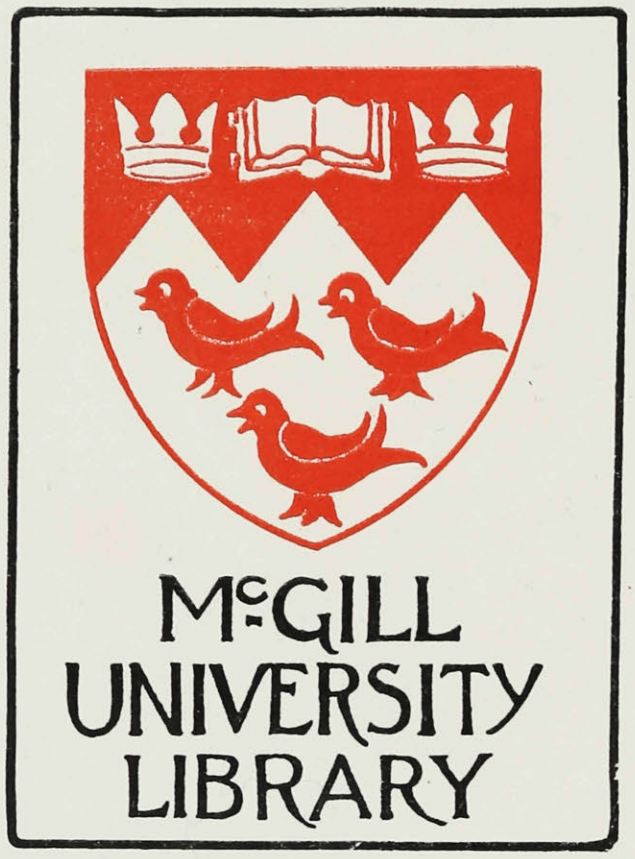
LIFE & LETTERS

DURING

THE AGE OF POPE

THE DUNCIAD



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LIFE AND LETTERS DURING THE AGE OF POPE

THE DUNCIAD

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION --- THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

It is not unusual to treat of the distinctive qualities of an earlier literary epoch, exalting its merits, disparaging its shortcomings and at the same time ignoring the underlying causes which have been shaping the specific literary features of the past. Such a study is of necessity superficial. One of the indexes of a finer critical spirit in the modern world of letters is the abandonment of the time-honored judicial attitude with its rigid application of a code of infallible laws, and the adopting of the saner principles of historical investigation. Poetry reflects the spirit of its age. Accordingly literary laws vary as do the primardial features of human existence, as enumerated by M. Taine; race, epoch and environment. When seen in this light literature becomes a speaking witness of life and of its variegated ramifications--social, intellectual, religious, political. It reveals the psychology of the ages. Thus it is that to the student of England's master dramatist the aspirations, the passions and the salient features of the Elizabethan social and intellectual structure are disclosed, for Shakespeare to a remarkable degree gives back an inclusive and colorful reflection of life in Elizabethan

England, holding as "'t were the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." [x] This being true of one of the most highly romantic eras of English literature so much the more is it true of the pseudo-classicism which marked the literature of the early eighteenth century. Sir Leslie Stephen, a keen observer of the interrelations of the varied phases of intellectual life advances the hypothesis that "if we wish to discover the secret of the great ecclesiastical and political struggles of the day we should turn not to the men in whose minds beliefs lie inert and instinctive, but to the poets who show how they are associated with the strongest passions and the most vehement convictions." [xx]

It is the purpose of this treatise to consider the extent to which social, political and intellectual characteristics in the half century following the glorious revolution were operative in controlling and circumscribing the muse of the Augustan poets and to trace this influence as it reveals itself in a virulent satire by England's master Augustan - the Dunciad of Alexander Pope. Unfortunately there exists in the world of letters a law which might well be called that of contiguous disparagement whereby the latest past phase of literature is made the object of depreciation, even of disdain and contempt. The poets of all time have

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[x] - HAMLET, III., 2, 23-7.

[xx] - English Literature and Society in the

not been exempt from this law, and the votaries of English classicism abide under the proscription of the romantic critics to this day. The antipathy of Thomas Carlyle is typical of the nineteenth centure resentment of the previous century. The age of sham, of prose, of lying, the fraudulent bankrupt century, the reign of Beelzebub, the peculiar era of cant: these are but a few of the profuse and virulent epithets which he showered upon an age that he neither cared nor attempted to interpret aright. In all justice to the transitory era which ushered in the modern world and "gave birth to the movements wherein we live and to the tasks which we yet labor to solve" [x] we are bound to repudiate these misnomers which are more extravagant than truthful. So too is the label 'the Augustan Age' misleading, for the genius of any intellectual movement refuses to be circumscribed by a single significant appellation altho there are undoubtedly certain tendencies which color the general physiognomy of the time, and from the maze it is possible to single out a definite spirit leading towards a specific goal.

The poetry of formalism is not of the most exalted species. It is not that Augustan poetry is unique in its reflection of the affectation, intrigue, idiosyncracies and virility of the times; rather it expresses these

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[x] - HARRISON, FREDERICK. Choice of Books, 350-87

characteristics of the social structure in their most pungent form. Never in the history of English literature has an epoch abounded in a greater number of scintillating portraits of social life; the work of consummate artists. The general tendency of letters in such an age is to divert attention from the more exalted themes of literature to a restricted circle of an aristocratic minority; in the Augustan times to the foibles of the beau-monde, the riots of fashion and the petty gossipings of the nation's elite.

The poetry and career of Alexander Pope reflect the multiplicity of interests which agitated English letters during his life. His juvenile Essay on Criticism crystallised the critical theory of English formalism; ideas upon which the learned Spectator was wont to speak ex cathedra in a similar vein. In his twenty-third year Pope had perfected an admirable mock heroic poem, the Rape of the Lock, with its dexterous portraiture of ephemeral mannerisms and foibles of aristocratic life; "the truest and liveliest picture of modern life" Joseph Warton called it. His genius for personal satire, it is the genius of the Augustan Age, is indulged in the Dunciad which represents the climax of an ignominious literary warfare with the Grub Street artists, and in which the lives of contemporary men of letters finds a vivid tho somewhat perverted reflection. The vague and illusive religious and philosppic thought of a Bolingbroke and a Shaftesbury formed both the basis and superstructure

of his Essay on Man and while the moral motive of the poem is subverted by Pope's incapacity to reason coherently, yet the poem reflects one phase of the dissatisfaction which had attended the religious compromise of 1688; the Deistic theory of a natural religion that repudiated ecclesiastical tradition and divine revelation breathes thru the entire poem. In later life the acute political antipathies which marked, and marred, the years of Walpole's supremacy drew Pope into the vortex of a seething political sea; his Imitations and Moral Essays are pregnant with the national turbulence that followed in the wake of the constitutional recognition of popular sovereignity. "Alike in his poetry, his criticism and his correspondence we seem to see the mind of the country taking an external shape during the period of struggle that followed the first establishment of civil liberty". [x]

The period immediately following the Stuart restoration and terminating in the upheaval of 1688 which annihilated the contract theory of government, witnessed an almost unprecedented barenness of genuine literary merit. Dryden's name alone, for Milton's genius is not the genius of neo-classicism, saves the period from utter destitution. Yet beneath the surface of national corruption, of political intrigue and disorganisation, of the unblushing ignominy

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[x] - COURTHOPE, W.J. History of English Poetry, V, 157.

of the Stuart court [xx] forces were at work whose influence upon society and upon political, religious and intellectual life was to be far-reaching and of the utmost significance in the later reigns of Queen Anne and the Hanoverians. Of these forces, one is worthy of extended comment since it is in part accountable for and intimately connected with the spirit of the Augustan Age: the evolution of a modern spirit of criticism. This attitude, an undertone of the political and intellectual Renaissance realised a slower and less conscious development in England than in her neighbor, France, due undoubtedly to the national character of her people, the nature of her social and intellectual structure and the insular isolation which England enjoyed prior to the restoration times. It is the result of a tone of mind that had worked its way into the intellectual atmosphere of continental nations and that became at once apparent and influential in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century. During these years the nation had leisure to develop considerations and formulate hypotheses of the physical universe and of the vast, but as yet little explored, worlds of intellectual experience. Opinions were rationalised and stablised which expressed a stubborn dissatisfaction

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xx - When love was all an easy monarch's care
Seldom at council, never in a war:
Jilts ruled the stateand statesmen farces writ
Nay wits had pensions and young lords had wit
The Fair sate panting at a Countier's play
And not a Mask went unimproved away.
(Essay on Criticism, 535)

with mediaeval Europe; opinions which had been rife in the sixteenth century but to the development of which the social order had not been congenial.

This tendency to challenge and appraise made Reason the ultimate court of appeal. It pronounced authoritative judgment upon the varied phases of life's activities, referring them invariably to the prosaic touchstone of practicability, and condemned all art that was not of a moral and didactic turn. A rapid survey of the century's intellectual life reveals Galileo (1564-1642) and Newton (1642-1727) winning glorious achievement in formulating laws of space; philosophy boasting of such names as Bacon (1561-1624), Descartes (1596-1650), Hobbes (1588-1678) and Leibnitz (1646-1716); natural science impelled by the contributions of Boyle, Napier, Kepler and Burnet. The enumeration is but partial. It scarcely does justice to the century and if time has disproved the hypothesis of many of these intellectual giants yet it has not overshadowed the immensity of their contributions in view of the sparse scientific background against which they labored and from which they drew such little inspiration. The existence of a Royal Society in England (1662) and of a French Academic Royal des Science (1666) is a witness of the spirit of the times.

It would be folly to presume that literature was exempt from this new agitation; it too partook of the new order and became but one of the many departments of Reason;

letters were characterised by the same striving after rationality that marked contemporary philosophising. This feature, superimposed upon classic authority, had become an integral attribute of French critical precept early in the seventeenth century. There the philosophy of Descartes, which, as Boileau is said to have remarked, had "cut at the throat of poetry", had found an echo in literary activities. Cartesianism however was simply an embodiment of the general trend of intellectual activity during this period. In England, a similar outlook influenced the Augustan conception of poetic art. Thus the imitation of classic art was encouraged because its reasonableness was universal and inevitable rather than personal and empirical. In this identification of the dictates of classical poetic art with those of a universal good sense lay the germs of an abstract and final standard of judgment and taste. Pope, who canonized anew the classic masterpieces as the first and last resort of all literary judgment writes:

> First follow Nature and your judgment frame
> By her just standard which is still the same.
> (Essay on Criticism, 68)

and supplements his advice by intimating that in the last analysis the rules of nature and of the ancients are identical.

> Learn hence from ancient rules a just esteem
> To copy nature is to copy them.
> (Essay on Criticism, 139).

Accordingly, as the principle of universal scientific rationality was urged, so the function of poetic imagination was discouraged. "With the scientific basis thus imposed on literature its only safeguard against extinction was the vast influence of a body of fixed rules which literature dared not deviate from." x The signal qualities of scientific, religious and philosophical thought are equally characteristics of the world of letters; the critical spirit encouraged by a congenial background of the social scheme evolved a new and modern literary style.

The poet reacted promptly to the new emphasis upon reason; the insistent demands for permanent and legitimate technical standards made him at once critical and analytic. In an earlier chapter of English literature, during the stirring times of Elizabeth, it is the very absence of this analytic tendency, together with the animation arising out of a great and impulsive national development, that imparted the tone of greatness to Elizabethan letters. When, however, the stimulating tide of national achievement had begun to recede and the genius of national enthusiasm had faltered the splendor and power of the Elizabethan poetic art induced an aftermath. The era of the metaphysicians followed; form and polish, characteristics of all truly great art, were ignored in the struggle for conceit in expression and freakishness of thought. It is the recapitulation of

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x - SPINGARN, J.E. History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, 250.

these peculiarities that supplies the key to the Augustan reaction, during which the primary insistence was upon form and finish. With Pope the age declared that "conceit is to nature what paint is to beauty" and that "there is a majesty in simplicity above all the greatness of wit". The analytic artist is a characteristic product of the times. The age of explanation and apology begins; prefaces, epilogues, dedications, explanatory notes appear in great profusion and only too often conceal a dearth of true literary talent. Pope is the child of his age in literally burying his Dunciad under a mass of letters to the publisher and to the reader, the prologomena and the like.

Poetry is thus perverted into a medium capable of representing the practical interests of the day in science, politics and religion. The flood of Elizabethan enthusiasm had ebbed; reached its low water mark in the obscurity and affectation of the metaphysical poets, which in turn had given way to the subdued tide of English pseudo-classicism. It was necessary that this should be, otherwise letters might well have failed to keep pace with the advance of thought, the origin of which is to be traced to the contemporary critical spirit. Later criticism emboldened by the natural antipathy of eighteenth century romanticism, quite alien to the spirit of neo-classicism, often misinterpreted the Augustan Age. Poetic originality was discountenanced.

Arnold in an essay on the Present Functions [x] of Criticism discusses the relative merits of the creative and critical powers of a nation; the former he believes to be "the highest function of man", which implies a relegation of the Augustan Age to a secondary position in literary epochs, for the times were critical if anything. Scepticism and analysis are never productive of the finest art; they remove the vigor, the warmth and color from all that they touch. Judged by Milton's touchstones--simple, sensuous and passionate--the age is barren indeed altho in comparison with the previous age it does possess an abundance of the first qualification. Didacticism, the evaluation of all literature in the light of its ethical contribution and not for its aesthetic significance, had discouraging results for pure letters . This tendency is noticable in the critical thought of John Dryden and not infrequently Pope and his contemporaries cloak an ignorance of the literary craft beneath a maze of ethical thought and suggestion. The ideal that Pope and his school pursued has been somewhat disguised by the misnomer, classical; few labels are all-inclusive enough to bound the activities of any one man of letters and how much less may they be applied to the ramifications of an entire movement.

Apart from the national contribution to this movement, English classicism assimilated a second-hand impulse in

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x - ARNOLD, MATTHEW. Essays in Criticism
1st Series, 4-9

the adoption of French standards, whose characteristics of nicety, precision and restriction were alien to the Anglo-Saxon poetic ideal which has always been marked rather by what it aspires towards than by what it actually grasps. Yet the tacit assumption that the principles of English poetic theory and practice, instituted shortly after the Restoration, were completely dominated by the genius of French classicism requires qualification. Equally to be avoided is the narrow national outlook which confidently asserts that English classicism would have assumed pretty much the same aspect had France been among the antipodes. De Quincey makes this error [x] and Pope himself voices something of the same sentiment in his Essay on Criticism when, after tracing the evolution of critical theory from the mighty Staggrite thru the subsequent ages, he concludes with an assertion which the entire spirit and nature of the poem gives the lie to

> "...We brave Britons, foreign laws despised
> And kept unconquered and uncivilized."
> (Essay on Criticism, 716)

Both are but half truths for French and English poetic theory of the early eighteenth century are divergent streams of the one great European movement; France having the precedence in time and an added prestige lent to the movement by a brilliant school of poets and critics including Moliere, Bossuet, Racine, Boileau and Malherbe. It was a time of

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x - DE QUINCEY, Literary Works, XI, 60.

mutual interchange, and the community of literary thought found a parallel in the spheres of philosophy and science; if England looked across the channel for a measure of literary guidance, French writers in turn were animated by a passion for libertyand enlightened government as provided by the English constitution. Voltaire drew upon the English deists for the weapons with which he attacked the corrupting influence of a state religion; the revolutionary theories of French government and society were inspired by the philosophy of John Locke. Servile imitation played little part in this interchange. John Dryden and the later enunciators of an English theory of art were far too practical to ignore the genius of the nation. In France, dictatorial standards emanated from the Academy with the voice of absolutism that characterised the political regime of Louis XIV; in England the spirit of critical liberty was breathed into poetic life in the discursive coffee-house atmosphere. "The ex-courtier, the man of affairs and the coffee-house philosopher did in England the refining work of the King, the Hotel Rambouillet and the Academie in France." [x]

English literature was amenable to any influence that made for rationality, and implied the negation of the blind enthusiasm and unperturbed egoism that had marked the life and letters of the previous age. Poetry had been

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[x] - COURTHOPE, W.J. History of English Poetry, V, 92.

overrun with extravagences; classicism promised to be the engine of rationality which would reduce this poetic jungle to an appearance of regularity and conformity. There was a nation-wide infusion of sociality and rationality, as opposed to individuality and unintelligibility; the prose of Addison, the philosophy of Locke, the poetry of Pope are replete with this infusion. The immediate effect of this attempt to bring order out of poetic chaos was one of circumscription. Poetry was rendered incapable of delving into the intricacies of the human soul, swayed, as it is, by passions and interests which are often highly irrational; but it could be applied with admirable effect to the external attributes of life. The Augustans were primarily moral poets in that their finest field for the expansion of genius lay in cultivating a poetry of manners. To attain to the profundities and infinitudes of poets of all time is denied to men of letters who are nurtured in such a school of thought. Clarity and cogency were possible however, and to these one must add a contemporary portraiture which for very vividness, if not for depth, has rarely been excelled in English poetry; these are the foundations of the Augustan art.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE AND POLITICAL LIFE

It has become a mark of England's social and public spirit that there is scarce a commoner of the realm who does not devote a considerable portion of his time and thought to considerations of political interests. This interest assumed specific form during the reign of William III when the bases of popular government were being consolidated. With the accession of Queen Anne, 1702, the lines of party demarcation had been carefully designated; the Whigs adhering to the principles of monarchial rule and parliamentary government embodied in the revolution settlement of 1689, promoting the new commercial interests of the nation and encouraging the movement toward religious toleration; the Tories holding for a time to the idea of the royal prerogative and representing the established church and the landed interests of the squierarchy. The contrast between the old order and the new is heightened by a comparison of the manifestoes of civil government elucidated in the Leviathan of Hobbes and in Locke's Treatise on Government. Both presume a more or less passive submission of Man to an order of civil society; here the parting of the ways is reached, Hobbes insisting that Man inclines naturally towards civil absolutism while Locke maintains that absolutism refutes the principle that led Man out of a State of Nature

and that the desideratum, the inevitable, is a trustee form of government "for the mutual preservation of the lives, liberties and estates of the citizens". The essence of the earlier doctrine of Hobbes found favor with the restored Stuarts; that of the latter is consonant with the Declaration of Rights.

