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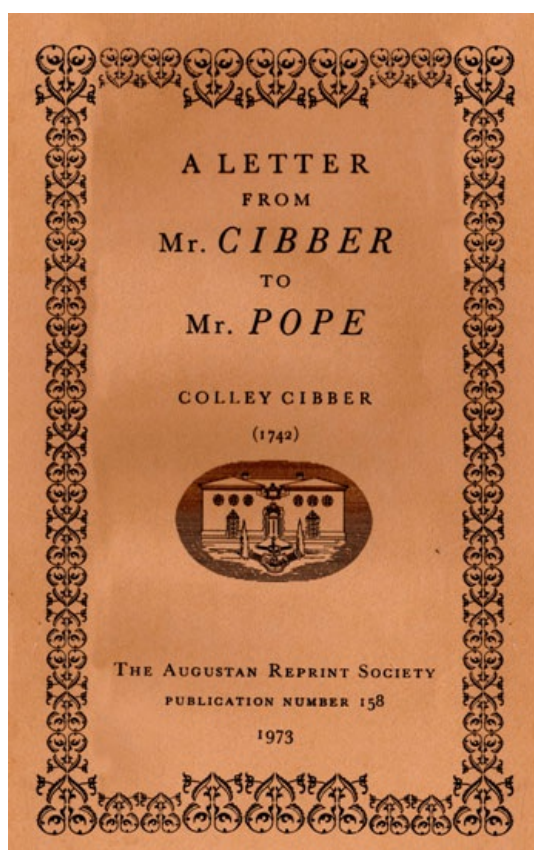
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A LETTER FROM MR. CIBBER TO MR.
POPE ***



To
H. T. Swedenberg, Junior
founder, protector, friend



WHERE could they find another formed so fit,
To poise, with solid sense, a sprightly wit?
Were these both wanting, as they both abound,
Where could so firm integrity be found?

The verse and emblem are from George Wither, *A Collection of Emblems, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1635), illustration xxxv, page 35.

The lines of poetry (123-126) are from "To My Honoured Kinsman John Driden," in John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Sir Walter Scott, rev. and corr. George Saintsbury (Edinburgh: William Patterson, 1885), xi, 78.

THE AUGUSTAN REPRINT SOCIETY

COLLEY CIBBER

A

LETTER

FROM

Mr. *CIBBER*

TO

Mr. *POPE*

(1742)

Introduction by

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INTRODUCTION

[Pg i]

In the twentieth century, Colley Cibber's name has become synonymous with "fool." Pope's *Dunciad*, the culmination of their long quarrel, has done its work well, and Cibber, now too often regarded merely as a pretentious dunce, has been relegated to an undeserved obscurity.

The history of this feud is replete with inconsistencies.^[1] The image Cibber presents of himself as a charming, good-natured, thick-skinned featherbrain is as true as Pope's of himself as a patient, humorous, objective moralist. Each picture is somewhat manipulated by its creator. The reasons behind the manipulation are less matters of outright untruth than of complex personalities disclosing only what they regard as pertinent. Cibber, the actor, always tries to charm his audience; Pope, the satirist, proffers those aspects best suited to his moral purpose.

Although the fact of their differences is evident in Pope's writings after 1730, explanations of the cause, continuation and climax tend to be muddled. The cause generally cited is Cibber's story in the Letter concerning *Three Hours after Marriage* and *The Rehearsal*. This is not only a one-sided version, it is not even strongly substantiated. As Norman Ault pointed out, it was not reported in any of the periodicals at a time when such incidents were seized

upon by journalists hungry for gossip.[2] The only confirmation aside from Cibber is Montagu Bacon's letter to his cousin James Montagu, which gives a slightly less vivacious account:

'I don't know whether you heard, before you went out of town, that *The Rehearsal* was revived ... and Cibber interlarded it with several things in ridicule of the last play, upon which Pope went up to him and told him he was a rascal, and if he were able he would cane him; that his friend Gay was a proper fellow, and if he went on in his sauciness he might expect such a reception from him. The next night Gay came accordingly, and, treating him as Pope had done the night before, Cibber very fairly gave him a fillip on the nose, which made them both roar. The Guards came and parted them, and carried away Gay, and so ended this poetical scuffle.'

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A more likely cause is the second story in the *Letter*, the visit to the bawdy house. If, as Ault goes on to suggest, there is even a shadow of truth in it, Pope's attitude, as well as his reluctance to reveal its cause, is understandable. The question then becomes: why did he continually provoke Cibber, knowing the latter had such a story at hand? This, however, might not be so illogical as it appears. Pope's work in the thirties abounds in sneers at the actor, but none of them is equal in scale to the full attack launched against Theobald. In comparison with the 1735 portraits of Atticus and Sporus, the comments on Cibber are minor barbs that could be ignored by a man whose reputation was secure in its own right. Cibber evidently believed he was in such a position, for he offered no defense before 1740, and took no offensive action before 1742.

The "wicked wasp of Twickenham" is supposed to have meditated long and fiendishly before bursting forth against his enemies, yet the *Dunciad* of 1728 reveals no evidence of long fermentation. The choice of Theobald as king of the Dunces obviously derives from *Shakespeare Restored; or a Specimen of the many errors as well committed as unamended by Mr. Pope, in his late edition of that Poet* (1726). Theobald's remarks on Pope's slipshod editing of Shakespeare are not couched in diplomatic terms, and would be especially galling if Warburton's note is true:

During two whole years while Mr. Pope was preparing his Edition of Shakespear, he publish'd Advertisements, requesting assistance, and promising satisfaction to any who could contribute to its greater perfection. But this Restorer, who was at that time solliciting favours of him by letters, did wholly conceal his design, till after its publication: (which he was since not ashamed to own, in a *Daily Journal*, of Nov. 26, 1728.)

Pedantic, unimaginative and presumptuous, Theobald was the logical choice for a Dunce King in 1728. Dennis, Ducket, Burnet, Gildon *et cie.*, had assailed him for years, and the prompt responses by Scriblerus merely increased their fury. Pope bore as many undeserved blows as Cibber, and he was no model of patience; the intense hostilities waged against him in the twenties were ample cause for an epic answer.

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Pope claimed he attacked only those who had attacked him. It seems strange that, among the inimical host who had indulged in verbal violence, he should have revised his satire against the one man who had not contributed to the paper war, and who had, in his *Apology*, made humble acknowledgment of Pope's gifts: "How terrible a Weapon is Satyr in the hands of a great Genius?" Cibber asks, remarking on Pope's acid portrait of Addison, and adds:

But the Pain which the Acrimony of those Verses gave me is, in some measure, allay'd in finding that this inimitable Writer, as he advances in Years, has since had Candour enough to celebrate the same Person for his visible Merit. Happy Genius! whose Verse, like the Eye of Beauty, can heal the deepest Wounds with the least Glance of Favour.

Even stranger is that with such eminent and vocal enemies as Lord Hervey and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, he should have been concerned with a seventy-year-old semi-retired player who was too ineffectual, it would appear, to be a proper target for his great satire, and whose words in print could never have been a real threat.

The words "in print" are important, especially with reference to Cibber. As far as direct attack in the form of broadsides, pamphlets and the like, Cibber is clearly innocent; however, like many actors, he was an expert improvisator of stage dialogue, and this in itself is a reason to believe that his side of the feud was kept up from the theater platform. A more potent and public method of ridicule would be difficult to devise.

Stage warfare was as prevalent as paper warfare, as Cibber's mockery of *Three Hours after Marriage* suggests, and as the prologues and epilogues amply demonstrate. *The Non-Juror* (1719) with its anti-Catholic remarks and its Jesuit villain played by Cibber himself, has several barbs directed at Pope.

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If Pope's wounds had been festering since 1715, he had a perfect opportunity to avenge them in the *Dunciad Variorum* of 1729. When Gay's *Polly* was suppressed that year, Cibber was accused of being responsible (though it was never proved), since he had first refused *The Beggar's Opera*, and then failed miserably to imitate its success with his own *Love in a Riddle*. He was at this time more widely known than Theobald, and had been a favorite target for anti-Hanoverians since *The Non-Juror*. It is very odd that Pope should have

ignored this chance, particularly when so many of his dunces are playwrights, only to take it up fourteen years later under much less favorable circumstances—when he himself was mortally ill and Cibber out of the public eye—unless something else had provoked him.

One view is that the laureateship triggered the alteration, but while it is true that Cibber was one of the worst versifiers ever to wear the bays, that honor had been conferred in 1730, thirteen years before the last *Dunciad*. The flood of burlesque Odes that followed each of Cibber's Birth-Day and New-Year efforts had ebbed by the mid-thirties, and in 1743 the laureate was a stale joke.

The *Apology's* praise of Pope did not benefit Cibber; years before the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* had stated:

A Fool quite angry is quite innocent;
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they repent (108-109).

and the minor slap on the wrist was misquoted by Pope, as the *Letter* points out. The exchange is interesting, for it is an indication that the man behind the actor's mask might have been less thick-skinned than he liked to seem, that he was genuinely hurt by Pope's shafts.

Cibber did not mind being portrayed as a fool. That, after all was the character he had created as Sir Novelty Fashion in *Love's Last Shift* (1696), and which he continued to play in public throughout his life. But a charge of immorality did bother him, for he was anxious to be considered a moral man. Apparently he was—his enemies charged him with gambling, highhandedness and plagiarism, but his life seems to have been surprisingly free of the kind of scandal that plagued most theatrical personalities. His plays embody the materialistic middle-class values which he champions in his later prose writings, and of all Pope's arrows, "And has not Colley still his lord and whore?"^[10] seems to have struck deepest. It may be significant that the bawdy house story follows close upon Cibber's plaintive remonstrance against this line.

