and reflecting the follies of each other, was unartful in the poet to the last degree....Thus, as there is a sameness of character, there is a barrenness of incident, which, by a very small share of address, the poet might have easily avoided.
>
> From a conformity to critic rules, which, perhaps, on the whole, have done more harm than good, our author has sacrificed all the vivacity of the dialogue to <u>nature</u>: and though he makes his characters talk like servants, they are seldom absurd enough, or lively enough to make us merry. Though he is always <u>natural</u>,[3] he happens seldom to be humorous.

Goldsmith points out the fact that to be humorous a character must be something more than natural with the natural moral goodness that Johnson demanded; nature must be heightened to produce the desired effect in character, whether that effect be goodness, humour or sorrow. That is probably one reason why Johnson is so seldom read today; he could seldom leave his moral seriousness long enough to see the absurdities of human beings.

In No. 2 of <u>The Bee</u> Goldsmith discusses in general the theatre of his time. He devotes a considerable portion of the issue to contemporary actors. Mademoiselle Clairon, a French actress, seems to him "the most perfect female figure I have ever seen upon any stage." Later in the discussion he includes a warning to the English actresses.

3. Even though more than forty years had elapsed since the height of Addison and Steele's career, the same terms of criticism were still being ~~used--words such as nature~~ and natural, etc.

"I would particularly recommend it to them never to take notice of the audience upon any occasion," because when an actress in the middle of a scene turns to bow to the audience for their applause, she "no longer continues Belvidera, but at once drops into Mrs. Cibber."

The best known piece from The Bee is 'A Reverie' from No. 5. In this he comments upon the fact that "Scarce a day passes in which we do not hear compliment paid to Dryden, Pope, and other writers of the last age, while not a month comes forward that is not loaded with invective against the writers of this. Strange, that our critics should be fond of giving their favours to those who are insensible of the obligation, and their dislike to those who, of all mankind are most apt to retaliate the injury." A little later he says that though every writer who now draws the quill seems to aim at profit, as well as applause, many among them are probably laying in stores for immortality, and are provided with a sufficient stock of reputation to last the whole journey."Then to fill out his paper Goldsmith lets his imagination go on a journey, a journey "too wild for allegory, and too regular for a dream." He fancies himself in an inn-yard "in which there were an inifinite number of waggons and stage-coaches........... each vehicle had its inscription showing the place of its destination." One inscription read 'The Pleasure Stage Coach'; another read 'The Vanity Whim';and the last one that Goldsmith saw read 'The Fame Machine.' When he saw that one, he went up to it and began to talk to the coach-

man. He learned from him that he had just returned from "the Temple of Fame, to which he had been carrying Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber; that they made but indifferent company by the way; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo: 'However,' says he, 'I got them all safe home, with no other damage than a black eye, which Colley gave Mr. Pope.'" Goldsmith tries to get the coachman to let him ride with him, but when he produces a copy of The Bee as proof of his merit, the coachman will not let him enter because he is expecting better passangers. "'But,' he says, 'as you seem a harmless creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride awhile for charity.'"

The first person who presented himself as a passenger was John Hill, who was "hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets.......The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word 'Inspector,' which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers." The coachman, however, refused him entrance, and the "carrier of the Inspectors was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind." This it seems did not discourage Hill, and a few minutes later he came back and tried to force his way into the coach by distracting the attention of the coachman with a nosegay, but Goldsmith came to the aid of the coachman and they sent "our literary Proteus, though worsted,

unconquered still, clear off, dancing a rigadoon, and smelling to his own nosegay." The next person to apply for admittance was an actor and dramatist, who has been indentified as Arthur Murphy. He presented for admittance a tragedy but the coachman refused it by telling the author to "'follow nature......and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity.'"

