Colley Cibbar and his critics

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COLLEY CIBBER AND HIS CRITICS

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the graduate College of the State University of Iowa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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--by--

Myrl Lewark Bristol, B.A.
Iowa City, Iowa.
June 1921.
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1. Summary
INTRODUCTION

A friend of Alexander Pope, William Cleland, blamed him for giving to obscure writers an undeserved immortality in his *Dunciad*. This was so just a criticism in regard to many of that company of Dunces that the impression still prevails even among people of more or less acquaintance with the personages of the eighteenth century, that all those mentioned in *The Dunciad* would long since have lain buried in deep obscurity had not Pope bestowed upon them the favor of his satire.

Another of Pope's admirers expressed the same opinion of his power:

"Or in thy Dunciad bid those
dupes to live;
A boon their whole fraternity
  can't give."

However, Mr. Cleland need not have been concerned about the undue length of the immortal life of the Dunces. So far from preserving to posterity the memory of the unworthy, Pope has, on the contrary, destroyed the fame of some who were worthy to be remembered. The case of "Tibbald", may serve as an example. Lewis Theobald, the first to apply the method of classical scholarship of the school of Bentley to textual criticism and restoration of Shakespeare, was the hero of the 1729 edition of *The Dunciad*. His reputation, a few years after his death, succumbed to the misrepresentation of Pope, and as his method became more general, its source was obscured. And so "Theobald the editor disappeared; 3

Theobald the dunce survived". In recent years, Shakespearian scholars


2. "An Epistle to Mr. Pope—by Gis.": *Gentlemen's Magazine*, (1735), V, 32.

have become aware of the priority and great influence of Theobald in their field of study. But it was not until last year that a thorough study was made, giving Theobald his rightful place in English scholarship.

Cibber's case is identical with Theobald's. The greater number of those who are not serenly ignorant as to who or what Cibber was, think of him as Pope pictured him, as a dull dunce, an inferior actor, a rank plagiarist, a "mangler" of Shakespeare, an unspeakably bad poet-laureate, and a man of dispicable personal character. It is the assumption that a study similar to that made of Theobald might be made of Colley Cibber, who was elevated to the throne of the Dunces when Theobald was dethroned in the second edition of 1742, and who has suffered equal injury at the hands of Pope. Already some modern scholars, notably Professor Croissant and Professor Bernbaum, have done for Cibber what Launsbury had done for Theobald —— they have clearly shown his importance and have studied carefully certain phases of his work. There ought to be made a complete study of Cibber's whole contribution to literary and theatrical art.

This study of Cibber is not an attempt at any such completeness. It merely aims to view, Cibber, from two points of view, as an actor, theatrical manager, and writer: First, as he appeared in contemporary comment and satire; second, as he appears in subsequent and modern criticism, showing the persistent derogatory influence of such source

4. Ibid.
6. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 
7. Ibid.
9. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 
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materials as The Dunciad. The problem is to show that, as Leslie Stephen points out, "his adversaries, political and literary, were stronger men than himself" but that "justice is none the less on the side of Cibber"; that although Cibber, by his undeniable badness of some of his literary works, and by some of his personal foibles, deserved some of the ridicule, yet the greater part of the satire was inspired by personal grudge and political difference; that this satire, being relied upon by subsequent critics, has been the means of blinding them to Cibber's place of great historical importance in the development of comedy.

A presentation of this contemporary satire can best be made after a brief outline of Cibber's life. He was of a better family than most of the actors of his day. His father, Caius Gabriel Cibber, a native of Halstein, was a sculptor and the best known maker of statuary of his time. His mother, Jane Colley, was of a good old English family whose fortune was lost during the Civil War. In November 1671 Colley Cibber was born in London. From 1683 until 1687 he attended the free school of Grantham in Lincolnshire. After his application for entrance into Winchester college was rejected, he, the same day, took post back to London that he might arrive in time to see a play which was then his darling delight. After a short stay in London, he joined his father in Nottinghamshire, and served with him as a soldier under the Duke of Devonshire. After the flight of James II, he left the army and a little later returned to London to await an answer to his petition to the Duke in which, as he says, he begged "That his Grace would be


pleased to do something (I really forget what) for me.

After a five months interval, during which he haunted the theatres, he decided that he "saw no Joy in any other Life than that of an Actor". In 1690 he joined the united companies at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. His first recorded appearance on the stage was in 1691. In 1696 his first play was produced. In the beginning of the season of 1710-11, Cibber and two fellow actors, Wilks and Dogget, took over the management of Drury Lane. Of this triumvirate, Cibber was the dominant spirit. He continued as actor, author, and manager until September 37, 1730, when he was appointed Poet Laureate by George I. He himself attributed his elevation to his Whig principles. Three years after this appointment, he retired from the stage and devoted himself to writing his autobiography, and to writing some pamphlets in answer to his opponents, especially Pope. On October 31, 1734 he reappeared on the stage as Bayes in The Rehearsal. He probably played other parts occasionally until his last appearance in his own version of King John in February 1745. He died in London on December 13, 1757.

A brief explanation of the contemporary bibliographical sources may prove helpful at this time. There is such material as the works of Pope and Fielding, and the biographical and periodical literature of the period. The miscellaneous and pamphlet literature may not be so familiar. Of the miscellaneous, those of Nichols, Davies, and Genest are important.

15. Cibber: Apol., I, 73.
16. Ibid.
John Nichols, a printer, in 1782 published the first edition of his Literary Anecdotes of the 18th Century, a nine volume collection of "biographical memoirs of William Bowyer, printer, and many of his learned friends". The Anecdotes is really a fully annotated diary of all that came from the press of William Bowyer and his successor, John Nichols, from 1700 to about 1796.

Thomas Davies was likewise a printer; he had formerly been an actor. The complete title of his three volume collection of miscellaneous observations will sufficiently explain its character: "Dramatic Miscellanies consisting of critical observations on several plays of Shakespeare: with a review of his principal characters and those of various eminent writers, as represented by Mr. Garrick, and other celebrated comedians with anecdotes of dramatic poets, actors, etc. .... London 1785".

Genest was a quiet clergyman of the Church of England who "undertook the lifelong drudgery of examining all the playbills in existence of the period named (1660-1830) for exact casts, and all the plays themselves for the leading features of the plot and characters". Genest modestly calls his compilation "Some Account of the English Stage". It is not strictly a source contemporaneous with Cibber's life (published, London 1832), but it is of particular interest because it is the first non-contemporary work of criticism. As far at least as Cibber is concerned, Genest's chief source is Davies, though he is able to point out many careless inconsistencies and contradictions in the Miscellanies.

He has much less confidence in the anonymous author of a pamphlet called The Laureat, whose statements he admits are "probably exaggerated" and whose unfairness he in some cases proves.

It would be well to point out here that Davies himself uses The Laureat as an authority at points where his own personal knowledge failed him. Davies, as a young man of twenty-four, just come from the University of Edinburgh, did not make his first appearance on the stage at the Haymarket until three years after Cibber's retirement from the stage at Drury Lane. After this first failure, he took up the occupation of book selling. Failing in that also, he returned to the stage, this time at Covent Garden, but not until 1748, two years after Cibber, an old man past seventy years of age, had made his last appearance as an actor. Davies did not write his Miscellanies until forty years after this date, and fifty years after Cibber gave up the management of Drury Lane. He could have had a personal knowledge of Cibber as an actor, though not in his best years, but he could not have had a personal knowledge of him as a theatrical manager, and after fifty years he naturally had to seek some authority. It is respect to Cibber's management that Davies has nothing good to say of him; significantly enough, it is in this respect also that he uses The Laureat as his authority. At the publication of the Dramatic Miscellanies, there was a strong enough protest against his unfairness to Cibber to cause Davies to add a postscript to the next edition in answer to the article in the Monthly Reviewer (June 1785) by R. Griffith. The latter's charge was that Davies had relied "too implicitly on pamphlets written purposely against him.

Davies admits his sources but asserts his belief in the judgment of the author of the Laureat.

The Laureat is a pamphlet published anonymously in 1740 immediately after the appearance of Cibber's Apology. It ridicules the Apology chapter by chapter in so hostile a manner that no one can doubt that the author was a bitter enemy of Cibber. Shortly after this there came out The Dunciad and Cibber's two pamphlet letters to Pope in his own defense. Following Cibber's second letter appeared Lick upon Lick and A Blast upon Bayes or a New Lick at the Laureat, both evidently from the same hand as The Laureat.

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II
THE CASE AGAINST CIBBER
a.--As an Actor

The facts of Cibber's career as an actor are related by him in his Apology. He does not hesitate to record the adverse as well as the favorable opinions of him which were held by his associates in the theatre, and he makes no comment as to the justness of these opinions.

Colley Cibber joined the United Companies at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane in the year 1690, playing minor parts at first without remuneration. His being put on the regular weekly pay roll of the company, says Davies, relating a verbal tradition, was due to the sense of humor and justice of the great actor Betterton.

Cibber had been cast to bring in a message, but upon his entrance into the presence of Betterton, he was overcome with stage fright. At the close of the scene, Betterton asked the prompter who the silly young man was and "Downes replied, 'Master Colley'.

"Master Colley! Then forfeit him!

"Why, sir," said the prompter, 'he has no salary'.

"'No, said the old man, 'why then put him down ten shillings and forfeit him five shillings'."

After a time he was given the little part of the chaplain in the Orphanby Otway. This little success naturally inspired him with the ambition to play the hero, but of his qualifications he says: "In this Ambition I was soon snubb'd by the Insufficiency of my Voice; to which might be added an uninform'd meagre Person, (tho' then not ill made) with with a dismal pale complexion".

24. Davies: III, 445
His first real opportunity came about two years later in November 1693 when Congreve's *The Double Dealer* was played before Queen Mary. Kynaston was to have played Lord Touchwood but was prevented by illness. Cibber, with but a few hours preparation, performed the part so creditably that, through Congreve's efforts, his 10 s was raised to 15 s a week.

However "not a step farther could he get" until after the "Revolution in the Theatre", when Betterton and several other of the best actors procured a patent for a new theatre in Lincoln's Inn-Fields and deserted Drury Lane. In the competition thus established Cibber profited by having his salary raised to 30 s a week.

Cibber relates a circumstance which shows how very low his capacity as an actor was then rated. At the reopening of Drury Lane,"it was thought necessary ---- that the Town should be addressed in a New Prologue". Cibber, having written the prologue which was accepted, begged hard to be allowed to speak his own verses. But "This was judged as bad as having no Prologue at all!"

After the division of the companies, the quality of the acting at the Theatre Royal was very poor; nothing, says Cibber, could cause a judicious spectator more painful regret "Than to see .... with what rude confidence those Habits which actors of real Merit had left behind then were worn by giddy Pretenders that so vulgarly disgraced them".

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26. (On page 8).
28. "" "" "" I, 194.
29. "" "" "" I,196.
30. "" "" "" I,202; Genest , II, 65.
Cibber disclaims all blame for this bad acting because he was too low in the profession to get any good parts: "So that as none of those great Parts ever fell to my share, I could not be responsible for the Execution of them: nor indeed could I get one good Part of any kind till many months after (May 1695); unless it were of that sort which no body else car'd for, or would venture to expose themselves in ".

His first part of any value was given to him by necessity. In order to compete with the other theatre for the favor of the town, the Theatre Royal company suddenly substituted the Old Bachelor for Hamlet which they had advertised. As Betterton's company had also advertised Hamlet for that day, the younger actors hoped that by playing the Old Bachelor with Powell mimicking Betterton himself, the crowd would be drawn to them. As usual all the principal parts had been chosen by the other actors when it was discovered that the part of Fondlewife, Dogget's great part, had been forgotten. No one cared to risk comparison with the incomparable Dogget. Cibber offered to do it but his offer was treated with contempt. At last Powell, resolved to go through with his plan, sent for Cibber saying, "If the Fool has a mind to blow himself up at once, let us ev'n give him a clear stage for it". The part was put into his hands at midday, and the performance was at four. He played the part in dress, feature, voice, and action so like Dogget himself, who sat in the pit, that the house was in an uproar of delight and perplexity.

To Cibber his success "was as Consumate a triumph as the Heart of Vanity could be indulg'd with". But his fellow actors were not of the

33. Cibber: Apol. I, 202 (note)
33. " " II, 203.
34. " " I, 207.
same opinion. As there were few other parts of that nature, they could not conceive, from what he had done in that, what other kind of character he could be fit for. He remarks "If I solicited for anything of a different nature, I was answered, that was not in my way, and what was in my way it seems not as yet resolved upon. And though I replied, That I thought anything naturally written ought to be in every one's way that pretended to be an actor; this was looked upon as a vain, impracticable conceit of my own".

Having received no advancement as a result of his success in the Old Bachelor, and being determined to win some distinction, he was reduced to write a character for himself. After much difficulty in getting it produced, his first play Love's Last Shift, or The Fool in Fashion, was acted in January 1696, Cibber reserving for himself the part of Sir Novelty Fashion. On the first day, Mr. Southerne, who had recommended the play to the Patantees of Drury Lane, said to Cibber, "Young Man! I pronounce thy play a good one; I will answer for its success, if thou dost not spoil it by thy own action".

He did not make any further progress as an actor till the year following when Vanbrugh, having written the Relapse as a sequel to Love's Last Shift and having raised Sir Novelty Fashion to the Bank of Baron of Foppington, gave Cibber the leading part. This character, Lord Foppington, became one of Cibber's most famous roles.

After this his progress was steady, his salary being 12L 12S a week when he left the stage. He continued on the stage for thirteen more years, writing plays and acting until the year 1710 when he and

36. " " " I, 312.
37. " " " I, 216.
38. Genest: III, 378—(Genest gives a complete list of Cibber's roles.)
Wils and Doggett became the managers of Drury Lane. He retired in 1733, appearing only occasionally thereafter.

During his forty years regular work as an actor, Cibber played one hundred and twenty-five different roles, seventy-five of which were interpreted originally by him.

This unfavorable view of Cibber's acting ability, as set forth by himself is only the view of "the profession". Outside the doors of the theatre there also were those who had a poor opinion of him. Among the most notable was Dr. Johnson. He did not say that he thought Cibber fell short in the execution, but he did say that, upon talking once with Cibber, he thought him "ignorant of the principles of his art".

Aside from this one observation, the mass of contemporary satire upon Cibber's art as an actor is bound up with the satire upon his personal character. His critics leave the impression that if he be allowed to play the fop and villain to perfection it was only because that was his real character.

"Bayes formed by nature
Stage and Town to bless
And act, and be, a coxcomb
With success". (36)

and that he was a better coxcomb off the stage than on it———

"Did on the Stage my Fop
Appear confin'd?
My Life gave ampler Lessons
to mankind".

Genest: III, 375 (refers to Gent, Mag.)
40. Boswell: Life of Johnson (Everyman's Library), II, 485.
Cibber, in his Letter to Pope took "to act, and be, a coxcomb with success" as an involuntary compliment, inasmuch as "to act the Coxcomb well, requires a Justness of Imagination which Dunces will never arrive at".

To this defense, the author of Lick upon Lick made a counter thrust: Why in the name of Folly was no notice taken of the verb be, as well as of act. If to act a coxcomb requires a Justness of Imagination, how does it appear that to be a coxcomb requires it also? May not Mr. Cibber, by seeming exactly what he is, make a better Theatrical Coxcomb than one who only personates what he has seen. By what I have heard, Colley, this is universally allowed to be thy case: And if so, who can deny that thou hast here made a very vain "Coxcomical Conclusion"?

A less prejudiced critic than either Pope or the author of Lick upon Lick was the Rev. T. Newton who had probably seen Cibber act and who years later wrote to David Garrick: "Cibber is something of a coxcomb in everything; and Wolsey and Iago and Syphax, all smell strong of the essence of Lord Foppington".

The same gentleman, in commending Garrick for his performance of Bayes in The Rehearsal, a famous part of Cibber, says: "Lowe and I were most highly pleased with Bayes.....and I think that you exceed old Cibber in many things and fall short of him in nothing".

Another (anonymous) admiring correspondent writes thus to Garrick in regard to Cibber's villain roles: "What demon possessed Theo. Cibber,

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42. Lick upon Lick (London 1744) p. 4. (Quoting Cibber's Letter).
44. Some Unpublished Correspondence of David Garrick (Boston 1907) page 7.
that he should attempt Richard? . . . . He performed the part infinitely worse than his father who was only supposed to do it well because he was generally allowed to act a villain to perfection. 

And as to Bayes he says in the same letter: "Old Cibber used to do it (Bayes) with great applause; and indeed as he, according to custom, did himself, and his own character often falling in with that of Bayes, he had merit. But were he to do it at present as well as ever, the town would readily discern how far he fell short of that perfection they now so justly admire. He in acting, could never thoroughly divest himself of his own temper, which mixing in some degree with the characters he was thought to do best, such as Ducetete, Fondlewife, etc., they appeared less natural in him than we have seen them of late."

These few references are all of the strictly contemporary adverse comment which has been discovered by the writer. Their one criticism seems to be that he performed villains and fops with great merit because he was a villain and a fop, and that he was something of the fop in every part he played.

Of the later criticism, that of Davies has nothing to say against Cibber as a comedian, except that he sometimes forgot his lines, but he reprobates certain serious roles which Cibber attempted, and implies that on the whole Cibber was in his parts "no more than a close imitator of all such players as had formerly represented them", citing as an example Cibber's mimickry of Dogget as Fondlewife.

For Cibber's lapses of memory Davies blames the actor's fondness for the gaming table. Cibber in his Apology, perhaps hypocritically, had

47. Davies: I, 305
scored Powel for that very vice of negligence. He says: "Nor was his Memory less tenacious than that of Wilks; but Powel put too much Trust in it, and idly deferr'd the Studying of his Parts, as Schooil-boys do their Exercise, to the last Day, Which commonly brings them out proportionately defective.---While, therefore, Powel presi.sided (as actor-manager) his idle Example made this Fault so common to others, that, I cannot but confess, in the general Infection, I had my Share of it; nor was my too critical excuse for it a good one, viz. That scarce one part in five that fell to my Lot was worth the Labour. But to show Respect to an Audience is worth the best Actor's Labour, and his business consider'd, he must be a very impudent one that comes before them with a conscious negligence of what he is about".  

That is Cibber's opinion and his excuse for himself given when he was an old man; but here is Davies picture of him as a young actor: "Cibber was as intent upon gaming, and all manner of pleasure, as Dogget could be in trafficking with the stocks. Cibber has lost every shilling at hazard or cards, and has been heard to cry out, 'Now I must go home and eat a child!' This attention to the gaming table would not, we may be assured render him fitter for his business of the stage. After many an unlucky run at Tom's coffee-house, he has arrived at the play house in great tranquility; and then, humming over an opera tune, he has walked on the stage not well prepared in the part he was to act. Cibber should not have reprehended Powel so severely for neglect and imperfect representation: I have seen him at fault where it was least expected; in parts he had acted a hundred times; and particularly in Sir Courtly Nice; but Colley dexterously supplied the deficiency of his memory by prolonging his ceremonious bow to the lady, and drawling out, 'Your humble
servant, madam*, to an extraordinary length; than taking a pinch of
snuff, and strutting deliberately across the stage, he has gravely
asked the prompter, what is next?". 49

In 1723, when Cibber was fifty-two he played Wolsey in Henry VIII
and as Davies had not yet come down to London and does not say he wit­
tnessed the performance, we may assume that he was reporting the judg­
ment of others, both favorable and unfavorable, when he says:

"Colley Cibber has been much praised for his assuming port, pride,
and dignity in Wolsey; but his manner was not correspondent to the
grandeur of the character. The man who was familiar in the greatest
courts of Europe and took the lead in the councils and designs of
mighty monarchies, must have acquired an easy dignity in action and
department, and such as Colley Cibber never understood or practiced".

When Cibber was an old man of seventy-four he returned to the stage
to act Pandulph in his own version of King John. Davies reports the
actor Quin as saying of this performance that Cibber played Pandulph
"like a cardinal who had formerly been a parish clerk", and for himself
he says:

"Cibber's deportment was, I think, as disgusting as his utterance.
He affected a stately magnificent tread, a supercilious aspect, with
lofty and extravagant action, which he displayed by waving up and
down a roll of parchment in his right hand; in short, his whole
behavior was so starchy studied, that it appeared eminently insig­
nificant, and more resembling his own Lord Foppington than a great
and dignified churchman". 51

This appearance as Pandulph was Cibber's last. Even before that
however, he had made almost as disastrous a reappearance in his old age

49. Davies: III, 479.
to act Richard III in rivalry with Garrick. That Cibber was very jealous of Garrick's success is shown by several anecdotes related by Davies.

Genest has for his chief authorities Cibber's Apology, Davies Miscellanies, and the anonymous pamphlets against Cibber. He adds nothing to the stock of adverse criticism except to record a statement from the Gentleman's Magazine that "Win was sometimes wrong in his tragic parts, Cibber was always so". And beside Cibber's plea of his "uninformed meagre person" and the "insufficiency of his voice" as the reason for his failure in tragedy, Genest places the Laureat's description of him: "He was in stature of the middle size, his complexion fair, inclinable to the sandy, his legs somewhat of the thickest, his shape a little clumsy, not irregular, and his voice rather shrill than loud or articulate, and cracked extremely when he endeavored to raise it: he was in his younger days so lean, as to be known by the name of Hatchet Face".

The most malignant satire upon Cibber as an actor came from the pen of the author of The Laureat. At the end of the pamphlet he added, "The history of the life, manners and writings of Aesopus the Tragedian from a fragment of Greek manuscript----interspersed with observations of the translator" which is a burlesque account of the life of Cibber. Genest quotes a few lines of it as follows:

"He had not long travelled in the provinces, but he grew weary of strolling, and ambitiously attempted to gain a settlement in Rome itself, and succeeded so well as to get himself enrolled in the lowest class of those Commedians, who acted under the direction of Claudius

Divitius, (Christopher Rich) at the salary of about one shilling of our money a night: here he stood the hiss of the people many years; he never attempted to open his mouth, but the whole audience constantly expressed their dislike of him: he was indeed at that time, both in his manner and form quite disagreeable: here he for a time lost the name of Aesopus, and was called Colleius; and I have frequently seen his name written thus, to some little parts he then acted.

No later or modern critic deny's that in such parts as that of Lord Foppington which, no matter by what name called, was created by Cibber, he was never surpassed. They agree that he was to a certain extent the coxcomb that he represented, that he was a very bad tragic actor, that he owed much of his success to mimickry of living actors, that he had inordinate vanity and consequent jealousy of others, and that he was a gambler and hence negligent of his work.

These unfavorable conclusions of modern writers on theatrical history, whether or not their source is given, are easily recognized as the comment already quoted from contemporary or near-contemporary critics.

60. Dict. of Nat. Biog.: X, 353.
b. As A Manager.

After the separation of the companies which had been brought about by Betterton, Powel had lorded it over Christopher Rich, the Patentee of Drury Lane. A little later Powel, jealous of the new actor Wilks, "cocked his Hat and in his Passion walked off to the Service of the Company in Lincoln's Inn Fields." He returned to Drury Lane, but Wilks had, during his absence, obtained his best parts and the favor of Rich, and was so troublesome in his demands that Rich, knowing Cibber to be a rival of neither, called upon Cibber to assist him. Cibber recommended that he favor Wilks because Powel's negligence and abandoned character would, if followed, reduce the company to contempt and beggary. Rich took his advice and Wilks from this time was "Bustle-master-general of the Company".