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As long as Cibber was in his own territory, he could answer Pope orally, but when he at last decided to reply in print, he was at a distinct disadvantage. The actor has a notorious disregard for the written word; his own experience on stage tells him that what is being said has less impact than the manner in which it is delivered. Cibber's lack of concern for language had been well publicized. His comment that Anne Oldfield "Out-did her usual Out-doing"^[11] was never allowed to rest, and Fielding rarely missed an opportunity to use Cibber's "paraphonalia" against him; that the most merciless parody of his Odes could scarcely sink to the depths of the originals, did not deter the efforts of the parodists.^[12]

He was not entirely insensible of his weaknesses. The second edition of *The Provoked Husband* was silently changed to "Out-did her usual Excellence," and the spelling of paraphernalia corrected. Dr. Johnson's testimony supports this view of Cibber's seriousness:

His friends gave out that he *intended* his birth-day Odes should be bad: but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit.^[13]

His unwillingness to take Johnson's advice might be more than mere egotism, if the Ode was the same one mentioned elsewhere in the *Life*, "I remember when he brought me one of his Odes to have my opinion of it, I could not bear such nonsense, and would not let him read it to the end; so little respect had I for *that great man!* (laughing)."^[14]

The laureateship marked only one of several changes in Cibber's life. In 1730, the triumvirate of actor-managers and their leading lady, a quartet which had supported Drury Lane through its most prosperous years, was broken by the death of Anne Oldfield; Wilks followed in 1732, and Booth, too ill to perform for two years, in 1733. Cibber's royal appointment meant a sure annual income of £100 (plus a butt of sack worth £26), his children were grown, and he could afford some freedom from the demands of the theater at last. He continued to act, but with lessening frequency, until 1746, when as Cardinal Pandulph in his own *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John*, he played the last role of a career spanning more than half a century.

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By 1740, he was far enough removed from the theater to have a slightly different perspective on language. The *Apology* betrays a concern for his reputation beyond the immediate audience, and the need to leave a written record other than his plays. Cibber had written prefaces and dedications, but from this point on, he was to pursue his nondramatic writing with *The egoist; or, Colley upon Cibber Being His Own Picture retouch'd, to so plain a Likeness, that no One, now, would have the Face to own it, but Himself* (1743); *The lady's lecture, a theatrical dialogue, between Sir Charles Easy and his marriageable daughter. Being an attempt to engage obedience by filial liberty, and to given the maiden conduct of virtue, cheerfulness* (1748); and *The Character and Conduct of Cicero* (1749), which Davies defends:

A player daring to write upon a known subject without a college permission, was a shocking offense; and yet Dr. Middleton, to whom the conduct of Cicero

was addressed, spoke of it with respect; and Mr. Hooke, the writer of the best Roman History in our language, has quoted Cibber's arguments in this [his?] pamphlet against the murderers of Julius Caesar, and speaks of them, not only with honour, but insists upon them as cogent and unanswerable.[15]

Cibber seems to have become more and more aware of the written word as a powerful legacy, and Pope's attacks began to hold a menace they had not had during the years of lighthearted stage warfare. On 20 March 1742, the *New Dunciad* struck him with enough force to cause him to reply with this open *Letter* of 7 July, which attracted a great deal of attention.[16] Four engravings and at least six pamphlets, all focusing on the bawdy house story, were shortly in circulation. Whether or not the story is true, or whether it was even believed, is immaterial. Its importance lies in that it allowed Pope's enemies to have at him in the most devastating way. The *Letter* may well have been as painful as Jonathan Richardson, Jr. claimed when he told Dr. Johnson that

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he attended his father, the painter, on a visit to Twickenham when one of Cibber's pamphlets had just come into Pope's hands. 'These things are my diversion,' said Pope. They sat by him while he read it, and saw his features writhing with anguish. After the visitors had taken their leave, young Richardson said to his father that he 'hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.'[17]

If so, the other attacks must have been shattering, since they lacked even the surface good humor of Cibber's *Letter*. Pope, at any rate, was concerned enough to tell Spence:

The story published by Cibber, as to the main point, is an absolute lie. I do remember that I was invited by Lord Warwick to pass an evening with him. He carried me and Cibber in his coach to a bawdy-house. There was a woman there, but I had nothing to do with her of the kind that Cibber mentions, to the best of my memory—and I had so few things of that kind ever on my hands that I could scarce have forgot it, especially so circumstanced as he pretends.
[18]

An answer to the *Letter* was demanded, and it was not long in coming. In August/September, Pope wrote his friend Hugh Bethel concerning a copy of the *New Dunciad* he had sent him:

That poem has not done me, or my *Quiet*, the least harm; only it provokd Cibber to write a very foolish & impudent Letter, which I have no cause to be sorry for, & perhaps next Winter I shall be thought to be glad of: But I lay in my *Claim to you*, to Testify for me, that if he should chance to die before a New & Improved Edition of the *Dunciad* comes out, I have already, actually written (before, & not after his death) all I shall ever say about him.[19]

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A Cibber-baiting campaign was undertaken by the poet's friends, and the actor responded with *The egoist*, in which he defended himself, as in his *Apology*, by freely admitting his flaws with infuriating complacency. Then a false leaf of the last *Dunciad* came into his hands (though certainly not directly from Pope), and he published a second, very brief, letter which indicated some stress. Pope knew, and at least tacitly approved, of these tactics, for in February of 1743, he wrote Lord Marchmont:

I won't publish the fourth *Dunciad* as 'tis newset till Michaelmas, that we may have time to play Cibber all the while.... He will be stuck, like the man in the almanac, not deep, but all over. He won't know which way to turn himself to. Exhausted at the first stroke, and reduced to passion and calling names, so that he won't be able to write more, and won't be able to bear living without writing.[20]

Copyright difficulties not mentioned by Pope prevented the Michaelmas publication date, but on 29 October 1743, the final *Dunciad* appeared with its new hero, for all the world to see.

Cibber kept his promise to "have the last word." *Another Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope* followed the publication of this *Dunciad*, stating his grievances with somewhat less humor, a number of scatological references, and an accusation against Warburton for instigating the change. Included was a twenty-page aside on the offending Bishop, revealing a startlingly thorough knowledge of his writings. This was the end. Cibber's friends were eager for him to keep up his side of the battle, but he, having had his say, resumed his good-humor and refused to speak out again.

It has been suggested that Pope may have planned the change in hero earlier, and aimed the *New Dunciad* with the express purpose of goading Cibber into just such a reply as the *Letter*. This is, of course, possible, but it cannot be more than speculation; the final *Dunciad* does show evidence of hasty revision. Pope was severely ill when his last variation on the dunce theme appeared, and the seven months of life remaining to him were clearly not enough to permit him to polish it to the level of perfection customary in his work. But, as Warburton once noted, quality and posterity have awarded Pope the final say:

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Quoth Cibber to Pope, Tho' in Verse you foreclose,

I'll have the last Word; for by G—, I'll write prose.
Poor Colly, thy Reas'ning is none of the strongest,
For know, the last Word is the Word that lasts longest.[21]

Cibber's words have not been reprinted since the eighteenth century, and his reputation has become so distorted it is sometimes difficult to find the man who, for so many years, amused and delighted London audiences. Yet, if one looks closely, under the froth and foppery, some of the charm and perception of the man still shines through. And, of more importance to the world of literature, it seems fairly clear that, whatever the original offense, the *Dunciad* as we know it today was a direct result of this *Letter*.

California State College
San Bernardino

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

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[1] Not even the winner of the contest has been beyond dispute. 150 years afterward, Robert W. Lowe, "Supplementary Chapter to Colley Cibber's Apology" in his edition of *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal* (London: J. C. Nimmo, 1889), II, 270, remarks on Cibber's later years: "His [Cibber's] state of mind was probably the more 'cheerful and contented' because of his unquestionable success in his tilt with the formidable author of 'The Dunciad;' a success none the less certain at the time, that the enduring fame of Pope has caused Cibber's triumph over him to be lost sight of now."

[2] Norman Ault, *New Light on Pope* (London: Methuen, 1949), pp. 298-307.

[3] George Paston [Emily Morse Symmonds], *Mr. Pope His Life and Times* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1909), I, 197.

[4] Alexander Pope, *Works*, ed. William Warburton (London: J. and P. Knapton, 1751), V, 86 (Book I, line 108). Griffith 643. This is a note to the variations on lines 108ff: "But chief in BAYS'S monster-breeding breast" and the wording is slightly altered from the earlier note quoted in the Twickenham edition, V, 75, *Dunciad* (A), Book I, line 106n.

[5] J. V. Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope 1711-1744* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), lists 15 pamphlets between 1724 and the publication of the first *Dunciad*, but he does not include the frequent newspaper comments.

[6] Cibber, I, 38-39.

[7] William H. Peterson, "Pope and Cibber's *The Non-Juror*" *MLN*, LXX (May, 1955), 332-335. Three instances are given:

1. Maria, the coquette, quotes *The Rape of the Lock* with great relish. The praise is in the wrong mouth.
2. Maria speaks slightly of her English version of Homer. Pope's last volume had just come out.
3. Dr. Wolf refers to "Eloisa and Abelard" in his second attempt to seduce Lady Woodvil. The argument is twisted out of context.

These elements, combined with the strong anti-Catholic sentiment, would certainly point attention toward Pope, and, in any case, were not calculated to please him.

[8] See R. H. Barker, *Mr. Cibber of Drury Lane* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 151.

[9] Cibber's supposition that Pope wrote the *Clue to the Non-Juror* has subsequently been established as correct. See Ault, pp. 303-313.

[10] *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 97. It should be noted here that Cibber misquotes the line, a failing habitual to him. The anonymous pamphlet, *A Blast upon Bays; or, a New Lick at the Laureat*, which appeared shortly after the *Letter*, points out rather severely the difference in meaning between Cibber's "too" and Pope's "still", maintaining a mistress twenty years after the events, *A Blast* is as heated in defense of Pope as it is in attack against Cibber, but it offers no evidence; aside from Pope's original line, it is the only charge of this kind among contemporary attacks.

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[11] Colley Cibber, *The Provoked Husband* (London, 1728), Preface.

[12] Two examples from the Birth-day Odes will give some idea of the Cibberian quality:

Her Fleets, that now the Seas command,
Were late upon her Forests growing;

Her wholesome Stores, for every Band,
As late within her Fields were sowing. (1741)

Behold! in clouds of fire serene,
The royal hero heads his pow'rs:
Alike to fame, with raptures seen,
His younger hope, the eaglet soars.
Fortune, to grace her fav'rite son,
Stamps on his bleeding form renown. (1743)

[13] James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), I, 402.

[14] Boswell, II, 92-93.

[15] Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, Esq.* (London, 1780), II, 202.

[16] In the Twickenham Edition of *The Dunciad* (London: Methuen, 2nd ed. rev., 1953, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv and (B) 341), James Sutherland refers to line 20 ("Soft on her lap her Laureat son reclines") and holds that Cibber's answer may have been less a protest than a warning. In *The New Dunciad* (1742), however, the footnote to this line expands the satire, quotes from the *Apology* and is a sharper attack than the line itself.

[17] Paston, I, 687.

