

The Life of Charles Gildon.

Charles Gildon was one of a numerous group of critics, penny-pamphleteers, and hack writers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. He is of more importance for his literary connections with other and greater men of his time than he is for his own contribution to English literature, for he had at once the privilege and the misfortune to look horns with the greatest writers of the period. His literary quarrels with Pope and DeFoe lend lustre to, and throw light upon, these adversaries' lives.

Like many Grub Street writers Gildon experimented with all literary forms. He wrote dramas and dramatic criticism. As a pamphleteer he became entangled in the political controversies of the time and suffered accordingly. He edited the works of other writers, in some instances because the popularity of the author seemed to preface a financial reward, in others at the instigation of the deceased author's family who paid for the privilege. He seems to have been a tool of Curll, the notorious bookseller, and for him he brought out the seventh volume of Rowe's pirated edition of Shakespeare. (1) He became enmeshed in the religious controversies of the time and wrote both for and against the Deists. He wrote poetry himself and criticized that of others. In short, he entered into any and all fields of early eighteenth century literary endeavor whenever and wherever financial remuneration seemed assured.

This thesis, treating of Charles Gildon as a critic falls into three divisions: a brief summary of his life based upon Paul Dottin's "Essay on Charles Gildon" contained in his (Dottin's) pamphlet, "Robinson Crusoe Examined and Criticized" (2) and

(1) Published 1710.

(2) Published London, 1923.

supplemented from other sources; Gildon's associations with his fellow writers and the resulting animosities and friendships thus formed; such of Gildon's individual works as require special treatment.

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Charles Gildon was born in 1685 in Gillingham in Dorsetshire of genteel parentage. This latter fact was always a source of pride to him. Even in financial straits, a recurrent condition of Gildon's, he refuses to become subservient (as he says) and writes (usually, however, in those cases where he was unsuccessful) that he is as well born as the gentleman from whom he has sought financial support. Despite their genteel station in life, Gildon's parents were in limited circumstances, and after he had finished his preparatory schooling at Gillingham he was sent to a college of priests at Douai to study for the priesthood. Here he remained five years studying the Latin and Greek classics and absorbing their lengthy pedantic utterances. This Latin and Greek learning and the ability to apply it in conversation he considered as one of the distinguishing characteristics of a gentleman, and he used it upon every available occasion.

In 1688 Gildon was called home by the death of his father. In that same year, having thrown off the yoke of ecclesiastical discipline which, as he later tells us, was always distasteful to him, he took his patrimony and went up to London to seek his fortune. There he set up as a gentleman of fortune, attended the plays, gambled, attempted to write gallant verses, and kept not a single mistress, but several. His money lasted but a short while, and having annexed a wife whose face was her fortune (not a particularly

great one), he soon found himself in straitened circumstances.

During this early London period of his life Gildon became acquainted with Mrs. Behn and joined the circle of the admirable Astrea's satellites. He met Charles Blount at these gatherings and struck up an acquaintance with the would-be cynical, deistical philosopher. Upon Blount's invitation he joined the coterie of would-be Deists who, under Blount's guidance, were attempting to shock the middle-class conception of respectability by frankly stating their agnostic views. Gildon, the disciple, contributed to the "Oracles of Reason", the publication of the society, and upon Blount's suicide in 1695 brought out a complete edition of the latter's works pre-facing it with an elaborate defence of his friend's conduct.

Prior to this Gildon, in true hack-writer fashion, had brought out his book, "The Postboy Robb'd of his Mail", a collection of scandalous letters purporting to be the work of diverse important people. In the same year (1692) he had written "Municius Infernalis", two dialogues modeled after Lucian in which the state of single blessedness was contrasted coarsely with its opposite.

The first literary project of note to occupy Gildon was the publication of the collected works of Mrs. Behn to which he pre-fixed an elaborate biography purported to have been written by one of the "fair sex". This "fair" writer was no other than Gildon himself as will be shown conclusively in the study of this individual work.

Gildon also contributed poems to various miscellanies at this time, and his knowledge of Greek and Latin brought him in some work as a translator. In 1703 he helped David Crawford compile and translate his "Ovidius Britannicus". He also became acquainted with

Tom D'Urfey, the reprobate dramatist, and was introduced into his circle of society. Here he made the acquaintance of the Earl of Rochester's descendants and agreed to assist Tom Brown in editing his Grace's posthumous letters. He also published several poems dedicated to the Earl of Dorset. The Duke of Buckingham consented to Gildon's inclusion of his "Essay on Poetry" in the latter's "Examen Miscellaneum" brought out in 1702.

Financially disappointed in this field of hack writing, Gildon now turned to drama and dramatic criticism. As early as 1694, in answer to a pamphlet of Rymer's, he had written a tract defending Shakespeare as compared to the restoration dramatists. In 1696 Gildon began his dramatic career, prudently enough, by bringing out Mrs. Behn's play "The Younger Brother" which had been left unfinished at her death. This play failed despite the prestige of Mrs. Behn's name, but Gildon excused its failure by saying that he had not felt that he should change those faults which he had noticed in the play because of his admiration for the incomparable Aetrea.(1)

Gildon's first original play, "The Roman Bride's Revenge", modeled after the successful plays of Lee, also failed in 1697, and it was not until the presentation of "Phaeton" in 1698, a play that proved to be moderately successful, that Gildon was accorded the name of dramatist. The preface to this play contained Gildon's refutation of Jeremy Collier's "Short View of the Immorality and Nebauchery of the English Stage". In this preface Gildon qualified his arguments by citing classical authority at great length. Encouraged by the partial success of this play Gildon now hastened to enter more lucrative fields of dramatic composition and turned Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" into an opera. By larding the

(1) Langbaine, "Lives of the English Dramatic Poets" (Edited and revised by Gildon, 1698), Appendix p. 175.

play with masques and dances as had Davenant some years previous, he again scored a partial triumph. Despite this successful presentation Gildon's opera must have been ridiculed and lampooned, for when we next hear the opera mentioned in Gildon's works it is denounced in scathing terms, and his participation in this field of writing is regretted. Whatever may have been its origin, this antipathy toward the opera is everywhere apparent in all Gildon's dramatic criticism, and his critical interpretation of its degenerative influence forms one of the most lengthy digressions in his "Complete Art of Poetry".

In 1698 Gildon was chosen to revise and complete Langbaine's "Lives and Characters of the English Dramatic Poets". In the same year he wrote a libelous criticism of the play "The Generous Conqueror" by Higgins (1) in which he extolled the virtues of Shakespeare and Ben Johnson, attacked Dryden for his lack of dramatic originality, and even reproached Steele for his anti-classicism.

In 1701 Gildon secured his first, last, and only complete dramatic triumph with his "Love's Victim" or "The Queen of Wales". This tragedy modeled after those of Otway also secured for him the protection of Lord Halifax who consented to act as his patron. In 1703 he rewrote Lee's play "Junius Brutus" changing its name to "The Patriot" to avoid official interference, the play as it stood being considered seditious.

As a fitting conclusion to his dramatic endeavors he brought out his "Life of the Late Thomas Betterton" in which he made much of his associations with the famous actor and his two charming companions, Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Bracegirdle.

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(1) Dottin, "Essay on Charles Gildon", 1933, p. 19.

Deism had proved but an impoverished mistress to Gildon, and to improve his professional status he easily let himself be converted to the Anglican religion in 1703 by the arguments of Charles Leslie (1) advanced in his "A Short Method with the Deists". In attempting to capitalize this conversion Gildon published it broadcast in 1704 in the preface to his "Deists Manual" in which he professed repentance for his youthful fallacious judgment and refuted his preface to Blount's works. As a result of this conversion he was admitted into the ranks of the political pamphleteers.

In 1706 Gildon let it be known that politically he was open to conviction and would assist with his "venal quill" either side. At this time the Whigs were in power in the government. The Tories resented their Queen's leaning toward their adversaries, and to alarm her Whig supporters, they asked her to invite the Princess Sophia of Hanover, the Queen-elect, to visit them. To further their request they obtained two letters, one from the Princess to the Archbishop of Canterbury evincing her desire for an English visit, the other from Sir Roland Gwynne, a gentleman of her court, to the Earl of Stanford giving reasons why the Princess should be invited to England for a visit. These two letters threw strong suspicion upon the Queen's Protestantism. They were given to Gildon by the Tories and were published under his name. A few days after the appearance of this pamphlet Gildon was arrested for libelous and seditious utterances. When brought to trial he was declared guilty and only by a series of pleas for clemency and the influence of his friends was he cleared of the charge. This experience so frightened Gildon that thereafter he refrained from political writing.

Returning to hack work he published a Latin grammar and a

(1) Non-juror and controversialist 1650-1722. Dobbins, p. 21 foot.

translation of Lucian in 1710. He also contributed panegyrics to the "Golden Spy", a Miscellaneum dealing with the evil influence of money in the royal courts of Europe. He also applied for work to Curll and pirated for him the seventh volume of Nicholas Rowe's edition of Shakespeare.

In 1714 Gildon began his attack upon Alexander Pope with his revival of the "New Rehearsal", and followed it up in 1716 with his "True Character of Mr. Pope". In 1718 he published his "Life of William Wycherley" in which he again vented his spleen against Pope.

The success of Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" aroused the envy of Gildon, and partly for this reason, partly for the return financially he published his "Short History of D....l de F.." in 1719. His criticism of Defoe, though disdained by that author himself, was eagerly read by the literary world, and once more brought Gildon into the limelight of public favor. This work proved to be a financial success, Gildon's greatest and last.

From this time on Gildon's work became more diversified in character. He wrote some panegyric poetry, "Canons or the Vision", dedicated to Lord Carnarvon, and others of like nature. His "Complete Art of Poetry", written after the manner of Aristotle was brought out in 1718 thanks to the financial support of the Duke of Buckingham's widow. Besides Gildon's classic rules, this work contained the Duke of Buckingham's "Essay on Poetry", Lord Roscommon's "Essay on Translated Verse", and such of Lansdowne's "Essay on the Unnatural Flights in Poetry".

In 1721 Gildon once more applied to Harley for work, but was unsuccessful. From this time on, until his death in 1724, he lived in abject poverty, having for his only consolation the fact that he

had been born a gentleman.