The next person who came "was a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable figures I had seen; but as he approached, his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I preceived that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined." He presented a dictionary for admittance, and was, of course, Samuel Johnson. The coachman refused to admit him on the strength of his dictionary, but he asked Johnson to let him see "that little book which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets." Johnson replied that it was a mere trifle called the Rambler. "'The Rambler!' says the coachman, 'I beg, Sir, you'll take your place; I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard to prefer it to the Spectator, though others have observed, that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become minute.'" The next

to come presented for admittance some essays which he called "rhapsodies against the religion of my country," but he was refused. He then presented a volume of his history, and the coachman then admitted him. This one has been identified as David Hume, whose History of the House of Tudor appeared in 1758. The next person to come was being urged on by a crowd, because his inclinations seemed more inclined to the Stage-coach of Riches. He presented a volume of history, but the coachman refused to admit him as an historian; the author then presented a romance which he said was "a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention." The coachman said that he was mistaken, because "'a well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais; and if you think fit, you may enter.'" The writer of the romance was Tobias Smollett, and he entered the Fame Machine. That made up the company for that trip and since Goldsmith could not be admitted to the coach, he "mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way."

A modern critic, in writing of High Life Below Stairs, disagrees with the opinion of Goldsmith, for he is amused by the servants' affecting of the manners of the upper classes.

> This capital two-act farce was first performed at Drury Lane in 1759. It has held the boards until our time, and its plot was adapted to the conditions of twentieth century society in a piece called The Night of the Party, which was

> played in London and New York in 1902. The strongest situation is where the servants, feasting and making merry in Lovel's house, are surprised by their master, who pretends to have gone for a trip into the country. He enters, armed with pistols, feigning to be drunk, and calls forth the ringleaders from the pantry, where they have taken refuge. He discharges the offenders and appoints honest servants in their places.[4]

The five persons whom Goldsmith discusses in the Bee No. 5 are still known today: John Hill, as has been indicated before, is remembered not for his own excellence, for he seems to have had none, but because of his quarrels with other famous writers of his day; Arthur Murphy is remembered for much the same reason as Hill, but he seems to have had a much more pleasing personality, although one modern critic calls him an "ill-tempered author-of-all-work;"[5] Johnson, Hume and Smollett are, of course, all of them eminent in their own right.

John Hill has been discussed before, and therefore, will not be treated again. Arthur Murphy was an actor and an author of comedies, tragedies and later of biographies. "Murphy invariably took his plots from previous writers. He showed, however, facility and skill in adapting them to English tastes."[6] Another critic says that "many of his comedies are light, animated two-act pieces, easy to read and to forget."[7] Murphy also wrote the biographies of Fielding and Garrick in which he displayed a fine disregard for facts and chronological

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4. British Drama, ed. Alfred Bates (1903), XVI, 85
5. Oliver Elton, Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780, 277
6. DNB, XXXIX, 334-337; Joseph Knight
7. Elton, op. cit., 277

sequence. He also published Gray's Inn Journal, which was modeled aftr its predecessors, and which contained information concerning the drama and the stage.

Of Johnson, a modern critic says that his personality "counts for more than his literary work. His influence proceeds from the bulk, and the weight of his character, the powerful base upon which are built up his opinions and ideas.................Johnson.........represents the intellectualised, superior type of the middle-class citizens who are then claiming and are already conquering the moral control of society."[8] Speaking of the Rambler, the same critic says that "reflections of a moralising nature are here more in their plcae, and this part of Johnson's work is of a solid worth; it has better stood the test of time. ....His thought is so sound, and appears so natural, that one is tempted into thinking it commonplace; and herein lies its artistic weakness. These robust analyses and arguments manage in places to extract from the gangue of common truths precious stones which would sparkle more brilliantly if they were cut with greater skill; a vein of humour, of keen personal perception, runs through these exercises of a mind which one might regard as subjected to the automatism of a reasoning habit now become settled. But the style confirms the appearance of a wisdom too regular, too sure of itself, too equal throughout, not to be slightly passive: it is ample, imposing, oratorical, cast in a uniform mould; its very firmness, its infallibility, rouse

8. Legouis and Cazamian, 827-828

in the reader a longing for fancy and paradox."[9]

