

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Bunner Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse
Swift Chekhov Pushkin Alcott
Newton



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**Essays on the Stage Preface to the
Campaigners (1689) and Preface to
the Translation of Bossuet's
Maxims and Reflections on Plays
(1699)**

Thomas D'Urfey

Imprint

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Introduction

The three parts of D'Urfey's "The Comical History of Don Quixote" were performed between 1694 and (probably) the end of 1696. Some of the songs included were conspicuously "smutty"--to use a word which D'Urfey ridiculed--but the fact that the plays were fresh in the public mind was probably the most effective reason for Jeremy Collier's decision to include the not very highly respected author among the still living playwrights to be singled out for attack in "A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage", which appeared at Easter time 1698. In July of the same year D'Urfey replied with the preface to his "smutty" play "The Campaigners". It is this preface which is given as the first item of the present reprint.

Pope's contemptuous prologue, written many years later and apparently for a benefit performance of one of D'Urfey's plays, is sufficient evidence that the playwright was not highly regarded; but he was reputed to be a good natured man and, by the standards of the time, his twitting of Collier--whom he accused of having a better nose for smut than a clergyman should have--is not conspicuously vituperative. Even his attack on the political character of the notorious Non-Juror is bitter without being really scurrilous. But like his betters Congreve and Vanbrugh, D'Urfey both missed the opportunity to grapple with the real issues of the controversy and misjudged the temper of the public. Had that public been, as all the playwrights seem to have assumed, ready to side with them against Collier, there might have been some justification in resting content as he and Congreve did with the scoring of a few debater's points. But the public, even "the town", was less interested in mere sally and rejoinder than it was in the serious question of the relation of comedy to morality, and hence Collier was allowed to win the victory almost by default.

Collier's own argument was either confused or deliberately disingenuous, since he shifts his ground several times. On occasion he argues merely in the role of a moderate man who is shocked by the extravagances of the playwrights, and on other occasions as an ascetic to whom all worldly diversion, however innocent of any obvious of-

fence, is wicked. At one time, moreover, he accuses the playwrights of recommending the vices which they should satirize and at other times denies that even the most sincere satiric intention can justify the lively representation of wickedness. But none of his opponents actually seized the opportunity to completely clarify the issues. Vanbrugh, it is true, makes some real points in his "A Short Vindication of The Relapse and The Provok'd Wife", and John Dennis, in his heavy handed way, showed some realization of what the issues were both in "The Usefulness of the Stage to the Happiness of Mankind, to Government and to Religion" (1698) and, much later, in "The Stage Defended" (1726). But, Vanbrugh is casual, Dennis is slow witted, and it is only by comparison with the triviality of D'Urfey or the contemptuous disingenuity of Congreve's "Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations" (1698) that they seem effective.

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At least forty books and pamphlets published between 1698 and 1725 are definitely part of the Collier controversy, but the fact that none of them really discusses adequately fundamental premises concerning the nature, method, and function of comedy had serious consequences for the English stage. The situation was further complicated by the rise of sentimental comedy and the fact that the theories supposed to justify it were expounded with all the completeness and clarity which were so conspicuously lacking in the case of those who undertook halfheartedly to defend what we call "high" or "pure", as opposed to both sentimental and satiric comedy. Steele's epilogue to "The Lying Lover", which versified Hobbes' comments on laughter and then rejected laughter itself as unworthy of a refined human being, is a triumphant epitaph inscribed over the grave of the comic spirit.