A patent granted to Sir Richard Steele had come under the direction of Sir John Vanbrugh and Congreve in a new theatre in the Hay Market. It had been built only for show with no regard for acoustics, and besides was outside the town. Vanbrugh, now sole manager of the Hay Market theatre, wanted to rent it to Swiney, who was an agent of Christopher Rich. Rich consented (1706) that Swiney take it and whatever actors from Drury Lane he chose, reserving only Cibber. He intended to be secret manager of both houses but to specialize in opera at Drury Lane. Most of the actors want to the Haymarket to escape the hardships of being in Rich's employ, and Cibber also decided to go when Rich refused to pay him regularly, a thing which he had never yet done. Swiney, to test his argument engaged Cibber and so Rich lost

63. Cibber: I, 255.
power over the other company.

Swiney paid his actors full and regular salaries and still profited. Rich continued to employ singers, rope dancers, and trained animals. For four years after this second desertion of the actors from Drury Lane, the stage was in a disrupted state.

The companies at Lincoln's Inn Fields and at Drury Lane reunited in 1707. The old actors, probably because of the disadvantages of their theatre, had poor audiences and could not support themselves. Some plays which had failed at the Hay Market succeeded when reproduced by this united company at Drury Lane. Among these was The Double Gallant. This play, says Cibber, was "made up of what little was tolerable in two or three others that had no Success, and were laid aside as so much Poetical Lumber; but by collecting and adapting the best parts of them all into one Play, the Double Gallant has had a Place every Winter amongst the Publick Entertainments these Thirty years. As I was only the Compiler of this Piece I did not publish it in my own Name; but as my having but a Hand in it could not be long a Secret, I have been often treated as a Plagiary on that Account".

At this time shares in Drury Lane were reckoned of so little value that Sir Thomas Skipwith gave away his shares to Colonel Brett. As the Colonel was an intimate friend of Cibber, he, upon the latter's advice, presented his deed of gift to Rich and as an equal sharer in the patent, demanded an equal share in the management. His proposal, agreed to by Rich, was that the Haymarket should house only the Opera, under the management of Swiney, and that Drury Lane should house again only plays under the management of Rich and Brett. This was accomplished December 31, 1707. One of Brett's first moves was to make Wilks, Estcourt, and

64. Cibber: II, 4.
Cibber his deputies in the management of the theatre.

The patent soon began to be a profitable holding, and Rich, who knew that in a state of prosperity he must pay his actors their full salary, decided to get rid of Brett and reduce the management to its former state of confusion. Also, Skipwith, seeing the shares begin to pay, sued Brett for the return of his gift, and Brett gave up his claim. Thereupon, the salaries of all the actors except Cibber, who protested stoutly, were reduced and one third of the proceeds from their benefit performance was taken from them. This was a severe blow because the benefit made up partially for the year’s arrears in their salaries.

The actors complained to the Lord Chamberlain who gave warning to Rich, gave the actors permission to form a new company, and finally issued an order to silence Drury Lane. The theatre was closed June 4, 1709.

The "actors union" of which Cibber was a member, began the following season in the Haymarket which had been remodeled to provide better acoustics. Drury Lane opened with the remnant of Rich’s actors, not under the patent, but under a special license from the King under the management of Collier.

Christopher Rich, now without actors or theatre, employed his leisure time in rebuilding Betterton’s theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields which he had leased sometime before.

Now that the Sacheverel trial was concluded and the people of quality were free to renew their interest in the theatre, Collier did not fare so well in his competition with the Haymarket, and accordingly made another agreement to take over the Haymarket with Opera, with certain articles in his favor, while the confederated actors and Swiney were to return to Drury Lane. Collier, however, after this change was made, envied Swiney his post with the again more prosperous...
organization and through his court influence, had Swiney transferred to the opers while he came back to Drury Lane. Collier accepted seven hundred pounds per annum, and left the actual management of affairs to the actors Wilks, Dogget, and Cibber under a license granted November 39 6, 1710.

This was the beginning of a period of peace and security for the actors, or for that favored trio at any rate, and Cibber thus expresses his satisfaction:

"What transport could the first Brutus feel upon his Expulsion of the Tarquins greater than that which now danced in the Heart of a poor Actor, who, from an injur'd Laborer, unpaid his Hire, had made himself, without guilt, a legal manager of his own Fortune".

Cibber says that he as manager assumed the role of peace-maker. Dogget, "naturally an Economist," kept the accounts and frowned upon the extravagance of Wilks, who, with "a stronger Passion for glory than Lucre" spent much money upon new costumes. "At the Beginning of almost every Season, he would order two or three suits to be made or refreshed for Actors of moderate Consequence, that his having constantly a new one for himself might seem less particular, tho' he had as yet no new part for it". These expenditures Dogget "look'd upon with the Eye of a man in Pain". Cibber himself was "rather inclin'd to Dogget's way of thinking" but yet was always "under the disagreeable restraint of not letting Wilks see it". In their quarrels, by assuming that they were both right as well as wrong, Cibber asserts that "their Differences were sometimes softened into Concessions" and many ill consequences averted.

Cibber's own criticisms of their mistakes as managers is as follows:

71. Cibber: II, 118.
"Our passions and our Interest drew not always the same way. Self had a great sway in our Debates: We had our Partialities; Our Prejudices; our Favorites of less Merit; and our Jealousies of those who came too near us;—One mind among three People were to have had three Masters to one Servant; but when that one Servant is called three different ways at the same time; whose Business is to be done first? For my own part, I was forced almost all my Life to give up my Share of him. And if I could, by Art or Persuasion, hinder others from making what I thought a wrong use of their Power, it was the All and utmost I desired."  

Wilks proved to be a most disagreeable man to work with and Cibber says that he led a delightful (?) life "with this impatient man for full twenty years", but that Dogget, having more money, and therefore not so much need for philosophy, after three years of it, left the stage altogether, whereupon Booth was admitted as actor-manager in Dogget's place.  

Booth suffered as much from Wilks's temper as had Dogget, but Cibber under provocation merely hummed an air to himself, or if the storm grew high he was ruffled enough to sing out of tune. For, thought Cibber, "Why should we not always consider that Rashness of Abuse is but the false Reason of a weak man".  

At the death of Queen Anne, the license had to be renewed and the actor-managers, out of regard for Sir Richard Steele's commendation of them in his Tatler papers, petitioned that Steele have Collier's place and pension; Steele received it by a license granted to Steele, Wilks, Cibber, and Booth on October 18, 1714".  

72. Cibber: II, 118.  
73. "": II, 127.  
74. "": II, 144.  
75. "": II, 157.  
76. "": II, 158.  
77. "": II, 165.
The order suspending Christopher Rich's patent had, in the meanwhile, been revoked and, ostensibly because of bad management at Drury Lane, there seemed to be a popular clamor for two playhouses as there had formerly been. In this respect Cibber says, "But that I may not impose upon the Reader a Merit which was not generally allow'd us, I ought honestly to let him know that about this time the publick Papers, particularly Mist's Journal, took upon them very often to censure our Management, with the same Freedom and Severity as if we had been so many ministers of State".

But Cibber claims that the chief fault of their management was still the ungovernable temper of Wilks which drove a few inferior actors to desert to Lincolns Inn Fields when it was finally reopened by John Rich, won of Christopher Rich.

With the advent of a second theatre the company at Drury Lane was not so prosperous. They then approached Sir Richard Steele on the matter of his stipulated seven hundred pounds which was to be granted as long as there was no other theatre in town. Steele not only agreed to take equal shares with the actor-managers, but offered to get in his own name, instead of their present license, a patent which he would afterwards share with them. This patent was granted January 19, 1715. By this agreement, Steele was a gainer by three hundred pounds annually. Well and regularly paid actors with a clear profit to each of the four managers of one thousand pounds a year tells a story of prosperity and good management.

The managers now felt emboldened to lay out larger sums on redocorating the theatre and upon the production of plays. But their enemies were

79. "": II, 173.
80. "": II 175
busy and their full houses were soon emptied by newspaper stories to
the effect that the walls and roof were likely to fall. A denial of
this signed by a surveyor restored their large audiences.

The new theatre in order to vie with Drury Lane's recovered prosper-
ity added dancing, singing, and spectacles to their plays and Drury
Lane felt compelled to follow suit. Cibber says, "I have not better
81
Excuse for my Conscience". The least ill that can be said of Cibber
in respect to this phase of his career is that he was an opportunist as
he acknowledges. "Had Harry the Fourth of France", he asks, "a better
excuse for changing his Religion? I was still, in my heart, as much as
he could be, on the side of Truth and Sense, but with this difference,
that I had their leave to quit them when they could not support me".

On December 6, 1717 was produced Cibber's adaptation of Moliere's
Tartuffe, called the Non Juror. After that for about fifteen years,
because of the Whig principles of the play Cibber got weekly notoriety
in Mist's Journal, a Tory organ.

Steele, having had trouble with the new Lord Chamberlain about his
Patent and having drawn so much advance pay as to bring a protest from
the other managers, had not been active in his managership for three
years previous to May 1721 when his lawyer brought suit against the
other managers for his full share of the profits for that period. The
case came to trial in 1728 and Cibber was chosen to plead the managers'
cause at the bar. He won the decision.

In defence against the many criticisms of their management, Cibber
says it is with managers as with ministers of state—"let us have done
never so well, we could not please everybody—The most plausible

82. "" "" : II, 183.
83 "" "" : II,187.
objection to our Administration seemed to be, that we took no care to breed up young actors to succeed us; and this was imputed as the greater Fault, because it was taken for granted that it was as easy as planting so many cabbages.

However, he does admit that absolute justice was not always practiced. He says: "In the Government of the Theatre, I have known many Instances where the Merit of promising Actors has not always been brought forward with the Regard or Favor it had a claim to". As examples of this injustice he cites his own early career and that of Booth, and says that "Booth himself, when he came to be a manager, would sometimes suffer his Judgement to be blinded by his inclination to Actors whom the Town seem'd to have but an indifferent Opinion of." Wilks, says Cibber, sometimes kept back the rising actors because he himself could not bear to miss an opportunity of appearing on the stage. He would even insist upon the production of the "watergruel Work of some insipid Author that happen'd rightly to make his court to him" if he could play the best character in it.

However, he gives Wilks credit for keeping the acting up to a high standard: "For as Wilks seem'd to have no Joy in Life beyond his being distinguished on the Stage, we were not only sure of his always making others more careful than without the Rod of so irascible a Temper over them they would have been. And I much question if a more temperate or better usage of the hired Actors could have so effectually kept them to Order".

And he says again of his own failings as an actor that had he had half of Wilk's application, he might have shown himself twice the actor

84. Cibber: II, 220.
85. "" "" : II, 226.
86. "" "" : II, 238.
87. "" "" : II, 237.
that he was, but that his excuse for his neglect was that so much of 
his attention "was taken up in an incessant Labor to guard against our 
private Animosities and preserve a Harmony in our Management, that I 
hope and believe it made ample Amends for what ever Omission my Auditors 
might sometimes know it cost me some pains to conceal." 88

From Cibber's defense of the managers, we may infer that they were 
strongly censured for their treatment of authors. He says that when an 
author, urged on by poverty, saw his work rejected he could not be 
blamed much for "the severe Reflections he might naturally throw upon 
those pragmatical Actors, who had no sense or Taste of good Writing". 
There were other authors impelled by love of glory who in their disappo 
pointment when their play was refused, complained that "the Stage was 
like to be finely governed when Actors pretended to be Judges of Authors; 
Etc". And then, also, if "some great Persons (whom it was not Prudence 
to disoblige)" wrote a play, and "came in with a high Hand to support 
their Pretentions", why, "then Cout que Cout, acted it must be! So when 
the short Life of this wonderful Nothing was over, the Actors were per 
haps abused in a preface for obstructing the Success of it, and the Town 
publicly damn'd us for our private civility". 89

Cibber was appointed poet-laureate in 1730. Many of the other actors, 
including Booth, soon after retired from the stage because of ill 
health and Wilks died in 1732. That year Cibber, conscious of his dec 
lining years, delegated his managerial authority to his son Theophilus 
Cibber. The following year, he sold his share in the patent and retired.

His conclusion to his account of his managerialhip rather implies 
that he had received severe criticism for the way in which he ended 
his theatrical career. He says: "What Commotions the Stage fell into 
the year following, or from what Provocations the greatest Part of the 
Actors revolted, and set themselves up in the little House in the

89. " "": " II?250.
Hay-Market, lies not within the promise of ny Title Page to Relate: Or as it might set some Persons living in a Light they possibly might not chuse to be seen in, I will rather be thankful for the involuntary Favour they have done me, than trouble the Publick with private Complaints of fancied or real injuries".

The story of subsequent events which Cibber thus considers unnecessary to tell are related by Robert W. Lowe in his supplementary chapter to his edition to the Apology. He declares that, as amateurs had bought the shares of Wilk's and Booth, Cibber appointed his scapegrace son in his place in order to avoid the contentions which he knew would arise; that Theophilus Cibber proved so objectionable that Highmore was glad to purchase the father's share to be rid of the son; that immediately after, Theophilus stirred up a revolt among the actors and, "what is still more disgraceful, Colley Cibber lent them his active countenance", thus rendering the patent valueless; that Colley Cibber thereupon applied for a new patent for his son and was refused it.

Our inference from Cibber's account of this part of his career is that as a manager he was accused by his contemporaries of being a plagiarist and mangler of plays; of being insolent and domineering over his colleagues; of being negligent of his duties; of being parsimonious; of catering to the low taste of the town; and of being unjust to rising actors and authors. And such charges we find to have been made by his enemies.

One critic of Cibber who never ceased rating him for his offence in altering and adapting plays, was Henry Fielding. When the actors had deserted Highmore, Fielding came to his aid by revising The Author's

91. Cibber; II, 356.
92. """:II, 357 et seq.
Farce in reference to the present theatrical situation. The banter which had formerly been applied to Wilks and Cibber, he now applied to Young Cibber and his father as Marplay Jr. and Marplay Sr. in allusion to their habit of mutilating plays before they would permit them to be acted. Night after night London saw the Cibbers represented as foolish and discredited theatrical managers, making over Shakespeare, accepting poor plays, rejecting good ones and prattling over their own that had been damned.

In *The Author's Farce*, the Author offers a tragedy to Marplay Jr. who says: "I will give you my opinion of it; and if I can make any alterations in it that will be for its advantage, I will do it freely.---Yes, sir, alterations---I will maintain it, let a play be never so good, without alterations it will do nothing.---Alack-a-day! Was you to see the plays when they are brought to us, a parcel of crude undigested stuff. We are the persons, sir, who lick them into form, that mould them into shape---The poet make the play indeed! the colourman might as well be said to make the picture, or the weaver the coat: my father and I, sir, are a couple of poetical tailors: When a play is brought us, we consider it as a tailor does his coat; we cut it, sir, we cut it".

In a scene between the two managers, who have just been seen ignorantly making non-sensical "alterations" in the author's play, Marplay Jr. asks,

"What do you think of the play?" and his father replies: "It may be a very good one.----but I am resolved since the town will not receive any of mine, they shall have none from any other." -------

---They are shown forcing bad plays on the public:

Marplay Jr.---"What shall be done with that farce that was damned last


94. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 

night?
Marplay Sr.—"Give it them again to-morrow. I have told some persons of quality that it is a good thing, and I am resolved not to be in the wrong: let us see which will be weary first; the town of damming, or we of being damned."

We see them keeping back promising authors:
Marplay Sr.—"What didst thou do with the comedy, which I gave thee t'other day, that I thought a good one?
Marplay Jr.—"Did as you ordered me, returned it to the author, and told him it would not do."
Marplay Sr.—"You did well. If thou writest thyself, it is thy interest to keep back all other authors of any merit, and be as forward to advance those of none."

And as to plagiarizing, Marplay Sr. says,
"The art of writing, boy, is the art of stealing old plays, by changing the name of the play, and new ones, by changing the name of the author."

To show the attitude of the town toward them, Fielding has Marplay Jr. say—"If it were not for those cursed hisses and cat calls."

Fielding's last words on Cibber, except for some scattered references are in The Historical Register, where he shows him as Ground Ivy, in conversation with the God Apollo, and declaring himself the greatest actor and author that ever lived. The newspapers constantly made the same accusations. A writer in

96. Fielding: Works VIII Authors Farce p. 216
97. """:(The Historical Register) Works, IX, 362
the Grubstreet Journal, answers a writer in the Daily Courant who under the name of "Ta^rjryme" had evidently defended the Cibbers in this theatrical crisis. The Grubstreet writer allows nothing to the credit of Cibber and nothing to the discredit of anyone else concerned. To a charge against Rich he replies: "As to mangling of Dramatick Pieces, (the Writer) believes this is the first time it was ever charged on Mr R--H, and may with greater justice be retorted on the managers of the Old House, especially on Mr. C----y C--b-r, whom Mr. Tag-rhyme calls a Man of Wit and Taste".

We have the opinion of both Pope and Fielding that Cibber was the dictator of the triumvirate of managers. When Wilks died, pope wrote to Gay: "The death of Wilks leaves Cibber, without a colleague, absolute and perpetual dictator of the stage, although, indeed, while he lived he was but as Bibulus to Caesar".

Some years later Fielding, when he was writing the Convent Garden Journal said "Thus the theatrical State of Drury, was, about an Age ago under the Jurisdiction of a Triumvirate, who called themselves Cibber, Booth, and Wilks, and had each of them their distinct Provinces of Government. Booth presided over the affairs of Tragedy, Wilks over those of Comedy, and Cibber reserved himself in a neutral state, ready to add Weight to the Scale of either of his Colleagues as the other should seem to preponderate". And as Fielding could never resist a thrust at Cibber's ignorance, he adds, "These Archons or chief Magistrates, are usually stiled Managers, or, as that learned and ingenious Historian Colley Cibber spells it, Menagers of the House".

98. Gentleman's Magazine: (No. 15 March 1735) II, 850.
The Laureat paints a more vivid and disagreeable picture of Cibber, the domineering manager:

"The Court sitting, Chancellor Cibber (for the other two sat only for form's sake) nodded to the author to open his manuscript— the author begins to read— in which if he failed to please the corrector, he would sometimes condescend to read it himself— if the play struck him— as it would if he found anything new in it, and he thought he could particularly shine in it as an actor---- he would lay down his pipe (for the Chancellor always smoked when he made a decree) and cry, "By heaven there is something in this--- I do not know but it may do--- I will play such a part" ---- when the reading was finished he made his corrections sometimes without propriety".

The Laureat also has much to say of Cibber's general misconduct and inefficiency. To Cibber's criticisms of Wilks for his temper, extravagance, and vanity, the Laureat comes forward with a warm defence of Wilks:

"One may easily conceive the foundation of your malice to Wilks--- his crime was merit--- it is, and was, the opinion of most people, both within and without the doors of the theatre, that he was the cornerstone that supported it ---- if he sometimes chastised you with his tongue, were not your idleness, your neglect of your business, your tyrannical behavior to your inferiors, the occasions of his rebuking you?--- Did not you often hurt the theatrical affairs by your avarice and ill conduct? -- did you not by your general misbehavior towards authors and actors, bring an odium on your brother managers, as well as yourself? I have been assured, no person who ever had power on the stage was ever so universally odious to the actors as yourself; and these were the reasons which might sometimes provoke Wilks to treat you with

the same asperity you used to others, — your partiality is so notorious, with relation to Wilks, that every one sees you never praise him but to rail at him; and only oil your bone to whet your razor.

Fielding also adds his testimony that Cibber helped keep other actors from rising; he was making the same charge against Garrick's management and saying that if Garrick didn't bring forward new actors, the stage would fall with himself, "as was the case when that famous Triumvirate, Booth, Wilks, and Cibber were in the management; who by discountenancing and keeping back any actor of apparent genius, left such a Set of Wretched Strolers behind them, at their departure, that our dramatic Entertainments became contemptible".

After Cibber's retirement, the Grubstreet Journal came out with some "modest proposals" for the improvement of the theatre, all their suggestions implying that such qualities of management had been absent during the former administration. A collection of their suggestions follows: "None should be admitted (as actors) who had not a genteel and liberal education. If any of either Sex should lose their fair and honest character, to be expelled"—— "The governor ought to be a Gentleman of the best understanding in Theatrical Affairs, to examine all Plays, and dramatical Entertainments: in Instruct young players in their several parts". "That anyone be dismissed for neglect of business or immorality"

That Cibber did not maintain a high standard in his theatrical offerings is another charge against him. Grubstreet proposes that "All plays etc. be examined and authorized by the said Officer, so that all plays, or such parts of them, as any way tend to Corruption of Manners, be excluded the Theatre".

105. " " " " " " " " " " " (April 1735), V, 197.
106. Ibid.
And a writer in the *Prompter* notes with pleasure that a bill has been introduced for the regulation of theatres because he thinks the stage of late has not been inculcating ideas, and that it is not wise to leave the management of the theatre to the manager and players.

Pope ridicules Cibber for following the lead of Rich in the matter of using machinery and such clap-trap in spectacle shows. He says:

"But lo! to dark encounter in mid-air!
New wizards rise: here B——th, and C——r there
B——th in his cloudy tabernacle shrin'd
On grinning dragons C——r mounts the wind.
Dire is the conflict, dismal is the din,
Here shouts all Drury, there all Lincoln's Inn;
Contending Theatres our empire raise,
Alike their labors, and alike their praise".

The fact that commercialism in the theatre in Cibber's day was as much cried against then as now is shown by an article in the *Universal Spectator*. This was two years after Cibber's retirement, but the writer is evidently thinking of conditions as they had been recently. He thinks the Theatre should be under proper management and regulation, but "which of the theatres can boast of such a Regulation? Are not the Plays, generally exhibited, far from being innocent in themselves? And considering the vitiated Taste of the Age, what Manager has Virtue or Morality enough to get up such a select Stock of Plays whose Representation would be really innocent? He consults his own interest, and therefore brings not on those Pieces that are most instructive to an Audience, but most gainful to himself".

107. Gentleman's Mag.: (March 1735) V. 145.
Some one writing in the Grubstreet Journal under the name of Dramaticus, evidently an aspiring author, is surprised that his play was rejected by Cibber on the ground that it lacked "theatricality". He thought he had observed all the rules of the drama and he is very much puzzled about the meaning of the Word Theatrical. His Conjectures about it are such as these --- a Play may be called theatrical when written by a Person belonging to, or is the Property of the Theatre. --- A Play may be called Theatrical that is revis'd and corrected by any person belonging to the Theatre; of this kind was the Modish Couple, touched up by a Gentleman famous for his Odes, yet died a violent Death. --- a Play that is forced upon the House by superior Authority may be called Theatrical. The Modish Couple had this degree of Theatricality. --- The last new Piece call'd Injured Innocence run indeed six nights, which however theatrical he didn't find the town much edified by it, the Author being obliged to make up the Deficiency of some of the Nights. ---- From all this concludes that Wit and Sense are no legal Cause to reject a Play".

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We may note from the foregoing strictly contemporary comment that the adverse comment comes from the Laureat, Pope and Fielding, and, among the periodicals, from Pope's particular mouthpiece the Grubstreet Journal. Davies, never having known Cibber personally as a manager relies upon the testimony of the Laureat. The following quotations show clearly his attitude to Cibber and his confidence in the Laureat. He says that Cibber says Dogget resigned his share in the patent and that the actors deserted on account of Wilk's temper, but it was merely Dogget's humour. They really left because they could get better parts.

and salaries under Rich "The mean subterfuge of Cibber, to cloke his spleen to Wilks by the sufferage of others is visible"—They (Cibber and Dogget) were stingy, he "took pleasure in dressing every character".