Dottin, in his "Essay upon Charles Gildon" gives the following list of the author's works:

- 1691 History of the Athenian Society.
- 1692 Nuncius Infernalis.
A Letter to Mr. D'Urfe.
Poeta Infamis.
Miscellaneous Poems upon Several Occasions.
Postboy Robb'd of his Mail.
- 1693 The Oracles of Reason
- 1694 Chorus Poetarum
Miscellaneous Letters and Essays.
- 1695 Miscellaneous Works of Charles Blount.
- 1696 The Younger Brother or The Amorous Jilt.
- 1697 The Roman Bride's Revenge.
Familiar Letters of the Earl of Rochester.
- 1698 Lives and Characters of the English Dramatic Poets.
(Langbaine revised)
Phaeton or The Fatal Divorce.
Poetical Remains of Mrs. Behn.
All the Histories and Novels of Mrs. Behn.
(Gildon edited the last two.)
- 1700 Measure for Measure, an Opera.
- 1701 Miscellany of Original Poems.
Love's Victim or The Queen of Wales.
- 1702 Examen Miscellaneum.
A Comparison of the Two Stages.
- 1703 The Patriot
Ovidius Britannicus (Coeditor with Tom Jones)
- 1705 The Deists Manual
- 1706 Letter from Her Royal Highness.
Review of Her Royal Highness' Letter.
- 1708 Libertas Triumphans
- 1709 The Golden Spy vol. I.
- 1710 The Golden Spy vol. II.
Works of Shakespeare vol. VII.
Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton Tragedian.
- 1711 Grammar of the English Tongue

Works of Lucian

- 1714 A New Rehearsal
- 1717 True Character of Mr. Pope.
Cases in Latin.
Canone or the Vision.
- 1718 Memoire of the Life of Wm. Wycherley Esq.
Complete Art of Poetry.
- 1719 Adventures of D.....l de F.. .
- 1720 New Projects for the Regulation of the Stage.
- 1721 The Laws of Poetry.

CHARLES GILDON AND MRS. BEHN.

It seems quite in keeping with what we know of Gildon's early life in London that he joined himself to the circle of the admirable Astrea, the toast of the gaming houses. Gildon, who, according to Defoe, "kept six whores and starved his modest wife", (1) with his momentary splurge of fine clothes and finer dalliance occasioned by his father's demise would be welcomed into the circle of the incomparable Mrs. Behn whose star was then at its zenith. It seems fitting that he became passionately yet distantly enamoured of her as did many of her younger satellites. I say younger because Aphra's circle was largely composed of admirers her inferior in years. She possessed the same charm, the same attraction for the young gallants of her time as did the proverbial college widow of some twenty years ago, and she employed it as impartially and as devastatingly.

Gildon, new to London society, drank in the scandal, the witty repartee and the sprightly uttered vulgarities of the time and could find no fault with the mistress of this semi-exclusive coterie. In his preface to Blount's Collected Works (1695) Gildon

(1) Daniel Defoe, "More Reformation", July, 1703. See Dottin, "Essay on Charles Gildon", page 20.

frequently mentions the scintillating Astrea, eulogizing her many activities. "None but one just so qualified as Hermione could have wounded me, separately could have don't, and sure they (traits of character) never met but in Hermione and Astrea. You have seen the force of their union in her (Astrea) and you may justly apprehend it as great in yourself". (1) Again, "You know Astrea, divine Hermione, and have an exact friendship with her, you can attest her wit, beauty.....you have been acquainted with her charms of conversation and conduct...."(1) This early infatuation of Gildon's persisted even after the death of Mrs. Behn and the dissolution of her circle, and it is natural to find him turning toward her works in his first literary endeavors.

The year following her death he brought out her unfinished play, "The Younger Brother", prefacing it with a complete biography of Mrs. Behn. When it failed he qualified its failure by saying that he had made such changes in it as would have rendered it more acceptable to the public because of his veneration for its divinely inspired authoress. (2)

In 1898 Gildon brought out the "Complete Works of Mrs. Behn", prefaced by a life of the author written confessedly by one of the "fair sex". Bernbaum, in his article "Mrs. Behn's Biography a Fiction" has conclusively proved that this pseudo fair biographer was none other than Gildon himself, for this account of her life tallies at large with that admittedly written by Gildon in the preface to the "Younger Brother".(3) Bernbaum points out that the here paralleled account of Mrs. Behn's life is entirely fictitious and the only part of it that is sufficiently documented to be con-

(1) Charles Gildon, "Collected Works of Charles Blount", 1695,

p. A4-A6.

(2) See note page 4.

(3) Publications Modern Language Association, 21; 1913, p. 432-

sidered as true is her sojourn in Holland as a government agent.

Doubt is also raised as to its authenticity by Gildon's mentioning the necessity of a female biographer to write Aphra's life and the immediate finding of such an individual.

But proof other than the documented statements of Bernbaum is suggested in the wording and phrasing of the biographical preface. Would a female biographer refer to her sex as follows: "My intimate acquaintance with the admirable Astrea gave me naturally a very great esteem for her, and it freed me from the folly of my sex of envying or slighting tendencies I could not hope to obtain"?; or this: "For my part, I knew her intimately and never saw ought unbecoming the just modesty of our sex....She was, I am satisfied, a great honour to our sex....This I may venture to say because I am unknown and the vengeful creatures of my sex will not reach me."?(1) Would a woman of the early eighteenth century, a would-be Aphra, confess another her superior in so gracious a manner: "Wit is the weapon she had to fight with, and that she was to make use of in her satisfaction to which, I, as a second was very willing to contribute"?(1) The many allusions to 'our sex' may well have been inserted for the obvious purpose of keeping the sex of the biographer in the foreground, just such a subterfuge as any author as unlearned in feminine psychology as Gildon would employ. Would a woman have written this: "I knew her intimately well, and I believe she would have not concealed any Love Affair from me, being one of her own sex"?; or this: "I have told you that as her mind, so her body was adorned with all the advantages of our sex."? (1)

We find other outcroppings of distinctly Gildonesque expression throughout this preface. The prevalence given to Reason with

(1) Complete Works of Mrs. Behn, 1698 vol. I Introduction.

which Gildon had so lengthily dealt in his preface to Blount's works "...for besides her vivacity and wit of conversation she had almost the first use of Reason in discourse." This account of her burial sounds more masculine than feminine in its sarcasm: "She was buried in the Cloysters of Westminster, covered only with a plain marble stone with two wretched verses on it, made, as I am informed, by a very ingenious gentleman though no poet".

Gildon's Treatment of Blount.

One of the consequences of Gildon's association with the circle of freethinkers of the time was his edition of Blount's "The Oracles of Reason", published after that latter's death. This volume printed in 1693, contained, besides the miscellaneous works of Blount, the "Oracles of Reason", a collection of some sixteen articles on differing Biblical and philosophical subjects. For the most part these are written in letter form; some from Blount to other freethinkers including two to Gildon, and others written to Blount himself. Gildon also contributed two of the latter. It is evident that Gildon's editing of the work accounts for the presence of his letters to Blount. Nothing in them has any value unless it be to show the shallowness of Gildon's pseudo-philosophical tendencies.

One of these letters written to a certain R.B., "Of a God", in some twelve pages of classical allusion yields the following unoriginal ideas: The idea of God is universal among men, and the world must be older than the scriptures claim it is because of elsewhere existing records. Typical of Gildon's literary method are the many references to Bion, the Theodorian Sex, Claudians in Rusinum, Pythagorians, Eusibius, The Greek Chronology, Livy, Gallust, the Auxume of Ptolemy, and so on ad infinitum.

A second letter proves more interesting only because it is

more ridiculous in its argument. Gildon's contention, advanced extravagantly enough, is that men were originally of Angelic degree until bewitched by the smiles of women, the "most lovely brutes of the universe" as he calls them, and were by them betrayed to mortality. These are, he remarks, but tentative conclusions. Evidently he had intended to provoke a lengthy discussion on the subject which is, after all, no more absurd than many others successful in their provocation.

In a third letter addressed to "Mr. B....Fellow of Cambridge" he gives us a good example of his abstruseness. "I would fain know what reason some men have to term any one quality in God more excellent than another, for certainly let the number be infinite, so must the perfection of each be, else the Infinite Being would in some be less infinite or rather finite: for I think there's no medium between infinite and finite; nor any difference can I discover betwixt two equally infinite qualities."

Of far more importance than these letters of Gildon's is his attempted justification of Blount's suicide, an event which prompted Gildon to bring out the book as its possible remunerative value was enhanced by the publicity given Blount's action. Blount committed suicide, according to contemporary opinion, because he was disappointed in his desire to marry his sister-in-law after his wife's death. The question of marrying two sisters, successively of course, was a much debated question. Although permitted by law it was barred by the Anglican church, and the latter proved the stronger argument. It is not necessary to determine whether Blount really did kill himself for this reason, and to avoid digression I assume, as Gildon wished his readers to assume, that such was the case.

In defending suicide in general and that of Blount in particular

Gildon's arguments are indicative of the deistical tendencies of the time. That they are not his own are obvious; that they are so abstract and ethereal that they contradict each other is more obvious, and that they failed in their purpose is still more obvious. In brief, his argument, omitting the digressions into the field of classical precedent, follows: The law of self-preservation, the antithesis of suicide, has its limitations and exceptions because rigid adherence to it would do away with moral law. If it were followed to the letter rescue of drowning persons would be unattempted because of the possibility of involuntary self-destruction. No personal risks would be run for the public good. Soldiers would not go to war and sailors would stay on dry land. In short, no one would do anything but sit still and avoid moving lest he fall and break his neck. The difficulty presented in the law of self-preservation lies in the fact that society arbitrarily limits the exceptions to this law. In this matter of exception every individual should be his own judge and jury, and he alone should determine the exception in his own case. Thus, if an individual, for good reasons sets this limit beyond suicide, his actions are justifiable if his reasons are justifiable. Inasmuch as the laws of Nature are found in Reason and Nature is always omnipotently right, Reason then should determine the individual limits of self-preservation. Self-preservation is founded upon the good that judgment observes in life. When good ceases in life the obligation for self-preservation likewise ceases, for "tis not consistent with Nature to desire the continuance of what appears to us an Evil." (1) If personal good conflicts with public good as it does in suicide the personal good is to be heeded because, as Gildon has pointed out, each man

(1) Charles Gildon, Charles Blount's Collected Works (1895) Introduction, page A 10.

is to be his own judge and jury.