The second item included in the present reprint, namely the anonymous preface to a translation of Bossuet's "Maxims and Reflections Upon Plays", belongs to a different phase of the Collier controversy. It serves as an illustration of the fact that Collier was soon joined by men who were, somewhat more frankly than he had himself admitted he was, open enemies of the stage as such. He had begun with arguments supported by citations from literary critics and he called in the support of ascetic religious writers after his discourse was well under

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way. But the direct approach by way of religion was soon taken up by others, of whom Arthur Bedford was probably the most redoubtable as he was certainly the most long winded, since his "Evil and Danger of Stage Plays" (1706) crowds into its two hundred and twenty-seven 4 pages some two thousand instances of alleged profaneness and immorality with specific references to the texts of scripture which condemn each one. But Bedford had not been the first to treat the issue as one to be decoded by theologians rather than playwrights or critics. Somewhat unwisely, perhaps, Motteux had printed before his comedy "Beauty in Distress" a discourse "Of the Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of Plays" (1698), written by the Italian monk Father Caffaro, who was professor of divinity at the Sorbonne. Unfortunately Caffaro had, some years before this English translation appeared, already retracted his mild opinion that stage plays were not, *per se*, unlawful, and it was possible not only to cite his retraction but also to offer the opinions of the Bishop of Meux, who was better known to English readers than Father Caffaro. The anonymous author of the preface to "Maxims and Reflections" grants that dramatic poetry might, under certain circumstances, be theoretically permissible, but rather more frankly than Collier he makes it clear that his real intention is to urge the outlawing of the theater itself, since all efforts to reform it are foredoomed to failure. "But if", he writes, "the Reformation of the Stage be no longer practicable, reason good that the incurable Evil should be cut off". That lets the cat out of the bag.

Both pieces reprinted here are from copies owned by the University of Michigan.

Joseph Wood Krutch

Columbia University

The Campaigners
OR
THE
Pleasant Adventures at Brussels.

A
COMEDY

As it is Acted at the *Theatre-Royal*.

WITH A FAMILIAR PREFACE

UPON
A Late Reformer of the STAGE.

Ending with a Satyrical Fable

OF
the DOG and the OTTOR.

Written by Mr. *D'urfey*.

PREFACE.

I must necessarily inform the Partial, as well as Impartial Reader, that I had once design'd another kind of Preface to my Comedy than what will appear in the following sheets; but having in the interim been entertain'd with a Book lately Printed, full of Abuses on all our Antient as well as Modern Poets, call'd Collier, p. 196. *A view of the Immorality and Prophaness of the English Stage*; and finding the Author, who, no doubt, extremely values himself upon his Talent of *Stage-reforming*, not only (to use his own Ironical words) *particular in his Genius and Civilities*, but indecently, unmanner'd, and scurrilous in his unjust Remarks on me, and two of my Plays, *viz.* the first and second parts of the *Comical History of Don Quixote*; I thought I cou'd not do better, first as a Diversion to the Town, and next to do a little Justice to my self, than (instead of the other) to print a short Answer to this very Severe and Critical Gentleman; and at the same time give him occasion to descant upon the following Comick Papers, and my self the opportunity of vindicating the other; with some familiar Returns (*en Raillere*) upon his own Extraordinary *Integrity*, and Justness of the *Censure*.

But first, lest I should plunge my self out of my depth, or like an unskilful Swimmer, endanger my self by a too precipitate Rashness, let me warily consider the Office and Habit of this unchristianlike Critick before I Attack him: He has, or had the honour to wear the Robe of a Clergyman of the Church of *England*: A Church, which for its Purity, Principles, and most Incomparable Doctrines, surpasses without objection all others in the world, which with a number of its pious, virtuous and learned Rulers and Ministers, I admire and acknowledge with all the faculties of my soul, heart and understanding; and on which I never seriously reflect, but I feel a secret shame for my remissness of duty, and my neglect, in not living hitherto up to its Admirable Principles. This reflection would indeed have been enough to awe any one in my circumstances from proceeding to answer his bold Censures, had I not Courage to consider that the rest of the worthy Gentlemen of that Robe are so good, that they will not excuse or defend our aforesaid Critick's Injustice or Mistakes in some places, tho they are pleas'd with his Truths in others; or be angry at me for endeavouring to gain their

good opinion, by defending my self from most of his black Aspersions (how fair soever as yet they seem) and by unfolding him be judg'd by their impartial reason, start a question, whither he, tho a happy member of the aforesaid Adorable Church, does not come in for his share of *Immorality*, 2 and other frailties; and consequently is not as fit to be detected, by the Wit of a Satyrical Poet; as the Poet by the positive Authority of an Angry Malecontent, tho in the garb of an humble Churchman.