"Of the managers Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, the last for many reasons, was the least esteemed by the players. He spared no pains, it is true, to instruct the actors in such characters as he drew in his own pieces; but he could not forbear, at times wantonly throwing out sarcasms on the inferior performers. Cibber was certainly least esteemed by the actors of the three great masters; the laureat goes farther, and avers that he was absolutely odious to them. I will not go so far; but I have been told, that the players had no hold on any of his passions, to accomplish their views, except his timidity.—Bickerstaff—had an income of 4 L a week. Cibber in an economical fit, retrenched him of half. ——Bickerstaff came threateningly to Cibber and Cibber restored his usual income. ——The truth is, the love and esteem of the actors went along with Booth and Wilks; to Cibber they paid no farther regard that what his power and their fear inspired".

The actors, says Davies, used to gather in a room in the theatre called the Settle. "Wilks came amongst them sometimes; Booth who loved the bagatelle, oftener; Cibber seldom came among the settlers; tyrants fear as they know, they are feared".

"As a manager to whom was entrusted the inspection of new plays, operas, and farces, and of receiving the applications of all dramatic writers, Cibber's character does not appear very justifiable". And hence Davies relates the story told by the Laureat about a young author who had brought a play to Cibber.

112. """: III, 487;
113. """: III, 490.
"Cibber turned over the first leaf; and, reading only two lines, returned it with these words, 'Sir, it will not do'. The mortified author left him; and Cibber, full of the adventure, went to Button's coffee-house, and, ready to split with laughter, related the story to Colonel Brett. — Brett reproached him, 'Do you pretend, Sir, by reading two lines, and that in a ridiculous and cursory manner, to judge of the merit of a whole play?'— Cibber made no reply: he squinted as usual; took a pinch of snuff; and sat down to ruminate on the affair, under the pretence of reading a spectator'.

"As a manager of a theatre, his behavior to authors, I have proved to have been illiberal and insolent; his treatment of the actors has been generally condemned as unfriendly if not tyrannical".

Genest also quotes freely from the Laureat, repeating all the passages used by Davies. He, however, is not so sure of the justice of the Laureat's criticisms. For example, "The Laureat says—'several of the surviving actors are ready to testify, that he was always against raising or rewarding, or by any means encouraging merit of any kind; they know how many disputes he had with Wilks on this account, who was impatient, when justice required it, to reward the meritorious', this is probably an exaggerated account".

But he does not accept the judgment of Davies of him in most respects. He says,

"The naturally close and sullen dispositions of Dogget and Cibber, quite opposite to Wilks open and generous mind, must now and then clash and occasion convulsions in their affairs—- Dogget's great anxiety was to take advantage of the rise and fall of the Stocks; Cibber was

115. "": III, 504.
addicted to gaming and all manner of pleasure— what could Wilks, who was a man of regularity and intent on the credit of the theatre, do with such partners as a stock-jobber and a gamester? — in the decoration of plays they grudged every necessary expense, while his spirit took pleasure in dressing every character as it ought to be, and furnishing such other ornaments as the plays required. (Davies and Laureat)"

And again, he says of Cibber's position as the dominant one of the trio,

"Davies is not surprised, that Wilks, who was a man of plain good sense, but without a learned education, should thus submit to Cibber's judgment, but observes that Booth's resignation of his understanding to an inferior must be resolved into an habitual love of ease—to this, indolence of Booth it is probably owing that Cibber makes little or no complaint of him in his Apology".

Genest has no doubt that Cibber is guilty of plagiarism and of insolent conduct toward authors. He says,—

"Thus far Cibber's conduct to authors seems to have been as little censurable as that of any Manager before his time or since—-but the author of the Laureat brings two heavy charges against him; in both of which there seems to be too much truth— he accuses him of pilfering scenes from manuscript plays which had been put into his hands as manager—— and taxes him with taking delight in rebuffing dramatic writers, and calling that pastime of his the Choaking of Singing Birds.

Then he relates a story told by the Laureat of how Cibber had rejected a play of Fenton's and, according to the actor Johnson had added the insolence "of advising Fenton to engage himself in some employ-

118. "" "" : III, 346.
119. "" "" : III, 347.
ment of honest labour by which he might obtain that support, which he
could never hope for from his poetry". The rejected play was after­
wards acted at Lincoln's Inn Fields with a profit to Fenton of about
1000 L.

Recent writers upon theatrical history do not treat Cibber's mana­
gement positively. If they discuss it at all, they usually concede that
he was successful. The only adverse comment found was in regard to Pope's
ridicule of his allowing pantomime to enter Dnmary Lane. In the preface
to the Elwin and Courthope edition of Pope's Works is the judgment "as
a theatrical manager, he must bear the odium which satire justly atta­
ches to the procurer of corrupting pleasure".

120. Genest: III, 23.
121. Ibid.
C. AS A WRITER

(a) Playwright.

Cibber has little to say of his work as a writer. He says that he began to write plays in order to obtain a part which the company thought "in his way" as an actor and that he continued to write plays during his theatrical career. He admits that he was "often treated as a plagiarist" and offers a defense of himself in the case of The Double Gallant. He frankly admits the justice of Congreve's criticism of his first play when he said it had in it "a great many things that were like wit, that in reality were not wit" and Cibber adds his own criticism of it, that it had in it "a great deal of Puerility and frothy Stage-language" but yet "by the mere moral Delight receiv'd from its Fable it has been— -- in Possession of the Stage for more than forty years".

The Grubstreet Journal never allowed Cibber any merit as a dramatist. Procious, a correspondent, says "The Cacethus of Scribbling is so epidemic that every one, who can write his name, will turn Author. Hence arise Cibber's in Dramaticks".

"Cibber wrote or altered", says Genest, "about 35 dramatic pieces— --Tragedies are almost forgotten and several of his Comedies are become obsolete".

A complete list of his plays with date of production follows:

1696—Loves Last Shift Comedy
1697—Women's Wit " " "
1699—Xerxes Tragedy
1700—Richard III " " "

126. Cibber (Supplementary Chapter), II, 486.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Genre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Love Makes a Man</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>The School Boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>She Would And She Would Not</td>
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<td>1704</td>
<td>The Careless Husband</td>
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<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>Perolla and Isadora</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>The Comical Lovers</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>The Double Gallant</td>
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<td>1707</td>
<td>The Lady's Last Stake</td>
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<td>1708</td>
<td>The Rival Fools</td>
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<td>1710</td>
<td>The Rival Queen</td>
<td>Comical Tragedy</td>
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<td>1713</td>
<td>Ximena</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td>Venus and Adonis</td>
<td>Masque</td>
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<td>1715</td>
<td>Bulls and Bears</td>
<td>Farce</td>
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<td>1716</td>
<td>Myrtillo</td>
<td>Pastoral Interlude;</td>
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<td>1717</td>
<td>The Non-Juror</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>The Refusal</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>Caesar in Egypt</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1728</td>
<td>The Provoked Husband</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>Love in a Riddle</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
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<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>Damon and Phillida—</td>
<td>Pastoral Farce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The worst of the plays like *Woman's Wit* and *Xerxes*, Cibber omitted from his 1731 edition of his works.

The first play *Love's Last Shift* or *The Fool in Fashion* like many subsequent ones, was declared to have been stolen by Cibber. His enemies asserted that to their certain knowledge the play was not his own, but to

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Cibber's satisfaction they never disclosed the real author. John Dennis, one of Cibber's active enemies many years later unconsciously praising the play asks, "How could he at the age of twenty, write a comedy with a just design, distinguished characters, and a proper dialogue, who now, at forty, treats us with Hibernian sense and Hibernian English?"

The other plays of Cibber which were targets for the satirical shots of his enemies were Richard III, Perolla and Isadora, The Non-Juror, Caesar in Egypt, and Papal Tyranny. All of these plays are adaptations, and all are tragedies except the Non-Juror which was the comedy with open political application. Genest, speaking of the Non-Juror, thinks that "Cibber deserved all the abuse and enmity that he met with --- the Stage and the Pulpit ought never to dabble in politics."

A good example of the bitterest attacks on Cibber as a playwright is that by the Laureat; speaking of Perolla and Isadora, he says; "The critics who have mentioned it say, (for there is not one little of the piece come down to us) that it was the strongest and most unnatural stuff that was ever written. Nobody understood the story; nobody ever heard of the names of his heroes; nobody from the beginning to the end could conceive what was meant."

Fielding has also some amusing satire on Cibber's plays. Some years before, Cibber had published his Caesar in Egypt with a motto from Lucan prefixed to each act as a summary of what the act was intended to teach. So in 1736, Fielding in burlesque of him summed up each scene of his Pasquin with some moral such as "we are all under petticoat government."

Cesar in Egypt deserved to be damned as it was. Genest says that
Fletcher's play from which it was adapted was "a very good one" but that Cibber's was "dull and uninteresting" and that the audience laughed at Cibber's "quavering Tragedy tones --- as much as they did at his pasteboard swans which the carpenters pulled along the Nile".

Such obvious failures as this play gave an opening to his enemies for general burlesque upon all his work. In The Historical Register for 1738, Fielding devotes a great deal of space to Cibber. In one scene he represents Thoophilus Cibber as asking the town whether they wish his wife Maria to have the part of Polly in The Beggar's Opera. He receives a hiss for an answer, to which he replies:

"Thanks to the town, that hiss speaks their assent;
Such was the hiss that spoke the great applause
Our mighty father met with, when he brought
His ridile of the stage; such was the hiss
Welcomed his Caesar to th' Egyptian shore;
Such was the hiss in which great John should have expired.
But wherefore do I try in vain to number
Those glorious hisses which from age to age
Our family has borne triumphant from the stage?"

In spite of the hisses, it appears that Cibber had insisted upon keeping Caesar in Egypt on the stage too long to please his brother managers. Some verses from a periodical of the times show Cibber's manner of closing a quarrel with them, as well the public comment on the play:

"On the sixth night of Cibber's Caesar in Egypt
When the pack'd audience from their posts retired,

And Julius in a general hiss expired;
   Sage Booth to Cibber cried, 'Compute our gains!
These dogs of Egypt and their dowdy queans,
   But ill requite these habits and these scenes,
To rob Corneille for such a motley piece:
   His geese were swans; but zounds! thy swans are geese!
Rubbing his firm invulnerable brow,
   The bard replied—'The critics must allow
Twas ne'er in Caesar's destiny To Run!'
   Wilks bowed and bless'd the gay pacific pun'.

Papal Tyranny was produced in 1745, but was written several years earlier. According to Cibber, Shakespeare had had splendid opportunities in the material of this tragedy, but for some reason, had missed most of them; especially did he fail to "inspirit" John with the resentment proper to an English monarch against the "intoxicated tyranny" of the Church of Rome. So Cibber stepped in and rewrote the play, doing his will upon it. To bring to the front his point of view, he even changed the name from King John to Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John. The play was put to rehearsal, but the actors, knowing that it would fail, refused to go on with it. At one of the rehearsals Cibber, incensed by the conduct of the company put the play into his pocket and walked off with it. The press and the coffee houses were still rallying Cibber on his failure when Fielding took it up in The Historical Register.

In one of the scened, Apollo, a theatrical manager, is represented as casting the parts for the original King John when Cibber under the name of Ground-Ivy appears and thus remonstrates with him:

Ground Ivy — What are you doing here?

Apollo — I am casting the parts in the tragedy of King John.

Ground Ivy — Then you are casting the parts in a tragedy that won't do.

Apollo — How, Sir? Was it not written by Shakespeare, and was not Shakespeare one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived?

Ground Ivy — No, sir. Shakespeare was a pretty fellow, and said some things which only want a little of my licking to do well enough; King John, as now writ, will not do—-But a word in your ear, I will make him do.

Apollo — How?

Ground Ivy — By alteration, sir: it was a maxim of mine, when I was at the head of the theatrical affairs, that no play, though ever so good, would do without alteration—-For instance, in the play before us, the bastard Faulconbridge is a most effeminate character, for which reason I would cut him out, and put all his sentiments in the mouth of Constance, who is so much properer to speak to them.

Fielding goes on much farther in ridiculing the presumption of Cibber, who, uttering his favorite "damn me", declares himself the equal of all actors and authors, living or dead. Mr. Medley who is here the mouthpiece of Fielding, quietly remarks that if Shakespeare is to be altered, no man is better able "to alter him for the worse". As for himself, he says, "I have too great an honour for Shakespeare to think of burlesquing him, and to be sure of not burlesquing him, I will never

attempt to alter him for fear of burlesquing him be accident".

And at the end of the play, as if speaking to plagairists, Mr. Medley virtuously declares:

"No borrowed or stolen goods we've shown.
If witty, or if dull, our play's our own".

Pope, too, in The Dunciad makes capital out of Cibber's failure in writing tragedy. He represents Cibber, the son of Dulness, as making a bonfire of his books:

"Now flames the Cid, and now Perolla burns;
Great Caesar roars, and hisses in the fires;
King John in silence modestly expires
No merit now the dear Nonjuror claims,
Moliere's old stubble in a moment flames".

In ridicule of Bentley and Theobald and such textual critics, Pope and Warburton have very elaborately annotated and emended The Dunciad. The notes add weight to the effect of the satire. The notes on this passage are as follows:

(a) In the first notes on the Dunciad it was said, that this author was particularly excellent at Tragedy. 'This (says he) is an unjust as to say I could not dance on a rope'. But certain it is that he had attempted to dance on this rope, and fell most shamefully, having produced no less than four tragedies (the names of which the poet preserves in these few lines); the first three of them were fairly printed, acted and damned; the fourth suppressed in fear of the like treatment".

(b) "A comedy threshed out of Moliere's Tartuffe, and so much the translator's favorite that he assures us all our author's dislike to it could only arise from disaffection to the government".

137. Pope; The Dunciad 1,v. 250-255, Works, IV, 120.
Of Cibber's ignorance and lack of originality, he says:

"How with less reading than makes felons 'scape,
Less human genius than God gives an ape,
Small thanks to France, and none to Rome or Greece,
A vast, vamp'd, future old, reviv'd new piece,
Twixt Plantus, Fletcher, Shakespe'ar, and Corneille,
Can make a Cibber, Tibbald, or Ozell".

A more general and scathing satire upon Cibber the author, is that passage in which Pope describes him in the throes of composition. Here we have a picture of a brainless doll, stupidly remembering his thefts from former playwrights.

(a)

"Swearing and supperless, the Hero sate,
Blasphem'd his Gods, the Dice, and damn'd his Fate;
Then gnawed his pen, then dash'd it on the ground,
Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!
Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there;
Yet wrote and flound'r'd on in mere dispair.
Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,
Much future Ode, and abdicated Play;
Nonsense precipitate, like running Lead,
That slipped thro' Cracks and zig-zags of the head;
All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
Fruits of dull Heat, and Sooterkins of wit
Next, o'er his Books his eyes began to roll,
In pleasing memory of all he stole,
How here he sipp'd, how there he plunder'd snug,
And suck'd all o'er, like an industrious Bug.
(b)

Here lay poor Fletcher's half-eat scenes, and here

The Frippery of Crucify'd Moliere;

There hapless Shakespear, yet of Tibbald sore,

Wish'd he had blotted for himself before".

The annotations to the above verses are as follows:

(a) "---Nothing was so natural, after so great a loss of money at dice, or reputation by his play, as that the poet should have no great stomach to eat a supper. Besides, how well has the poet consulted his heroic character, in adding that he swore all the time?".

(b) "A great number of them taken out to patch up his plays".

(c) "When I fitted up an old play, it was as a good housewife will mend old linen, when she has not better employment" (Apology).

(d) "It was a ridiculous praise which the players gave to Shakespeare, 'that he never blotted a line'. Ben Johnson honestly wished he had blotted a thousand, and Shakespeare would certainly have wished the same if he had lived to see those alterations in his works, which, not the actors only (and especially the daring hero of this poem) have made on the stage, but the presumptuous critics of our days in their editions".

Davies is not interested in Cibber as a playwright. He dismisses him as of no importance, except for one comment upon Cibber's vanity in altering King John. "Colley's vanity", he says, "so far transported him, that, in his Dedication, he told Lord Chesterfield, he had endeavored to make his play more like one 'than what he found in Shakespeare'."

Davies believed that Cibber suppressed Papal Tyranny, not because the actors protested and refused to go on with it, but because so much

140. Davies: I, 3.
had been said against him for again presuming to meddle with Shakespear. 141.

Genest also blames Cibber for his presumption in altering Shakespeare. He quotes Cibber's dedication of the play: "As Shakespeare seems to have been under no restraint from his religion, it will require a nicer criticism than I am master of to excuse his being so cold upon so warm an occasion". Genest remarks that Shakespeare said what was appropriate to King John and adds "Many better dramatic writers than Cibber have fallen into absurdities, by merely considering if it can come with propriety from the person who speaks it.--- Cibber had mangled Shakespeare badly enough in Richard III, but here he shows him no mercy at all --- the play is in great degree written afresh; the language is chiefly Cibber's, but sometimes he retains the precise words of the original; at others he alters them--- he has absolutely spoilt the fine characters of Constance and Falsonbridge and in the grand scene between John and Hubert, the King makes Hubert shut the window shutters, before he speaks to him of murdering Arthur --- If Cibber's presumption had not been excessive, he would have left uncontaminated at least of which Stevens says, 'art could add little to its perfection and time itself could take nothing from its beauties' 143.

Recent critics up to those who have written within the last year or two have entirely ignored Cibber as a playwright, believing him to have written nothing of value as literature, to have contributed nothing to the development of comedy, and to have been the stupid, presumptuous plagiarist and mangler of plays that he is represented to

142. Genest: IV, 158.
143. Genest: IV, 160
be by his critics.

(b) As Poet Laureate

Cibber in the Apology did not attempt to defend his poetry; he even agreed with his detractors. In speaking of Pope's frequent satirical attacks upon him he says: "As a little bad poetry is the greatest Crime he lays to my charge, I am willing to subscribe to his opinion of it".

He evidently knew his poor were his odes for New Year's Days and the King's birthday, written in accordance with the requirements of his office as Poet Laureate. In relating an incident connected with his having written a prize ode in school he says: "The very word, Ode, I know makes you smile already; and so it does me; not only because it still makes so many poor Bevils turn Wits upon it, but from a Reflection of how little I then thought that I should be call'd upon twice a year---- to make the same kind of Oblations to an Unexceptionable Prince, the serene Happiness of whose Reign my battling Rhimes are still so unequal to".

Cibber made no secret of the fact that he thought that it was not for nothing that he had championed the Whigs and the Hanovarian succession with his comedy. He confesses candidly that "Part of the Bread I now eat was given me for having writ the Nonjuror", meaning that the office of Poet Laureate was given him as a reward for his services to the Government.

143. -Cibber I, 36.
144. Cibber I, 32.
Hiw rivals for the Laureateship were: Richard Savage, Lewis Theobold, John Dennis, Steven Duck and Alexander Pope.

Immediately upon Cibber's appointment, the Grubstreet Journal made comment with a skit, attributed to Pope himself, which concludes thus:

"But guessing who would have the luck
To be the birthday fibber
I thought of Dennis, Tibbald, Duck
But never dreamt of Cibber".

This is not the only epigram which Pope made on the occasion. That Pope had not forgotten the Nonjuror is shown by this witty one:

"What! Cibber Laureate made!
O heavens! forbear
All ye Nonjurors, if you can
to swear".

But of all the hundreds of verses which filled the magazines for the year 1730, this epigram, attributed by Cibber also to Pope, Genest considered the best.

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

Dr. Johnson also wrote an epigram upon Cibber and George I of which he seems to have been somewhat proud:

"Augustus still survives in Maro's strain
And Spenser's verse prolongs Eliza's reign;
Great George's acts let tuneful Cibber sing,
For Nature formed the Poet for the King". 149

Dean Swift, even, could not resist an epigram, the only bit of satire he ever leveled at Cibber:

"For instance: when you rashly think,
No rymer cam like Welsted sink,
His merits balanc'd you shall find
The Laureate leaves him far behind". 150

The great mass of the satire which filled the periodicals of this time appeared in Grubstreet Journal. The real power behind the publication was Pope who wrote under the name of "Mr. Poppy". He used the magazine to praise himself and lash his enemies. Nothing could be better of its kind than the scorn and ridicule that the Journal dealt out periodically to Colley Cibber as it took up one by one the odes which he wrote and reduced them to nonsense and vacuity. For instance, Cibber's Ode for New Year's Day, 1732 is typical of all his poetry:

"Awake with joyous songs the day
That leads the op'ning year,
The Year advancing to prolong,
Augustus' sway demands our song,
And calls for universal cheer.

Your ancient Annals Britain read,
And mark the reign you most admire;"

The present shall the past exceed,
And yield enjoyment to desire.

Or if you find the coming year
In blessings should transcend the last
The difference only will declare
The present sweeter than the past".  

Grub Street Journal publishes then the following parody:

Gibber's Ode translated into English
(by way of irony)

"Awake, with songs, the opening day,
That calls for general cheer:
Since nothing good can live too long,
Let Augustus have a song,
And hey, for gambols, and strong beer!

Britons, your chronicles go read,
See what king's reign you most admire;
The present shall the past exceed
And be what'er your hearts desire.
For if, by chance, the next new year
But proves as lucky as the last,
Why then -- the present 'tis most clear
Is far more happy than the past".  

152. Ibid.
Cibber's Ode Burlesqu'd

"Awake, with Grub-street Odes, the Day
That leads the op'ning year;
The year advancing to prolong
Great C-bb-r's Fame, demands a Song,
Inspired by Gin or by small Beer

Your Ancient Ballad--makers read,
And mark the Fool you most admire;
The present shall the past exceed,
And yield Enjoyment to Desire.
Or, if you find the coming Ode,
In nonsense should transcend the last,
The Diff'rence only will make good
The present duller than the past".

In the same issue of Grub Street Journal (Jan, 13, 1733) there appeared a vulgar sketch by "Mr. Bavis", the editor. He has a letter from a correspondent telling of his vision of how the Laureate went to Parnassus and challenged Apollo for the Laurel. Apollo demanded his credentials. He showed a book of plays and asked who had written or acted a better character. Apollo said that to bestow a poet's laurel on a player would degrade the laurel. Cibber declined as a test to be examined in ancient writers of drama.

The next month the Grub Street Journal came out with
A Paralell between Mr. Cibber and Mr. Carpenter Of Hereford.
in which Cibber suffers by the comparison:

153. Ibid.
"Mr. Carpenter is Poet Laureate of Hereford, Mr. Cibber, in London. They are both of the same Sex, Education, Profession, Occupation, and Complexion; the initial and final letters of their names are the same. Mr. Carpenter is Deputy Bellman of the City of Hereford; Mr. Cibber --- Director of the Playhouse Thunder, as Deputy to Mr. Dennis, Inventor thereof....-----

"Mr. Cibber is a professed Poet, so is Mr. Carpenter, and the better of the Two, as will appear from their respective Performances on New Year's Day. The following is Mr. Carpenter's:

'The year its steady Course doth constant run,
No sooner ends but 'tis again begun;
One is no sooner past but still appears
Another new; thus years are chained to years,
Whose fruitful Seasons does for man provide,
And all the creatures on the Earth beside,
Thus doth the year its active Course maintain,
It comes to go, and goes to come again'.

"Mr. Cibber is an actor, and Mr. Carpenter has made a Figure among a Set of Strollers. 'Tis observable that Players act that part best to which they are most naturally inclin'd. Thus observation is contradicted in the Action of these two Persons; for Mr. Cibber performs the part of a Coxcomb and a villain to Perfection. -----

"Mr. Carpenter is an excellent Translator and Cobler but not equal to his Rival. He has translated two Pair of Corneille's and Moliere's old Shoes in such a manner as to fit no Mortal.-------

"To conclude--- Mr. Cibber has the more money, but Mr. Carpenter is the taller man".

The foregoing skit would have been more clever had it not been so obvious an imitation of Steele's parallel between Wilks and Cibber and especially of his burlesque parallel between the actors Bullock and Pinketham in the Tatler papers.