The events, terminating in the glorious revolution, had given men good cause to observe the conduct of affairs of state. During the last decade of the century an era of broader mental horizons, conducive to individual thinking and free speech encouraged a greater interest in the political situation. This interest finds a persistent reflection in the literary world for men of letters participated in the uncertain experiment of popular sovereignity. This engrossment of the nation's attention had vital consequences for letters now that the Gazette or a party pamphlet--for these were the libraries of the politician as the coffee-house was his school--was acclaimed where nobler literary effort passed unheeded. Poetry and polite letters displayed their charms in vain and the gratification of party thirst for malignant disparagement and unqualified eulogy became the indexes of literary prosperity. To embrace the cause of party became the primary necessity of literary productions. "In our nation and especially in our present age whilst War, Debates and Public Convulsions turn our minds so wholly upon Business and Affairs the better Genius's being in a manner necessarily

"involved in the active Sphere on which the general eye of mankind is so strongly fixed there must remain in the Theatre of Wit a sufficient vacancy of Place and the quality of the Actor upon that stage must of consequence be very easily attainable and at a low price of Ingenuity and Understanding." x

To the general political concern it is necessary to relate the particular economic conditions of literary production. Men of letters chose to celebrate themes of a political nature not alone because they were popular, but as well because they offered emolument, and were as sign posts pointing the way to political preferment. This to be sure, is but an ephemeral phase in England's literary development; it marks the evolution out of the Stuart tradition of royal patronage and protection to a more modern tradition of independence of life, judgment and thought. Dr. Johnson is the spokesman of the new order in his famous repudiation of Lord Chesterfield's delayed overtures concerning patronage for the doctor's dictionary. Carlyle says of this, that "it was the far-famed blast of doom proclaiming to the ear of Lord Chesterfield and thru him to the listening world that patronage should be no more." The new status of the literary profession is confirmed by Oliver Goldsmith; writing in 1762 he says "At present the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence. They have now no other patron but the public, and the public collectively considered, is

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x - SHAFTESBURY, EARL OF, Characteristics, III, 273

"a good and generous raster ... Every polite member of the community by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore of living in a garret, might have been wit in the past age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true." [x] But it was all very different in the Augustan times.

The age of Pope was none the less natural for all its ephemerality. The Stuart tradition had flown with the last Stuart anachronism - James II - and political patronage and literary subservience to party leaders became the order of the day. Here again the folly of the tradition which remarks a similarity between the English Augustan Age and the era of enlightened encouragement and protection enjoyed by men of letters under the Emperor Augustus is obvious, insofar as such a comparison implies a measure of royal favor and protection. Sir Adolphus Ward in the introduction of the 'Globe' Pope, denies the existence of royal patronage; "the English Augustans were not warmed by the favor of any English Augustus" [xx]. To William III literature was merely another phase of English life to which he cared not to reconcile himself. Queen Anne was too often subservient to plotting politicians to be a constant friend of men of letters. Of the Hanoverians, the first did not

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[x] - GOLDSMITH, OLIVER, Literary Works II,368.

[xx] - WARD, SIR A., Pope's Poetical Works, 9

know the language of the people over whom he had been summoned to rule and his successor soon quenched the hopes of those who had come to associate his accession with a return of royal favor for the liberal arts. During the entire Augustan Age, with the rather doubtful exceptions of Congreve and Rowe, it is quite impossible to single out an example of recognition and reward of pure literature as such.

The favor of crown and court had given way to an equally insidious type of patronage the general effect of which, however, was less deplorable than that of the previous age. This took the form of a combined private and political patronage, the former accompanied by a condescending familiarity on the part of the great, the latter circumscribing the efforts of creative literary genius within the stifling bounds of party antipathy. To all intents and purposes these two phases are as one; so closely fused are they as to make differentiation quite impossible. No more comprehensive delineation of the tangled web of political and literary associations can be found than that which Shaftesbury outlines in his Characteristics. Writing in 1710 he says: "There is no element in the Art of Writing can be said to have attained a greater height than that of Controversy or the Method of Answer and Refutation." In former times he adds "whatever Sect there were, the Zeal of Party-causes ran not so high as to give the Reader a taste of the personal reproaches which might pass

"in a debate between different Partymen ... We have at present so high a relish of this kind that the Writings of the Learned are never truly gustful until they are come to what we may properly call their true Pipeness and have begat a Fray ... We begin then for the first time to whet our attention and apply our ear." x

The reign of Anne found partisans ranked in hostile camps endeavoring by fair means or foul to embarrass their political adversary. Prior to this time the echoes of parliamentary debate had not resounded beyond the walls of the Commons, yet as it became evident that more and more would the lives of governments be dependent upon public opinion, party leaders cast about for forces which might enhance their prestige. They were quick to realize that the power of the pen might well become a mighty factor in directing the bent of the popular mind--an influence not unlike that wielded by the modern newspaper. Queen Anne partisans revelled in the use, and abuse, of this newly found ally. Would-be men of letters who could wield their pens with but a passable mediocrity were eagerly enlisted in the cause of party, and rewarded in proportion as they advanced the causes of their respective parties. Speaking of the swarm of minor versifiers Pope writes to Lord Bolingbroke in 1724, "Some of these will be encouraged by the govt.

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x - SHAFTESBURY, III, 9.

"equally, if not superiorly, to the good ones, because the latter will rarely, if ever, dip their pens for such ends. And these are sure to be cried up and followed by one half of the kingdom and consequently possessed of no small degree of reputation." [x] This is no doubt one feature of the world of letters which in a later time led writers to cast longing eyes back to the golden age of Anne, where ability had been recognised by lucrative appointments and significant honors. But there is another side to all this which when duly emphasised detracts considerably from the glowing aspect of literary prosperity, and when it is over-emphasised makes the age seem despicable. The literary status of Addison, Steele, Locke, Prior and Swift was unimpaired by political intrigues, in themselves, for respectable citizens of the Queen took these much as a matter of course; but it is to be regretted that this participation circumscribed their creative literary genius. Too often the signal marks of encouragement were naught but returns to men of letters of whom it may be said, as Goldsmith remarked of Burke in a later day, that they "to party gave up what was meant for mankind." Addison knew this when he wrote in Spectator, 125, "Knowledge and learning suffer in a particular manner from this strange prejudice which at present prevails amongst all ranks and degrees in the British nation. As men formerly became eminent in learned societies by their parts and acquisitions, they now distinguish them-

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[x] - ELWIN AND COURTHOPE, Pope's Works, VII,400.

"selves by the warmth and violence with which they espouse their respective parties ... An abusive scurrilous style passes for satire and a dull scheme of party notions is called fine writing." [x] The lines of men of letters in Anne's reign indicate that the blight of political patronage was fatal to pure literature. Probably no author, with the exception of Pope, attained the heights of literary craftsmanship which might well have been reached had it not been for political subservience, and Pope had in his favor comparative independence and an intensely intellectual temperament that helped him to avoid the political turbulency of the times. His cynical outlook is disclosed in a letter to his friend ~~Carlyle~~ Caryll of May 1st, 1714, in which we read : "This miserable nation is so sunk between the animosities of party and those of religion that I begin to fear most men have politics enough to make the best scheme of government a bad one thru their extremity of violence." [xx]

The full implications of this intermingling of literary and political life are often perverted. The following statement is an abridgement of M. Beljame's account of the consequences of the alliance: [xxx] The status of writers as a class was elevated beyond the level attained during the Restoration times; this augmented prestige can be traced in

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x - SPECTATOR PAPERS (ed.H.Morley) No.125
xx - ELWIN AND COURTHOPE, VI, 208.
xxx - BELJAME, ALEXANDRE. Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au 18e siecle, 339-363.

large measure to the relations between letters and politics. Enrolment in the lists of the political arena gave to men of letters a liberty of movement unrealized under the restored Stuart court where there had been but one place of appeal, one adjudicator of literary excellency. Now there were two sponsors, and writers availed themselves of the opportunity presented by the alternatives to improve their situation. Disinterestedness in the political scheme was not a characteristic of the English Augustans and the invaluable services that writers might render to both party and individual led to a more considerate treatment of contemporaneous literary life. Patronage implied more than it had in the past; it was not well for partisans to reject proffered services or to discard at will their allies. Furthermore, a community of interest often made the poet an associate and collaborator of the patron; on the whole, the position of the former was distinctly less that of a subaltern than it had been immediately after 1660. Yet men of letters were still dependent -- and here is the darker side of a so-called golden age -- they lived not by their pens but by their services. Poets still enacted the role of soliciters paying court to the chief functionaries of the day. Swift, writing to Stella in 1711, from London whither he had been drawn by hopes inspired by the temporary Tory ascendancy, writes of the dinners at the Lord Treasurers: "Prior is always there; he is a much better courtier than

"than me and we expect at any time to see him commissioner of customs." Indeed, the representative men of letters seem not to have differed materially from many who moved in the first circles of the nation's social and political life, either with respect to their sympathies or activities. For all this, writers were still obliged to resort to dedications, and a measure of subservience, however the close associations of man of letters and politician may have prevented the former from prostrating himself as before a god. The general tone of dedicatory content is more dignified and independent but men of letters had for so long a time associated eulogium with emolument that the break with the tradition of dedication was halting and at times imperceptible. Not infrequently writers were without the inclination and special aptitudes which fit one for public duties; the political atmosphere thwarted and stifled their native genius. In turn the absorption of creative powers, embarrassment of administrative duties, occupation at literary productions whose only enduring quality was their ephemerality, and wherein only by the rarest chance might the author be happily elevated above his theme--these exacted a heavy toll; posterity has been the loser. Men of letters werealive to the fact that preference and place were not attained without a loss to pure letters; Addison counsels Pope not to be content with the admiration of half the nation when he may have it all, and thinks that Pope is most fortunate in being beyond the hubbub of partisan

contentions. But perhaps the most unfortunate of all effects was the insidious tendency to evaluate literature by the narrow party services to which it was addressed. Letters became merely a means to an end--political preferment, with its attendant life of relative freedom from the trials of impoverished writers. Yet men of letters were to learn by painful experience how unstable their new home was; that no master is a finer turn-coat than a political one. Addison was deprived of his offices during the pre-eminence of the political stars of Bolingbroke and Oxford, and during this enforced relief from public duties produced the Spectator upon which his claim to literary distinction rests. Steele, basking no longer in the rays of political benevolence, lived to direct the mountebank performances at Drury Lane theatre. Swift schemed in vain for the bishopric that was never to be his, and lived quite buried alive, as he said, in his Irish deanery becoming more and more cynical with the passing years. There is only one genuine man of letters, one Augustan who lived for and by his pen, and that Pope felt the tug of the world of politics need scarce be doubted, for writing in December of 1715 to the inspirer of his juvenile efforts, Sir William Trumbull, he says : "I never had so much cause as now to complain of my political star that fixes me, at this tumultuous time, to attend the jingling of rhymes and the measuring of syllables; to be

"almost the only trifler in the nation and as ridiculous as the poet in Petronius who while all the rest in the ship were either laboring or praying for life, was scratching his head in a little room to write a fine description of the tempest." [x]

The rival parties had long anticipated the uncertaintyof the political situation that would attend the death of Queen Anne. During the closing years of her reign literature was flung into a national melting-pot where England's political future was being compounded. The ultimate triumph of the Whigs was inevitable, for the Tory cause had been discredited by internal dissension which took the form of a struggle for supremacy between Oxford and Bolingbroke, and when the former had been dismissed for neglect of duties St. John's ascendency seemed assured. The Queen, however, had inconsiderately died, (August 1, 1714), and the Tory programme did not admit of a rapid read judgment to meet the new state of affairs; it was at once immature and indecisive and when finally a partial recovery of equilibrium had been effected the power of the Whigs was paramount. They had grasped more keenly the significance of the situation; Hanoverian rule had become a certainty. The facts of history are too well known to call forth further comment here. For a quarter of a century Whig supremacy was not seriously

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[x] - ELWIN AND COURTHOPE, VI, 9.

challenged. The nation, guided by the masterful vigilance of Robert Walpole, who had seized the helm of the good ship of state when the South Sea Bubble had been pricked, entered upon an era of unprecedented prosperity and compromising peace.

The change bore special consequences for the world of literary composition and production. General political patronage ceased. Nor has one to go far afield to disclose the complexity of causes responsible for the altered status of men of letters. Neither the king nor his chief minister were responsive to the voice of poetry; the welfare of the English muse was only to be cherished as Walpole saw therein an opportunity to reinforce the stolid Whiggism of the times. Sir Robert was not unaware of the dangers attendant upon the retention of the patronage tradition that had been in vogue since the revolution. He realized that the auspicious environment in which men of letters found themselves tended naturally to increase their number and their expectation; it had become quite obvious that the demand for party plums would soon exceed the supply. Accordingly the poet's foe, as he was later called, adopted the most effective means of curtailing the demand. What might be gained on the one hand thru the dissemination of Walpole's principles, would surely be offset by the virulence of men of letters who had curried, yet failed to find, favor with Sir Robert. Moreover the minister's policy of peace at home and abroad

would scarcely be promoted by the rabid and ill advised participation of men of letters in politics. As a member of the ministry during the reign of Anne he had, rightly or wrongly, attributed much of the intermittent agitation to the alliance between poet and politician; he had been convinced that poets, on the whole, were very indifferent administrators. The unchallenged priority of the Whigs; the age has been called the avatar of Whiggism, released them from the necessity of having extensive recourse to literary weapons with which to embarrass their adversaries. Tory sentiment had gone into a decline from which it was not to emerge until the late thirties. Walpole's treatment of literature is typical of his methods. He established a system of literary centralization; commandeered a band of servile scribblers who were not above selling their pens and submerging the last vestige of self respect while contending with one another for the special favor of Walpole. His retinue of hack-writers, men of the Concarren, Arnall, Welsted type, was just sufficient in number to lend a bias to public opinion and to chastise the man who, in a moment of indiscretion, challenged the efficacy of Walpolean policy.

What then was the fate of men of letters who had neither the opportunity nore the feebleness of spirit to attach themselves to the gazetteers? The history of English letters has not transmitted a particularly elevating

representation of their position. Non-partisan writers were without visible means of livelihood. They turned in vain to Whigs and Tories; the former were giving nothing; the latter had nothing to give. The possibility of private patronage was practically negligible because of the dearth of a cultured English aristocracy; the foreign favorite of the German king were not likely to pose as literary benefactors. No longer might men of letters make merry at the festive board of prestige and appointment; their places had been usurped by a pack of avaricious politicians upon whom were showered profusions of stars, mitres and garters. Writers were thus thrown back upon themselves, or rather upon the book and newspaper trades which, altho destined for an amazing growth, were not very remunerative. The immediate reaction was most humiliating, however gratifying the final outcome may have been. Life became a miserable existence. Pledged to the services of unscrupulous booksellers who imposed conditions almost at will; living from day to day in the grim shadow of the prison; ever doubtful of the morrow; protagonists of the art of letters, who a decade earlier had prospered exceedingly, now presented a perspective of humiliation and impoverishment.

Innumerable must have been the instances of men of genuine literary talent whose energies were sapped, whose creative powers never attained fruition, whose lives were

terminated violently and untimely and who partook with Dr. Johnson of the five ills of the brotherhood of letters: toil, envy, want, the garret and the jail; who learned with the doctor the bitter truth that "Slow Rises Worth by Poverty Distressed." When good Queen Anne had ruled, the poet had been a gentleman of the beau-monde; dabbling in the popular religious controversies and playing a role in affairs of state. Under the first Hanoverians his condition was sadly reversed and there is probably more of truth than we should like to imagine in Taine's portrayal of the denizens of Grub Street. "In no age were hack-writers so beggarly and so vile. Poor fellows like Richard Savage who slept during one winter in the open air on the cinders of a glass manufactury lived on what he received for a dedication, knew the inside of a prison, rarely dined and drank at the expense of his friends; pamphleteers like Tutchkin who was soundly whipped, plagiarists like Ward exposed in the pillory and pelted with rotten eggs and apples. Journalists, hired slanderers, vendors of scandal and insult, half rogues, all the literary vermin which haunted the gambling houses, the stews, the gin cellars and at a signal from the booksellers stung honest folk for a crownpiece." [x] One need scarce pursue the description further; such conditions could not but

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[x] - TAINE - History of English Literature, 494

have regrettable consequences. "Moral sensibility was blunted, artistic sensibility frittered away, disorder became a Grub Street habit and tradition, so that when kind fortune deigned to smile upon the improvident poet he knew not how, and doubtless cared less, to husband his resources. Few individuals who lived to the full the life of Grub Street emerged untainted. George Saintsbury has undertaken, at considerable length, to prove that the Grub Street tradition is a mere myth. Johnson and Macaulay, he believes, crystallised popular opinion and apart from their writings there is but meagre evidence of its existence. [x] This, if true, would completely nullify the purpose of the Dunciad. Shaftesbury overlooks the genius of Hogarth, the stark realism of Smollet's novels, Besant and Rice's "Chaplain of the Fleet" and a host of contemporary witnesses of the precarious existence of men of letters. Miserable writers sought a haven in the precincts of Drury Lane and Grub Street, whose very names have become almost synonymous with destitution. Johnson says of Grub Street that it is "a street near Moors fields in London, much inhabited by writers of small history, dictionaries and temporary poems." Posterity has been only too willing to recognize the meanness, servility and depths to which these unfortunate writers sank. Pope, from the pedestal of relative luxury, showers withering

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[x] - SAINTSBURY, GEORGE, The Peace of the Augustans, 90

contempt upon them; their very poverty seems objectionable to him, and the temple of Dulness is made at once the "cave of poverty and poetry". He brings to an end the day of typical Grub Street revels, so disgustingly described in Book II of the Dunciad, thus:

> Thus the soft gifts of Sleep conclude the day
> And stretched on bulks, as usual, Poets lay.
> Why should I sing what bards the nightly Muse
> Did slumbering visit, and convey to stews:
> Who prouder marched with magistrates in state
> To some fam'd round-house ever-open gate!
> While others timely to the neighboring Fleet
> (Haunt of the Muses) make their safe retreat.
>
> (Dunciad, Book II, 418)

Pope's enmity was not entirely unprovoked; his is the natural wrath of a selfish intellectual temperament, for the hirelings and hacks who were degrading the poetic art by responding to wretched literary tastes. The occasion which called forth his contempt in the great tirade against Dulness in all its forms, and particularly among would-be men of letters, was both personal and particular but time has given a measure of universality and generality to the poem in its entirety.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE AND THE SOCIAL SCHEME

The wealth of letters and memoirs; the intense social interest of the literature of the Augustan Age, provides a vivid and picturesque view of the early eighteenth century. The memoirs of Lord Hervey, Bubb Dodington and Lady Mary Wartley Montagu; the letters of Swift, Pope and the remainder of the Tory coterie; the art of Hogarth; the intimate glimpses into the foibles of contemporary life afforded by essays of the Sir Roger de Coverley type leave little to be disclosed of the days of hoops and patches, of snuff-boxes, clouded canes and full bottomed wigs when Addison could became a minister, Swift wielded a mighty power, Savage died a miserable death and Grub Street teemed with wretchedness and unrecognized genius. One and all bear witness to the peculiar isolation of the Town, for London was practically the sole center of the nation's political, social and economic life; the provincial centers, still relatively small, effected the general scheme of life in the beau-monde but little. Communication was slow and hazardous, a nation-wide penny post quite inconceivable, city periodicals had a circulation confined quite exclusively to the city and its immediate environs. London, as it were,

was an oasis of enlightenment in the surrounding wilderness of agricultural England. Macaulay in his history points out the great gulf which separated rural from urban England, and the papers of Joseph Addison intimate that the nation's squirarchy had little interest or influence in affairs of the Town. There, from the one half million of city-dwellers, was recruited the small intellectual society which, in the absence of court leadership, was more and more to direct and dominate the course of English letters.