[18] Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes and Characters of Books and Men*, ed. James M. Osborn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), I, 110 (no. 251).

[19] Alexander Pope, *Correspondence*, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), IV, 415.

[20] Spence, I, 148-149 (no. 331).

[21] Pope, *Works*, V. 89 (Book I, line 109n). This verse appears in the Twickenham edition, V, 276, as a note to *Dunciad* (B) Book I, line 104.

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A

LETTER

FROM

Mr. *CIBBER*

TO

Mr. *POPE*

Price One Shilling.

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A

[Pg 3]

LETTER
FROM
Mr. CIBBER
TO
Mr. POPE

Inquiring into the MOTIVES that might
induce him in his SATYRICAL WORKS,
to be so frequently fond of
Mr. CIBBER'S Name.

Out of thy own Mouth will I judge thee.
Pref. to the *Dunciad*.



LONDON,
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M DCC XLII.
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A
LETTER
TO
Mr. POPE, &c.

SIR,



As you have for several Years past (particularly in your Poetical Works) mentioned my Name, without my desiring it; give me leave, at last, to make my due Compliments to *Yours* in Prose, which I should not choose to do, but that I am really driven to it (as the Puff in the Play-Bills says) *At the Desire of several Persons of Quality.*

If I have lain so long stoically silent, or unmindful of your satyrical Favours, it was not so much for want of a proper Reply, as that I thought they never needed a Publick one: For all People of Sense would know, what Truth or Falshood there was in what you have said of me, without my wisely pointing it out to them. Nor did I choose to follow your Example of being so much a Self-Tormentor, as to be concern'd at whatever Opinion of me any publish'd Invective might infuse into People unknown to me: Even the Malicious, though they may like the Libel, don't always believe it. But since the Publication of your last new *Dunciad* (where you still seem to enjoy your so often repeated Glory of being bright upon my Dulness) my Friends now insist, that it will be thought Dulness indeed, or a plain Confession of my being a Bankrupt in Wit, if I don't immediately answer those Bills of Discredit you have drawn upon me: For, say they, your dealing with him, like a Gentleman, in your *Apology for your own Life*, &c. you see, has had no sensible Effect upon him, as appears by the wrong-headed Reply his Notes upon the new *Dunciad* have made to it: For though, in that *Apology* you seem to have offer'd him a friendly release of all Damages, yet as it is plain he scorns to accept it, by his still holding you at Defiance with fresh Abuses, you have an indisputable Right to resume that Discharge, and may now, as justly as ever, call him to account for his many bygone Years of Defamation. But pray, Gentlemen, said I, if, as you seem to believe, his Defamation has more of Malice than Truth in it, does he not blacken himself by it? Why then should I give myself the trouble to prove, what you, and the World are already convinc'd of? and since after near twenty Years having been libell'd by our Daily-paper Scriblers, I never was so hurt, as to give them one single Answer, why would you have me seem to be more sore now, than at any other time?

As to those dull Fellows, they granted my Silence was right; yet they could not but think Mr. *Pope* was too eminent an Author to justify my equal Contempt of him; and that a Disgrace, from such a Pen, might stick upon me to Posterity: In fine, that though I could not be rouz'd from my Indifference, in regard to myself, yet for the particular Amusement of my Acquaintance, they desired I would enter the Lists with you; notwithstanding I am under the Disadvantage of having only the blunt and weak weapon of Prose, to oppose you, or defend myself, against the Sharpness of Verse, and that in the Hand of so redoubted an Author as Mr. *Pope*.

Their spiriting me up to this unequal Engagement, I doubt is but an ill Compliment to my Skill, or my Discretion; or, at best, seems but to put me upon a level with a famous Boxer at the *Bear-Garden*, called *Rugged and Tough*, who would stand being drubb'd for Hours together, 'till wearying out his Antagonist by the repeated Labour of laying him on, and by keeping his own Wind (like the *Roman* Combatant of old, who conquer'd by seeming to fly) honest *Rugged* sometimes came off victorious. All I can promise therefore, since I am stript for the Combat, is, that I will so far imitate this Iron-headed Hero (as the *Turks* called the late King of *Sweden*) as always to keep my Temper, as he did his Wind, and that while I have Life, or am able to set Pen to Paper, I will now, Sir, have the last Word with you: For let the Odds of your Wit be never so great, or its Pen dipt in whatever Venom it may, while I am conscious you can say nothing truly of me, that ought to put an honest Man to the Blush, what, in God's Name, can I have to fear from you? As to the Reputation of my Attempts, in Poetry, that has taken its Ply long ago, and can now no more be lessened by your coldest Contempt, than it can be raised by your warmest Commendation, were you inclin'd to give it any: Every Man's Work must and will always speak *For*, or *Against* itself, whilst it has a remaining Reader in the World. All I shall say then as to that Point, is, that I wrote more to be Fed, than be Famous, and since my Writings still give me a Dinner, do you rhyme me out of my Stomach if you can. And I own myself so contented a Dunce, that I would not have even your merited Fame in Poetry, if it were to be attended with half the fretful Solitude you seem to have lain under to maintain it; of which the laborious Rout you make about it, in those Loads of Prose Rubbish, wherewith you have almost smother'd your *Dunciad*, is so sore a Proof: And though I grant it a better Poem of its Kind, than ever was writ; yet when I read it, with those vain-glorious encumbrances of Notes, and Remarks, upon almost every Line of it, I find myself in the uneasy Condition I was once in at an Opera, where sitting with a silent Desire to hear a favourite Air, by a famous Performer, a Coxcomby Connoisseur, at my Elbow, was so fond of shewing his own Taste, that by his continual Remarks, and prating in Praise of every Grace and Cadence, my Attention and Pleasure in the Song was quite lost and confounded.

It is almost amazing, that you, who have writ with such masterly Spirit, upon the *Ruling Passion*, should be so blind a Slave to your own, as not to have seen, how far a low Avarice of Praise might prejudice, or debase that valuable Character, which your Works, without your own commendatory Notes upon them, might have maintained. *Laus propria sordet*, is a Line we learn in our Infancy. How applicable to your self then is what you say of another Person, *viz.*

Whose Ruling Passion is the lust of Praise;

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*Born, with whate'er could win it from the Wise,
Women and Fools must like him, or he dies.*
Epist. to Ld. *Cobham* Vers. 183.

How easily now can you see the Folly in another, which you yourself are so fond of? Why, Sir, the very Jealousy of Fame, which (in the best cruel Verses that ever fell from your Pen) you have with so much Asperity reproved in *Addison* (*Atticus* I mean) falls still short of yours, for though you impute it to him as a Crime, That he could—

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Bear, like the Turk, no Brother near the Throne.
Vers. 190 of the same Epist.

Yet you, like outrageous *Nero*, are for whipping and branding every poor Dunce in your Dominions, that had the stupid Insolence not to like you, or your Musick! If this is not a greater Tyranny than that of your *Atticus*, at least you must allow it more ridiculous: For what have you gain'd by it? a mighty Matter! a Victory over a parcel of poor Wretches, that were not able to hurt or resist you, so weak, it was almost Cowardice to conquer them; or if they actually *did* hurt you, how much weaker have you shewn yourself in so openly owning it? Besides, your Conduct seems hardly reconcilable to your own Opinion: For after you have lash'd them (in your Epistle to Dr. *Arburthnot*, ver. 84.) you excuse the Cruelty of it in the following Line.

—Take it for a Rule,
No Creature smarts so little as a Fool.

Now if this be true, to what purpose did you correct them? For wise Men, without your taking such Pains to tell them, knew what they were before. And that publick-spirited Pretence of your only chastising them, *in terrorem* to others of the same malicious Disposition, I doubt is but too thin a Disguise of the many restless Hours they have given you. If your Revenge upon them was necessary, we must own you have amply enjoy'd it: But to make that Revenge the chief Motive of writing your *Dunciad*, seems to me a Weakness, that an Author of your Abilities should rather have chosen to conceal. A Man might as well triumph for his having kill'd so many silly Flies that offended him. Could you have let them alone, by this time, poor Souls, they had been all peaceably buried in Oblivion! But the very Lines, you have so sharply pointed to destroy them, will now remain but so many of their Epitaphs, to transmit their Names to Posterity: Which probably too they may think a more eligible Fate than that of being totally forgotten. Hear what an Author of great Merit, though of less Anxiety for Fame, says upon this Weakness,

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*Fame is a Bubble, the Reserv'd enjoy,
Who strive to grasp it, as they touch, destroy.*
Y— Univers. Passion.

In a word, you seem in your *Dunciad*, to have been angry at the rain for wetting you, why then would you go into it? You could not but know, that an Author, when he publishes a Work, exposes himself to all Weathers. He then that cannot bear the worst, should stay at home, and not write at all.

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But Sir—That *Cibber* ever murmured at your Fame, or endeavoured to blast it, or that he was not always, to the best of his Judgment, as warm an Admirer of your Writings as any of your nearest Friends could be, is what you cannot, by any one Fact or Instance, disprove. How comes it then, that in your Works you have so often treated him as a Dunce or an Enemy? Did he at all intrench upon your Sovereignty in Verse, because he had now and then written a Comedy that succeeded? Or could not you bear, that any kind of Poetry, but that, to which you chiefly pretended, should meet with Applause? Or was it, that he had an equal Reputation for Acting his own Characters as for Writing them, or that with such inferior Talents he was admitted to as good Company as you, with your superior, could get into; or what other offensive Merit had he, that has so often made him the Object of your Contempt or Envy? It could not be, sure, simple Ill-nature, that incited you, because in the Preface to your *Dunciad* you declare that you have—

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“In this Poem attacked no Man living, who had not before printed, or published some Scandal against you.”

How comes it, I say, that you have so often fallen foul upon *Cibber* then, against whom you have no Complaint, nor whose Name is so much as mentioned in the printed List you have given us of all those high Offenders, you so imperiously have proscribed and punish'd. Under this Class at least, you acquit him of having ever provoked you?