In October of the same year (1733) there appeared the Laureate's Ode for His Majesty's Birthday. It began:

"Let there be light!"

Such was at once the word and work of heav'n,
When from the void of universal night,
Free nature sprung to the Creator's sight,
And day to glad the new-born world

was given.

Succeeding days to ages roll'd
And every age some wonder told:
At length arose this glorious morn!
When, to extend his bounteous pow'r

High heaven announced this instant hour

The best of monarchs shall be born!"

Promptly appeared, as usual, The Laureate's Ode Burlesqued:

"Seel Colley as profanely Scripture handle

As punch when ent'ring with his Farthing candle.

Let there be light!

Such was the Almighty's, such the

Laureat's phrase;

When from the void of his unthinking head,
Free Dullness (Pallas-like) with native lead,
Arose to glad his heavy labour'd lays

Succeeding songs to odes then roll'd

And every ode surpass'd the old;
At length conspicuous o'er the rest,
The Laureat to extend his pow'r
Appointed for this instant hour,
At once the dullest and the best". 157

This burlesque was followed by Notes on the Ode, from Grubstreet Journal, in the style afterwards used by Pope in The Dunciad.

"Verse 2 -- 'Let there be Light' was the word but not the work of heav'n.

"Verse 4 -- 'Free Nature etc' -- if it means light, he said it before. If it means the world, it was not created till the 2nd and 3rd day". etc-----

One more example of the number of witticisms at his expense each of his odes called forth in the papers:

On the Laureat's Last Ode

"Let there be light, the Almighty said:
A blazing glory shines;
And o'er the universe was spread,
Except on C----r's lines .

"Unaided by this grant, we find
Our bard: and thence 'tis plain,
Chaos and Darkness were assign'd
To sleep in C----r's brain .

"One spark of light receiv'd had he,
We might indeed be sure,

157. Ibid.
The dullest laureat ne'er could be
So palpably obscure.

"Ye critics, then blame not the wight,
Nor let ill words be given;
Since he has lent you all the light
He e'er receiv'd from heaven,"

One of the most humours of the satirical verses was a burlesque of Cibber's obscure expressions. One notes, too, the spelling of Cibber's name, the K sound being always used in ridicule of his half foreign origin.

**Imitation of the Keyberian Stile and Manner.**

"If when at all, suppose it should be so,
Without regarding either to or for,
some, not in vain, together blindly go,
Then only them., however, I abhor,
Not that because, which some I know will say,
Indubitable reasons may be giv'n;
Yea, if bright Phoebus, gilds the Golden day,
Our thoughts ascend insensibly to heav'n ".etc

The Grub Street Journal was untiring in its persecution of Cibber. A discussion, early the next year (1733), had been carried on between two other journals in regard to an excise tax on wine and tobacco. This furnished Grub Street Journal another vehicle of burlesque entitled, *Dulness not to be Taxed*. In pompous legal language the writer explains about the recent sentiment in favor of taxing wine, tobacco and even the "commodity called Dulness". But

158. Ibid.
when the rumor reached the traders in dullness, they resolved to offer burnt offerings to the goddess of Dullness to prevent the tax.

"Sect. IV. The most eminent among the constant traders was Kibemus Laureatus; and his Offering was nine hundred Weight of translated tragedy; half that quantity of stolen Comedy, spoiled in the transmographying; and three hundred Weight of New Year and Birthday Odes".

To go on multiplying examples were of little value. Every year from 1730 to 1757, the year of the Laureat's death there appeared the two odes and parodies and burlesques on them in the magazines. But the most spirited and cleverest attack on Cibber appeared anonymously in the Whitehall Evening Post at the very beginning of the battle of wits. A very flattering Hymn to the Laureat had appeared in one of the magazines. Immediately there was raised the shout that Cibber had written it himself. Three days later appeared the anonymous verses accusing him of writing his own dull praise, of outshining all shining Brass. His chief parts on the stage were reviewed, showing him to be a rogue and blockhead. Then the last stanzas bewail the fact that Cibber can stand all their satire because he delights in it. The very last stanza goes to the root of the matter:

"Thunder, tis said, the Laurel spares;
Naught but thy brows could blast it:
And yet--O curse, provoking Stars!
Thy comfort is, thou hast it."

Not until the Apology appeared, nearly ten years later, was it known that this attack upon him was made by Cibber himself. He finally confessed to it to show that he did not have much concern about the "Poetical cry then against him "and to"shew you this particular cast of his temper".

Following his New Year's Ode for 1736 there appeared a pastoral dialogue to show the weariness with which his odes were received:

"Strephon--- Colley has tun'd again his fife.
Thyris— Has he! ------'s life!
Strephon--- Nor is he quite out of breath!
Thyris --- Not yet? ---- 's death! "

After Cibber's death on December 27, 1757, no notice appeared in the magazines except a mere formal announcement and some verses in the same spirit of ridicule:

"The Laureat dead! Ah well a day!
No sing song will appear,
Nothing but dirge and fun'ral lay
Will close the dismal year".

Cibber would have us believe that he subscribed to his critic's poor opinion of his poetry and smiled with them at his odes. But Doctor Johnson maintains that Cibber was proud of his odes and anxious about the Doctor's opinion of them. Boswell quotes Johnson at different times on this point:

"As for Cibber himself ------- he was a poor creature. I remember when he brought me one of his odes to have my opinion of it, I could not bear such nonsense, and would not let him read it to the end; so little respect had I for that great man! ---- His friends gave out that he intended his birthday Odes should be bad; but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he showed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not

163. " " " " (Jan. 1758), XXVIII, 35.
164. Boswell, I, 349.
very willing to submit---- Colley Cibber once consulted me as to one of his birth-day Odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages. Cibber lost patience, and would not read his ode to an end". 166

Walpole, a political ally, and ardent admirer of Cibber had to admit that Cibber wrote as bad odes as Garrick did but, that unlike Garrick he was redeemed by his other writings.

The Laureat, of course, defends Pope in all of his abuse of Cibber. He says at the end of a *New Lick at the Laureat*:

"By this time, dear Colley, I believe I have proved more than I at first profess'd, not only that dulness is a proper subject of ridicule, in all who pretend to be wits, and that it is criminal in you, as Poet Baureat, however innocent it may be in others; but also, that in the Opinion of other People, besides Mr. Pope, you are really as dull a Fellow as he makes of you".

Ridicule of the Laureate was not lacking on the stage as well as in the papers. During the uncertainty as to the appointment, Fielding's Tom Thumb was being played. A farce by Cooke called *The Battle of the Poets, or the Contention for the Laurel* was interpolated into the second act of Fielding's play. The author introduces the candidates into the farce under names thinly disguised: Cibber as Fopling Fribble, and Theobold as Comment profund. All the contestants vie with each other for the honor of writing a marriage ode for Tom Thumb, and the judges decide in favor of Fribble because he is the poorest poet in the lot.

165. Boswell I, 249.
166. *""* I, 134.
Cibber's "mannerisms and ways of speech on and off the stage were ridiculed in phrases such as, 'Ay, ay, hum, let me see!' and 'Hah! gadso, that's true, strike me speechless!'.

Fielding himself makes Marplay Jr. remark that since his play was damned he would write no more unless he were "forced to do it".

"Luckless— that's no easy thing, Marplay.

Marplay, Jr. — Yes, sir. Odes, odes, a man may be obliged to write those, you know".

By the time Fielding wrote "Pasquin" (1736) the current ridicule of Cibber's odes had become perhaps a trifle stale, but no one else ever did it better than he in the scene where a rival voter asks Lord Place for a position in the court. Here is the conversation:

"2 Voter— My Lord, I should like a place at court too; I don't care much what it is, provided I wear fine clothes and have something to do in the kitchen or the cellar; I own I should like the cellar, for I am a devilish lover of sack.

Lord Place— Sack, say you? Odes, you shall be poet-laureat.

2 Voter— Poet! no, my Lord, I am no poet, I can't make verses.

Lord Place— No matter for that, you'll be able to make odes.

2 Voter— Odes, my Lord! What are those?

Lord Place— Faith, sir, I can't tell what they are; but I know you may be qualified for the place without being a poet".

Fielding, by way of a proper prologue, opened The Historical Register with an "Ode to the New Year" in parody upon those with which Cibber greeted every new year. Medley produces what is supposedly the Laureate's Ode:

171. """: Pasquin, Works, XI, p. 184
"Medley.--- There, sir; there's the very quintessence and cream of all the odes I have seen for several years past.

Sour Wit.--- Ay, sir, I thought you would not be the publisher of another man's wit?

Medley.--- No more I an't sir; for the devil of any wit did I ever see in any of them".

Then follows the ode, the best of the "sing song" parodies.

"This is a day, in days of yore, Our fathers never saw before:
This is a day,'tis one to ten Our sons will never see again
Then sing the day And sing the song And thus be merry all day long.

This is the day, and that's the night When the sun shall be gay And the moon shall be bright.
The sun shall rise, all in the skies; The moon shall go, all down below.
Then sing the day And sing the song And thus be merry all day long".

Fielding's clever nonsense must have set all London chuckling. That Walpole enjoyed it is attested by his echoing it in his letter to a friend:

172. Fielding: Historical Register, Works, Iv, 344.
"--- and this I send to London, by a gentleman who—— will deliver it to you on your birthday,

When you are singing the day
And singing the song
And singing the day
All night long  "  

Fielding kept up the fun with Cibber as long as it interested the public. Perhaps his best stroke is in a Lucian vision, where the Laureate is sent to Hades. All who pass Charon's ferry are stripped by Mercury of clothes and belongings. He says that in the crowd his eyes were "suddenly diverted by an elderly gentleman with a piece of withered laurel on his head.—— I was surprised to see him pass examination with his laurel on, and was assured by the standers by, that Mercury would have taken it off if he had seen it".  

Pope has no special reference to Cibber's odes in his Dunciad. The satire is general and lies in the fact that the Poet Laureate is crowned King of Dunces and is thus instrumental in restoring the Empire of Dullness to Great Britain. In one instance Pope refers definitely to his position as successor of Woffenden:

"Thou, Cibber! thou his laurel shall support,
Folly, my son, has still a Friend
at court".

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Davies is concerned only with Cibber as an actor and manager. He has nothing to say of him as a poet. Genest dismisses him with a summary he has heard somewhere, " 'as an actor, he had undoubted

merit; as a dramatic writer, his character was both good and bad; as Laureat, he was unquestionably the worst that ever was".

Nothing can be of less interest evidently, to modern literary critics than a Poet Laureate. Cibber as laureate is scarcely remembered even for the badness of his odes. The Dictionary of National Biography, however, says "Cibber's Odes are among the most contemptible things in literature".

W. Forbes Gray, who has taken the trouble to study all the poets laureate, merely agrees with Cibber, that he received the laureateship in consideration of his political activities, and concludes that "it was not by any means a red letter day in the annals of English poetry when Cibber was added to the roll of Poets Laureate".

(3) As a Prose Writer.

The fact that Cibber wrote an apology for his life, which in reality was almost a justification of his life makes it necessary to collect a mass of satirical material which was aimed not particularly at his autobiography but at his life, his conduct as a man, and this kind of satire was the bitterest of all. It was this personal abuse that led to his historic quarrel with Pope.

Cibber must have known that his Apology would be met with a storm of criticism. But perhaps it is merely unintentionally that he anticipates most of the hostile remarks. He says he wrote it out of pure vanity, the same which as it" makes even homely People employ Painters to preserve a flattering Record of their Persons, has seduced me to print off this Chairo Oscuro of my mind."

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176. Genest:III,386( From Universal Spectator, Aug. 7, 1743 )
177. Gray: p. 166
He gives his life's philosophy.——

"to give a constant Preference to the Business of the Day, and yet to be able to laugh while we are about it——— is a State of Happiness which the greatest Precepts of moral wisdom will not easily teach us to exceed". Rather a light view of life, his enemies will declare, and yet he is willing to live and die by it. "I have been making my way for above Forty yeats through a Crowd of Cares, —— is it time of Day for me to leave off these Fooleries, and to set up a new character? Can it be worth my while to waste my Spirits, to bake my Blood, with serious Contemplations, and perhaps impair my Health, in the fruitless Study of advancing myself into the better Opinion of those very-very few Wise Men that are as old as I am? No, the Part I have acted in real life shall be all of a piece". ——" I can no more put off my Follies than my Skin——— nor am I sure that my Friends are displeased with them; for, besides that in this Light I afford them frequent matter of Mirth, they may possible be less uneasy at their own foibles when they have so old a Precedent to keep them in Countenance". 181——"If the world thinks me a Trigler, I don't desire to break in upon their Wisdom; let them call me any Fool but an Uncheerful one".

He even appears vain of his vanity; "Nothing gives a Coxcomb more delight than when you suffer him to talk of himself; which sweet Liberty I here enjoy for a Volume together! —— but here, when I have all the Talk to myself, and have no body to interrupt or contradict me——— is a pleasure which none but authors as vain as myself can conceive".

183. "" "" : I, 29.
After this complacent comment on his frailties in general, to head off the "determined critick", Cibber comes out with his own determined criticism of his book, an arraignment which is a fair sample of the criticism which did actually follow.

"I will prevent even the Imputation of his doing me an Injustice, and honestly say it myself, Viz. That all of the Assurances I was ever guilty of, this of writing my own life is the most hardy.... That through every Page there runs a Vein of Vanity and Impertinence; but as this is a common Error, I presume the Terms of Doating Trifler, Old Fool, or Conceited Coxcomb will carry contempt enough for an impartial censor to bestow upon me; that my style is unequal, pert, and frothy, patch'd and party-colour'd like the coat of an Harlequin; low and pompous, cram'd with Epithets, strew'd with Scraps of second-hand Latin from common Quotations; frequently aiming at Wit, without ever hitting the mark; a mere Ragoust toss'd up from the offals of other authors: My Subject below all Pens but my own, which, whenever I keep to, is flatly daub'd by one eternal Egotism: That I want nothing but Wit to be as accomplished a Coxcomb here as ever I attempted to expose on the Theatre."

As has already been stated, one of his enemies published a chapter-by-chapter review of the Apology as soon as it appeared. This ill natured pamphlet was called The Laureat. The Laureat says "that the Apology is obscurely and immethodically written--- that Cibber's style is everywhere embarrassed and sometimes unintelligible--- that it abounds in fustian, false English, and ridiculous flowers of rhetoric".

Fielding was editing The Champion and gave Cibber much attention

184. Cibber: I, 43.
185. Genest, III, 382.
A numbering error caused there to be no page “68” in this document.
in its pages. In one number he remarks, "many persons have expressed an impatience to read the Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian; asserting they are sure it must be the saddest stuff that was writ*. 186 And in another he stated that it was generally thought "that, however illustrious person may wind up as a man, he will certainly end as an author with a very bad life". 187 In another, he proceeded to show the little advantage of grammar because cibber"is generally understood, without......and sometimes not to be understood with it". He picked out for ridicule phrases or sentences in the Apology which failed in grammar or meant nothing, such as: 'made his first step forward into nature (was born)— so that the fate of King James, the Prince of Orange, and himself were all at once on the anvil'— 'an Emanation of Beauty ( a woman) '—'shine' and 'regret' as transitive verbs and 'adept' in the sense of 'novice'. 188 In another paper he questions not that : "the ultra sublime will in future ages be called the Cibberian style". His best bit of fun with Cibber's style was in the article in which he summoned Cibber before the court Censorial Inquiry on an indictment for murdering the English language. When asked to take oath before the Court, Col. Apology, left handed and a fool, caused some delay and amusement before he "could be brought to know which hand he was to hold up". The charge was formally made that without the fear of grammar before his eyes he had made "with a certain weapon called a goose-quill ...... several broad wounds but of no depth at all, on the said English language", and so--- the said Col. Apology the said language did murder". In the verdict they all agreed as to the book that "if he had not, from the warmth of his imagination run into nonsense...

187. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 285. April, 1, 1740
188. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 392. April, 29, 1740.
189. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 289. May , 3, 1740.
nor, from coldness of either his circumstance or his principles had crawled out of his way into politics, his book would have been perfect of its kind*. He was freed and according to the promise of the Court, advertisements of his book appeared in The Champion.

Cibber in one of his prologues had spoken of a certain actress as having "outdone her usual outdoings". No one expression in the Apology caused more mirth. Every one want out of his way to use the verb "outdo" and it was sure to be followed by the noun "outdoing". Thus Fielding says in the preface to Tom Thumb that only one Shakespeare will arise in century and "when he comes like a Prodigy of the better Sort where Nature (according to the Phrase of a great Philosopher) may be said to have outdone her usual outdoings".

Fielding had something to say also of Cibber's personal life. He says that the book may properly "be styled an apology for the life of which one who hath played a very comical part, though theatrical, hath been acted on a much bigger stage than Drury Lane". He said, too, that Cibber "lived the life he hath recorded, and is by many thought to have lived such a life only in order to write it". .... -"How completely doth he arm us against so mineasy, so wretched, a passion as the fear of shame! how clearly doth he expose the emptiness and vanity of that phantom, reputation".

Fielding never could forbear laughing at Cibber's ignorance. He has a let ter from the Man in the Moon to Captain Vinegar who presided over the Court of Censorial Inquiry. He says: "I am much pleased with your criticisms on the Apology, especially with your address in putting what I am told is the severest of all your remarks in Greek. This ---- is whispering softly, so softly that it is impossible your antagonist should hear it".

191. Fielding: "" "" "" April 22, 1740, "" "" "" 282.
Of both the Gibbers he said: "The father lulls you to sleep, the son awakens you out of it; the father sets your teeth on edge; the son makes your head ache. To sum up their merits in two words: the father writes as no one ever wrote before, the son as none will ever write again".

There is one bit of evidence that even the man in the street, the shopkeeper, knew of Cibber but knew no good of him from the newspapers. A letter from Mrs Pilkington to Richardson says that she can get a "most compleat, beautiful shop ---- but the gentleman who owns it wants some person of credit to give me a character. I mentioned Mr Cibber but he had no opinion of him."

In the Dunciad there are still some verses perhaps aimed at the Apology. The Dunce is speaking:

"And were my Elasticity and fire. Some Daemon stole my pen (forgive the offence) And once betray'd me into common sense: Else all my Prose and Verse were much the same; This prose on stilts, that poetry fallen lame."

Cibber had been admitted to the exclusive White's club which gave excuse for this couplet:

"Or chair'd at White's amidst the Doctors sit, Teach Oaths to gamesters, and to Nobles Wit?!.

Referring to Cibber's impudence he writes of the "Cibberian forehead" and the note protests sarcastically: "so indeed all the MSS read, but I make no scruple to pronounce them wrong, the Laureate being elsewhere celebrated by our poet for his great modesty-

194. Cross: I, 483 (from The Champion)
195. Barbauld: The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, (London 1804)
196. Pope: The Dunciad, I, 185-190.
This is Pope's idea of Cibber's personal appearance:

"Great Cibber sate: The proud Parnassian
sneer,
The conscious simper, and the jealous
leer,
Mix on his book:"

Davies is severe in his judgment of Cibber as a man. He says:

"As a member of society at large, little can be said in his praise.
---His love of gaming rendered him a neglectful father, and unkind to his family and relatives. The moral honesty of a gamester, depending so much on the revolutions of chance, cannot fairly be relied upon. (It must be granted, that although Cibber was a gamester, he never was charged with being a cheat or gambler.) A dupe to his own passions he certainly was, and probably to the fraudulent practices of others; but he never merited the odious nickname of a blackleg...... -- His contempt of religion was greatly censored by many. Dennis in a letter to --- Sir Richard Steele charges him with spitting at a picture of our Saviour at Bath. At Tunbridge, I have been informed by Dr. Johnson, Cibber entered into a conversation with honest Mr Wm. Whiston, with a view to insult him, but Whiston cut him short by telling him at once that he could possibly hold no discourse with him; for that he was himself a clergyman; and Cibber was a player, and was besides, he had heard, a pimp".

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198. "" "" "" "" "" "" "", II, v. 5-7.
As to his cowardice, Davies says: "To Cibber's passive valour Lord Chesterfield ironically alludes in a weekly paper called Common-Sense: "Of all the comedians who have appeared on the stage in my memory no one has taken a kicking with such humour as our excellent Laureate".

Genest's contribution to our poor opinion of Cobber's character is to repeat the words of Dr. Johnson: "Dr. Johnston, in a conversation which he had with Malone some few months before his death said he had never lived in intimacy with Colley Cibber, but that he had sometimes in company with him and that he was much more ignorant that he could well have conceived any man to be, who had lived near 60 years with authors, critics, and some of the most celebrated characters of the age (Malone)."

Among the modern critics Gray says 'Cibber' was without a touch of intellectual or moral greatness'.

Cross thinks that the Apology has "an absurd title" and that Cibber's life was such that he owed an apology to the public. He considers the book formless, verbose, nonsensical through use of phrases he thought sublime. "At many points he says, "the book and author exposed themselves to ridicule."

Bernbaum has made a scholarly study and has concluded that there is a great contradiction in Cibber's character. He says:

"The contrast between his personality and his sentimental comedies is astounding.-----The creator of those edifying reformed prodigals, Loveless and Sir Charles Easy, persisted in his libertine ways. He who attacked gambling in The Lady's Last Stake remained a confirmed gamester. He who had so often glorified forbearance and benevolence never

200. Davies, III, 448.
201. Genest: III, 166
"74"

forgave his own daughter for offending him, and observed her distressful indigence without relieving it. His sentimental comedies were not reflections of his experience but excursions of his imagination. 'Mrs. Porter', says Davies? upon reading a part in which Cibber had painted virtue in its strongest and most lively colors, asked him how it came to pass that a man who could draw such admirable portraits to goodness should yet live as if he were a stranger to it.' "Madam, said Colley, the one is absolutely necessary, the other is not". (Davies III 432) To complete the paradox, it may be added that though he had created a larger number of serious characters, he excelled in comic parts. But after all, he was never so truly an actor as when he played the preacher of sentimentalism.

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Such is the case against Cibber. As an actor he is atto be hissed off the stage in tragedy; if he is allowed any merit at all in comedy it is because he is an imitator and such a consummate Coxcomb and villain in real life. As a theatrical manager he is the gamester negligent of his duties; he is the overbearing "Dictator", stingy, arrogant, cowardly; he is the ignorant Marplwy who mutilates the plays of Shakespeare as well as those of young men about town before he will bring them out, calling it improving them; he is the egotistical Ground-Ivy who asserts his superiority over all actors and authors that ever lived. As an author he is a stupid adapter and mangler of plays; he writes an apology for his life in so wretched a style that he is arrested and tried for the murder of the English language; he addresses his King in silly odes, the worst that ever was; he is a poet whose laurel so withers so that it becomes at last almost invisible. He is a man of "impenetrable impudence", boasting of all the virtues except chastity,

the very type of vainglorious and impudent ignorance; he is hard matured, ungenerous, immoral, irreligious, and yet the author of plays of sugary goodness and sentimentality. Such a man, singled out by his sovereign for a particularly honorable and lucrative office at Court was surely, as the Laureat says, "not only a proper, but the most proper, Subject for Satire, at least for Ridicule, in the three Kingdoms".
III.

The Case For Cibber.

(a) His Enemies.

Besides the minor newspaper writers who naturally follow great men in making sport of a prominent public figure, Cibber's active enemies seem to have been John Dennis, Richard Savage, Doctor Samuel Johnson, Henry Fielding, Alexander Pope, and the anonymous author of The Laureat. The Laureat may or may not have been worthy to be in company with these great names, but at any rate he is important as far as Cibber is concerned because he is the forebear of the adverse criticism that has descended directly from him through Davies and Genest to modern literary and theatrical critics. Even more significant of the power of his enemies than adverse criticism, is the absolute silence in regard to Cibber that is to be observed in most critical histories of those times.