The *Vates*, or Poets in antient times were held in special veneration, even their Kings, and other chief Rulers, often submitted to the virtue of their Inspiration: Amongst which, the never enough admir'd Mr *Cowley*, in his noble version of the *Dauideidos*, gives the *Royal David* this Title, *Rex olim & Vates duo Maxima munera Coeli*; and numbers of others might be inserted to prove Poetical Authority, and the respect it bore in past Ages; which, tho I have not capacity to parallel, I hope I may be allow'd to imitate on another subject; and in this have leave to acquit my self of several heinous Accusations, which this Tyrannical Critick has Impos'd upon me.

I am not at all Ignorant of his eminent parts, Learning, and other qualifications; nor am I insensible, as well as the rest of his Readers, that his Book has a very fair and engaging Title-page, and is no less Illustrated with many weighty and just censures upon the *Immorality of the Stage*, and our licentious Writings for many years past; and tho this has been proved by the late Ingenious Author of the *Vindication of the Stage* to be occasion'd by the vices of the Times, and not those of the Poets; yet thus for we can endure the Scourge, and kiss his Rod with patience enough: And for my own part, I declare if I had found his Severity had been moral, and had ended in the good design of cleansing the Stage from its Impurities, and had been only a kind Instruction to my Brethren and my self, to reform our Immoral errors, I had, as the rest of us, with all humility imaginable, thank'd him for his wit and good reproof; and had been so far from answering in this manner, that I should have been proud to have my name before his Book, with a Copy of Verses in applause of his Admirable Design. But when, instead of this, I find he strikes at the root of our Dramatick Labours, and the Town's diversion, for some sly and selfish ends; and instead of reproving us with a Pastorly Mildness, Charity and Good Nature, gives us the basest language,

and with the most scurrilous expression, sometimes raging and even foaming at mouth, taxing the little liberty has always been us'd, with horrid horrid Blasphemy, Prophaneness, and Damnable Impiety; when Reason must inform every one we intend nothing of the matter, besides the poor priviledge *Poetica Licentia*: and pretending to prove this with false Quotations, unnatural Mistakes, and Hypocritical Hypotheses, I resolv'd to controvert him, and endeavour to prove that 'tis meerly his malice that has abus'd me and the rest, without Reason or Provocation; and that his own Wit and Morals are not so Infallible, but they lye also open to the censure of any Poetical Critick, who has Courage and Sense enough to attack 'em.

I once more therefore address my self to the Reverend of the Gown, from highest to the lowest, and humbly desire that they will not appear Interested against me, because I defend myself against one that has abus'd me, and has the honour to wear one, (to what purpose the Judgment and Clemency of our Government knows best) I assure 'em my design is only to turn, like the Worm that is trod upon, complain being hurt, vindicate my self from abusive malice, and at the same time am heartily sorry that ever I had the occasion.

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'Tis a pleasure to me however to know that I have for many years, as well as now, the honour of the Conversation of several eminent men of the Church; and I dare say, upon occasion, I could easily gain their good words to prove my good behaviour. I do declare I never abus'd the sacred order in my life, but have always had, and still have, all the veneration for 'em that's possible; nor have any of my printed Writings contradicted this, unless when spoken in the person of Atheists, Libertines, and Ignorants, where 'tis natural in Comedy; nay, in my Book of Poems you will find a *Satyr against Atheists*, and in another Book, call'd *Colin's walk thro' London and Westminster*, a Moral through the whole, and design'd in the honour of the Church of *England*, to shew the stubbornness of *Romanists*, Grumblers, and other dissenting Sects; but this my partial Antagonist never read, nor heard of; nay, tho by his Book we may suppose he has read a thousand, yet amongst twenty of my Comedies Acted