Least this argument be criticized as approval of wholesale self destruction Gildon qualifies it with the statement that the world is in no danger of individual depletion because the mob is not capable of rational thought. Because he could see the absurdity of this circular argument, Gildon appended to it the naive question that inasmuch as man had a right to change his terrestrial habitation for another on the same planet why limit this right to earthly emigration.

The Real Evil in life that Gildon attempts to point out in Blount's life was disappointment in love, and he considers it 'reasonable' enough. Reason, he argues, determines whether an object is worthy of passion but does not govern the passion itself, (This is the one sound statement in the whole discourse) and when Reason has once decided it automatically ceases to function, even in warding off suicide. The stronger a human passion becomes the more closely Reason scrutinizes it, and by inference, the farther it withdraws into the background of the mind, its scrutiny completed. As Gildon does not draw his conclusions from this argument we may be allowed to do so for him. Therefore, Reason, individual Reason, determines suicide or non-suicide; and when it has set its stamp of Reasonability upon an undertaking, and the failure of the undertaking prompts suicide; then, and only then, is suicide justified by Reason. This conclusion speaks for itself and is all the criticism of Gildon's defence that is necessary.

Gildon concludes this preface with a dedication to Blount in which he attempts to vindicate the Deists in general. This defence is as successful and as reasonable as is his defence of Blount's suicide. It is important, however, because, remembering it, Gildon

later wrote the "Deists Manual", in which he refuted all the arguments advanced here. In this preface he once more becomes entangled in the meshes of Reason arguments. After introducing his subject, "but the omnipotent cause left not the mind of man without its director in this maze and lottery of things: he gave it Reason the sovereign touchstone;" he goes on to tell us that "'Tis true that Reason is not sufficient to bring us to a perfect knowledge of things, but 'tis able to furnish us with enough to be happy", and "to infringe its (Reason's) liberty of directing is to invade the common charter of nature, every man's right and property." This liberty of Reasoning is all that the Deists ask. "This liberty among us extends to the interpretation of that sacred repository of truth, the Holy Scriptures, to our own Reason", and, "this being granted it follows that we be allowed the liberty of declaring our opinion and interpretation." (1)

As to the orthodox critics and objectors to the Deists, "They make themselves the judges of that Good (of mankind) and so make their opinion (in matters of scriptural interpretation) the standard". If they presented a unified front in their attacks on the Deists, the latter might lean more toward their religious judgment, but, "when they differ.....they give grounds to suspect a trick in the whole". (1) This liberty of personal opinion and expression their opponents grant to the Deists only "on philosophical and historical points of which the book (Doctor Burnett's "Archilogia (sic) Philosophica which is under discussion) which relates not to religion is composed." (1)

The remainder of the preface is concerned with a very detailed and biblical interpretation of God's sanction of Blount's proposed

(1) Blount, A Letter to My Worthy Friend Charles Gildon -
Collected Works of Charles Blount, 1695.

marriage to his sister-in-law. The twelve tribes of Israel are drawn up in marital array with all their patriarchal ancestors, and their approval is guaranteed by Gildon. A certain line of the Bible concerning the interpretation of the "nakedness of thy brother's wife" is expanded into ten pages of argumentation, and by classical and biblical analogy the correctness of Blount's desires are justified. This prologue is quite formless. Gildon probably wrote it haphazardly and fused into it anything he could remember of the conversations which he very likely overheard rather than participated in.

Gildon, Congreve, and Wycherley.

Gildon's interest in the drama and dramatic criticism brought him in touch with the legion of pamphleteers and would-be dramatists who were either defending or refuting Jeremy Collier's attack upon the English stage. Chief among his associates in this work were Wycherley, Congreve, and Dennis.

To understand the part Gildon played in the controversy concerning the corruptness of the English stage it is necessary to sum up briefly the successive attacks upon it beginning with Blackmore's in 1697. In his preface to "King Arthur" Blackmore warns dramatists that a future age "might come to reject them with indignation and contempt as the dishonourers of the Muses and the underminers of the public good", (1) because of the unbridled license and freedom of speech in the current plays. He praises Congreve's "Mourning Bride" to the skies as a model of chaste and virtuous presentation. His criticism bears weight chiefly because it is a forerunner of Collier's famous and far-reaching "Short View".

In 1698, some months before the appearance of Collier's crit-

(1) Edmund Gosse, Life of Congreve, London, 1924. p. 88-89.

icism, Merriton brought out his pamphlet on the "Immorality, Debauchery, and the Profaneness of the Age" in which the author takes much the same viewpoint as does Collier.

In March Jeremy Collier, an hitherto unimportant, prosaic writer brought out his "Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage together with the Law of Antiquity upon this Argument." Collier ruled that, "The business of plays was to commend virtue and discountenance vice, to show the uncertainty of human greatness, the sudden turns of Fate, and the unhappy conclusions of violence and injustice".(1) This was the first sensible and complete treatment of the subject and the results were far-reaching and immediate. Scores of pamphlets were written in defence and in defiance of its precepts. This pamphlet of Collier's was conservative and well written, and, had he not made it ridiculous by his follow-up attacks, would have accomplished even more than it did.

Gildon entered the fray in support of Congreve and Vanbrugh in April, 1698, with his "Phaeton", a tragedy containing, "Some Reflections on a Book Called a Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage". Gildon, who "under Dryden was most respectable tho he drew a venal quill long afterwards in the days of Pope", sympathized with Congreve. He admitted the corruptness of the stage and the necessity for stage reform, but insisted that Collier had exaggerated the evil and by the brutality of tone of his arguments had alienated the sympathy of those writers (meaning Congreve and Wycherley) who desired a reformation as much as himself. He condemns the attack upon plays in general and insists that reformation must be brought about by less drastic means. In

(1) Edmund Gosse, Life of Congreve, London, 1934. p. 89.

conclusion he promises to write a vindication of the English stage at his earliest convenience. Such a tract appeared anonymously on May 17 of the same year, a month later than Gildon's reflections, but it is to be doubted that Gildon wrote it. Gosse attributes it to Wycherley because of its allusions to the English countryside, to Staffordshire and Shropshire, favorite localities of Wycherley's. The style Gosse further insists is more in keeping with Wycherley than with Gildon. Dottin likewise does not consider this pamphlet the work of Gildon. The tract defends Congreve and his plays and mentions no one else. The friendship of Congreve and Wycherley, assuming that Wycherley wrote it, would account for the latter's non-appearance in the pamphlet. Probably Wycherley intended that Congreve be thought the author.

On May 26, 1698 appeared Filmer's "Defence of Dramatic Poetry", a prosaic argument directed futilely against Collier's citation of classical authority in his pamphlet. Filmer's reach, like that of many of his contemporaries, exceeded his grasp, and his attack netted no gain against the force of the pugnacious Collier.

On June 6 of the same year a much more formidable opponent entered the lists. John Dennis issued his pamphlet, "The Usefulness of the Stage" in which he attacks Collier for his brutality of tone and for his distorting and reversing ideas to suit his own ends. He ably defends Wycherley but makes no mention of Congreve.

Two days later Vanbrugh brought out his "Short Vindication of The Relapse and the Provok'd Wife", two plays of his. Two weeks later Filmer published his "Further Defence of Dramatic Poetry". Neither of these two pamphlets was comparable in weight to the retaliation of Gildon or Dennis.

The battle over the profaneness and immorality of the stage

was beginning to bear fruit, both in the dearth of dramatic writings and in the condemnation of dramatic presentation. From March 1st, 1698, the date of Collier's pamphlet, until the first of July of the same year only one play, "The Fatal Friendship" by Catherine Trotter (1) had been produced. Both Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle had been fined for using profane language on the stage, and Congreve and D'Urfey had been prosecuted for writing "The Double Dealer" and "Don Quixote" respectively. Tonsen and Briscoe, booksellers, had also been prosecuted for printing the above plays.

Suppression and condemnation, however, resulted in a new deluge of pamphlets. Congreve, on July 12, brought out his "Amendments to Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations", a poor answer and a weak defence of his position in which his bluffing method of argumentation accomplished nothing. This pamphlet was amended by George Powell (2) who attacked Dennis, Hopkins, D'Urfey, and Gildon and their defences of the stage. An anonymous pamphlet defending Collier of which Ridpath was probably the author induced Collier to bring out on November 10 his "Defence of the Short View of the English Stage" which rather detracts than adds anything to his side of the argument.

This controversy was carried on with intermittent success for several years, and echoes of it are even noticed as late as 1736, but inasmuch as Gildon's connection with it is negligible after 1700 there is no necessity of pursuing the subject farther.

Altho Gildon's active participation in this controversy was limited, his contribution is important because it shows the general trend of his dramatic criticism later to be elaborated in his "Art of Poetry". In his criticism he is essentially a classicist,

(1) Langbaine, Lives of the English Dramatic Poets. p. 179.
(2) Langbaine, Lives of the English Dramatic poets. p. 113.

a follower of Dryden and the classic tradition. He attacks Collier's attitude toward dramatists, not his arguments for reforming the stage. He agreed with him that the stage had been corrupted by departing from the classic tradition, and only by returning to it could the Renaissance classic simplicity be once more attained. This insistence upon the Latin and Greek ideals as advanced by Horace was probably due to his early schooling in the classics, which he had attempted to imitate with indifferent success in his own dramatic work.

From his participation in the controversy Gildon gained the friendship of Congreve, of Wycherley, of Dennis, and of Steele; and these connections, particularly those with Dennis and Steele, were to be of great benefit to him later. We are reasonably sure of Congreve's early friendship for Gildon because he contributed three poems to the latter's miscellany published in 1692.