The London of the early eighteenth century was essentially aristocratic. If it exhibited the vices of an unrestrained aristocracy it did so quite cognisant of the fact that the possibilities of external restraint and regulation were negligible, for now that social, as well as political life had cast off the yoke of royal domination there was an absence of authoritative guidance whilst the bourgeoisie were slowly but surely attaining to the supremacy. The activities of such a society were well calculated to animate the intellect, sharpen the wit and harden the hearts of its members. The very narrowness of this circle served to foster and illuminate eccentricities, foibles and petty mannerisms, and allusions to these in verse would be recognized and appreciated in a manner quite impossible today. This phenomenon became quite noticable in the world of letters after 1688. Previous to this the

adjudicators and remunerators of literary ingenuity were located in the Stuart court which, however, had long since ceased to give that particular encouragement to letters which was consonant with national tastes, as the court had done in the days of Elizabeth. This change is most clearly revealed in the altered function of the drama, which had formerly given expression to sentiments and aspirations which found favor with the masses as well as with the courtier. With the restored Stuarts, however, the national interest of the drama had either ceased or been greatly circumscribed. Restoration drama became the organ of a degenerate court, thoroughly alienated in spirit from the commoners of the realm, and while the king's satellites heartily applauded a reflection of the licentious Stuart court and its continental mannerisms, the masses silently condemned the drama and found at length a spokesman in the person of Jeremy Collier. A similar evolution marked the history of literary development in general; the drama simply affording the most obvious example of what was the general literary tendency of the time.

The struggle between the court and popular parties had virtually terminated in 1688 and the consequences of the popular victory were carried over into spheres other than political. This transition was of course gradual; altho the influence of the court had been considerably qualified its voice had not been silenced. On the other hand, the

voice of the Commons was not so immeasurably the voice of authority as now and "while supreme in the choise of measures it was secondary in that of persons".
It was not enough that Robert Walpole be a man of consummate diplomatic dexterity, a master of parliamentary tactics and political stratagems. These were indeed contributing facts, Yet, in reality, his strangle hold upon political preeminence was the result of an efficient system of court strategy whereby he anticipated the bent of the royal outlook. One phase of the transition which had important consequences for the world of letters was the incorporation of the Commons within the narrow limits of aristocratic London. This isolated society of the nation's elite dominated the House not by the letter of any law, but merely because tradition had established it as the most eligible unit for governing. Parliament became the debating club of fashion, and in turn the beau monde reflected a political interest which permeated all spheres of its life. Thus it is that during the reign of Queen Anne literature has almost ceased to be an instrument of the Court; it has become an organ of society, or rather that part of society which lived, moved and had its being in the Town. The contemporaneous existence of popular literary clubs, which not infrequently were back-stair party cabinets; the coffee-houses; the journals, whether

of political import or of moral, are at once causes and manifestations of the altered function of literature.

London was quite unique in the particular bent given to the social character of literary activities during the Augustan Age. The coffee houses, authors' clubs and combined literary and politieal institutions were indigenous rather than imitative. It was not until the Age of Johnson that English Letters consciously endeavoured to revive the drawing-room atmosphere of France, and thereby to make the bond between letters and the social world intimate and abiding. Various conjectures have been suggested to explain the absence of anything like an English salon during the reign of Queen Anne. It would seem that literary urbanity was quite favorable to its inception; a Stuart queen was enthroned; the typical man of letters seemed not averse to the pleasures of social intercourse. Opposed to those more propitious circumstances; however, there was a notorious participation of women in the world of letters. This new conception of woman's place in literature dates from the Restoration times, and represents a distortion of the true spirit of the Salon which tends to elevate woman to the rank of an associate muse to inspire and direct the course of letters. Mrs Manly (Rape of the Lock 111, 165); Mrs Centlivre (Dunciad 11, 411); the Duchess of Newcastle (Dunciad 1, 142) and Lady Mary Wortley (Morel Essays 11, 24) were candidates of the new order, for literary celebrity, and the salon degenerated into a "school for professional writers". x. There was undoubtedly a parallelism between the interaction of letters and politics in England and in France but

(x) Tinker C.B. The Salon and English Letters.

but in the latter country the Government and literature moved in the direction of absolutism while in England the trend in both spheres was in the direction of a constitutional liberty. The coffee house and similar institutions were best calculated to promote this movement. By the end of the 17th century the salon had ceased to exercise a ~~violent~~ vital influence upon English letters - an influence which was later resuscitated in the famous blue-stocking clique. The unique club projected by Addison and Steele in the Spectator will remain for all time a symbol of the social aspect of letters during the Augustal Age.

Whilst men and manners absorbed the interests of the literature, the primary emphasis was upon the Town. London became a Land of Promise, at once a workshop and a club, a discipline and an opportunity." The city was a centre of attraction which drew men from all parts of the island towards it. The pilgrimages of David Mallet and his friend Thomson are but two of innumerable instances of men who journeyed to London in search of literary fame; there, the narrow, intellectual circle existed which apportioned encouragement and recompense for what it considered to be true literary talents. We have seen that men of letters enjoyed a measure of prosperity and affluence, during the reign of Queen Anne, which was almost without a precedent in the

history of English literature and of how their condition was so sadly reversed under the Hanoverians. History and fiction are replete with anecdotes of the pre-eminence of the town in England's social structure. This condition was not without serious implications for the poet's art, because apart from the general trend of Augustan intellectual thought this concentration of interest and sympathy in the Metropolis contributed towards the partial and perverted conception of nature and the physical universe which contracted the poetic horizons of the English Augustans. Essentially practical, conventional and decorous, poetic imagination was unprepared to acknowledge the existence of worlds of mystery and infinitudes outside of the immediate precincts of the town.

Pope's interests are circumscribed by the narrow social scheme in which he moved. In "Windsor Forest" where he might well have turned aside from the restraint of classic formality to celebrate the glories of physical nature, he chooses rather to people his forest with men than with trees, and in attempting to portray the heights and depths of human emotion and passion, in the tragic mediaeval figures of Eloisa and Abelard, he betrays his trust and makes his poem a vehicle for incipid rhetoric, and moral platitudes. Thus his flights are painfully bounded by the walls of the town from which he himself probably never departed more than one hundred miles. One might carry the work of circumscription still further, for even with the

town his interest is confined to the most artificial and sophisticated element of society; he singles out for treatment not the universalities of human nature but rather ephermeral superficialities. Whatever its beneficient implications may have been, the coffee-house atmosphere was not conducive to broad and natural literary vistas. Pope, whose enfeebled constitution prevented him from entering upon the free and easy life of his fellows, which, as Thackeray says, shortened their lives and enlarged their waistcoats, yet found it expedient to dwell at Twickenham, some tem miles from the centre of fashion. From thence he might anticipate the trend of public interest and appear upon the scene at the least suggestion of a controversy - literary, political, it seemed to matter not - like"a porpoise in a storm. The soured author of the peregrinations of Lemuel Gulliver never fully reconciled himself to life in an Irish deanery, so far removed from the fountain-head of English urbainty. Boswell tells of how, upon one occasion, while walking with Johnson in Greenwich Park the doctor attempted to try his friend's appreciation of nature by asking:

"Is not this very fine?" To which his biographer "having no relish of the beauties of nature and being more delighted with the busy hum of men " had replied: "Yes, Sir, but not equal to Fleet Street." One need hardly add that Johnson commended his friend's opinion. The incident is trivial; yet

Augustan men of letters would have appreciated its implications better perhaps than we should. On the whole, the greater part of poetic composition during the Augustan times, making that age identical with the career of Alexander Pope, bears witness to the restricting and enervating reaction which the social structure exercised upon poetic interpretation and outlook.

CHAPTER 1V

THE DUNCIAD - ITS COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION

The history of the composition and publication of the Dunciad is only important for our purposes so far as it seems to illustrate something of the deceptive ingenuities which men of letters resorted to in order that their efforts might bear the marks of justification, which in themselves they often lacked. The true history of the composition of this poem will never be fully known. Pope was a master in the art of equivocating "pretty genteelly" when it so suited his cause, and deductions concerning the conception and evolution of the Dunciad in the poet's mind will be but tentative. One thing is certain: Savage's account is not to be trusted; it was falsified with the deliberate intention of leading the public mind astray from the true course of the poem's development. He tells us that when the miscellany containing among the literary trifles and fragments, Pope's Treatise of the Bathos, was published - the treatise had arranged the several species of bad poets and had indicated by initial letters, ostensibly selected at random, the poets belonging to each class - the poetasters of the times took these initials and this classification to themselves. Straightway a host of abusive retaliations were directed against Pope, for although he had not acknowledged the treatise as his own, it had at once been attributed to him. "This gave Mr. Pope the thought that he had now some opportunity of doing good by detecting

and dragging out into the light these common enemies of mankind; since to invalidate this universal slander it sufficed to show what contemptible men were the authors of it..... This it was that gave birth to the Dunciad and he thought it a happiness that by the late flood of slander upon himself, he had acquired such a peculiar right over their names as was necessary to this design"(x) The supposition that Pope himself contributed the spirit, if not the actual content, of this letter of justffication is not without credulity.

There are at least two things which offer convincing testimony that entirely refute the tone of Savage's apology.

(1) The poem itself: Not as it now appears with innumerable revisions and intrusions which represent the accumulation of Pope's personal hatred and maliciousness from 1729 to 1742, but as it appeared in the original edition - that of the oval frontispiece of 1728.

(2) <u>The letters of Pope and his associates:</u> Here we are treading upon more uncertain ground, for Pope's duplicity in revising and publishing his correspondence has cast a wholesale doubt upon the authenticity of the letters, unless their genuineness has been confirmed thru other sources. In this case, however, where the evidence is opposed to the general impressions which Pope wished to imprint upon the public consciousness, there is some justification for taking him at his word.

The poetic organisation of the Dunciad suggests disjointed and intermittent composition; the poem lacks continuity of action, for, on the whole, the episodes in the first edition are not characterized by an alignment of cause and consequence

(x) Elwin & Courthorpe IV 231

which Pope had shown himself to be capable of in his earlier Rape of the Lock. Yet while suggestive, this is by no means conclusive, for this same deficiency in continuity of thought is even more marked in some of his later poems and noticeably in the Essay on Man. The diffusion of personal antipathy throughout the poem makes against the impression of uninterrupted composition. Pope speaking through the publishers original notice to the reader, says of the discredited Grub Street denizens: "I should judge that they were clapped in as they rose, fresh and fresh, and changed from day to day, in like manner, as when old boughs wither we thrust new ones into a chimney". (x) This implies that the author intended that the action should be loose enough to permit the inclusion of individual strokes at will and that it should merely suffice to bind together his satiric thrusts. Yet, there is more than this, for in the same notice the publisher refers to the six arduous years spent in composition and although in later acknowledged editions Pope imputes this to purposeful exaggeration, there is no reason to doubt his refutation, since it was quite obviously promoted by the insinuations that it was scarcely praiseworthy that the first man of letters should devote so much time and energy to such a petty pursuit. The more likely conclusion is that about the time Theobold published his Shakespeare Restored (1726) Pope began to assemble the disjointed fragments of satire, which had been written from

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(x) Elwin & Courthorpe IV 231.

time to time as provocation occurred, and grouped them about the person of his rival for Skakespearian honours. Having completed the poem he postponed the pleasure of revelling in Theobold's humiliation; kept the composition by him for several years, as was his custom, and was further constrained to retard publication because of the vòguе which his friend Gay's "Beggar's Opera" was then enjoying. Finally the action of the poem (x) derives its significance and meaning from earlier libels against the character and ability of Pope, many of which were anterior to the quarrel with Theobold. The suggestion that there had been a half formed satire on the Progress of Dulness, which Pope revised to suit the occasion, is not an unlikely one.

It is not likely that the fragmentary nature of the parts, later to be assembled in the Dunciad, would be the occasion for specific references in the poet's correspondence. Yet references there are, which together with the story of how Dean Swift so narrowly saved the poem from consignment to the flames, indicate that the Dunciad had begun to take definite form while the Dean was Pope's guest at Twickenham in 1725. Here are two excerpts:

(1) A letter from Pope to Sheridan - the father of Richard Brindsley, dated October 12, 1928. "It had never been writ but at his (the Dean's) request and for his deafness, for had he been able to converse with me

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(x) Twas on the day when Thorold rich and grave
Like Cimon triumphed both on land and wave
(Dunciad 1.85)
(Thorold was the Lord Mayor in 1720)

do you think I had amused my time so ill?"(x) This suggestion is confirmed by Swift who posed as a sort of a foster parent to the poem and said that he had cause to put Mr. Pope on writing the poem called the Dunciad.

(2) A letter from Pope to Swift, October, 1725, in which he laments that Ambrose Phillips had not been preferred, for, he adds, "If they do not promote him they will spoil a very good conclusion of one of my satires" (x) He appends several lines one of which is contained toward the end of Book 111 in the Dunciad.

Lb! Ambrose Phillips is preferred for wit (326). Swift was not at all certain of the advantages to be incurred by giving to the world this satire and he warns Pope against the dangers of giving unnecessary notoriety to names which time alone would soon render oblivious.

This troubled Pope; he tried to excuse his action to Swift and to justify himself to his readers in two explanatory notes which are flatly contradictory:

(1) Book 111. 333. "It may perhaps seem incredible that so great a revolution in learning, as is here prophesied, should be brought about by such weak instruments as have been described in the poem; but do not rest too secure in thy contempt of these instruments. Remember what the Dutch stories

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(x) Elwin & Courthorpe V11 137

(xx) Elwin & Courthorpe V11 57

relate, that a great part of their province was once overflowed by a small opening made in one of their dykes by a single water-rat." (x)

(2) Book 1V. 585. Commenting upon the petty nature of the charges assigned to Dulness' minions he writes: "But be it well considered that whatever inclination they might have to do mischief, her sons are generally rendered harmless by their inability and that it is the common affect of Dulness to defeat her own designs." (x)

If the Treatise of the Bathos may, with a reasonable degree of certainty, be accepted as a premeditated stratagem, calculated to pave the way for a coup de Grace, the Dunciad had assumed mature proportions before 1727. Whatever the truth may be, the poem was not the voice of righteous indignation calling down destruction upon the common enemies of man, but rather the culmination of a personal, vengeful and long-meditated scheme by which Pope might humiliate his detractors and justify to man the ways of Alexander Pope. As long as this assumption is not seriously challenged, the moral pretensions which Pope argued for the poem, will be negligible.

The publication of the Dunciad illustrates the ingenious artifices resorted to by men of letters in order that anonymity might be preserved and the operation of a vague copyright

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(x) Elwin & Courthorpe 1V. 185

(x) Elwin & Courthorpe 1V 121

law circumvented. The intense personality of the poem, a characteristic of most Augustan satire, was so apparent that its author was dangerously exposed to libel charges. The unravelling of the tangled threads of Pope's duplicity in publishing the Dunciad is less difficult and confusing than in the case of his correspondence.

Either instance serves to elucidate a common practice in which Pope excelled. Because of the very excellency of his chicanery, he has been acknowledged by posterity to be a master literary trickster; Could Pope re-visit today the scene of his deceitful subterfuges, he would find it poignantly true that posterity avenges itself upon the man who practises deception too cleverly, and who will deny Pope a ~~promised~~ prominent place among the masters of this art?