David Hume "may be regarded as the acutest thinker in Great Britain of the eighteenth century, and the most qualified interpreter of its intellectual tendencies."[10] Another critic says that "Hume possesses the natural gift of clearness. His most subtle analyses are astonishingly lucid. The three years during which he was in intimate contact with the French tongue have left their mark upon him. His language is sober, terse, classical, and as supple as it is precise; his syntax has freedom and ease. Without sacrificing anything to art, he is a writer."[11] The History of the House of Tudor that Goldsmith mentions is one volume of a series which was collected as The History of England (1762 and 1770). The first volume of the series was not very enthusiastically received, but the other two were received well enough for the colledted edition to be published.

Tobias Smollett had almost as varied a career as some of the heroes in his picaresque novels. In 1744 he settled in London as a physician. At that time "he took kindly to tavern life and to coffee-house society, among which he shown as a raconteur."[12] "Taine would appear to sympathise with Mr. Leslie Stephen in a much lower estimate of Smollett as the interpreter of the extravagant humours of 'ponderous well-fed masses of animated beefsteak'. Of the five great eighteenth century novelists, Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne,

9. Op. cit., 881
10. DNB, XXVIII, 215-226; Leslie Stephen
11. Legouis and Cazamian, 927
12. DNB, LIII, 174-184; Thomas Seccombe

Smollett is now valued the least, yet in the influence he has exercised upon successors he is approached by Sterne alone of his contemporaries. The religious point of view never occurred to him..... ...He carried on the robust tradition of Swift and Defoe", and he "is singularly free from archaisms and from conceits of ev ry kind."[13] Another critic says that "Smollett's novels have about them more of the quarry and less of the statue. He is richer in types than Fielding; and it needs only a mention of his naval scenes and characters to raise memories of a whole literature...........The picaresque novel in general, which burst into activity soon after the publication of Roderick Random, was under heavy obligations to Smollett, and nowhere more so than in its first modern example, Pickwick."[14]

In The Citizen of the World,[15] Goldsmith used the ideas of having a foreigner, preferably one from a so-called uncivilized nation, write letters to a friend in his native land telling the peculiarities of the people and customs in the country he was visiting. The device had become popular in France[16] and had been used occasionally by other English writers. Goldsmith seems to have obtained the name and nationality of his foreign visitor from "A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi, at Peking," written by

13. DNB, Op. cit., 174-184
14. Cambridge History of English Literature, X, 49; Harold Child
15. The title The Citizen of the World was perhaps suggested by Bacon's essay No. XIII, in which he says that "if a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shewes he is a citizen of the World."; this is quoted from a note for page 52 in the Everyman Edition of The Citizen of the World.
16. Montesquieu, Lettres Persanes, 1721

Horace Walpole; this letter was briefly noticed in the May issue of the *Monthly Review*, where Goldsmith was then acting as scribbler-general to Griffiths. This pretense of a foreign writer would offer Goldsmith an excellent opportunity to criticize a variety of things without running the risk of acquiring the decidedly sermonizing tone that prevades many of Johnson's efforts.

One of the first persons in the literary field that he singles out for mention is the critic.

> A critic is a being possessed of all the vanity, but not the genius, of a scholar, incapable, from his native weakness, of lifting himself from the ground, he applies to contiguous merit for support, makes the sportive sallies of another's imagination his serious employment, pretends to take our feelings under his care, teaches where to condemn, where to lay emphasis of praise, and may with as much justice be called a man of taste, as the Chinese who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails.[17]

Later in *The Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith, in speaking of the works of others, seems to forget that he had spoken none too flatteringly of the critic. In Letter XL, Lien Chi Altangi seemingly comes to the defence of the English poets; in reality, Goldsmith is saying that the prose writers deserve the name poet more than do the poets.[18] Accordingly, Lien Chi, in his criticism, does not limit his meaning of the word "poet" to those who merely write in verse. He says that "it is