Gildon's connection with Steele released him from imprisonment in the Tower for publishing his seditious pamphlet of 1703 concerning the proposed visit of Sophia, the Queen-Elect of England. When Gildon was searching high and low for a protector who would intercede with Harley on his behalf and would keep him out of prison he turned to Steele, and Steele wrote to Harley that, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty; The humble petition of Charles Gildon sheweth, That y'r Petitioner has, by an unhappy mistake and not out of malicious design against the Happiness and Quiet of y'r Majesty's government been concerned in publishing a pamphlet call'd Sr. R. Gwynn's letter etc. That he is under greatest sorrow and contrition (sic) for this his high offence against so good and so gracious a Queen and shall hereafter abhor and avoid all license in speech and writing unbecoming a quiet, humble, and

peaceable subject...."(1)

Steele's friendship for Gildon seems to have continued, for in 1710 we find Gildon dedicating his "Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton" to Steele in a flowery eulogy both of the man and of his plays. "Yet I can't but acknowledge that among the ancients, the name of a learned friend was of greater consideration with the writer than the dignity of a man of power,....and the merit of Mr. Steele in the kingdom of the muses is too well known to the Beaux Esprits not to secure me from the fear of raillery.....I have chosen to address this discourse to you (Steele) because the Art of which it treats is of your familiar acquaintance." Thus, despite the fact that Gildon differs frequently with the Tattler and its editor in dramatic criticism, we find these differings set forth in a respectful manner, which would tend to prove in as vitriolic a minor critic as Gildon that he was at least agreeably acquainted with the subject of his differings.

Gildon, Pope, and Addison.

Gildon's quarrel with Pope and the subsequent break between Pope and Addison goes back to Gildon's friendship with John Dennis and his championing of his views in regard to classic literature.

Gildon first attacked Pope publicly in his parody of Buckingham's "The Rehearsal" published in 1714. In this parody Pope was easily identified in the character of Sawney Dapper, a young poet, easy versifier, conceited prig, and contemner of others, the others in this case being Gildon and his friends whom Pope included later in his Bathos, Gildon as a porpoise, Philips a tortoise, and Ned Ward and James Moore as frogs. Pope's friend Nicholas Rowe was also satirized in this pamphlet as "Bays the Younger", a pedantic,

(1) George Aitkin, Life of Steele, vol. 1. p. 152.

reciting poet. Gildon heaped scurrilous abuse upon Pope's "The Rape of the Lock", the particularly petted poem of the Wasp of Twickenham, and in so doing earned the undying hatred of its author.

The second attack, embodied in "A True Character of Mr. Pope", a scurrilous pamphlet appearing anonymously in 1716, has been attributed to Dennis, to Gildon, and to both in collaboration. There are several arguments favoring Dennis as the sole author. First, this pamphlet was very probably provoked by the "Imitation of Horace", issued anonymously, which vilified Dennis. The tone of the pamphlet may have led Dennis to suspect Pope as the author, and as Dennis preferred being the vilifier rather than the vilified he would retaliate immediately, completely, and vindictively. All this the "True Character" does. This pamphlet makes mention of a task, that of publishing a work of observation upon Pope's translation of Homer, which Dennis later carried to completion. Other noticeable suggestions and comparisons later elaborated upon by Dennis and here mentioned are: the comparison of Pope and Boileau, dealt with by Dennis in his "Remarks upon the Dunciad"; the accusation of Pope's being an imitator in all his works, of Vergil in his "Bucolics", of Boileau in "The Rape of the Lock", of Denham in "Windsor Forest", of Dryden in the "Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day", and of Chaucer in his "Temple of Fame". The quotations from Hudibras and Horace, both favorite authors of Dennis, and the references to the Squire of Alsatia, a favorite one of his, would seem to point to Dennis if not the sole author, at least a collaborator in the work. Aside from the proof contained in the work itself we find Pope assigning it to Dennis in the "Testimonies of Authors" prefixed to the "Dunciad" despite Dennis' vigorous denial of authorship.

Opposed to the theory of Dennis' authorship of the "True Character" we find several traits and facts recommending it as the work of Gildon. First and foremost, Curll, the notorious bookseller, insisted that it was the work of Gildon. This evidence loses weight in recalling that Curll's reputation was such, in the matter of veracity, that his denying a thing would tend to confirm us in the opposite conclusion. Later, indeed, Curll insisted just as vehemently that it was the work of Dennis. In 1729 Dennis published his "Remarks upon the Preliminaries to the Dunciad" which was advertised as containing letters proving the falsehood of Pope's accusation of Dennis as the author of the "True Character". This burst of self-righteousness in such a one as Dennis must be accepted with reservations however, and, despite the testimony it offers, it seems quite likely that he collaborated with Gildon in publishing this volume, especially when we remember that he had been a collaborator of Gildon before.

This Gildon-Dennis friendship was of long standing. As early as 1694 Gildon had dedicated his "Vindication of Love in Tragedies" to Dennis, agreeing with him that love was a fit subject for tragedy. In his "Miscellaneous Letters and Essays upon Several Subjects", published in 1694 Gildon also states that Dennis had kindly consented to second his views. In 1702 Dennis wrote the prologue for Gildon's play "The Patriot" which would tend to show us that this early friendship still existed. Again in 1718 Gildon praises Dennis highly as the "most consummate critic of the age"(1), nor was he alone in this view. Dennis' star had arisen and the estrangement between him and Gildon hinted at by several contemporaries seems, on the part of Gildon at least, to have been entirely ignored.

Gildon may have patterned much of his "Complete Art of Poetry" (1) Preface to the Complete Art of Poetry, 1718 p. IV.

published in 1718 upon the revolt against the new trend of English literature inaugurated by Pope, remembering that Dennis was the outstanding opponent of the poetaster who advocated, as did Gildon himself, the old classic trend, the defence of mechanical rules.

In 1728 Gildon was one of the hundred and twenty subscribers to Dennis' "De Fide et Officiis Christianorum". Considering everything then it seems probable that Dennis, one time collaborator of Gildon, possessing the same grievance against Pope, would readily agree to aid his friend in his endeavor, particularly so because the blame of authorship could easily be thrown off upon the lesser writer in case of necessity.

The third attack upon Pope by Gildon, though more personal, was not advertised as such. In 1718 Gildon published his "Life of the Late Mr. Wm. Wycherley and his Writings by Lord Lansdowne, to which are added some familiar letters written by Wycherley and a True Copy of his Will and Testament". In these letters Gildon gives us a picture of Pope in the following words: "I was once to wait on Mr. Wycherley and found in his chamber a little Aescopic sort of an animal in his own cropt hair and dress agreeable to the forest he had come from. I confess the gentleman was very silent all my stay there and scarce utter'd three words on any subject we talk'd of, nor could I guess at what sort creature it was, and should have guessed all the pretences of mankind around before I should have thought him a wit and poet." (1) Needless to say this added fuel to the flames of Pope's fury and precipitated the break between him and Addison. Addison's connection with the affair is elsewhere taken up in this paper.

The fourth step in Gildon's criticism of Pope, one not mentioned in Dottin, nor elsewhere as far as I have been able to ascertain, (1) Paul Dottin, Essay on Charles Gildon's Life, p. 33.

is contained in the preface to the "Complete Art of Poetry", published in 1718, and is directed against Pope's translation of Homer, an undertaking sure to arouse the animosity of such a complete classicist as Gildon. Here again he descends to personalities. "Division and party is now so much the genius of the age, that it has thrust itself into the very dominions of Helicon; and old Homer, who after his death was the cause of strife to seven cities for the honour of his nativity, is now so between two gentlemen who contend for the mastery in translating him. One of them (Tickel) has only, to the regret of good judges, given us the first book of the Iliad; the other, the first four adorned with pictures and notes. If the last has not done the blind bard justice it has not been for want of encouragement, since he has had more subscribed to him for the translation than we can discover the author ever got for the original.

"...as to who is the better,...Mill's Coffee House gives it to the four books, Button's, to the one. ...For my part, I must say this of Mr. Tickel's, that he seems to have entered into the soul of Homer. You are sure at least of having some taste of his genius and manner of the poet when you read his version.

"Who that has read Grimaldi's tracts would not imagine that we had a second Cato among us, and that public spirit had survived all the attacks of the growing avarice of these later days; but come closer to him (Pope) and you find a poor, narrow-souled, selfish creature; a zealous pursuer of little byends, a prodigal of promises, and endearing assurances; but such as were no more to be confided in than a whore's tears and vows and a sharper's caresses. Who that hears Boanerges, can chuse but think that the old primitive zeal of the Apostolica times is revived in ours, notwithstanding the daily efforts of incredulity and Atheism? but alas, draw the veil, and

you discover the man; pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, and ir-religion, appear in all his actions and pursuits.

"Thus when you hear Hudnetto has sent abroad two or three de-tached descriptions (referring to the prospectus of Pope's trans-lation), expectation is aroused and you persuade yourself that the whole poem is of a piece; when you come near, and view it more closely, you find it a wretched medley of incoherent patches of vel-vet, lincey woolsey, and sometimes cloth of gold, but seldom any-thing so precious in all his voluminous descriptions, which renders the whole a visual product of a most miserable poetaster. These trifling authors make themselves indeed taken notice of, but cer-tainly not much to their advantage. They might otherwise have passed silently and unobserved from the book seller's stalls to the tobacconist's, pastry cook's, or grocer's with an abundance of in-finitely more meritorious work; but they chose rather in their pass-age to be acquainted with ignominy, and make their exit in a noise, though in one so disagreeable as an hiss; for they can never go off with the more joyful claps of an audience."(1)

And what reply does Pope make to all this? How does he retal-iate? By totally ignoring Gildon's tirades for the most part, as he very probably thought it beneath his dignity to quarrel with a minor hack writer such as Gildon. In three places, however, Pope mentions Gildon and in a few words does what a complete tract might have accomplished in showing his contempt for Gildon's scurrilous attacks. First he is mentioned in the Dunciad,

"Ah Dennis, Gildon ah, what ill-starred rage
Divides a friendship long confirmed by age?
Blockheads with reason wicked with abhor,
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war.
Embrace, embrace my sons, be foes no more,
Nor glad vile poets with true critic's gore."
(Book III lines 173 -)

(1) Gildon, Complete Art of Poetry, 1718, introduction p. XII-XV.

and a second time,

"He (Eusebius) sleeps among the gull of ancient days
Safe, where no critics damn, no duns molest,
Where wretched Withers, Ward, and Gildon rest."
(Book I. lines 294-)

secondly we find him mentioned in the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot":

"If Dennis writes and rails in furious pet,
I'll answer Dennis when I am in debt.
If meagre Gildon draws his meaner quill,
I'll wish the man a dinner, and sit still."

thirdly, we find him mentioned, as we have said elsewhere, in Pope's Bathos as a porpoise.

