

Joseph Addison as a Literary
Critic

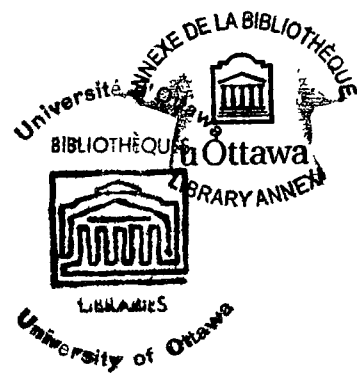
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This thesis is
humbly dedicated to my friend
Dr. S. L. Lacy, Jr.
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of Mount Vernon University, D. C.

Preface

The author of this thesis makes no apology for having undertaken a study of Addison as a critic, conscious as he is that the work will appeal to only a limited audience. Addison may not have been the greatest critic of the eighteenth century, but he moulded the tastes of a large section of the English reading public. It may be true that his criticism is unscientific, that he often judges by taste, and that even his best critical papers are sometimes superficial; nevertheless, the opinions on literature of a virtuoso and journalist should merit our serious consideration. Interest has been displayed in the critical comments of Reynolds, an artist, Hume, and historian, and Burke, a statesman. Is it not reasonable, then, to want to explore the literary criticism of a professional newspaperman? After all, people of his age knew Addison as one of the leading tragedians of his day, author of brilliant Latin verses, and outstanding exponent of the periodical essay. In reality, he has influenced a much larger group than either Pope or Johnson.

It should be mentioned that the war has affected this thesis in various ways. The quality of paper and carbons in the United States and Canada is no longer uniform. Frequently, too, the author has had to be satisfied with other than the definitive editions of some of the works of eighteenth century critics because of the restrictions upon travel.

This piece of research was begun at Duke University in 1935, under the direction of Dr. Allan H. Gilbert, who kindly loaned the author his unpublished translation of Trissino's Poetica. Others who gave valuable advice and assistance are Professor Frank McDonald, Rev. Henri Poupart, O. M. I., and other members of the graduate staff of the University of Ottawa, Dr. Richmond Bond, University of North Carolina, and Dr. Jay B. Hubbell, Duke University. Mention should also be made of the typing done by the writer's wife, an invaluable aid.

The completion of the thesis was expedited by the kind co-operation of members of the staffs of the following libraries:

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Chapter I.

Addison the Virtuoso: His Qualifications as a Critic

Literary men of almost every age have objected strenuously to professional criticism on the grounds that literary critics are prone to be unsympathetic and biased. John Keats, maligned by hypercritical British critics, passed on in his prime "to seek a kinder clime."¹ Edgar Allan Poe, himself a reputable critic, was contemned by reviewers writing for the New York Mirror, largely because these custodians of public morals were more concerned with Poe's ability to imbibe alcoholic spirits than with the beauty of his melodious pure poetry.² Shakespeare, considered by many Neo-classic critics as an inspired idiot, failed to impress some eighteenth century reviewers simply because they were too prejudiced to be able to evaluate properly romantic genius.³ In one age it is the subservience to Aristotle's Poetics that perverts the judgment; in another, some other influence or doctrine. When we have, therefore, a distinguished critic who recognizes certain a priori rules as governing art,⁴ and who is at once the artist and the unbiased reviewer, the judgments which he makes are worthy of our closest scrutiny; for, as Addison has said, "Among the moderns likewise, no critic has ever pleased, or been

1. Edmund Blunden, Leigh Hunt's 'Examiner' Examined(London), p. 158.

2. Hervey Allen, Israfel(New York, 1934), p. 566.

3. See Bonamy Dobree, As Their Friends Saw Them(London, 1933), p. 106. This dialogue illustrates the indifference of Neo-classicists to Shakespeare's art.

4. See Henry Home, An Abridgement of Elements of Criticism, ed. J. Frost (New York, 1850), p. 298 ff. Kames says that there are certain things, unaffected by popular standards, which affect us the same.

looked upon as authentic, who did not show by his practice, that he was a master of the theory.¹ Now it so happens that such a man is a rarity in any age. Perhaps Neo-classic England produced more than its share of such men-of-letters; but even the Augustan Age has few men who rank with Joseph Addison in the field of literary criticism. Addison was not only one of England's greatest essayists and dramatists, but his scholarly estimates of Milton and the traditional ballad, his origination of the cult of the imagination (with the publication of those delightful essays, "The Pleasures of the Imagination," a series of papers which altered the course of eighteenth century poetry), together with his cogent comments on various aspects of English and classical literatures, have served to establish him as one of the most adept and unbiased of our English critics.

One of the most important factors in determining the ability of a critic to judge the works of his contemporaries and predecessors is his education. The author of penetrating criticism must be steeped in the past and alive to the present. Joseph Addison was particularly fortunate in this respect. His university training made him conscious of antiquity, and the highly developed mind of the mature Addison became singularly sensitive to the beauties of the artistic performances of his coetans. At an early age he was enrolled at Charterhouse School, later entering Queen's College² and Magdalen College, Oxford.³ His first years of study were devoted

1. The Guardian, No. 115, July 23.

2. Addison's father had also attended Queen's (see The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, ed. R. Hurd (London, 1889), VI, 673.

3. Addison originally planned to take holy orders (ibid., VI, 675).

largely to the masters of antiquity, whom he imitated in his well-executed Latin poetry.¹ As a result of this predilection for the works of the ancients, his language assumed a classical tone.² Doubtless this was one of the reasons why Addison appreciated the style of Milton, a style abounding in Latinisms. Our critic says:

Milton, by the above-mentioned helps, and by the choice of the noblest words and phrases which our tongue would afford him, has carried our language to a greater height than any of the English poets have ever done before or after him, and has made the sublimity of his style equal to that of his sentiments.

I have been the more particular in these observations on Milton's style, because it is that part of him in which he appears the most singular. The remarks I have here made upon the practice of other poets, with my observations out of Aristotle, will perhaps alleviate the prejudice which some have taken to his poem upon this account; though, after all, I must confess, that I think his style, though admirable in general, is in some places too much stiffened and obscured by the frequent use of those methods, which Aristotle has prescribed for the raising of it.³

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1. The importance of this imitative verse may be understood if one peruses Trissino's Poetica, in which the Italian critic states: "It is easy, then, to understand that it is natural for us to imitate, since man is more given to imitation than any other animal, and he first learns from imitation; hence the children most given to imitation develop greatest ability." See Trissino's Poetica, tr. A. H. Gilbert (UNPUBLISHED MS.), pp. 3-4.
 2. The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison, ed. A. C. Guthkelch (London, 1914), I, xiii.
 3. The Spectator, No. 285, January 26.

When Addison was twenty-eight years of age, he journeyed to France, Italy, Austria, and other continental countries on a pension granted him by King William III, thus broadening his receptive mind for the literary tasks he was to undertake later in his life. Although some great writers, musicians, and philosophers, notably Kant, Bach, and Beethoven,¹ disdained to travel beyond the frontiers of their own nations, it cannot be denied that a first-hand knowledge of a foreign culture is often the means of understanding it. In order to appreciate many of the finer things in life, one must understand them. Addison became deeply absorbed in the study of European arts, so much so that he began research work in Vienna, according to his Letter to Stepney, November, 1702, on the metals of European countries. This material was incorporated in his famous Dialogues upon Medals.² It is interesting to notice, furthermore, that our critic was prompted by his travels to introduce Boileau to the Musae Anglicanae.³ But, strangely enough, Addison's sojourn in Italy did not lead to his appreciation of Italian opera, especially as he saw it represented upon the English stage.⁴ One suspects that his aversion to opera is

1. Hendrik W. Van Loon, The Arts (New York, 1937), p. 525.

2. J. Addison, Miscellaneous Works, I, xv-xvii. Hereafter denoted by Misc. Wks.

3. Addison edited the second volume of this work.

4. The Spectator, No. 18, March 21.

caused by two influences. The first is obviously the attitude of Plato toward music as brought forth in the Republic. Addison's reverence for antiquity was such that he readily agreed with Plato concerning the place of music in the commonwealth. The essayist says, "I must confess I would allow it no better quarter than Plato has done, who banishes it out of his commonwealth."¹ And secondly, there is a less commendable reason for his antipathy, namely, his intense nationalism. The utterances in The Spectator cannot be construed otherwise than meaning Addison was jealous of the Italians for having attained a greater degree of success in opera than had the English, for he says:

If the Italians have a genius for music above the English, the English have a genius for other performances of a much higher nature, and capable of giving the mind a nobler entertainment.²

Fortunately, Addison's criticism is comparatively free of flaws of this nature. His travel abroad must not be overlooked, therefore, as one of the salutary influences.

Now it is not the intention of the writer to imply that Addison was impeccable as a critic or as a writer. Too many authors have been eulogized by one age, only to become fallen idols in another era. Lord Macaulay, it seems, represents very adroitly Add-

1. The Spectator, No. 18, March 21.

2. Ibid., No. 18, March 21. Compare Addison's attitude toward music with that of John Stuart Mill, who says, "I at this time first became acquainted with Weber's Oberon, and the extreme pleasure which I drew from its delicious melodies did me good, by showing me a source of pleasure to which I was as susceptible as ever." See Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, ed. J. J. Cross (New York, 1924), p. 101. Italians, by the way, scoffed at Purcell's operas.

ison's literary genius, both creative and critical, in his admirable Essay on Addison. Macaulay says:

We need not, therefore, hesitate to admit that Addison has left us some compositions which do not rise above mediocrity, some heroic poems hardly equal to Parnell's, some criticism as superficial as Dr. Blair's, and a tragedy not very much better than Dr. Johnson's. It is praise enough to say of a writer, in a high department of literature, in which many writers have distinguished themselves, he has had no equal; and this may with strict justice be said of Addison.¹

Yes! "A man of genius and virtue is but a man."² Let us not place Addison on too lofty a pedestal, as is sometimes done with Shakespeare. Even Vicesimus Knox expressed some doubt in his Essays, Moral and Literary as to Addison's ability as a poet. Let us, then, examine Addison's criticism with an open mind, yet mindful that he was destined to shape the character of later classicism. And let us not be oblivious of the fact that Addison's formal education played an important role in securing for him the reputation which he now holds.

The reading of a critic forms, beyond a doubt, a background which cannot be supplanted by any other mode of enlightenment. As our critic points out, reading enlightens the understanding and rectifies the passions.³ It is gratifying to find, therefore, young Addison saying of his reading at Oxford, "I applied myself with so much diligence to my studies, that there are very few books, either in the learned or modern tongues, which I am not acquainted with."⁴

1. Thomas B. Macaulay, Essays and Poems (New York), III, 9.

2. Ibid., III, 9.

3. The Spectator, No. 37, April 12.

4. Ibid., No. 1, March 1.

Nor did he cease reading assiduously after his departure from the university. He kept abreast of the times, ever alert for worthy books to recommend to readers of his papers. We find him, accordingly, suggesting certain volumes for feminine readers, including such diverse works as Rules to Keep Lent, Dryden's All for Love, The Government of the Tongue, La Calprenede's Pharamond, Bayle's Dictionnaire, and the Pleasures of a Country Life.¹ It is only reasonable to assume, then, that Addison did not confine his reading within too narrow limits. Naturally he had certain preferences. With these we shall concern ourselves chiefly.

In his biographical sketch of that frequenter of coffee-houses, Sir Roger de Coverley, Steele says that "Aristotle and Longinus² are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke."³ Both Steele and Addison probably speak for themselves through the personages in their papers. Occasionally Sir Roger and the irrepressible Will Honeycomb are made to express opinions alien to the writers' philosophy; but even these characters usually express Addison's sentiments. H. V. Routh says, "These characters remain mere symbols of the Spectator's philosophy or, at the most,

1. The Spectator, No. 92, June 15.

2. C. D. Thorpe says of Addison's knowledge of Longinus: "Addison was much under the spell of Longinus. He quoted and cited him constantly. His critical theory was obviously much influenced by the liberal doctrines of the great Greek." See Clarence D. Thorpe, "Addison and Some of His Predecessors on Novelty," in PMLA, Vol. LII, No. 4, December, 1937, p. 1125.

3. The Spectator, No. 2, March 2.

mouthpieces to enliven an exchange of opinions, except Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Honeycomb, who after fluttering through thirty seasons of London elegance and immorality, marries a dairy-maid in the country."¹ It is apparent from these remarks that Addison is expressing his own opinions on classical criticism when drawing his portrait of Sir Roger. Because of this preference for ancient criticism, Addison used ancient criteria in rhetoric and poesy when formulating his judgments on modern writers, which is amply illustrated by the evaluation of Paradise Lost.² But Longinus and Quintilian also provided Addison with many of the tenets of his own critical theory, for he points out, erroneously,³ that these critics were the only ancients to draw a distinction between puns and true wit. Since there are frequent references to the works of both rhetoricians, Addison's knowledge of On the Sublime and The Institutes of Oratory can scarcely be questioned. The reverence he has for these critics is demonstrated by his own aversion to puns. Addison states:

As true wit consists in the resemblance of ideas, and false wit in the resemblance of words, according to the foregoing instances; there is another kind of wit, which consists partly in the resemblance of ideas, and partly in the resemblance of words; which for distinction sake, I shall call mixt wit. This kind of wit is that which abounds in Cowley, more than in any author that ever wrote. Mr. Waller has likewise a great deal of it. Mr. Dryden is very sparing in it.

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1. H. V. Routh, "Journalism and the Essay," in A History of English Literature, ed. John Buchan (London, 1929), p. 318.
 2. The Spectator, No. 61, May 10.
 3. Hume points out that Quintilian said that Seneca abounds in agreeable faults (see David Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (London, 1898), I, 243).

Milton had a genius much above it. Spenser is in the same class with Milton. The Italians, even in their epic poetry, are full of it. Monsieur Boileau, who formed himself upon the ancient poets, has everywhere rejected it with scorn. If we look after mixt wit among the Greek writers, we shall find it no where but in the epigrammatists. There are, indeed, some strokes of it in a little poem ascribed to Musaeus, which by that as well as many other marks, betrays itself to be a modern composition. If we look into the Latin writers, we find none of this mixt wit in Virgil, Lucretius, or Catullus; very little in Horace; but a great deal of it in Ovid; and scarce anything else in Martial.¹

This passage demonstrates, first of all, that Addison was well acquainted with the writers, both creative and critical, of ancient Mediterranean civilizations;² and, secondly, that he endeavored to adhere stringently to what he considered the dictates of leading Greek critics. So great was his distaste for the pun, a dislike which probably derives from Longinus, that Addison had contempt for anything remotely resembling a pun.³ How he failed to discern many of the puns in Spenser's Faerie Queene is, consequently, somewhat mystifying.⁴

Having observed the essayist's knowledge of ancient criticism, we should examine more intently his acquaintance with other Greek and Roman chefs-d'oeuvre. Homer was, of course, the

1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11.

2. Addison's knowledge of the classics was so complete that he deserves to be ranked as a classics scholar with Hume and, perhaps, Bentley. See J. Frederick Doering, David Hume as a Literary Critic (Master's thesis: Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 1935), p. 21 ff.

3. See The Spectator, No. 62, May 11.

4. Addison must either have skimmed over the Faerie Queene or he was baffled by Spenser's archaisms and grammar.

idol of most of the critics and writers of the Age of Enlightenment. In 1711 Pope wrote in his Essay on Criticism:

When first young Maro in his boundless mind
 A work t'outlast immortal Rome design'd,
 Perhaps he seemed above the critic's law,
 And but from nature's fountains scorned to draw;
 But when t'examine ev'ry part he came,
 Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.¹

Addison's attitude toward Homer resembles that of Pope: it was the conventional view held in the Augustan Age. Our critic lists the Iliad among "the three great heroic poems which have appeared in the world."² As for his knowledge of Plato, it was fairly complete, if we may judge by the felicity with which he quotes the philosopher.³ But Addison's knowledge of the Greek dramatists, though adequate, hardly measures up to one's expectations in spite of frequent allusion to Aeschylus, Sophocles,⁴ and Aristophanes. He

1. Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Criticism," in The Works of Pope, ed. W. Elwin and W. J. Courthope (London, 1871), II, 41. Cf. Thomas Blackwell, An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (London, 1735), p. 35. Blackwell says that Homer took plain, natural images from life. Robert Wood expresses similar sentiments to those of Pope that nature and Homer are the same. He says that "false appetites and imaginary wants are created, unknown to Nature, to Homer, and the Bedouin." See Robert Wood, An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer (London, 1775), p. 176.

2. The Spectator, No. 351, April 12.

3. Ibid., No. 557, June 30. Addison gives a fairly detailed account of Vergil's use of Platonic philosophy (ibid., No. 90, June 30).

4. Ibid., No. 44, April 20.

11.

was, nevertheless, surprisingly familiar with the fragments of lyric poetry by Sappho,¹ which he analyzes minutely, and with the historical works of Herodotus,² Hesiod,³ Plutarch,⁴ and the other prominent historians of ancient Hellas, not to mention the satires of that first satirist, Siminodes, which show so well the coarseness of his generation.⁵

Exclusive of Aristotle and Homer, Addison's knowledge of Greek letters seems to have been eclipsed by his familiarity with the masterpieces of Rome, which might be expected of an eighteenth century virtuoso. In view of the Latinity of Neo-classic taste and the decided flavoring of Greek culture with the atmosphere of Rome in this period,⁶ the surprising fact is that Addison understood as well as he did the essence of Greek art. Particularly did Aristotle's Poetics feel the Roman influence, for as S. H.

1. Ibid., No. 223, November 15. Addison writes, "Among the mutilated poets of antiquity, there is none whose poems are so beautiful as those of Sappho."

2. Addison offered to translate part of Herodotus for Jacob Tonson, the publisher. Our critic was to have been associated in the project with Boyle and Blackmore (ibid. No. 231, November 24 shows Addison's absorption in Greek history; Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 321). See also "Letter to Tonson, Oxford(?)", February 12, 1695-6(?)" in Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 319.

3. Misc. Wks., II, 9.

4. See, for instance, The Spectator, No. 223, November 15.

5. Ibid., No. 209, October 30.

6. Edward Bensly, "Pope," in The Cambridge History of English Literature, ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (New York and Cambridge, 1933), IX, 84.

Butcher points out, "Aristotle does not indeed demand of the poet that he shall set before himself a didactic aim, nor does he test the merit of his performance by the moral truths that are conveyed."¹ Pleasure was Aristotle's chief norm for testing poetry; the Neo-classics took Aristotle as he was interpreted by Horace.

Vergil and Lucretius were considered by Addison to have come nearer to perfection than any of the other Roman poets. This is more or less in conformity with the judgment of Sir William Temple, who said, "The height and purity of the Roman style, as it began toward the time of Lucretius, which was about that of the Jugurthin war; so it ended about that of Tiberius."² But Addison, as did Hume,³ seems to have had a decided preference for the Georgics, though both recognized willingly the great merit of the Aeneid. Our critic says:

I shall not here compare the style of the Georgics, with that of Lucretius, which the reader may see already done in the preface to the second volume of Miscellany Poems; but shall conclude this poem to be the most complete, elaborate, and finished piece of all Antiquity. The

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1. Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, ed. S. H. Butcher (London, 1923), p. 226.
 2. The Works of Sir William Temple (London, 1770), III, 463-464.
 3. Letters of David Hume, ed. J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford, 1932), I, 209.

Aeneis indeed is of a nobler kind, but the Georgic is the most perfect in its kind. The Aeneis has a greater variety of beauties in it, but those of the Georgic are more exquisite. In short, the Georgic has all the perfection that can be expected in a Poem written by the greatest Poet in the flower of his age, when his invention was ready, his imagination warm, his judgment settled, and all his faculties in their full vigour and maturity.¹

Tully was not quite so highly esteemed by Addison as he was by David Hume² and James Beattie,³ though the English critic does admit that Cicero "guided the lords of the whole earth at his pleasure."⁴ That Addison regards Cicero as having been more proficient as a writer than as a counsel detracts somewhat from his estimate of the Roman orator.⁵ Horace, too, was read with avidity by Addison, perhaps with more thoroughness and comprehension than by most of the Neo-classic school. Like Cicero, whom Addison certainly admired, Horace⁶ does not always

1. Misc. Wks., II, 11.

2. D. Hume, Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects (London, 1772), I, 106.

3. James Beattie, Dissertations, Moral and Critical (London, 1783), p. 648.

4. J. Addison, "Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning," in Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 222.