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17. *The Citizen of the World*, Letter XX
18. A note in the Everyman Edition of *The Citizen of the World* says that "Gray, Beattie, and Churchill were the bards of 1760, and Goldsmith loved none of them." The note was for page 111

now thought even by the English themselves that the race of their poets is extinct, every day produces some pathetic exclamation upon the decadence of taste and genius,"but to him "glowing sentiment, striking imagery, concise expression, natural description, and modulated periods are full sufficient entirely to fill up my idea of this art," because poetry does not need to be that "which is couched in a certain number of syllables in every line, where a vapid thought is drawn out into a number of verses of equal length, and perhaps pointed with rhymes at the end." If he accepts the English idea of poetry, he must agree that "many of the writers of their modern odes, sonnets, tragedies, or rebusses.......deserve not the name, though they have done nothing but clink rhymes and measure syllables for years together;" but if they will think of poetry as he does then they will find that "their Johnsons and Smolletts are truly poets; though for aught [he knows] they never made a single verse in their whole lives."

A few numbers later he discusses two of the fashionable "rhetorical figures......which have not travelled to China." These two figures are a "revival of what was once fashionable here before." The figures to which he refers are called "Bawdy and Pertness; none are more fashionable; none so sure of admirers; they are of such a nature, that the merest blockhead, by a proper use of them, shall have the reputation of a wit; they lie level to the meanest capacities, and address those passions which all have or would be ashamed to disown." He states that it was by this manner that Tom D'Urfey gained his reputation and became the favourite of a king. "The works of this original genius,

though they never travelled abroad in China, and scarce have reached posterity at home, were once found upon every fashionable toilet, and made the subject of polite, I mean very polite conversation."[19] He finished this letter by saying that "though the successor of D'Urfey does not excell him in wit, the world must confess he outdoes him in obscenity."

In two of the letters Goldsmith published verses by himself. The first verses were supposedly written by a poet "in shabby finery" whom Lien Chi had seen at the "club of authors". The other members of the club quoted the laws of the club to prevent the poet from reading his poems. The law quoted was "that whatsoever poet, speechmaker, critic, or historian, should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down sixpence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading; the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompence for their trouble." The poet, however, saw two strangers in the room and "his love of fame out-weighed his prudence" and he paid the fine and read his verses. The second set of verses comes in a letter in which the Chinese is discussing the rivalry that exists between the various actors; he finds it very annoying because the "war" is not limited to the theatre, but is

19. The Citizen of the World, Letter LIII; the note in the Everyman Edition says that this "letter is aimed at the earlier volumes of Tristram Shandy. Goldsmith, the critic of critics (Letter XX), 'has suddenly become his own dreadful example,' as the late Andrew Lang pointed out in a delightful paper 'On an Inconsistency of Dr. Goldsmith's' (Illustrated London News, 26 November 1892)."
20. The Citizen of the World, Letter XXX

aided by the poets who write panegyrics for both sides. The verses given are cited as an example of this objectionable type of panegyric, and are entitled 'On Seeing Mrs.***Perform in the Character of***'.[21]

In Letter XIII, Lien Chi Altangi is writing of his visit to "Westminster-abbey." While he was wandering about by himself "a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple." Later as the two walked along they came to a particular part of the Abbey, "'there', says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, 'that is the poets' corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespear, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton,'". The Chinses remarked that he had never heard of Drayton, but that he had been told of one Pope, and he wondered if he had a monument here. The man in black remarked that Pope had not been dead long enough for people to stop hating him. The Chinese exclaimed "strange...... ....[that] any be found to hate a man, whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow creatures !" To this the man in black replied, "Yes........they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet." From this it may be assumed that Goldsmith had a fondness for Pope, although the description that he gives of what he calls an-

21. The Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXV

swerers fits Pope almost too well.[22] Goldsmith also seems to be trying to explain Pope's unfavourable reputation by saying that it was due to the malice of less famous of his writing contemporaries.