It seems a hopeless task to attempt to rectify the views regarding Cibber promulgated by such of his contemporaries as these. Walpole received the same treatment as did Cibber and Cross says of it:

"Nothing can prevail against genius. So far as literature is concerned, Walpole has found his resting place among the arrant villains of all time". So it may be true that Cibber has found a resting place beside his friend and admirer. Nevertheless, one may inquire into what motives, in addition to high and unselfish regard for literature and public morals, may have influenced his enemies in their abuse of him.

205. Cross: III, 280
John Dennis besides being a critic, was an unsuccessful playwright. He wrote several plays which either failed or were never acted. He was one of the disgruntled authors who blamed the successful author, actor, and manager for his failure. He hated Cibber because, as he imagined, Cibber obstructed the success of his tragedy, *Invader of his Country*. He was also an unsuccessful candidate for the laureateship. He had done some good literary criticism, had rendered loyal service to the government, was no worse a poet than Cibber, and was in dire financial need. It can not be wondered at if envy rankled in his heart when honors went to a player who already had a very ample income.

Richard Savage had also aspired to success in the theatre, both as author and actor but was unsuccessful. He definitely accused Cibber of contributing to the failure of his play *Sir Thomas Overbury*. He too was eager for the post of Laureate, so much so that he even, in spite of protests from Cibber, styled himself "Volunteer Laureate" and wrote odes for the Queen for which she allowed him a pension of 50L a year. Avowedly he was a Whig, but secretly he had Jacobite sympathies.

That Cibber was "a player" was enough to prejudice Dr. Johnson against him. In the same conversation in which he related his contemptuous treatment of Cibber and his Ode, he says that he and Cibber walked over to pay a visit to Samuel Richardson who did not share Johnson's opinion of "that great man". He says, "I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I did not treat Cibber with more respect. Now, Sir, to talk of respect for a player! (Smiling disdainfully)". This prejudice Boswell attributes in part to the fact that Johnson and Garrick came down to London together, the former intending to become an actor, the

206. Davies, III, 437.
207. Dict. of Nat. Biog. XV.
latter a lawyer. But "because of the imperfection of his organs", Johnson took to the bar and Garrick's natural talents led him to the stage where he outdistanced Johnson both in fame and fortune.

Either because of his dislike of players or because of ignorance of theatrical affairs, Johnson was not qualified to judge Cibber's work. Here is his judgment of Garrick which we instantly recognize as false. It is in the same conversation in which he declares Cibber "ignorant of the principles of his art" that he says: "Garrick, Madam, was no declaimer; there was not one of his scene shifters who could not have spoken 'To be or not to be' better than he did".

Fielding's first contact with Colley Cibber was probably when, as a young man of about twenty-three, he came to London resolved to make his living in the theatrical world. Cross says, "For some reason he had lost favour with the managers of Drury Lane. On submitting to them his Don Quixote in England, Cibber and Booth both told him it was immature and quite unsuitable for the stage". Two more comedies were written and probably rejected by the managers. He then cast his fortunes with the Haymarket Theatre and his first play there was The Author's Farce in which we see he had his revenge upon Cibber. His next was Tom Thumb which burlesqued Cibber's style in its preface and contained the interpolated farce by Cooke. In later farces he attacked the government so briskly that the next season found the Haymarket closed by constables and Fielding making his peace with the managers of Drury Lane. Cibber however, had now delegated his share of the management to his son. Cross says that, "the road to peace was doubtless easy...As yet Fielding possessed none of the antipathy for the son that he had felt towards the father." Fielding must have felt a contempt for all ignorant

211. Knight, Joseph: David Garrick (London 1894) P—
scribblers and presumptuous adapters of Shakespeare. But at the time he conceived his "antipathy" for Cibber, the latter had not yet written his Apology nor his execrable odes, nor had he done more with Shakespeare than write a very popular version of Richard III, one, in fact, which has held the stage even down to this present generation. It seems probable that his antipathy was that of an impetuous youth whose ambitions were blocked by an autocratic old man who returned his comedies with the words "It won't do". Once allied with the Haymarket, he found himself required to write farce and burlesque for that was the special offering of that theatre. Having found that farce, rather than comedy, was best suited to his temper he found it easy to continue, especially as just at this time Fate lifted Colley Cibber to such eminence as to make him a fit butt for anyone's ridicule.

Had Fielding been able to secure a sinecure under Walpole, as Savage did, and as Cross desired, he, like Savage, might have veiled his Tory sympathies under a show of loyalty and the world would have lost some of his cleverest satire. As it was, he was an avowed political enemy to the Whig government under which Cibber held his office. Even if there were no personal reasons, this fact alone would explain his attacks on Cibber.

No one seems to have ventured even a conjecture as to who the Laureate was. He was someone familiar enough with the theatre to be able to chatter about plays and actors in a manner intelligent enough to impress the lay reader, but he was not familiar enough with it to be absolutely accurate in his statements. He falsely says that Cibber belonged to a company of strolling players before coming to London; and
it is not probable that, as he says, Cibber was hissed in the small parts first assigned him and it certainly is not true that "he never attempted to open his mouth, but the whole audience constantly expressed their dislike of him". He falsely assert that Cibber's name frequently occurred as Mr. Colley for Genest says it occurred so on but one play bill; "he taxed Cibber with forgetting that Booth acted Jaffier—nothing can be more certain than that Booth did not play Jaffier at the time of which Cibber is speaking"; he maliciously supplies the name of Cibber's second play which Cibber had omitted from the authorized edition of his works, but unfortunately he thought Cibber's second play and Isadora. Peroilla and that "not one tittle of it "survived; whereas it was Woman's wit. This was an inexcusable blunder as both plays were in print.

He was not a classical scholar, not so well educated as Cibber himself. Cibber must have smiled at the ignorance of his subject which the Laureat displayed when he said of Peroilla and Isadora that "Nobody understood the story; nobody ever heard of the names of his heroes", for the tragedy was "Founded on history, and the names of 3 of the principle characters occur in the 23rd book of Livy".

Considering the inaccuracies, and deliberate falsehoods of the Laureat, "we ought to read them with a certain degree of distrust, as the work of an inveterate enemy".

The quarrel between Pope and Cibber was of long standing. "Johnson says that though Pope attacked Cibber with acrimony, the provocation is not easily discoverable". But there has been no contradiction to Cibber's statements as to Pope's motives. Twenty five years before Pop's anger burst forth in The Dunciad it was excited unintentionally.

216. """""""""", 385.
217. Ibid.
218. """"""""
by Cibber and was never abated through the quarter of a century. The circumstances were as follows:

On January 16, 1717 there was produced a comedy which was damned as severely as any of Cibber's tragedies. It was Gay's *Three Hours After Marriage*. According to Genest, "Gay says he wrote it with the assistance of two friends — he does not name them, but they have always been considered as Pope and Dr. Arbuthnot. It has been supposed that Pope's dislike of players was occasioned by the cool redemption of this play, but this may be doubted as in the play itself is said 'a Parrot and a Player can utter human sounds, but we allow neither of them to be a judge of wit'". This was an unwarranted attack upon the players.

One of the ludicrous situations in the play which caused its failure was that in which Plotwell and Underplot by a wager, try to gain access to Foàsilè's wife by coming disguised as a mummy and a crocodile.

On February 7, Drury Lane ran a revival of *The Rehearsal* in which Cibber played the part of Bayes. In that play the two kings of Brentford come from the clouds. In keeping with the high imagination of a Bayes, Cibber interpolated a "fling" at *Three Hours After Marriage* by the following speech:

"Now, Sir, this Revolution I had some thought of introducing by a quite different contrivance; but my design taking *air* some of your sharp wits, I found, had made use of it before me; otherwise I intended to have stolen one of them in the shape of a Mummy and the other in that of a Crocodile."

The audience burst into a roar of laughter. Genest thinks that by thus provoking the ridicule of the town, Cibber "threw the first stone" at Pope, but there was no malice on Cibber's side; for it was then

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220 Disraeli: p. 301.
221 Genest: II, 594.
222 Genest: II, 595.
223 Genest: IV, 165.
the custom to restore the zest of that obsolete dramatic satire, by introducing allusions to any recent theatrical event." Besides, Cibber was probably unaware of Pope's share in the authorship until he. In the swelling of his heart, after the play was over, came behind the scenes with his lips pale and his voice trembling, to call Cibber to account for "the insult"; and accordingly says Cibber, he "fell upon me with all the foul language that a wit out of his sense would be capable of, choked with the foam of his passion." And it is rumored Gay also came back and replied to Cibber "with something more feeling than words." But "Cibber replied with dignity, insisted on the privilege of the character, and that he would repeat the same jest as long as the public approved of it."

Following close upon Pope's failure came Cibber's success with The Monjipur. Besides the irritation of seeing another successful where he had failed, there was the additional provocation of the import of the play itself. Pope's father was a monjitur and he himself has not been entirely vindicated from the same charge. No one dared attack Cibber's play for fear of declaring his own politics, but Pope, under the assumed name of Barnevelt, published "an odd piece of wit, proving that the Nonjuror in its design, its characters, and almost every scene of it, was a closely-couched jacobite libel against the government".

The first edition of the Dunciad appeared in 1728. Cibber received his share of the satire which Pope dealt out to his enemies in this work which he characterized as an "opportunity of doing good, by delecting and dragging into light these common enemies of mankind".

224. Disraeli: p. 303. (From the Letter)
225. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 
227. Disraeli: p. 302. (From the Letter)
228. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 
229. Ibid.
230. Introduction, works IV.p.34, (Quoted from Preface said to be by Pope Himself.)
Then in 1730 came Cibber's appointment to the Laureateship. Pope, "the most celebrated living author" naturally expected the honor to be bestowed upon him. But his suspected Roman-Catholic and Tory affiliations made him an impossible candidate. Nevertheless, to see his own supremacy disregarded in favor of a player, must have increased the ill feeling he had for Cibber.

The next known step in the quarrel was the publication of Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot in which, in some copies of the folio of 1734 appeared the line:

"Cibber and I are luckily no friends" In other copies the line reads, "The players and I are luckily no friends".

It may be inferred that Pope corrected the text while the folios were still issuing from the press for the later editions all have the latter reading.

Commenting upon this incident, Cibber says years later in his letter: "This is so uncommon an instance of your checking your temper and taking a little shame to yourself that I cannot in justice omit my notice of it".

Also in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot Pope asked about the aged Cibber:

"And has not Colley still his lord, and w—re?" It was this line that caused Cibber to forsake the policy of silence and to attempt some defense against Pope.

Cibber, in his Apology answered Pope rather happily. He admired Pope, and said, Pope could have no "more pleasure in writing his verses than I have in reading them, tho' I sometimes find myself there" (as

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232. Ibid.
Shakespeare terms it) dispraisingly spoken of. With good natured perversity, he assumes that Pope's attacks upon him are merely a trick of the game, "Poetical Craft", for "Satyr shall have a thousand Readers where Panegyric has one. When I therefore find my name in the Satyric Works of our most celebrated living author, I never took upon those lines as malice meant to me (for he knows that I never provok'd it) but profit to himself: One of his Points must be, to have many readers: He considers that my face and name are more known than those of many thousands of more consequence in the Kingdom: That therefore, right or wrong, a Lick at the Laureat will always be a sure Bait....to catch him little Readers."

Before Pope could reply, The Laureat came to his rescue with ridicule of Cibber's book, its literary style and facts of theatrical history.

The fact that Cibber had not yet lost his temper — probably irritated Pope the more, for just following the Apology and The Laureat, appeared Pope's "New Dunciad" the fourth book of his Dunciad in which he has his fling at the "Cibberian forehead" and pictures the poet laureate reclining in the lap of his mother, Dulness.

Then was published the first pamphlet "letter from Mr Cibber; to Mr Pope inquiring into the motives that might induce him in his satyrical works, to be so frequently fond of Mr. Cibber's name".

The letter was received with great glee by Cibber's friends. Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann: "Cibber has published a little pamphlet against Pope, which has a great deal of spirit, and, from some circumstances, will notably vex him."

Cibber begins by stating that he is driven to a reply "at the desire of several persons of Quality". The reviewer of the letter in the Gentleman's Magazine observes that "persons of quality must be mentioned or it were not the man". Cibber is probably speaking the truth. His friends must have relished the sport if an encounter between the lively, good-natured Cibber and the sensitive Pope. Cibber says that he has been silent because he thought that no public reply was needed; everyone knew the truth or falsehood of what Pope had said; he didn't need to follow Pope's example and torment himself about what unknown persons thought of him. "But", he says, "since the Publication of your last New Dunciad (where you still seem to enjoy your so often repeated Glory of being bright upon my Dullness) my friends now insist, that it would be thought Dullness indeed, or a plain confession of my being a Bankrupt in Wit, if I don't immediately answer those Bills of Discredit you have drawn upon me: For, say they, your dealing with him like a Gentleman,—in your Apology for your own Life etc., you see has had no sensible effect upon him as appears by the wrong headed reply his Notes upon the New Dunciad have made to it". "But, once aroused, he is resolved to keep his temper, but to fight it out to the end. He says, "While I have Life, or am able to set Pen to Paper, I will now Sir, have the last Word with you. For, let the Odds of your Wit be never so great or your Pen dipped in whatever Venom it may, while I am conscious you can say nothing truly of me that ought to put an honest Man to the Blush, what in God's name can I have to fear from you?"

This causes the reviewer to remark, "Mr Cibber's blushing (for you know the man) will make you smile, though I don't pretend to call his

236. Gent. Mag. (Aug. 1743) VII, 424 (Quoted from the Letter)
238. Ibid.
On Cibber's declaration that he will have the last word with Pope, The Summer Miscellany has this far sighted epigram:

"Quoth Cibber to Pope, tho' in Verse you forclose, I'll have the last Word, for by G-d I'll write prose.
Poor Colley, thy Reasoning is none of the strongest,
For know, the last Word is the Word that lasts longest".

Cibber makes seven charges against Pope, as follows:

(1) That Pope has a low avarice for praise.
(2) That he treats Cibber as a dunce fast asleep in the lap of Dullness, which is "a little too strong" considering the fact that he is as "seldom asleep as any Fool".
(3) That the cause of his enmity was the incident of Cibber's unintentional affront in The Rehearsal years ago.
(4) That Pope was offended at The Nonjuror.
(5) That Pope was jealous of the Poet Laureate.

To the epigram which he here attributes to Pope which ends, "That Cibber can serve both for fool and for poet",

Cibber replies just as wittily:

"Those fools of old, if Fame says true Were chiefly chosen for their wit, Why then called Fools? because like you Dear Pope, too bold in shewing it".

(6) That Pope's attack on his private life was unwarranted, because Pope too is guilty. Cibber here relates the "spider" anecdote, "an idle story of Pope's behavior at a tavern", Dr. Johnson termed it,--- a story which set the town in convulsions of laughter at Pope as a ridiculous lover with a misshapen spider-like body.

(7) That Pope's attack in verse takes him at a disadvantage, "for any accusation, in smooth verse, will always sound well, though it is not tied down to have a tittle of truth in it; when the strongest defence in poor humble prose, not having that harmonious advantage, takes no body by the ear" He defends himself against the charge of impudence, saying that the Papal rather than the Cibberian forehead ought to be out of countenance.

The reviewer of this letter defended Pope at every step, even attempting to deny that Pope was the co-author of Three Hours After Marriage, asserting that his passionate attack on Cibber was merely in disinterested defence of the real author. But he was forced to admit in praise of the Letter that "there is an entertaining oddity in it which you cannot meet with in any other words or manner than his own".

Commenting on the Letter, another friend of Pope's, Warburton, wrote to Bowyer, the printer: "I love the rogue when he reasons. He is then a delightful ass indeed. In a word, is it possible there can be buyers for such a pamphlet".

The pamphlet made Pope furiously angry. Dr. Johnson in his Life of the poet relates the manner in which Pope received it as it was told to him by the son of Samuel Richardson: "I have heard Mr. Richardson relate that he attended his father the printer on a visit, when

one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, 'These things are my diversion'. They sat by his side while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish: and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope'.

Cibber had hoped to arouse Pope's temper and he succeeded. Pope made no direct reply to the letter but as Dr. Johnson says: "He resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and, to show that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the 'Dunciad' in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence and enthroned Cibber in his stead......Unhappily the heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old pedantry, and the sluggish pertinacity of Theobald'. So it is not Cibber, but a dunce very unlike Cibber, who is the hero of The Dunciad. As Dr. Johnson says, Pope by using the same ridicule for two different persons, "reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpie, who from his cage calls cuckold at venture".

To this retaliation, Cibber, as he had promised, replied with another pamphlet entitled, "Another Occasional Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope. Wherein the New Hero's Preferment to his Throne, in the Dunciad seems not to be accepted. And the Author of that Poem His more rightful Claim is Asserted". This second letter is little more than exultation over the distress he had caused the poet. Pope's great blunder in applying Theobald's attributes to himself did not escape Cibber and he humorously compared the libel "to a purge with the wrong label" and Pope "to an apothecary who did not mind his business". 245

242. Cibber: Apol. II, 276. (Supplement)
243. Cibber: I, 280-81, (From Johnson's Life of Pope)
244. Lippincott's Mag.: Vol. 21, p. 564.
245. Cibber, II, 302. (Supplement)
He did make a dignified remonstrance against Pope's unwise attacks upon his most successful original plays. This portion of his letter shows that he was capable of serious moderation and judgment in his protest. Under all Cibber's semmingly unperturbed good nature he probably realized what it meant to have posterity finding him so maligned in Pope's lines. And he realized the hopelessness of combating the effect of "smooth verse" in mere prose.

Pope had allowed Cibber "less human genius than God gives an ape" and had placed him in the company of Johnson and Ozele, whose names were even then obsolete, to enforce his point. To this passage Cibber replies:

"And pray, sir, why my name under this scurvy picture? I flatter myself, that if you had not put it there, nobody else would have thought it like me; nor can I easily believe that you yourself do: but perhaps you imagined it would be a laughing ornament to your verse, and had a mind to divert other people's spleen with it as well as your own. Now let me hold up my head a little, and then we shall see how the features hit me". He then proceeds to relate, 'how many of those plays have lived the longer for my having meddled with them? He mentions several, which had been dead to the stage out of all memory, which have since been in constant course of acting above these thirty or forty years! And then he adds, 'Do those altered plays at all take from the merit of those more successful pieces, which were entirely my own? --- when a man is abused he has a right to speak even laudable truths about himself, to confront his slanderer. Let me therefore add, that my first comedy of The Fool in Fashion or Love's Last Shift, was as much (though not so valuable) an original, as any work Mr Pope himself has produced. It is now forty-seven years since its first appearance on the stage, there it has kept its station to this very day, without lying one winter dormant. Nine years after this, I brought On The Careless Husband, with still greater
success; and was that too

"A patch'd, vamp'd, future, old, revived new piece? Let the
many living spectators of these plays, then, judge between us, whether
the above verses come from the honesty of a satirist, who would be
thought like you, the upright censor of mankind. Sir, this libel was
below you! Satire, without truth, recoils upon its author, and must,
at other times, render him suspected of prejudice, even where he may
be just. — and the bad heart, Mr. Pope, that points an injury with
verse, makes it the more unpardonable, as it is not the result of
sudden passion, but of an indulged and slowly-meditating ill-nature.

This letter was "the last word" between the two chief belligerents.
In the actual fray, Cibber bested Pope at the time but "The last word
is the word that lasts longest" and no defender of Cibber has been
able to stand against Pope's immortal verse. Cibber knew how it would
be. He concludes his epitaph on Pope with the lines,

"E'en death shall let his dust this
truth enjoy,
That not his errors can his fame destroy."

But the quarrel was taken up by, presumably, the author of The Laureat in a new pamphlet dealing with Cibber's Letter as the former had dealt with the Apology. It was entitled "A blast upon Bays; or, a new lick at the Laureat. Containing remarks upon a late tattling performance entitled, A Letter from Mr Cibber to Mr Pope, Etc. And lo there appeared an old woman! Vide the Letter throughout". Cibber's second letter called forth, from the same pen, "Lick upon Lick occasioned by an Occasional Letter from Mr Cibber to Mr Pope". One perceives that it would have been useless for Cibber to answer such determined critic

246. Disraeli: p. 305 (From the 2nd Letter).
as the Laureat. His unfair and malignant spirit is shown by the following quotations:

The pamphlet begins,

"'War, horrid War, betwixt two mighty Heros!'"

But wherefore do they fight? Because the poet, after all the Town, had call'd the Player a Coxcomb; the Player very complaisantly takes upon himself to make good the Poet's words. He has not thought proper indeed, to mention this as the real drift of his pamphlet; but that it has no other tendency, I shall evince in the following 248 pages.

Stubbornly unmindful of the fact that Cibber had actually ignored Pope's attacks for twenty years, the Laureat speaks of Cibber's "affected contempt of censure" and says that it "fits ill upon --- the vainest Creature on Earth".

Inspite of Cibber's playful admission of his vanity and folly in his Apology, the Laureat insists upon informing Cibber that it is a "wonder that you, who have initiated so many Passions, should not perceive that those a vain, pert, pragmatical, Pop are the very essence of your own being".

Enough of Cibber's character has appeared in the quotations in these pages, it seems, to justify the opinion that Cibber may have been pert, vain, impudent, frivolous, witty, but never dull. Cibber denied the charge of impudence and especially that of dullness. He had argued to Pope that dullness was not a crime even if he had been guilty of it, and he couldn't convince himself that Pope did think him "the dull Fellow he made of him". He had written honestly at the risk of

249. Ibid., p. 3.
250. Ibid, P. 3.
appearing vain even in legitimate self defence: "I don’t believe you
do think so of me. This I grant may b Vanity in me"—"Dost indeed!"—
exclaims the Laureat, "and who will not grant the same?".  

The Laureat’s next shot comes nearer the mark. He disregarded the fact that a man never writes real poetry when he is ordered to do it and paid for it, and that Cibber’s odes were no worse than his predecessors. If the Laureat were one of the disappointed aspirants for the laurel crown, perhaps Cibber’s line "Thy comfort is, thou hast it" was a palpable hit. The Laureat says that dunces must always be the game of the wits, and Cibber must expect to be hunted while there are such men as Pope, "especially as you are a Dunce of such importance, as to wear the only Laurel of the kingdom. --- To be the titular monarch of Wit, and receive a Salary in that capacity; must it not make Folly the more egregious, where it was before remarkable? --- And as to yourself, all the World can remember that Mr Pope was not singular in his Opinion when the Laurel was given you; and all but you yourself know how contemptible a Figure you make in the wearing of it". 

Having proved that Cibber is a dull fellow, he says: "I shall, in mere tenderness, omit the Proofs of your Scurrility, or any other justifiable motive that Mr Pope might have for singling you out in this manner. Is it not enough that you are not only a proper, but the most proper subject for Satire, at least for Ridicule, in the three Kingdoms? Have I Occasion, after this, to endeavor to wipe off the Aspersion of Malignity, to which you ascribe all the satirical Arrows that Mr Pope has shot at you?"

And as to the affront in The Rehearsal, he says that for Cibber to believe this the cause of Pope’s enmity "lifts Mr Cibber into a man of

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251. Ibid, p.65.
252. ib. p. 5.
such Consequence, that a trifling Affront from him becomes intolerable and unpardonable. I will not say as you do to Mr. Pope; I don't think you do believe all this: But I will venture to say, you are almost the only man that ever will be brought to believe it".  