The following are the salient facts of publication, which it will be observed, differ considerably from Savage's account of 1732, already mentioned. In London, May 28th, 1728, there appeared an anonymous poem in three books, which claimed for itself to be the reprint of an earlier Dublin poem of the same name. Now, that this poem was never printed in Ireland prior to May 28th, there is no good cause to doubt; in fact, there is conclusive evidence to the contrary. This evidence rests in the main upon the authentic correspondence between Pope and Dean Swift, then resident in Ireland. The following several excerpts might be greatly augmented space permitted or the occasion demanded.

(1) A letter from Pope to the Dean dated in January, 1728, interesting in that it shows that another title was at one contemplated, and reading in part thus: "It grieves that I cannot send you my chef d'oeuvre, the

poem on Dulness, which after I am dead and gone will be printed with a large commentary and lettered on the back "Pope's Dulness". (x) It is not unlikely that Pope feared the interception of the poem by agents of piratical book sellers, should he make bold to sell it. Gay's Opera and the Life of Jonathan Wild, founded upon one feature of the contemporary social order, intimate that His Majesty's Mail did not always proceed from place to place with impunity. Pope did, however, include the several lines of dedication to the dean, begging him to "consider and re-consider, criticize and hypercriticise" them that they might not unworthily celebrate the virtues of his venerable friend. The lines inserted, subject to considerable revision, appear now in Book 1. (xx) They were at first omitted from the anonymous editions since they would associate Swift too intimately with the poem and point too obviously to its author.

(2) A letter from Pope to Swift, March 23rd, 1928, which indicates a decision to alter the title. We read: "As for those scribblers for whom you apprehend I should suppress my Dulness (which, by the way, for the future you are to call by a more pompous name The 'Duncaid'.) How much that nest of hornets are my regard will appear to you when you read the Treatise of the Bathos." (xxx)

(x) Elwin & Courthorpe V11. 110

(xx) Oh Thou, whatever title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff or Gulliver;
* * * *
Dunciad Book 1. 19-28

(3) A letter from Swift to Pope bearing the date May 10th, 1728. "You talk of this Dunciad but I am impatient to have it.....There is a vacancy now for fame, the Beggar's Opera has done its task." (x) It is quite incredible that the Dunciad could have appeared in Dublin without Swift being immediately aware of it; nor is it at all likely that in the two weeks immediately following, a Dublin edition appeared, a copy was conveyed to London and a piratical edition printed there. The entire Dublin mystification is not confusing when one recalls the relation in which these two centres of the English book trade stood, the one to the other, for in the time of the ~~Fifth~~ first Hanoverians, the absence of a ~~dixrect~~ common copyright law was a direct incentive to literary piracy which was indulged in much as a matter of course.

The Dunciad, then, was first published in London, and Pope had carefully removed all evidence that might indicate authorship directly, a stratagem which we may feel sure wounded the vanity of Dean Swift to whom the poem was to have been inscribed and who was elaborately complimented therein. Furthermore, the Publisher's letter to the reader (xx) insinuated that Pope was neither the author nor inspirer of the poem which was a work of defence undertaken by one of

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(x) Elwin & Courthorpe V11. 131
(xx) Elwin & Courthorpe 1V 230.

his many admirers who had been taken aback at the outburst which had greeted so innocent a treatise as that of the Bathos. Why did Pope seek so zealously to conceal the authorship? Mr. Courthorpe, in an admirable introduction to the poem (x) suggests a two-fold motive for Pope's connivance. The fear of prosecution; for Pope could not anticipate the public's reception of this savage satire, the personality of which laid him open to legal action. The fear of Grub Street Retaliation; the author knew that open acknowledgments of the poem would provoke equally savage counter-attacks from the Grub Street race whose enmity he had had occasion to experience after the Treatise of the Bathos appeared. Of these the latter motive may be considerably discounted. Pope was too well versed in the vicissitudes of his craft not to perceive that, because of the spirit and animus of the poem, his enemies and the public at large would at once associate authorship with himself. George Paston likens the poem to a boomerang. (xx) Pope's weapon did rebound in a manner which he had scarce calculated, and to offset this he had trumped up the stories of the authors beseiging the booksellers and of the inability of the Grub Street pack to secure remunerative employment because of their inclusion in the poem. (xxx) Both are quite fictitious.

(x) Elwin & Courthorpe 1V. Introduction

(xx) Paston, George (pseud) Mr.Pope 11. 365

(xxx) Elwin & Courthorpe 1V 3-6

To trace in detail the further subterfuges of publication is hardly necessary. Pope's fears of the consequences of his libelous satire were not fully overcome by the cordial reception which the poem received. After several imperfect editions the first ~~xxx~~ complete one was registered in November 1727. This was protected by assignment to three peers of the Realm - Lords Burlington, Oxford and Bathurst, who had been induced to lend their names for this purpose. This edition contained an overwhelming number of prefaces, dissertations, advertisements and the like, after the manner of the day. Of these the Letter to the Publisher by Pope's "man Cleland" and the Prologomena of Martinus Scriblerus may still be read by students of Pope with interest and advantage. In March 1729 we are informed that the King received a copy of the poem from the hands of Sir Robert Walpole and that he remarked that "Mr. Pope was a very honest man". There are but two other spisodes in the checkered career of this poem. The first acknowledged action of 1735 and the final edition of 1742 in which a fourth book and numerous emendations and additions, made necessary by the unfortunate decision to depose Theobald and enthrone Colley Cibber as Dulness' Mignon, were included. This fourth book had been previously published by itself, having been designed as the last of a series of four moral essays which it was Pope's ambitious plan to append to the Essay on

Man, and which was to take the form of a satire against the mis-application of learning, science, wit to be examplified by pictures, characters, and examples. The unlucky Cibber had incurred Pope's enmity in setting forth, in the Apology for His Life, derogatory testimony of Pope's life and character, and by adopting for purposes of ridicule, an episode from Three Hours after Marriage, an unsuccessful joint-authorship play by Pope, Gay and Arbuthnot which Cibber incorporated in the revived Rehearsal, the presentation of which he was superintending.

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CHAPTER V.

The Spirit of the Dunciad

Pope's independence, the book of Homer, and the circle of the great and near great in the world of letters and politics, who constituted his intimate friends did not bring happiness. Fame, a moderate affluence, envied companionships were all overcast by the shadow of a restless and vituperant wrath which hung like hovering clouds over what might well have been, had Pope's nature been tempered by humaneness, years of happy and enduring effort. When finally the storm burst in the Dunciad, there is the pitiful spectacle of greatness ignominiously stooping to indulge in the very practices which it had hoped to trample upon. The history of English literature has taught us that this spirit is alien to the native literary temperament, yet it appears and re-appears in the 17th and 18th centuries, at a time when English literature was profoundly affected by foreign influences. It shows itself in the vicious Restoration drama; breathes through the poetry of Dean Swift ; darkens the pages of Pope; permeates and contaminates the translations and adaptations of the popular prose romances. The grace of toleration is rarely a Popean attribute. He never observes the careful distinction which he points in his Preface to the Satires & Epistles between a libeller and a satirist, and his Dunciad degenerates into a series of loosely connected lampoons, in which all bounds of decency and decorum are cast to the winds. The man, who actuated by a spirit of unreasonable

anger and a disproportionate desire for revenge, spent some of the best years of his life reviling the less fortunate scribblers of the times, and whose very vehemence over-reaches its mark and bestows a measure of notorious immortality upon insignificant poetasters, whose views time alone would have silenced, is deserving of little sympathy from posterity on that score. In an earlier day John Dryden had been maligned by tenth rate critics and vendors of malicious satire, and since the Dunciad is so obviously related to Mac Flecknoe and the latter part of Absalom and Achitophel, a word by way of contrasts will be illuminating. Dryden sinks to equal depths of coarseness and invective; yet his self possession is never for one moment doubted. One feels throughout that he himself is immeasurably above his subject. Such is not the case with Pope; he abandons the last vestage of self-control; his dignity becomes a nonentity; disproportionate and impassioned malevolence breathe through every page of the poem; the general impression, apart from the concession of a praiseworthy felicity of expression, is not pleasant. The poem is at once vehement and bitter.

The spirit of the Dunciad, the blunders which mar this effort of the greatest Augustan, can be traced in large measure to the spirit of the man and to the spirit of the age. Pope was extremely sensitive to the influences of environment in his later life. During the years in which he was making the revisions and additions for the editions of 1736 and 1743, and at the same time producing his

Satires & Epistles in imitation of Horace, his position was rendered embarrassing by the nature of his social and politifal association. Pope's identification of his own interests with those of his friends induced in him despair for the nation's moral and political welfare, which was as peurile as it was unreasonable. Virtue had perished from the earth, or where it lingered, it had become the peculiar moncpoly of the handful of the old Tory guard, Lyttelton, Bolingbroke, Marchmont. The successive editions of the Dunciad are impregnated more and more with the spirit that breathes glorification of the Tory coterie, and the abasement of all those outside the circle of the elect. The thought of virtue unrewarded and unworthiness acclaimed, rankled in his mind, and this is the contrast of thought which gives life and pungency to his later satires. For all this Pope was without the true satiric heart, and when he adopts the guise of a moral censor it is with a superficial sincerity, which renders his adminitions both shallow and penetrable. Righteous indignation is seldom an incentive with him. Life he accepts with complacency, and Swift whose misanthropy was at least genuine, informs the bard of Twickenham that his cynicism is naught but affectation. It was a cruel distortion of human temperament that caused Pope, who had contributed so materially towards the elevation of the literary profession, to a position of honorable recognition and independence, to make use of his position to heap infamy upon the lesser poetasters,

and upon the new literary prestige. But Pope's contemporary fame was dependent upon his catering to an age that relished personality in literature. The shadow of the town hovers over him; his genius is constrained by it. The finer graces of life were no conspicuous during the reign of the first Hanoverians; at least they were seriously limited in the spheres of life from which Pope's friends and enemies were drawn. Faction had effected a division in the nation, and the violence of party animus had been carried over into social life. The age was not without an affected Grandisonian element, but in general Sir Robert Walpole is typical of the times when poetry had ceased to be scarce other than an instrument for personal and partizan conflict. "The public barbarized by its gladitorial spectacle of politics, could relish nothing but blows, and blows were most applauded when they drew blood". (x)

Pope was caught up in this maelstorm and much of the unenviable notoriety which has since been attached to his name, is the reward not of uniqueness in the art of defamation but of adeptness.

(x) Pattison Mark - Pope's Satires and Epistles.
Introduction Page 8.

The mud that Pope bandied with his adversaries was not the more polluting, it simply stuck better. The spirit in which the Dunciad was written is typical of the age. It stands as an index of an unfortunate literary condition which had grown out of the perverted inter-relations between letters and society. Pope entered into this spirit quite readily; his consciousness of satiric genius urged him on. (x)
Pope is preeminently a poet of satire; we lose the meaning of his position in the higher hierarchy of letters if we fail to consider him in this light. P.E.More in his Shelburne Essay (xx) observes that unfortunately for Pope the modern world scarcely regards the satiric as a species of poetry worthy of the name, and that because of this, together with the necessity of a comprehensive knowledge of Hanoverian men and manners, necessitated by the intense personality of the poem, the Dunciad is seldom read and rarely appreciated. Undoubtedly, the Dunciad does partake of a particular interest which renders it liable to ephemerality.

(X) Satire is my weapon, but I'm too discreet
To run amuck and tilt at all I meet ;
I only wear it in a land of Hectors
Thieves, Supercargoes, Sharpers and Directors
(Satire in Imitation of Horace 11. 1. 69)

(xx) More P.E. Among the Wits. 125-49

It lays itself open to all the accusations which a satire with particularity of detail and falsity of general impression encounters. The personal satirist's outlook upon life, his field of vision, tends to be restricted and perverted. Thus Pope saw life not in its total effect, but in isolated and minuter particulars, the flaws, foibles and blots. In justice is not infrequently the result of intense personal satire, but Pope's Dunciad is not alone unjust, it is also untrue. Not only does he wink at the nobler constituents of human character, but he purposely perverts human weaknesses to disproportionate magnitudes. He invariably reverses the telescope when scrutinizing his victim's merits.

The pitfall into which the unwary wielder of satiric power is likely to tumble, is pointed out by G.K.Chesterton in Varied Types (x). The satirist who through downright maliciousness magnifies out of all proportion the weaknesses of an adversary, hits beside the mark. Society knows that its members are not altogether monstrosities, and accordingly is not stirred violently by the evident distortion, however, it may be amused. This is a grievous fault in Pope; one that he shared with his age, and accordingly as satiric spirit runs unrestrained through the Dunciad, the effect which Pope

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(x) Chesterton, G.K. Varied types 43-70

strove after was circumvented. It is only when Pope mingles light and shade, tempers censure with at least a partial recognition of merit, that his satire becomes truly effective. This he was able to do in the famous passage on "Atticus" and in the caricature of Phillip, Duke of Wharton contained in the Epistle to Lord Cobham. Against the accusation that Pope humbled his muse by reviling the less fortunate poetasters, whose only faults were the envy and disillusionment which the unsuccessful not infrequently have for those who have attained fame and notoriety, little by way of extenuation can be said. An even greater offence is that he included within his tirade able scholars and men of letters, Bentley, Defoe, Theobald. Whatever Theobald's vanity may have been, he vindicated his claim to Shakespearean scholarship in his edition of 1734. Mark Pattison writes in his preface to Pope's epistle, "if we condemn the unsuccessful author for the indulgence of a jealousy which it is hard for human nature to stifle, what shall we say of the successful man who retaliates upon his yet struggling fellows, insults their misery and tramples on them because he has been fortunate enough to emerge?" (x) No palliation need be made but an explanation may be observed in the particular spirit of the man and his times. Augustan

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(x) Pattison, Mark. Pope's Epistles and Satire.
Int. P. 13.

Society condoned the phenomenon of a man sitting in individua judgment over his fellows, for human nature is so constituted as to take an inhumane pleasure in the discomfiture of friend and foe.

CHAPTER VI

THE DUNCIAD- POPE AND POLITICS.

As a class, those frequenters of Grub Street who prostrated their muse before party are arraigned and impaled in the Dunciad. Throughout his life Pope had assidiously eschewed political entanglements, keeping zealously away from the party brawls of the times. His biographers and he himself attached considerable significance to the fact that he lived by and for his profession .(x) Thus Beljame calls him "le premiere homme de lettres Anglais" and attributes to him the honour of elevating the status of the writer to a position of independence and respect, which it has occupied to this day . This may be in a sense unwarranted and excessive eulogy; yet Pope's most bitter detractors will hardly deny that he set his face against the patronage tradition, both individual and political, and that his contribution towards breaking down the patronage barrier, is at once significant and praiseworthy. He was fully cognizant of the dangers in the intimate alliance between man of letters and politicians, for he counsels Deam Swift,

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(x) In moderation placing all my glory
While Tonies call me Whig and Whigs a Tory,
(Imitation of Horace 11. 1/67
Maintain a Poet's dignity and ease
And see what friends and read what books I please.
(Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot 263.

when the latter was making overtures to Pulteney during the temporary Tory domination in the reign of Queen Anne, and intimates that there are already too many writing for very enmity and connivance; and that the Dean should write for honour and posterity. The Dunciad, in its final form, as well as the "Moral Essays and Satirical Imitations" is replete with indications of an active political interest that with the years leaned more and more decidedly in the direction of Toryism. It is not phenomenal that this should be; the marvel is that Pope living as a proscribed Catholic and hence an object of general distrust and of suspicion (x) shouuld not have struck vigorously for Tory principles, and alligned himself more definitely with the interests of that party. That he did not dedicate his Muse to the cause of party is greatly to his credit.

During Anne's reign when the sun of popularity and prosperity was beaming upon men of letters, he had come up to London, 1706, and without any other initiative than his own, and that of his first publisher, Tonson, he had given to the world his juvenile literary efforts, thereby establishing a reputation of precocity and promise which gave him ready access into the inner circle of the Beau Monde. Among his friends and admirers were numbered not only the literary geniuses of

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(x) Lecky, W.E.K. History of England in the 18th Century. 1. 298.

the time, Addison, Swift, Gay, Steele, Congreve, Arbuthnot, but also politicians recruited from the ranks of both parties, Harley, Somers, Halifax, Craggs, and later Bolingbroke.

The political situation and the inter-relations of letters and politics have been commented upon in an earlier chapter. Let it suffice to recall something of the nicety of the political balance of power during Anne's reign, and the liberal inducements which were held out by rival party leaders to men of letters, who might render a service to the nation by indulging in the popular game of political nine pins, setting up the causes of the one and bowling over those of the other. Politicians saw in Pope, whose genius who had been so enthusiastically acclaimed, a potential political power, an instrument for the dissemination of the party propaganda. Whigs and Tories alike sought to enlist them under their respective banners. The Tories hailed him as their own, for was he not of the faith of the exiled Stuarts? Had he not written in the concluding lines of Windsor Forest?

> Hail sacred Peace! Hail long expected days
> That Thames's glory to the stars shall raise.
>
> (Windsor Forest 355.)

and this celebrated the Treaty of Utrecht, engineered by the Tory authors, Bolingbroke, Oxford, Ormonde, Strafford,

and bitterly opposed by the Whigs who claimed that the nation's honour and interest had been compromised. The programme of the Whigs and Tories seems to have been strangely reversed since Queen Anne's time;at any rate the Whig plenipotentiaries thoroughly disapprove of the sentiments voiced by good Father Thames in Pope's poem. The Whigs, however, were unabashed, and when it became common knowledge that Pope was to write a prologue for Addison's dramatic experiment, Cato, they welcomed him as a champion of Whigism, for in spite of Pope's assertion that it was but foolish industry which had perverted the drama into a party play, and that he had been "clapped into a staunch Whig sore against his will at almost every two lines," during the prologue reading, the nation had interpreted the play in the light of the existing political situation, and upon that interpretation the popularity of Cato was founded.