All of the writers mentioned in The Citizen of the World have been treated before from the viewpoint of modern critics, so they will not be discussed in that respect again. Goldsmith himself has been very kindly treated by the modern critics. One says of him that he "is essentially a man of his day; the literary transition the change in the mood of minds, are taking place in him without his being fully aware of them...............As an essayist, he has much of the charm of Steele, with less youthfulness of heart, a riper reflection, and a touch of melancholy. In thus taking up once again the form created by the authors of the Spectator, he imparts to it a vitality that is new, and yet in many respects not unlike what it was before."[23] Another modern critic in speaking of his personality says that

> ....he proceeds to exude this spirit of benevolence and true love, true charity, as it manifests itself in the slums and brothels, the prisons and taverns, amongst the most degraded and disreputable members of human society. It is a noble, a Christ-like achievement; utterly unrespectable (as that word has been mostly misused). No wonder that Johnson should have said of this gentle creature: 'Let not his frailties be remembered. He was a very great man'. So I conclude.......with words by the man who knew Goldsmith most intimately, and loved him most shrewdly.[24]

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22. "These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce, and Scribbler, to praise the dead, and revile the living, to grant a man of confessed abilities some small sha e of merit, to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the re utation of candour, and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure.
23. Legouis and Cazamian, 932

24. The Citizen of t'e World, Everyman Edition; introduction by Richard Church, xii

Conclusion

There seems to have been two rather distinct phases of literary criticism in the eighteenth century. The first half of the century, which is represented by the three periodicals written by Steele and Addison, is still under the influence of the Restoration; this influence is most noticeable at the beginning of the century and becomes of less importance as the middle of the century approaches. In the early 1700's the aristocracy and the wealthiest commoners were still the dominating force in English literature although the middle classes were becoming of increasing importance; this importance increasdd until it became, after the middle of the century, the most important factor in English literature.

As long as these early authors were writing to please a particular type of audience, theywrote what that audience liked best. During its exile the court of Charles II had turned to pursuits that amused its members; in literature the same tendency had prevailed. For the most part the only works which won favour with the exiled court were those which displayed characters, of like morals if not of like class, speaking witty lines which the audience tried to imitate Nothing was taken seriously by this audience; love, marriage, religion and politics, all were subject to jests--jests which were often none too gentle or refined in their import. When the king returned to power, he and his followers brought this philosophy home with them and made it popular with the general populace. Towards the end of the seventeenth century a revolt against this license was beginning to take form.

However, during the first years of the eighteenth century, the reform movement had not completely dissipated the Restoration influence. Steele and Addison said (especially in the Tatler and the Spectator) that they wanted to reform manners by laughing people out of their errors; but in the process of putting the common misdemeanors into a ridiculous light they frequently achieved the effect of merely an amused tolerance. They are too close to the Restoration to have completely lost the belief that the upper classes were superior to any other, despite the fact that they realized that their influence on the lower classes was not beneficial. With Fielding, Johnson and Goldsmith, a different attitude is apparent. Aside from the personal difference between this group and the former, there is the fact that the middle classes had made themselves felt as an influence in the literary world. A further difference is that the time when the writer depended upon a wealthy and aristocratic patron had passed; writers, if they had the necessary talent, could support themselves solely by their own efforts; they no longer had to modify their opinions to fit those of their patrons, as the contemporaries of Addison and Steele had had frequently to modify theirs. Johnson, Fielding and Goldsmith were earnestly trying to reform the abuses that they saw about them.

To Johnson there was very little right in this world. In his estimation, about the best anyone could do with any of the affairs of the world was to make the best of a bad bargain; and even the best was often apt to be none too good. He is the disciple of pessimism; however, in spite of all this, he has an earnestness, a profound

belief in the need for virtue and a passion for definite laws to govern all things, that make one respect him even if one cannot like him.