5. The Freeholder, No. 40, May 7.

6. Addison shows his Ciceronian tendencies in his "Letter to the Earl of Warwick (Sandy-End), May 20, 1708," wherein he displays more than ordinary familiarity with De Amicitia (see Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 367).

receive the critic's unqualified praise, particularly with regard to the Ars Poetica. This trait is hardly characteristic of the Neo-classicists as a group. Our critic comments thus on one occasion:

If a reader examines Horace's Art of Poetry, he will find but very few precepts in it, which he may not meet with in Aristotle, and which were not commonly known by all the poets of the Augustan age. His way of expressing and applying them, not his invention of them, is what we are chiefly to admire.¹

Ovid's Metamorphosis had, quite naturally, been read by the critic, with the following criticism of Ovid's lack of originality resulting:

Mr. Dryden makes a very handsome observation on Ovid's writing a letter from Dido to Aeneas in the following words: "Ovid(says he, speaking of Virgil's fiction of Dido and Aeneas) takes it up after him, even in the same age, and makes an ancient heroine of Virgil's new-created Dido.... The famous author of the Art of Love has nothing of his own; he borrows all from a greater master in his own profession, and, which is worse, improves nothing which he finds: Nature fails him, and being forced to his old shift, he has recourse to witticism. This passes, indeed, with his soft admirers, and gives him the preference to Virgil in their esteem."²

Although our critic reckoned Ovid's poetry was sometimes trifling and puerile,³ he thought enough of his works to translate a portion of them. But the truth of the matter is that Addison did not hold in high esteem all of the Latin elegiac poets(Cat-

1. The Spectator, No. 253, December 20.

2. Ibid., No. 62, May 11.

3. See Works, ed. R. Hurd, III,175. Ad Lesbiam is referred to in The Spectator, No. 229, November 22.

ullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid), though he says in the "Tentamen de Poetis Romanis Elegiacis," a work attributed to him by most scholars:

Occulta quaedam inest carminibus incantatio quae-
nunquam non solet bene formatum pectus grata dubedine
afficere; atque ego quidem opinor in probae illius at-
que ingenuae classis poetarum, Catulli nempe, Tibulli,
Propertii, et Ovidii versibus, aliquid nescio quid sin-
gulare atque valde patheticum existere.¹

Sallust was considered by Addison to have been the "most elegant and correct of all the Latin historians;" but his conclusions seem to have been based upon a perusal of Catiline, often regarded as being inferior to the inspiring Jugurtha.² Statius was recommended by the critic to the Earl of Warwick as worthy of his perusal, but under rather novel circumstances.³ Martial had been read by him without great appreciation.⁴ And Addison had delved also into Juvenal,⁵ Claudian,⁶ Seneca's⁷ moral and dramatic writings, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dion,⁸ and Luc-

1. Works, ed. R. Hurd, VI, 601.

2. The Spectator, No. 55, May 3.

3. Ibid., V, 368. See also The Spectator, No. 286, January 26.

4. Martial and Persius provided Addison frequently with mottoes (see ibid., Nos. 12, 13, March 14-15).

5. Ibid., No. 582, August 18.

6. Misc. Wks. II, 42.

7. The Spectator, No. 37, April 12.

8. See Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 108. For Suetonius only, see The Spectator, No. 287, January 29.

an,¹ as well as Petronius Arbiter,² and the two leading Latin comic dramatists, Plautus and Terence.³ Even comparatively minor Roman writers were well known to Addison, a sufficient proof of his erudition.

Among the minor modern European writers with whom our critic was conversant were Boccacini⁴ and Aretino.⁵ One is not surprised, then, to find that Addison had a good knowledge of Machiavelli,⁶ Scaliger,⁷ and Giraldi,⁸ not to mention the outstanding French critics, philosophers, and dramatists. In fact, though he was not a disciple of the French classical school, Addison was, to say the least, the chief precursor of the French classical school in England, of which Hume and Gibbon were the chief proponents. Now the

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1. See Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 224.
 2. Addison is reputed to have translated Petronius, the work having appeared in 1736.
 3. Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 219.
 4. The Spectator, No. 291, February 2.
 5. Ibid., No. 23, March 27.
 6. Machiavelli's The Prince obviously influenced Addison's contribution to The Reader, No. 4, May 28, 1714.
 7. The Spectator, Nos. 297 and 562, February 9 and July 2.
 8. Cinthio is alluded to in Dialogues upon Ancient Medals (Misc. Wks., II, 342). Though Addison must have been familiar with Italian poetry, his temperament did not admit his appreciating its finer qualities. He says, "I must entirely agree with Monsieur Boileau, that one verse in Virgil is worth all the clinquant or tinsel of Tasso." See The Spectator, No. 5, March 6. Boileau had written in Satire ix, 175:

A Malherbe, à Racan préférer Theophile
Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.

chief French writers whom Addison had read and admired were Boileau,¹ Monsieur and Madame Dacier,² and Rene Le Bossu.³ Like Dennis, Addison was influenced a good deal by the aesthetic theories of these critics. Unlike Dennis, Addison came under the spell of La Bruyère, whom, H. G. Paul tells us, "Addison and the younger critics valued so highly."⁴ The reason is readily apparent: La Bruyère is credited with setting the vogue for Neo-classic character writing. The Traité du poëme épique of Le Bossu,⁵ L'Art poetique of Boileau, and the Discours à l'Académie française of La Bruyère had such a profound effect upon the critical principles of Addison that it is logical to assume that he had read extensively in these authors.⁶ Then, too, the fact that Addison denounced many of Perrault's arguments demonstrates his acquaintance with the works of most of the French critics implicated

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1. The Spectator, No. 303, February 16.
 2. Ibid., Nos. 223, 229, November 15, 22.
 3. Addison questions Le Bossu's defense of Homer on all points (ibid., No. 327, March 15). Le Bossu's Traité exerted, nevertheless, an influence upon our critic, as well as upon Dennis, Hugh Blair, and Fielding.
 4. H. G. Paul, John Dennis, His Life and Criticism (New York, 1911), p. 112.
 5. Notice the direct borrowings by Dennis from Le Bossu (ibid., p. 160), whom Dryden called the best of modern critics. For further information on Addison's debt to Le Bossu, see George Saintsbury, A History of Criticism (Edinburgh and London, 1928), II, 442 ff.
 6. The Spectator, Nos. 297, 315, and 327, February 9, March 1 and 15.

in the controversy concerning ancient and modern learning. The critical value of such a passage as that which follows is enhanced by Addison's firm stand on the beauty of Homeric similes:

I am the more particular on this head, because ignorant readers, who have formed their taste upon the quaint similes, and little turns of wit, which are so much in vogue among the modern poets, cannot relish these beauties which are of a much higher nature, and are therefore apt to censure Milton's comparisons, in which they do not see any surprising likeness. Monsieur Perrault was a man of this vitiated relish, and for that very reason has endeavoured to turn into ridicule several of Homer's similitudes, which he calls Comparaisons a longue queue, 'Long-tailed comparisons.'¹

Besides being an invective against Perrault, whom Temple regarded as something of an apostate,² this excerpt shows that Addison, though he wrote a discourse on ancient and modern learning, was able to appreciate ancient and modern writers alike. Addison, like Dryden, was hardly involved in the quarrel of the ancients and moderns despite this treatise. His mind was too sensitive to the beauties of a performance to be beguiled by the rants of any prejudiced group of thinkers. For this reason Addison enjoys an exalted place in the realm of English literary criticism. But it must not be assumed that Addison's knowledge of French criticism was confined to any particular school, as the foregoing epitome might seem to indicate: Bouhours, whom

1. The Spectator, No. 303, February 16.

2. William Temple, op. cit., III, 474.

Addison looked upon as "the most penetrating of all the French critics," and Monsieur Segrais were also the possession of the essayist.¹

Of the French dramatists, Corneille and Racine were looked upon with favour by Addison, as was Molière to perhaps a lesser extent. Of course Addison was partial to performances in the classical tradition, as might be expected of the author of Cato. But Addison must have read widely in French drama, for he was able to comment intelligently upon both the classical and Gothic dramas of France. Only a careful reading of Racine and Corneille could have resulted in the following critical summary:

Since I am upon this subject, I must observe, that our English poets have succeeded much better in the style than in the sentiments of their tragedies. Their language is very often noble and sonorous, but the sense either very trifling or very common. On the contrary, in the ancient tragedies, and indeed in those of Corneille and Racine, though the expressions are very great, it is the thought that bears them up and swells them. For my own part, I prefer a noble sentiment that is depressed with homely language, infinitely before a vulgar one that is blown up with all the sound and energy of expression.²

Other French writers who must have been perused by Addison include Des Cartes, whose laws of association Addison applied to primary and secondary pleasures,³ the writers of the Bouts-Rimez,

1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11.

2. Ibid., No. 39, April 14.

3. A. Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson (The Hague, 1930), p. 32 ff. Addison, according to Bosker, was the only Neo-classicist to use the appeal to the imagination as one of the chief tests of a work.

whom he condemns as exemplifying "the decay of wit,"¹ Bayle, whose Dictionnaire he recommends to female readers,² Mallebranche,³ Fontenelle's Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes,⁴ and several of the prominent female authors who lent grace to the famous French literary salons.

But Addison was familiar with other foreign writings. He was probably acquainted with an English or French translation of Cervantes' Don Quixote,⁵ with Gracian's El Criticon,⁶ Duns Scotus and the scholastic philosophers,⁷ whose works he encountered at the university, Erasmus, the eminent Renaissance scholar,⁸ and the sixteenth century German historian, Marquard Freher.⁹ Addison's passing knowledge of Turkish tales probably derives from his friend, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who knew such eastern notables as Fatima.¹⁰

1. The Spectator, No. 60, May 9.

2. Ibid., No. 92, June 15. Addison's printer reported finding Bayle open on the essayist's desk almost every time he visited him. See Addison's Spectator, ed. G. W. Greene (New York, 1861), I, 562, n. 4.

3. The Spectator, No. 94, June 18.

4. Ibid., No. 519, October 25.

5. The Reader, No. 4, May 28, 1714.

6. C. D. Thorpe, "Addison on Novelty," in PMLA, p. 1125 ff.

7. The Spectator, No. 239, December 4.

8. Ibid., No. 239, December 4; The Reader, No. 5, April 16, 1714.

9. The Spectator, No. 181, September 27.

10. Ibid., No. 94, June 18..

A few general remarks concerning Addison's knowledge of English literary performances should suffice at this time. It is evident from his diverse writings that he had read copiously the works of his contemporaries and of his precursors. His first-hand acquaintance with Old English literature is doubted; and there is practically no evidence that the critic had any great familiarity with Middle English romances, allegories, or chronicles. That he had read some of Chaucer is to his credit, even though it is improbable that he could cope with Chaucer in the original. No doubt Addison resorted to translations by Dryden or, perhaps, Pope.¹ This indicates, at least, that Addison was curious about the writings of the first poet to use English as the vehicle of his choicest thoughts, which is more than may be said for David Hume. Addison's knowledge of Elizabethan literary men, too, leaves much to be desired; but he was more sensitive to the beauties of some of the Gothic productions of this age than were many of his fellow classicists. He readily acknowledged the genius of Shakespeare; and Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher were not always displeasing to him. As for the seventeenth and early eighteenth century achievements in literature, the critic was cognizant of the chief trends in philosophical, political, scientific, and creative writing. The fact that he was proficient in all of the branches of English and ancient letters and well

1. The Spectator, No. 73, May 24.

versed in science, politics, fine arts, and the art of living entitles Addison to be ranked with the virtuosi.¹

In his Characteristicks Shaftesbury defines the virtuoso as a gentleman who is a lover of the arts and ingenuity, who is conversant with law, politics, classics, amusements, and the arts.² Now it does not follow necessarily that the virtuoso or honnête homme is more adept at criticism than another person of genius; but the virtuoso is more likely to have that delicacy of taste and passion which Hume thought indispensable in the critic.³ No one

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1. For the critic's interest in diverse arts, including lapis lazuli inlay work, Italian furniture, and tapestries, see Misc. Wks., II, 32-55.
 2. A. A. Cooper, Characteristicks (London, 1711), III, 156.
 3. Hume says: "Thus though the principle of taste be universal, and, nearly, if not entirely the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means, excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: The finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labour; and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: Strong sense united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty." See D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 278-279.

can deny that Addison the virtuoso possessed to a remarkable degree those very qualities which Hume, a few decades after Addison's death, proclaimed the minimum essentials in the critic. Judging by Hume's standard, which is as reliable as any other norm by which a critic may be judged, Joseph Addison was well equipped to pass judgment upon the several arts.

Evidence of Addison's delicacy of taste may be perceived in abundance in the admirable critical essays on Milton's Paradise Lost. Our critic says in one instance:

There are several other strokes in the first book wonderfully poetical; and instances of that sublime genius so peculiar to the author. Such is the description of Azazel's stature, and of the infernal standard which he unfurls; as also of the ghastly light by which the fiends appear to one another in their place of torments.

The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimm'ring of those livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful--

The shout of the whole host of fallen angels when drawn up in battle array:

--That universal host up sent
A shout that tore hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old night.¹

Proof of his delicacy of passion is equally easy to discover, because we find in Addison many such passages as the following:

1. Addison says: "It is likewise necessary for a man who would form to himself a finished taste of good writing, to be well versed in the works of the best critics both ancient and modern." See The Spectator, No. 409, June 19.

But among our methods of moving pity and terror, there is none so absurd and barbarous, and what more exposes us to the contempt and ridicule of our neighbours, than that dreadful butchering of one another, which is so very frequent upon the stage.¹ To delight in seeing men stabbed, poisoned, racked or impaled, is certainly the sign of a cruel temper: and² this is often practised before the British audience, several French critics, who think these are grateful spectacles to us, take occasion from them to represent us as a people that delight in blood.²

Such statements as these are conclusive evidence that Addison possessed the superlative virtues of the virtuoso or the honnête homme, a delicacy of taste and passion. In this respect, at least, he was preeminently fitted for the profession of literary criticism.

Addison does not take a firm stand on the matter of the liberty of the poet or the critic; yet from his multiplex remarks on the art of writing, it may be gathered that he deemed it the duty of the writer to praise or blame as he saw fit. In practice, too, Addison is a defender of liberty, for he interceded for a writer incarcerated for sedition.³ The critic's act is comparable to Cowper's humanitarian interest in Phillips, a poor printer who was jailed for selling the treasonous publications of Paine. It will be recalled, in this connection, that Horace had said of the liberty of the poet:

Aut famam sequere aut sibi conventia finge.
scriptor honoratum si forte reponis Achillem,

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1. Addison's condemnation of Senecan blood and thunder is akin to Hume's denunciation of Rowe's slaughtering his characters in The Ambitious Stepmother (see D. Hume, Essays and Treatises, I, 223). Both praise the French for keeping the stage clean.
 2. The Spectator, No. 4, April 20.
 3. J. Addison, "Letter to the Attorney-General, Whitehall, June 16, 1717," in Works, ed. R. Hurd, VI, 455.

impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
 iura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
 sit Media ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
 perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes,¹

Addison's view, it is suspected, was something similar to that of the Roman, whom he admired greatly even though he did not always agree with him.²

The tenet Addison subscribed to that the critic should try to discern and point out the beauties of a work of art, rather than its defects,³ may appear to imperil sound criticism. Carried to extremes, this doctrine would result probably in a critic's giving approval to mediocre or defective performances. In the hands of the virtuoso or honnête homme, however, the theory would not be attended by grave dangers. One finds, accordingly, that Addison the virtuoso accomplished through the application of this principle many feats which proved beyond his fellow critics: he attained a new height in Miltonic criticism; he clarified many of the beauties of Vergil in his Essay on Virgil's Georgics; and he ushered in a new era of ballad appreciation. Far more important from the historical standpoint, Addison was the first classicist to recognize folklore as suitable subject matter for creative art.

1. Horace on the Art of Poetry, ed. E. H. Blakeney (London, 1928), p. 26.

2. The Spectator, No. 253, December 20.

3. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 93.

An open mind is another attribute of the adept critics. Prejudice can have no permanent place in an art, science, or religion which controls the happiness and prosperity of any large group. The public may not be quick to discern biased opinion, but eventually there is an awakening. For the problem of the relationship between a work of art and the reading public is to the prejudiced critic a stumbling block comparable to the fifth proposition of Euclid, vulgarly called the "pons asinorum," because so many English students come to grief over it. Such has been the case with Samuel Johnson. Despite Boswell's attempts to vindicate his celebrated master, Johnson's attacks on Milton's private life, political writings and tendencies, and Calvinistic doctrines cannot be condoned.¹ So it is with Dryden's vituperative criticism of Shadwell in MacFlecknoe² and Pope's unfair assault upon Dennis in the Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot.³ Now if there is anyone who is skeptical of Addison's impartiality, it is only necessary to cite his critique of the traditional ballad, which before Addison's time had been generally looked upon with mild contempt. Yet Addison had the courage to compare Chevy-Chase with the Aeneid and Homer's two great heroic poems, saying:

1. James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (London), p. 397.

2. Works of Mr. John Dryden (London, 1701), III, 30.

3. A. Pope, op. cit., III, 253.

I shall here, according to my promise, be more particular, and shew that the sentiments in that ballad are extremely natural and poetical, and full of the majestic simplicity which we admire in the greatest of the ancient poets: for which reason I shall quote several passages of it, in which the thought is altogether the same with what we meet in several passages of the Aeneid; not that I would infer from thence, that the poet (whoever he was) proposed to himself any imitation of these passages, but that he was directed to them in general by the same kind of poetical genius, and by the same copyings after nature.¹

To the modern reader this panegyric on the writer, as Addison supposed, of the ballads is not unusual; but Addison, in the second decade of the eighteenth century, was jeopardizing his reputation as a critic. George Washington Greene says in this connection:.

To praise an old ballad at the present day would hardly be considered as a remarkable proof of taste. Percy's collection, Scott's example, and the revival of mediaeval studies, have brought out a store of genuine poetry, which critics of a hundred years ago had never dreamed of. But of all the papers of the Spectator there is none, perhaps, which in spite of all the authority of Sidney, Dryden and Moliere, required more independence than this defence of a simple and artless poem.²

The school of thought to which a writer or critic subscribes is another factor governing his success. Of course, the English have not imitated the French in forming schools of poetry; yet, ordinarily, authors and critics have found it unwise to oppose

1. The Spectator, No. 74, May 25.

2. G. W. Greene, ed., op. cit., I, 203, n. Many traditional ballads and intriguing folksongs may still be collected in North Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, Missouri, Ontario, and Quebec (see J. F. Doering, "Folksongs of the Corn Belt," in Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 57, No. 223, January-March, 1944, p. 72 ff.; "Negro Folk-Songs from Louisiana," in The Southern Literary Messenger, March, 1943, p. 7 ff.; "Songs the Cajuns Sing," in Southern Folklore Quarterly, vol. VII, No. 4, December, 1943, p. 193 ff.).

popular tastes and traditions. Matthew Arnold, it is true, was a fairly successful classicist in anything but a classical age. But, as a rule, a writer who pursues a course which is counter to popular dictates is regarded as either a conservative or a radical. Blake and Whitman are examples of those following revolutionary paths: only today are their works being fully appreciated. Addison, with Aristotelian tact, chose the middle course. He adopted, more or less, the traditions of Dryden, even to acceptance of "the fairy way of writing."¹ He drew cautiously from the leading French classicists. But he went a step farther. Basing his theory upon the accepted literary principles of Dryden and the philosophical concepts of John Locke and the empiricists,² Addison proceeded to found the cult of the imagination. Before Addison, Hobbes' Answer to Davenant had been the chief document of the Neo-classic school with respect to the imagination. After Addison, Burke, Kames, Gerard, Beattie, Hume, and Hartley assumed that the imagination acts in accordance with the laws of association. Before Addison, imagination in art had had practically the same connotation as memory, though Dryden, in the Preface to Annus Mirabilis, conceived of it as wit, and Locke had considered it synonymous with fancy. Now Addison did not change entirely the conventional concept; instead, he established

1. The Spectator, No. 419, July 1.

2. Ibid., No. 413, June 24.

the necessity of reckoning with impressions received by senses other than eyesight.¹ Thus we see in Addison the first stages in the germination of the seeds of nineteenth century Romanticism, for previous to our critic no literary theorist or writer since the time of Shakespeare had dared to interpret so liberally imagination. Addison was in many ways a revolutionary critic; but he was also cautious. He made certain that he was building upon foundations laid by Homer, Ovid, Locke,² and Dryden. No classicist in England before Addison had dared to use appeal to the imagination as one of the chief criteria for judging literature.³

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1. Addison said (ibid., No. 417, June 28): "And among the learned languages who excel in this talent, the most perfect in their several kinds, are, perhaps, Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. The first strikes the imagination wonderfully with what is great, the second with what is beautiful, and the last with what is strange." Cf. Blair's remarks upon imagination: "We find not in Ossian an imagination that sports itself, and dresses out gay trifles to please the fancy. His poetry, more perhaps than that of any other writer, deserves to be styled, The poetry of the heart. It is a heart penetrated with noble sentiments and with sublime and tender passions; a heart that glows, and kindles the fancy; a heart that is full, and pours itself forth. Ossian did not write, like modern poets, to please readers and critics." See Hugh Blair, "Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," in The Poems of Ossian (New York), pp. 107-108.
 2. That eminent critic, Mr. George Saintsbury, disputes this, contending that W. B. Worsfold was wrong in eulogizing Addison for his broadened view of the imagination as a criterion by which art may be judged (W. B. Worsfold, Principles of Criticism (London, 1897), p. 55 ff.). Saintsbury is hardly wrong in his contention that Addison does not make appeal to the imagination the final test of poetry (G. Saintsbury, A History of Criticism (New York, 1905), II, 446), but it is questionable whether Addison, despite his avowals, limited pleasures of the imagination to the visual. The Spectator, No. 413, June 24, reckons with auditory pleasures and transcends Lockean theory.
 3. Milton placed reason in first place and fancy next (Par. Lost, V, 11). Addison may be in debt to Milton in this regard.