Pope's awareness of his predicament is described in a letter to his friend Caryll, dated July 25th, 1714, and reading in part: "Yet let me tell you, you can hardly guess what a task you undertake when you profess yourself my friend; there are some Tories who will take you for a Whig, some Whigs who will take you for a Tory, some Protestants who will esteem you a rank Papist, and some Papists who will account you a heretic. "(x) Yet until the influence of Bolingbroke became paramount in his life, Pope maintained in so far as it was possible, an attitude of uncompromising neutrality, exhibiting no marked preference for the cause of either party, but betraying

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(x) Elwin & Courthope, VI. 215.

more or less unconsciously a sympathy with the principles of his Tory friends. Until long after the accession of the first Hanoverian, he devoted himself exclusively to the pursuit of prosperity, of literary correctness, of fame; adhering to the earlier advice of Addison, remaining unsatisfied with the praise of half the nation, when that of all was not unattainable. This determination to avoid participation in the arena of political disputation discloses itself in the subtle way in which Pope escaped a declaration of sympathies and dedicated his translation of Homer to a fellow artist, William Congreve, who does not seem to have been a bosom friend of Pope, but who possessed the almost unique distinction of being on favorable terms with both Tories and Whigs. Speculation was doubtless rife upon more than one occasion, when Mr. Pope was known to have a piece ready for the press, only to be disappointed. Dr Johnson had read into the later dedications of the poet, conclusive evidence of his Tory bias, yet in reality the dedication to Lords Bathurst, Cobham, Bolingbroke, the Earl of Burlington, are not declarations of party sympathy, but tributes to enduring friendships.

In later life his bosom friends were quite without exception, drawn from the Tory circle; their interests became his interests, and in proportion as they were crystalized, we observe a reflection of them in his poetry; but to assign to Pope the servile dedicatory habit of the times is to proceed upon evidence which the facts of his life do not warrant.

His treatment of proffered pension and place, whatever his factional inclination may have been, speaks for his determination to eschew the obligation entailed by their acceptance. Harley has once intimated that Pope had but to submit to the orthodox faith and political emolument would be thrown open to him. But the poet's refusal was doubly emphasized by the sense of obligated and perverted literary serviceability, and by the knowledge that such a step, while it would not trespass upon his own convictions, of religious propriety, for his fervor for Catholicism was by no means intense, would bring hours of grief and sadness to his aged mother. Later, when the era of unprecedented Whigism in Government, and in English life generally, was ushered in, Halifax and Craggs made their overtures to Pope. The latter suggested a pension of 300 pounds sterling from the secret service fund, which was under his jurisdiction, as Secretary of State, and of which no itemized account was rendered to Parliament. Pope was not unaware of the possibilities of a more luxurious life, as he himself said, "To live largely in the city and to have a carriage", but the prospect of liberty without a carriage was even more attractive. He rejected the overtures. The particular reader of Pope will observe the manifestation of an increasing party interest in his poems, particularly after Pope had found in Bolingbroke his guide, Philoscpher and friemd.

His intimacy with the Tory chieftans, who were later to rally around the standard of the patriot king , influenced him perhaps more than he would care to acknowledge. Pope's was a kindred spirit, with the Tory coterie, which boldly carried the war into the camp of their political enemies. He was probably never as bitter an enemy of Walpole as his poems might lead one to believe. In fact, when the war waged most furiously, Walpole was pleased to bestow a living at Pope's request upon Thomas Southcote, the friend of Pope's youth, the family priest whose advice had helped the youth at a trying period of his life, to fortify his body against that long disease, his life. It was rather the power that Walpole represented in the State (x), the moneyed interests and the protagonists of Catholic social and political disabilities, that he resented.

It is a significant fact that rarely throughout his entire life did Pope stand alone. He invariably associates himself and his poetry with a kindred soul, to whose guidance he becomes extremely susceptible. Thus in early life he had leaned upon Trumbull, Walsh and Wycherley; these in turn are supplanted by Dean Swift; later Bolingbroke exercises considerable influence upon Pope's literary and political bent; and he is superseded by Warburton, the defender of Pope's orthodoxy.

(x) Moral Essay (Bathurst) - Use of Riches.

There is a striking similarity between the Tory attitude of righteous indignation with the Walpolian abuses of Government, which found expression in their literary organ, The Craftsman, and the spirit which led Pope to undertake to purge the nation from the disreputable abuses, of Grub Street. Pope's alliance with Bolingbroke's clique was a tacit acknowledgment of this kinship. His political debut was undoubtedly hastened by the new status of letters in the nation's life, after Walpole had assumed the reins of office in 1721. The balance of power between the rival parties had scarcely survived the death of the Queen, 1714. The virtual annihilation of the Tories, whose cause had been that of the exiled Prince, followed. Walpole's practice, we have already seen, demanded a complete servility from the hack writers whom he felt constrained to retain, as checks upon popular opinion. Political writers of the type of Addison gave way before the poverty stricken poetaster whose abusive pamphlets were circulated through Mist's Journal, and the Flying Post, both of which are attacked by Pope, and make up a portion of the burden of the ass in the early edition of that frontispiece. Pope's gradual attachment to Toryism and the abandomment of his laissez faire political attitude, are clearly shown, in the successive editions of the Dunciad. The first edition of 1728 had caught the fancy of the nation's chief minister who had presented a copy to his royal master.

In its final form Walpole would probably have been satisfied to present a copy to ~~Arnold~~ Arnall, or one of his breed, and that for purposes of retaliation. Pope's correspondence, ~~his~~ is replete with suggestions of the same development.

The following passages from the Dunciad, selected more or less at random, speak for, and relate very definitely to, the political situation and its bearing upon the world of letters.

(1). Gaming and Grub Street skulk behind the King (l. 310)

Twixt Prince and People close the curtain draw,
Shade him from light and cover him from Law,
Father the Courtier, starve the learned band. (l. 313).

These lines are omitted from all of the editions previous to 1742. In the note which Pope has appended we read that "When the statute against gaming was drawn up, it was represented that the king, by ancient custom, plays at hazard one night in the year and therefore a clause was inserted with an exception to this effect," which in turn becamse the pretext for professional gaming wherever the court resided. This is all very futile. ~~The~~ The real significance of the lines lies in their reference to the Hanoverian King; his absolute indifference to the welfare of English letters; his failure to understand the English people; the tacit protection given to Walpole's pack of Grub Street hounds, while embarrassment oppressed the true votaries of the Muse.

(2). Not so bold Arnall, with a weight of skull
Furious he dives, precipitately dull;
He brings up half the bottom on his head
And loudly claims the Journals amd the Lead. (11. 315)

Next plunged a feeble but a desperate pack,
With each a sickly brother on his back,
Sons of a Day!
These are - ah no - these were the Gazeteers (11. 305)

Of these, the lines satirizing the Gazeteers do not appear in the early editions, and Arnall has usurped the role which in the edition of 1736 was occupied by Welsted whose status as a party hack writer was somewhat analagous to that of Arnall, yet not nearly as significant. The revision and addition were the direct result of Pope's animosity, which had been increasingly incited against Walpolese methods. Pope informs us that "the Daily Gazette" was a title given, very properly, to certain papers, each of which lasted but a day, and that into this as a common sink was poured all the trash which had been dispersed in several journals and circulated at the public expense of the nation." This type of writing, a running journalistic commentary upon current events, is closely associated with the general literary movement of the times. It had been originated and had enjoyed a considerable vogue during the high spirited Roundhead and Cavalier struggle, for national crises seem often to animate journalism. Periodicals had taken the

form of single sheets; their contents were more often than not in satiric vein, and embellished with fanciful cartooms and grotesque caricatures. A temporaray barrier had been thrown across the path of these impromptu productions, by the institution of a censorship in 1663, together with the appointment of an official dispenser of popular information. This restraint upon the free expression of public opinion was by no means effective. It drove the journalists into underhand methods of publication, and their contributions became as questionable as their practices. Accordingly the licensing law had lapsed, 1695, and in the years that followed, factional journalism enjoyed an unprecedented growth. Political periodicals were helping to enlarge the reading public, and with the diffusion of the reading habit, the potentialities of this type of literature as a democratic force in England were realized. But the public was as yet neither large nor generous enough to make journalism in itself a profitable career, and while Steele had begun the Tatler with the avowed intention of eschewing politics, he had found it quite impossible to avoid partiality. Walpole had capitalized upon the public susceptibility to journalism. Arnall had been elevated to the position of chief literary henchman, and as such he had received some 10,997 pounds sterling for his services during four years. This is the finding of the committee appointed to enquire into the conduct of affairs under Walpole, which, we may well believe, accepted its charge somewhat reluctantly, for there were not many in governmental circles, who had not partaken

of the ministers' generosity. It disclosed the expenditure of 57,077 pounds sterling in the decade following 1731, for the current dulness of these years in Britain, and Pope adds that during this period "not a pension at court nor preferment in the church or universities was bestowed on any man distinguished for his learning, separately from party merit or pamphlet writing."

Pope's condemnation of these excesses is not wholly unmerited. It would be folly to assume that the offence lay entirely with one faction. It is a striking testimony to the new power of journalism, that during the 15 years of his office the opposition to Walpole from the press was more to be feared than that from any other source.

(3). With that a Wizard old his cup extends
Which whoso tastes forgets his former friends
Sire, Ancestors, himself. One casts hiseyes,
Up to a star and like Endymion dies,
A Feather shooting from another's head,
Extracts his brain; and Principle is fled. (IV, 517)

Pope informs us that the Cup is that of self-love which causes oblivion of honour, services to God and state, "all sacrificed to vain glory, court worship or the yet meaner considerations of lucre and brutal pleasures."
It is apparent that Walpole is the Wizard Old and that Pope is expressing the growing uneasiness with which the nation is coming to regard Walpole's doubtful practices of bribery at home and abroad.

(4). Others import yet nobler arts from France
Teach Kings to fiddle and make Senates dance.
Perhaps more high some daring son may soar
Proud to my list to add one monarch more,
And nobly conscious, Princes are but things
Born for first Ministers, as slaves for Kings. (IV, 597)

Perhaps the most outspoken of the tirades in the Dunciad against the King and his chief minister. Contributions of this sort made Pope the unofficial Laureate of the Opposition. The nobler art imported from France can be naught else than the principle of arbitrary rule, and Pope insinuates that Parliament danced as the King fiddled. The last four lines echo the charges which from time to time were emphasized in the Craftsman, that Walpole was endeavoring to exercise despotic rule hiding himself, as it were, under the cover of the King's constitutional prerogative. As parts of Book IV the last two quotations make their first appearance in the year 1742; many more series of similar lines may be observed, yet on the whole these four indicate the new spirit which influenced Pope's later life.

CHAPTER VII.

The Dunciad. Pope and the Booksellers

"Now learning itself is a trade. A man goes to a bookseller and gets what he can. We have done with patronage. In the infancy of learning, we find some great men praised for it. This diffused it among others. When it becomes general, an author leaves the great, and applies to the multitude." Dr. Johnson had himself witnessed and contributed towards this transition which he thus described in 1773. The commercial operation in literary publication had progressed greatly since the time when ignorance had been the badge of the dispensers of literary wares, and Johnson had knocked Osborne down with a folio saying, "lie there thou lump of lead."

Pope also had been intimately connected with the improvement in this trade. His scurrilous attack upon the booksellers in the Dunciad wherein he treats of them as a particularly despicable species of Grub Street vermin is merely another indication of the intense personality with which the entire poem is permeated; another factor which renders the moral design which he attributed to the poem quite intangible, hidden, as it were, behind a cloud of calumnious and personal abuse. Indiscriminately he makes Bernard Lintot and Edmund Curll the chief competitors for the bookseller's prize; the former a

legitimate and relatively honorable publisher; the latter a rogue and debauchée, a typical product of Grub Street, to whom the devious paths of illicit publication were thoroughly familiar. It is not that the faculty of nice discernment was wanting in Pope. He had had cause to experience the methods of the rival booksellers, for Lintot had been the competent publisher of his Homer, while Curll, whose surreptitious practices made him the bane of honest authors and publishers, had clearly shown his unscrupulousness in the ingenious connivances which had marked the publication of Pope's correspondence. Up to a certain degree the resentment against Curll, to which the poet gives way, is justifiable but with respect to Lintot the case is different, for Pope has magnified what appeared to him as an offence in his old publisher until it assumed the proportion of a crime, and then, he strikes.

The emphasis bestowed upon the booksellers in the Dunciad may be taken as an indication of the new functions which this class had assumed in the world of English letters. During Pope's lifetime, and dating more particularly from the abolition of the licensing laws in 1695, the evolution of the modern publisher from a subaltern state of semi-independence to one of almost complete freedom had occurred. During the seventeenth century, reading was so restricted as to be almost a class privilege;

so small ~~is~~ was this class that the commercial activities of literary production were of only secondary importance. The role of the bookseller was one of insignificance. The day when there would be a division of labor between publisher and printer was far distant. The bookseller venturing little, won little; he was dependent upon the return made by the author for publication and a small commission on the sales. At the same time the man of letters was dependent upon neither the bookseller nor the few purchasers who might constitute his public. He dedicates and solicits the patronage and support of the individual. Publication by subscription had not been generally recognized, for prior to 1689 there were but two instances of this practice; Wotton's Polyglot Bivle (1654-6) and Jacob Tonson's edition of Paradise Lost (1688), whose copyright he had secured. It has already been observed that the reading public increased by leaps and bounds in the last decade of the old and the first of the new century. Commenting upon the new atmosphere Pope writes,

> Now times are changed and one poetic itch
> Has seized the Court and City, poor and rich
> Sons, Sires and Grandsires all will wear the bays
> Our wives read Milton and our Daughters Plays.
>
> (Epistle to Augustus, 169).

The man of letters recognized the remunerative possibilities in an extended audience, but he himself was no longer able to

touch directly this rapidly growing and appreciative group. At this point the offices of the mediaeval bookseller are modified and extended. He becomes an intermediary between the author and his public; an important and indispensable cog in the machinery of literary production; sensing and directing public taste; ever on the qui vive for talented men of letters and, after 1695, feeling himself to be free of the uncertain restraints of legal regulation, inclined to risk his own capital in anticipation of successful sales. Thus Tonson had purchased outright the publishing rights of Paradise Lost and had become the sole publisher of Dryden's Miscellany (1688) and Pope's Pastoral poems, while Lintot foresaw the possibilities of Pope's Homer and entered into a commercial agreement which would be remarkable even in our own times. The contrast in reception of the translations of the classics by England's master classicists, emphasizes the degree to which the new condition of literary productivity had progressed. In 1697 Dryden's Virgil had netted the translator some 1400 pounds sterling as against Pope's 9,000 pounds sterling for his translation of Homer completed in 1725. It is essential that the new alliance between author and publisher be observed -- the former contributing his literary talent, the latter his commercial experience -- for through it dignity and independence were made accessible to the contracting parties. In proportion as a larger reading public was formed, the possibilities of literature as a lucrative occupation were enlarged, and men of letters and their

agents had not been slow in interpreting the signs of the times.

Pope is one of the first to profit by this alliance, and the existence of an enlightened public. His early experience had taught him a fact which had been brought home to Dryden in later life; that the best condition for men of letters lay in an intelligent alliance between themselves and the publisher. He had come up to London from his semi-isolation in Windsor Forest, deformed, a Catholic, quite unknown, and through his juvenile Pastorals had been fortunate enough to attract the attention of the first English publisher, in a modern sense, Jacob Tonson, who had sponsored the genius of Dryden's age. The following letter, brief, yet significant of a new feature in literary production, is in the nature of an overture from the publisher. He writes from Gray's Inn - April 20th, 1706: "I have recently seen in the hands of Mr. Walsh and Mr. Congreve a Pastoral of yours which is very fine and which has the approval of the best judges of poetry. I recall having seen you in my shop and I regret that I did not become better acquainted with you. If you design your poem for the press no one will print it with more care or give you greater encouragement than, sir, your very humble --- etc."

The youthful poet entered into negotiations with Tonson. His Pastorals appeared in Tonson's Miscellany of 1709. Pope had broken a literary tradition in England by his initial appearance under the auspices of a bookseller, without a patron

of any sort. It is hardly necessary to pause over the subsequent relations of Pope and Tonson. The poet was undoubtedly displeased with the precedence given to the inferior pastorals of Ambrose Phillips in the same miscellany, yet relations between the two were never strained and when Pope turned from the publisher of his juvenile efforts, Pastorals, Windsor Forest, Temple of Fame, it was to accept the more favorable inducements held forth by rival publishers.

In Book II of the Dunciad Pope gibbets two booksellers unsparingly; Bernard Lintot and Edmund Curll. The character of Curll that has been passed on to posterity is at once notorious and despicable. If we may accept contemporaneous testimony his moral attributes were quite as unprepossessing as his personal appearance. True, Nichols speaks of him as one to whom posterity has scarcely done justice, and adds that "he did not publish a single volume but which amidst a profusion of base metal contained some precious ore." [x] However this may extenuate the disparagement under which his name has rested it is the pen picture of Pope which has preserved his unenviable notoriety; Curll the most detestable of Grub Street vermin; the publisher whose only thought was to fill out his volumes at any cost, for prior to the Copyright Act of 1712 England's literary past was considered

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x Nichols, John . . Anecdotes of the 18th century, I, 456

fair plunder for the literary pirate; whose publications were replete with caricature not conducive to the welfare of national morals; whose translators lay "three in a bed at Pewter Platter Inn"; who prospered throughout by means of questionable practices. Pope's ironical note that "he carried the trade many lengths beyond what it ever before had arrived at. . . he possessed himself of a command over all writers whatever - - - they oould not call their very names their own",[x] seems not to have been unconfirmed by the public indictment which in 1727 proscribed Curll as "homo iniquus et sceleratus," because of his unseemly practices and publications.