Fielding also saw the need for virtue and for definite laws as clearly as did Johnson, but to this insight he added what Johnson lacked, a sense of humour and a deep and sincere understanding of and sympathy for the unfortunate and down-trodden. He sometimes expressed himself roughly, but always, despite his brusqueness, he is trying to make the public see the need for a certain reform as clearly as he saw it.

Goldsmith on the other hand more nearly resembled his predecessors Addison and Steele. He employed the use of characters to point the lesson he wished to teach; he used allegories for the same purpose; and he had the appearance of lightness and gaiety that Addison and Steele had. But Goldsmith had something more than the gracefulness of Addison's writing; he was probably as earnest a reformer as his two contemporaries, but he added a touch of sentiment and warmth and spontaneity.

The difference between the literary criticism of the first part of the century and that of the latter part of the century follows much the same lines as the differences in personalities. Addison and Steele were still more or less dependent upon patronage for successful living; in their cases, however, it was more party than personal patronage. Addison was the most important writer for the Whig party; consequently, it was his job not only to furnish party propaganda when necessary, but

to try to obtain the services of all promising young writers for the Whigs. He was, so to speak, a literary political boss. As has been stated before, Addison gathered a group of writers around him and formed a club which met at Button's. It has also been mentioned that Addison seemed to be the type of man who liked to associate with men his intellectual inferior. For this reason, as well, perhaps, as for a political one, Addison did not obtain the services of the best writers of the period. With the exception of Steele none of his associates at Button's is very well remembered. Because Addison wanted to keep the men that he had with the party, he had at times to praise their works not only orally but in writing. He and Steele had, no doubt, a strong personal attachment for most if not all of their associates. Most of these other writers followed to the best of their ability the rules for the "classical style" of writing, which were then so rigorously defended; but all of these writers lacked the spark of genius which makes works live despite rules. Philips is the only one of them who is read with any degree of frequency today; however, he is remembered not so much for the works that Addison and Steele praised as for the merits of the works that they neglected to mention. Of the two men Addison had the more correct literary taste, as can be seen from his appraisal of the old ballads, the works of Shakespeare and Milton and the papers on the drama in general. These he examined in the light of the best of the literary laws which had been derived from a study of the ancients. He, as well as Steele, could very easily put aside his strict literary

principles when he criticized the works of a friend, or when it seemed the expedient thing to do. They seldom went outside of their own club for contemporary authors' works to review; they found it more profitable to themselves and party interests to write about each other. Steele valued Addison's Cato highly; Addison commentated at great length upon Philips's Distressed Mother; and Tickell praised to an excess the Pastorals of Philips.

By the middle of the century the attitude had changed. The authors were free to criticize as they saw fit; they did not have to find merit except where they thought there was merit. As has been said, Johnson found nothing that he unreservedly recommended; in fact he devoted very little time to the criticism of the actual works of contemporary writers; he was content to prescribe the rules that they were to follow. Fielding set up his Court of Censorial Inquiry before which he arrainged the works of contemporary authors including his own Amelia. However, he (like Johnson and Goldsmith) did not devote as much time to a discussion or literary matters as he did to matters of social importance. Goldsmith, as has been mentioned previously, used many of the literary devices that had been used by Addison and Steele, but his literary criticism was much more impersonal and general in tone than theirs.

In general the literary criticism of the three periodical writers of the latter part of the first half of the eighteenth century was

impersonal in tone,[1] and frequently dealt with literary theories rather than with specific writers. However, when they did discuss any one author's works they chose to do so, not because they felt obliged to, but because they had an especial interest in that author or because they felt that the public would be interested in a discussion of his works. They were beginning to approach the modern conception of a critic---the conception that the critic will impartially discuss the merits of the author's works and not his personality. The primary aim of Johnson, Fielding and Goldsmith, however, was not literary criticism, but the rectification of social evils by criticism.

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1. Literary criticism in periodicals in the early part of the nineteenth century (Edinburgh Review, Quarterly, etc.) turned again to the personally or politically biased attitude of Jeffrey, Gifford, etc. This would tend to indicate that fashions in literary criticism moved in cycles the same as any other fashions.