and Printed, he never heard of the *Royalist*, the *Boarding School*, the *Marriage Hater Match'd*, the *Richmond Heiress*, the *Virtuous Wife*, and others, all whose whole Plots and designs I dare affirm, tend to that principal instance, which he proposes, and which we allow, *viz.* the depression of Vice and encouragement of Virtue. Not he, he has not had leisure since his last *holding forth in the late Reign*, to do me this Justice, 'tis enough for him that he has encounter'd *Don Quixot*: Collier, p. And truly, I must own, was a most proper Combatant for him; for if he had not been mad with the Wind-mill that was in his pate, or had ever perus'd that *Giant* of an Author, upon whom I am the *Pigmy*, as he wittily observes, he would have found the Block-headed Chaplain had been greazing his old Cassock there long before I new rigg'd him: But that's all one, I, poor I, must be denounc'd as Criminal; I brought him upon the Stage, I wash'd his Face, put on a new Crape Vest, and a clean Band, which, oh, fatal accident, made him look so like somebody, that I, in his opinion, and condemn'd by his infallibility, have been no body ever since, *vox & præterea nihil*. Well, however this is determin'd, let me beg of my impartial Readers, to give me leave to try what I can be, I have had good fortune I am told by others in Lyrical Verse, which I am sure is one principal part of Poetry, I'll see now if I can match my Antagonist in Rallying Prose. Several ingenious Authors have already, I think, so well confuted his Assertions against the Stage, by proofs from the Antient Poets, the Primitive Fathers, and their Authorities, that they have far excell'd what I can pretend to do there; only, I could have wish'd one who is best able, and whose admirable Genius and Skill in Poetry would have been remarkably serviceable, had drawn his Pen to defend the Rights of the Stage, tho he had own'd the loosenesses of it, and had ventured the being presented for it; but since we, the forlorn, are not so happy to have that Aid, let my Antagonist, the Reformer, who, for all the gravity in some part of his Book, and the solid Piety he would insinuate in his Arguments, I perceive to be a Joker, and as full of Puns, Conundrums, Quibbles, Longinquitites, and Tipiti-witchets, as the rest of us mortals, be pleas'd to take the length of my Weapon at that sport, for now I cannot help telling my Audience, which is the Town, that he has laid his reforming 4 Cudgel upon me so severely, and it smarts so damnably, that I can't forbear smiting again if I

were to be hang'd, desiring only, as the usual method is, a clear Stage, and from him no favour.

To begin then, I shall illustrate my first Scene with a comical hint upon some part of his Character; and that the Jest may be worthy of making you laugh, you are to know, that the first view I ever had of this extraordinary Person, was neither better nor worse than under the *Gallows*. Well, but think you, I warrant, 'twas about some Charitable Duty that his sacred Function and Piety oblig'd him to, such as Exhorting the poor Souls to confess their Crimes, in order to be sav'd, or the like; no, faith, but quite contrary, for he was rather hardning them, and infusing a strong Portion of his own obstinacy, to fortifie 'em for their dubious Journey; and in few minutes after, possess'd with a stronger Spirit of Priesthood than e'er, for some past Ages there has been Example for, pronounc'd the *Absolution*, the extremest and most mysterious Grace the Church can possibly give to the most repentant Sinner, to wretches Justly condemn'd by Law to die, for the most horrible Crimes in nature, *viz.* the intended Murder of the King, and Subversion of the Protestant Religion and Government. Now that such a Person should set up for a Protestant Example, and a Teacher of Morality, is somewhat new, for upon my veracity, this Gentleman may insinuate as he pleases, that our Church, and its Doctrines govern his heart; but as to that matter what may be in his heart I can't tell, but if a Pope is not crept into his belly, very near it, I am very much mistaken.