The possible influence of Milton upon our critic must not be discounted.

But whether Addison was cautious, like an orator developing a timely preparatory refutation, or fearful lest he deviate too sharply from the standards set up by post-Commonwealth critics is difficult to say. One cannot help feeling, however, that Addison is dissatisfied with the urbanity and complacency of the writings of his contemporaries, but that he is too shrewd to expose himself to criticism by admitting it outright, for he says:

If we consider the works of nature and art, as they are qualified to entertain the imagination, we shall find the last very defective, in comparison of the former; for though they may sometimes appear beautiful or strange, they can have nothing in them of that vastness and immensity, which affords so great an entertainment to the mind of the beholder. The one may be as polite and delicate as the other, but can never shew herself so august and magnificent in design. There is somethings more bold and masterly in the rough careless strokes of nature, than in the nice touches and embellishments of art. The beauties of the most stately garden or palace lie in a narrow compass, the ^{imagination} immediately runs them over, and requires something else to gratify her, but, in the wide fields of nature, the sight wanders up and down without confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of images, without any stint or number. For this reason we always find the poet in love with a country-life, where nature appears in the greatest perfection, and furnishes out all those scenes that are more apt to delight the imagination.¹

Although there is a hint of admiration for the beauties allied with strangeness and for the renascence of wonder in Addison's work, he was in many respects a staunch Neo-classic; but we have

1. The Spectator, No. 414, June 25.

in his contributions to The Spectator a definite development in the theory of the imagination,¹ without which the Romantic era between 1798 and 1832 might have been delayed. Hitherto in the Age of Classicism nature, the tested opinions of mankind, was deemed the sole guide of the poet.

First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring NATURE, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.²

Most writers of the early eighteenth century adhered rather stringently to this doctrine of Pope; but Addison laid the foundations for a change in attitude. Pope's supreme authority over English poetry diminished after Addison's theory took root.

Addison did not confine himself to judging a work of art as a whole, despite his high regard for Aristotle and Pope. He did not subscribe to the ideal expressed by Pope in the following excerpt from Essay on Criticism:

'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.³

The influence of Longinus had taken a firm hold on Addison, rendering him susceptible to the beauties of the individual

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1. The Spectator, No. 416, June 27. Here Addison points out the role played by touch and hearing in affecting the imagination.
 2. A. Pope, op. cit., II, 37. See also H. Blair, op. cit., p. 111, wherein Blair says, "Aristotle studied nature in Homer. Homer and Ossian both wrote from nature. No wonder that among all three, there should be such agreement and conformity."
 3. A. Pope, op. cit., I I, 48.

passage. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his critical papers on Milton, in which he says in one instance:

The passage in the catalogue, explaining the manner how spirits transform themselves by contraction, or enlargement of their dimensions, is introduced with great judgment, to make way for several surprising accidents in the sequel of the poem.¹

On the whole, this influence of Longinus was a salubrious one. Combined with the influence of the Poetics upon Addison, it rendered the critic more capable of passing judgment upon literary works of every type.

Addison was aware, too, of many other problems confronting literary critics. Although agreeing in part with Pope that

To copy Nature is to copy them,²

Addison by no means recommended servile imitation of the ancients. For example, he says: "An imitation of the best author is not to compare with a good original; and I believe we may observe that very few writers make an extraordinary figure in the world, who have not something in their way of thinking, or expressing themselves, that is peculiar to them, and entirely their own."³ We find Addison, accordingly, placing Homer, Shakespeare, and Pindar, as well as some of the writers of the

1. The Spectator, No. 303, February 16.

2. A. Pope, op. cit., II, 42.

3. The Spectator, No. 160, September 30.

Old Testament, in this category of natural geniuses.¹ Now he does not necessarily rate these writers above those in the second class, such as "among the Greeks were Plato and Aristotle, among the Romans, Virgil and Tully; among the English, Milton and Sir Francis Bacon:²" but Addison does admit that geniuses of the second class are exposed to a great danger, "lest they cramp their own abilities too much by imitation, and form themselves altogether upon models, without giving full play to their own natural parts."³ From this it may be perceived that Addison believed in going a step farther than did Pope and, in doing so, our critic laid the foundations for Edward Young's exposition of the fundamental tenets of the cult of original genius. In Conjectures on Original Composition⁴ Young says, among other things, "Again: we read imitation with somewhat of his languor who listens to a twice-told tale: Our spirits rouse at an original; that is a perfect stranger, and all

1. The Spectator, No. 160, September 30.

2. Ibid., No. 160, September 30.

3. Ibid., No. 160, September 30.

4. Edward Young's Conjectures on Original Composition, ed. E. J. Morley (Manchester, 1918), p. 7. Blackwell's idea was: "It appears, My Lord, that Nature is the surest Rule and real Characters the best ground of fiction." See Thomas Blackwell, op. cit., p. 333.

throng to learn what news from a foreign land. And tho' it comes like an Indian prince, adorned with feathers only, having little of weight; yet of our attention it will rob the more solid, if not equally new."

Addison understood, furthermore, the essence of wit,¹ another matter essential to sound criticism. Using as a motto Horace's "Ut pictura poesis erit," Addison proceeds to tell us that "nothing is so much admired, and so little understood, as wit;² but in this instance the motto was not well chosen. Dryden's Parallel of Poetry and Painting and Reynolds' Discourses are more to the point. Our critic continues by enumerating the following types of false wit: "the scholar's egg," an oval poem;³ lipograms, written by such ancients as Tryphiodorus,⁴ an "ingenious kind of conceit, which the moderns distinguish by the name of a Rebus, that does not sink a letter, but a whole word, by substituting a picture in its place;⁵ the

1. The Spectator, No. 253, December 20. Addison says, "And here give me leave to mention what Monsieur Boileau has so very well enlarged upon in the preface to his works, that wit and fine writing doth not consist so much in advancing things that are new, as in giving things that are known an agreeable turn."

2. Ibid., No. 58, May 7.

3. Ibid., No. 58, May 7.

4. Ibid., No. 59, May 8.

5. Ibid., No. 59, May 8.

echo, found in Ovid;¹ anagrams;² acrostics;³ chronograms;⁴ Bouts-Rimez, "the favourites of the French nation for a whole age together;"⁵ and the pun, which Addison condemns despite the interpretation of ancient writings by some scholars to give "a kind of sanction to this piece of false wit."⁶ Our critic concludes by adopting almost wholesale Locke's opinion that wit lies in the resemblance of ideas, rather than of words. A good test for this interpretation of wit would be the ability of the translator to retain the original flavor in his work. Addison says concerning this borrowing from English idealistic philosophy:

Mr. Locke has an admirable reflection upon the difference of wit and judgment, whereby he endeavours to shew the reason why they are not always the talents of the same person. His words are as follows: And hence, perhaps, may

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1. The Spectator, No. 59, May 8.
 2. Ibid., No. 60, May 9.
 3. Ibid., No. 60, May 9.
 4. Ibid., No. 60, May 9.
 5. Ibid., No. 60, May 9.
 6. Ibid., No. 61, May 10.

be given some reason of that common observation, that men who have a great deal of wit, and prompt memories, have not always the clearest judgment, or deepest reason. For wit lying most in the assemblage of ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance and congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy; judgment on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being mis-led by similitude, and by affinity, to take one thing for another. This is a way of proceeding quite contrary to metaphor and allusion; wherein, for the most part, lies that entertainment and pleasantry of wit which strikes so lively on the fancy, and is therefore so acceptable to all people.¹

To this Addison adds that the resemblance in ideas must be such as gives "delight and surprise to the reader,"² which appears to be in conformity with the dictates of Aristotle, Horace, and Sir Philip Sidney that poetry should please and instruct.

Addison was aware also of the problems allied with aesthetics,³ the use of novelty, the theory of variety,⁴ and other aspects of literary criticism, all of which will be considered more fully in due course. It must be acknowledged generally, therefore, that Addison was eminently equipped to pursue the profession of literary critic. To this natural ability and int-

1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11.

2. Ibid., No. 62, May 11.

3. Ibid., No. 285, January 26.

4. C. D. Thorpe points out (op. cit., p. 1114) that Robertson in his The Genesis of Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century suggests Addison's indebtedness to Muratori, but no substantial evidence seems to be offered. It is more likely that Addison is indebted to Le Bossu or even Rapin (see René Rapin, The Whole Critical Works of Monsieur Rapin (London, 1706), X, 89) for his ideas on novelty and variety.

ellectual alertness, his education, foreign travel, reading, unprejudiced mind, his delicacy of taste and passion, and his consciousness of the grave problems confronting the critic contributed in turn. So admirably did Addison succeed in the realm of criticism that David Hume said of him by way of tribute: "Addison, perhaps, will be read with pleasure, when LOCKE shall be entirely forgotten."¹ Addison the virtuoso impressed his own age with the soundness of his judgments on literature, and he has enjoyed a considerable reputation, not only as an essayist, but as a critic, right down to the present day. Indeed, no greater tribute could be paid to Addison than the words written by Pope, in his "Letter to Addison, October 10, 1714, in which the accepted ruler of Neoclassicism said, " I am sensible how much the reputation of any poetical work will depend upon the character you give it."²

On the one hand, Addison stands allied with the virtuosi of the School of Taste, Rymer, Dryden, and Temple;³ on the other, aligned with Le Bossu and Boileau, thus becoming what Dryden failed to be, the real English precursor of Hume and

1. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 5. It should be noticed that Hume was not speaking depreciatively of Locke, but there is no mistaking his admiration for Addison.

2. See Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 423.

3. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 17.

the French classical school in Britain. It should be remembered, too, that Addison presages Shenstone and Thomson in his "Milton's Stile Imitated."¹ That a prominent Neo-classicist should depart from heroic couplets and write blank verse in imitation of Paradise Lost is significant, even though the work be ephemeral and ill-inspired.

1. Misc. Wks., I, 149 ff.

Chapter II

On Literary Forms

In the preceding chapter an effort was made to demonstrate Addison's capability as a critic. Let us now examine his comments on the various forms of literature, which represent an earnest effort on his part to transmit to posterity a few original, constructive ideas, though by no means does he neglect important conventional doctrines. Although Addison was a professional writer, he is always the virtuoso in his criticism. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his delightful, unpretentious essays in The Guardian and The Spectator, in which most of Addison's critical papers appear. Seldom does the critic pretend to give an exhaustive treatment of his subject, being content, for the most part, to write somewhat after the fashion of Montaigne, Bacon, and Cowley. Addison's critique on tragedy vies, however, with the treatises of Horace and Boileau. Perhaps the greatest defect in Addison's writings on literary forms is his close adherence to the principles and techniques of Aristotle's Poetics, but this may be attributed to the age in which he lived--an age dominated

by the thought of the Stagyrite. Though Addison never does succeed to the extent expected in transcending the limits of the Poetics, evidence is plentiful of the influence of Longinus, Horace, Le Bossu, Boileau, the Daciers, Rapin, and Pope, not to mention many other ancient and modern critics. This tends to give Addison's criticism a freshness which makes the perusal of his essays all the more pleasing. However, our critic shows veneration for the doctrines upheld by most of the virtuosi, particularly the doctrine of literary types.¹

Our greatest disappointment arises, perhaps, from Addison's neglect of certain forms which he was particularly qualified to discuss. Some consolation may be derived, nevertheless, from the essays treating with the ballad, the literary essay, the epic, the opera,² and the drama. All of these papers are fairly extensive in their scope. And, after all, the periodicals, the chief source of information on Addison's principles of criticism, have a surprising variety of subject matter. It is indeed fortunate that Addison left us as much

1. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 86.

2. Although this is scarcely the place to discuss Addison's views on opera, it is interesting to notice that he wrote: "The Poetry of them is generally as exquisitely ill, as the Musick is good" (Misc. Wks., II, 59). Addison had some basis for his condemnation of the opera: many Italian singers sang in their own language, only to have English actors reply in their native tongue, a practice which has been followed on more than one occasion in our own time.

as he did on the mechanics of literature, even though some of the essays may be superficial or inadequate.

Dramatic Theory

Dramatic theory in the first half of the eighteenth century was constrained by the doctrines of Aristotle. Rymer in his Short View of Tragedy (1693) had gone so far as to advocate the introduction of the chorus into English drama. It is not surprising, then, that Addison is in most respects a strict classicist. Occasionally he embellishes his theory with borrowings from French, English and, perhaps, Italian criticism, but even these adoptions (albeit they enrich his theory of tragedy), are in conformity with the rules of the Greek master.¹ One finds, accordingly, in Addison little which is new in principle, but much which is original in manner of presentation. Whatever else Addison may have been, he was primarily a journalist, not the type of journalist we have today, but, nevertheless, a writer of and for the people. Steele, Addison, and Defoe contributed much to the development of the middle-class point of view. It is evident

1. Addison refers to Aristotle as "the best critic...that ever appeared in the world" (The Spectator, No. 291, February 2).

that our critic's delineation of the parts of the tragedy, though Aristotelian in content, is designed almost solely to extend the scope of his readers' knowledge. Most of the sixty thousand subscribers to The Spectator represented the middle classes. For them, Addison stripped his theory of technical terms: he presented his views in terms the average reader of the paper could comprehend.

That Addison based his theory of tragedy upon the parts of the drama established by Aristotle is apparent.¹ He agrees, moreover, with Horace's interpretation of the Poetics that tragedy should please and instruct, an interpretation which has never been fully clarified by Aristotelian scholars, for Addison states, "As a perfect tragedy is the noblest production of human nature, so it is capable of giving the mind one of the most delightful and most improving entertainments."² Tragedy was, of course, recognized by eighteenth century critics as the quintessence of poetic achievement; consequently, it is not to be wondered at that Addison eulogizes this form of writing. As for the metrical form of the tragedy, he agrees with Aristotle that the iambic metre is the most suit-

1. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14.

2. Ibid., No. 39, April 14.

able, and with Shakespeare and his coetans that blank verse is "wonderfully adapted to tragedy."¹ But our essayist is careful to point out that two or three couplets to end an act often relieve the monotony which sometimes accompanies long recitals of blank verse. This device was employed rather successfully by many of the Elizabethan dramatic writers. But Addison condemns most vehemently any conglomeration of blank verse and rhyme, because these " are to be looked upon as ~~two~~ several languages."²

As for the diction of tragedy, Addison relies once more upon the Poetics. He considers the cloaking of puerile ideas in noble and sonorous language most reprehensible, as he does the habit of Shakespeare of rendering noble sentiments difficult to understand by the use of "sounding phrases, hard metaphors, and forced expressions."³ Those speeches "which are

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1. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14. Beni's Disputatio in qua ostenditur praestare Comoediam atque Tragoediam metrorum vinculis solvere released plays from the shackles of rhyme.
 2. Ibid., No. 39, April 14. It is not improbable that Beni's Disputatio, published in 1660, had reached Addison, as well as a treatise by St. Evremond. Havens points out, however, that Roscommon, Addison, and Johnson had a mistaken notion of the nature of blank verse (see Raymond D. Havens, The Influence of Milton on English Poetry (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1922), p. 55).
 3. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14.

commonly known by the name of rants," something which Hume disapproved of in Dryden,¹ are also deemed out of place in tragedy, for our essayist regards them as "false beauties." In short, Addison does not approve of filling the mouths of heroic characters with bombast, unnatural exclamations, blasphemies, and the sort, blemishes quite common in the heroic drama of the Restoration. He says:

I have seen Powell very often raise himself a loud clap by this artifice. The poets that were acquainted with this secret, have given frequent occasion for such emotions in the actor, by adding vehemence to words where there was no passion, or inflaming a real passion into fustian. This hath filled the mouths of our heroes with bombast; and given them such sentiments, as proceed from a swelling than a great mind.²

Affected diction is not the only conceit or affectation which Addison scored. He lamented the fact that English tragic writers have interpreted Aristotle too broadly in the matter of moving pity and fear "by the dresses and decorations of the stage."³ Thus the critic sums up the matter:

There is some of this kind very ridiculous in the English theatre. When the author has a mind to terrify us, it thunders; when he would make us melancholy, the stage is darkened. But among all our tragic artifices, I am the most offended at those which are made use of to inspire us with magnificent ideas of the persons that speak. The ordinary method of making an hero, is to clap a huge plume of feathers

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1. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 370.
 2. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16.
 3. Ibid., No. 42, April 18.

upon his head, which rises so very high, that there is often a greater length from his chin to the top of his head, than to the sole of his foot. One would believe, that we thought a great man and a tall man the same thing. This very much embarrasses the actor, who is forced to hold his neck extremely stiff and steady all the while he speaks; and notwithstanding any anxieties which he pretends for his mistress, his country, or his friends, one may see by his action, that his greatest care and concern is to keep the plume of feathers from falling off his head. For my own part, when I see a man uttering his complaints under such a mountain of feathers, I am apt to look upon him as an unfortunate lunatic, than a distressed hero. As these superfluous ornaments upon the head make a great man, a princess generally receives her grandeur from those additional incumbrances that fall into her tail: I mean the broad sweeping train that follows her in all her motions, and finds constant employment for a boy who stands behind her to open and spread it to advantage.¹

From Addison's comments on Italian opera, it may be taken for granted that he accepted the notion that the characters in a tragedy should be kings or noblemen;² but he does not appear much concerned about the matter, probably thinking this to be one of the inviolable traditions of the theatre.³ At least Addison does not ally himself with such proponents of the domestic tragedy as Richard Steele⁴ and George Lillo.⁵ But

1. The Spectator, No. 42, April 18. Such a character is described by Fanny Burney in her "Letter to Susy, April 7, 1777." See The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778, ed. A. R. Ellis (London, 1907), II, 176.
2. The Spectator, Nos. 18 and 42, March 21 and April 18.
3. Cf. Giraldo Cinthio, Scritti Estetici: De' Romazi, delle Comedie, e delle Tragedie, ecc. (Milan, 1864), II, 6; B. Daniello, La Poetica (Venice, 1536), p. 34. Trissino says, "Tragedy is an imitation of a virtuous and noble action which is complete and of magnitude." See A. H. Gilbert, tr., op. cit., p. 12. Addison rebukes Otway for employing nefarious characters as his heroes in Venice Preserv'd (The Spectator, No. 39, April 14).
4. G. Freedley and J. A. Reeves, A History of the Theatre (New York, 1941), p. 286; B. Matthews, The Development of the Drama (New York, 1910), pp. 272-273; A. W. Ward, A History of English Dramatic Literature (London, 1899), III, 497 ff.
5. Thomas Davies, Lillo's Dramatic Works (London, 1810), I, 2 ff.

our critic was deeply interested in the custom of English dramatists in extricating their innocent characters from their distress before proceeding with the development of the plot, which would appear to be a step in the proper direction. In this connection the writer says:

The English writers of tragedy are possessed with a notion that when they represent a virtuous or innocent person in distress, they ought not to leave him till they have delivered him out of his troubles, or made him triumph over his enemies. This error they have been led into by a ridiculous doctrine in modern criticism, that they are obliged to an equal distribution of rewards and punishments, and an impartial execution of poetical justice.¹

This, says Addison, is contrary to life. There is no equable distribution of punishment and happiness in real life.² It would appear, then, that Addison departed radically from the Renaissance viewpoint that in tragic performances the wicked should be punished and the virtuous rewarded; but this does not mean that he ignored the moral purpose of the drama. He says in one instance:

The modern tragedy excels that of Greece and Rome, in the intricacy and disposition of the fable: but, what a Christian writer would be ashamed to own, falls infinitely short of it in the moral part of the performance.³

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1. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16. It is suspected Addison was expressing displeasure with the doctrines of Dennis (cf. John Dennis, Original Letters, Familiar, Moral, and Critical (London, 1721), p. 407).
 2. Kames said no innocent person should fall into adversity (see H. Home, Elements of Criticism, p. 248).
 3. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14. Cf. Piccolomini's attitude that poets should praise integrity and condemn vice (see J. E. Spingarn, A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance (New York, 1908), p. 12).