These attacks of Gildon's are of importance, in particular that contained in the "Life of Wycherley", because it alienated Pope from Addison, who, if not friendly, had been at least courteous to the poetaster. Pope attributed this break between him and Addison to the latter's connection and support of Gildon, and he said in a letter to Warburton, "Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley in which he both abused me and my relatives grossly"(1) He further insisted that Lord Warwick had told him that Addison had given Gildon ten guineas to publish this attack. Lord Warwick, in the capacity of brother-in-law to Addison was in a position to impart this information had it been true, and it may have been true that he told this to Pope, for, according to a letter of Addison's dated February 12, he did send Gildon ten guineas. Dottin seems to think that Addison sent him this sum in payment for three copies of his latest book, "The Cases of Latin Bouns" which Gildon was industriously hawking from door to door at this time.

Pope's animosity toward Addison, brought to a head by this report, had an earlier, underlying basis. In 1715 Addison had encouraged Tickell to complete his translation of the Iliad, a task to

(1) Paul Dottin, Essay upon the Life of Gildon, p. 35-36. see notes.

which Pope felt himself called by divine appointment. Pope never forgot a slight, and remembering this supposed injury of several years standing, without troubling to inquire into the truth of the assertion, he used it as a convenient outlet through which he might vent his spleen.

Gildon's Life of Thomas Betterton.

Gildon's "Life of Betterton" is worthy of special mention because it shows in detail the method of his dramatic criticism. Under guise of a biographical treatment Gildon incorporates various essays upon public speaking, on gesture and gesticulation, on music and on the opera.

In his preface to this work Gildon admits that he is to some degree a plagiarist, and indeed the best parts of his work are his elaborations upon Saint Evremond's precepts of operas and operatic presentation. He states that if his work meets with public approval he will publish the rules for the stage alone. Evidently his work was not a financial success since this suggested work was never brought out; that is, unless we consider his "Art of Poetry", published in 1713 as here meant.

The first few pages of the book are devoted to the life of Betterton, eulogizing him as an actor and an upright man. From this Gildon digresses to the conduct of actors in general; showing how far they depart from the admirable conduct of Betterton, their superior. An actor, according to Gildon, should so conduct his private life that there is no contradiction between it and that of the virtuous character he is to portray. "To hear virtue, honour and religion commended by a prostitute, an atheist, or a rake makes these qualities a jest to many people." Gildon is discreetly silent upon the home life of the stage villain, which would not be especially com-

commendable under these circumstances. His uprighteousness extends so far that he would dismiss all ladies (not men) who have acquired blemished reputations. Evidently he considers the presence of smoke in such a case the proof of a conflagration. In true masculine fashion he elaborates upon the conduct of ladies in the theatre both before and behind the footlights, and dismisses men somewhat vaguely with the admonition to go and do likewise.

From these puritanical admonitions Gildon wanders to the actions of an actor upon the stage, prefacing his remarks by a discussion of pantomime, particularly that in Shakespeare's "Hamlet". In pedantic fashion he attempts to give a set of rules for aspiring actors to follow in order to become great actors. In this connection he eulogizes Mrs. Barry's presentation of tragic roles and lists minutely the particular motions of the face and all its appurtenances. "I shall proceed to the proper regiment and proper motions of the head, the eyes, the eyebrows, and indeed the whole head, and shall conclude with the action of the hands, more copious and various than the other parts of the body." These rules, he adds, might well be applied to the pulpit as well as to the stage, and he concludes with a reference to the Tattler's Essay upon this subject. As to the necessity of such rules, the conduct of the actors of the day, "whispering to one another and bowing to their friends in the pit or gazing about" speaks for itself.

The second part of the book deals with music and the stage, with the distinction between opera and the drama. "I shall presume to say something of the operas which have of late been dangerous rivals of the drama. I am sensible that what I have to say will look like a condemnation of my own practise (referring to his turning "Measure for Measure into an opera)...yet considering that I

did what I did on account of self defence I hope what I may say here cannot be looked upon as a deviation from my own principles. I know very well that in this I shall run against the stream of the town...but I have contracted such a value for the drama by so long a conversation with it, that I would willingly leave for my successors a stage freed from those intolerable burdens under which it groans at present by the depravity of the Taste of the audience, which, as it has risen in dignity, has (I am afraid) fallen away in judgment." (1)

Gildon's antipathy toward the opera arises no doubt through his envy of its popularity and the financial remuneration of its supporters. He condemns them, the operas, "with which of late the town (I mean the leading part of the audience) has been perfectly intoxicated, and in that drunken fit, has thrown away thousands of pounds for their support." He is also jealous of the popularity of French musicians, and professes to prefer Harry Purcell's(2) non-operatic English airs to all imported French creations. He quotes Saint Evremonde's condemnation of the opera as expressing his own views on that subject; and, in concluding, consoles himself with the thought that appreciation of the opera is beneath the level of intelligence (such as his, the inference reads) and consequently is to be avoided.

This work shows something of Gildon's inability to produce anything entirely original. If he is not quoting the authority of the Roman writers, he is quoting a modern supporter of them. It also affords us a good example of the extent to which envy of more successful writers (the writers of operas) can overlay his subject

(1) Life of Thomas Betterton by Charles Gildon, p. 160-166.

(2) Life of Thomas Betterton, by Charles Gildon. p.167

matter, a trait brought out much more forcibly in his attack upon "Robinson Crusoe".

Gildon's Treatment of "Robinson Crusoe".

The immediate popularity of Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" which had gone into its fifth edition in as many months, and the financial return from it aroused the envy and the jealousy of a flood of Grub Street writers, among them Charles Gildon, and resulted in diverse pamphlets and open letters of scurrilous abuse. Defoe's puritanical attack upon Gildon, contained in his poem "More Reformation" (July, 1703) had not been forgotten by Gildon, and he saw a means of both paying off past and present grudges and of doing it in a way that would bring him in a handsome return. Accordingly he began his "Remarks upon Robinson Crusoe" about the first week of August, 1719.

"Robinson Crusoe" was immediately popular, so much so that Gildon himself remarks, "...famed from Tuttle Street to Limehouse Cole; there is not an old woman that can go the price of it but buys the "Life and Adventures" and leaves it as a legacy with Pilgrim's Progress, The Practice of Piety, and God's Revenge against Murder, to her posterity".(1) The inconsistencies in it were instantly remarked by many, but it remained for Gildon, the minute observer, to list and publish them broadcast.

Gildon had Defoe's book read to him and then dictated his notes upon its inconsistencies, intending to publish his criticism as an open letter. The appearance of Defoe's second volume in August and its increasing popularity led him to double the size of the intended volume and sell it for a shilling instead of six pence.

Upon hearing the introduction to the second volume, Gildon noticed that Defoe had written, "The useful and religious inferences drawn from every part (of "Robinson Crusoe") are so many testimonies

(1) Paul Fottin, Reprint of Gildon's Pamphlet, 1923, p. 71-72.

to the good design of making it public, and must legitimize all the part that may be called invention or parable", (1) and immediately pounced upon this as the vulnerable spot of approach. Accordingly he prefaced his discourse and its postscript with an imaginary discourse between Crusoe, Defoe, and Friday, in which the inconsistencies of the book and the supposed 'comicalness' of the characters are set forth. This dialogue is a rather scurrilous piece of work disjointedly done and is of particular value for its long tirades against Defoe in the guise of D....I (Daniel, and by inference, Devil) which throw a great deal of light upon certain events in Defoe's life. Gildon sums up Defoe's life, mentioning many of the details. He refers satirically to Defoe's changing his name, his politics, his friendships, and his literary activities at random, and in a very abusive way attempts to show his (Defoe's) ungentlemanlike qualities.

Several questions such as the actual birthplace of the novel are settled in these tirades, and late biographers are prone to make much of the pamphlet. Snatches of his vitriolic, biographical attack are inserted here as examples of Gildon's style. "D....I; 'I set out under the banner of Kidderminster, and was long a noisy if not zealous champion for the cause....I talked myself into a pretty large credit by which I might have thrived but like you my head ran upon chimeras and I quitted a certainty for new adventures.First I set up for scribbling of verses and dabbling in other sorts of authorizing, both religious and profane...by making myself a constant pensioner to all the rich and zealous of my party I pickt up a handsome penny....I writ on until some of the wiser heads of the other party thought me worth retaining in their service...

(1) Daniel Defoe's Complete Works, published by Aikin, 1800. Vol. II. p. VII introduction.

I managed matters so well for a great while that both sides kept me in their pay...but I went a little too far and by another irony... I brought myself to the Tripes at Paddington but that my good friend (Harley) that set me to work got me a pardon, and so safe was his word that I have never forsaken him since for that good office... and as for the money... I made a pretty penny among the Whigs though nothing to what I have done since among the Tories...The Tories therefore for my money, not that I value the Tories more than I do the Whigs, but nothing for the Whigs will sell and everything for the Tories does." (1)

Influenced further by the possible allegorical interpretation of "Robinson Crusoe", Gildon called his pamphlet, "The Life and Surprising Adventures of Mr. R...l de F.. of London, Mosier who has lived fifty years by himself in the Kingdoms of North and South Britain...and the Discoveries he has made for the Benefit of his Country." It is interesting to note that Defoe brought forth in his "Serious Reflections upon Robinson Crusoe" this theory of allegorical interpretation and it is entirely probable that this attack of Gildon's is responsible for this sudden challenge. If we do not accept the theory of the genuineness of the deliberate, preconceived allegory in "Robinson Crusoe", and the trend of present day literary criticism seems to point that way, it seems more than probable that Defoe, endeavoring to suppress this allegation of Gildon's, instead of refuting the latter's arguments as to the allegory agreed with them and elaborated upon them. Whether the book is allegorical or not passes the bounds of this paper, but certainly Defoe, incensed at Gildon's attack, as we can safely surmise he must have been, would take some means of retaliating, and by calling his own work allegorical, Gildon's slandering word, he stole the latter's thunder. (1) Paul Cottin, Reprint of Gildon's Pamphlet, 1933 p. 73-76.

Moreover, from a financial standpoint Gildon's attack did more good than harm for it increased the circulation of "Robinson Crusoe" and Defoe preferred financial to gregarious ascendancy every time.