But in your Notes, to this Preface (that is, in your Notes upon Notes) from this general Declaration, you make an Exception,—“Of two, or three Persons only, whose Dulness or Scurrility all Mankind agreed, to have justly intitled them to a Place in the *Dunciad*.” Here then, or no where, you ground your Pretence of taking Me into it! Now let us enquire into the Justness of this Pretence, and whether Dulness in one Author gives another any right to abuse him for it? No sure! Dulness can be no Vice or Crime, or is at worst but a Misfortune, and you ought no more to censure or revile him for it, than for his being blind or lame; the Cruelty or Injustice will be evidently equal either way. But if you please I will wave this part of my Argument, and for once take no advantage of it; but will suppose Dulness to be actually Criminal, and then will leave it to your own Conscience, to declare, whether you

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really think I am generally so guilty of it, as to deserve the Name of the Dull Fellow you make of me. Now if the Reader will call upon My Conscience to speak to the Question, I do from my Heart solemnly declare, that I don't believe you *do* think so of me. This I grant may be Vanity in me to say: But if what I believe is true, what a slovenly Conscience do you shew your Face with?

Now, Sir, as for my Scurrility, when ever a Proof can be produced, that I have been guilty of it to you, or any one Man living, I will shamefully unsay all I have said, and confess I have deserv'd the various Names you have call'd me.

Having therefore said enough to clear my self of any Ill-will or Enmity to Mr. *Pope*, I should be glad he were able equally to acquit himself to Me, that I might not suppose the satirical Arrows he has shot at me, to have flown from that Malignity of Mind, which the talking World is so apt to accuse him of. In the mean while, it may be worth the trouble to weigh the Truth, or Validity of the Wit he has bestow'd upon me, that it may appear, which of us is the worse Man for it; He, for his unprovoked Endeavour to vilify and expose me, or—I, for my having or having not deserv'd it.

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I could wish it might be observed then, by those who have read the Works of Mr. *Pope*, that the contemptuous Things he there says of me, are generally bare positive Assertions, without his any sort of Evidence to ground them upon: Why then, till the Truth of them is better prov'd, should they stand for any more, than so many *gratis Dictums*? But I hope I have given him fairer Play, in what I have said of him, and which I intend to give him, in what I shall farther say of him; that is, by saying nothing to his Disadvantage that has not a known Fact to support it. This will bring our Cause to a fair Issue; and no impartial Reader, then, can be at a loss on which side Equity should incline him to give Judgment. But as in this Dispute I shall be oblig'd, sometimes to be *Witness*, as well as *Accuser*, I am bound, in Conscience, not to conceal any Fact, that may possibly mitigate, or excuse the resentful manner, in which Mr. *Pope* has publicly treated me. Now I am afraid, that I once as publicly offended him, before a thousand Spectators; to the many of them, therefore, who might be Witnesses of the Fact, I submit, as to the most competent Judges, how far it ought, or ought not, to have provoked him.

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The Play of the *Rehearsal*, which had lain some few Years dormant, being by his present Majesty (then Prince of *Wales*) commanded to be revived, the Part of *Bays* fell to my share. To this Character there had always been allow'd such ludicrous Liberties of Observation, upon any thing new, or remarkable, in the state of the Stage, as Mr. *Bays* might think proper to take. Much about this time, then, *The Three Hours after Marriage* had been acted without Success; when Mr. *Bays*, as usual, had a fling at it, which, in itself, was no Jest, unless the Audience would please to make it one: But however, flat as it was, Mr. *Pope* was mortally sore upon it. This was the Offence. In this Play, two Coxcombs, being in love with a learned Virtuoso's Wife, to get unsuspected Access to her, ingeniously send themselves, as two presented Rarities, to the Husband, the one curiously swath'd up like an *Egyptian Mummy*, and the other slyly cover'd in the Paste-board Skin of a Crocodile: upon which poetical Expedient, I, Mr. *Bays*, when the two Kings of *Brentford* came from the Clouds into the Throne again, instead of what my Part directed me to say, made use of these Words, viz. "Now, Sir, this Revolution, I had some Thoughts of introducing, by a quite different Contrivance; but my Design taking air, some of your sharp Wits, I found, had made use of it before me; otherwise I intended to have stolen one of them in, in the Shape of a *Mummy*, and t'other, in that of a *Crocodile*." Upon which, I doubt, the Audience by the Roar of their Applause shew'd their proportionable Contempt of the Play they belong'd to. But why am I answerable for that? I did not lead them, by any Reflection of my own, into that Contempt: Surely to have used the bare Word *Mummy*, and *Crocodile*, was neither unjust, or unmannerly; Where then was the Crime of simply saying there had been two such things in a former Play? But this, it seems, was so heinously taken by Mr. *Pope*, that, in the swelling of his Heart, after the Play was over, he came behind the Scenes, with his Lips pale and his Voice trembling, to call me to account for the Insult: And accordingly fell upon me with all the foul Language, that a Wit out of his Senses could be capable of——How durst I have the Impudence to treat any Gentleman in that manner? &c. &c. &c. Now let the Reader judge by this Concern, who was the true Mother of the Child! When he was almost choked with the foam of his Passion, I was enough recover'd from my Amazement to make him (as near as I can remember) this Reply, viz. "Mr. *Pope*——You are so particular a Man, that I must be asham'd to return your Language as I ought to do: but since you have attacked me in so monstrous a Manner; This you may depend upon, that as long as the Play continues to be acted, I will never fail to repeat the same Words over and over again." Now, as he accordingly found I kept my Word, for several Days following, I am afraid he has since thought, that his Pen was a sharper Weapon than his Tongue to trust his Revenge with. And however just Cause this may be for his so doing, it is, at least, the only Cause my Conscience can charge me with. Now, as I might have concealed this Fact, if my Conscience would have suffered me, may we not suppose, Mr. *Pope* would certainly have mention'd it in his *Dunciad*, had he thought it could have been of service to him? But as he seems, notwithstanding, to have taken Offence from it, how well does this Soreness of Temper agree with what he elsewhere says of himself?

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But touch me, and no Minister so sore.

Since then, even his Admirers allow, that Spleen has a great share in his Composition, and as Thirst of Revenge, in full Possession of a conscious Power to execute it, is a Temptation, which we see the Depravity of Human Nature is so little able to resist, why then should we wonder, that a Man so easily hurt, as Mr. *Pope* seems to be, should be so frequently delighted in his inflicting those Pains upon others, which he feels he is not himself able to bear? This is the only way I can account for his having sometimes carried his satyrical Strokes farther, than, I doubt, a true and laudable Satyrist would have thought justifiable. But it is now time to open, what on my own part I have to charge him with.

In turning over his Works of the smaller Edition, the eldest Date I find, in print, of my being out of his Favour, is from an odd Objection he makes to a, then, new Play of mine, *The Non-Juror*. In one of his Letters to Mr. *Jervas*, p. 85. he writes thus—

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“Your Acquaintance, on this side the Water, are under terrible Apprehensions, from your long stay in *Ireland*, that you may grow too polite for them; for we think (since the great Success of *such a Play as the Non-Juror*) that Politeness is gone over the Water, &c.

(By the way, was not his Wit a little stiff and weary, when he strained so hard to bring in this costive Reflection upon the *Non-Juror*? Dear Soul! What terrible Apprehensions it gave him!) And some few Lines after he cries out—

“Poor Poetry! the little that’s left of thee, longs to cross the Seas—

Modestly meaning, I suppose, he had a mind to have gone over himself! If he had gone, and had carried with him those polite Pieces, *The What d’ye call it*, and *The Three Hours after Marriage* (both which he had a hand in) how effectually had those elaborate Examples of the true Genius given, to the *Dublin* Theatre, the Glory of Dramatick Poetry restor’d? But *Drury-Lane* was not so favourable to him; for there alas! (where the last of them was unfortunately acted) he had so sore a Rap o’ the Fingers, that he never more took up his Pen for the Stage. But this is not fair, you will say: My shewing Mr. *Pope*’s want of Skill in Comedy, is no excuse for the want of it in myself; which his Satyr sometimes charges me with: at least, it must be owned, it is not an easy thing to hit by his missing it. And indeed I have had some doubt, as there is no personal Reflection in it, whether I ought to have mention’d his Objection to *The Non-Juror* at all; but as the Particularity of it may let one a good deal into the Sentiments of Mr. *Pope*, I could not refrain from bestowing some farther Notes upon it.

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Well then! upon the great Success of this enormous Play, *The Non-Juror*, poor Mr. *Pope* laments the Decay of Poetry; though the Impoliteness of the Piece is his only insinuated Objection against it. How nice are the Nostrils of this delicate Critick! This indeed is a Scent, that those wide-mouth’d Hounds the Daily-Paper Criticks could never hit off! though they pursued it with the Imputation of every Offence that could run down a Play: Yet Impoliteness at least they oversaw. No! they did not disguise their real dislike, as the prudent Mr. *Pope* did; They all fairly spoke out, and in full Cry open’d against it, only for its so audaciously exposing the sacred Character of a lurking, treason-hatching Jesuit, and for inhumanly ridiculing the conscientious Cause of an honest deluded Jacobite Gentleman. Now may we not as well say to Mr. *Pope*, *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* Here was his real Disgust to the Play! For if Impoliteness could have so offended him, he would never have bestowed such Encomiums upon the *Beggars Opera*, which whatever Beauties it might boast, Politeness certainly was not one of its most striking Features. No, no! if the Play had not so impudently fallen upon the poor Enemies of the Government, Mr. *Pope*, possibly, might have been less an Enemy to the Play: But he has a charitable Heart, and cannot bear to see his Friends derided in their Distress: Therefore you may have observed, whenever the Government censures a Man of Consequence for any extraordinary Disaffection to it; then is Mr. *Pope*’s time generously to brighten and lift him up with Virtues, which never had been so conspicuous in him before. Now though he may be led into all this, by his thinking it a Religious Duty; yet those who are of a different Religion may sure be equally excused, if they should notwithstanding look upon him as their Enemy. But to my Purpose.

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Whatever might be his real Objections to it, Mr. *Pope* is, at least, so just to the Play, as to own it had great Success, though it grieved him to see it; perhaps too he would have been more grieved, had he then known, that his late Majesty, when I had the Honour to kiss his Hand, upon my presenting my Dedication of it, was graciously pleased, out of his Royal Bounty, to order me two hundred Pounds for it. Yes, Sir! ’tis true—such was the Depravity of the Time, you will say, and so enormous was the Reward of *such a Play as The Non-Juror!*

This brings to my Memory (what I cannot help smiling at) the bountiful Banter, you at this time endeavoured to put upon me. This was the Fact I had, not long before, been a Subscriber to your *Homer*: And now, to make up our Poetical Accounts, as you call’d it, you sent me a Note, with four Guineas inclosed, for four Tickets, for the Author’s Day of *such a Play as The Non-Juror*. So unexpected a Favour made me conclude, there must be something at the bottom of it, which an indifferent Eye might have overlooked: However I sent you the Tickets with a written Acknowledgment; for I was willing you should think the kind Appearance had passed upon me; though every Gentleman I told it to laugh’d at my Credulity, wondering I should not see, you had plainly done this, in scorn of my Subscription to your *Homer*. Which, to say the Truth, I never had the least doubt of, but did not think myself so far obliged to gratify your Pride, as to shew any sign of my feeling the Hurt you intended me. Though, as this was in the Infancy of your Disinclination to me, I confess, I

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might have been better pleased, would your Temper have suffered me to have been upon better Terms with you: But so it is! of such insensible Stuff am I made, that I have been rated by my Friends, for not being surprized, or grieved at Disappointments. This I only offer as an early Instance of our different Dispositions. My Subscription had no Disguise, I thought it due to the Merit of Mr. *Pope*: But that his Bounty to me rose from the same Motive, I am afraid would be Vanity in me to suppose.