Double plots, executed so admirably by Terence among the ancients and by Heywood among the English, come in for their share of criticism by Addison,¹ who regards double plots as being in the same category as the tragi-comedy, "one of the most monstrous inventions that ever entered into a poet's thoughts." Just how Addison would have viewed an admixture of sentiments as are to be found in Tobacco Road would be a pleasant subject of conjecture. Addison has said, as might be expected of a critic so enamoured of Aristotle ::

An author might as well think of weaving the adventures of Aeneas and Hudibras into one poem, as of writing such a motley piece of mirth and sorrow. But the absurdity of these performances is so very visible, that I shall not insist upon it.²

Evidently Addison had not come under the influence of such Italians as Guarini, who defended the tragi-comedy. Lord Kames, though he discarded arbitrary distinctions in form, agreed with Addison, Pye, and Hurd with respect to the tragi-comedy.³ Though Addison preferred the tragic ending, perhaps he was cognizant of the effective use by many British and continental tragedians of the happy ending.⁴ The critic maintained

1. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16.

2. Ibid., No. 40, April 16.

3. Henry Home, Elements of Criticism (Edinburgh, 1762), I, 116ff.

4. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16. Kennard says of the Pastor fido: "It follows classic models as to unity of place and time but it fuses tragic and comic elements into one harmonious unit." See J.S. Kennard, The Italian Theatre (New York, 1932), I,

unflinchingly, notwithstanding, that the admixture of passions found in the tragi-comedy was beyond the limits of good taste. One might well notice that he drew a distinction between the tragedy with the happy ending and the tragi-comedy, wherein the passions are mixed indiscriminately, something which is not always differentiated.

Addison seems more intent on the proper methods of arousing pity and fear than with any other part of tragedy. He is obviously averse to the English method of slaughtering one another upon the stage. This aspect of the Senecan tradition, which made so great an impression upon the Elizabethans, notably Marston, Webster, Marlowe, and Tourneur, left our critic sickened by its repulsiveness. Both Addison and Hume heaped praises upon the French playwrights for avoiding this kind of artifice.¹ John Home, it will be recalled, used blood and thunder rather sparingly in Douglas, if one takes into account the folk backgrounds of the play. Addison points out, furthermore, that the Greek tragic writers used more finesse in handling situations of this sort than did the majority of English dramatists.

It may not be unacceptable to the reader, to see how Sophocles has conducted a tragedy under the like

1. The Spectator, No. 44, April 20. Kames takes issue on this point, claiming that the Greeks were not so effeminate in their taste as the French (see H. Home, op. cit., p. 261 ff.)

delicate circumstances. Orestes was in the same condition with Hamlet in Shakespeare, his mother having murdered his father, and taken possession of his kingdom in conspiracy with her adulterer. That young prince, therefore, being determined to revenge his father's death upon those who filled his throne, conveys himself by a beautiful stratagem into his mother's apartment, with a resolution to kill her. But because such a spectacle would have been too shocking to the audience, this dreadful resolution is executed behind the scenes: the mother is heard calling out to her son for mercy; and the son answering her, that she showed no mercy to his father: after which she shrieks out that she is wounded and by what follows we find that she is slain.¹

The introduction of fatherless children was looked upon by Addison with mixed feelings. In the hands of a good writer such an incident might be executed beautifully; yet they "become ridiculous by falling into the hands of a bad one."² When poorly done, such a scene is almost as barbarous as one of butchery. Addison cites an example of this in the following passage:

...I am informed, a young gentleman, who is fully determined to break the most obdurate hearts, has a tragedy by him, where the first person that appears upon the stage is an afflicted widow in her mourning--weeps, with half a dozen fatherless children attending her, like those that usually hang about the figure of Charity.³

Means of arousing pity and fear which appealed to Addison,

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1. The Spectator, No. 44, April 20.
 2. Ibid., No. 44, April 20.
 3. Ibid., No. 44, April 20. Addison was evidently quite familiar with allegorical pictures and emblems (see ibid., No. 15, March 17). Pity was for Kames the ruling passion (H. Home, op. cit., p. 247).

or which were not disapproved by him, are thunder and lightning, the discreet use of the handkerchief, various uses of clocks and bells, such as are to be found in Macbeth and Venice Preserv'd, and the appearance of ghosts. "A spectre," says Addison, "has very often saved a play, though he has done nothing but stalked across the stage, or rose through a cleft of it, and sunk again without speaking one word." No doubt the use of such devices by reputable playwrights influenced Addison's attitude on this matter. Perhaps he should have admonished more emphatically playwrights to use discretion in the employment of these artifices, since excessive application of them might be indicative of a degeneracy of taste. Such is the case with the sentimental drama of the early eighteenth century. However, the weight of the authority he gives to such methods is diminished somewhat by the following excerpt from The Spectator:

I do not therefore find fault with the artifices above mentioned when they are introduced with skill and accompanied by proportionable sentiments and expressions in writing.¹

It might be mentioned at this point that Addison was also averse to the parading on the stage of soldiers in battle array or of the numerous attendants of kings and queens.² He

1. The Spectator, No. 44, April 20.

2. Ibid., No. 42, April 18.

mentions, too, that because the audience is peculiarly susceptible to the spectacle, "the tailor and painter often contribute to the success of a tragedy more than the poet."¹ It is possible that Addison may have been too liberal in his interpretation of the function of spectacle in the light of what Aristotle has to say about it. The Greek rhetorician said :

The Spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry. For the power of tragedy, we may be sure, is felt even apart from representation and actors. Besides, the production of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet.²

Aristotle admits, however, that "pity and fear may be aroused by spectacular means,"³ a statement which Addison must have interpreted as broadly as possible. In the light of recent developments in staging plays, Addison showed wisdom in recognizing the importance of this part of tragedy, because at the present time many extravaganzas are dependent to a great degree for their success upon the merit of their spectacle. Furthermore, scenery and stage properties were assuming a more important role in Addison's day than they had in former times.

1. The Spectator, No. 42, April 18.

2. Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, ed. S. H. Butcher (London, 1923), pp. 29, 31.

3. Ibid., p. 49.

This naturally brings us to the point where a consideration of the Aristotelian catharsis is imperative.¹ Milton, it will be recalled, believed in purging the mind of pity and fear "that is, to temper and reduce them to a just measure with a kind of delight."² Corneille maintained that the theory of the purgation of pity and fear, extended to include admiration, was the most tenable.³ Until 1679 Dryden gave no evidence of acceptance of "the cathartic principle which was intriguing his French contemporaries."⁴ Leading German critics

1. For further information on the catharsis, see A. H. Gilbert, "The Aristotelian Catharsis," in Philosophical Review, xxxv, 4, July, 1926, p. 301 ff.
2. "Preface to Samson Agonistes," in English Poems by John Milton, ed. R. C. Browne (Oxford, 1877), II, 204. For still another angle of the pity and fear question, see G. G. Trissino, Tutte le Opere (Verona, 1729), II, 95.
3. P. Corneille, Oeuvres (Paris, 1862), I, 53. See also Clarence Green, The Neo-classic Theory of Tragedy During the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge (Mass.), 1934), p. 181. Addison appears to have first heard of Corneille's inclusion of admiration in the catharsis directly from Monsieur Boileau. Our critic writes in a "Letter to Bishop Hough, Lyons, December, 1700:" "Aristotle, says he, proposes two passions that are proper to be raised by tragedy, terror and pity, but Corneille endeavours at a new one, which is admiration." Butcher discusses the various interpretations of the catharsis, including Bernay's opinion that the purgation denotes a pathological effect on the soul analogous to that of medicine upon the human body (S. H. Butcher, ed., op. cit., pp. 243-245). Cf. A. S. Minturno, L'Arte Poetica (Venice, 1564), p. 77 ff.
4. Baxter Hathaway, "John Dryden and the Function of Tragedy," in PMLA, LVIII, 3, September, 1943, p. 667.

interpreted the catharsis as meaning the purification of tragedy. It is evident, then, that numerous interpretations are to be found of Aristotle's statement that "tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play, in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation¹ of these emotions."² Addison seems, on the surface, to ignore the catharsis entirely. But does he? He says, "Terror and commiseration leave a pleasing anguish in the mind."³ In other words, though he is averse to poetic justice, the absence of which Dennis condemned in Cato, Addison does realize that the audience should leave the playhouse with a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction. That would hardly be possible without some denouement to mollify the passions. True, Addison claims that tragic events may fill one's heart with as much pleasure as can be derived from happy ones;⁴ but he surely was not impervious

1. Ingram Bywater retains the word "catharsis" (see "De Poetica," tr. I. Bywater, in The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford, 1924), XI, n. p.

2. S. H. Butcher, ed., op. cit., p. 23.

3. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16. Cf. Dryden, Le Bossu, and Rapin (see The Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1900), I, 211.

4. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16. Cf. H. Home, op. cit., p. 260.

to the fact that tragic events improperly controlled at the end of a performance will send an audience home with red eyes and tear-moistened handkerchiefs. Despite the fact that not all dramatic critics believe in the necessity of the catharsis, it is not unreasonable to deduce that Addison's denouement is akin to the catharsis as expounded by Aristotle.

That Addison recognized the unities is aptly demonstrated by his own dramatic writings, written in strict Neo-classic style. Addison probably took for granted that the unities should be observed in the drama, even though he does not say very much upon this subject.¹ In his essay on cat-calls, prompted by a performance of The Humorous Lieutenant of Beaumont and Fletcher, the critic at least implies that he gives his sanction to rigid observance of the unities, when he writes:

I must conclude this paper with the account I have lately received of an ingenious artist. . . . He has his base² and his treble cat-call; the former for tragedy, the latter for comedy; only in tragicomedies they may both play together in consort. He has a particular squeak to denote the violation of each of the unities, and has sounds to show whether he aims at the poet or the player.³

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1. See The Spectator, No. 592, September 10. Dryden is more explicit, agreeing with Corneille that more than twenty-four hours should be allowed (see W. P. Ker, ed., op. cit., II, 157 ff.).
 2. Sic in text.
 3. The Spectator, No. 361, April 24.

But this does not mean that Addison felt that the unities should be observed in all pretentious poetic compositions. The epic, he asserts in conformity with ancient standards, should not be restrained by the same rules as apply to the drama. "None of the critics," he says, "either ancient or modern, having laid down rules to circumscribe the action of an epic poem with any determined number of years, days or hours,"¹ greater freedom should be allowed the writer of heroic poetry. However, our critic jibes poets who violate the unity of place. This is quite apparent to the reader of his "Epilogue" to Lansdowne's dramatic poem, British Enchanter.²

It is only natural to expect, in light of Addison's treatise on the imagination, that scenes which appeal to the fancy would meet with his approbation. We are not to be disappointed, for he says:

Among the English, Shakespear has incomparably excelled all others. The noble extravagance of fancy, which he had in so great perfection, thoroughly qualified him to touch this weak superstitious part of his reader's imagination; and made him capable of succeeding, where he had nothing to support him besides the strength of his own genius. There is something so wild and yet so solemn in the speeches of his ghosts, fairies, witches and the like imaginary persons, that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, though we have no rule by which to judge them,³ and must confess, if there are such beings in the

1. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5. Trissino also held this opinion (see G.G. Trissino, Tutte le Opere, II, 95), though he and Maggi believed in enforcement of the unity of time in the drama.

2. Misc. Wks., I, 177.

3. Cf. Joan Bulman, Strindberg and Shakespeare (London, 1933), p. 18. In the above passage from Addison, we have another instance of his approving the use of folkloristic materials in literature.

world, it looks highly probable they should talk and act as he represented them.¹

All this Addison says with earnestness, despite his having said but fourteen months before, "Poets who want this strength of genius to give that majestic simplicity to nature, which we so much admire in the works of the ancients, are forced to hunt after foreign ornaments, and not let any piece of wit of what kind soever escape them. I look upon these writers as Goths in poetry, who, like those in architecture, not being able to come up to the beautiful simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans, have endeavoured to supply its place with all the extravagancies of an irregular fancy."² In slightly over a year, then, Addison was transformed from a critic who had scoffed at Gothic fancy into the founder of the cult of the imagination; he became, too, the first important classicist to approve the use of legend, superstition, and other folklore in art. This enabled him to appreciate more fully the Gothic beauties in the 'sauvage avec imagination', as Voltaire called Shakespeare.

1. The Spectator, No. 419, July 1.

2. Ibid., No. 62, May 11.

Such matters as peripety, the number of acts,¹ the discovery, and imitation in tragedy pass by in Addison almost unnoticed. The logical assumption, then, is that Addison's views on these aspects of tragic writing coincided with those of the Greek master. Otherwise, an alert and active genius as Addison surely possessed would have given expression to sentiments in contravention to the doctrines formulated by the Stagyrte. This is the same view taken by David Hume and Lord Kames, among others.

Comedy is not subjected by Addison to the same close scrutiny as is tragedy, another common error among English critics which may be attributed to Aristotelian influence. Simply because Aristotle did not treat comedy so fully as tragedy in the extant version of the Poetics, and because the action and characters of comedy are less illustrious than those of the serious drama is insufficient reason for this lamentable neglect.² Perhaps this tendency to ignore comedy is one of the

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1. In practice, at least, Addison approved the Senecan custom of having five acts, for Steele says in his "Dedication to The Drummer: "The editor is pleased to relate concerning Cato, that a play under that design was projected by the author very early, and wholly laid aside; in advanced years he re-assumed the same design, and many years after four acts were finished, he writ the fifth, and brought it upon the stage" (see Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 152).
 2. Trissino points out (Poetica, li, 120) that tragedy achieves moral instruction by pity and fear; comedy by chastisement and vituperation of evil things. We find no such thoroughness in Addison's treatment of comedy.

reasons for some of the monstrosities perpetrated by comic writers of the modern period, many of which violate all orthodox notions of unity, taste, and morality. Where there is a scarcity of rule and regulation, inferior writers justify their transgressions of common sense and decency by the contention that by this very fact greater freedom is admitted them in the composition of their pieces.

What we have in Addison by way of a critique on comedy is based fundamentally on Hobbes' theory of laughter and on Machiavelli's definition of nonsense. The former theory led Addison to recognize the inferiority of the players to the listeners. "Every one laughs," says Addison, "at somebody that is in an inferior state of folly to himself."¹ That is one reason why the Renaissance comic dramatists employed fools, idiots, fairies, and deformed characters in their plays: all these were deemed below average. By way of elaboration, our critic informs us:

I am afraid I shall appear too abstracted in my speculations, if I shew that when a man of wit makes us laugh, it is by betraying some oddness or infirmity in his own character, or in the representation which he makes of others; and that when we laugh at a brute, or even an inanimate thing, it is at some action or incident that bears a remote analogy to any blunder or absurdity in reasonable creatures.²

1. The Spectator, No 47, April 24.

2. Ibid., No. 47, April 24.

Entering into the philosophy of laughter, Addison informs his reader that "secret elation and pride of heart which is generally called laughter" arises from perceiving natural or artificial foolishness. But he claims that the man who chooses his fool from a higher, rather than a lower, strata shows refinement of taste.¹ Judged by this definition, Caliban was a creation of inferior taste. This whole theory of Addison's is akin to Locke's theory of nonsense.

Low nonsense is like that in the barrel, which is altogether flat, tasteless, and insipid. High nonsense is like that in the bottle, which has in reality no more strength and spirit than the others, but frets, and flies, and bounces, and by the help of a little that is got into it, imitates the passions of a much nobler liquor.²

These may be classified, the critic remarks, according to the classification of Machiavelli; namely, what is nonsense to the understanding and what is nonsense to the conscience.³

Comedy is aided by various stage tricks, Addison points out;⁴ but essentially comedy is a species of ridicule in writ-

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1. The Spectator, No. 47, April 24.
 2. The Reader, No. 3, April 16, 1714.
 3. Ibid., No. 4, May 28, 1714.
 4. See Works, ed. R. Hurd, II, 318.

ing.¹ Extremes should not be indulged in, such as the Italians did with regard to lewdness,² because all comedy should be governed by the ordinary principles of good taste. What Addison has said of British women might with cogency be applied to his view of comedies, "Their being fair is no excuse for their being naked."³

Addison deplures the state of English comedy, deeming it far inferior in many ways to ancient comic drama. Particularly displeased is he with methods employed to excite laughter,⁴ with the result that he gives vent to his wrath by citing as an example a supposedly humorous scene from one of Etherage's plays. The harshness of this criticism is mollified somewhat by the concluding sentence, however, for Addison admits that he believed this species of drama warranted more latitude than that usually allowed tragic writers: He states:

In ordinary comedies, a broad and narrow brimmed hat are

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1. The Spectator, No. 249, December 15.
 2. Italian poets, said Addison, had no idea of genteel comedy. Their plays were filled with lewd and filthy double meanings (Misc. Wks., II, 60).
 3. The Guardian, No. 134, August 14.
 4. Cf. Jeremy Collier, A Defence of the Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage (London, 1699), pp. 86-87. De Balbis' views on the progress of comedy are also interesting, because he says comedy begins sorrowfully and ends happily (see J. E. Spingarn, op. cit., p. 66).

different characters. Sometimes the wit of the scene lies in a shoulder-belt, and sometimes in a pair of whiskers. A lover running about the stage, with his head peeping out of a barrel, was thought a very good jest in King Charles the second's time; and invented by one of the first wits of that age. But because ridicule is not so delicate as compassion, and because the objects that make us laugh are infinitely more numerous than those that make us weep, there is a much greater latitude for comic than tragic artifices, and by consequence a much greater indulgence to be allowed them.¹

Oratory

Leading rhetoricians and critics of the eighteenth century appear to have been almost unanimous in the opinion that English eloquence was inferior to that of most European countries. With the decline of the flowery style of the ancients, vehemence of thought was no longer accompanied by animated action.

1. Addison says (The Spectator, No. 446, August 1): "Whatever vices are represented upon the stage, they ought to be so marked and branded by the poet, as not to appear either laudable or amiable in the person who is tainted with them. But if we look into the English comedies above-mentioned, we would think they were formed upon a quite contrary maxim, and that this rule, though it held good upon the heathen stage, was not to be regarded in Christian theatres. There is another rule, likewise, which was observed by authors of antiquity, and which these modern geniuses have no regard to, and that was, never to chuse an improper subject for ridicule." This was Addison's reaction to the sort of performance against which Collier had protested. Some conception of the debauchery of Restoration actresses and patrons of the theatre may be gathered from Lewis Melville, Neill Gwyn (New York, 1926), p. 47.