The "Remarks upon Robinson Crusoe" following the dialogue are a jumbled mass of individually criticized incidents possessing no coherent or chronological order. Gildon passes from Defoe's treatment of the sailors to his invocation of Providence; from that to Siberia, and from there back to the shipwreck. They seem to be jotted down at random as they occurred to Gildon. This confusion is easily accounted for if we remember that Gildon was semi-blind at this time and could only dictate his work. There is but one slight recurrent thread running through this mass of inconsistent incidents and that is Gildon's harking back to Defoe's attitude toward religion. It is in these paragraphs that Gildon is most bitter. We find pages of denunciation of Defoe's partiality toward Catholics, of his remarks upon the Bible, and of his unchristian deeds and thoughts. The following are but brief excerpts of this nature: "But you make very free with the Holy Scriptures which you quote as freely as the devil once did. I cannot pass in silence his coining of Providence. But it was necessary that he (Crusoe) should have a Bible to furnish him the means of burlesquing the sacred writ. He has esteemed it no crime to set off his fable with the words of the Holy Scriptures, nay, he makes a sort of *Sortes Vigilinae* (sic) of the Bible, by making Crusoe dip into it for sentences to his purpose. This book ought to be printed with Vaninus, the Freethinker, and other atheistical tracts, which are condemned and held in abhorrence by all good Christians. Most of the religion in this book consists in dreams."

This religious mania I trace to two causes: first, to Gildon's "Deists Manual" brought out in 1704; and secondly, to Gildon's own

religious experiences. The "Deist's Manual", elsewhere discussed, is a compilation of all Gildon's religious thought, and we find those things most severely criticized in this "Essay on Robinson Crusoe" are the same upon which he has elaborated at length in his earlier work. For instance, the Immortality of the Soul and its future existence mentioned by Defoe and whose mention is criticized by Gildon is exhaustively dealt with in the "Deists Manual". In the second place Gildon was never allowed to forget his religious conversions, from Catholicism to Deism and from Deism to Anglicanism. Less successful writers, yes, even far greater ones such as Defoe lampooned him as a religious dilettante and refused to credit him with any firm religious convictions. In this they wronged him, however, for however weak may have been his reasons for embracing the Anglican faith, he was, if not a staunch supporter of it, at least an indefatigable opponent to all other religions. His antipathy toward the Roman Catholics strangely enough, was especially vitriolic, and he frequently mentions their hallucinatory beliefs. I have no doubt that Gildon's antipathy was partially prompted by his religious beliefs. Thus Gildon had a double reason for attacking Defoe's religious statements; first and foremost, because Defoe admitted the justice in the practices of certain Catholic priests in "Robinson Crusoe", and secondly because Defoe was himself a Dissenter, not an Anglican.

In like manner Gildon shows by his criticism of grammatical syntax that his various hack works on English grammar and the cases of Latin nouns were still present in his mind. He says, "How friend D...l, worse than the worst? I thought that beyond the superlative degree there was nothing: I am sure that Robinson's school learning with all that other false grammar which is to be found in almost

every page, particularly the nominative case for the accusative." (1) Gildon was correct in this criticism and it speaks well for his astuteness, but two or three mistakes in syntax do not prove that Defoe was the ignorant writer Gildon would have us believe him to be.

There can be no doubt that there are numerous inconsistencies in "Robinson Crusoe", and on that point alone can Gildon's work be justified. He studied the book carefully, noting down scores of inconsistencies, many of them so completely hidden that they had been unnoticed before. Gildon did not note them all, nor has anyone else, but he pointed out in tones of sarcastic inquiry the most flagrant, such as Crusoe's stripping to swim to the ship and while on board filling his pockets with ship's biscuits; Friday's speaking as good English at the end of two months companionship with Crusoe as he did at the end of twelve years; the slave Xury, never having seen or heard an Englishman before, speaking to Crusoe in broken English; the shipwreck sinking out of sight one night after a storm only to be noticed six months later sticking farther out of the water than usual; Friday's snatching up a rock from the ground covered many feet deep with snow and killing a bear with it in a place where no bears ever existed; the Chinese horses lean and scrawny one minute and so covered with trappings the next that their leanness or their corpulence could not be determined; and single men practicing adultery with single women.

The influence of this pamphlet upon Defoe, unless it may have prompted his insistence upon an allegorical interpretation of "Robinson Crusoe", was negligible. He never deigned to publish a reply or a defence, nor even mentioned Gildon in the preface of later editions. Its influence upon Defoe's publishers was of greater importance. In Bettesworth's edition of "Robinson Crusoe Complete in (1) Paul Dottin, Reprint of Gildon's Pamphlet, 1933. page 103.

One Volume" published February 27, 1722 all the inconsistencies pointed out by Gildon were suppressed, and it has been suggested, though not satisfactorily proven, that Defoe himself amended his later editions.

The sudden popularity lent Gildon's pamphlet by the name of Defoe on the cover died down almost as quickly as it had sprung up. For fifty years the pamphlet was forgotten, and at that time was momentarily resurrected only to be buried again where it remained in obscurity until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Deists Manual.

To realize Gildon's aptitudes as a critic it is necessary to examine several of his purely critical works in detail, and inasmuch as his "Deists Manual" is at once the best and the most argumentative of his works it deserves special mention. In the preface to this book Gildon refutes all his arguments advanced earlier in his edition of Blount's works. As he candidly tells us in this later volume, having changed his views he must acknowledge the fact. "Tis not to comply with the mode that I trouble the reader with this preface, but to remove an opinion I have formerly too much contributed to by my defence of a friend's death, for whom I had a particular value, not imagining it would have been of the ill consequences which I am afraid it was. I therefore thought myself obliged not only to declare that I am perfectly convinced that Suicide is not lawful, but also set down my reasons for this opinion which I shall do by assuring all those I brought there for the contrary."

The argument concerning suicide as he sees it simmers down to the one point, is the first primal law of nature, self-preservation, so universally binding as to never admit exception? Having argued the negative in his preface to Blount's works, he takes the points

there set forth and answers them. In the first place, the public good is always to be considered as preferable to any particular good. In other words, Man living in a world of society owes his first duty to that society from which he draws his living and should therefore consider it before considering himself. Having established this fact, sine statu, Gildon summons to his aid the great abracadabra of Grub Street writers, the precepts of Right Reason, or Natural Reason, and quite as unauthoritatively proves that this opposed to man's reason shows suicide to be unjustifiable because, "The principle of self-preservation ought never to be broke, but for the preservation of that which secures that of every individual, that is by promoting and defending the preservation of the whole community to which each particular owes his own preservation."

As to the wishes of our passions, particularly those of love which the late lamented Blount experienced, they are to be subjected to the rules of Right Reason and there must appear in the mind of the subjector the 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' of nature, "since there is no misfortune which virtue cannot overcome, no evil so great that it can deprive life of a Good." Evil arises from the indulgence of our passions, and self preservation demands that we hold our passion in check. Consequently self preservation is necessary for Virtue as Virtue is necessary for Good.

To conclude this pointless method of argument, Gildon finds that, "Life therefore never being an Evil but by our own faults there is no shadow of reason to justify our throwing it away without a public motive". These last four words Gildon probably inserted because he remembered his lengthy discussion of involuntary suicide in the preface to Blount. The prime reason, however, why suicide is to be completely banned is because religion forbids it, and upon

this thread he spins his "Deists Manual".

He begins this work with a laudatory letter from Charles Leslie, the author of "A Short Method with the Deists", in which Gildon is praised for his seeing the Light. "He, (God) has given you the true spirit of repentance... to make such satisfaction as you can for the injuries you have done to religion, by answering what has been formerly been published by yourself against it, and being converted you endeavor to strengthen your brethren."

The general plan of Gildon's work is taken from the dialogues of Plato, and he attempts to incorporate the same style of argumentation. For the purposes of exposition he has the ideal Christian, an old man living in London by preference so as to further the work of the Lord at the seat of its iniquities, entertain for some days two skeptics, Philalethes, a young man of the town, one atheistically inclined, "inflicted with the wild notions of Atheism since his principles flattered his inclinations"; and another, Pleonexus by name, a miser who reckoned everything in terms of dollars and cents. Gildon's idea of a good Christian as exemplified by this man is a "man whose youth was not spent in inactive contemplation (as was Gildon's) but in actions of good deeds both public and private. Whose mornings were spent in devotion and study and whose afternoons in practising it."

In the mouth of Philalethes are put Gildon's reasons for his own youthful indiscretions and lapses from grace. "Nothing", he states, "has more increased the number of Deists than a professed enmity to Humane Reasoning". It is by Reason alone that we have any notice of God and by it we prove both the high justice of his laws and the folly and injustice of our breaking them. There is no conflict between Christianity and Reason, Right Reason that is, since

"Reason but raises the fundamentals of religion to their highest perfection." Philalethes, like Gildon, admits that he was led astray. "I may perhaps, by a too criminal liberty of youth taken up with first appearances that struck me with those darling follies that bore me away, but sir, this much of the man I yet retain; to know that I ought not surrender myself to any opinion that is not justified by Reason." And reasons other than ecclesiastical with their lengthy eulogies ought to be given so the youth of the city (rather the wits) might understand what they read. "If our inquiry", goes on Philalethes, "require so voluminous a search, how shall I, who know no language save my own,...am ignorant of the subtelties of any school, and the nice distinctions of philosophy and divinity. ..ever hope to arrive at an end?" Having thus justified himself for his youthful sidings from virtue, and having given us what he considers a valid reason for publishing this book, a practice common to Grub Street writers, Gildon launches us on the first of his five discourses, namely that "There is a God".

The Deists, or rather the pseudo-Deists of whom Gildon was a converted, repentant member, based their denial of God's existence on the following premises: The world and mankind have existed from all Eternity without a beginning, and Providence as an act of God toward influencing men is non-existent. From these two premises they draw the conclusion that there is no God, since the premises being true, there is no need for Him. In answer to these conclusions Gildon is prepared to prove that there is an intelligent first cause, that He created the world and all living things in it, that there is a Providence which governs men's actions, and that we have infallible notions of it.