Pliny indeed, in his Natural History, *Lib. 28, Cap. 10.* tells ye, He that is bitten by a Scorpion may have relief, if immediately he go and whisper his grief into the Ear of an Ass. This Historian, perhaps, had so great credit with these Malefactors that they thought the remedy, by Auricular Confession, might serve too in their Concerns. But we are confirm'd, they were enough mistaken in the rest of their Opinions, and so 'tis very likely were in this. If this Parallel be found a little gross, I hope the Reader will excuse it, when he examines the bold Critick's Stile relating to the Poets. Besides, how wise soever he may be in other things, I'm sure all those that are so, and true Sons of the Church, when they reflect on that Action of his, will own that he deserves that, or a worse Title. And so to proceed.

But before we inspect further, or touch upon the Moralists Immorality, for I dare engage it is not altogether impossible to prove, the *Pulpiteer* may be tainted a little as well as the *Poetaster*, let us see whether we can find him guilty of the first Charge against us, which is *Immodesty*; and upon this subject indeed, if our Learn'd Reformer did not impose upon us with a Fallacy, I should (to shew my good Nature walk hand in hand with my resentment) once more admire him for his Character of Modesty in the 11th page of his Book, which is, to do him Justice, very fine; but then he only tells us of one kind of Modesty, when he knows there are two, and therein he is Falacious, in not exposing the other, which is decency of Speech and Behaviour; and truly, meerly, I believe, through a conscious reflection of his own frequent miscarriages in that case. If therefore, these Papers differ a little from that Civility which is proper, I beg the Readers pardon, and assure him 'tis only in 5 imitation of his Stile to me, as all those that read his Book may find.

For, in the first place, he does not shew his own, nor, indeed, any part of decent modesty, in exposing any Gentlemans Name in print, when the subject matter is Satyr, Reflection, Scandal, &c. and in which case I believe the Law might do Justice, if apply'd to; but if not, I am sure good Manners, and civil Education, ought to tie the Cassock as close as the Sash or Sursingle; but this our Divine helper, most Bully-like, disallows; for he, puff'd with his Priestly Authority, calls us boldly to the Bar of his Injustice by our own Names, the same minute that he is roaringly accusing us of Blasphemy, Smutery, Foolery, and a thousand Monstrosities besides, as he'd make you believe; unless for variety, he picks out one amongst the rest, now and then, to abuse a little more civilly, and then, rubbing up his old College Wit, he Nicknames 'em, as you may find elegantly made out at the latter end of his Book, (for he shall see that I have read it quite through, and can hop over pages as fast as he for the life of him) where he can find no other Name or Character for two Gentlemen of Honour and Merit, *viz.* Mr. *Congreve* and Captain *Vanbrooke*, who have written several excellent Plays, and who are only scandalous to our Critick, by being good Poets, yet these he can give no other Names or Characters, but what are Abusive and Ridiculous. Collier, p. 74. The first, for only making *Jeremy*, in *Love for Love*, call the Natural inclinations to eating and drinking, *Whor-*

son Appetites, he tells, That the Manicheans, who made Creation the Work of the Devil, scarcely spoke any thing so coarse. And then very modestly proceeding onwards says, *The Poet was Jeremy's Tutor*. The t'other Gentleman he dignifies by a new Coin'd name of his own, viz. *The Relapser*, and much like an humble Son of the Church, a Man of Morals and Manners tells us, *This Poet is fit to Ride a Match with Witches*: Collier, p. 230. And, that Juliana Cox (a Non-juring Hag, I suppose, of his Acquaintance) never switch'd a Broom-stick with more expedition. Faith, such sentences as these, may be taking enough amongst his Party; but if this be his way of Reproving the Stage, and Teaching the Town Modesty, he will have fewer Pupils, I believe, than he imagines.