Hume had so lamented the lack of effective gesticulation by British speakers that he went so far as to advocate the use of the *supplisio pedis*,¹ so popular among the Italians, which had the sanction of no less a rhetorician than Cicero.² Now Addison had expressed sentiments similar to those of Hume some thirty years prior to the publication of the essay, "Of Eloquence," by the Scottish philosopher. Addison had voiced the following indictment of English orators:

Our preachers stand stock-still in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermons in the world. We meet with the same speaking statues at our bars, and in all the public places of debate. Our words flow from us in a smooth continued stream, without those strainings of the voice, motions of the body, and majesty of the hand, which are so much celebrated in the orators of Greece and Rome. We can talk of life and death in cold blood, and keep our temper in a discourse which turns upon everything that is dear to us. Though our zeal breaks out in the finest tropes and figures, it is not able to stir a limb about us.³

Addison cites St. Paul's preaching at Athens as a model of effective speaking, asserting, at the same time, that he deplores the failure of English preachers to achieve similar

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1. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 167.
 2. Marcus Tullius Cicero, "De Claris Oratoribus," in Opera (Oxford, 1783), I, 403.
 3. The Spectator, No. 407, June 17.

effectiveness in their sermons.¹ After all, modern authorities on speech and homiletics are agreed that action is the end of all oratory. Without action, words are of small utility, being as the sounding of brass, a meaningless nothing.² "In England," according to Addison, "we very frequently see people lulled asleep with solid and elaborate discourses of piety, who would be warmed and transported out of themselves by the bellowings and distortions of enthusiasm."³ It was this latter type of preaching which gained for the Wesleys such a large following.⁴

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1. The Spectator, No. 407, June 17.
 2. Cf. W. N. Brigance, "The Twenty-Eight Foremost American Orators," in Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. xxiv, No. 3, October, 1938, p. 367.
 3. The Spectator, No. 407, June 17. Addison's conception of pulpit eloquence seems to warrant the conclusion that he favored pathos, rather than ethos, as a means of persuading the congregation. "The function of the ethos is delectare, while that of pathos is flectere or movere" (see I. J. Lee, "Some Conceptions of Emotional Appeal in Rhetorical Theory," in Speech Monographs, Vol. vi, 1939, p. 67). This is in direct contrast with the orthodox view that "the sermo... aims at relaxing emotional tension" (see M. A. Grant and G. C. Fiske, "Cicero's Orator and Horace's Ars Poetica," in Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, Vol. xxv, 1924, p. 34).
 4. But John Wesley instituted another practice of which Addison no doubt would have strongly disapproved, namely, of trusting in direct inspiration by Providence in the delivery of sermons. Preparation gave way to hope, and the standard of English religious oratory reached an even lower level than heretofore, though this was compensated for somewhat by the increase in enthusiasm (see J. B. Wakeley, Anecdotes of the Wesleys (London, 1878), pp. 108-109).

Now the fact that most English orators do not induce action on the part of their hearers is traceable, in Addison's opinion, not to their rhetoric, but to their awkward platform stance and suppression of spontaneous gesticulations.

The truth of it is, there is often nothing more ridiculous than the gestures of an English speaker; you see some of them running their hands into their pockets as far as ever they can thrust them, and others looking with great attention on a piece of paper that has nothing written in it; you may see many a smart rhetorician turning his hat in his hands, moulding it into several different cocks, examining sometimes the lining of it, and sometimes the button, during the whole course of his harangue.¹

The solution which Addison proposes is simple: "We ought either to lay aside all kinds of gesture, (which seems to be very suitable to the genius of our nation) or at least make use of such only as are graceful and expressive."² But "figulus figulo faber fabro invidet," with the result that Addison's advice fell upon barren ground, and the condition of English public speech remained unimproved. For this reason Addison's writings on oratory must, as is the case with the essays on speech of more than one Neo-classicist, be relegated to the class of literary curios. The remarkable circum-

1. The Spectator, No. 407, June 17.

2. Ibid., No. 407, June 17.

stances surrounding Addison's effort are that papers with the circulation of The Spectator, estimated at between thirty and sixty thousand subscribers, should have had so little effect.

Addison's comments on the use of metaphorical and explicit language belong rightfully to his discourse on oratory. Nothing so distinguishes fine addresses, he contended, as the proper use of metaphors and other rhetorical embellishments. That Addison had due respect for such adornments is aptly demonstrated by the following excerpt from his essay, "Characteristics of Taste:"

He may likewise consider, how differently he is affected by the same thought, which presents itself in a great writer, from what he is when he finds it delivered by a person of an ordinary genius. For there is as much difference in approaching a thought clothed in Cicero's language, and that of a common author, as in seeing an object by the light of a taper, or by the light of the sun.¹

Our critic lauds the ancients in his "Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning" for the pleasure they derived from the eloquence of the time. Although Addison does not venture to the extreme to which Hume went in exhorting the English to imitate many of the beauties of the oratory of antiquity,² still

1. The Spectator, No. 409, June 19.

2. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 173-174.

Addison exalts the oratory of Demosthenes and Cicero to a position far beyond that occupied by the eloquence of any modern speakers. Addison says of ancient oratory:

If the ancients took a greater pleasure in the reading of their poets than the moderns can, their pleasure still rose higher in the perusal of their orators; though this, I must confess, proceeded not so much from their precedence to us in respect of time, as judgment. Every city among them swarmed with rhetoricians, and almost every senate-house was almost filled with orators; so that they were perfectly well versed in all the rules of rhetoric, and perhaps knew several secrets in that art that let them into such beauties of Demosthenes ;or Cicero, as are not yet discovered by a modern reader. And this I take to have been the chief reason of that wonderful efficacy we find ascribed to the ancients, from what we meet with in the present; for, in all arts, every man is most moved with the perfection of them, as he understands them best.¹

Throughout Addison's meagre treatises on the art of public speaking, evidence is to be found that he favored preparation, but just how much he depended upon memory would be nothing more than a conjecture; nor does he make any positive assertion concerning the extemporaneous manner of delivery. However, ~~if~~ James Beattie's statement that "sermons are almost the only sort of discourses, which it is in this country the custom to get by heart" applies to English, as well as to Scottish, oratory;² then it is not unreasonable to

1. See Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 222.

2. J. Beattie, op. cit., p. 47.

assume that Addison favored ex tempore oratory, because he has pointed out that a read speech or one that is perused by the public does not compare to actual audience contact, as we call it today.¹ Even Hume, who was aware of strong public sentiment against "set speeches," is vague on this point.² Evidently the Neo-classic critics found it difficult to arrive at a decision as to the proper course to pursue in the preparation and delivery of a speech. About the only point of agreement was that English public speaking represented a decadent art.³

Satire must always be viewed with suspicion, for satire is probably the most easily misinterpreted of all the forms of literature. The farther one is removed from the age in which it was written or of which it is a part, the more difficult becomes the task of perceiving subtleties in the satire. Very obviously Addison's essay, "Different Classes of Female Orators," is a satirical treatment of the triviality of feminine

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1. The Spectator, No. 407, June 17. See also J. F. Doering, David Hume as a Literary Critic, Chapter II.
 2. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 173-174.
 3. Johnson said of Whitfield, considered an outstanding orator of his time; "His popularity, Sir, ... is chiefly owing to the peculiarity of his manner. He would be followed by crowds were he to wear a night-cap in the pulpit, or were he to preach from a tree"(J. Boswell, op. cit., p. 145).

conversation, and probably a satire on the decay of speech arts among men. In the opening paragraphs of the paper, Addison writes :;

It has been said in praise of some men, that they could talk whole hours together upon any thing; but it must be owned to the honour of the other sex, that there are many among them who can talk whole hours upon nothing. I have known a woman branch out into a long extempore dissertation upon the edging of a petticoat, and chide her servant for breaking a china cup, in all the figures of rhetoric.¹

Basing his thesis on the premise that, despite their natural fluency, women are guilty of trifling conversation, Addison proceeds to classify female "orators" under four heads: first, those who stir up the passions, such as are to be found among British fishwives; second, those who deal in invectives, such as the female wedding guest; third, the plain unadorned gossip; and fourth, the coquette, who means nothing that she says.² Addison wonders at the fact that all classes of female have "this talent for a ready utterance in so much greater perfection than men." But he is not alarmed by their loquacity so much as by the insipidity of their chatter, concerning which he says:

All I am at by this dissertation is, to cure it of several disagreeable notes, and in particular those jarrings

1. The Spectator, No. 247, December 13.

2. Ibid., No. 247, December 13.

and dissonances which arise from anger, censoriousness, gossiping, and coquetry. In short, I would have it always tuned by good nature, truth, discretion, and sincerity.¹

Debating is also dealt with by Addison, but in a rather superficial way. Here, again, the essayist is dealing in satire, striving to aim a blow at those who are open to bribes, or who are guilty of corrupt practices. The result is that about all Addison presents is a brief resume of the methods of argumentation. Socrates, he remarks, used the catechetical method; Aristotle, the syllogistic. European university circles, it appears, argued upon the whole field of human knowledge, taking "all the good sense of the age" and cutting it and mincing it "into an almost infinitude of distinctions." Oxonian scholars, on the other hand, ignored all of the syllogistic rules of Aristotle and when no other device proved successful in confuting an antagonist, "they knocked him down." Such is the gloomy picture Addison conjures up of eighteenth century debate technique.²

Addison's conclusion is that the intelligentsia of the Age of Reason did not carry on an argument in much better fashion than the rabble or the barbarians of yesteryear. He writes:

1. The Spectator, No. 247, December 13.

2. Ibid., No. 239, December 4.

The first races of mankind used to dispute as our ordinary people do now-a-days, in a kind of wild logic uncultivated by rules of art.¹

He was rather disconsolate at the ignorance of cultured Englishmen of the rules of argumentation as formulated by rhetoricians. He pictures their resorting to "club law," "arguing by torture, " and convincing "by ready money."² The most logical inference is that Addison considered these methods even less praiseworthy than the "wild logic" of the masses.

The Literary Essay

The "lucidus ordo," or the method which gives light, is the principle adhered to rather strictly by most successful Neo-classic writers. Addison is no exception; yet the critic points out that not all of his own essays are written with regularity and method, some running into "the wildness of the compositions which go by the name of Essays." "Seneca and Montaigne," he explains, "are patterns for writing in this last kind, as Tully and Aristotle excel in the other."³ It is

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1. The Spectator, No. 239, December 4.
 2. Ibid., No. 239, December 4.
 3. Ibid., No. 476, September 5. For a comparison of Addison and Steele, see Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals (New York, 1930), p. 79.

undeniable that, whatever Addison may have done in practice, he was in theory strictly an exponent of the Neoclassic ideal, since he says:

You may ramble in the one a whole day together, and every moment discover something or other that is new to you; but when you have done, you will find but a confused imperfect notion of the place: in the other, your eye commands the whole prospect, and gives you such an idea of it, as is not easily worn out of the memory.¹

But despite his apparent preference for the ordered essay, Addison copied Montaigne's style more than he was willing to admit. Perhaps, in some instances, he is inclined to be a little more formal than the French essayist; at other times, a good deal more journalistic. There are, indeed, too many different kinds of digressions and personal anecdotes in Addison's papers in The Spectator, The Freeholder, and the Tatler to warrant their being given any other character.² It may not be untruthful, moreover, to say that Addison seldom, if ever,

1. The Spectator, No. 476, September 5.

2. Cf. W. F. Bryan and R. S. Crane, The English Familiar Essay (Boston, 1916), p. xxxiii. J. C. Squire points out, however, that there is a difference between essays produced by the literary journalist and the "full-time" journalist, a difference which will be readily acknowledged. Addison and Steele encountered an "economic determinant" not faced by Cicero. This, if nothing else, forced them to emulate Montaigne more frequently than the classical writers. See J. C. Squire, "An Essay on Essays," in Essays of the Year, 1929, 1930 (London, 1930), p. xv.

duplicates the style of De Amicitia or De Senectute, for example. True, in his dramas, poems, and a few of his critical dissertations Addison manifests a predilection for the "lucidus ordo;" nevertheless, without detracting from the merit of Addison's dissertations, one must admit they are scarcely equal to those of Cicero and Aristotle in precision and order. Perhaps Addison may more properly be placed in the class of geniuses, about whom he said:

Irregularity and want of method are only supportable in men of great learning or genius, who are often too full to be exact, and therefore chuse to throw down their pearls in heaps before the reader, rather than be at the pains of stringing them.¹

But it must not be assumed that there is an irregularity of method in Addison compared to that often witnessed among Romanticists. The necessity of the "lucidus ordo" was too firmly implanted in the mind of Addison for him to have ignored it entirely. This may be one reason for classifying some of his essays with those of the ancients, but, surely the journalistic tendencies of Addison would be sufficient to counterbalance any inclination to do so. As has been suggested previously, Addison's essays were ordered far more than are the productions of most of our own contemporaries; but Addison is obviously attempting to delude his readers when he disowns Montaigne as a model for a large portion of his essays. At any

1. The Spectator, No. 476, September 5.

rate, Addison's presentation of the middle class viewpoint, his dissemination of coffee-house chatter, and his quality of intimacy tend to mark him as an outright apostle of Defoe, Steele, and Cowley, rather than of classical essayists, such as Aristotle, Cicero, or Seneca.

We find Addison saying, furthermore, that "method is of advantage to a work, both in respect to the writer and the reader." The former profits because it is a boon to his imagination in that his thoughts are not obscure and because "every thought in a methodical discourse shews itself in its greatest beauty."¹ The latter benefits since "he comprehends everything easily, takes it in with pleasure, and retains it long."²

That Addison recognized the personal character of the literary essays is apparent in most of his essays in which he expounds his idea of the nature of his own productions of this genre.³ But, though pleasing and entertaining, Addison's essays are purposeful. He did not lose sight of the didactic value of art; and he placed praise and blame where he saw fit. The essays have an avowedly instructional character:

If I have any other merit in me, it is that I have

1. The Spectator, No. 476, September 5.

2. Ibid., No. 476, September 5.

3. Ibid., No. 243, December 8.

new-pointed all the batteries of ridicule. They have been generally planted against persons who have appeared serious rather than absurd; or, at best, have aimed at what is unfashionable than what is vicious. For my own part, I have endeavoured to make nothing ridiculous that is not in some measure criminal. I have set up the immoral man as the object of derision; in short, if I have not formed a new weapon against vice and irreligion, I have at least shown how that weapon may be put to a right use, which has so often fought the battles of impiety and profaneness.¹

Addison is responsible for much of the popularity accorded the literary essay. He released the essay from the bonds of philosophy, by which it had been restrained for centuries. Addison was a journalist of the first rank. Although Defoe probably surpassed Addison as a reporter, the latter's essays remain masterpieces of eighteenth century journalism. They opened the way for the delightful compositions of such modern essayists as Alice Meynell, J. C. Squire, Robert Lynd, G. K. Chesterton, and James Russell Lowell. In Addison we have the transition from the old type of formal, aphoristic, restricted essay to the informal, semi-philosophical, entertaining essays of today. Now this new epoch ushered in by Addison and Steele, for we must include the editor of The Tatler, was not caused so much by any theory they evolved concerning this form of literature, if we except their statements of purpose, as by the authority established by the practice of both writers. Addison, Steele, and Defoe were

1. The Spectator, No. 445, July 31.

our first great journalists. Of these, Addison was probably the greatest, for his influence is undiminished right down to our own day. At any event, Addison and Steele may properly be called the first of the moderns in the field of essay writing. In the history of the literary essay their names stand out alongside Bacon's and Montaigne's.

The Epic

Joseph Addison was one of the last of the great eighteenth century literary critics to defend the formal epic. At the same time, he was one of the first of the Neo-classics to show any genuine appreciation of Milton. True, Blackwell, Lord Kames, and Doctor Blair were interested in the epics of former days; but such prominent critics as Samuel Johnson, Bishop Hurd, and David Hume were either in favor of purging heroic verse from the influence of mythology and the marvellous or were interested in the dissolution of the formal epic. Hume contended, not without reason, that the marvellous part of the epic should be abandoned because it was unsuited to the modern reader;¹ Hurd, under Hume's influence, eventually began to doubt whether epic poetry

1. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 455.

was suited to all ages;¹ and Doctor Johnson found mythology rather displeasing.² Now Blackwell, some forty-five years before Johnson took this stand, had asserted, "The Marvellous and Wonderful is the Nerve of the Epic Strain,"³ an attitude somewhat akin to that held by Addison. Blackwell had defended, moreover, the sudden and flashy type of mythology, which he distinguishes from the abstracted and cool, or artificial variety.⁴ Addison, on the other hand, becomes more concrete in his qualification of the use of celestial machinery and pagan deities when he says:

Virgil and Homer might compliment their heroes, by interweaving the actions of deities with their achievement; but for a Christian writer to write in the Pagan creed, to make prince Eugene a favourite of Mars, or to carry on a correspondence between Bellona and the Marshal de Villars, would be downright puerility; and unpardonable in a poet that is past sixteen.⁵

But whereas several later critics doubted Milton's wisdom in

1. Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance, ed. Edith J. Morley (London, 1911), p. 144.

2. J. Boswell, op. cit., p. 386.

3. T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 26. See also what Aristotle says about the pleasing qualities of the wonderful (S. H. Butcher, ed., op. cit., p. 95): "Now the wonderful is pleasing It is Homer who has chiefly taught other poets the art of telling lies skilfully."

4. T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 163.

5. The Spectator, No. 523, October 30.

using Christian theism in his Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained,¹ a criticism which was also levelled against the French work, Clovia, Addison is lavish in his plaudits. In one instance, he says:

The particular beauty of the speeches in the third book consists in that shortness and perspicuity of style, in which the poet has couched the greatest mysteries in christianity, and drawn together, in a regular scheme, the whole dispensation of Providence, with respect to man.²

Addison goes on to speak also of the "fineness" of Milton's allegory and compares Milton's angels to the gods of Homer or Vergil.³

It is evident, therefore, that Addison was not averse to the inclusion of the Christian godhead and angels in the epic--something which many literary critics tended to condemn. Nor was Addison opposed to any of the major structural characteristics of the epic as written by Homer, Vergil, and Milton. Far from it! Addison lauds Homer and Vergil, both for their characters and fables. Actually he believed

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1. Johnson considered witches, ghosts, and fairies the only suitable supernatural beings in the epic (J. Boswell, op. cit., p. 390); but Beattie thought Satan in Paradise Lost "a sublime idea." See J. Beattie, op. cit., p. 613. Dryden objects to Camoens' use of both Christ and Bacchus in the fable of the Lusiad (W. P. Ker, ed., op. cit., I, 190).
 2. The Spectator, No. 315, March 1.
 3. Ibid., No. 273, January 12.

that Homer had surpassed Vergil in novelty and variety of characters, but his appreciation of the Aeneid was unaffected by this view. Addison, after the fashion of Vida, was willing to assign a prominent place to epic poets, including Milton, whom he considered the first of the English bards.¹ In fact Addison went so far as to place Blackmore's epic, Creation (1712), considered by Dennis worthy of being ranked with the work of Lucretius, among "the most useful and noble productions in our English verse."²

As a critic of epic poetry, Addison is indubitably an Aristotelian. He believed that the fable should "abound in circumstances that are both credible and astonishing," which means that the marvellous was for our essayist something of the "nerve" of epic poetry. "This rule," says Addison, "is as fine and just as any in Aristotle's whole Art of Poetry." Continuing, the English critic points out that if the fable is only probable, it differs in no respect from ordinary history;³ whereas, it descends to the level of romance if it is only marvellous. Here Addison once more strikes the "via media" of Aristotle,⁴ which was rather characteristic of the Neo-

1. The Spectator, No. 273, January 12.

2. Ibid., No. 339, March 29.

3. Dennis maintained that many of the beauties of the Aeneid derived from Vergil's deviation from historical truth; yet, at the same time, he condemned Shakespeare and Addison for departing from historical fact in their plays (H. G. Paul, op. cit., p. 131).