Consider, as requested by Gildon, this house and grounds sur-

rounding it. Did they arrive at this stage of perfection by mere chance? Was not an architect required to design the buildings and gardens? Can we say that because we do not see the architect in person that he never existed? And is not the world a far more complex arrangement than this one minute part of it? Granting then that an architect brought these grounds into this stage of perfection, is it not probable that the world with all its astronomical, natural, and physiological wonders would require an infinitely greater Architect? What is this Chance to which the Deists attribute the wonders of the Universe? Is it some being or power endowed with power and knowledge? If the former, the term is synonymous with God; if the latter, it is an effect not a cause, and there must be a cause to produce an effect.

The Deists claim that it is impossible for the infinite to work or have influence over the finite, yet is not the mind infinite and does it not control the finite material of the body? Matter itself has no motion. A dead body does not move. It must be actuated by the infinite. Conceding then that atoms are finite material they have no motion within themselves, and in the absence of an infinite moving force they must have remained merely inanimate things. That they did not remain so is a proof of that infinite moving force called God, "That Being which gave existence to all and received His from none".

In further proof of God's existence Gildon goes on, "Cannot man say there was a time when he was not?" Inasmuch as every man can, even back to the first man, there must have been a time when mankind as a race was not. He must have had a beginning. If he sprung from plants, as has been claimed, why doesn't he do so now? and from whence came the seed from which the first plant grew? From

these and many other like observations Gildon concludes that there must have been some first primal Cause, God, and inasmuch as no being can impart that which he has not, man was never more than God. This line of argument is very similar to Descartes' in arriving at the Perfection of God.

Gildon begins his second discourse concerning the attributes of God with another sarcastic fling at the Deists. "There are some", he says, "who are so tenacious of their principles however pernicious and false, that they think it a point of honour to persevere in error rather than change their opinions for truth." It is difficult for the finite to comprehend the infinite, he insists, especially since our Reason is limited by Him to that amount necessary for our happiness. Our reason can attribute to God in the very least the greatest degree of all attributes found in men, since God could not impart that which he did not possess. Gildon's arguments in this connection can be summed up in the one word, 'unlimited'. God possesses unlimited existence, immensity, spirituality, will, and all other human characteristics.

Returning from this digression Gildon becomes a bit more lucid, and in discussing the Moral Attributes of God gives us the three cardinal virtues of mankind. These are, first, the duty to ourselves which should regulate our actions, and by so doing, bring us happiness via the precepts of Nature; secondly, to our neighbor, those of justice, giving everyone his due, and those of beneficence which should exceed those of justice in liberality; thirdly, to God, the virtue of piety, to be shown by belief in, by veneration of, and outspoken testimonies for God and His word.

Gildon's third discourse on the Nature of Providence and also his fifth upon the Law of Nature are the parts of his work possess-

ing intrinsic merit in the way of originality. Both of these are advanced against the theories of Hobbes. In the third discourse he attempts to refute Hobbes' argument of God's possessing any other attribute than existence. He remarks, "But I suppose the unintelligibility of some part of that book (referring to Hobbe's Leviathan) and the novelty of others has given it a reputation that those who cry it up may be thought men of understanding....If he wrote not to be understood why did he write at all?" Having asked this question he answers it himself. "But such arguments as destroy the knowledge of God, of religion and Nature are best couched in obscurity".

By Providence Gildon would have us understand, "the action of God by which he preserves and governs all creatures according to laws established by himself." After differentiating between intelligent and unintelligent creatures, namely, men and animals, he begins again his dissertation concerning Right Reason. Does any man wish himself destitute of Reason however evil it may result to him? Certainly not, and therefore Reason is at fault only in application. Reason is transgressed through no fault of God. Because one's eyes deceive him and he stumbles over a log, would one throw away his eyes? So is it with the mind, the seat of reasoning. Right and true Reasoning is of divine origin. It directs us toward Virtue and must be measured only by the Divine yardstick. This can be accomplished only by consulting God's own attributes and works whose aim is happiness and pleasure, and this consultation is only possible through religion.

Realizing that Happiness and Pleasure are necessarily indefinite terms, and probably recalling his treatment of these same two qualities in his preface to Blount's works in a more rational, if less orthodox manner, Gildon here points out his principles concerning

good and evil. That is a good which is agreeable and pleasant to any perceptive life and is consistent with the preservation of the receiver. That which is pleasant and agreeable to any perceptive life but is not consistent with the preservation of the receiver is an evil. There are differing degrees of good in a good. Good is to be embraced and evil avoided. If the determination of good or evil is outside our comprehension we should believe others if their lives and actions bear out their words. (Evidently Gildon, discreetly passing over his earlier lapses from grace, considers his own life worthy of emulation). If necessity of such choosing arise, choose rather the absence of a real good than presence of a real evil. A present good is to be surrendered for a probable future good infinitely greater.

Gildon becomes more lucid in his argument proving that passion is a hindrance rather than a help in determining what is good and what is evil. Passion, like the mind, is given us as a purgatory to prevent stagnation of the individual. It furnishes the mind with material both good and evil from which to choose. In this way passion is in itself a good because it affords us the reassurance of inherent goodness of the mind's discrimination. It broadens our understanding without degrading it. Passions regulate the amount of esteem our mind shall give an object, not the processes of discrimination themselves. Therefore the passions are intrinsic goods, the greatest and most complete of human experience, provided that the following two laws are kept: the passions must be directed only toward worthy and just objects, and they must be proportioned to the intrinsic goodness or evil of the object itself. In laying down these two laws Gildon has proved that whatever he may be, he is no logician, since by them he has reduced everything once more to hope-

less, dogmatic confusion. After discussing the various passions at great length he concludes with the platitudinous remark that after all passion itself is not wrong, but the faulty application of it has led many to judge it so, an obvious statement which this forty or fifty page discussion has neither added to nor explained.

Remembering that this discussion of his is primarily upon God's Providence, Gildon once more waxes platitudinous and theological in proving that the confusion of worldly affairs and the apparent triumph of evil over good is a proof of God's Providence. Certainly God who could create the world is capable of directing its affairs, and this seeming worldly confusion results only from the freedom of agency that He gave man at his creation. Whatever may be the individual confusion there is universal concordance. In judging the apparent triumph of evil over good inquire first into this seeming triumph, judge it by the precepts of Right Reason, draw the distinction between vice and virtue more finely, inquire beneath the surface, and then if your search can disclose no flaw in this elevation, consider the immortality of the soul and be comforted. Such is Gildon's advice.

Gildon's fourth discourse concerning the Immortality of the Soul is written in direct answer to the "Oracles of Reason" and is a pointless theological argument from which no conclusions can be drawn save that the soul is immortal because God created it so and that the Bible confirms His words. His conclusion here quoted is as intelligible as any or all parts of the discourse. "Thus merely by the Rules of Right Reason we find the immortality of the Soul and the absurdity of the contrary opinion."

In his fifth discourse concerning the Law of Nature and the Opposition to Mr. Hobbes, Gildon becomes more argumentative. He has

no patience with Hobbes nor with his theories. "I have read so much of Mr. Hobbes in my younger days that I knew there was no new discoveries in him, or any larger portion of Reason than in his neighbors." Hobbes' principles, "tend directly to Atheism so they naturally dissolve all bands of morality and religion which is so agreeable to the young would-be wits...When the principles he lays down are destructive to the existence of God, those who are willing to have it so, easily distinguish between formal and empty words, and the force and energy of an argument." "Mr. Hobbes, lest we should think mankind the work of an infinite goodness and wisdom, supposes a state of man that never was in reality, nor never could be...he must suppose all mankind mad." This in referring to Hobbes' theory of a fighting, struggling origin of society. Hobbes has, according to Gildon, "a mind to set up as the head of a party...and chose rather to wander after plausible error and wild opinion and fancy than to give his disciples anything to distinguish themselves by". He sets individual reason against the collective reason of mankind.

Assuming Gildon's two postulations, "Mankind was made by an omniscient, omnipotent, and beneficent God with a beneficent intent", and "Man has those faculties of mind I have already proved, that he is a rational creature", then, because man's happiness depends upon society, society is a divine institution. Property and dominion are necessary to society; therefore they likewise are stamped with God's approval. This seems to be a resume of Gildon's arguments directed against Hobbes and his theory of the Natural Law.

In Gildon's sixth discourse on the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion he reiterates what he has already given us in the preceding chapters. The Christian religion, Catholicism excluded, is rational when viewed through the eyes of Right Reason

because Right Reason is God's own Reason given us that we say ascertain the reasonableness of religion itself, sums up everything he says.

Before drawing any conclusions concerning Gildon's true worth as a critic as judged by his "Deists Manual" it is necessary to consider his "Complete Art of Poetry", his other purely critical work.

Gildon's Complete Art of Poetry.

In his "Complete Art of Poetry", published in 1718 Gildon makes his last appearance as a critic of the finer arts. It is a thoroughly classical and pedantic piece of work embracing the entire field of poetry with the emphasis placed on dramatic verse and its presentation. It is at once the most important and least original of his works. In it he repeats what he has said in his "Life of Betterton" and his various attacks upon the stage. Thoroughly classic in form, it is larded to repletion with quotations from the ancients and their modern supporters. The inclusion of these latter accounts for its publication, as Gildon acknowledges; but we may safely disregard his philanthropical justification of these borrowings for the more obvious one, that of financial remuneration. Gildon's financial supporter of this work was none other than the Duke of Buckingham's widow whose marital partner's essay on poetry is frequently quoted at great length.

In addition to that of his Grace, Gildon acknowledges his indebtedness to Boileau, Rapin, Dacier, Horace, Aristotle, and Dennis. To the last named, under the guise of Crites, the book is dedicated. As in several other of his works Gildon takes pains in his preface to vilify his immediate predecessor in this field, and he damns with faint praise Bysse's "Art of English Poetry" which had appeared some years previous. He differs from Bysse, he assures us, "in

giving the great images found in those of our poets who are truly great. Their art does not consist chiefly in the coloring any more than that of the painter, but rather in design." In this connection he uses Shakespeare, always a favorite of Gildon's for illustrative purposes. To his work he appends his Shakespeariana, a collection of Shakespearian quotations which to him deserve the name of poetry.

In form Gildon's "Art of Poetry", like that of the "Deists Manual" is strictly classical. It is modeled after the classical dialogues of Lucian and Plato. Among the characters appearing there are Laudon, an open minded man who possesses the true sense of discrimination and criticism; Morisina, his faithful counterpart; Eusebia, a female friend, "not ashamed of being religious even in so abandoned an age"; Mme. La Mode and her husband Issachar, worshippers and judges of literature by worldly standards; and Cammamiel, Gildon himself. The entire dialogue is addressed to Crites (Dennis), Gildon's friend.