To Cibber's sober defence of his authorship, he replies:  

"For God's sake, Colley, if thou hast, in thy long Life, hammer'd out two tolerable Comedies, that are indeed Original, does that atone for the Sin thou hast committed in almost twenty others, which thy Conscience knows to be no better than patch'd, vamp'd, old, future, reviv'd, new pieces. But thy soreness in this part, where I think thy wincing is more remarkable than in other Paragraph of thy Letter, is a Proff that thou art touched to the Quick.-----We are not, however, so soon to give thee Possession of these two Plays. The Careless Husband, in the Opinion of all Mankind, is a good comedy: But how shall we know it to be thine?"  

Cibber's moderation and unvenomed admiration of Pope, call forth this rejoinder:  

"I must now own, in your Behalf, that you have prudently done just- ice to the Merit of Mr. Pope, in every thing you say of his Writings, except where he attacks your dear Self. This is a sort of bribing the Public to believe your Coolness and Impartiality which might perhaps have passed upon some, if you had not weakly, in so many Places betrayed your darling Self-Opinion, and Ignorance of your own true character".  

Then the writer denies that Pope ever wrote the line:  

"Cibber and I are luckily no friends" but he grudging admits that if Pope did write it, Cibber was magnanimous in "Afterwards recom-

"94"

Tho', by the way"he adds, "I dare say, you would have forgiven all that was past, and have done a hundred meaner Offices, to have been entirely excluded only from Mr. Pope's future Satires".

According to the Laureat, as Cibber was vain in objecting to being called dull, so Cibber was impudent in denying the possession of "a tolerable share of Effronterie".

In Lick, Lick, the author devotes himself to Cibber's personal character. Cibber had protested that his title to the throne was not founded upon his wickedness but upon his stupidity. To Pope's charges of swearing and debauchery, Cibber the old octogenarian had exclaimed "Alack and well-a-day!" and fell to ruminating on how Pope would envy him if the charge were true and concluded, "But, however, supposing this dreadful Inputation were true of him, what Strength would it add to his Title of Imperial Stupidity?" The Laureat replies that his title is founded upon an assemblage of qualities, and if Cibber has these qualities, he asks what remaineth, but that thou quietly keep in thy Throne, and nod under the Crown which thou wilt never remove! Nay, pray, Mrs Cibber, be seated!

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adamant, the jewel would have been accessible before now, and Cibber would have had his little share of immortality on his own account.

His enemies were inspired by jealousy of his success, prosperity, and honors and by political differences. The chief of these were Fielding, and Pope, and the latter's satellite, the Laureat. Fielding remained honorable in his ridicule. He only abused Cibber's work and his public character. Pope descended to personal abuse of his private character, and hence his attacks, tho' better known, are not so clever and amusing as Fielding's.

To accuse Pope of envy of Cibber is not so ridiculous a charge as it may seem, for" a successful playwright of these days was a notable public figure, and the delicious applause of the crowded theatre of those days was eagerly sought by even the most eminent men". And again, if must be remembered that Pope's fame was not then perfectly assured as it is now. And prof. Bernbaum holds the opinion that it was envy that caused Pope's hatred of Theobald. Scholars were winning fame by restorations of classical and Elizabethan texts. Pope, not really a deep scholar, could not bear to see any one surpass him in any field, so he published his text of Shakespeare, a hasty and superficial work. Shortly afterward appeared Theobald's Shakespeare, the work of a lifetime. Seemingly Theobald had been malicious enough to publish an excellent study merely to show the absurdities of Pope's.

And so it might have been with Cibber. Pope itched to equal his success as a playwright. He was only a player, not a startling genius as a dramatist, a wretched poetaster— the great Pope ought to excell

him. But when Pope sitting in the audience at Drury Lane heard the
town in gales of laughter at Gibber's "take off " of his first attempt,
his natural irascibility could not be controlled. Pope never forgot the
shame of that moment. The one-sided quarrel grew until in the pamphlet
where Gibber's "impenetrable" good humor and self-control drove Pope
to the greatest retaliation in his power, and the blow delivered in
the Du r miad proved fatal to Gi bber.

But recently scholars have begun to realize that there is another
contemporary portrait of Gibber, not as a stupid, brainless dunce,
foppishly dressed, lolling in debauched sensuality in the lap of Dulness;
but as Grisoni's painting portrays him----, an alert, intelligent man
of affairs, in neat, clean and appropriate dress, getting things done
efficiently and as easily as possible, pert and waggish, and"as seldom
asleep as any Fool".
(b) As An Actor

From Cibber's first little success as the Chaplain in the Orphan to his last triumph, he paid for his good fortune in the malevolence of those who envied him his victories and denied him any merit. He has faithfully recorded how his fellow actors ignored his ability and constantly denied him any opportunity of showing it. He has also treasured up all the compliments he received in those days of struggle.

After his appearance as the Chaplain, the old comedian Goodman enquired what new young fellow that was whom he had seen in the Chaplain. Young Cibber was pointed out to him. Then, says Cibber, he looked earnestly at me, and, after some pause, clapping me on the Shoulder, rejoined, 'If he does not make a good Actor, I'll be D--d'.

Concerning his first appearance as Fondlewife, Cibber says that though applause is not all important, any actor might be proud of the applause he received. "After one loud applause was ended and sunk into a general whisper that seemed still to be their general approbation, it reviv'd to a second, and again to a third, still louder than the former".

His next part was the first of his own brilliant series of fops, Sir Novelty Fashion. When the play was over and he had succeeded so well both as actor and author that "the people seemed at a loss which they should give the preference to, Nell Gwyn's old friend, Sackville, now Lord Dorset (and also Lord Chamberlain) declared "That it was the best First Play that any Author in his memory had produced; and that for a young Fellow to show himself such an Actor and such a Writer in one Day, was something extraordinary".

264. """""""""" I, 214.
There was one kind of disapprobation which Cibber very sensibly
considered as a true compliment—the aversion he aroused when he played
the villain. His "insufficient voice" did not disqualify him for
playing vicious characters and he delighted in playing them because
"they are generally better written, thicker sown with sensible
Reflections, and come by so much nearer to common Life" and Nature
than characters of Admiration", but, he says, "from the Delight I seem'd to take in my performing them,
half my auditors have been persuaded that a great Share of the Wickednes
ess of them must have been in my own nature". This dislike he rightly
judged to be involuntary commendation for he interpreted it to mean that
he was like the character he ought to be like. But it was a praise
which few actors at that time besides Cibber could endure, so he got
such important parts as Iago and Richard III because other actors
disliked to appear the villain. It is only recently that audiences
have been trained to distinguish the actor from his character and to
witness a splendid interpretation of a villain with applause instead
of a hiss. What a lack of vanity, and how honest a regard for his
art does Cibber exhibit in his attitude toward the hisses of the
audience and the Squamishness of "those dainty actors" who would not
be seen in such roles. Cibber says,"Nor could I sometimes help smiling
--- as if they were one jot the better men for acting a good man well,
or another man the worse for doing equal justice to a bad one! 'Tis not,
sure, what we act, but how we act what is allotted us, that speaks
our intrinsic Value".

All of Cibber's comments upon the art of acting are sound. He values

applause at its true worth when he ventures to say "that from the common weak Appetite of False applause, many Actors have run into more Errors and Absurdities, than their greatest Ignorance could otherwise have committed". He does not scorn applause; he had his share of it in characters, where he knew applause was appropriate. "If the multitude were not in a roar to see men in Cardinal Wolsey, I could be sure of them in Alderman Pindledewife. If they hated me in Iago, in Sir Fopling, they took me for a fine gentleman; if they were silent at Syphax, no Italian Eunuch was more applauded than when I sung in Sir Courtly. If the morals of Aeschylus were too grave for them, Justice Shallow was as simple and as merry an old Rake as the wisest of our young ones could wish me. And though the Terror and Detestation raised by King Richard might be too severe a Delight for them, yet the more gentle and modern Vanities of a Poet Bays, or the well-bred Vices of a Lord Foppington, were not at all more than their merry Hearts or nicer Morals could bear."

Cibber speaks modestly of his own work as an actor. He has given us a vivid and complete picture of others, but he has left us no clear image of his own histrionic powers. He displays royal generosity in attributing alleged excellences in his own acting, to his study of the acting of others. For example: "If, some years after the Death of Monfort I myself had any success in either of these characters, (Spenskishe and Sir Courtly Nice), I must pay the Debt I owe to his Memory, in confessing the advantages I receiv'd from the just Idea and strong Impression he had given me from his acting them".

And again, he attributes what success he had in Richard III to

268. Ibid: I, 139.
269. Ibid: I, 139.
Sandford. Sandford never played Richard, but Cibber, knowing Sanford's particular fitness for the part and knowing his style of acting, played it as he knew "Sandford would have spoken every line of it" and asks that the "merit be given to him".

While praising others he is ever ready to disparage himself; and he as heavily ridicules his insufficient voice, his meagre person, and his pallid complexion as any enemy might have done for him.

When the Rev. T. Newton wrote to Garrick that Cibber was "something of the coxcomb in everything", he also was honest enough to tell Garrick he didn't think the latter was enough of one. He says: "But at the same time that I commend you so much and so deservedly for this, I must tell you as a friend, that I do not hear you equally applauded for Lord Foppington; and it was my opinion, you know, at the first, that Sir Chas. Easy was the proper part for you".

And in the part of Bays too there was one dispute as to Garrick's excellence.

Walpole wrote to the countess of Ossory about Garrick: "His Bayes was no less entertaining (than his Sir John Brute); but it was a Garrotes ette-r-bard. Old Cibber preserved the solemn coxcomb; and was the caricature of a great poet, as the part was designed to be". And Gilbert Walmsley wrote to Garrick: "Lord Chesterfield --- says you are the best tragedian --- that ever was in the world; but he does not like your comedy, and particularly objects to your playing Bayes, which he says is a serious solemn character, etc, and that you mistake it".

In this case, however, Lord Chesterfield was partially wrong, for although the character was originally drawn from Dryden, it had now

270. Ibid: I, 139
273. Ibid. P 44.
become a mere vehicle for mimicry, and as we see Cibber handled it, could be adapted to satirize any contemporary event or persons.

Foote was an actor of Garrick's time and used to say of him: "Yes, the hound has something clever, but if his excellence was to be examined, he would not be found in any part equal to Colley Cibber's Sir John Brute, Lord Foppington, Sir Courtly Nice, or Justice Shallow", and adds Genest, who records the story, "tho' this was evidently said with a view to depreciate Garrick, yet it is still a proof of the high opinion Foote had of Cibber in these characters".

When we compare Cibber with Garrick, we must remember that the latter was without question one of the greatest actors in the history of the English stage. He was one of the extremely few who were equally great in comedy and tragedy. To say that Garrick could not act the fop, the rake, or the simpleton as well as Cibber is no more a detraction from his fame than it is from Cibber's to say that he could not act the lover and tragic hero as well as Garrick. It is simply a case of "Them mountain and the squirrel." Cibber was essentially a comic actor and tho' not supremely great as a villain, he "was supposed to do it well". In other words he did other parts acceptably, as long as his weak voice and slight physique were not a handicap, but it is as a comedian that we are to judge him.

Steele has a discriminating criticism of him in his parallel between him and Wilks:

"The first among the present stage are Wilks and Cibber, perfect actors in their different kinds. Wilks has a singular talent in representing the graces of Nature; Cibber the deformity in the affectation of them. Were I a writer of plays, I should never employ either of them in

parts which had not their bent this way. This is seen in the inimitable strain and run of good humor which is kept up in the character of Wildair, and in the nice and delicate abuse of understanding in that of Sir Novelty. Cibber, in another light, hits exquisitely the flat civility of an affected Gentleman- usher, and Wilks the easy frankness of a Gentleman ---To beseech gracefully, to approach respectfully, to pity, to mourn, to love, are the places wherein Wilks may be made to shine with utmost beauty: to rally pleasantly, to scorn artfully, to flatter, to ridicule, and to neglect are what Cibber would perform with no less excellence.  

Cibber's popularity did not wane as he became more familiar, but increased with his years. When he was an old man of seventy and was returning to the stage for one of his occasional performances, Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann, "Old Cibber plays tonight, and all the world will be there".  

If money talks, it ought to testify to Cibber's popularity. He began his career without pay but through the generosity of Betterton was given 10s a week. At the end of his actor's career, from the time he sold his share until he left the stage, the management paid him 12L 12s a week, a salary more than twice as large as that of any other member of the company. His yearly income, even before he was appointed to the Laureateship, was 1500L. And when he returned occasionally he was paid 50L a night, the highest sum ever given till that time to any English player.  

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Cibber's best days were over when Garrick achieved his sudden  

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275. Steele: The Tatler, No CLXXXII, June 8, 1710, p. 444.  
277. Gent. Mag. (June 1733) III, 30a.  
278. " " " " (Jan. 1732) II, 563.  
success, and, according to Davies, the old man was very jealous of the young man. Old as he was, he was "impelled by vanity" to revive Richard III and measure himself with Garrick. But his voice and strength were not equal to it. But Cibber was the first to realize his failure. Says Davies: "Victor, who saw him when the play was over, told me that Colley confessed he never longed so much for anything as the dying scene of Richard".

Davies, echoing Pope and the Laureat, blamed Cibber for not being able to play tragedy; but he says of Dogget, at the same time praising Cibber, that he "was certainly, in the opinion of the world, as well as Cibber, an original and inimitable actor; a close copier of nature in all her attitudes or disguises. . . . This great actor was perhaps the only one who confined himself to such characters as nature seemed to have made him for". It evidently does not detract from his good opinion of Dogget that he was only able to do one thing well.

We have Davies'testimony as to how the audience appreciated Cibber in the part of Justice Shallow. His implications that their delight was due to something besides his talent as an actor and that he was not original in his interpretation, are perfectly evident. The part of Shallow was that of a "merry, ignorant, and foolish old rake". Some years after he had left the stage Cibber acted it again. "Whether it was owing to the pleasure the spectators felt on seeing their old friend return to them again, . . . I know not; but surely, no actor or audience were better pleased with each other. His manner was so perfectly simple, his look so vacant, when he questioned his cousin about the price of ewes, and lamented in the same breath with silly surprise the

death of old Gouble that it will be impossible for any surviving spec-
tator not to smile at the remembering of it. --- Whether he was a copy, or an original in Shallow, it is certain that no audience was ever more fixed in deep attention, at his first appearance, or more shaken with laughter in the progress of the scene, that at Colley Cibber's exhib-
tion of his ridiculous justice of the peace 283.

In his remarks upon Cibber as Sir John Brute, Davies manages to damn him with faint praise:

"Cibber's Sir John Brute was copied from Betterton, as far as a weak pipe and an inexpressive countenance could bear any resemblance to the vigorous original. ZI have seen him act this part with great and deserved applause; his skill was so masterly, that, in spite of natural impediments, he exhibited a faithful picture of the worshipful debauchee. Vanbrugh was, I suppose, prevailed upon by Cibber to transfer the abuse on the clergy to a satirical picture of women of fashion, in a scene which Cibber acted with much pleasantry. His comic feeling when drunk, and after receiving the challenge of Constant, when he found him and Heartfree in his wife's closet, was inimitable acting. The audience were so delighted with him, that they renewed their loudest approbation several times". However, though he says Cibber's Sir John Brute was justly admired, he gives the preference to Garrick.

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Genest repeats what Davies said of Cibber, mentioning that Davies had especially commended Cibber's acting "the coxcomb of quality, and especially Lord Foppington in The Careless Husband. As the fashions of the times altered (quoting Davies), he adjusted his action and behavior to them and introduced every species of growing foppery! Davies commends his Sir John Brute and especially his Justice Shallow. 284

283Davies: I, 305-306.
283Davies: III, 455.
That Cibber was modest in his account of his own acting is the opinion of Genest. He says: "All through his Apology he speaks modestly of his own acting: he mentions with some degree of complacency, his performance of Wolsey—Fondlewife—Sir Fopling Flatter—-Iago—Syphax—-Richard the 3rd— Bayes—-Sir Courtly Nice—-Aesop—- Shallow and Lord Fopppington: and this surely was no more than he might do without censure."

Genest quotes an estimate from the Gentleman's Magazine which is unreserved in its praise of Cibber's acting of comedy. This is how critics disagree. The Laureat says "his legs were somewhat of the thickest, his shape a little clumsy, not irregular, and his voice rather shrill etc". Davies says his face was "inexpressive". But the contributor to the magazine says: "His shape was finely proportional yet not graceful, easy, but not striking; when he represented a ridiculous humour he had a mouth in every nerve, and became eloquent without speaking: his attitudes were pointed and exquisite; his expression was stronger than painting: he was beautifully absorbed by the character, and demanded and monopolized attention: his very extravagancies were colored with propriety".

Genest, farther removed from the time of Cibber and suspicious of the evidence of the Laureat, is fairer in his judgment. Davies reports Cibber's last appearance as Pandulph when he was seventy-four years old, as a ridiculous performance. He says, "his deportment was as disgusting as his utterance". But Genest, is more charitable and his account shows the respect that the audience had for the old actor, besides flatly disagreeing with Davies opinion of Cibber's "deportment". Without stating his authority, he says:

286. Ibid.
"Cibber returned to the stage to play Cardinal Pandulph; he had at this time lost all his teeth, and was attempting to speak in a theatre much larger than that he had been generally used to—his spectators therefore could only be entertained with his attitudes and conduct, which were truly graceful. They however showed all imaginable indulgence to him as an old actor".

Modern critics are conscious of Cibber's merit as a comedian. No one of them gives him more than passing notice; but a composite opinion from them is favorable:

It "was in itself a compliment to Garrick that a man "of so much eminence as Cibber" would say nothing better of him than "his aside to Mrs. Bracegirdle, I' faith, Bracey, the lad is clever!"

"Cibber's exquisite insolence, affectation, and sangfroid are cristalized in a delightful picture by Grisomi, and some sympathy may still be felt with those who hold that Garrick never reached the ineffable impertinence of his predecessor".

Upon his first appearance as Sir Novelty Fashion, he "became immensely successful with the public", he was among "the first people in the kingdom"; he was "a comedian of high mark,— a great comedian". Maria Cibber was a great actress, "both in comedy and tragedy. She had been trained as an actress by old Colley Cibber, her father-in-law". Garrick reformed the acting of tragedy, but comedy did not need reforming. "This was chiefly due to the fact that comic art was not corrupted

287. Genest: IV, 162.
288. Knight: p. 43.
289. "": p. 318.
291. Cross: I, 266 (quoting Murphy).
in the same way as tragic art, but through Nokes, Doggett, and to some extent Cibber and Quin, as well as Mrs. Clive, had remained fresh all the time".

The feeling one has on reviewing the evidence regarding Cibber as an actor is that modern critics are unconsciously still dominated by the spirit of Pope and the Laureate. The source of their criticism is usually Davies, who, it seems clear, is prejudiced against Cibber. They cannot deny that Cibber was a great comedian but they do make excuses and attempt to explain away his greatness. No one today will believe that a man can play the simpleton because he is a simpleton, nor the fop because he is a fop. In fact, we now know that the more intelligent the man, the more simple he can act, and the more critical he is of foppishness the better he can copy it and make it ridiculous. To assert that he could play the villain because he himself was a vicious character is equally absurd.

No one, unless prejudiced, would use Cibber's good qualities as evidence against him. He made a great success as a mimic of Doggett in The Old Bachelor. To be a perfect mimic is the basis of fine acting. Garrick himself attempted to mimic Cibber in his best comedy parts and was not able to accomplish it. But he was not always merely a mimic. Davies even, in an unguarded moment, says that Doggett, as well as Cibber, was an original and inimitable actor. His greatest role, the coxcomb of fashion, was created by himself, both as author and as actor, and in it he has never been surpassed. That role he copied from Life, which is mimicry in its highest sense. When in modesty and generosity he disclaims all credit for his ability and says he owes his conceptions to the great actors who have gone before him, he is classed as a minor imitator. What great actor, if honest, must not have said the same?

The traditions of the stage are among the most powerful conventions; new conceptions come gradually, and though Garrick is regarded as a revolutionist, each of his alleged reforms, it is fairly certain, antedated his reign of influence.

Such statements as that "comic art had been kept fresh by Nokes, Dogget, and to some extent Cibber and Quin, as well as Mrs. Clive" is illustrative of the modern attitude. Nokes and Dogget were of the generation before Cibber and so there is no disparagement there. But to place Cibber with Quin is to take him out of his class. As Dogget was the greatest comedian of his generation, Cibber was the greatest of his own, as Garrick, inferior to him in many respects, was his successor.
As A Manager

The credit for reform in managerial policy in the theatre is generally given to Garrick. An interesting study would be the determination of how much of his policy Garrick owed to Cibber. The reformation of the style of tragic acting, the restoration of Shakespeare, the banishment of auditors from the stage, and the introduction of moral purity in the theatre are the things for which Garrick as a manager is most noted.

The reformation of the manner of acting tragedy, the change from a kind of singing intonation to natural speech as was used in comedy, may have been due to Garrick. And yet it is only natural that he was carried with the general tendency, and like Cibber gave the public what he knew they liked, though fortunately, unlike Cibber, he would not have had to go against his conscience to do it. He became manager of Drury Lane in 1747. It was in the performance of Cibber's Papal Tyranny two years before that, that Mrs. Pritchard refused to "tone" her words and by speaking naturally gained the applause of the audience. And in the same performance Theophilus Cibber who spoke in the "good old manner of singing and quavering out their tragic tones" felt the displeasure of the spectators for "tho' they spared the fault in the old man (Colley Cibber) they could not excuse the son" Garrick had been acting in London for four years so it was probably he who started the tide toward realistic acting of tragedy.

Garrick restored Shakespeare to the stage, with the exception of Richard III. It was Cibber and not Shakespeare that he played as Richard. It was not virtuous reverence for Shakespeare that animated

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296. " " :IV, 134.
Garrick; he was not averse to alteration per se. His own alteration of Hamlet was not successful and was never published. Due to the enthusiasm created a generation before by textual critics of the school of Bentley and especially by Theobald with his restored editions of Shakespeare, restorations was in the air. It was natural that Garrick should conform to the craze for restoration as Cibber and others had conformed to the craze for alterations.

Spectators were banished from the stage by Cibber. For many years before his retirement, he says, "we had---- shut out those idle gentlemen -- who took their daily stands where they might best elbow the Actor, and come in for their Share of the Auditor's Attention". He had also destroyed the custom of admitting the footmen to the gallery free of charge.

It was Garrick who refused to allow the boards of Drury Lane to be polluted by the revival of vile restoration comedies, but this is only a culmination of the sentiment in favor of cleanness and morality begun by Cibber. It was not Garrick, nor Steele, nor even Jeremy Collier who brought about reform. If the credit goes to any one man, it belongs to Cibber, for his Love's Last Shift was the first play of the Restoration period, which was written with a moral intent, introducing characters who spoke the language of decent ladies and gentlemen.

Cibber's own ideal of management, one gathers from his Apology, was to have a clear stage, unencumbered by the vain fops of the town, to have a theatre in which were observed the "Decencies of a Drawing Room", freed from the "Noise and Clamour of these savage Spectators" who filled the galleries and with hisses and cat calls, as the mood.
struck them, became "the most disgraceful nuisance that ever depreciated the theatre"; to have harmony between the managers and actors because, as he had learned in the years of turmoil before he became a manager, "no company could flourish while the chief actors and the Undertakers were at variance".