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There is another whimsical Fact relating to this Play, which common Fame, just after the Run of it, charged to Mr. *Pope*: Had I his Sagacity in detecting concealed Authors, or his laborious Curiosity to know them, I do not doubt but I might bring my Fact to a Proof upon him; but let my Suspicion speak for itself. At this time then there came out a Pamphlet (the Title I have forgot) but the given Name of the Author was *Barnevelt*, which every body believed to be fictitious. The Purport of this odd Piece of Wit was to prove, that *The Non-Juror* in its Design, its Characters, and almost every Scene of it, was a closely couched Jacobite Libel against the Government: And, in troth, the Charge was in some places so shrewdly maintained, that I almost liked the Jest myself; at least, it was so much above the Spirit, and Invention of the Daily-Paper Satyrists, that all the sensible Readers I met with, without Hesitation gave it to Mr. *Pope*. And what afterwards left me no doubt of it was, that he published the same Charge against his own *Rape of the Lock*, proving even the Design of that too, by the same sort of merry Innuendos, to have been as audacious a Libel, as the other Pamphlet had made *The Non-Juror*. In a word, there is so much Similitude of Stile, and Thought, in these two Pieces, that it is scarce possible to give them to different Authors. 'Tis true, at first Sight, there appears no great Motive for Mr. *Pope* to have written either of them, more than to exercise the Wantonness of his Fancy: But some People thought, he might have farther Views in this Frolick. He might hope, that the honest Vulgar would take literally, his making a Libel of *The Non-Juror*, and from thence have a good Chance of his turning the Stream of their Favour against it. As for his playing the same game with his *Rape of the Lock*, that he was, at least, sure could do him no harm; but on the contrary he might hope, that such a ludicrous Self-accusation might soften, or wipe off any severe Imputation that had lain upon other parts of his Writings, which had not been thought equally Innocent of a real Disaffection. This way of owning Guilt in a wrong Place, is a common Artifice to hide it in a right one. Now though every Reader is not obliged to take all I have said for Evidence in this Case; yet there may be others, that are not obliged to refuse it. Let it therefore avail no more, than in reality it ought to do.

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Since, as you say, in one of your Letters to Mr. *Addison*, "*To be uncensured and to be obscure is the same thing;*" I hope then to appear in a better Light, by quoting some of your farther Flirts at *The Non-Juror*.

In your Correspondence with Mr. *Digby* p. 150. complaining of People's Insensibility to good Writing, you say (with your usual sneer upon the same Play)

"The Stage is the only Place we seem alive at: There indeed we stare, and roar, and clap Hands for King *George* and the Government.

This could be meant of no Play, but *The Non-Juror*, because no other had made the Enemies of the King and Government so ridiculous; and therefore, it seems, you think the Town as ridiculous to roar and clap at it. But, Sir, as so many of the Government's Friends were willing to excuse its Faults for the Honesty of its Intention; so, if you were not of that Number, I do not wonder you had so strong a Reason to dislike it. In the same Letter too, this wicked Play runs so much in your Head, that in the favourable Character you there give of the Lady *Scudamore*, you make it a particular Merit in her, that she had not then even

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Seen Cibber's Play of the Non-juror.

I presume, at least, she had heard Mr. *Pope's* Opinion of it, and then indeed the Lady might be in the right.

I suppose by this time you will say, I have tir'd your Patience; but I do assure you I have not said so much upon this Head, merely to commemorate the Applauses of *The Non-juror*, as to shew the World one of your best Reasons for having so often publish'd your Contempt of the Author. And yet, methinks, the Good-nature which you so frequently labour to have thought a part of your Character, might have inclin'd you to a little more Mercy for an old Acquaintance: Nay, in your Epistle to Dr. *Arbutnot*, ver. 373, you are so good as to say, you have been so humble as to *drink with Cibber*. Sure then, such Humility might at least have given the Devil his Due: for, black as I am, I have still some Merit to you, in the profess'd Pleasure I always took in your Writings? But alas! if the Friendship between yourself and Mr. *Addison*, (which with such mutual Warmth you have profess'd in your publish'd Letters) could not protect him from that insatiable Rage of Satyr that so often runs away with you, how could so frivolous a Fellow as I am (whose Friendship you never cared for) hope to escape it? However, I still comfort myself in one Advantage I have over you, that of never having deserved your being my Enemy.

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You see, Sir, with what passive Submission I have hitherto complained to you: but now give me leave to speak an honest Truth, without caring how far it may displease you. If I thought, then, that your Ill-nature were half as hurtful to me, as I believe it is to yourself, I am not sure I could be half so easy under it. I am told, there is a Serpent in some of the *Indies*, that never stings a Man without leaving its own Life in the Wound: I have forgot the Name of it,

and therefore cannot give it you. Or if this be too hard upon you, permit me at least to say, your Spleen is sometimes like that of the little angry Bee, which, in doing less Mischief than the Serpent, yet (as *Virgil* says) meets with the same Fate.—*Animasque in vulnere ponunt.* Why then may I not wish you would be advis'd by a Fact which actually happen'd at the Tower Guard? An honest lusty Grenadier, while a little creeping Creature of an Ensign, for some trifling Fault, was impotently laying him on with his Cane, quietly folded his Arms across, and shaking his Head, only reply'd to this valiant Officer, "Have a care, dear Captain! don't strike so hard! upon my Soul you will hurt yourself!"

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Now, Sir, give me leave to open your *Dunciad*, that we may see what Work your Wit has made with my Name there.

When the Goddess of *Dulness* is shewing her Works to her chosen Son, she closes the Variety with letting him see, *ver.* 235.

*How, with less Reading than makes Felons 'scape
Less human Genius than God gives an Ape,
Small Thanks to France, and none to Rome, or Greece,
A patch'd, vamp'd, future, old, reviv'd, new Piece,
'Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Congreve and Corneille,
Can make a Cibber, Johnson, or Ozell.*

And pray, Sir, why my Name, under this scurvy Picture? I flatter myself, that if you had not put it there, no body else would have thought it like me, nor can I easily believe that you yourself do: but perhaps you imagin'd it would be a laughing Ornament to your Verse, and had a mind to divert other Peoples Spleen with it, as well as your own. Now let me hold up my Head a little, and then we shall see how far the Features hit me! If indeed I had never produc'd any Plays, but those I alter'd of other Authors, your Reflexion then might have had something nearer an Excuse for it: But yet, if many of those Plays have liv'd the longer for my meddling with them, the Sting of your Satyr only wounds the Air, or at best debases it to impotent Railing. For you know very well that *Richard the Third*, *The Fop's Fortune*, *The Double Gallant*, and some others, that had been dead to the Stage out of all Memory, have since been in a constant course of Acting above these thirty or forty Years. Nor did even *Dryden* think it any Diminution of his Fame to take the same liberty with *The Tempest*, and the *Troilus and Cressida* of *Shakespeare*; and tho' his Skill might be superior to mine, yet while my Success has been equal to his, why then will you have me so ill-favour'dly like the Dunce you have drawn for me? Or do those alter'd Plays at all take from the Merit of those more successful Pieces, which were entirely my own? Is a Tailor, that can make a new Coat well, the worse Workman, because he can mend an old one? When a Man is abus'd, he has a right to speak even laudable Truths of himself, to confront his Slanderer. Let me therefore add, that my first Comedy of *The Fool in Fashion* was as much (though not so valuable) an Original, as any one Work Mr. *Pope* himself has produc'd. It is now forty-seven Years since its first Appearance upon the Stage, where it has kept its Station, to this very Day, without ever lying one Winter dormant. And what Part of this Play, Sir, can you charge with a Theft either from any *French* Author, from *Plautus*, *Fletcher*, *Congreve*, or *Corneille*? Nine Years after this I brought on *The Careless Husband*, with still greater Success; and was that too

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A patch'd, vamp'd, future, old, reviv'd, new Piece?

Let the many living Spectators of these Plays then judge between us, whether the above Verses, you have so unmercifully besmear'd me with, were fit to come from the *honest Heart* of a Satyrist, who would be thought, like you, the upright Censor of Mankind. Indeed, indeed, Sir, this Libel was below you! How could you be so wanting to yourself as not to consider, that Satyr, without Truth, tho' flowing in the finest Numbers, recoils upon its Author, and must, at other times, render him suspected of Prejudice, even where he may be just; as Frauds, in Religion, make more Atheists than Converts? And the bad Heart, Mr. *Pope*, that points an Injury with Verse, makes it the more unpardonable, as it is not the Result of sudden Passion, but of an indulg'd and slowly meditating Ill-nature; and I am afraid yours, in this Article, is so palpable, that I am almost asham'd to have made it so serious a Reply.

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What a merry mixt Mortal has Nature made you? that can thus debase that Strength and Excellence of Genius she has endow'd you with, to the lowest human Weakness, that of offering unprovok'd Injuries; nay, at the Hazard of your being ridiculous too, as you must be, when the Venom you spit falls short of your Aim! For I shall never believe your Verses have done me the Harm you intended, or lost me one Friend, or added a single Soul to the number of my Enemies, though so many thousands that know me, may have read them. How then could your blind Impatience in your *Dunciad* thunder out such poetical *Anathemas* on your own Enemies, for doing you no worse Injuries than what you think it no Crime in yourself to offer to another?

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In your Remarks upon the above Verses, your Wit, unwilling to have done with me, throws out an ironical Sneer at my Attempts in Tragedy: Let us see how far it disgraces me.

After your quoting the following Paragraph from *Jacob's Lives of the Dramatick Poets*, viz.