Gildon's outlook upon life is reflected in his first dialogue by his excessively orthodox utterances upon the irreligiousness of the present trend in literature. "What can be more sublime and worthy the employment of a rational mind than the consideration of the works of the Deity." He comments upon the choice of subject matter, particularly for dramatic literature. "What are the subjects the poets have chosen to write upon but Lust, Murder, Rape and the like." He censures these writers very highly and adds, probably through spite and envy at remembering his own troubles to secure a patron, "These writers....vilely content to be a slave to some or other booksellers which wretched maintainance is probably eked out now and then by a sordid aim got by flattering some worthless great man who, though he be fond of the adulation, yet will be more gener-

ous to his mistress or his valet than to one of these inspired sons of Apollo."

Poetry, according to Gildon, is the blending of these three qualities, music, art, and eloquence, and from it these three have derived their separate origin. It has served for historical ends before the dawn of history; witness Homer's Epics. It was a moral code before the times of Moses and was used to further virtue and to discountenance vice. It has scriptural sanction as parts of the Bible were originally written in verse. Thus derogative criticism of such an art as poetry arises from its abuses rather than from the intrinsic matter itself.

Here again Gildon digresses toward the stage and the drama through a comparison of the ancient and modern stages. He mentions Collier's attack. "I must acknowledge that Mr. Collier's criminations on the stage, as they are debased in this nation are too true and just; but then the conclusion he draws from this abuse is by no means just even from the principles he fixes at the beginning of his book."

A poet is a superman, a man "blessed with the divine gift by the Gods, to whom the admirable framing of images of virtue, vices, or whatever else offers that delightful instruction which distinguishes and gives the right to the name of a poet." A poet is not limited like an historian or a philosopher. He excels, "not only in furnishing the mind with knowledge that is a conditional good, but in setting it forward to arrive at that which justly deserves the name of a real good." As for tragedy, the true vehicle of a poet, "It was of old called the Poetry of Kings, but by our modern management it has become the contempt of the vulgar", and even the revered Shakespeare in this regard, "in his inferior business of a

play sunk the more excellent duties of his assumed character of a poet; money seems to have been his aim rather than reputation." This attitude, coupled with the multiplicity of versifiers is responsible for the decay of both poetry and prose, according to Gildon. English poetry beginning with Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower, "Who first made any figure in that dress, of whom Chaucer is the only one who may justly claim the name of poet", was brought to perfection under Dryden and since his day it has steadily declined.

Gildon's second discourse is largely composed of vituperative animadversions upon people and their literary productions distasteful to him. Concerning Byshe he says, "I have myself perused a great part of this ridiculous author and he had provok'd me into a writer to vindicate the honour of the art I admire, from the shameful ignorance of a little pretender, had not the clamor of the traders in books deterred me by asserting that the undertaking would be unfair, not only interfering with the sale of a book already received, but of transferring it from the book seller's shops to those of the pastry cook and the grocer." A subtle touch that last, worthy of many better writers' pens than Gildon's. Again, of the Opera, Gildon's particular antipathy, "The Italian Opera seems.... like the puns and jests of the merry fellows that, with the help of the warmth of the bottle and the heat of conversation make us laugh.when saner judgment is absent....Harry Purcell seems to have the genius of Greek music...he touches the Soul.....The worst play of the worst poet is a more rational diversion than the Opera." Once more Gildon takes issue with the Tattler and the Spectator in their definitions of a true critic and his criticism. "We are not excluding the moderne from their merits, but insist that no modern has any merit but what he owes to the rules and precepts of the

ancients." This forms his classic thesis, and had he carried it out his work would have had the merit which Dottin seems to consider it has.

In his third discourse Gildon takes up the various fields of literature. This part of the work, praised so highly by certain present day critics as being the essence of classicism, is almost entirely historical. It traces the rise of the different classes of poetry from their early classic sources up to their present state of abuse. The epigram, the first considered, takes its origin not from the Greek but from the Roman literature. Its use according to him, is to afford a repository for certain scintillating turns of wit elsewhere out of place. This "poetry in miniature" arises from classical inscriptions put into verse form, 'causa tenendi memoriae' and is held of little esteem nowadays.

The pastoral originating in mythology as handed down by Theocritus and Vergil should represent "chastity and innocence in all plainness of setting." Ambrose Phillips, according to Gildon, is the best English follower of the pastoral tradition. These poems should possess a very slight plot, should exclude all digressions, should not employ English dialect, need not necessarily be allegorical in interpretation, and above all should not exceed one hundred lines in length.

The lyric, the earliest type of poetry, is at once the most spontaneous and personal in expression. It had its origin as an expression of religious feeling, either pagan or christian. Gildon quotes Buckingham and Boileau at great length in this connection and concludes with the statement, "It is remarkable that the French who are a much soberer race in general have produced better drinking songs than we have."

In his discussion of satire and its uses Gildon remembers his experiences at the hands of Pope and Defoe, and his statements remind us, to paraphrase the quotation, 'Hell hath no fury like a poet scorned'. "I am a person who never have I thank my stars, deserv'd or found the favor of great men.when a poet of the first magnitude purposed the publishing of a complete body of criticism in poetry he got but seventy guineas a subscription. When Iabeo (Pope) proposed a subscription for an abominable translation he got above three thousand pounds subscribed." He consoles himself however: "Otway died in an alehouse, Lee in the streets. Butler and Spenser starved. Milton never got a penny from any of them (the patrons)." He might well have included, 'Gildon died, half blind, in extreme poverty.'

Religion, according to Gildon, is tabooed from satire. The following, quoted in his work, is from Boileau:

"But vain blasphemer, tremble when you chuse
God for the subject of your impious muse."
"At last those jeats which libertines invent
Bring the lewd author to just punishment."

In his fourth dialogue concerning comedy and tragedy Gildon feels more at home and again takes issue with the Spectator. He laments Addison's propitiations to false gods and thinks it a pity that he (Addison) "had to corrupt his taste by approbation of the Opera. How false all this criticism is will be seen by what Mr. Dennis has judiciously replied to it in his letter to the Spectator published with his essay on the 'Genius and Writings of Shakespeare!'" Gildon criticizes the portrayal of emotions on the stage in much the same words as he used in his "Life of Betterton". "The excess of pity is what tragedy should correct, likewise fear and terror." Admiration is too calm a passion for tragedy, nor is love always to be included. Altho this last named is not included in Shakespeare's

tragedies, which Gildon considers far superior to his comedies, he is not therefore, "for entirely excluding love from our tragedies; but then I would have a love consistent with modesty.I am entirely against these tedious scenes of courtship." In conclusion Gildon gives us a sound definition for tragedy. "A tragedy is therefore an imitation of one, serious, grave, and entire action, of a just length and contained within the unities of time and place; and which, without narration, by the means of terror and compassion purges those passions and all others like them." It is noticeable throughout this essay that wherever Gildon differs from the Duke of Buckingham's Essay on Poetry he attempts to smooth over his differing by reading into the former's lines interpretations that are not there. Gildon never became so absorbed in his subject matter that he forgot to whom he would owe financial return for his work.

The value of the epic poem, according to Gildon, is more to be exalted by its matter than by its form. It must not give history absolute but history perfected, and in so doing it must maintain a just proportion of all its parts. As opposed to tragedy which should be pure action, it should be purely narrative. Gildon praises "Paradise Lost" as the great English epic, and remembering Pope, again remarks upon those men, "who have vanity enough to fancy themselves epic poets, and have the luck of a transient reception of their works of this kind." In a discussion of technicalities Gildon passes from the sublimity of style, "this rock upon which mean wits split...from which they fly out in all directions", to a detailed analysis of spondaic Greek meter which though doubtless accurate and enlightening is in no way connected with his critical faculties.

We may conclude from a detailed analysis of Gildon's "Art of Poetry" that, although the author has given several sound classical

principles, they are so outnumbered by the quotations inserted for financial as much as illustrative reasons, by the vituperative attacks of Gildon upon his literary enemies, and by the digressions harking back to earlier works that their literary value, and consequently Gildon's prestige as a minor critic is lessened.

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Gildon's importance as a critic is negligible when we compare his work with that of the many far greater critics of his day, but an inquiry into his literary activities gives us a better appreciation of the state of England's lower literary classes of the early eighteenth century; into their quarrels, their friendships, their difficulties, their literary versatility, and their envious regard of their more successful literary superiors. His literary likes and dislikes are typical of the literary school to which he unwillingly belonged. A study of his critical faculty gives us an insight not only into Gildon's private life but also into that of the innumerable Grub Street writers who, like him, swam protestingly down the stream of early eighteenth century literary endeavor, striving ever for a foothold on the slippery bottom, crawling up on the clay banks, safe for a moment, only to fall back again as the bank gives way beneath them.

Charles Gildon was never a great critic. His critical judgment was always warped by financial considerations, by personal animosity aroused for the most part through envy, and by religious conviction. After 1704 his critical faculty was hampered by his religious views. Probably his early Catholic training had as much to do with this as any other factor, and certainly his physical condition (Gildon was never well after 1704) must have exerted its influence upon his mind. He condemns play as immoral and irreligious,

using the two words as synonyms. He frequently cites the Bible as conclusive authority as proof of a contention, and he is particularly bitter in his denunciation of the Deistical tendencies of the time.

In his literary criticism he is essentially a classicist. He measured poetry by the Aristotelian rule, as laid down by Horace, and cited classical precepts upon every available occasion. Particularly in his "Art of Poetry" is this trait apparent. He gives no original rules for literary procedure but combines his remembered early groundings in the classics with his commercialized translations and after assimilating them gives them to us, often neglecting to mention his original source of information. In his dramatic criticism, and to a lesser degree in his dramatic practice, he adheres strictly to the Aristotelian precepts, and in this he is at his best.

In conclusion then, when we consider Charles Gildon merely as an individual, his works fall into insignificance; but when we consider him as representative of a literary school whose members were legion in his day and whose vituperative criticisms often lifted authors and their works at which they were aimed into prominence, a study of his works and of his life affords us a glimpse into the literary world of the early eighteenth century that cannot be gained any other way.

Charles Gildon, Critic.

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