He goes on to explain his attitude toward his company. In this account one may see the source of the seemingly absurd statement of the Laureat that anyone should fear the genial and somewhat frivolous Cibber. He had a definite policy toward the actors whom he wished to hold in check; a cold, impersonal, businesslike personality which he assumed in business hours: He says: "I therefore made it a Point, while it was possible upon tolerable terms, to keep the valuable Actors in humour with their Station; and tho' I was as jealous of their Enroachments as any of my Co-partners could be, I always guarded against the least Warmth in my Expostulations with them; not but I at the same time they might see I was perhaps more determined in the Question than those that gave a loose to their Resentment, and when they were cool were apt to recede. I do not remember that ever I made a Promise to any that I did not keep, and therefore was cautious how I made them. This Coldness tho' it might not please, at least left them nothing to reproach me with; and it Temper and fair Words could prevent a Disobligation, I was sure never to give Offence or receive it. But as I was but one of three, I could not oblige others to observe the same conduct. However, by this means I kept many an unreasonable discontent from breaking out, and both Sides found their account in it".

Cibber's side of the case regarding the difficulties of management

304. Cibber, I, 190.
305. Ibid.
are well stated in his speech in the law suit against Sir Richard Steele. The conclusion of that speech is as follows:

"Sir, by our own Books it is apparent that the Menagers have under their care no less than One Hundred and Forty Persons on constant daily Pay: and among such Numbers, it will be no wonder if a great many of them are unskillful, idle, and sometimes untractable; all which Tempers are to be led, or driven watch'd, and restrained by the continual Skill, Care, and Patience of the Menagers. Every Menager is oblig'd in his turn, to attend two or three Hours every Morning at the Rehearsal of Plays and other Entertainments for the Stage, or else every Rehearsal would be but a rude Meeting of Mirth and Jollity. The same Attendance is as necessary at every Play during the time of its publick Action, in which one or more of us have constantly been punctual, whether we have had any part in the Play then acted or not. A menager ought to be at the Reading of every new Play when it is first offer'd to the Stage, though there are seldom one of those Plays in twenty which, upon hearing, proves to be fit for it; and upon such Occasions the attendance must be allowed to be as painfully tedious as the getting rid of the Authors of such Plays must be disagreeable and difficult. Besides this, Sir, a Menager is to order all new Cloaths, to assist in the Fancy and Propriety of them, to limit the Expence, and to withstand the unreasonable Importunities of some that are apt to think themselves injur'd if they are not finer than their Fellows. A Menager is to direct and oversee the Painters, Machinists, Musicians, Singers, and dancers; to have an Eye upon the Door-keepers-Under-Servants, and officers that, without such Care, are too often apt to defraud us, or neglect their Duty".

From this account of the duties of a manager we perceive that to be successful, he must be a firm and tactful person, able to deal with great numbers of unskillful, idle, and untractable stage hands and actors; he must be a diligent worker, always present at the dull routine of rehearsals, performances and playreadings; he must be an efficient business man, choosing the theatrical equipment with judgment as to the "propriety of them" as well as to the expense involved. According to the testimony of Cibber's enemies, he was the "dictator of the triumvirate", the man who shaped and executed the policies of management, while Wilks was interested only in acting and Booth only in keeping the accounts. According to them also, he was not a man who could deal successfully with subordinates because of his overbearing disposition and lax habits which inspired disrespect; he was not a diligent worker, but was a gamester, dissolute and negligent of his duties; he was not a business man, expecting certain values in return for certain expenditures, but was parsimonious, unwilling to spend money for any improvement. The manager who really managed the theatre was nothing that a manager should be. The conclusion must logically be then, that the management of Drury Lane during the twenty-three years of his administration was not successful. Cibber thought himself successful and writes proudly of the peaceful and prosperous condition of the theatre up to the time of his retirement.

Contemporary evidence in favor of Cibber's management is almost entirely lacking, and yet it is as a manager, apart from his activities as author and actor, that modern critics are most unreserved in their praise of him. This is due to the fact that they have been left to their own conclusions without evidence pro or con from contemporaries. For if one examines the satire leveled at him as Marplay or Ground-Ivy the Manager, one sees that it is usually the actor-manager or author-manager
that is attacked, and not the business manager. Therefore it seems reasonable that if Cibber the author and actor had been allowed to die to fame instead of having been forced to live in the company of the dunces, he would have been rescued from oblivion many decades ago and could have taken his rightful place in the history of dramatic art, whereas it may never be possible to free him from the stigma placed upon him by his powerful enemies.

In all the periodical literature of the time there have been found by the writer only two hints favorable to Cibber's personality as a manager. One was from the Grubstreet Journal; in the same article in which "Prosaicus a correspondent" says that everyone who can write his name will turn writer, hence the Cibbers in dramatics, and speaks of Cibber's vanity, he also, in commenting on the desertion of several actors from Drury Lane to Rich, which Cibber attributed to the temper of Wilks, admits that "The master of the New House wants indeed the Ceremony, Wit and Taste of the Managers of the Old".

The other was also from the Grubstreet Journal at the time of Cibber's retirement when his son was having difficulties. The contributor states that "Wit, good Sense, and Politeness are absolutely necessary in a manager, and asserts that such have been the qualifications of the persons who had the office, pointing out that even so eminent a man as Sir Richard Steele had joined with those "professed Players, Mr. Booth, Mr. Wilks, and Mr. Cibber". The fact that they were "professed Players" speaks all the higher for their ability as managers, for "School-masters and Players" were "reckon'd in the lower Class of Life".

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307. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " (June 1733) III, 286.
308. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " (March 1733) II, 646.
Though Davies quotes copiously from the Laureat, and leaves the general impression that the Laureat is a reliable authority, in a few instances, his sense of fairness compels him to differ from that writer. I think Davies in these few instances, considering the source of his information, entirely vindicates Cibber from the charge of prejudice against other actors and unfair use against them of his power as manager.

For instance, says Davies, "That Verbruggen and Cibber did not accord is plainly insinuated by the author of the Laureat"—"He, however, chose Verbruggen for his Loveless, and certainly from a confidence in his superior abilities, in preference to any other actor".

Then there was the case of Estcourt. Cibber speaks slantly of Estcourt's stage activities, but the public didn't agree with him. To give the public what they wanted in an actor was Cibber's policy. Though he perhaps envied Estcourt and wanted to play Bayes, and being manager could have taken the part, yet "Cibber, who afterwards played Bayes, with what success you know, contented himself, during the life of Estcourt with the inferior part of Prince Volscious".

The Laureat says that Cibber was prejudiced against Wilks and never said anything good but as an opportunity to say something ill of him. Cibber says much in favor of Wilks and against him merely that Wilks had a disagreeable temper and was vain of his good appearance on the stage and had no other interest. If Cibber really disliked Wilks, which there is no ground for believing, it speaks well for his tolerance and self control in his treatment of Wilks that Wilks admired Cibber, and, though the Laureat says that he often sharply reprimanded Cibber,

Benjamin Victor, an actor in the company told the following incident to

310. "": III, 449.
311. "": III, 311.
Davies: Booth and Wilks were having a dispute over a part in *Venice Preserved*. Wilks had his way. Booth submitted because, says Davies, "he knew that Cibber would espouse the cause of Wilks on all occasions; for however Colley may complain in his Apology, of Wilks's fire and impetuosity, he in general was Cibber's great admirer; he supported him on all occasions, where his own passions or interest did not interpose; nay, he deprived the inoffensive Harry Carey of the liberty of the scenes, because he had, in common with others, made merry with Cibber in a song, on his being appointed poet Laureat; saying at the same time, he was surprised at his impertinence, in behaving so improperly to a man of such great merit".

Genest in one instance defends Cibber from the charge that he stole from manuscript plays submitted to him for examination. *The Double Gallant* was one of the plays which he was accused of compiling in this way, but Genest points out that the play which was especially mentioned by Cibber's enemies was in print at the time Cibber made his adaptation, though he adds that Cibber "might have discouraged her (the author) from giving it in London". Genest thinks that Cibber improved upon the plays he used.

A passage from Theophilus Cibber's *Life of Booth* gives a picture of the manager at work. As the managers made no complaint of Cibber's negligence, and as Cibber, delegated by his colleagues, plead their cause at the bar against Steele for not doing his share, it is safe to assume that Cibber was present at the Saturday morning sessions described: "'Saturday morning I waited on the Mgrs at their office, where they constantly settled their weekly expenses, and fixed the business of the ensuing week---at these meetings also they settled the order in which new or revived plays or entertainments should be brought forward."

heard the (frequent imaginary) grievances of the company, and gave rewards to, or advanced the salaries of, such performers as, on any emergency, had been of particular service, or had given proofs of their improvement in their business; which last articles, I remember, had never passed unnoticed by them.

This is a direct contradiction of the Laureat's assertions that Cibber was negligent of his duties and was always opposed to any advancement or reward to his actors. Unfortunately this evidence comes from Cibber's own son and cannot well be used in Cibber's favor.

The story most damaging to Cibber in regard to his treatment of authors is that of his treatment of Fenton. It was the actor Johnson who told the story. Davies hints that Johnson had a justifiable grudge against Cibber. Here is the way he states it: "On Dogget's leaving the stage, the part (Shallow) had been given to Johnson, but on Johnson's being ill, Cibber made himself master of it, and performed it so much to the satisfaction of the public, that he retained it as long as he continued on the stage: on his retiring Johnson resumed the part when he was between 70 and 80. --- Whether Johnson considered his being deprived of Shallow for almost 20 yrs, as a manager's trick, or dishonest manoeuvre of Cibber is not known, but the old man never spoke of him (Cibber) with any complacency.

Davies implies that the part had been acted by Johnson and that Cibber by a "manager's trick" got it for himself. Undoubtedly, however blameless Cibber may have been, Johnson felt aggrieved and would have been glad to tell to Cibber's discredit anything like the Fenton story.

But Genest defends Cibber showing that it is "Impossible to assign any time at which Johnson could have played Shallow before Cibber" --- Johnson might possibly be offended at Cibber for resuming the part on his return to the stage", but he implies, Johnson had no cause for
offence that Cibber took the part before he ever acted it.

Genest also defends Cibber from the charge of rejecting good plays and forcing bad plays on the public. Cibber made the blunder of rejecting *The Beggar's Opera* which achieved remarkable popularity at the time and even this year was successfully revived. But his judgment was not so much to be blamed. Pope wrote regarding it: "Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty sort of thing a Newgate Pastoral might make——— this was what gave rise to the Beggar's Opera——— he began on it; and when first he mentioned it to Swift, the Doctor did not like the project——— when it was done neither of us thought it would succeed———we showed it to Congreve; who said it would either take greatly, or be damned confoundedly———we were all, at the first night of it, in great uncertainty of the event."

A manager would have been taking a long chance to produce so novel an dramatic entertainment, and Cibber, a prudent man, was afraid of it.

And Genest adds a note saying, "From this account it appears with what little reason Cibber has been censured in modern times for rejecting this piece."

Even had Cibber felt certain of the success of *The Beggar's Opera*, we may surmise that he would have perceived hidden in its lines the keen satire upon Walpole and the Whig government. For political reasons alone one would expect him to reject it without incurring any criticism of his discernment as a judge of theatrical pieces.

He also quotes from Cibber the passage in which he says that they were sometimes compelled to produce bad plays because of the "imposition of some great persons", etc. Genest thought this a very proper observation of Cibber's, and that these few bad ones produced ought not to weigh against the merit of the many bad ones rejected. And he

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concludes: "After all that has been said against Chancellor Cibber, it does not appear that he often made a wrong decree: most of the good plays come out at L.D.L. — nor am I aware that Cibber is much to be blamed for rejecting any play, except the Siege of Damascus in the first instance".

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With fragments from modern critics one may construct a favorable account of Cibber as a manager, both as a business man and a qualified critic of theatrical affairs.

He "was a singularly capable and judicious manager, upon whom to a certain extent Garrick is said to have modeled himself.—The anonymous author of 'The Laureat' — accuses Cibber of using in his own plays material sent in by other writers. This is a charge from which few managers who were also authors have escaped".

Garrick was vilified as a manager just as much as Cibber was, but as his enemies were not so prominent as Cibber's, his fame has not suffered. These charges were no more true of Garrick than they were of Cibber; it is interesting to observe that these words, written of Garrick sound strangely like charges against Cibber: "Naturally, too, his great success made him intense enemies. Consequently he was not only directly vilified, but more insidiously attacked with the anecdote which told, not what his enemies knew to be true, but what they wished to have believed true. As a man, he was, of course, said to be jealous, parsimonious, a toady to rank and title; as a manager uninterested in the development of the drama as drama, arrogating to himself all the best lines, hard to his actors, etc. —— in fact he was declared guilty of the whole list of sins charged up by enemies against the

Cibber became "the most important manager of his time, conducting the affairs of Drury Lane with a success both histrionic and financial which it had never known before".

"Colley Cibber's faults frequently turned out profitable to him. His gifts were neither deep nor extensive; nature had not particularly qualified him for the stage work, nor did he ever become a great actor, or a great character, but he was an amiable man with great pliancy and elasticity of mind; he came at the right moment, made the right use of his chances, and---most needful of all to a theatrical manager----he was successful".

The above quotation is interesting because it derogates while it praises, which was the method of Davies. It contains a falsity, too, for Cibber surely was a great actor if not a great character.

"Almost immediately after the dissolution of the triumvirate and the retirement of Colley Cibber, the theatrical world became the scene of disturbances and confusion, the like of which had scarcely ever been seen, and which proved better than anything else by what a firm hand this stage had been managed by—the three able actors, especially Cibber".

"Not one good play was produced at Covent-Garden from the days of Booth, Wilks, and Cibber" until Garrick's day.

Cibber was an unequalled critic of theatrical performances--the best critic of acting the stage has ever known". Davies, in his account of the other critics and their interpretations, constantly quotes Cibber as his chief authority. Thus for our knowledge of the

322. """"": V, 364.
323. Murphy: II, 159.
greatest actors among his contemporaries, we are indebted to Cibber. Davies speaks of Cibber's "admirable account of the old actors" in his *Apology*, calls him a "critical historian", and says he pays great deference to Cibber's judgment.

Modern critics feel, too, that the opinion of "writers and critics such as Colley Cibber, men of acknowledged ability" must be respected. "This able critic gives us an interesting description of the theatre at this time, and some very excellent notices of the celebrated actors and actresses who then trod its boards. It is admitted that the author was peculiarly adapted for such a task, and his remarks will be found of the highest value". "Colley Cibber was eminent in his profession, and a close observer of the talents of his contemporaries".

Doran in his *Annals* uses Cibber as his authority and praises his criticism. "The next great pleasure to seeing Betterton's Hamlet, is to read Cibber's masterly analysis of it". "Cibber is so perfect a critic, he so thoroughly understands the office and so intelligently conveys his opinions, that it were well if all gentlemen who may hereafter aspire to exercise the critical art were compelled to study his *Apology*, as medical students are to become acquainted with their Celsus. No one should be admitted to practice theatrical criticism who has not got by heart Cibber's description of Betterton and Mrs. Oldfield; or who fail in their being examined as to their proficiency in the Canons of Colley".

A contributor to the *Contemporary Review* gives a more vivid account of the spirit of Cibber's criticism. He says that the *Apology* redeems

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585. The Life and Times of Thomas Betterton (London 1888) p. 4.
327. Murphy: II, 175.
328. Doran, Dr: *Annals of the English Stage* (London 1897) p. 43.
not the names, but the vivid images of some of the greatest artists of a century ago, from oblivion. Here they are not embalmed, but kept alive—and breathe, in all their glory of their meridian powers before us.——The theatrical portraits in this work are drawn with the highest gusto, and set forth with the richest coloring. The author has not sought, like some admirable critics of this age of criticism, to say as many witty or eloquent things on each artist as possible, but simply to form the most exact likeness and to give the drapery the most vivid lines”.

It is, then, to Cibber’s valuable criticism that we owe all the knowledge we have of the actors of his day. It is upon his policies as a manager that Garrick built his success. These policies include (1) a stage free from spectators; (2) an attentive and well-behaved audience; (3) harmony between actors and managers; (4) the production of the best plays possible with a due regard to financial interest and the demands of the public.

He was even-tempered, dignified, systematic, businesslike, and fair-minded in the administration of the affairs of Drury Lane. He was the manager of the oldest and most important theatre in London, and was the most influential and successful man in the theatrical world for a quarter of a century. Again pounds and shillings tell the story of his merit. When he became manager, shares of Drury Lane were so valueless that Colonel Brett had received a large block of stock as a gift. Shortly afterwards he was sued for the return of so valuable a holding. In 1714 Booth paid 600 L for his share. Nineteen years later, Cibber received more than five times as much for his. The steady increase

in the value of the theatre up to the time of his retirement is test­
imony to his ability as a manager.

The best plays of that period were brought out under his management and he made few wrong judgments as to the value of plays. Moreover, what is of most importance historically, he began a movement for cleaner morals in the theatre which resulted in an altogether new type of drama, the Sentimental Comedy.
C. As A Writer

(1) Playwright

There is nothing in the Apology which is evidence of the approbation of Cibber's comedies by his contemporaries. He himself speaks with satisfaction of several of his successful plays, and points out that they were original. But neither Cibber nor any of his critics seem to have been aware of the significance of his work.

Some of his admirers praised him, and even Dr. Johnson "allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that the 'Careless Husband' was not written by himself." There is every reason to believe that the play, on the contrary, was entirely original. Boswell records that Cibber submitted every scene of it to Mrs. Brett "for revisal and corrections" and that the chief scene in it was a true incident which happened between Mrs. Brett and her husband.

Walpole had no prejudice against Cibber because he was a player. He always speaks well of him. He wrote in 1774, "A good new play I never expect to see more nor have seen since 'The Provoked Husband' which came out when I was at school". And three years later when the School for Scandal came out he wrote, "I have seen no comedy that comes near it since "The Provoked Husband"."

In spite of the contempt of many great men for Cibber, Walpole considered him a gentleman. Cibber was of better family and education than other players. His father was an artist, formerly had been cabinet maker to the King of Denmark. His mother's family had been among the lesser nobility of England. Cibber's natural place in life.

333. Walpole: I, cv.
334. "" "" "" : VI, 145.
335. "" "" "" : VI, 458.
would have been in the army or the church as his father had intended. And had fate placed him in either position, his determination to succeed would probably have found a way to a command or a bishopric. As it was, however, he had followed his inclination to a lower station. But he had friends among prominent men and the fashionable nobility. That last had laid him open to the charge of being a "toady" to "persons of Quality". He was elected to White's, at that time the elite club of London. But his enemies said that they only took him in to make sport of him. Walpole saw Gibber simply as a prominent and talented man among "people of fashion that have sense", and thought that he wrote genteel comedy because he "lived in the best company".

The movement toward sentimental literature, of course, made a close bond of sympathy between Cibber and Samuel Richardson. However immoral Cibber may have been in his personal life, he was intensely interested in Richardson's moral stories, and enjoyed weeping over the plight of his virtuous heroines. He sent word by Mrs. Pilkington that he thirsted for Richardson's writings and hoped to be given a morning interview.

Speaking of another of Richardson's stories, of which he had read the first, Cibber himself writes to the author his distress about the heroine: "Z--3s! I have not patience, till I know what's become of her. Why, you! I don't know what to call you! Ah! Ah! you may laugh if you please: but how will you be able to look me in the face, if the lady should ever be able to shew hers again? What piteous, d----d, disgraceful pickle have you plunged her in? For God's sake send me the sequel".

In another letter Cibber was so lavish in his praise that he stopped himself with "By the way, don't I almost talk nonsense?" and says he

337. Richardson: Letters II, 23.
couldn't finish the story without having a "handkerchiefly" feeling about it, and that since he was born he never "met-- so much goodness of heart". And then he states his ideal of a writer: "Can any man be a good moral writer that does not take up his pen in the cause of virtue? I had rather have the fame that your amiable zeal for it deserves, than be preferred as a poet to a Pope, or his Homer."

Cibber's reaction to Richardson's *Clarissa* shows this same temper of his mind. Mrs Pilkington writes to Richardson: "I passed two hours this morning with Mr. Cibber, whom I found in such real anxiety for Clarissa, as none but so perfect a master of nature could have excited. I had related to him, not only the catastrophe of the story, but also your truly religious and moral reason for it; and, when he heard what a dreadful lot hers was to be, he lost all patience, threw down the book, and vowed he would not read another line. To express or point his passion would acquire (require) such masterly hands as yours or his own: he shuddered; nay the tears stood in his eyes:-- 'What! (said he) shall I who have loved and revered the virtuous, the beautiful Clarissa, from the same motives I loved Mr. Richardson, bear to stand a patient spectator of her ruin, her final destruction? ------ I cannot bear it! had Lovelace ten thousand souls and bodies, I could wish to see them all tortured, stretched on the rack; no punishment can be too bad for him.'

"In this manner did the dear gentleman, I think I may say, rave! for I never saw passion higher wrought than his. When I told him she must die, he said, G-d d---n him, if she should; and that he should no longer believe Providence, or eternal Wisdom, of goodness governed the world, if merit, innocence, and beauty were to be destroyed: ---- I can scarcely express the pleasure I received from the dear gentleman's warmth."

as it showed me atones the virtue of his heart, and the power of the writer.

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In a postscript, Davies tells that a review of his Miscellanies was published in the Monthly Reviewer of June 1785 by R. Griffith who defended Cibber and accused Davies of prejudice. Davies defends himself halps to prove Mr. Griffith's contention. Davies writes: "He says, I rely too implicitly on pamphlets written purposely against him. This assertion the Reviewer knows to be unsupported by truth. I had charged the comedian with insolence, it is true; and was there anything more universally acknowledged? I would ask this sagacious critic, how I shall come at facts, but by comparing a writer's work with that of his adversary—Cibber's Apology was published, as far as I can remember, toward the end of the year 1739. The Laureat, a pamphlet of near 120 pages, came forth in 1740. The Reviewer, who is dextrous in tripping up the heels of evidence, I think I may presume to say, had never seen it. It appears to have been written by a gentleman well acquainted with the gay world, and particularly conversant in the transactions of the stage. The characters of the comedians who lived prior to the date of his pamphlet, he seems to have known perfectly. By his information I rescued the characters of some actors, and particularly Verbruggen, from the envious misrepresentations of Cibber: many glaring acts of Colley's theatrical tyranny are here pointed out.

"Cibber had too much discernment to reply to his adversary. But Mr. Griffith knows I did not entirely rest my proofs of Cibber's insolence on this pamphlet. What does he think of a speech Colley himself has recorded, in answer to Mr. Pope's reproaches for ridiculing an incident

in Three Hours After Marriage?" Mr. Pope, you are such a sort of man, that I can't answer you as I would'. As it is well known that Cibber was a rank coward, his insolence must appear intolerable".

This last sentence is enough to make clear Davies' position. For there is no more reason to assume that Cibber feared violence from the "little Tom-tit", as he afterwards called him, than that he had some regard for his own dignity which it seems Pope in this instance had not.

However, in spite of this prejudice one can cull from the Miscellanies a few remarks that go to strengthen the case for Cibber. He admits that Cibber had enemies who constantly worked against him. "Poor Cibber!" he says," it was his hard fate to have his best comedies attributed to anybody but himself. His Careless Husband was, for a long time given to the Duke of Argyle and other noblemen. Nothing could put an end to such ungenerous and weak suggestions but his scenes of high life in the Provoked Husband, which he proved to be his own by printing the unfinished Ms of Sir John Vanbrugh's play, called a Journey to London. Some comic characters of this writer were severely treated by the audience because supposed to be written by Cibber".

He shows too that he originated a new stage type, that Cibber's Sir Novelty Fashion was different from and more English than all similar characters seen previously. He says:"Sir Novelty Fashion was a true picture of manners in the top of the times. Before this author wrote, our affected gentlemen of the stage were, I believe, not quite so entertaining in their profession of foppery. Etheridge's Sir Fopling Flutter is rather a copy of Moliere's Marquis than a thing of English growth. Crown's Sir Courtly Nice, is, in a few shadows, distinct from the other, by being more insignificantly soft, and more pompously important. Sir Courtley's song of 'Stop theif' is a translation from a sonnet of the French poet".