"Mr. *Colley Cibber*, an Author, and an Actor, of a good share of Wit and uncommon Vivacity, which are much improv'd by the Conversation he enjoys,

which is of the best," &c.

Then say you,

"Mr. *Jacob* omitted to remark, that he is particularly admirable in Tragedy."

Ay, Sir, and your Remark has omitted too, that (with all his Commendations) I can't dance upon the Rope, or make a Saddle, nor play upon the Organ.—Augh! my dear, dear Mr. *Pope*! how could a Man of your stinging Capacity let so tame, so low a Reflexion escape him? Why this hardly rises above the pretty Malice of Miss *Molly*—*Ay, ay, you may think my Sister as handsome as you please, but if you were to see her Legs—I know what I know!* And so, with all these Imperfections upon me, the Triumph of your Observation amounts to this: That tho' you should allow, by what *Jacob* says of me, that I am good for something, yet you notwithstanding have cunningly discover'd, that I am not good for *every thing*. Well, Sir, and am not I very well off, if you have nothing worse to say of me? But if I have made so many crowded Theatres laugh, and in the right Place too, for above forty Years together, am I to make up the Number of your Dunces, because I have not the equal Talent of making them cry too? Make it your own Case: Is what you have excell'd in at all the worse, for your having so dismally dabbled (as I before observ'd) in the Farce of *Three Hours after Marriage*? *Non omnia possumus omnes*, is an allow'd Excuse for the Insufficiencies of all Mankind; and if, as you see, you too must sometimes be forc'd to take shelter under it, as well as myself, what mighty Reason will the World have to laugh at my Weakness in Tragedy, more than at yours in Comedy? Or, to make us Both still easier in the matter, if you will say, you are not ashamed of your Weakness, I will promise you not to be ashamed of mine. Or if you don't like this Advice, let me give you some from the wiser *Spanish* Proverb, which says, *That a Man should never throw Stones, that has glass Windows in his Head.*

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Upon the whole, your languid Ill-will in this Remark, makes so sickly a Figure, that one would think it were quite exhausted; for it must run low indeed, when you are reduc'd to impute the want of an Excellence, as a Shame to me. But in *ver.* 261, your whole Barrel of Spleen seems not to have a Drop more in it, though you have tilted it to the highest: For there you are forc'd to tell a downright Fib, and hang me up in a Light where no body ever saw me: As for Example, speaking of the Absurdity of Theatrical Pantomimes, you say

*When lo! to dark Encounter in mid Air
New Wizards rise: Here Booth, and Cibber there:
Booth, in his cloudy Tabernacle shrin'd,
On grinning Dragons Cibber mounts the Wind.*

If you, figuratively, mean by this, that I was an Encourager of those Fooleries, you are mistaken; for it is not true: If you intend it literally, that I was Dunce enough to mount a Machine, there is as little Truth in that too: But if you meant it only as a pleasant Abuse, you have done it with infinite Drollery indeed! Beside, the Name of *Cibber*, you know, always implies Satyr in the Sound, and never fails to keep the Flatness or Modesty of a Verse in countenance.

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Some Pages after, indeed, in pretty near the same Light, you seem to have a little negative Kindness for me, *ver.* 287, where you make poor *Settle*, lamenting his own Fate, say,

*But lo! in me, what Authors have to brag on,
Reduc'd at last to hiss, in my own Dragon,
Avert it, Heav'n, that thou, or Cibber e'er
Should wag two Serpent-Tails in Smithfield Fair.*

If this does not imply, that you think me fit for little else, it is only another barren Verse with my Name in it: If it does mean so; why—I wish you may never be toss'd in a Blanket, and so the Kindness is even on both Sides. But again you are at me, *ver.* 320, speaking of the King of Dunces Reign, you have these Lines:

*Beneath whose Reign, Eusden shall wear the Bays,
Cibber preside Lord-Chancellor of Plays.*

This I presume you offer as one of the heavy Enormities of the Stage-Government, when I had a Share in it. But as you have not given an Instance in which this Enormity appear'd, how is it possible (unless I had your Talent of Self-Commendation) to bring any Proofs in my Favour? I must therefore submit it to Publick Judgment how full your Reflexion hits, or is wide of me, and can only say to it in the mean time,—*Valeat quantum valere potest.*

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In your Remark upon the same Lines you say,

"*Eusden* no sooner died, but his Place of Laureat was supply'd by *Cibber*, in the Year 1730, on which was made the following Epigram." (May I not believe by yourself?)

*In merry Old England, it once was a Rule,
The King had his Poet, and also his Fool.
But now we're so frugal, I'd have you to know it,
That Cibber can serve both for Fool and for Poet.*

Ay, marry Sir! here you souse me with a Witness! This is a Triumph indeed! I can hardly

help laughing at this myself; for, *Se non e vero, ben Trovato!* A good Jest is a good Thing, let it fall upon who it will: I dare say *Cibber* would never have complain'd of Mr. *Pope*,

—*Si sic*
—*Omnia dixisset*— Juv.

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If he had never said any worse of him. But hold, Master *Cibber!* why may not you as well turn this pleasant Epigram into an involuntary Compliment? for a King's Fool was no body's Fool but his Master's, and had not his Name for nothing; as for Example,

*Those Fools of old, if Fame says true,
Were chiefly chosen for their Wit;
Why then, call'd Fools? because, like you
Dear Pope, too Bold in shewing it.*

And so, if I am the King's Fool; now, Sir, pray whose Fool are you? 'Tis pity, methinks, you should be out of Employment: for, if a satyrical Intrepidity, or, as you somewhere call it, a *High Courage of Wit*, is the fairest Pretence to be the *King's Fool*, I don't know a Wit in the World so fit to fill up the Post as yourself.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavour'd to shake off all the Dirt in your *Dunciad*, unless of here and there some little Spots of your Ill-will, that were not worth tiring the Reader's Patience with my Notice of them. But I have some more foul way to trot through still, in your Epistles and Satyrs, &c. Now whether I shall come home the filthy Fellow, or the clean contrary Man to what you make me, I will venture to leave to your own *Conscience*, though I dare not make the same Trust to your *Wit*: For that you have often *spoke* worse (merely to shew your Wit) than you could possibly *think* of me, almost all your Readers, that observe your Good-nature will *easily* believe.

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However, to shew I am not blind to your Merit, I own your Epistle to Dr. *Arbuthnot* (though I there find myself contemptibly spoken of) gives me more Delight in the whole, than any one Poem of the kind I ever read. The only Prejudice or wrong Bias of Judgment, I am afraid I may be guilty of is, when I cannot help thinking, that your Wit is more remarkably bare and barren, whenever it would fall foul upon *Cibber*, than upon any other Person or Occasion whatsoever: I therefore could wish the Reader may have sometimes considered those Passages, that if I do you Injustice, he may as justly condemn me for it.

In this Epistle ver. 59. of your Folio Edition, you seem to bless yourself, that you are not my Friend! no wonder then, you rail at me! but let us see upon what Occasion you own this Felicity. Speaking of an impertinent Author, who teized you to recommend his *Virgin Tragedy* to the Stage, you at last happily got rid of him with this Excuse—

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*There (thank my Stars) my whole Commission ends,
Cibber and I, are luckily no Friends.*

If you chose not to be mine, Sir, it does not follow, that it was equally my Choice not to be yours: But perhaps you thought me your Enemy, because you were conscious you had injur'd me, and therefore were resolv'd never to forgive *Me*, because I had it in my Power to forgive *You*: For, as *Dryden* says,

*Forgiveness, to the Injur'd does belong;
But they ne'er pardon who have done the Wrong.*

This, Sir, is the only natural Excuse, I can form, for your being my Enemy. As to your blunt Assertion of my certain Prejudice to any thing, that had your Recommendation to the Stage, which your above Lines would insinuate; I gave you a late Instance in *The Miller of Mansfield*, that your manner of treating Me had in no sort any Influence upon my Judgment. For you may remember, sometime before that Piece was acted, I accidentally met you, in a Visit to the late General *Dormer*, who, though he might be your good Friend, was not for that Reason the less a Friend to Me: There you join'd with that Gentleman, in asking my Advice and Assistance in that Author's behalf; which as I had read the Piece, though I had then never seen the Man, I gave, in such manner, as I thought might best serve him: And if I don't over-rate my Recommendation, I believe its way to the Stage was made the more easy by it. This Fact, then, does in no kind make good your Insinuation, that my Enmity to you would not suffer me to like any thing that you liked; which though you call your good Fortune in Verse, yet in Prose, you see, it happens not to be true. But I am glad to find, in your smaller Edition, that your Conscience has since given this Line some Correction; for there you have taken off a little of its Edge; it there runs only thus—

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The Play'rs and I, are luckily no Friends.

This is so uncommon an Instance, of your checking your Temper and taking a little Shame to yourself, that I could not in Justice omit my Notice of it. I am of opinion too, that the Indecency of the next Verse, you spill upon me, would admit of an equal Correction. In excusing the Freedom of your Satyr, you urge that it galls no body, because nobody minds it enough to be mended by it. This is your Plea—

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*Whom have I hurt! has Poet yet, or Peer,
Lost the arched Eye-brow, or Parnassian Sneer?
And has not Colley too his Lord, and Whore? &c.*

If I thought the Christian Name of *Colley* could belong to any other Man than myself, I would insist upon my Right of not supposing you meant this last Line to Me; because it is equally applicable to five thousand other People: But as your Good-will to me is a little too well known, to pass it as imaginable that you could intend it for any one else, I am afraid I must abide it.

Well then! *Colley has his Lord and Whore!* Now suppose, Sir, upon the same Occasion, that *Colley* as happily inspired as Mr. *Pope*, had turned the same Verse upon *Him*, and with only the Name changed had made it run thus—

And has not Sawney too his Lord and Whore?

Would not the Satyr have been equally just? Or would any sober Reader have seen more in the Line, than a wide mouthful of Ill-Manners? Or would my professing myself a Satyrist give me a Title to wipe my foul Pen upon the Face of every Man I did not like? Or would my Impudence be less Impudence in Verse than in Prose? or in private Company? What ought I to expect less, than that you would knock me down for it? unless the happy Weakness of my Person might be my Protection? Why then may I not insist that *Colley* or *Sawney* in the Verse would make no Difference in the Satyr! Now let us examine how far there would be Truth in it on either Side.