4. The Spectator, No. 315, March 1.

classic virtuosi. Yet, despite all the fervor of Addison's praise of Paradise Lost, he was conscious that its fable was more suited to the tragedy than the epic, an opinion which Dryden, among others, shared.¹

The second important part of the heroic poem, according to the plan offered by Aristotle, is its characters. Addison again concedes this point. Homer, he claims, excelled all epic poets in this respect, for, although Aeneas is a perfect character, apart from Simon, Camilla, Ascanius, and Dido, Vergil's characters fall short of his Greek master's in their variety and novelty. Milton, Addison admits, realized full well the shortcomings of his own characters, but our critic excuses him to some extent on the grounds of the natural limitations of the subject.

The fable of the epic is, in Addison's estimation, perfect or imperfect according to its action, which should have three qualifications. First, it should be but one action. Second, it should be an entire action; and third, a great action.² Addison points out that even Homer could not boast of the unity of his fable, an imputation from which Vergil has not es-

1. W. P. Ker, ed., op. cit., I, 178 ff.; II, 29, 165.

2. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5.

caped entirely either. As for the second quality, it implies nothing more than a beginning, a middle, and an end, which excludes, of course, episodes not bound closely to the main action.¹ In this respect, Addison feels that Milton has surpassed the two great ancient heroic poets, because "we see it contrived in hell, executed upon earth, and punished by heaven."² Greatness,³ the third requisite, is today considered one of the most important attributes of the epic, although the term "epic" has been profaned. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the failure of Wilkie's Epigoniad to sustain the interest of the reader: its action is not comparable in greatness to that of the Iliad or the Aeneid. If we are to believe Addison, however, it was in this respect

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1. Notice Lord Kames' contention that an epic consists of a chain of causes and effects right down to the final catastrophe." See H. Home, op. cit., p. 246.
 2. "The scheme is simple, clear, and grand," says Saurat, "and bears the imprint of Milton's mind." See Denis Saurat, Milton, Man and Thinker (New York, 1935), p. 213.
 3. Tasso's theory that the epic should be illustrious in its action is tempered by the statement that tragic actions move honor and compassion, but these emotions are never aroused by the epic (see J. E. Spingarn, op. cit., p. 122).

that Milton's poem eclipsed those of antiquity, for Grecian wars and the founding of the Eternal City are insignificant compared with the theme of Paradise Lost.¹

The sentiments and diction of the epic also come under Addison's scrutiny, just as they do in the Poetics. The former are "the thoughts and behaviour which the author ascribes" to his characters;² the latter is the perspicuity or sublimity of the poet's language.³ These two qualities, together with the fable and characters, comprise Addison's chief borrowings from Aristotle concerning the epic. It may be recalled that Vida thought that discreet compliance with the Aristotelian epic⁴ rules resulted in the epic's being the most admirable of literary forms.

But let us examine what Addison has to say regarding the sentiments of an epic poem. The critic arrives, first of all, at the conclusion that the poet's sentiments must be appropriate, which he elaborates thus:

The sentiments have likewise a relation to things as well as well as persons, and are then perfect when they are such as are adapted to the subject. If in either of these cases

1. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5.

2. Ibid., No. 279, January 19.

3. Ibid., No. 285, January 26. Thomas Blackwell says: "A LANGUAGE thoroughly polished in the modern Sense, will not descend to the Simplicity of Manners absolutely necessary in Epic-Poetry: And if we feign the Manners, we must likewise endeavour to imitate the Stile!" (T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 59).

4. See R. A. Brower, "Dryden's Epic Manner and Virgil," in PMLA, Vol. LV, No. 1, March, 1940, p. 119.

the poet endeavours to argue or explain, magnify or diminish, to raise love or hatred, pity or terror, or any other passion, we ought to consider whether the sentiments he makes use of are proper for those ends.¹

Much of this is contrary to Renaissance theory. Torquato Tasso, as has been mentioned previously, believed that the arousing of pity and fear lay more in the field of tragedy than in that of the epic. Classical practice seems to substantiate, however, the contentions of Addison, for proof of which one need only peruse the Aeneid. Surely the sentiments of which Maro sings in Book IV relative to the departure of Aeneas from Carthage and the ultimate fate of the disconsolate Dido excite pity in the reader; and so does the account of the tempest in Book I arouse fear lest the fleeing Trojans suffer more losses.

Addison says that Homer is sometimes censured for want of delicacy of sentiment, but our critic is firm in his belief that such a defect could only be ascribed to the manners of the Homeric Age, an opinion which flourished in the eighteenth century.² "Virgil," the critic asserts, "has excelled

1. The Spectator, No. 279, January 19.

2. Thomas Blackwell, generally recognized as the originator of the cult of the primitive in England, believed the Homeric Age was peculiarly fitted for the production of poetic genius. He divides antiquity into three periods, believing that progress ended when Greece lost her liberty (see T. Blackwell, op. cit., pp. 14-15).

all others in the propriety of his sentiments;" and Milton is praised likewise, particularly because his characters had to be conceived in his own imagination. It is unfortunate that Addison did not comment on the sentiments to be found in Tasso's Gerusalem Liberata, in Beowulf, or in such minor epics as D'Avenant's Gondibert or Cowley's Dauides. At any rate he does say that Milton's chief excellence was the sublimity of his sentiments, in which "he triumphs over all poets both modern and ancient, Homer only excepted."² Hurd, in his notes to his edition of the Spectator, takes exception to this statement, saying, "He might have said, with truth, Homer himself not excepted."³

What constitutes poor taste in sentiment is defined by Addison as thoughts which are natural, but "low and groveling." In short, anything vulgar or mean should be avoided assiduously, as should laugh-provoking episodes, if we may

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1. Henry Morley maintains that the Gerusalem Liberata is a carefully planned epic, with sentiments similar to those of the Iliad, with Rinaldo's fury replacing the wrath of Achilles. Addison, on the other hand, classed Tasso more closely with Ariosto, whose artistic tastes were thought boorish in Neo-classic England. See T. Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered, tr., Edward Fairfax, ed., H. Morley (London and New York, 1901), pp. xi-xiii.
 2. The Spectator, No. 279, January 19.
 3. G. W. Greene, ed., op. cit., II, 46, note.

place faith in several inferences. A few examples of lack of delicacy of taste are cited by our critic.

Homer has opened a great field of raillery to men of more delicacy than greatness of genius, by the homeliness of some of his sentiments. But, as I have before said, these are rather to be imputed to the simplicity of the age in which he lived, to which I may also add, of that which he described, than to any imperfection in that divine poet. Zsilus, among the ancients, and Monsieur Perrault among the moderns, pushed their ridicule very far upon him, on account of some such sentiments. There is no blemish to be observed in Virgil under this head, and but a very few in Milton.¹

Perhaps Addison might have cited passages in Milton which are almost bathetic; yet there is much controversy among modern Miltonic scholars regarding the sublimity of a large portion of Paradise Lost. It is possible, notwithstanding his other just criticism, that Addison was either so appreciative of Milton's work that he became insensible to the blemishes in the individual passage, or he was sufficiently Aristotelian to judge the work as a whole. The noticeable effect of Longinus' On the Sublime on Addison tends to make one discount the latter possibility. This is supported by the following quotation from The Spectator:

Let the judicious reader compare what Longinus has observed on several passages in Homer, and he will find parallels for most of them in Paradise Lost.²

1. The Spectator, No. 279, January 19.

2. Ibid., No. 279, January 19.

This Addison said of the sublime passages in Milton. It is all the more alarming, then, that he did not find parallels in Milton for those passages in Homer which have been marked as bearing the imprint of a lack of delicacy of taste. Addison must be defended, however, for recognizing certain faults in Milton's sentiments: he criticized the epic poet for sayings which "degenerate even into puns,"¹ for too "frequent allusion to heathen fables," and for "unnecessary ostentation of learning."²

Still following Aristotle's design for heroic poetry, Addison examines the language of the epic, saying, first of all, "It is requisite that the language of an heroic poem should be both perspicuous and sublime."³ Perspicuity, which is most essential, is obligatory because "a good-natured reader sometimes overlooks a little slip even in the grammar or syntax, where it is impossible for him to mistake the poet's sense." As one of his examples of Milton's laxity in this respect, Addison quotes:

Adam the goodliest man of men since born

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1. Goldsmith makes a similar indictment of Milton (see The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (London, 1901), IV, 422.
 2. The Spectator, No. 297, February 9.
 3. Ibid., No. 285, January 26. Cf. S. H. Butcher, ed., Op.cit., pp. 81-83.

His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.¹

Sublimity is essential because ordinary expressions are shocking to the ear. Addison warns poets, however, not to fall into false sublimity in their attempts to avoid the other extreme, something of which even Aeschylus, Sophocles, Claudian, Shakespeare, and Lee were sometimes guilty. Addison acknowledges the fact that it is much more difficult, though, to perceive such errors in the ancients than in modern compositions.

He says:

The great masters in composition know very well that many an elegant phrase becomes improper for a poet or an orator, when it has been debased by common use. For this reason the works of ancient authors, which are written in dead languages, have a great advantage over those which are written in languages that are now spoken. Were there any mean phrases or idioms in Virgil and Homer, they would not shock the ear of the most delicate modern reader, so much as they would have done that of an old Greek or Roman, because we never hear them pronounced in our streets, or in ordinary conversation.²

Addison gives assent, too, to Aristotle's method of achieving sublimity, though he recognizes that some of these suggestions are more applicable to Greek than to modern languages.

1. The Spectator, No. 285, January 26.

2. Ibid., No. 285, January 26.

The use of metaphors and the "idioms of other tongues," and inversions appealed a great deal to our English critic. Under this head Addison praises Milton, especially for his use of Latinisms and even Graecisms and Hebraisms. He thought this was a step toward sublimity. Few men but a virtuoso would have held this opinion.

The credit which Addison gives Milton for coinings¹ and "the lengthening of a phrase by addition of words, " as well as for inserting or omitting syllables of certain words savors of pedantry. One imagines that the essayist is trying to make Milton conform to the rules of epic poetry found in the Poetics, or to the theories evolved in The Spectator. The same criticism applies to Addison's laudatory remarks on the use of archaisms, though it must be admitted that archaic language appealed to more than one critic of the Neo-classic period. Warton defended Spenser from Ben Jonson's remark that "Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language;"² and from Daniel's attack in Sonnet LII, in which he had said of the Faerie Queene:

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1. Addison refers to Plutarch the reader who objects to this liberty in Milton (The Spectator, No. 285, January 26).
 2. Thomas Warton, Observations on the Fairy Queen (London, 1807), p. 184.

Let others sing of Knights and Palladines
In aged accents and untimely words.¹

Elisions in epic poetry and the use of blank verse also pleased Addison, who found that they elevated the style of Milton.²

But, whether or not we agree with Addison's application of Aristotle's rules to Milton's work is immaterial at this point, for here we are concerned primarily with Addison's own theory of the epic and the extent of his borrowing from other critics.

Addison has still other principles for which he is indebted to the great Greek critic and philosopher. Addison followed Aristotle's example in advising the epic poet to refrain from mentioning himself too frequently, which Addison attributes to the fact that "the reader is more awed and elevated when he hears Aeneas or Achilles speak, than when Virgil or Homer talk in their own persons."³ Then, too, our critic expresses the opinion that the epic with a happy ending is preferable to one which ends tragically,⁴ which is in accordance with Aristotle's dictum that

1. T. Warton, op. cit., p. 171, note.

2. The Spectator, No. 285, January 26.

3. Ibid., No. 297, February 9. See also S. H. Butcher, ed., op. cit., p. 93.

4. The Spectator, No. 369, May 3.

the implex fable is superior to the simple. The simple fable is characterized by an absence of change in the fortunes of the hero; the implex, by a change from good to bad, or from bad to good. Addison believed, however, that the unhappy ending was more suitable for a tragedy than an epic,¹ largely because he felt the mind of the reader ought to be left, after having been transported through a series of disquieting circumstances, "in a state of tranquillity and satisfaction."² But this does not end Addison's borrowings from Aristotle: he believed in "lavishing all the ornaments of diction on the weak unactive parts of the fable, which are not supported by the beauty of sentiments and characters."³ Hyperboles, similes, and allusions are some of the embellishments prescribed for attaining sublimity in such instances.

1. The Spectator, February 9, No. 297.

2. Ibid., No. 369, May 3. Addison says Milton's fable is deficient in this particular.

3. Ibid., No. 321, March 8.

From Longinus, Addison derives the idea that a work with occasional lapses, such as have been dealt with above, is, if written by a *genius*, vastly superior to the work of an ordinary author, even though he may be "scrupulously exact and (his work be) conformable to all the rules of correct writing."¹ Addison subscribed, moreover, to the hypothesis of Longinus that "there may be loftiness in sentiments, where there is no passion,"² and brings instances out of ancient authors to support his opinion. The pathetic, Addison relates, is not essential to sublimity, though passions may "animate and inflame the sublime."³ But, as has been conjectured prior to this, probably the greatest debt which Addison owes to Longinus is for the tenet of the ancient's theory of beauty that the individual passage, not the work in toto, should be subjected to close scrutiny. Without this adoption, the Miltonic criticism of Addison would have been a mere shell, if not entirely impossible.

Addison scorned to draw critical precepts from Tasso, but

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1. The Spectator, No. 291, February 2. This opinion was shared by Boccacini.
 2. Ibid., No. 339, March 29.
 3. Ibid., No. 339, March 29.

he did delve into the criticism of ancient Rome. Modern Italians,¹ such as Tasso and Ariosto, were too much in the Gothic tradition to have had any effect upon the Addisonian theory of the arts.² But Horace was a different matter. With regard to the epic, nevertheless, Addison remained unmoved by much of the Ars Poetica. Only in the broadest generalities did Addison find anything which he proposed to incorporate in his own system. The following quotation illustrates aptly the sort of influence Horace had upon Addison's epic theory:

Horace advises a poet to consider thoroughly the nature and force of his genius. Milton seems to have known perfectly well wherein his strength lay, and has therefore chosen a subject entirely conformable to those talents of which he was master.³

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1. Addison agreed with Scaliger that there should not be too many digressions (The Spectator, No. 297, February 9). Witness, however, what Charles Cowden Clarke says in his "The Genius and Poetry of Chaucer:" Say what we please, we love Homer better because he now and then nods; Dante better for his bitterness and truculence; Livy better for his Patavinity of style; Ariosto better for his endless digressions; Shakespeare better for his puns and clenches; Dryden better for his foxhunter-like falls, while pursuing his break-neck poetic career; Wordsworth better for his childishness; Shelley better for his "ploughman graith;" Scott better for his old wives' prejudices and stories; and Chaucer better for his simplicity often approaching silliness, and his conversational tone sometimes degenerating into twaddle." See The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, ed., C. C. Clarke (Edinburgh, 1868), III, xx.
 2. The Spectator, No. 369, May 3.
 3. Ibid., No. 315, March 1.

Nor is René Le Bossu's influence on Addison to be overlooked. Although he refused to follow the example of Le Bossu in dating the action of an heroic poem from the end of the introductory episode, as Le Bossu does in considering the action of the Aeneid to have begun in Book II, our critic was swayed by the Frenchman's emphasis upon the moral of the epic poem. Again this is to be expected of a Neo-classic virtuoso. So greatly was Addison impressed by the Traité du poëme épique, that he comments upon the delicacy of the moralities interspersed throughout one of Adam's speeches.¹ In a more general vein, Addison says:

Those who have read Bossu, and many of the critics who have written since his time, will not pardon me if I do not find out the particular moral which is inculcated in Paradise Lost. Though I can by no means think, with the last-mentioned French author, that an epic writer first of all pitches upon a certain moral, as the groundwork and foundation of his poem, and afterwards finds out a story to it: I am, however, of opinion, that no just heroic poem ever was, or can be made, from whence one great moral may not be deduced.²

Addison is true to his promise to add something new to the theory of epic poetry. He denounces the too frequent use of technical terms;³ he adds new lustre to the employment of invocations and speeches;⁴ and he gives added authority to

1. The Spectator, No. 351, April 12.

2. Ibid., No. 369, May 3.

3. Ibid., No. 297, February 9.

4. Ibid., No. 327, March 15.

catalogues,¹ so profusely used by Homer, Ovid, Spenser, and Chaucer. It is a pity that Addison did not show the same appreciation of Chaucer's work as he did of Milton's, for had he been more familiar with Middle English, he would have perceived in Chaucer much of the same sublimity which is so apparent in Milton. Of the number of books in an epic, Addison says that Milton showed good judgment in changing the number of books from ten to twelve. This was in conformity with the practice of Vergil, though it will be recalled several poets of antiquity divided their epics into twenty-four books.²

In accordance with Neo-classic doctrine, Addison delights in the abstracted ideas in allegory.³ Romantics, on the other hand, lean more toward concrete imagery; but, naturally, when allegory is employed abstraction is imperative. Furthermore, Addison insists that allegory must be appropriate to be used effectively in the epic. In this connection Milton is censured

1. The Spectator, No. 303, February 16.

2. Ibid., No. 369, May 3.

3. Ibid., No. 339, March 29.

in typically Neo-classic fashion.

...Milton has interwoven in the texture of his fable, some particulars which do not seem to have probability enough for an epic poem, particularly in the actions which he ascribes to sin and death, and the picture which he draws of the Limbo of Vanity, with other passages in the second book. Such allegories rather savour of the spirit of Spenser and Ariosto, than of Homer and Virgil.¹

The Traditional Ballad

Addison may not have been the first English critic to appreciate the ballad; Sir Philip Sidney² and Dryden³ had recognized the intrinsic beauty of the folk literature. However, Addison established something of a precedent in comparing "Chevy Chase" with the Aeneid, an act of sacrilege in the opinion of more conservative Neo-classicists. It was in this respect that Addison was a pioneer in the appreciation of the traditional ballad. "Interdum vulgus rectum videt," Horace had said,⁴ a saying which our critic was quick to grasp. Addison realized that the folk were sometimes capable of taste and good judgment.

1. The Spectator, No. 297, February 9.

2. See Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature (New York, 1942), p. 182. It is noteworthy that Kennedy has recently brought out forcibly the importance of folkways in early heroic poetry (see Charles W. Kennedy, The Earliest English Poetry (Oxford, 1943), p. 149).

3. Dryden even used a folk proverb in the "Dedication to Aeneis" (see W. P. Ker, ed., op. cit., II, 196).

4. See Horace's Epistles, I. 11. 63.

Then, too, he had some of the instincts of an antiquarian or folklorist, though he hardly falls into that category, which resulted in an interest in the beliefs and practices of the North American Indian, in various burial customs, and, of course, in folksongs.¹ It was he who gave the common ballad prestige in the eighteenth century.

Addison's critique of the ballad, though scholarly in some respects, is not a model of scholarship, as we view it today. Without endeavoring to examine the origins or authorship of the ballad, the essayist assumes that it is the composition of one author.² In this contention, he is supported by one modern group of ballad students, but better authorities incline to the view of folk authorship.³ Anthropologists usually take the view that the folksong is composed by an individual but is changed through repetition of the song by the folk. This invariably results in innumerable variants of one song. This is, perhaps, the most tenable of all positions on the authorship of the ballad. Now Addison was aware that folksongs are transmitted orally from one generation to another. Though this observation may seem to be comparatively obvious, it must be ack-

1. The Spectator, No. 56, May 4.

2. Ibid., No. 70, May 21. For a discussion of this problem, see A Book of Old Ballads, ed., Beverley Nichols (New York), pp. xxiv-xxviii.

3. Louise Pound, Poetic Origins and the Ballad (New York, 1921), p. 4.

nowledged that Addison gave the matter some thought, for he says:

When I travelled, I took a particular delight in hearing the songs and fables that are come from father to son, and are most in vogue among the common people of the countries through which I passed
.....¹

An excuse may be found easily enough for Addison's want of knowledge concerning the origins of the ballad, but he can hardly be defended for failing to understand the main characteristics of this form. Apparently he had not read widely enough in existing folk literature, having been content to consider these songs as one would at present the crude compositions of Restoration balladeers.² He did not acquaint himself with the true nature of the traditional ballad, for he makes no comment upon their refrains, stereotyped language,³ rhyme schemes, or metrical form. This may be attributed partially to his preoccupation with the sentiments of "Chevy Chase." He says, for example: "His

1. The Spectator, No. 70, May 21.

2. Compare the ballads Addison praises with those of the Restoration, usually artistic, rather than folk, ballads. See F. Burlington Fawcett, Broadside Ballads of the Restoration Period from the Jersey Collection known as the Osterley Park Ballads (London, 1930).