But to do that Gentleman Broom-stick Rider some Justice, and because we shall want a Name hereafter to Christen the t'other, as he has given the Name of *Relapser*, so I think that of the *Absolver* will be a very proper one to distinguish our Switcher, by which the Reader may observe, that we are civiller to him than he to us however. And first then, I desire all Persons to observe, that in other places of the same Chapter of his Book, our *Absolver*, for all his detestation of the Stage, and of Poetry in general, yet takes a huge deal of pains in taking to pieces, and mending the Comedy of the *Relapse*; nay, and to shew how transcendent his own Skill in these things is, he has help'd the Author to a better Name for his Play, and says, Collier, p. 210. *The Younger Brother*, or, *The Fortunate Cheat*, had been much properer. This shews some good will he has to the Comick Trade however; and I doubt not, but if his Closet were Ransack'd, we might find a divertive Scene or two, effects of his idle Non-preaching hours, where Modesty, Wit, and good Behaviour, would be shewn in perfection.

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And yet, as to his own humour, we find it to be, by his Book, more fickle than even the Wind, or Feminine frailty in its highest Inconstancy. One while he's for Instructing our Stage, Modelling our Plays, Correcting the Drama, the Unity, Time and Place, and acts as very a Poet as ever writ an ill Play, or slept at an ill Sermon; and then, presently after, wheiw, in the twinkling of an Ejaculation, as Parson *Say-grace* has it, he's summoning together a Convocation

of old Fathers, to prove the Stage in past Ages exploded, and all Plays horrible, abominable Debauchers of youth, and not to be encourag'd in a Civil Government. What can we think of this, especially when I find him in this Paragraph of his Book **raving* on at this rate, and quoting to us, That St. *Cyprian*, or the Author *de Spectaculis*, argues thus against those who thought the Play-House no unlawful diversion; 'tis too tedious to recite all, but enough of St. *Cyprian* for my purpose runs thus: *What business has a Christian at such Places as these? A Christian who has not the liberty so much as to think of an ill thing, why does he entertain himself with lewd Representations? Has he a mind to discharge his Modesty, and be flesh'd for the Practice? Yes, this is the consequence, by using to see these things, he'll learn to do them; what need I mention the Levities and Impertinencies in Comedies, or the Ranting distractions of Tragedy, were these things unconcern'd with Idolatry, Christians ought not to be at them, for were they not highly Criminal, the foolery of them is Egregious, and unbecoming the gravity of Believers. And then again, before he is out of breath, A Christian has much better Sights than these to look at, he has solid Satisfaction in his power, which will please and improve him at the same time. Would a Christian be agreeably refresh'd, let him read the Scriptures, here the Entertainment will suit his Character, and be big enough for his quality. Ah, Beloved, how noble, how moving, how profitable a thing is it, to be thus employ'd, to have our expectations always in prospect, and be intent on the glories of Heaven!* Very good, and who is he so reprobated, that will not allow this to be devout, and admirable good Counsel? But now let us see how the *Absolver*, for all Pious quotation, has follow'd St. *Cyprian's* Advice; that holy Father charges him not to entertain himself with such lewd things as Plays, and he very dutifully reads a thousand as fast as he can; nay, scans and weighs 'em, and, no doubt, not without tickling satisfaction, at the present, for all his Saturnine Remarks at last. Now if his Answer to this is, That it belongs to his Office, as a Church-man, and that he could not reprehend the Vices in 'em without reading the Books themselves, I must tell him, That St. *Cyprian*, nor the rest of the Fathers, did not allow that, neither do we find they did it themselves, for all their inveighing against the Stage; so that he makes his own Quotation altogether invalid, *He not being to do ill that good might come of it.*

And therefore, why may not a Poet now, who, perhaps, is a greater Votary to St. *Cyprian* in other Matters than the *Absolver* is in

this, rally him thus, and turn his Quotation upon himself, Phrase by Phrase? "What business has a Parson with such Books as these? A Parson who has not the liberty so much as to think of an ill thing? Why does he entertain himself with lewd Comedies? Has he a mind to discharge his Priestcraft, and flesh himself up for a Poet? Yes, this is the consequence, by using to see these *smutty* things, he'll learn to write 'em. 7 What need I mention the Sham-Oaths, and looseness of Farce, or the Fustian raving against the Gods in Tragedy, were these things really unconcern'd with Idolatry, a Parson, of all Mankind, should not be known to ogle them, for were they not highly Criminal, the foolery of them is Egregious, and unbecoming the gravity of all that thump the Cushion, or intend to thump a true Belief into the Pates of an incorrigible Congregation."