It is doubtful, however, whether Curll would have called forth more than a passing mention, as did Thomas Osborne, the tyrant of Johnson's juvenile muse, had Pope's resentment not been stimulated by personal episodes which filled the town with laughter and posterity with disgust. The first of these goes back to 1716 to a meeting in the Swan Tavern. Here Pope, Lintot and Curll are assembled, the latter to answer for the publication of a series of Court Poems, the work of Lady Mary, false attributed to John Gay or "the translator of Homer". Wine was consumed whilst the would-be adjudicators of orthodoxy were sitting in judgment upon the luckless Curll, but it was not until

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[x] Elwin and Courthope - IV, 133

several weeks later that the town was taken aback by "a full amd true account of a horrid and barbarous revenge by poison on the body of Mr. Edmund Curll, bookseller." This abusive panphlet was designed by Pope to make light of the reports which Curll had circulated concerning the mock trial, which Dennis, among others, had made capital of as a sensational revelation of the danger in which the nation stood from the person of Mr. Pope.

Thus was begun a quarrel which sheds ignominy upon the contending parties and which reached its climax in the tangled web which Pope endeavored to weave about the publication of his letters. The poet is quite as culpable as the bookseller; the former in that, seeking to avoid the accusation of vanity, he would have it appear that he must publish in very defence because of threatened surreptitious volumes; the latter in that he readily made himself a partner to an undertaking of extensive literary piracy. The story in all its sordid details is revealed with painstaking effort by Mr. Elwin.[x]

Pope's treatment of Lintot is an amazing example of gross ingratitude. Pope had been indebted to Lintot in much the same way that Dryden had been to Tonson. He is known to have conducted a respectable business and to have made for himself

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x Elwin and Courthope, VI, Introduction

a fortune through his business acumen. He had carefully observed the pulse of public literary inclination, anticipated the popular vogue which the translation was destined to enjoy, and offered to Pope attractive terms which are too well known to call forth comment here. Both were greatly enriched, yet the Odyssey proved to be a stumbling block in the way of their amicable relations. Perhaps Pope had deceived Lintot by posing as the "undertaker" of the translation, thereby disclaiming the role of sole translator. At all events Lintot became highly displeased with the entire transaction and hinting at fraudulent procedure threatened to institute a suit against Pope in the Chancery Court. Pope never forgave him; "the portentous cub never forgives." Bentley had said. Lintot is one of mnay who were "clapped in as they rose fresh from time to time." The two episodes [x] in which the booksellers, and notably Lintot, Curll and Osborne, contend for the possession of a phantom Poet and a Poetess -- James Moore Smythe and Eliza Haywood -- will scarce bear quotation; they constitute one of the foulest blots upon the poem.

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[x] Dunciad, II, 35 - 190

CHAPTER VIII

The Dunciad, Pope and Grub Street

Pope delineates a further species of Grub Street artists distinct from those whose existence was eked out from the party coffers of the Whig administration; an even more infamous species; the mongers of vituperative and defamatory scandal. Grub Street, later dignified by the name Milton Street, though not as is popularly supposed in doubtful honor of the poet of Paradise Lost, held out an alternative to would-be men of letters upon whom the sun of political affluence had failed to shine. They might yet become the subservient hirelings of the booksellers. The status of the latter had materially improved since the upheaval of 1688. Later the Walpolean era of peace and prosperity; the spirit of controversy animated by the community atmosphere of the coffee-houses, club life, etc.; the awakened interest in the civic status of the middle class, becoming vaguely aware of its political and social destiny; the very personality of the times -- these, had given a new and expansive function to all identified with the literary profession.

Pope's attack is levelled against the intermittent productions of poetasters of impaired fortunes and reputations who lived by pandering to the coarse and spiteful delight in individual and social caricature. It would be quite supererogatory to

add that Pope's vehemence exceeds the bounds of propriety and defeats his own purpose. Strangely enough he traces the existence of this type of poetaster to a quite irrelevant cause, the lapse of the licensing laws of 1695, ~~which~~ these had been designed in the early Restoration times to give the king a sort of royal prerogative over the nation's press, and in order that subservience might be complete, no productions might issue from the press save those which had been duly registered with the Stationer's Company and licensed by one of the functionaries appointed for that purpose. The efficiency which attended the enforcement of this act may be concluded when one observes in the literature of the years during which the law was presumably operative, those very features which Pope attributes to the lapse of the law; floods of invective and scurrilous abuse directed against the state, the king's ministers, religious and educational institutions as well as against private individuals. Long before 1695 the law had become a dead letter. Afterwards the illicit bookseller and his pack emerged from the secretiveness of cellars and attics, and posed brazenly as national benefactors.

In reality, the existence of such a species of knaves is a convincing testimony of the scandalous nature of contemporary social life, when defamation was encouraged and cultivated with avidity by the leaders in society and politics as well as by the

lowest hanger-on.

"The dark dexterity of groping well" was a passport to an unenviable transient notoriety. "Calumnies that have been never proved or have been often refuted are the ordinary postulatums of these infamous scribblers, upon which they proceed as upon first principles granted by all men, though in their hearts they know they are false, or at best very doubtful. When they have laid these foundations of scurrility it is no wonder that their superstructure is every way answerable to them." [x] Lady Mary's abusive Pop on Pope; the pamphlet wherein John Dennis juggled with Pope's name with spiteful gusto unto he had involved an "Ape" and was thereby highly pleased; these are but two of innumerable instances of what had assumed the aspect of a national sport.

Pope had early cause to observe that the Grub Street scandal mongers could sting. His infirmities of body and temperament made him an attractive butt for the venomous practices of the literary world when "to blast one's reputation, to blacken one's character, to defile one's grandfather's grave" all followed pretty much as a matter of course when a cause of grievance, fancied or real, had been scented. Far from elevating one above

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Addison, Joseph -- Spectator No.125

the range of petty abuse, celebrity in any sphere rendered one's position the more precarious, for malicious envy was added to personal hatred. Such was the case with Pope. The higher his enfeebled body, imprisoning a mind and temper of such violent contrasts, ascended the ladder of literary fame, the more did he become an object of tirade and abuse. In all justice to his detractors one must admit that the majority of the attacks were not unprovoked. To attempt a balance of censure would be both futile and misleading; too much of the evidence has been buried with the passing of the years. At all events, the passion, commendable insofar as it was genuine, which Pope pleads for himself -- a sincere contempt for all that was low and obnoxious in the world of letters - was heightened by bitter personal enmity. How else could he have been so acutely aware of the blots in his fellow artists and yet so complacently blind to the same faults in himself?

Among the appendices, obviously attached to impart a measure of justice to his counter attack, Pope includes a list of "books, papers and verses in which our author was roundly abused" which had appeared prior to andimmediately subsequent to the edition of 1728.[x] The following names have been selected almost at random from this appendix and to the names

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Elwin and Courthope IV, 232 - 5

~~have been selected almost at random from this appendix and~~ ~~to the names~~ has been linked at least one reference to the Dunciad; Johathan Smedley (Bk. 11. 291), Mrs Centlivre (Bk. 11. 411,) John Oldmixon (Bk. 283,) Leonard Welsted Bk. 11 207, Joseph Gay (pseud), John Breval (Bk.11 283.) In short it would appear quite impossible to select one individual from the Appendix who is not clapped into Pope's pillory. Seldom does he look elsewhere for characters and examples than in the immediate circle of his own enemies and those of the small Tory coterie. Once more the garb of censor of national morals is found to fit the poet very indifferently.

The inconsistency and insincerity of Pope's position was revealed in 1737 when Walpole restored a partial literary censorship by reviving an act for licensing the drama, in anticipation, no doubt, of further satirical strokes like to those in Fielding's "Pasquin" and the Historical Register, in the latter of which the dramatist undertook "to ridiclue vice and imposture while the liberty of the press and stage subsist." The Tories read into this act the preliminary step in the withdrawal of the freedom of the press, and accordingly raised a veritable uproar against an act, the subsequent enforcement of which showed that it had been designed merely to curtail the effrontery of dramatists who were playing fast and loose with the administration. Pope joined in the

objections of the opposition for now the prospect of the general licensing act is tinged with political implications.

"But held in ten fold bonds the Muses lie
Watched both by Envy's and by Flattery's eye;
There too her heart sad tragedy addrest
The dagger wont to pierce the tyrant's breath.

(Dunciad IV. 43)

Closely associated with the absence of publishing restraint was another perfidious evil; plagiarism. Unblushing literary plagiarism was a distinctive characteristic of the Augustan age. The appropriation of dramatic plot, and exact literary phraseology, was not regarded as a singular offence by the poetaster whose hard-bound brain supplied little of originality. It is one of the charges, and not altogether without foundation, which Pope urges against his hero of the Dunciad, that his reputation was largely dependent upon shameful literary pillaging.

..... a folio common-place
Founds the whole pile, of all his works the base.

(Dunciad 1, 160)

Nor was this the only kind of plagiarism, in which the Grub Street artists was an adept, for there was also a borrowing of names which enabled the booksellers to publish 'vile pieces of obscure hands, under the names of eminent authors'.

"Cooke shal be prior and Concanen Swift
So shall each hostile name become our own

And we too boast our Garth and Addison.

(Dunciad 11. 138)

This is more than an idle trumped up accusation of Pope. Savage who is amazingly honest in acknowledging those features of a life which the majority of mankind would fain obscure, confesses in his Author To Let that his own career had begun in that way, and that among his deputations he had been employed by Curll to write "a merry tale, the wit of which was its obscenity." The effort had been palmed off upon the public as a posthumous piece of Matthew Prior. Practices of this kind are particularly condemned in the first edition of the Dunciad.

The games of diving, vociferating, tickling, in which the poetasters and booksellers engage, before the Imperial seat of Dulness, do not provide pleasant reading. Occasionally however, among the sordid and sullied lines one finds passages of fine declamation, of admirable versification, of poignant satire. Such a passage is that which satirizes the indefatigable muse of Sir Richard Blackmore, the author of Arthur and numerous other epic poems, of stupendous length; the everlasting Blackmore, he has beem called. It is to be presumed that the epithet applies rather to his multiplicity of lines than to the durability of his fame:

"But far o'er all, sonorous Blackmore's strain
Walls, steeples, skies, bray back to him again,
In Tet'nham fields, the brethren with amaze,
Prick ~~up~~ all their ears up and forget to graze;
Long Chanc'ry-lane retentive rolls the sound
And court to court return it round and round.
Thames wafts it hence to Rufus' roaring hall
And Hungerford re-echoes bawl for bawl.

(Dunciad 11. 259)

CHAPTER 1X.

The Dunciad. Pope and the Theatre.

The use to which the early 18th century theatre was put reveals, perhaps better than the general literature of the times, the debasement of national tastes. In the years following the Restoration the drama had become as degraded as national manners, and although during the reign of Queen Anne the moral character of Dramatic entertainment had been elevated above the coarse standard of the previous generations, yet this partial purgation had rendered the drama insipid, effeminate and lacking in the vigor and energy demanded by the populace,

Richard Steele had assayed the popular drama but his first effort was as he tells us damned for its piety. The popularity of an occasional production like Addison's Cato was comparatively short-lived, and dependent not so much upon genuine dramatic technique and virtue as upon its appeal to faction. Pope was unable to anticipate the basis of the nation's appreciation for Cato. He had written a prologue to it and although it was years afterwards that he allied himself with Bolingbroke and the Tory Patriots he probably was more than a little embarrassed when as Johnson says "the Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned, as a satire upon the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap to show that the satire was unfelt."

The nation dissatisfied with contemporary theatrical entertainment, depreciated the legitimate drama, and gave

the stage over largely to Mounteback performances. After the Restoration there had been but two theatres in London, D'Avenant's and Killigrew's, operating by a royal patent and enjoying a complete monopoly of the stage. Apparently, the Restoration comedy of manners was not calculated to attract continual popularity, for the two theatres were slenderly patronized. Consequently stage managers endeavoured to bolster up the flagging public interests by introducing innovations and stage novelties; dancers, pantomine, jugglers, opera, the ever-popular Punchinello. These had become quite firmly established by the end of the century and had already begun to usurp the place of the regular drama. English playwrights and actors were naturally bitter opponents of this new bid for public favor. Their protestations, however, were quite futile, although doubly redoubled in the aftermath of the South Sea fiasco, for then the clerics, incited, to be sure, by a different motive, took up the cry against the immorality, atheism and profanity of the mountebank performances. History is, as it were, repeating Jeremy Collier's broadside against "the immorality and profaneness of the English stage" (1698), but the emphasis had been shifted from the drama to the theatrical novelties of the times. Even when David Garrick assumed managerial control of Drury Lane Theatre,

in 1747, he had to forego his devotion tc Shakespeare and the legitimate drama for some time, and to accede to the popularity of the bizarre. Occasional performances like the Beggars Opera (Lincoln's Inn Fields 1728) deviated from the conventional entertainment and hence were heartily acclaimed. Gay's opera, moreover, had in its favor, attractive music, a timely appearance, a propitious subject and although it was condemned by the court because of the moral implications of its heightened description of the lines of highway and street robbers, yet it enjoyed an unprecedented popular vogue.

In 1682 a temporary union of the rival actors of the King's Company and that of the Duke's had been effected and the theatre in Drury Lane had become the centre of their activities. The alliance, however, was short-lived. Dissension was followed by division and the rebels led by Betterton were subsequently licensed to carry on at Lincolm's Inn Fields. A natural rivalry was kindled between these Companies which was further intensified when Betterton's group transferred its activities to the more elaborate Haymarket Theatre. Here the Italian Opera found unusual favor. Pope refers in the Epistle to Augustus (#) to an English Opera, the Siege of Rhodes by Sir Wm. Davenant, belonging to the

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(#) Epistle to Augustus 153.

year 1658. This was for the most part declamatory and characterized by little of the recitative and musical parts common to the opera. English adaptations of the Italian opera were being introduced before the close of the century. Writing of 1706 Colley Cibber says, "Not lomg before this time the Italian opera began to steal into England, but in as rude a disguise and as unlike itself as possible, in a lame, hobbling translation into our own language with false quantities or meter out of measure to its original notes, sung by our own unskillful voices with graces misapplied to almost every sentence, and with action lifeless and unmeaning through every character." It is evident that at this time Colley was highly displeased with stage production, but later, when he became the nation's laureate and, with Wilkes and Doggett, a joint-manager of Drury Lane, he reconciled himself to them; for, he said, he had not virtue enough to starve by opposing a multitude, and that while profits were his motive, then must he needs incline to the public demand for this type of entertainment. (x)

Under George 1. three companies vied with one another in catering to the perverted public taste; one under

(x) Cibber, Colley .....Apology 11. 182.

the management of Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields. (

"Immortal Rich! How calm he sits at ease
Mid snows of paper and fierce hail of pease.

(Dunciad, 111. 261)

a second at Drury Lane where Cibber and Booth directed the performances.

"New wizards rise; I see my Cibber there
Booth in his cloudy tabernacle shrin'd
On grinning dragons thou shalt mount the wind.

(Dunciad, 111. 266.)

The third at Haymarket, now given over entirely to the Italian models supervised by Heidegger, an improvident Swiss whose ugliness made him the butt of endless caricature, but who capitalized upon his ingenuity until his extravagant innovations carried all before them.

.....(a monster of a fowl.)
Something betwixt a Heidegger and Owl)
perched on his crown.

(Dunciad 1. 290.

Rich and Cibber were hard put to meet the popularity of Heidegger's grotesque performances. They ultimately were forced to abandon purely dramatic entertainment and to undertake the introduction of fantastic pantomine. In 1723 the irrepresible Faustus appeared at Lincoln's Inn

Fields under the guise of the Necromancer . Drury Lane not to be outdone took up the same theme and produced an even more bizarre, unreal and hideous spedtacle. (#)

One might anticipate that Pope's attack on the abuses of the theatre was promoted by causes which were personal rather than general. At the beginning of his poetic career Pope had been urged by his friends, Cromwell, to court the Muse of Tragedy, to "leave elegy and translation to the inferior class, and think only on the dignity of tragedy, which is of the greatest poetry." (##)

The tragedienne, Thomas Betterton, had been known to express the hope that he might act in conjunction with Pope to the glory of English tragedy. Pope determined to forego the experiment. He may have recognized that his was not the genius of tragedy, and he certainly was too independent to submit himself to the players and the town as Augustan dramatists were constrained to do. Later, Pope had collaborated with Gay and Arbuthnot in writing the farcical Three Hours after Marriage, the failure of which

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(#). Thence a new world to Nature's laws unknown
Breaks out refulgent with a heaven its own,
Another Cynthia her new journey runs,
And other planets circle other suns.
The forests dance, the rivers upward rise,
Whales sport in woods, and dolphins in the skies;
And last, to give the whole creation grace,
Lo! one vast egg produces human race.

(Dunciad 111. 241)

(##) Elwin & Courthorpe . V1. 128)

was as miserable as its merits were negligible.
Pope appears to have had a singular faith in the piece, and accordingly felt its rejection quite keenly, and when Cibber incorporated some of the grotesque machinery into his revival of the Rehearsal, Pope had regarded it as a deliberate attempt to belittle the farce, himself, and his friends. He had forbidden Cibber to continue the performance, and the absolute disregard which the Laureate had shown had rankled deeper than a direct attack. Moreover, Pope was not without some knowledge of dramatic technique, and in the excesses of popular performances, saw an admirable opportunity for the exercise of satiric genius. The foibles of the theatre provided him with a butt into which he might win his venomous shafts of satire.

The situation was complicated by the vehement political interests of the times, which associated themselves with the various cliques of players, and accentuated rivalry among the actors of the different companies. Even the immortal Handel found his efforts circumscribed by party animosities. He was constrained to cross to Ireland in 1741 where his masterpiece the Messiah was produced in a more appreciative atmosphere.