3. Addison does remark that "merry men" is used for "fellow soldiers" (see The Spectator, No. 70, May 21).

(Earl Douglas') sentiments and actions are every way suitable to an hero."¹ This is a reasonable enough observation, but had he perused or listened to more ballads than he did, he would have found this applied to many more such compositions. Then, too, he was content to base his criticism almost entirely upon "Chevy Chase," resulting in his failure to find features common to all ballads of the period in which it was written.

One true observation Addison did make on the character of this literary type is that it is "full of the majestic simplicity which we admire in the greatest of the ancient poets."² "Had this song (Chevy Chase) been filled with epigrammatic turns and points of wit," he continues, "it might perhaps have pleased the wrong taste of some readers; but it would never have become the delight of the common people, nor have warmed the heart of Sir Philip Sidney like the sound of a trumpet."³ The ballad in question, Addison asserts, was not written in the Gothic taste; otherwise, "it would not have hit the taste of so many ages, and have pleased the readers of all ranks and conditions."⁴

1. The Spectator, No. 70, May 21.

2. Ibid., No. 74, May 25.

3. Ibid., No. 74, May 25.

4. Ibid., No. 74, May 25.

Addison perceived, too, that ballads ordinarily have a moral. In this respect, at least, it conformed with Neo-classic principles, for Addison held that an heroic poem should be founded on some moral precept, "adapted to the constitution of the country in which the poet writes." ¹ Our critic felt that Vergil and Homer had done this, but one suspects that he had to search diligently for any such moral in "Chevy Chase" until he came to the closing passages:

God save the King, and bless the land
 In plenty, joy, and peace;
 And grant henceforth that foul debate
 'Twixt noblemen may cease. ²

Modern readers may sneer at the idea that Addison displayed unusual delicacy of taste in defending the ballad. Yet when one considers that Hume, many years later, ventured to say that the most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony and nature, one realizes the magnitude of the task before Addison.³ None but a virtuoso would have attempted it at the time; no one but a virtuoso would have hoped for success. At that, Addison had to rely upon such authorities as Dryden, Molière, Lord Dorset, whom he cites as a collector of ball-

1. The Spectator, No. 70, May 21.

2. Ibid., No. 70, May 21.

3. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 276.

ads,¹ and Ben Jonson.² But Addison succeeded in establishing the prestige of the ballad; so much so, that within a century many admirable collections, including Percy's Reliques, had appeared in print. Thus began a new era in ballad appreciation and perhaps, mediaevalism. Without the Spectator papers, the vast store of folksongs in the hills of the South, on the western plains, and in old Quebec might have passed unrecorded into oblivion. Addison gave impetus to the movement which produced the balladry of Percy, Scott, and Professor Child.

Miscellaneous Forms of Literature

Our critic commented upon several other literary forms, among which were allegorical poetry, translation, satire, biography, the dialogue,³ and romance; but his remarks were not embodied in any lengthy dissertations upon these subjects. Instead, most of these types were dealt with casually in his essays, or they comprise nothing more than a single issue of the periodicals to which he contributed. He was more verbose

1. The Spectator, No. 85, June 7.

2. Ibid., No. 70, May 21.

3. Addison reminds us in Dialogues upon Ancient Medals that some of the finest Latin and Greek treatises are in dialogue form (Misc. Wks., II, 299).

in his treatment of Italian opera, having written about it in both The Spectator and The Guardian, but this subject is scarcely within the scope of this treatise.

Addison mentions in connection with his discussion of allegory that Spenser was the last Englishman of repute to write allegories with success. So impressed was Addison with Spenser's skill that he once thought of writing an allegory in Spenserian style, an epitome of which was set down in The Guardian, Friday, September 4. There is a possibility that Addison was somewhat instrumental in the Spenserian revival, which numbered among its adherents James Thomson, William Shenstone, and John Keats, even though the proposed work never proceeded beyond the embryonic stages. He did enumerate, nevertheless, several requisites of the allegory which he believed Spenser had recognized.¹ He states:

That an allegory may be both delightful and instructive, in the first place, the fable of it ought to be perfect, and, if possible, to be filled with surprising turns and incidents. In the next, there ought to be useful morals and reflections couched under it, which still receive

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1. Addison's regard for Spenser's Faerie Queene is shown in his "Letter to Ambrose Phillips, Dublin Castle, August, 1710," wherein he says: "I hope you will follow the example of your Spenser and Virgil in making your Pastorals the prelude of something greater." See Works, ed. R. Hurd, V, 383-384. For further information on Spenser's allegory, see The Spectator, No. 183, September 29.

a greater value from their being new and uncommon; as also from their appearing difficult to have been thrown into emblematical types and shadows.¹

Of translation, Addison says, "There is a great deal of difference between putting an author into English and translating him."² This is the keynote to his idea of proper translation. In other words, it is necessary "to construe," as British classics scholars put it, the full meaning of the author's words. Certain suggestions are offered by Addison, some of which, by his own admission, derive from Horace. The prospective translator should, first of all, preserve, as far as possible, "everywhere the life and spirit of his author, without servilely copying after him word for word." Next, the language used should be such as the translator imagines the author himself would have employed had he written in the language into which his work is being translated.³ And lastly, an effort should be made to add wit and humor "by throwing in a lucky word, or a short circumstance."⁴ Works thus rendered into

1. The Guardian, No. 152, September 4.

2. The Lover, No. 39, May 25, Chapt. 19.

3. This is more or less in conformity with the view of Longinus that any author should consider what Homer or Plato would have said under like circumstances. For further information on Longinus' theories, see W. Rhys Roberts, Longinus on the Sublime (Cambridge, 1907).

4. The Lover, No. 39, May 25, Chapt. 17.

a foreign language will possess some of the sublimity of the original. Observance of similar principles, our critic suggests, may be held responsible for the great success of French translators.¹ This attitude toward translation has been characteristic of the true virtuosi of almost every age. Again we find, too, Addison's predilection for French classicism everywhere evident.

Satire was deemed by Addison a very dangerous form of literature. "Lampoons and satires," he says, "that are written with wit and spirit, are like poisoned darts, which not only inflict a wound, but make it incurable."² Lady Mary Montagu branded such an attack upon Pope, Gay, Swift, and Arbuthnot "so horrid a villainy."³ Both she and Addison were later on to be subjected to Pope's blistering satire, though neither had had a hand in the "Epistle to Mr. Alexander Pope." Yet Addison sometimes indulged in satire, but it was good-natured and humorous. He was very careful to qualify whatever approval he appeared to give satire by saying that an

1. Addison laments Dacier's attempting to prove Plato's Christianity before translating him. The "Letter to Charles Montagu, Paris, October 14, 1699," states that Dacier's whole work "is overrun with texts of Scripture, and the notion of pre-existence supposed to be stolen from two verses out of the Prophets" (Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 324).

2. The Spectator, No. 23, March 27.

3. The Best Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ed., Octave Thanet (Chicago, 1901), p. 187.

ill-tempered man's satire will have as its subject what ought to be exempt from this species of writing.¹ Even Addison's foes could hardly bring any such charge against him. Addison's satire is that of a painstaking, logical thinker, as may be witnessed by his satire on female orators. Never does he become vindictive. Indeed, he says:

It is impossible to enumerate the evils which arise from these arrows that fly in the dark; and I know no other excuse that is or can be made for them, than that the wounds they give are only imaginary, and produce nothing more than a secret shame or sorrow in the mind of the suffering person.²

Addison enumerates, in one instance, various examples of European satire, but that of his own country passes untouched unless we give credence to a manuscript note of a Spanish merchant which entitles No. 23 of The Spectator, "The Character of Dr. Swift." Aretino, in particular, is rebuked for the baseness of his satire. In fact, so suspicious of satirists was Addison that he wrote, "I would never trust a man I thought capable of giving these secret wounds." He sums up the matter thus:

1. The Spectator, No. 23, March 27.

2. Ibid., No. 23, March 27.

There is indeed something very barbarous and inhuman in the ordinary scribblers of lampoons. An innocent young lady shall be exposed for an unhappy feature. A father of a family turned in to ridicule for some domestic calamity. A wife be made uneasy all her life for a misinterpreted word or action. Nay, a good, a temperate, and a just man, shall be put out of countenance by the representation of those qualities that should do him honour. So pernicious a thing is wit, when not tempered with wirtue and humanity.¹

For Addison, history and biography were almost inseparably linked. Today there is a more marked distinction between these literary forms. Men such as Emil Ludwig and André Maurois are in reality men of letters as well as biographers; whereas Trevelyan, Rippey, and Lunt, to mention only a few modern historians, are primarily research scholars whose concern is historical veracity, rather than literary excellence.² Now Addison relates that there was a sort of writer in his own day who was so penurious as to snatch almost any opportunity to write about a lately deceased dignitary.

1. The Spectator, No. 23, March 27.

2. A good many historians of the eighteenth century "followed the practice of writing history en philosophe" (J. B. Black, The Art of History (New York, 1926), p. 77 ff.).

These are Grub-street biographers, who watch for the death of a great man, like so many undertakers, on purpose to make a penny of him. He is no sooner laid in his grave, but he falls into the hands of an historian; who, to swell a volume, ascribes to him works which he never wrote, and actions which he never performed; celebrates virtues which he was never famous for, and excuses faults which he was never guilty of. They fetch their only authentic records out of Doctors' Commons; and when they have got a copy of his last will and testament, they fancy themselves furnished with sufficient materials for his history.

Luckily, says Addison, time eliminates such impositions upon public credulity, and only the best endures.

The critic gives us very little constructive criticism, if we except his quoting Gratian's maxim that a man must not only perform extraordinary deeds, he must secure a competent historian. Fortunately Addison explains what he considers a good biographer: he is a writer of good sense and learning, familiar with public business, military tactics, and eminent personages.¹ One not endowed with these qualities, he warns us, is apt to commit notorious blunders and is likely to form questionable opinions of his subject. What is more, Addison feels that it is impossible to do justice to a man whose blood is not yet cold in his veins. He

1. The Freeholder, No. 35, April 20.

asserts:

The truth of it is, as the lives of great men cannot be written with any tolerable degree of elegance or exactness, within a short space after their decease; so neither is it fit that the history of a person, who has acted among us in a public character should appear, till envy and friendship are laid asleep, and the prejudice both of his antagonists and adherents be, in some degree, softened and subdued.

Herein Addison fails to realize the importance of collecting data for history and biography as early as is feasible. Again we have the view of the virtuoso: he was intent on the justness of sentiments, the validity of actions from the standpoint of time, and on the impartial representation of the subject.¹ Scholarship, facts to be gathered from ephemeral sources, and contemporary opinion caused Addison little concern.

Addison lived before the birth of the novel; but neither he nor Steele was wholly unmindful of the worth and possibilities of the romance or tale. Steele had recommended Sidney's Arcadia as an acceptable romance. Their attitude was in sharp contrast with that of Lady Montagu who expressed the view that Clarissa and Pamela would do "more general mischief than the works of Lord Rochester."² Addison's viewpoint represented an increasing consciousness of the merits of the

1. The Freeholder, No. 35, April 20.

2. O. Thanet, ed., op. cit., p. 258.

fanciful and the fictitious. Addison just missed having the novel form in his character sketches of Sir Roger, Phelps reminds us.¹ It was not, however, until 1719-1720 that Robinson Crusoe was written; and Pamela, generally acknowledged to be the first true novel, appeared only in 1740. Yet already in Steele the romances of a "crude age" are lauded, and in Addison there is the first inkling of the validity of imaginative composition. Without these steps, the position of the novel in the eighteenth century might have been considerably altered.

It is noteworthy that Addison also recognized the value of suspense, one of the most significant traits of the modern novel, for he says, "Surprise is...the life of stories." True, he was a little too much concerned with "smooth delivery, and elegant choice of words, and a sweet arrangement," but surprising turns in the story, perhaps the forerunner of plot, receive more than ordinary attention. Still we see in our critic a good deal of the staid, old Neo-classic, as may be perceived from the following passage:

1. W. L. Phelps, The Advance of the English Novel (New York, 1916), p. 35.

There is a set of men who outrage truth, instead of affecting us with a manner in telling it; who overleap the line of probability, that they may be seen to move out of the common road; and endeavour only to make their hearers stare, by imposing upon them with a kind of nonsense against the philosophy of nature, or such a heap of wonders told upon their own knowledge, as it is not likely one man should ever have met with.¹

It is true that Addison's remarks on story-telling bear chiefly upon the oral relating of tall stories,² but he does show some interest in French romances, particularly those of Scudéry. What Addison says of oral tales he has applied in his criticism of Scudéry's use of extra-sensory perception, which Addison believed transcended the limits of probability. Accordingly, he pokes fun at the French romancer in the following terms:

If Monsieur Scudery, or any other writer of romance, had introduced a necromancer, who is generally in the train of the knight-errant, making a present to two lovers of a couple of these abovementioned needles, the reader would not have been a little pleased to have seen them corresponding with one another when they were guarded by spies and watches, or separated by castles and adventures.³

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1. The Spectator, No. 538, November 17.
 2. Addison proposes several methods of putting to shame the narrator of tall tales (Spectator, No. 538, November 17). This is a common folk practice in the American Middle West (See Hoosier Tall Tales (Indianapolis, 1939). Cf. Steele's attitude in The Guardian, No. 42, April 29, 1713).
 3. The Spectator, No. 241, December 6.

Thus it may be perceived that Addison the virtuoso, although he recognized romance as a literary form,¹ was too much absorbed with the higher branches of literary art, with politics, history, and manners to give serious thought to this lighter type of composition. The day of the novel and the short story was yet to come. Although he believed in limited appeals to the imagination, Addison has not fully recognized the potentialities of some other forms involving the imagination, particularly allegory. His remarks on this subject are far short of those of Hughes, who said:

Allegory is indeed the Fairy Land of Poetry, peopled by the Imagination; its Inhabitants are so many Apparitions....²

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1. He points out that romances spring from the passion which was the mother of poetry, love. The agonies endured by heroes and heroines rather amused Addison (See Ibid., No. 377, May 13).
 2. J. Hughes, An Essay on Allegorical Poetry (London, 1715), p. 91.

Chapter III

Addison's Criticism of British Authors

The critical judgments of a literary critic are only as important as the man himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds' critical sketches are important because they represent the opinions of a distinguished artist. David Hume's essays on criticism are significant because therein a celebrated historian and philosopher expresses his views on literature. Adam Smith's critical comments--ignominious though they be--give us the economist's attitude toward literary men. But in Addison we have the reviewer and journalist of the more or less professional type passing judgment upon the works of his fellowmen. His criticism is not the rhapsodical effort of men like Shaftesbury and Temple. Addison was painstaking, scrupulously careful, in his criticism. True he was a typical virtuoso of the Neo-classical period, but something of the professional virtuoso besides. He was not merely the connoisseur of fine art. He dealt in it. But his environment, his training, and his appreciation was that of the virtuoso.

Now Addison was too much the virtuoso to have any considerable comprehension of philology. That was the pastime of the antiquarian. And even those absorbed in popular antiquities in

Addison's day did not possess an overabundance of knowledge along these lines. It is not surprising, then, that Addison displays little or no knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and but a smattering of Middle English. Chaucer is described as a "merry bard" in the Account of the English Poets, but his humor was regarded as obsolete and coarse.¹ The references to Chaucer in Addison's prose are of the most casual nature,² leading one to wonder whether Addison had ever read Chaucer. If he did, he was indeed devoid of appreciation of Chaucer's wit. Other authors of the Middle English period are ignored, except for a few comments on chivalric tales. The critic missed the whole point of the code of courtly love,³ but he perceived enough of the insipidity of the knights to write:

The knight goes off, attacks every thing he meets that is bigger and stronger than himself, seeks all opportunities of being knocked on the head, and after seven years rambling returns to his mistress, whose chastity has been attacked in the mean time by giants and tyrants, and undergone as many trials as her lover's valour.⁴

The ballads are, of course, dealt with more thoroughly than most aspects of early English literature. His admiration of Chevy-Chase marked Addison as a man who appreciated poetry for its own sake. But even less outstanding ballads appealed to him. Two Children in the Wood, "one of the darling songs of the common people," is pleasing to him because

1. W.J. Courthope, Addison, in E. M. L., ed., J. Morley (London, 1898), p. 33.

2. The Spectator, No. 73, May 24.

3. Ibid., No. 99, June 23.

4. Ibid., No. 99, June 23.

it is "a copy of nature." Although he deplures the naïve character of its verse, he admits that "because the sentiments appear genuine and unaffected, they are able to move the mind of the most polite reader with inward meltings of humanity and compassion."¹ That he should have appreciated the "natural" language of these compositions testifies to his development as a critic from the restricted Neo-classic type of the latter part of the seventeenth century to a precursor of Romanticism. Before a romantic revival was possible, someone had to recognize the validity of rustic, or natural, diction. Addison was the man who did it.

It is not less astonishing either to find a Neo-classic critic admiring a work for lack of affectation; that is, a work which really was unaffected.² Pope, among others, had railed against affectation in the Essay on Criticism, but he had failed dismally to perceive the difference between a work which lacked workmanship, as C. E. Montague calls it, and conscious artistry. Addison's ability to discern artless beauty is, consequently, of some significance.

Although W. F. Courthope indicates that Addison sensed the part women would play in the formation of English taste

1. The Spectator, No. 85, June 7.

2. Ibid., No. 70, May 31.

and manners, this seems hardly the case. True, a good portion of the papers in The Spectator are reflections on women; but Addison seems to be making a concerted effort to mould women's taste and improve their manners, rather than to attribute to them delicacy of taste and refinement of manners.¹ Too much of his writing on women is satire for him to have been a prognosticator of female suffrage, writer's clubs for women, and university women's organizations. Indeed, in his reference to "that excellent old ballad," Wanton Wife of Bath, wherein he quotes--

I think, quoth Thomas, women's tongues
Of aspen leaves are made

--it is evident that he had no great regard for female culture.² Yet Courthope is probably accurate in saying that there was something of a reaction in Addison to the two extreme views of women: the Age of Chivalry had regarded them as something exalted, pristine in character and divine in beauty, whereas the Restoration had treated them with levity, considering all women about on the level of the orange girls. Addison does recognize their ability to rationalize and appreciate, but his remarks upon this homely ballad preclude any broader interpretation of his attitude, it seems.

1. W. J. Courthope, op. cit., p. 109.

2. The Spectator, No. 247, December 13. Pope's influence is probably seen here.

The Elizabethan literature marked for Addison, as it did for Hume, the beginning of English literature.¹ What came before was trivial. Even the Elizabethans were considered barbarians by Neo-classic dispensers of "prose cut into lengths and rhymed." In his Account of the English poets Addison says:

Old Spenser next, warmed with poetic rage,²
 In ancient tales amused a barbarous age--
 An age that yet uncultivate and rude,
 Where'er the poet's fancy led pursued,
 Through pathless fields and unfrequented floods,
 To dens of dragons and enchanted woods.
 But now the mystic tale, that pleased of yore,
 Can charm an understanding age no more;
 The long-spun allegories fulsome grow,
 While the dull moral lies too plain below.³

Too much importance must not be attached, however, to this early work in estimating Addison's opinion of British writers because his later judgments are what really count. For example, he says in The Spectator on the subject of wit, "Milton had a genius much above it (mixt wit). Spencer is in the same class with Milton."⁴ One can plainly observe that this is a far cry from the opinion expressed in Account of the English Poets. Perhaps he never fully

1. More, in the intervening period, was considered an enlivener of ordinary discourses (Spectator No. 349, April 10) and King James, an indefatigable punster (Ibid. No. 61, May 10).

2. Wotton thought "true Enthusiastick Rage" the first requisite of poetry (see A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 26). Davenant had rated Spenser next to Vergil and Homer, though he found fault with the poet's language and subject.

3. Misc. wks., I, 31-32.

4. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11.