And now methinks I see the Spiritual Critick, with a certain sal-low Male-contented Phiz, poring upon this Page, and sucking his Ring-finger, gives himself an unpleasurable minute to Judge whether I have paraphras'd right or no; well, all's one, fall back fall edge, I'm resolv'd to bait him with St. *Cyprian* a little more. "A Parson has, or should have, much better Books than Plays to look in; he has many Authors of Pious and Solid Authorities to please, and improve himself with, at the same time. Would a Parson be agreeably refresh'd, let him read the Scriptures, let him find out Treatises of Morality, Meekness, Charity, and holy Life, there the Entertainment will suit his Character. Ah, Beloved, how noble, how moving, how profitable a pleasure would it be to us, to see a Parson thus employ'd, to let the Stage's diversions be too little for his grave Consideration, and be intent himself on the glories of Heaven!" And here now, I do not at all question but the *Absolver*, a little nettled at this last Parallel, will fall to biting of his fingers again, his Righteous Spirit being offended at my Insolence, in scribbling the Word *Parson* so oft, it being a Nickname, and only invented by some idle fellow, who resolv'd to use the Order with no more respect. Why truly, I confess, in this Case, Modesty is a little gravell'd, but then she may thank him for it, for he has dignify'd the Poets with so many *Hell-defying, deep-mouth'd Swearing, Relapsing, Witch-riding Titles*, that the worthy Ministry cannot reasonably be angry, especially when the Word is only meant to him, whom I shall prove has lessen'd the true Title, by his *Immorality* and *Hypocrisy*, more than ever the Poets did

the Reputation of the Stage, by their Time-serving Loosenesses and Licentious Diversions.

It is, no doubt, a considerable Maim to us, in some Peoples opinions, who never digested the benefits arising from the Stage in its Moral Representations, that this smarting Lash is given us by a Clergy-man of the Church of *England*, that is, good friends, if he be so, for some Judicious Heads are not resolv'd in that Affirmative— but let that be *discuss'd* in another place, I'm sure, if he is, *Obedience to Government, in the first place, should be his principal Tenet*; and whether that is a part of the *Absolver's* Character, I think has sufficiently appear'd. But let him be what he will, I shall now take the pleasure to inform those People, that but few years since, we had a Man of Wit and Learning, that wore the Gown, and as true a Son of the Church as she could possibly breed; that was intirely devoted a Champion in our Cause, and Asserted the Rights of the Stage with Success and Applause; and whoever will but look back a little, and incline his Eyes towards the delectable River *Cam*, may Encounter the fam'd Wit of that University, the Ingenious Mr. *Thomas Randolph*, who in one of his great many admirable Pieces, call'd the *Muses Looking-glass*, makes his whole Moral to be the Vindication of the Stage, and its usefulness, and by shewing the passions in their Kinds, contrives to confute some canting prejudic'd Zealots, whose ignorance and frenzy had conspir'd before to run it down; I will treat the Reader here with some of it.

Muses Looking-Glass. A Country Lass, for such she was, tho here
In th' City may be Sluts as well as there;
Kept her hands clean, for those being always seen,
Had told her else how sluttish she had been;
Yet was her Face, as dirty as the Stall
Of a Fish-monger, or a Usurer's Hall
Begrin'd with filth, that you might boldly say,
She was a true piece of *Prometheus's* Clay.
At last, within a Pail, for Country Lasses
Have oft you know, no other Looking-glasses,
She view'd her dirty Face, and doubtless would
Have blush'd, if through so much dirt she could.
At last, within that Water, that I say,
That shew'd the Dirt, she wash'd the Dirt away.