"Strong in new arms, lo! Giant Handel stands
Like bold Briareus with a hundred hands,
To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul, he comes,
And Jove's own thunders follow Mar's Drums,

Arrest him, Empress; or you sleep no more;
She heard, and drove him to th' Hibernian Shore.
(Dunciad, IV.65)

Prior to his departure, the Patriots had upheld his cause and Pope, although he was not at all susceptible to the power of the master musician's art, commends him because it was the fashion of the Tory coterie so to do. The seditious, violent and immoral practises of the stage were coming to have a nation-wide social significance, and as the theatre became a vehicle for out-spoken attacks upon the King's Ministry, Walpole determined to intervene. An act was accordingly introduced and written into the Statute Books in 1737, whereby the licensing of all theatrical performances was made necessary. This law was effective in curtailing the treason and abuse which had sprung from the stage, but it could not impose a similar restriction upon the extravagances of public tastes and for another generation the legitimate drama was over-shadowed by the sensationalism of opera, pantomime and like performances.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DUNCIAD - ANTIQUARIANISM AND EDUCATION

The latter part of Book Three and the entire Fourth book of the Dunciad were appended to the earlier and less pretentious edition, in accordance with Pope's ambitious scheme of emlarging the scope of his satire to include an attack upon the abuse ans misapplication of learning and scuence, and to fulfill the prophecy of Book 111, by bringing to pass the Kingdom of Dullness upon earth, to the destrution of Science and Order.

"Beneath her footstool Science groands in chains
And Wit dreads exile, penalties and pains,
There foamed rebellious logic, gagged and bound,
There, stript fair Rhet'ric languished on the ground,
His blunted arm by Sophistry are borne
And shameless Billingsgate her robes adorn,
(Dunciad 1V. 21)

Pope runs true to form and inserts the personality necessary to insure the pungency and popularity of his satire. The poet was sadly fitted for his undertaken, and it must be acknowledged that he was proceeding less upon his own initiative, than upon the encouragement and suggestion of Warburton, who had but recently attempted to place the stamp of Orthodoxy upon Pope's essay on Man by brushing aside the conclusion of M. Crousaz, a Professor

of Philosophy at Lausanne, that the poem led to fatalistic conclusions, alien to the foundations of natural religion. Warburton's defence had won the poet's gratitude, and Bolingbroke's position as the "guide, philosopher and friend," of England's first poet was usurped by Pope's new champion.

The addition to the poem takes the form of an unbalanced criticism of educational institutions and practices, as well as of a perverted stream of the spirit of enquiry of which the Royal Society was the harbinger - an awakened interest in antiquarianism and the study of nature. The latter movement, while it had no immediate significance for the world of letters does, however, suggest a divirce between Augustan principles and the new interest. English classicists, for the most part, seem to have tacitly acknowledged the benefits which might ensue from a study of natural phenomena, which restricted itself within the bounds of first principles.

Pope's censure of the tendency which led investigators a-field into the maze of virtuoso trivialities is not altogether unfounded. When Voltaire spoke of the 17th century as " le siecle des Anglais" he was undoubtedly thinking of the leadership taken by England in the fields of scientific experiment. The Royal Society was a link

between this movement and the world of letters. It was more than an academy of science; its activity touched the whole sphere of knowledge, and for literature its significance lay in the organized alliance of the world of science, with that of letters. It is difficult to determine the extent to which the virtuosi had been encouraged by the Royal Society. The institution seemed to have lent itself to freakish investigation, for which it was copiously criticized by Samuel Butler. (#) Later, in Addison and Tatler #236, laments the stupidity and perversity which characterize election into the society; fellows being selected who had no further qualification to recommend them than that they had " no pretense to wisdom but want of wit or no natural knowledge but ignorance of everything else." In this same paper an interesting account of the origin and early activities of the Society's is given. King Charles had placed himself at the head of the Society to lead them forward into the discoveries of nature. He tells of the first proposal that was acted upon - the importation of frogs into Ireland - a particularly hazardous feat which after repeated failures was accomplished by one Sir Hans Sloan "an ingenious physician and a good Protestant" who placed some of his cargo of frog spawn in St Patrick's well where "the animals had the impudence to make their first appearance."

(#) Butler, Samuel ... The Elephant in the Moon.

This criticism is echoed by Pope who, however, overleaps the candid criticism of Addison. When Dulness is conferring her titles and degrees upon her disciples it is an appropriate reward that those who "

"Impale a Glow worm or Vertu profess
Shine in the dignity of F.R.S."

(Dunciad IV. 569)

The Earl of Shaftesbury comments upon this tendency also; he regards the virtuosi as a product peculiar to the early 18th Century when "lovers of art and ingenuity such as have seen the world and informed themselves of the manners and customs of the several nations of Europe, searched into their antiquities and records, considered their police, laws, constitutions; observed their principal arts, studies amusements, their architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and their tastes in poetry, learning, language, and conversation." A movement quite laudible in itself but as the Earl observed, liable to run into extravagances and trifling research, until the striving after a fuller knowledge of man and his affairs, together with the interpretation and examination of the works of nature, becomes naught but "zeal in contemplation of insect life, the conveniencies, habitation and economy of a race of shell fish;" whence having "fortified his mind with the same trash and trumpery of corresponding empty notions and chimerical conceits," the investigator becomes a subject of sufficient raillery and is the jest of common conversation. (#)

(#) Shaftsbury, Earl of. Characteristics III. 156

Thus Dr Wilkins had written a serious dissertation on the inhabitants of the moon, wherein he had discussed the possibilities, and advanced tentative proposals, for a flight thereto; he was one of the original members of the society, which in all seriousness, encouraged his project.

"The head that turns at super-lunar things
Pois'd with a tail, may steer on Wilkin's wings,
(Dunciad IV. 450.)

Huardian No.112. is concerned entirely with the philosphers of the reign of Charles 11. who were devoting their ingenuity towards the art of flying. The author intimates that Wilkins had projected the movement and that "in the next age it will be as usual to hear a man call for his wings when he is going a journey, as it is now to call for his boots" and that the virtuosi "were actually making parties to go up to the moon together, and were moreput to it in their thoughts how to meet with accommodations by the way, than how to get thither."

The satire of Pope directed against the antiquarians and naturalists is the direct result of Augustan's pre-possessions; the harmful effect of prejudices formed from an association of ideas inimicable to the study of antiquities and the physical universe. Closely associated with these prejudices was the complacent exaltation of the scientific achievements of the Augustan age. The facilitation of

a more modern method of enquiry, aided by new auxiliary instruments, had led men to visualize Progress as the logical outcome of progressive years. Accordingly there was a tendency among philosophers and scholars to ignore preceding times; to consider the Middle Ages as being scarce conducive to the exercise or reward of research and ingenuity. Antiquarianism makes an historical appeal to the imagination. It leads one back into the mannerisms of a past age and hence its spirit is opposed, to the ideal of present worth and intrinsic value. The two are irreconcilable and the English formalist had discouraged the investigation of the Middle Ages and refuted the suggestion that such a study might enlighten history; illustrate theology; interpret scientific, economic and political life in the light of Feudal organization of society and politics.

In Pope's time these studies were absorbing the time and energies of men of taste and polite learning, and while they at first had confined themselves largely to enquiries of manners, records, coinage, etc, the entire movement was soon to have an extended field for investigating the poetical compositions of the past, which had for so long been submerged by the prevalance of a correct and polished taste. Pope did not fully realize whither the revival of interest in natural phenomena and the historic past led. The naturalistic and antiquarian tendencies of the times involved implications which were coming to have

a significant place in the literary unrest which preceded the downfall of pseudo-classisism.

The pre-eminence of any poetic school is rarely as absolute as one is inclined to assume. Even while the art of the Augustan was most strongly entrenched the pleasing simplicity and artless graces of what Bishop Percy later called "the barbarous productions of unpolished ages", were not wholly obscured and from time to time leaders of literary fashion expressed an apologetic appreciation for the popular poetry of the people. Thus Addison in Spectator Nos. 70 and 74. had called attention to the naive beauty of Chevy Chase which had pleased the ear of the nation through the centuries, although he justifies the popularity of this old song of Percy and Douglas by a rather futile comparison with the classical precepts and examples of Homer and Virgil. The dramatist Rowe had made the old ballad of Jane Shore the basis of a tragedy of the same name, which appeared at Drury Lane in 1714, and for which Pope had written an epilogue.

In short, while Pope was completing his alterations and additions to the Dunciad, the signs of the times were pointing towards a revival of interest in England's poetic past, which was accompanied by linguistic research, the investigation of Archaic dialects and the like.

"But who is he in closet close y'pent
Of sober face with learned dust bespent,
Right well mine eyes arede the myster wight
On parchment scraps y'fed and Wormius hight
To future ages may thy dulness last
As thou preserv'st the dulness of the past.

(Dunciad III. 185)

This attack was made upon the antiquarian Thomas Hearne, although Pope demies it, whose only offence seems to have been an avid interest in the neglected poetry of his forefathers; he had published, for the first time, in 1718, the older version of the Hunting of the Cheviot. Incidentally Pope in reverting to the language of Spenser reveals an ignorance of the language by his nonsensical interpretation of the 'myster wight' as an 'uncouth mortal'.

Pope's condemnation is not unreasonable insofar as he dwells upon the trifling pursuits of the virtuosi who conducted their research with a zeal worthy of important business, absorbing their time and energy to no other purpose than to make what seems secondary, of primary and philosophical importance. Addison in much the same spirit holds the virtuosi up to ridicule in Tatler No.216, in which we read: "Since the world abounds in the noblest fields of speculation, it is, methinks, the mark of little genius, to be wholly conversant among insects,

reptiles and those trifling rarities that furnish out the apartment of the virtuosi." The same paper contains an itemized and ludicrous account of the bequests of a deceased virtuoso. Addison returns to the attack in Tatler No.221 He relates therein of the delivery of a letter from the widow, who informs him in detail of the activities of her late husband, the virtuoso, who "was chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society; from which time I do not remember ever to have heard him speak as other people do, or talk in a manner that any of his family could understand him", it being his sole delight to ramble about the country-side in search of the baubles of nature. The two papers are full of amusing touches and incidents, certainly over-drawn, yet written in all sericusness to impress upon the nation the folly of inconsequential speculation and investigation.

Pope's attitude toward the virtuosi is somewhat inconsistent with idiosyncrasies of his own life, and particularly the care which he bestowed upon the freakish ornamentation of his famous grotto. The poet's correspond-ence with Ralph Allen indicates that he was greatly indebt-ed to him for material. Writing to Bolingbrooke, in 1740, who was then self-exiled in France, he remarks of the delight which he takes in patching up his grotto, "With all

thevarieties of nature underground - spars, minerals, and marbles. I hope to live to philosophise with you in this museum which is now a study for virtuosi and a scene for contemplation." (#)

The attempts to identify the virtuosi Annius (1V 346) and Mummius (1V 371) with figures of contemporary life have not been very convincing. Although the suggestion does not seem to have been thrown out, it is quite credible that their prototypes did not exist, and that Pope for the time being abandons the personal, and makes his attack general. This inference is strengthened by Pope's subsequent treatment of the naturalists to whom names are not assigned.

The rival virtuosi request of Dulness that she commit the nation's idlers into their respective cares:

"..... a lazy lolling sort
Unseen at church, at Senate or at court,
Of ever listless Loit'rers that attend
No Cause, no Trust, no Duty and no Friend.
(Dunciad 1V. 337)

Their claims are deferred and their places before the great adjudicator usurped by the rival leaders of the naturalistic tendencies; the one who has nurtured a flower of surpassing beauty, and whose labours have been brought to naught by the ruthless despoiler whose "insect lust, laid this fair daughter of the spring in dust", while

(#) Elwin & Courthope V11. 407

in pursuit of a peerless butterfly. Dulness arbitrates ; pacifies them by committing the destinies of a nation's loiterers into their hands. The goddess's final charge to her disciples is that they find their proper employment in the study of butterflies, cockles, mosses, with the caution never to overstep the bounds which separate trifling from useful occupations.

"The dull may waken to a humming bird,
The most recluse, discreetly open'd find
Congenial matter in the cockle-kind;
The mind in Metaphysics at a loss
May wander in a wilderness of Moss,
O, would the sons of men once think their eyes
And reason given them but to study Flies.

(Dunciad IV 446.)

Pope's attack upon educational instititions and practices of his time presents a varied, and not infrequently unbalanced criticism, founded in part upon his personal antipathy towards a system which denied Roman Catholics the privilege of attendance at the public schools and universities, and in part, upon an aporaisement of the inefficient foundation of the educational structure, which had long since outlived its usefulness. The poet had suffered from the restrictions which in the reigns of William and Anne were regarded as precautions necessary

to obscure the interests of Catholicism in the land. His studies had been conducted under inauspicious circumstances, at a private school, and later, under the guidance of an inefficient tutor. Later, though still in his early teens, he had entered upon a course of study, disjointed, ungoverned, save by his youthful fancy, and the mediocre suggestion of his father. The disability which closed the gates of the university to him must have weighed heavily upon him, for later, 1717, while busily engaged upon the Iliad, he had visited Oxford, and in a letter to Martha Blount, described the sympathetic impression which the old University had made upon him. He writes: "I confirmed myself to the college hours, was rolled up in books, lay in one of the most ancient dusky parts of the university, and was as dead to the world as any hermit of the desert. I found myself received with a sort of respect which the learned pay to their own species; who are as considerable here as the busy, the gay, and the ambitious are in your world." (#) In later life he magnified the ill features of the accepted educational regime, which had so sorely circumscribed his quest for knowledge.

(#) Elwin & Corthope IX 276

The fault with the entire system seems to lie in the identification of education with learning; a tendency traceable in its origins to renaissance influence, which confounded all knowledge and all aesthetic beauty with the precepts and example of the classics. Progress in the spheres of science, politics, social organization and philosophic thought had been a marked attribute of the early 18th century . As intellectual vistas generally had been lifted and extended, the educational order of the day was observed to be highly unsatisfactory. In short, educational practices had lagged far behind the current intellectual progress, and the vitalized condition of social and political existence. The fault is not peculiar to the Augustan age.

John Locke attacks the very foundations of educational adherence to tradition and conservatism when he attributes the stubborn prevalence of an unsatisfactory system to "custom which is come to serve for reason, and has to those who take it for reason, so consecrated this method that it is almost religiously observed by them." (#) Latin and Greek recitation and dissertation still constituted the major study in the grammar school, where with an absolute lack of discrimination the youth of the country

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(#) Locke, John "Some Thoughts concerning Education". 138

were exposed to the arduous composition of themes and declamations, as though the primary aim was to manufacture classic poets and orators. Tatler No. 173 ridicules the single track method whereby youths destined for an apprenticeship and the trades, or the university and a profession, alike thimbed the pages of Virgil and Horace. The author reports of a friend of his, a pastry cook, that "he would not yet take his son from learning but was resolved as soon as he had a little smattering of Greek to put him apprentice to a soap-boiler."

Chance and ignorance were the blind guides who led the nations youth into the initial stages of public education, and Pope drives home an effective blow in introducing Dr. Busby as a genius of the public schools.

"When lo! a Spectre rose, whose index hand
Held forth the virtue of the dreadful wand,
His beav'red brow a birchen garland wears,
Dropping with Infant's blood and Mother's tears.

(Dunciad IV. 139)

This notorious tyrant had guided the destiny of Westminster for more than half a century, 1638, to 95, during which Locke had been subject to his discipline, and had stored his practical mind with the prejudices which he later aired in condemning the entire system, as inefficient and ill-fitted to prepare one for civil conversation and business. The Diarist, Evelyn, in the early

years of the Restoration reports that "he heard and saw such exercises at the election of scholars at Westminster School to be sent to the Universities; in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, in themes and extempory verses as wonderfully astonished me in such youths, some of them not above twelve or thirteen years of age." [x] We may well imagine that the intricacies of Greek and Latin grammar supplied scanty nourishment for the nations youth, and yet the practice of imposing the rudiments and principles of a language which the child might never have recourse to and all the while neglecting those practical studies "which are of great advantage in all conditions of life and to most trades indispensably necessary" seems to have been accepted pretty much as a matter of course.

The correspondence between Locke's treatment of the public school in his Thoughts on Education (1693) and that of Pope in the Dunciad is so noticeable as to suggest that

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x Coleridge concludes that the emphasis placed upon studies of this nature in the public schools was largely responsible for the vogue of the English classical poets.

(Biographia Literaria III, 156)

the poet knew his Locke, and more or less consciously followed the trail already blazed by a master intellect. Several specific references may help to confirm this.

(1) In treating of the tendency to make the word pre-eminent over the thing; to place a primary emphasis upon the abstract in preference to the concrete Pope writes that,

> Words are Man's province, Words we teach alone
>
> (Dunciad IV, 150)

In Locke we read "if we would take the true way our knowledge should begin, and in those things which fall under the senses be laid the foundations".

(2) Pope puts in the mouth of the genius of the schools the remark that

> As Fancy opens the quick springs of Sense
>
> We ply the Memory, we load the Brain,
>
> Bind rebel Wit . . . . . (Dunciad IV, 156)

Locke too condemns the practice of cramming the memory with the scraps of a language got by heart, a process that breeds a natural aversion to study and books, "which when a man's head is stuffed with he has got the just furniture of a pedant and 'tis the ready way to make him one".

(3) In concluding the genius of the school regrets the circumstances which led away from pedantry into the spheres of civil business thus undoing the work of years.

Lost, lost too soon in yonder House and Hall,
There Wyndham ev'ry Muse gave o'er
There Talbot sunk and was a Wit no more!
How sweet an Ovid, Murray was our boast!
How many Martials were in Pult'ney lost !.

(Dunciad IV, 166)

All of which implies the note of impracticability which forms the basis of Locke's accusation. [x]

Before the fourth book of the Dunciad had assumed its final form, an incident occurred which sharpened Pope's animus towards the Universities. In 1740 overtures had been made by Dr. Leigh to both Pope and Warburton in anticipation of a visit to Oxford in the Summer of that year during which Pope was to be honored with the degree of D. C. L. and Warburton with that of D.D. The Heads of the Houses refused, however, to sanction the proposal, for they considered Warburton unworthy of the honor. The whole procedure aroused Pope. On August 12/1740, he writes to the defender of his orthodoxy "As for my degree I will die before I receive it . . . in short I will be doctored with you or not at all."