Davies gives us a picture of the audience's reception of the first Sentimental Comedy, *Love's Last Shift*. He says they were especially pleased with the scene of reconsiliation in the last act where the wife reveals herself to her surprised and admiring husband. "The joy of unexpected reconcilement, from Loveless' remorse and penitence spread such an uncommon rapture of pleasure in the audience that never were spectators more happy in easing their minds by uncommon and repeated plaudits. The honest tears, shed by the audience at this interview, conveyed a strong reproach to our licentious poets, and was to Cibber the highest mark of honor. The uncommon run of this comedy—-is a convincing proof that the people at large are never so vicious as to abandon the cause of decency and virtue".

He even allows some credit to Cibber's version of *King John*. He believed it was a sacrilegious violation of Shakespeare, but yet Cibber deserves some credit for reviving the play at all because it had "lain dormant from the days of Shakespeare", and he thinks that Cibber has some good touches in his version, and that it has some just claim to merit. Cibber's *Richard III*, too, he calls a "pleasing pasticcio", and he praises the *Nonjuror*. "In spite of his affecting to despise party men and party principles, Pope, in his letters to Jervas and Mr. Digby, discovered no little vexation at the success of the Nonjuror;--------The play is a good imitation of Moliere's *Tartuffe*; and deserves commendation, if it were for the sake only of the fine portrait of an amiable young lady. There is not in all the dramatic poetry, a more sprightly, good natured, and generous coquette, than Maria".

347. Davies: I, 63.
Davies was aware how politics worked against Cibber's popularity. He says that the Nonjuror exposed Cibber "to innumerable and virulent attacks from high Tory and Jacobite parties". Cibber himself says that the fury of his enemies which could not prudently vent itself on the Nonjuror fell upon his next play to be produced, The Provoked Husband. They came an hour before the first curtain, prepared to damn it. Davies agrees that that was their design, but "The reconciliation scene wrought so effectually upon the sensible and generous part of the audience, that the conclusion was greatly and generously approved".

In a few words Davies states a strong claim for Cibber's place in the history of the drama.

"To a player we are indebted for the reformation of the stage. The first comedy, acted since the Restoration, in which were preserved purity of manners and decency of language, with a due respect to the honor of the marriage bed, was Colley Cibber's Love's Last Shift".

"Besides the honour of reforming the morals of comedy Cibber was the first who introduced men and women of high quality on the stage, and gave them language and manners suitable to their rank and birth".

"As a writer of comedies, Cibber must be placed in a very superior rank; before Jeremy Collier attacked the profaneness of dramatic writers, he first taught the stage to talk decently and morally. He was properly the inventor of the higher comedy, a species of the drama in which persons of high birth and eminent rank are introduced; for the faint efforts in that style, of Etheridge and Steele—- are scarcely worth our notice ".

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350. "" "" : III, 446.
351. "" "" : III, 436.
352. "" "" : III, 442.
353. "" "" : III, 504.
As before stated in the beginning of this paper, the only modern scholars who have truly perceived the significance of Cibber are Professor Croissant and especially Professor Bernbaum. Davies may have given a hint of Cibber's importance, but he only credits him with moral reform, while Bernbaum credits him with creating a new comedy type.

Cibber's fame will be secure when the nature of his work is understood and the reasons for the satire upon him are made clear. His dramas are not of literary, but of historical importance. But even some critics who have not perceived his place in the history of comedy, have allowed him a degree of merit. "He was a sparkling, and successful dramatist"— and "in his comedies Cibber all but stands comparison with the best of the successors of Congreve. —— To wit he seldom rises, but he has a smartness of dialogue and animal spirits that form an acceptable substitute".

Hazlitt thought Lord Foppington a mere "copy of Etheridge's Sir Fopling Flutter" although he regarded Lord Foppington as "a most splendid caricature". But a more recent critic, Ward, agreeing with Davies, remarks: "Lord Foppington I am inclined to pronounce the best fop ever brought on the stage -- unsurpassed and unsurpassable, and admirable from first to last".

Baker, another modern critic, without stating the basis of his classification says that "Benjamin Hoadlye's The Suspicious Husband, is often ranked with Cibber's Provoked Husband, Colman and Garrick's Clandestine Marriage, Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, and Sheridan's School for Scandal, as the five significant comedies of the eighteenth century".

Merely as literature, "three of Cibber's plays, at least, are well worth while: The Careless Husband, She Would and She Would Not, and The Nonjuror. They lack the briskness and sureness of touch that characterized Congreve, but compare most favorable with the work of men in the
next rank, and are not only delightful and profitable reading, but are thoroughly representative of the period in which they appear.

But it is to Cibber's intimacy with Samuel Richardson that we must look for the true meaning of his work. The latter was working with a new type of fiction, the Sentimental Novel, and Cibber's letters to him, after his own sentimental writing was done, show his sympathy with and encouragement of Richardson. Cibber had done the same sort of thing in his comedies, and according to Bernbaum, it was he who originated Sentimental Comedy, which is "a protest against the orthodox view of life, and against those literary conventions which had served that view. It implied that human nature, when not, as in some cases, already perfect, was perfectible by an appeal to the emotions. It refused to assume that virtuous persons must be sought in a romantic realm apart from the everyday world. It wished to show that beings who were good at heart were found in the ordinary walks of life. It so represented their conduct as to arouse admiration for their virtues and pity for their sufferings. In sentimental comedy it showed them contending against distresses but finally rewarded, by morally deserved happiness".

The 18th century dramas of sensibility were steps in an uninterrupted literary movement. They made up a large proportion of the plays of the period and represented a more or less conscious attitude toward life. There had been Elizabethan plays with the same characteristics, but they were disconnected and sporadic. They were unsupported by a contemporary sentimental movement in popular taste or ethical thought, so it is doubtful whether they can be considered a real source.

There was an early comedy by Etheridge; in 1676 Mrs Behn wrote one under Elizabethan influence. In the Restoration period Wycherley, Shadwell

360 *" *": p. 48.
and Congreve made momentary approach to a pathetic scene or exemplary character. Restoration comedy was an unusual of obedience to rule in English literature. "Its compliance is explicable partly on the literary ground that classical authority, which demanded unity of tone within each genre, was strong; but quite as much on the ethical ground that the distrust of ordinary human nature was a deep seated conviction. Such being the orthodox theory and practice, the appearance in 1696 of sentimental comedy was in the true sense of a much abused term, revolutionary".

The play which in 1696 began a new epoch in English dramatic history was Love's Last Shift. In it there is a husband who, led astray, sincerely repents and is reunited to a wife who had caused him to fall in love with her posing as a mistress. "For many years there had not been a comedy written but at the expense of husbands. They were the dupes and dolts of the piece; were betrayed and dishonored; cudgelled, and contented in their abject debasement. Audiences had had something too much of this and Cibber was the first to perceive it." So when he made the first step out of this slough the audience shed "honest tears".

"Love's Last Shift, though artistically no masterpiece, occupies historically the same leading position that The Tatler holds among moral periodicals, and Pamela among sentimental novels". Cibber attributes its success to the "moral Delight receiv'd from its fable". "In the Dedication to this play, Cibber modestly avows his intention of seeking to reform by example the coarseness of contemporary comedy and to produce what may be fit entertainment for People of Quality, 'especially the Ladies'--- The purpose of the play is genuinely moral".

"Despite its 'moral delight', the play did not escape the censure of Jeremy Collier, though Cibber protests that 'his greatest charge against it is, that it sometimes uses the word Faith as an Oath in the Dialogue'. Modern taste might find a stronger objection with which a faithless husband, after eight years quest of pleasure is permitted to reclaim a faithful wife. Yet difference in moral standards rather than insincerity on Cibber's part may fairly account for ethical short-comings".

His moral purpose is everywhere evident. He says in the Apology:

"It has often given me Amazement that our best Authors of that time could think the Wit and Spirit of their Scenes could be an Excuse for making the Looseness of them publick. The many Instances of their talents so abused are too glaring to need a closer Comment. If then to have avoided this Imputation or rather to have had the Interest of Honour of Virtue always in view, can give Merit to a Play, I am contented that my Readers should think such merit all that mine have to boast of".

Yet, what is noteworthy in Cibber's work is not his moralizing, but his sentimentality. He really advocated the reformation of humanity by an appeal to its feelings for virtue in distress. This method of reform was as displeasing to Collier as immorality itself".

Thackeray (Charity and Humour) credits Steele with being the founder of sentimental writing in English, and Nettleton says the "Movement was fully inaugurated by Steele" and gives Cibber no credit, saying that to Cibber's moral aim Steele "added literary art and genius". The tone of his remarks about Cibber is a true product of such adverse comment as has been quoted. The facts prove the case to be otherwise. Steele did not, as

367. Cibber: I, 266.
368: Bernbaum: p. 81.
Thackeray says, exorcise Restoration comedy, for it held the stage many decades after his death; nor did he found sentimental comedy; nor did his plays surpass Cibber's in literary merit. In his The Lying Lover, Steele modeled his characters upon the types already created by Cibber, adding only a pathetic father and an attack upon duelling as his contribution. But for the rest, "the play is not remarkable for either originality of conception or superior skill in execution".

Steele was indebted to Cibber for his plays. In The Tender Husband "he may have taken suggestions for the main title of the theme from Cibber's Careless Husband." This is a hesitant acknowledgement. Nettleton also points out Steele's moral purpose in The Conscious Lover's,

"With breeding to refine the age
To chastise Wit, and moralize the stage"
as if this was the first such prologue, and he only allows Cibber such a share in it as that "fortunately, at Colley Cibber's suggestion, Steele admitted a larger comic element than he had at first allowed himself#.

But Bernbaum sees more of Cibber in Steele's most famous play. "Steele acknowledged that he zealously assisted in the production by The Conscious Lovers, and (just how is unknown) ' altered the disposition of the scenes". In it, "Steele plainly shows the influence of Cibber, for it is a reversal of the main situation in The Careless Husband. --- In this there is little that is original, or even progressive; the sentimental scenes, in comparison with those of Cibber, are neither long nor intense".

Between 1696 and 1704, four sentimental comedies were produced and are of remarkable historical interest because "They were in their day the only works—not merely in the drama but in all literature—and that interpreted life sentimentally". Of these the first (Cibber's was

372. Ibid.
373. Ibid. p. 137.
374. """": p. 100.
375. """": p. 94.
successful, but the others were almost failures. "The progress of the
genre was thus doubtful, when Cibber came to its rescue with The Care-
less Husband (Dec. 7, 1704) and established, in the face of declining
fortunes, its permanent popularity".

Cibber's next successful comedy was The Double Gallant (1707) which
shows that he "could write at least as acceptably in the comic style as
in the sentimental."

Of eight comedies produced between 1705 and 1709 the only progress
in the essential characteristics of the type was made by Colley Cibber
in The Lady's Last Stake (Dec. 13, 1707). The advancement lay in the fact
that both the main and subplots were treated sentimentally and that an
important addition was made to the personnel in Sir Friendly Moral. He
voices the ethical sentiments of the new comedy. "Sometimes such figures
as he coalesce with the devoted father, the benevolent uncle, or the
nobleman in disguise; but they are always recognizable as sentimental
guides, philosophers, and friends, who seek nothing for themselves, but
who confound villainy and smooth the path of distressed virtue. The first
full length portrait of this type was not the least of Cibber's many
contributions to sentimental comedy."

Cibber's next and last service to the new type of comedy he had found-
ed was rendered in revising and completing an unfinished manuscript of
Vanbrugh's A Journey to London. The difference between Vanbrugh's
scenes and Cibber's show the difference between real and sentimental
comedy. This was Cibber's most successful play and remained a stock play
for nearly a century.

"With The Provoked Husband (1728), Cibber's career as a sentimental
dramatist came to its end, closing as successfully as it had begun. The
377. "": p. 98.
378. "": p. 97-103.
379. "": p. 106.
380. "": p. 137.
founder of the type in 1696, its rescuer from early extinction in 1704, he had impressed upon it its most enduring characteristics and had contributed to it more works of lasting popularity than any rival.

But "the drama of sensibility, was still far from driving its rivals off the stage, and showed too few signs of vigor and fertility. The ideals that ruled the literary and intellectual world still preponderated against its spirit. Its authors seemed to lack that venturesome enthusiasm which springs from the sincere belief that one's own ideals of life are the only true ones."

However, between 1729 and 1732, sentimental comedies preponderated in number. Out of eleven comedies, four were burlesques; and of the seven comedies none was so good as the Non Juror.

There seems no reason for his contemporaries to condemn Cibber so severely for his use of "Moliere's old stubble". Certainly Fielding adapted Moliere's Medecin Malgre lui without bringing the town upon his head.

Adaptations from the French were very common. Tho' weakened by its political purpose the play was the best of the imitations of the period, and besides, contained the coquette Maria, an admirable study in the Congrevian manner. Arthur Murphy says that if Pope's judgment had not been warped by party prejudices he would have seen that Cibber's play was an improvement on the original.

The feeling is strong among critics that among the most reprehensible of Cibber's deeds was his adaptation of Shakespeare. One critic says that under the lash of contemporary criticism, he "had the grace to appear ashamed" of them.

381. Bernbaum: p. 139.
382. "" "": p. 140.
383"""": p. 142.
385. Murphy, II, 80.
Cibber used to laugh at jests about his odes, but Genest thought he wouldn't have laughed at jokes about his mangling Shakespeare. There is no reason why he should have been ashamed. His Richard III (1700) and his King John were his only two offences and they surely were not the worst of the adaptations. It must be remembered that the rage for re-touching, and correcting, and improving was the very error of the times. Not even Garrick escaped it. It seems to us, as Murphy says of Garrick, that the adapter "lopped and pruned, and cut away, what he thought unnecessary branches, and instead of a flourishing tree he left a withered trunk". But in extenuation of Cibber and other adapters it must be said that as the demand for new plays out ran the supply, and as interest in Elizabethan drama was being stimulated by the textual critics, it was natural for the Restoration dramatists to go to that great storehouse for new material. They could not use the plays as they were written because they were built on romantic patterns. The pseudo-classic influence, brought into England with the French translations and adaptations, was so strong that everything had to be remodeled on the pseudo-classical pattern. The technique of the chronicle play did not fit the eighteenth century ideal of concentration, concreteness, and dramatic unity. Hence Cibber, although he had not been influenced in a university by classical rules, yet tried with his practical ability to give the public what they wanted, to render Shakespeare acceptable on his stage, to make King John "more like a play" than what he found it in Shakespeare. He means, of course, "make it more like a pseudo-classic play" than he found it.

Throughout this whole period no species of Shakespeare's plays was sacred from these alterations. During the fifty years following the Restoration no less than twenty six rewritings, alterations, and makeovers of the dramas of Shakespeare were made and a large majority of them

388. Murphy, II, 282.
acted. This list discloses some twenty different plays, the work of sixteen authors including three laureates, the actors Betterton, Lacy, and Cibber, scholarly authors and critics such as Theobald, Dennis, and Gildon, and hack writers like D'Urfey, Ravenscroft, and Duffet. A partial list of these adaptations is given by Ward in his History of English Dramatic Literature. It is sufficient to say that of all these adaptations only one of them survived. Cibber's Richard III has given up to the present time a famous acting version, the accepted stage text.

(2) Poet

A defense of Cibber as a poet would be as absurd as all the satire his contemporaries heaped upon him. He has not enough merit to call forth either praise or ridicule. But there is this to be said. His position alone was not enough to provoke all that mass of vituperation. In spite of the epigram put into his mouth in one of the skits

"My brother poets are all d—n'd severe,
Because I've got a Hundred Pounds a year".

A mere harmless laureate is not worth all that spleen. The laureateship is not burdened with too much honor. Some great poets have held the post, but their claim to greatness does not rest upon their birthday odes. Only one of them, Tennyson, understood his business, and in his official capacity produced anything worth preserving.

It is true Cibber's odes could not have been worse. But they were as good as was expected of him, because "in accordance with Hanovarian practice, the Laureateship had degenerated into a mere perquisite of a political party". It was not Cibber the poet, but Cibber the Whig who

390. Opus Cit: I, 513 et seq.
received the reward of merit. Judged by the patriotic standard, he was a better poet and much to be preferred to Pope. The Gentleman's Magazine stated that viewing a poem entitled C-bb-r preferred to P-pe. The author points out how Pope praises lord at another's expense and on the same page owns and stabs his friend. How could Pope, he asks, descend to personal abuse without a reflection on himself, and remarks that Cibber's sincerity makes amends for his lack of the poetic sense. He concludes:

"But know, O P---, that while thy mur'drous pen
Assaults thy Country's Friend, the Friend of men;
And C---r's Lyre, howe'er untuned the Strings
With honest Zeal resounds the best of Kings,
With greater Patience shall his Lays be heard,
And even C---r be to P--e prefer'd".

Pope excused his personal abuse of Cibber as Laureate upon the ground of his disinterested regard for poetry, his concern that the laurel was so unworthily bestowed. But that was an insincerity. Anyone who could get the "hundred pounds a year" was fit to be the "birthday fibber". When Whitshead succeeded Cibber, the wits declared that as a poet he was not worth, a pinch of snuff, "But for a Laureat---- he was good enough".

(3) Prose Writer

Cibber's Apology may have been a little weak in grammar but it proved a delight to some of his contemporaries. Swift was so captivated by it that he stayed up all night to read it through. This is the more remarkable as Swift was the intimate friend of Pope. Davies says that "Though the superior spirit of Swift controlled the actions and regulated the politics of Pope, the latter had no influence of that kind upon the Dear. He

was not induced by his friend's dislike of Cibber, to attack him in any part of his writings, except, I believe, in his short ridicule on his Birth-day Odes. And that ridicule, ways Cross, was originally meant for Fielding.

The worth of Cibber's Apology in so far as it was an account of the stage has been discussed as a phase of Cibber's managership, his ability as a theatrical critic. It is an "inimitable treatise on the stage." A reviewer in the Gentleman's Magazine, speaking of the Life of Garrick which appeared in 1780, says, "We scruple not to compare it with the Apology of Cibber; we cannot give it a higher commendation."

Dr. Johnson thought the Apology "very entertaining". Walpole surely enjoyed it for one whimsical expression he quotes constantly in his familiar letters.

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Some modern critics give due credit to the Apology. In it "He is seen at his best. There are passages in this that are likely to live as long as the art with which they deal."

As to the purely personal side of his book, a writer in The Contemporary Review says that there are few people whose lives written by themselves would not be interesting, but that the qualification which is most indispensable to the writer of such auto-biography, is vanity. If he does not dwell with gusto on his own theme, he will communicate no gratification to the reader. He must not, indeed, fancy himself too outrageously what he is not, but should have the highest sense of what he is, the

396. Davies; III, 508.
397. Cross: II.
399. "" "": VI, 430.
400. Boswell: I, 368.
happiest relish for his own peculiarities, and the most blissful assurance that they are matters of great interest to the world. He who feels thus, will not chill us by cold generalities, but trace with an exquisite minuteness all the felicities of his life, all the well remembered moments of gratified vanity, from the first beatings of hope and first taste of delight, to the time when age is gladdened by the reflected tints of young enterprise and victory. Thus it was with Colley Cibber; and, therefore, his Apology for his own life is one of the most amusing books that have ever been written."
IV. Conclusion

After a half century of public life in London, on Dec. 27, 1757 Cibber the actor-manager—dramatist passed away and Cibber the Dunce survived. The friendship and admiration of men like Walpole, Swift, and Steele could not prevail against the hatred and envy of men like Johnson, Pope, and Fielding. Nothing can prevail against genius. The sentiments of Cibber's admirers have come down to us by verbal tradition or in familiar letters, while those of his enemies have been preserved in immortal works of art. Cibber's fear and resentment that Pope should satirize him in smooth running verse was well grounded. No mortal character could stand against the immortal testimony of the Dunciad. The fame of Cibber was murdered by Pope.

A reflection upon the facts of Cibber's career reveals that he could not have been the irreligious, shallow, pretending, profligate coxcomb of the contemporary satire. The only record we have of Cibber's losing his temper is his fury at the charge of sacrilege made by Dennis. A man of his energy and industry—creator of three score roles, author of thirty plays, producer of the best plays in the city for a quarter of a century, the originator of two types of characters and a new type of drama—couldn't have been lazy, negligent, dull, or profligate. As shown by the fact that he began his work with no salary at all, and died a rich man he was eminently successful in all that he undertook.

The secret of his success lies in his ability to make the best of his opportunities, to get through the necessary business of life with a smile. He may not have been a supremely great man, morally or intellectually, but he shows himself in his Apology to be a man of good sound sense and modesty who rated his associates generously and himself fairly. He did 404. Cibber: II, 158(note)
not affect great virtue or wisdom, but openly derided gravity, bad
defiance to the serious pursuits of life, and honestly preferred his own
lightness of heart and of head to knowledge or the most extensive or thou-
gt the most profound. Cook dubbed him "Fribble". It is the best of his
sobriquets. He was a Fribble, alert, lively, witty, pleasant with his
cromies at the coffee houses or Whites; but a serious Fribble, cold, im-
personal, firm, and dignified in his theatre. The only place he was a
coxcomb was on the stage. He pitied his son Theophilus "for his velvet
surtout and silver frogs" and set London into many a chuckle of approval
as he consistently ridiculed the fopperies of the period in his ever chang-
ing Lord Foppington. But in those days, even cleanliness was a symptom of
foppishness. That was the one virtue that Lady Betty Modish (In The Care-
less Husband) saw in Sir Novelty. Perhaps Cibber was careful of his
persch. It would not be surprising if he dressed well, wore jewels and
perfume as gentlemen of means were accustomed, but that he was an absol-
ute fool about such things is not probable.

Morally he was no better than the men of his time. He claimed that of
the first ten thousand men one might meet, not one could lay claim to
chastity. Pope's charge in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot was denied by
Cibber with an "Alack-a-day" manner. It was probably true. He wrote to
Mrs. Pilkington when he was seventy-six that he wished he could come to
Ireland, where she then was, "to see the lovely women".

But he could not have been really dissipated and have preserved the
vigor of body and keenness of mind that he did up to almost his ninetieth
year. When he was nearly seventy he wrote his Apology which, without a
symptom of senility, is "one of the most amusing books ever written". When
he was seventy-two he engaged in a lively battle of wits with the most

celebrated poet of the day and got the better of his opponent by his happy raillery and unruffled temper. And through it all, though he gave thrusts that pierced Pope's thin skin, he preserved a warm admiration of his adversary's genius.

Only a deliberate malice could have prompted Pope to charge Cibber with dullness. He was essentially a bright, genial, and quick-witted man. Armstrong, his intimate friend, wrote of him as being, "to the last, one of the most agreeable, cheerful, and best humored men you would ever wish to converse with". Shortly before his death his friend Walpole wrote that he "was glad to see him look so well". Cibber replied, making the best of circumstances to the end, "Faith, it is well that I look at all".

Looking at the whole career of this "King of Dunces", we behold the best and most popular comedian of his generation who surpassed even Garrick in some respects; the most powerful theatrical manager in London, responsible for the best plays produced in that city for a quarter of a century; the most skilful of all the adapters of plays, the author of the accepted stage version of Richard III; the author of laureate odes as good as the time demanded; the writer of one of the most interesting and amusing autobiographies ever written; the successful opponent of the great Alexander Pope, becoming in the famous quarrel the author of witty and good natured controversial pamphlets; a man of quick mind, keen wit, practical genius, but unexalted spiritual outlook---a typical eighteenth century man surely

But such a man ought not to be the hero of the Dunciad.

408. Walpole: II. 481.
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