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As to the first Part of the Charge, the *Lord*; Why—we have both had him, and sometimes the *same* Lord; but as there is neither Vice nor Folly in keeping our Betters Company; the Wit or Satyr of the Verse! can only point at my Lord for keeping such *ordinary* Company. Well, but if so! then *why* so, good Mr. *Pope*? If either of us could be *good* Company, our being professed Poets, I hope would be no Objection to my Lord's sometimes making one with us? and though I don't pretend to write like you, yet all the Requisites to make a good Companion are not confined to Poetry! No, Sir, even a Man's inoffensive Follies and Blunders may sometimes have their Merits at the best Table; and in those, I am sure, you won't pretend to vie with me: Why then may not my Lord be as much in the Right, in his sometimes choosing *Colley* to laugh at, as at other times in his picking up *Sawney*, whom he can only admire?

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Thus far, then, I hope we are upon a par; for the Lord, you see, will fit either of us.

As to the latter Charge, the *Whore*, there indeed, I doubt you will have the better of me; for I must own, that I believe I know more of *your* whoring than you do of *mine*; because I don't recollect that ever I made you the least Confidence of *my* Amours, though I have been very near an Eye-Witness of *Yours*—By the way, gentle Reader, don't you think, to say only, *a Man has his Whore*, without some particular Circumstances to aggravate the Vice, is the flattest Piece of Satyr that ever fell from the formidable Pen of Mr. *Pope*? because (*defendit numerus*) take the first ten thousand Men you meet, and I believe, you would be no Loser, if you betted ten to one that every single Sinner of them, one with another, had been guilty of the same Frailty. But as Mr. *Pope* has so particularly picked me out of the Number to make an Example of: Why may I not take the same Liberty, and even single him out for another to keep me in Countenance? He must excuse me, then, if in what I am going to relate, I am reduced to make bold with a little private Conversation: But as he has shewn no Mercy to *Colley*, why should so unprovok'd an Aggressor expect any for himself? And if Truth hurts him, I can't help it. He may remember, then (or if he won't I will) when *Button's* Coffee-house was in vogue, and so long ago, as when he had not translated above two or three Books of *Homer*; there was a late young Nobleman (as much his *Lord* as mine) who had a good deal of wicked Humour, and who, though he was fond of having Wits in his Company, was not so restrained by his Conscience, but that he lov'd to laugh at any merry Mischief he could do them: This noble Wag, I say, in his usual *Gayetè de Cœur*, with another Gentleman still in Being, one Evening sily seduced the celebrated Mr. *Pope* as a Wit, and myself as a Laugher, to a certain House of Carnal Recreation, near the *Hay-Market*; where his Lordship's Frolick propos'd was to slip his little *Homer*, as he call'd him, at a Girl of the Game, that he might see what sort of Figure a Man of his Size, Sobriety, and Vigour (in Verse) would make, when the frail Fit of Love had got into him; in which he so far succeeded, that the smirking Damsel, who serv'd us with Tea, happen'd to have Charms sufficient to tempt the little-tiny Manhood of Mr. *Pope* into the next Room with her: at which you may imagine, his Lordship was in as much Joy, at what might happen within, as our small Friend could probably be in Possession of it: But I (forgive me all ye mortified Mortals whom his fell Satyr has since fallen upon) observing he had staid as long as without hazard of his Health he might, I,

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Prick'd to it by foolish Honesty and Love,

As *Shakespear* says, without Ceremony, threw open the Door upon him, where I found this little hasty Hero, like a terrible *Tom Tit*, pertly perching upon the Mount of Love! But such was my Surprize, that I fairly laid hold of his Heels, and actually drew him down safe and sound from his Danger. My Lord, who staid tittering without, in hopes the sweet Mischief he came for would have been compleated, upon my giving an Account of the Action within, began to curse, and call me an hundred silly Puppies, for my impertinently spoiling the Sport; to which with great Gravity I reply'd; pray, my Lord, consider what I have done was, in regard to the Honour of our Nation! For would you have had so glorious a Work as that of making *Homer* speak elegant *English*, cut short by laying up our little Gentleman of a Malady, which his thin Body might never have been cured of? No, my Lord! *Homer* would

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have been too serious a Sacrifice to our Evening Merriment. Now as his *Homer* has since been so happily compleated, who can say, that the World may not have been obliged to the kindly Care of *Colley* that so great a Work ever came to Perfection?

And now again, gentle Reader, let it be judged, whether the *Lord* and the *Whore* above-mention'd might not, with equal Justice, have been apply'd to sober *Sawney* the Satyrst, as to *Colley* the Criminal?

Though I confess Recrimination to be but a poor Defence for one's own Faults; yet when the Guilty are Accusers, it seems but just, to make use of any Truth, that may invalidate their Evidence: I therefore hope, whatever the serious Reader may think amiss in this Story, will be excused, by my being so hardly driven to tell it.

I could wish too, it might be observed, that whatever Faults I find with the Morals of Mr. *Pope*, I charge none to his Poetical Capacity, but chiefly to his *Ruling Passion*, which is so much his Master, that we must allow, his inimitable Verse is generally warmest, where his too fond Indulgence of that Passion inspires it. How much brighter still might that Genius shine, could it be equally inspired by Good-nature!

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Now though I may have less Reason to complain of his Severity, than many others, who may have less deserv'd it: Yet by his crowding me into so many of his Satyrs, it is plain his Ill-will is oftner at Work upon *Cibber*, than upon any Mortal he has had a mind to make a Dunce, or a Devil of: And as there are about half a Score remaining Verses, where *Cibber* still fills up the Numbers, and which I have not yet produced, I think it will pretty near make good my Observation: Most of them, 'tis true, are so slight Marks of his Disfavour, that I can charge them with little more, than a mere idle Liberty with my Name; I shall therefore leave the greater part of them without farther Observation to make the most of their Meaning. Some few of them however (perhaps from my want of Judgment) seem so ambiguous, as to want a little Explanation.

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In his First Epistle of the Second Book of *Horace*, ver. 86, speaking of the Uncertainty of the publick Judgment upon Dramatick Authors, after naming the best, he concludes his List of them thus:

*But for the Passions, Southern sure, and Rowe.
These, only these support the crowd'd Stage,
From eldest Heywood down to Cibber's Age.*

Here he positively excludes *Cibber* from any Share in supporting the Stage as an Author; and yet, in the Lines immediately following, he seems to allow it him, by something so like a Commendation, that if it be one, it is at the same time a Contradiction to *Cibber's* being the Dunce, which the *Dunciad* has made of him. But I appeal to the Verses; here they are—ver. 87.

*All this may be; the Peoples Voice is odd,
It is, and it is not the Voice of God.
To Gammer Gurton if it give the Bays,
And yet deny The Careless Husband Praise.*

Now if *The Careless Husband* deserv'd Praise, and had it, must it not (without comparing it with the Works of the above-cited Authors) have had its Share in supporting the Stage? which Mr. *Pope* might as well have allow'd it to have had, as to have given it the Commendation he seems to do: I say (*seems*) because is saying (*if*) the People deny'd it Praise, seems to imply they *had* deny'd it; or if they had *not* deny'd it, (which is true) then his Censure upon the People is false. Upon the whole, the Meaning of these Verses stands in so confus'd a Light, that I confess I don't clearly discern it. 'Tis true, the late General *Dormer* intimated to me, that he believ'd Mr. *Pope* intended them as a Compliment to *The Careless Husband*; but if it be a Compliment, I rather believe it was a Compliment to that Gentleman's Good-nature, who told me a little before this Epistle was publish'd, that he had been making Interest for a little Mercy to his Friend *Colley* in it. But this, it seems, was all he could get for him: However, had his Wit stopt here, and said no more of me, for that Gentleman's sake, I might have thank'd him: But whatever Restraint he might be under then, after this Gentleman's Decease we shall see he had none upon him: For now out comes a new *Dunciad*, where, in the first twenty Lines he takes a fresh *Lick at the Laureat*; as Fidlers and Prize-fighters always give us a Flourish before they come to the Tune or the Battle in earnest. Come then, let us see what your mighty Mountain is in Labour of? Oh! here we have it! *New Dun. ver. 20.* Dulness mounts the Throne, &c. and—

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Soft in her Lap her Laureat Son reclines.

Hah! fast asleep it seems! No, that's a little too strong. *Pert* and *Dull* at least you might have allow'd me; but as seldom asleep as any Fool.—Sure your own Eyes could not be open, when so lame and solemn a Conceit came from you: What, am I only to be *Dull*, and *Dull* still, and again, and for ever? But this, I suppose, is one of your *Decies repetita placebit's*. For, in other Words, you have really said this of me ten times before—No, it must be written in a Dream, and according to *Dryden's* Description of dead Midnight too, where, among other strong Images, he gives us this—

Even Lust and Envy sleep.

Now, Sir, had not *Your Envy* been as fast as a fat Alderman in Sermon-time, you would certainly have thrown out something more spirited than so trite a Repetition could come up to. But it is the Nature of Malevolence, it seems, when it gets a spiteful Saying by the end, not to be tired of it so soon as its Hearers are.—Well, and what then? you will say; it lets the World see at least, that you are resolv'd to write *About me*, and *About me*, to the last. In fine, Mr. *Pope*, this yawning Wit would make one think you had got into the Laureat's Place, and were taking a Nap yourself.

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But, perhaps, there may be a concealed Brightness in this Verse, which your Notes may more plainly illustrate: let us see then what your fictitious Friend and Flatterer *Scriblerus* says to it. Why, first he mangles a Paragraph which he quotes from my *Apology* for my own Life, *Chap. 2.* and then makes his particular Use of it. But as I have my Uses to make of it as well as himself, I shall beg leave to give it the Reader without his Castrations. He begins it thus,

"When I find my Name in the Satyrical Works of this Poet," &c.

But I say,—

"When I, therefore, find my Name, *at length*, in the Satyrical Works of our most celebrated living Author"—

Now, Sir, I must beg your Pardon, but I cannot think it was your meer Modesty that left out the Title I have given you, because you have so often suffer'd your Friend *Scriblerus* (that is yourself) in your Notes to make you Compliments of a much higher Nature. But, perhaps, you were unwilling to let the Reader observe, that though you had so often befoul'd my Name in your Satyrs, I could still give you the Language due to a Gentleman, which, perhaps, at the same time too, might have put him in mind of the poor and pitiful Return you have made to it. But to go on with our Paragraph—He again continues it thus—

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"I never look upon it as any Malice meant to me, but Profit to himself"—

But where is my Parenthesis, Mr. *Filch*? If you are asham'd of it, I have no reason to be so, and therefore the Reader shall have it: My Sentence then runs thus—

"I never look upon those Lines as Malice meant to me (for he knows I never provok'd it) &c.