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Locke, John -- (140-53)

Accordingly among the candidates for degrees and honors from the hands of Dulness

> The last not least in honor or applause
> Isis and Cam made Doctors of her Laws
>
> (Dunciad IV, 577)

and in Book III in anticipating the sovereignty of Dulness upon the earth the Goddess reveals to her favorite son the general debasement into which learning is destined to fall because of the neglect and abuse of educational privileges. The wonder is that these lines have not been given a modern turn by inveterate pessimists and fault-finders who read into the higher institutions of learning the realization of youthful misdirection and degeneration.

> Proceed great days, 'till Learning fly the shore
> 'Till Birch shall blush with noble blood no more
> 'Till Thames see Eton's sons for ever play
> And Westminster's whole year be holiday
> 'Till Isis' Elders reel, their pupils sport
> And Alma Mater lie dissolved in Port.
>
> (Dunciad III, 333)

The attack upon the Universities is prompted by personal considerations which take from it much of its worth and meaning. In general Pope condemns the practices which are

carried over from the public schools into the universities. The prevalence of the old scholastic methods which Pope attributes to the influence of the confining spirit of Aristotle's logic is confirmed by contemporary studies of eighteenth century universities.

Thick and more thick the black blockade extends
A hundred head of Aristotle's friends.

(Dunciad IV, 191)

Pope falsifies the facts of Locke's life by making the radical theory of the Essay of Human Understanding the cause of his being deprived of a scholarship at Christ's Church, while in reality political motives were the cause, and the Essay did not appear until long afterwards (1690).

Each fierce Logician still expelling Locke
Came whip and spur and dashed thru thin and thick

(Dunciad IV, 195 and note)

There is a half truth however in Pope's suggestion that the Essay was received very indifferently by the English University authorities. In 1696 Locke writes that after a number of years his Essay is receiving some credit at Cambridge "where I think for some years after it was published it was scarce so much as looked at." In 1703 the Heads of the Houses at Oxford pledged themselves to follow Aristotle and the entire peripatetic doctrine.

However this may imply a censuring of the principles of the Essay, the cause of Locke, Clarke and Newton, gradually gained countenance and disturbed the sinecure of the Stagirite. This agitation, in its origin, goes back to Bacon's contribution to English philosophic and scientific thought. He had struck the first decisive blow against the old natural philosophy founded, as it were, upon the scholastic metaphysics and logic, and thus had prepared the way for a wider breach which would allow the intrusion of a more expansive philosophy founded upon nature and experience. The theory enunciated by John Locke furnished this basis. Yet custom had lent its authority to the old tradition, which was supplanted very gradually, altho when Pope completed the Dunciad the circumstances of which he complains had pretty well disappeared.

Apart from calling attention to the old and the new philosophy, the attach upon the Universities degenerates into a hopeless attempt to belittle the "awful Aristarch", Richard Bentley, the Master of Trinity from 1700 to his death, 1742. Bentley was the most brilliant scholar of his time, but his over-bearing attitude towards others and the general neglect of his administrative duties while at Trinity kept him in continual trouble. Pope's attach represents the culmination of a series of incidents, trivial in themselves, but magnified out of all proportion by Pope's distorted sense of injury.

Perhaps the battle waged between Sir William Temple and Bentley concerning the authenticity of the Phalaris Letters began it all. Temple had not lived to see his cause overwhelmed by the ponderous scholarship of Bentley, yet his enmity had been passed on to Dean Swift, and Pope invariably makes the quarrels of his friends his own. Morover, Bentley was reported to have made deprecatory remarks of Pope's Homer; it was "pretty but we must not call it Homer". This, together with Bentley's edition of Horace (1711) abounding in questionable emendations, and a somewhat ludicrous edition of Milton, (1731) which the scholar made a vehicle for the display of scholastic ingenuity, filled up the quota. The brief reference to Bentley in the early editions is enlarged upon in Book IV (200 - 275). England's first classical scholar is made the master critical hair-splitter; the type of critic whose energies are absorbed in verbal minutial.

> 'Tis true on Words is still our whole debate
> Disputes of Me or Te, of aut or at
> To sound or sink in cano, O or A
> Or give up Cicero to C or K.
>
> (Dunciad IV, 219)

Only the perversity of a distorted temperament can explain this unreasonable tirade.

Before turning aside from Pope's attack upon educational practices it will be well to call attention to a custom confirmed by centuries of practice as the final step in a young gentleman's education; the Grand Tour. Pope satirizes this course and its effects. The satire depicts the accomplished sons of Dulness who have, with her assistance, completed the work of school and university and are proceeding to the continent, presumably to round out their education by the intimate contact with other peoples and places, and to shatter the barriers of a complacent provincialism. [x] These tours were, more often than not, undertaken under unfavorable circumstances and at an inauspicious time; governors were often ill-fitted for their duties and the youth from sixteen to twenty-one is scarcely calculated to absorb the beneficent effects of travel from them. "He comes to relish and pride himself in manly vices and thinks it a shame to be under the control of another."[xx] Consequently the positive benefits were frequently obscured by the accumulation of ill habits, and the only knowledge of men and places was an unworthy admiration of the most vicious mannerisms observed on the continent.

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[x] Dunciad IV, 275 - 333.

[xx] Locke, John, 184

Led by my hand, he saunter'd Europe round
And gathered every vice on Christian ground
Try'd all hors-d'oeuvres, all liqueurs defin'd
Judicious drank and greatly-daring dined,
Dr**a**pt the dull lumber of the Latin store
Spoil'd his own language and acquir'd no more

(Dunciad IV, 311)

Later Goldsmith, in his Enquiry into the Present State of Polite **L**earning in **E**urope (1759), contrasts the relative merits of an education formed by a travelling and sedentary life. He knew whereof he spoke, for in his early manhood he had entered upon the Tour "with a guinea in his pocket, one shirt to his back and a flute in his hand." His conclusion is that while the Grand Tour shook off national prejudices and gave one a wider tho less intense knowledge of men and manners, yet on the whole, the insidious dangers offset these benefits and the nation's youth would profit by eliminating, or at least postponing, this part of their education. Pope stands midway in time between Locke and Goldsmith. His own contact with foreign peoples was slight, with foreign institutions negligible. The benefits are unrevealed to him. He sees a band of dissolute youths flitting unconcernedly from one place to another, from one vicious habit to another yet more pernicious, and finally returning

to England wiser in naught save a knowledge of vices; the supporters of illegitimate drama; ready suitors at the court of Dulness.

> See now half-cur'd and perfectly well bred
> With nothing but a Solo in his head
> As much Estate, and Principle and wit
> As Jansen, Fleetwood, Cibber shall think fit.
>
> (Dunciad IV, 323)

CHAPTER XI

Conclusion

This essay, in dealing with the Dunciad, has endeavored to set off and interpret the characteristics of Augustan literary life against a background of the social and political, and to a less pretentious degree, the intellectual stratum. [x] A companion study might well be undertaken of Pope's Essay on Man in the light of the discordant varieties of religious skepticism and philisophic confusion which agitated the surface of English thought in the half century following the Revolution. The same freedom and mobilization of English thought that linked the literary, social and political structures together, also stimulated enquiry into the principles of natural religion and there is a corresponding reflection of this interest in the literature of the times. The rational outlook of the Augustan philosophers helped to disrupt the unity and centralisation of religious thought. The clash between the orthodox and deistic parties is echoed in the Essay on Man; it is but one of the many cross-currents which makes the spiritual life of the times a veritable maze. A cursory study reveals, in addition to the deistic discountenancing of revelation in religious life; apologists like Samuel Clarke (1675 to 1729) endeavoring to correlate and reconcile the attributes

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Gosse, Edmund, -- 18th Century Literature 374 - 400
Elton, Oliver -- The Augustan Ages Chapters 4, 5, 6.

of God with the rational universe as interpreted by the new science; protagonists of the gospel of free-will; inveterate misanthropists like Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733); unbalanced optimists of a best of all possible worlds in which "whatever is, is right," like the Earl of Shaftsbury (1671-1713) who, however he may have owed his humaneness to his teacher Locke, certainly did not found his conception of the moral order, as revealed in his Characteristics, upon the precepts of his teacher. Shaftsbury's philosophy indirectly affected Pope's Essay on Man; the earl was a continental as well as a national figure of considerable magnitude.

Furthermore, the Moral Essays and the Imitations of Horace are replete with contemporary interest in political and moral activities. The Rape of the Lock, altho it is attacked by no less an authority than Sir Leslie Stephen, yet remains the model of brilliant picturesque mock-heroic, giving to posterity a glimpse into the trifling mannerisms of a social aristocracy. In short, it would be difficult to point out a single work of Pope, apart from his juvenile efforts, which does not reflect the varied interests of the times.

In many respects Pope lived through transitional movements in English letters. During the years of Ann's reign almost the entire field of English thought was regarded as

the legitimate sphere of literary activities. The art of poetry was directly connected with politics, history, science, philosophy, theology, etc., and literary life can scarcely be said to exist apart from the Town and the interests centred therein. The prospect of an artist working in solitude, detached from the busy hum of men, is not an Augustan one. "Every writer of the time shows how the city atmosphere told upon literature itself, determining its poetic forms, envenoming its spirit . . . how expression became prosaic and prose perfect; and how this balance of forces hung delicately poised for about a quarter of a century and was then by elements both political and spiritual disturbed." [x] When, however, Pope's long disease is brought to an end, the scope of English letters and thought is no longer identical. Literature has come to acknowledge a much narrower sphere. In the early Jacobean times, movements in the world of letters had been kindled almost at will, accepted on faith, ordered by a shallow enthusiasm. But Reason has come in, and literary experimentation is cautious and tentative; accepted insofar as it justifies itself. This is well shown by the gradual reconciliation of the newly established art of journalism to literature; by the evolution of the modern novel originating

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[x] Elton, Oliver -- The Augustan Ages, 290

in part, in the discredited comedy of the past; by the awakening of interest and of a consciousness of poetic potentialities in the despised natural universe, an interest which perhaps best of all illustrates the measure of precaution which had supplanted the abandon of the past.

During the Age of Pope the mind, attuned to the methods of Descartes - this method seems to be of native and independent origin in England - and to the new science imparted to critical thought a unity of purpose and a discipline. Investigations in intellectual spheres were motivated and circumscribed by pretty much the same principles throughout. In the world of letters this resulted in the withering of the more spiritual sources of poetry; mysticism became a dead letter. Religion was not unlike any of the other features of social and philosophical phenomena; the very fountainhead of romantic inspiration was dried up. The social and political structure gave an added impetus to this tendency; accordingly the qualities of scientific and rationalistic writing became dominant. "The saving process of human thought was forced to beggar the sense of beauty." This was not a futile sacrifice. For prose it meant the formation of a modern style. For poetry it meant the imposition of pseudo-classical formality and restraint, the discouraging of the higher forms of poetic art, the epic, the lyric, the

tragic, and an undue emphasis upon lesser forms, satire, epigram, panegyric.

"How much of the romantic revival, of the romantic triumph lay and still lies in the ideas of freedom, of asserting the personality, of defiance to the accepted, of proving of all things," [x] and just how much the indebtedness, on this score, is to English classicism, is a much disputed point. Certainly the Augustan Age helped to break down national intellectual barriers, and gave a cosmopolitan aspect to letters which had been wanting hitherto and upon which the romantic poets were wont to pride themselves. This idea of an international federation of letters is most noticeable in the case of England and France. Previous to 1700 the direct influence of French precept and example in England was slight. The couplet had been impressed upon the ears of the exiled followers of the Stuart court during the Commonwealth days, yet Waller had championed the cause of the closed couplet long before. Malherbe's influence is difficult to trace. Voiture and La Fontaine, the former in social verses, the latter through a vigorous narrative style, exercised a slight effect upon

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x Elton, Oliver . . The Augustan Ages. 417

the art of poetry across the Channel. For the most part the contribution was formal, critical. Yet with the new century direct intercourse was established through mutual ambassadors of literary taste; St. Evremond, Destouches and later Voltaire in London; Maynwaring and Abbé Prévost in Paris. Nor was this intercourse confined to the world of letters alone. Philosophic and scientific interchange of ideas was considerable. One need only mention Voltaire and the English deists; Locke and the revolutionary French theorists of government and society; Shaftesbury and European philosophers generally. The similarity between the poetic principles of Pope and Boileau can no doubt be paralelled in other countries where the reaction against the excessiveness of the early 17th century occurred; where the processes of art were limited to an imitation of the social aspects of man and where a premium was placed upon precision and moral purport. Indeed the early manifestations of Romanticism consisted mainly in adding the finer graces of poetry to themes that satisfied the reason.

Apart altogether from general intellectual complications, the classical tradition, in itself alien to the native genius of the English people, was dominant because of its moral practicality. Classicism was approved because it promised to be a minister to the social good. Its very

compactness and vitality afforded a weapon which helped to disperse the gloom of moral darkness that brooded over England. Hence from the time of Dryden, emphasis had been placed upon the didactic content of verse, and it is this mark of utilitarianism, so noticeable in the case of Joseph Addison, which made him remark that an heroic poem which was not calculated to impart at least one moral lesson had no cause for existing.

Classicism as the "detached and balanced presentation of life, the relation of values irrespective of temperament and personal philosophy, the subordination of the artist's own emotion and moral purposes to the form and reality of his creation, " [x] is far removed from the native bent of English poetical literature. Matthew Arnold elaborates upon the implications of this statement in his Essay on Academies. Why is the Augustan contribution to classicism itself an indifferent one? Why do the last two centuries offer so little in English literature of the purely classical? The answer is not far to seek. It lies in the character, the native genius of the race, a nation of poets Arnold suggests, whereby the imagination supplants the rational strait-jacket

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x Collins, H. P. Modern Poetry -- 109 - 37.

of formalism, and enthusiasm drives out the qualified submission of the true classicist. Of all nations France is perhaps the only one where the classical predilection finds a natural home, and while the Augustan tradition was not summarily imposed upon the poetic susceptibility of England, yet the powerful school of French classicists, and the new social and intellectual intercourse between the nations contributed greatly toward the temporary ascendency of an English classicism. The straining after this type of formalism is never quite natural or successful in England. There is an element of eccentricity surrounding Pope, as a typical Augustan. This it is that made Pope a continental influence, and that led to a direct imitation of his practice in the lettered nations of Europe. On the other hand the sturdy genius of John Dryden, although in theory akin to that of Pope, is distinctly native. His influence is restricted pretty much to England.

In concluding, while it is not the purpose of this essay to defend or explain away the principles of Pope's poetic art, one is tempted to call attention to erroneous suppositions concerning his poetry and his position in the hierarchy of English poets. Ever since the unhappy remark of Walsh, the friend of Pope's youth, that England had never

had one poet who was correct, Pope's position as the disciple of correctness has been a much-mooted point. Walsh had summarily disposed of Spenser, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton; his was the advice that encouraged Pope to enter upon a life-long quest for correctness. Hazlitt, DeQuincey and Lord Macaulay in turn have challenged his position. Their assertions are but half truths, for it is possible to prove a measure of correctness in Pope that was wanting in many of his greater predecessors. Pope did endeavor to attain to the heights of poetic expression to which Horace had called the poets of the first Augustan Age when he implied that "men of letters did not spend sufficient pains upon their poetry; they did not make it as good as they might have done; their treatment was not sufficiently varied; their language was not sufficiently varied; their versification was not sufficiently polished." [x] Insofar as this became the objective of the poets of a later Augustan Age, it was not a matter of individual temperament, but rather the result of a social and intellectual environment the outlines of which have been sketched in the preceding pages.

The conscious need of elaboration, of delicate workmanship in thought and style were not the attributes of early

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[x] Connington, John -- Miscellaneous Writings I, 5.

English literature simply because it was early, for in the primary stages of a nation's literary development the matter is generally the thing, rather than the mode of communicating it. The poets of such an age proceed along an unconscious adherence to the regulations of essential poetic truth and beauty. Once, however, the first glow of enthusiasm has passed away and thoughts of style and expression become common, to ignore the consciousness of these needs is fatal to poetic art. The English Augustan Age represents such an era. Its analytic character drew attention to the hitherto neglected principles of poetic style and structure. Although its results were negative rather than positive, and in avoiding minor thoughts it emphasised minor beauties, it worked for the ultimate good of English poetry.

The Augustans, although they may have covertly admired the powers of England's poetic past, could not elude the shadow of their time. Thus it was that John Dryden was able to say that Shakespeare wrote rather happily than knowingly or justly, and Bishop Atterbury suggested that Pope transform the glories of Samson Agonistes into the formal garb of the heroic couplet. St. Beuve in his Nouveau Lundis regrets the treatment which M. Taine, himself a champion of historical criticism, has given to the great Augustan poet,

"he does not make the effort it becomes a literary historian to exercise over himself." [x] Taine has joined the great body of critics which has attempted, with indifferent success, to dislodge Pope from a secondary peak of the English Parnassus; to relegate him to a position of uncompromising inferiority, and in the attempt to capitalise upon the irrelevant bodily deformities and personal idiosyncrasies of the poet. The Anecdotes of Spence are the best antidote for the reader who labors under misapprehensions and delusions concerning Pope.

Perhaps the judgment of Joseph Warton (1756) is still the most comprehensive declaration of Pope's position. "I revere the memory of Pope, I respect and honor his abilities; but I do not think him at the head of his profession. In other words, in that species of poetry wherein Pope excelled he is superior to all mankind; and I only say that this species of poetry is not the most excellent one of the art." The Augustan times offer little to the occasional reader of English poetry. He who satisfies himself with skimming its surface will miss the true meaning of it all. A correlated study of their art of poetry and the background against which that art functioned will encourage an appreciation of and an enthusiasm for the poetry of the English Augustans.

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x Sainte-Beuve -- English Portraits (from Nouveau Lundis 1864)

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