These last Words indeed might have star'd you too full in the Face, not to have put your Conscience out of countenance. But a Wit of your Intrepidity, I see, is above that vulgar Weakness.

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After this sneaking Omission, you have still the same Scruple against some other Lines in the Text to come: But as you serve *your Purposes* by leaving them out, you must give me leave to serve *mine* by supplying them. I shall therefore give the Reader the rest entire, and only mark what you don't choose should be known in *Italicks*, viz.

"*One of his Points must be to have many Readers: He considers, that my Face and Name are more known than those of many Thousands of more Consequence in the Kingdom, that, therefore, right or wrong, a Lick at the Laureat will always be a sure Bait, ad captandum vulgus, to catch him little Readers: And that to gratify the unlearned, by now and then interspersing those merry Sacrifices of an old Acquaintance to their Taste, in a Piece of quite right Poetical Craft.*"

Now, Sir, is there any thing in this Paragraph (which you have so maim'd and sneer'd at) that, taken all together, could merit the injurious Reception you have given it? Ought I, for this, to have had the stale Affront of *Dull*, and *Impudent*, repeated upon me? or could it have lessen'd the Honour of your Understanding, to have taken this quiet Resentment of your frequent ill Usage in good part? Or had it not rather been a Mark of your Justice and Generosity, not to have pursued me with fresh Instances of your Ill-will upon it? or, on the contrary, could you be so weak as to Envy me the Patience I was master of, and therefore could not bear to be, in any light, upon amicable Terms with me? I hope your Temper is not so unhappy as to be offended, or in pain, when your Insults are return'd with Civilities? or so vainly uncharitable as to value yourself for laughing at my Folly, in supposing you never had any real malicious Intention against me? No, you could not, sure, believe, the World would take it for granted, that *every* low, vile Thing you had said of me, was evidently *true*? How then can you hold me in such Derision, for finding your Freedom with my Name, a better Excuse than you yourself are able to give, or are willing to accept of? or, admitting, that my deceived Opinion of your Goodness was so much real Simplicity and Ignorance, was not even That, at least, pardonable? Might it not have been taken in a more favourable Sense by any Man of the least Candour or Humanity? But—I am afraid, Mr. *Pope*, the severely different Returns you have made to it, are Indications of a Heart I want a Name for.

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Upon the whole, while you are capable of giving such a trifling Turn to my Patience, I see but very little Hopes of my ever removing your Prejudice: for in your Notes upon the above Paragraph (to which I refer the Reader) you treat me more like a rejected Flatterer, than a Critick: But, I hope, you now find that I have at least taken off that Imputation, by my using no Reserve in shewing the World from what you have said of *Me*, what I think of *You*. Had

not therefore this last Usage of me been so particular, I scarce believe the Impertunity of my Friends, or the Inclination I have to gratify them, would have prevailed with me to have taken this publick Notice of whatever Names you had formerly call'd me.

I have but one Article more of your high-spirited Wit to examine, and then I shall close our Account. In *ver.* 524 of the same Poem, you have this Expression, *viz.*

Cibberian Forehead———

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By which I find you modestly mean *Cibber's* Impudence; And, by the Place it stands in, you offer it as a Sample of the *strongest* Impudence.—Sir, your humble Servant—But pray, Sir, in your Epistle to Dr. *Arbutnot*, (where, by the way, in your ample Description of a Great Poet, you slyly hook in a whole Hat-full of Virtues to your own Character) have not you this particular Line among them? *viz.*

And thought a Lye, in Verse or Prose the same.

Now, Sir, if you can get all your Readers to believe me as Impudent as you make me, your Verse, with the Lye in it, may have a good Chance to be thought true: if *not*, the Lye in your Verse will never get out of it.

This, I confess, is only arguing with the same Confidence that you sometimes write; that is, we both flatly affirm, and equally expect to be believ'd. But here, indeed, your Talent has something the better of me; for any Accusation, in smooth Verse, will always sound well, though it is not tied down to have a Tittle of Truth in it; when the strongest Defence in poor humble Prose, not having that harmonious Advantage, takes no body by the Ear: And yet every one must allow this may be very hard upon an innocent Man: For suppose, in Prose now, I were as confidently to insist, that you were an *Honest, Good-natur'd, Inoffensive Creature*, would my barely saying so be any Proof of it? No, sure! Why then might it not be suppos'd an equal Truth, that Both our Assertions were equally false? *Yours*, when you call me *Impudent; Mine*, when I call you *Modest, &c.* If, indeed, you could say, that with a remarkable Shyness, I had avoided any Places of publick Resort, or that I had there met with Coldness, Reproof, Insult, or any of the usual Rebuffs that Impudence is liable to, or had been reduced to retire from that part of the World I had impudently offended, your *Cibberian Forehead* then might have been as just and as sore a Brand as the Hangman could have apply'd to me. But as I am not yet under that Misfortune, and while the general Benevolence of my Superiors still suffers me to stand my ground, or occasionally to sit down with them, I hope it will be thought that rather the *Papal*, than the *Cibberian Forehead*, ought to be out of Countenance. But it is time to have done with you.

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In your Advertisement to your first Satyr of your second Book of *Horace*, you have this just Observation.

To a true Satyrist, nothing is so odious, as a Libeller.

Now, that you are often an admirable Satyrist, no Man of true Taste can deny: But, that you are always a *True* (that is a *just*) one, is a Question not yet decided in your Favour. I shall not take upon me to prove the Injuries of your Pen, which many candid Readers, in the behalf of others, complain of: But if the gross things you have said of so inconsiderable a Man as myself, have exceeded the limited Province of a *true Satyrist*, they are sufficient to have forfeited your Claim to that Title. For if a Man, from his being admitted the best Poet, imagines himself so much lifted above the World, that he has a Right to run a muck, and make sport with the Characters of all Ranks of People, to soil and begrime every Face that is obnoxious to his ungovernable Spleen or Envy: Can so vain, so inconsiderate, so elated an Insolence, amongst all the Follies he has lash'd, and laugh'd at, find a Subject fitter for Satyr than Himself? How many other different good Qualities ought such a Temper to have in Balance of this One bad one, this abuse of his Genius, by so injurious a Pride and Self-sufficiency? And though it must be granted, that a true Genius never grows in a barren Soil, and therefore implies, that great Parts and Knowledge only could have produced it; Yet it must be allow'd too, that the fairest Fruits of the Mind may lose a great deal of their naturally delicious Taste, when blighted by Ill-nature. How strict a Guard then ought the *true Satyrist* to set upon his private Passions! How clear a Head! a Heart how candid, how impartial, how incapable of Injustice! What Integrity of Life, what general Benevolence, what exemplary Virtues ought that happy Man to be master of, who, from such ample Merit, raises himself to an Office of that Trust and Dignity, as that of our Universal Censor? A Man so qualified, indeed, might be a truly publick Benefit, such a one, and only such a one, might have an uncontested Right——

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——— *To point the Pen,*
Brand the bold Front of shameless, guilty Men;
Dash the proud Gamester, in his gilded Car,
Bare the mean Heart that lurks beneath a Star.

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But should another (though of equal Genius) whose Mind were either sour'd by Ill-nature, personal Prejudice, or the Lust of Railing, usurp that Province to the Abuse of it. Not all his pompous Power of Verse could shield him from as odious a Censure, as such, his guilty Pen could throw upon the Innocent, or undeserving to be slander'd. What then must be the Consequence? Why naturally this: That such an Indulgence of his Passions, so let loose upon the World, would, at last, reduce him to fly from it! For sure the Avoidance, the Sights, the

scouring Eyes of every mixt Company he might fall into, would be a Mortification no vain-glorious Man would stand, that had a Retreat from it. Here then, let us suppose him an involuntary Philosopher, affecting to be—*Nunquam minus solus, quam cùm solus*—never in better Company than when alone: But as you have well observed in your Essay—

*Not always Actions shew the Man—
Not therefore humble He, who seeks Retreat,
Guilt guides his Steps, and makes him shun the Great.*

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(I beg your Pardon, I have made a Mistake; Your Verse says *Pride* guides his Steps, &c. which, indeed, makes the Antithesis to *Humble* much stronger, and more to your Purpose; but it will serve mine as it is, so the Error is scarce worth a Correction.) But to return to our Satyrical Exile,—Whom though we have supposed to be oftner alone, than an inoffensive Man need wish to be; yet we must imagine that the Fame of his Wit would sometimes bring him Company: For Wits, like handsome Women, though they wish one another at the Devil, are my Dear, and my Dear! whenever they meet: Nay some Men are so fond of Wit, that they would mix with the Devil himself if they could laugh with him: If therefore any of this careless Cast came to kill an Hour with him, how would his smiling Verse gloss over the Curse of his Confinement, and with a flowing animated Vanity commemorate the peculiar Honours they had paid him?

But alas! would his high Heart be contented, in his having the Choice of his Acquaintance so limited? How many for their Friends, others for themselves, and some too in the Dread of being the future Objects of his Spleen, would he feel had undesired the Knowledge or the Sight of him! But what's all this to you, Mr. *Pope*? For, as *Shakespear* says, *Let the gall'd Horse wince, our Withers are unwrung!* But however, if it be not too late, it can do you no harm to look about you: For if this is not as yet your Condition, I remember many Years ago, to have seen you, though in a less Degree, in a Scrape, that then did not look, as if you would be long out of another. When you used to pass your Hours at *Button's*, you were even there remarkable for your satyrical Itch of Provocation; scarce was there a Gentleman of any Pretension to Wit, whom your unguarded Temper had not fallen upon, in some biting Epigram; among which you once caught a Pastoral Tartar, whose Resentment, that your Punishment might be proportion'd to the Smart of your Poetry, had stuck up a Birchen Rod in the Room, to be ready, whenever you might come within reach of it; and at this rate you writ and rallied, and writ on, till you rhym'd yourself quite out of the Coffee-house. But if Solitude pleases you, who shall say you are not in the right to enjoy it? Perhaps too, by this time you may be upon a par with Mankind, and care as little for their Company as they do for Yours: Though I rather hope you have chosen to be so shut up, in order to make yourself a better Man. If you succeed in *that*, you will indeed be, what no body else, in haste will be, A better Poet, than you *Are*. And so, Sir, I am, just as much as you believe me to be,

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Your Humble Servant,

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