5. It was Pope's opinion that Addison had not read Spenser when he wrote this (see Spence's Anecdotes, p. 50).

appreciated Spenser--certainly not to the extent that Warton did--but it slowly dawned on Addison that Spenser was an original genius. In an age in which the validity of the imagination and fancy in writing remained to be established, it is not difficult to imagine Addison's predicament.

Ben Jonson may have thought Shakespeare "was not of an age, but for all time," but Addison was a little less enthusiastic about the dramatist. First of all, Addison objected to "hard metaphors" and "sounding phrases" in Shakespeare when his thoughts were just and great, because our critic agreed with Aristotle that opinions, manners, and passions are apt to be obscured by pomposity of expression.¹ Lee was considered by Addison to have been a little more proficient in this respect, an opinion shared by Warton when he compiled his first list of poets.² Then, too, the essayist considered Shakespeare as swelling too frequently into a false sublimity, but Lee is also open to indictment on this charge.³

On the subject of Shakespeare's happy endings in tragedies, Addison is slightly more generous, largely because of the example of Marlowe, Dryden, and several of the Greek tragedians.

1. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14.

2. Joseph Warton, An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope (London, 1806), I, v-vii.

3. The Spectator, No. 285, January 26.

He admits, therefore, that Shakespeare was well within his rights when he used happy endings, but he ventures to say that there is a great difference between tragi-comedy, in which there is an admixture of sentiments, and the pure tragedy with a happy ending. His chief objection is not to the use of the latter by Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Dryden, but to "the criticism which would establish this as the only method" of concluding a tragic episode.¹

Two other imperfections are found in Shakespeare, namely, puns and blood and thunder. In connection with puns, Addison comments that "the tragedies of Shakespeare are full of them." Bishop Andrews, he asserts, punned sinners into repentance, and Shakespeare put puns into the mouths of weeping heroes. The ancients, he feels, excelled later writers because of their genius, though they, too, fell into similar error. Cicero's orations are full of puns, as is his treatise on the rules of oratory; Isocrates and Plato permit their works to be marred by similar blemishes. So it is that Addison goes on to say "The Moderns cannot reach their beauties, but can avoid their imperfections." Just how strongly he felt on the subject of puns is demonstrated by the biting sarcasm of the following criticism:

I must not here omit, that a famous university of this land was formerly very much infested with puns; but

1. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16.

whether or no this might arise from the fens and marshes in which it was situated, and which are now drained, I must leave to the determination of more skilful naturalists.¹

Steele, George Colman, Sr., and Hume were also averse to puns,² but Shakespeare was not treated so harshly by them. Indeed, many eighteenth century critics absolved Shakespeare of blame on this score; Rowe, for example, pointed to the use of puns by English clergymen as a defence.³ Both Hume and Addison, however, decided that British tragic writers indulged excessively in horrible scenes. Addison's comment on this aspect of the drama is more cogent than his rants against punning. He points out, to prove his point, that Hamlet was in much the same condition as Orestes, but Sophocles handled the situation with more delicacy, yet equal eclat.⁴ Even a modern writer like John Erskine, in an age given to the exploitation of the horrible, has chosen to follow the example of Sophocles. In The Private Life of Helen of Troy Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are slain by Orestes and his sister, Electra, behind the scenes.⁵

1. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16.

2. Herbert S. Robinson, English Shakesperian Criticism in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1932), p. 152.

3. Ibid., p. 15.

4. The Spectator, No. 44, April 20.

5. John Erskine, The Private Life of Helen of Troy (Indianapolis, 1925), pp. 224-225.

Addison seems to have placed a good deal of importance on blood and thunder in Shakespeare. Whether this is one of the reasons why Shakespeare was not mentioned in the Account of the Greatest English Poets¹ would be difficult to say. It may safely be stated, though, that Addison's respect for Shakespeare increased, rather than diminished, with the years, despite the Senecan traits in the dramatist. As early as 1709, when he wrote the "Prologue" to Edmund Smith's Phaedra and Hippolitus, Addison was aware of Shakespeare's preëminence in his field.²

By the time Addison began contributing regularly to the periodicals, his respect for Shakespeare had waxed considerably; but almost every Neo-classicist, including Addison, seemed to feel that Rowe's Life of Shakespeare had established the Elizabethan's incorrectness. Particularly did Addison respect the poet for his character delineation. Of Brutus he asks, "Can all the trappings or equipage of a king or hero, give Brutus half that pomp and majesty which he receives from a few lines in Shakespear?"³ Hamlet's dealing with the ghost also evokes his

1. W. J. Courthope, op. cit., p. 33.

2. Misc. Wks., I, 185.

3. The Spectator, No. 42, April 18.

praise,¹ as do the better speeches in Macbeth.² But it is doubted whether any of Shakespeare's characters appealed more to Addison than did Sir John Falstaff, unless it be Caliban.³ He also regarded Othello and King Lear as being among the best of their kind.⁴

Sidney's works are scarcely mentioned except in connection with the ballad,⁵ if sporadic citing of specific works by name be overlooked. Sir Thomas Browne is remembered chiefly for his remark in Religio Medici regarding a line in Proverbs, "There is more rhetoric in that one sentence than in a library of sermons."⁶ Luckily, Bacon's style excites more comment. Addison, like Aristotle, Cicero, Spenser, and Bacon, was interested in the theme of friendship. Consequently, Bacon's little essay on this subject naturally had some appeal for him; but he also lavishes praise on Bacon for his descrip-

1. The Spectator, No. 44, April 20.

2. Ibid., No. 45, April 21.

3. Ibid., No. 47, April 24.

4. H. S. Robinson, op. cit., p. 29.

5. The Spectator, No. 70, May 21.

6. Ibid., No. 177, September 22.

tive powers in the following words: "Sir Francis Bacon has finely described other advantages, or, as he calls them, fruits of friendship; and indeed there is no subject of morality which has been better handled and more exhausted than this."¹ The essay "On Health" is cited, but as is often the case with the virtuoso who is only interested in certain phases of learning, Addison's reference is characterized by a paucity of comment upon the style of the writer. Perhaps Addison does a little better in clarifying his attitude toward Bacon than he does with some of the other writers of the period, for he lists Bacon in that class of genii who "have formed themselves by rules, and submitted the greatness of their natural talents to the corrections and restraints of art."²

The virtuoso ignores a good many of the other writers of the Elizabethan period, just as he does with the Commonwealth and Jacobean eras, another proof of his strict Neoclassicism. Hume, hardly a virtuoso, did the same thing. Ben Jonson was little more to Addison than an old poet who had admired the traditional ballad;³ Ford, Shirley, and the later

1. The Spectator, No. 68, May 18.

2. Ibid., No. 160, September 3. The Renaissance attitude toward friendship is well summed up in C. G. Smith, "Spenser's Theory of Friendship," in PMLA, Vol. XLIX, No. 2, June, 1934.

3. The Spectator, No. 70, May 21. Steele has a good review of The Volpone in The Tatler, No. 21, May 28, 1709.

dramatists are passed over as though they had never existed. Sir Walter Raleigh's History was received by him with more than ordinary enthusiasm, to which Goldsmith objected vehemently.¹ Even such a minor writer as John Greaves, author of Pyramidographia, commanded Addison's attention.² But Otway and Lee, among other Restoration playwrights, were considered far more suitable subjects of criticism than the pre-Commonwealth dramatists.

Milton, as has been shown, received due recognition. If Addison had done as much for Milton's contemporaries, their fame might be more secure today. Andrew Marvel, for example, experienced a renaissance only a few decades ago, despite Whittier's mention of him in the "Proem." Marvel lacked the support of an Addison. Now the literary critic classified Milton along with Bacon among those writers who conform to the restrictions of art.³ First place in English poetry was assigned to him, Addison adding that he drew more quotations from Milton than from any other poet.⁴ One

1. J. W. M. Gibbs, op. cit., IV, 450.

2. The Spectator, No. 1, March 1.

3. Ibid., No. 70, May 21.

4. Ibid., No. 262, December 31.

reason was, doubtless, Milton's abstinence from mixed wit, use of which Addison considered one of the major defects in writing.¹ But Addison's admiration of Milton developed into a phobia to such an extent that he defended the Latinity of Milton's style on the ground that deviation from ordinary expression is laudable.

That Addison failed to comment upon Milton's Puritanism is to his credit. Critics have usually failed in their efforts to paint Milton either as a staid Puritan fundamentalist or as an old rûé. Addison did much better in examining him as an artist. However, this omission prevented Addison's determining thoroughly Milton's attitude toward women, which may have been something akin to Addison's own. Courthope would have us believe, perhaps correctly, that Addison was interested in a fuller emancipation of woman, one which would take in the rational side.² Now Dr. Allan H. Gilbert has demonstrated beyond all doubt that the Puritan poet was something of a crusader for women's rights when he considered those liberties for the benefit of humanity. Gilbert says:

The point is not laboured, for Milton's purpose in writing was not to assert that women as well as men were entitled to divorce, but to assert the principle that divorce 'to the good of both sexes' should be freely permitted.³

1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11.

2. W. J. Courthope, op. cit., p. 109.

3. Allan H. Gilbert, "Milton on the Position of Woman," in Modern Language Review, Vol. XV, No. 3, January, 1920, p. 18.

Doctor Gilbert also points out that Milton held that a wife should be a companion intellectually, as well as a regulator and gratifier of the senses, which may be the incipient stage of Addison's idea of rational emancipation.¹ Again we have in Addison the broad viewpoint of the virtuoso.

A more complete analysis of Addison's opinion of Milton's poetic genius and of Milton's influence upon Addison, particularly upon his theory of epic poetry, will be presented in the fifth chapter, "The Peak of Addison's Critical Powers."

Many seventeenth century writers are dealt with by Addison in his papers. Unfortunately his letters are not the usually fecund source of information on the writer's critical opinions. Addison was sometimes brief, usually reserved, and oftentimes businesslike in his letters, with the result that many of them reveal little or nothing of his literary taste. Perhaps the group in which he evinces most interest is the seventeenth century dramatists. Shadwell and Etheridge had, in his opinion, a perverted or distorted sense of humor. Addison saw no humor in a man's running about the stage with his head peeping out of a barrel, as occurred in Etheridge's Comical Revenge.² Neither did he see humor in some of Shadwell's re-

1. A. H. Gilbert, "Milton on the Position of Woman," in M. L. R., Vol. XV, No. 3, July, 1920, p. 262.

2. The Spectator, No. 44, April 20.

presentations, such as he describes herein:

The deceased Mr. Shadwell, who had himself a great deal of the talent which I am treating of, represents an empty rake, in one of his plays, as very much surprised to hear one say that breaking of windows was not humour; and I question not but several English readers will be much startled to hear me affirm, that many of these raving incoherent pieces, which are often spread among us, under odd chimerical titles, are rather the offsprings of a distempered brain, than works of humour.¹

In this connection Addison characterizes false humor as being a succession of apish tricks, indiscreet mimicry,^{and} viciousness; irrational, full of personal ridicule.² Admittedly, he subscribes to Plato's conception of humor. Otway and Lee fare better at Addison's hands. Such critics as Charles Lamb viewed Restoration drama with proper perspective,³ but Addison was still too close to that period to fully perceive the artificiality of the work of this period. Lee, Addison thought, was adapted for tragedy, but he deplored the abject behavior toward the fair sex of his characters, as well as their general insolence.⁴ These lamentable heroes, together with the false

1. The Spectator, No. 35, April 10. He refers to character writing in drama, no doubt.

2. Ibid., No. 35, April 10.

3. Alfred Ainger, Charles Lamb, in English Men of Letters, ed., John Morley (London, 1899), p. 174 ff.

4. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16.

sublimity of Lee's lines, prevented his reaching the heights which he seemed destined to attain. Otway, too, was found wanting, since Addison judged the great characters of Venice Preserved to be the rebels and traitors, but this judgment may have been inspired by Addison's notion of patriotism.¹

In this regard he calls our attention to the fact that Venice Preserved and The Orphan are among the best English plays in which the favorites of the audience "sink under their calamities."² In the former play Otway uses artfully devices to stir up terror, so artistically that Addison does not object to these artifices.³ That Addison possessed something of the same type of genius in drama that was Otway's is shown by the following comment of Goldsmith:

I cannot help thinking that Mr. Addison's Cato, if we except the tragedies of Shakespear and Otway, is the best tragedy that appeared in any language for these two thousand years.⁴

This may be the reason Addison did not evaluate Otway nearly so well as he did some of the other Restoration writers. Addison was not alone, though, in his appreciation of this dramatist, as has been pointed out on several occasions.

1. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14.

2. Ibid., No. 40. April 16.

3. Ibid., No. 44, April 20.

4. J. W. M. Gibbs, ed., Op. cit., IV, 427.

It is evident that both Lee and Otway were too highly esteemed by Addison. Lee was named by him one of the best tragedians of his day.¹ Our critic, accordingly, recommended to his readers Sophonisba, The Rival Queens, and Mithridates, a tragedy in blank verse.² In the last instance, however, he may have been motivated by his scorn for other English writers who were mingling indiscriminately scenes in blank verse and in rhyme, which Addison termed "two several languages."³ But he did redeem himself somewhat for his lavish praise of Otway and Lee. Fortunately, he perceived that Otway had mismanaged the plot of Venice Provoked by having his greatest characters traitors and rebels.⁴ Then, too, the critic indicts Lee for having been guilty of false sublimity, but in the same breath he also accuses Statius, Claudian, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Shakespeare of the same thing.⁵ To rank Lee with most of these writers seems to us ludicrous. More in keeping with Lee's abilities

1. The Spectator, No. 39, April 14.

2. Ibid., No. 92, June 15.

3. Ibid., No. 39, April 14.

4. Ibid., No. 39, April 14.

5. Ibid., No. 285, January 26.

is Addison's satirical jibe levelled at his characters who are insolent and boisterous in the presence of men and "abject towards the fair one."¹ In this connection Addison shows, nevertheless, some liberality in yielding to popular pressure for this sort of thing. All through The Spectator one is conscious of Addison's recognition of the defects of Lee and Otway, but the verdict of his age was more than his critical experience could cope with.²

Congreve, on the other hand, received less fortunate treatment at the hands of Addison. Although it is a certainty that Congreve is never subjected to any severe criticism by Addison, it is the latter's silence which is so eloquent. Addison obviously did not accord Congreve anything like a share of credit he deserved. Addison did not appraise critically the works of this Restoration dramatist. He contents himself rather with a few inane comments such as the one on Congreve's humorous treatment of the subject of transmigration of souls. If one were unkind to Addison, one might mention that trivial comments such as this may have been indicative of a lack of

1. The Spectator, No. 40, April 16.

2. Cf. Warton's rating of these poets in 1756 (see William MacClintock, Joseph Warton's Essay on Pope (Chapel Hill, 1933), pp. 58-59.

appreciation of drama.¹ There would be much evidence, too, to support such a contention; namely, Addison's failure to respond to the beauties of Elizabethan drama, his excessive regard for certain Restoration dramatists, and his inadequate treatment of classical dramatists. On the other hand, however, he has given us a fairly satisfactory body of facts on dramatic theory, more satisfactory than that produced by many of his contemporaries. Notwithstanding, Addison's refusal to include some of Congreve's dramas among plays he would add to his library is disappointing. In Addison's library, Congreve gives way to Lee, Otway, and Dryden, not to mention a few less skilled writers. It is interesting to notice at this point that Lord Kames rebuked Congreve for suspending dialogue to display his wit.²

1. The Spectator, No. 211, November 1. The lines from Congreve which are praised by Addison follow:

"Thus Aristotle's soul, of all that was,
May now be damn'd to animate an ass;
Or in this very house, for ought we know
Is doing painful penance in some beau."

Addison corresponded with Congreve (Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 326).

2. H. Home, op. cit., p. 263.

Addison does not discuss seventeenth century poetry very fully, but he does furnish his reader with an insight into his personal likes and dislikes. As has been previously pointed out, Addison condemned Waller's excessive use of mixed wit,¹ but he was delighted with Dorset's wit, partly because the nobleman was a collector and admirer of the ballad.² Butler's Hudibras is cited by our critic as a courageous attack upon false devices in writing, such as the use of the echo.³ However, Butler himself comes in for a share of criticism when Addison comments upon his use of doggerel. Although Addison recognizes that Butler had a satisfactory precedent in the example of Cervantes and Lucian, he does show his contempt for burlesque, though Addison might have offered a word on the justness of Butler's satire of the Puritan:

If Hudibras had been set out with as much wit and humour in heroic verse as he is in doggerel, he would have made a much more agreeable figure than he does; though the generality of his readers are so wonderfully pleased with the double rhimes, that I do not expect many will be of my opinion in this particular.⁴

1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11. Cf. O. Thanet, ed., op. cit., p. 245.

2. Ibid., No. 85, June 7.

3. Ibid., No. 59, May 8.

4. Ibid., No. 249, December 15.

Then, as might be expected, Addison agrees with some of the critical principles of Roscommon, whom he occasionally quotes.¹ In one instance he contends that some incidents "should be told, not represented." Roscommon has said:

Yet, there are things improper for a scene,
Which men of judgment only will relate.²

This is, of course, an adoption of the Horatian principle, as Addison has clearly indicated.

Our critic assails "the scribblers of the age" for other abuses, for example, the deprecatory remarks directed against other poets. Even Alexander Pope, he points out, fell into this error. In this connection, he commends Sir John Denham for great candor and ingenuity, because the latter had praised Fletcher.³ Denham had said:

But whither am I stray'd? I need not raise
Trophies to thee from other men's dispraise
Nor is thy fame on lesser ruins built,
Nor needs thy juster title the foul guilt
Of eastern kings, who, to secure their reign,
Must have their brothers, sons, and kindred slain.⁴

1. In the "Account of the Greatest English Poets," Addison commented thus upon Roscommon:

"Nor must Roscommon pass neglected by,
That makes ev'n Rules a noble poetry:
Rules whose deep sense and heav'nly numbers show
The best of critics, and of poets too."

See Misc. Wks., I, 34.

2. The Spectator, No. 42, April 18.

3. Ibid., No. 253, December 20.

4. Ibid., No. 40, April 16.

On the whole, however, Addison's criticism of Denham is just as superficial as his remarks on other comparatively minor poets of the seventeenth century.

Powell, whose intemperance in his declining years lost for him some of the prestige he had acquired as a dramatist, was recognized by our critic as "excellently formed for a tragedian."¹ But Addison points out that Powell not infrequently received applause because he appealed to the baser instincts of the audience. Since heroes are generally great lovers, the critic felt that audiences oftentimes would rejoice in seeing the hero insult kings, affront gods, and manhandle men if he were² abject in his behavior toward ladies. Dryden and Lee, as well as Powell, were guilty of this in Addison's opinion.

Powell was criticized also for filling the mouths of his heroes with bombast. Exclamations not consonant with the

1. Steele pokes fun at Powell, saying: "The Moral of Mr. Powell's drama is violated, I confess, by Punch's national Reflections on the French, and King Harry's laying his dog upon the Queen's Lap in too ludicrous a manner before so great an Assembly" (The Spectator, No. 14, March 16).

2. Ibid., No. 40, April 16.

temper of the character, curses, blasphemies, and the like were objectionable methods of arousing the audience, according to Addison. In fact the critic accuses Powell of having used rants, false beauties, to stir the hearts of his spectators.

Among the prominent prose writers of the century whom Addison comments upon are Shaftesbury, Temple, Cowley,¹ and Swift, not to mention the philosophers Hobbes and Locke. Dean Swift, especially, furnishes Addison with an abundance of quotable material. Yet the essayist detested "the giving of secret stabs to a man's reputation." Satire, he felt, fell into this category. He argued that satires and lampoons are like poisoned darts, "which not only inflict a wound, but make it incurable." He digresses to eulogize Socrates for appearing at performances of Aristophanes which were designed to ridicule Socratic philosophy.² Unfortunately, Addison drew most of his allusions and analogies from classical, instead of contemporary, literature. As a consequence of this practice, his criticism of Swift is highly superficial. It is obvious, nevertheless, that Addison was sufficiently the virtuoso to appreciate any topic upon human affairs from Temple's remarks

1. Although Addison recognized Cowley's genius, particularly in his admirable imitation of Pindar, he has little to say of Cowley's prose. One comment on Cowley's work is pertinent, however:

His turns too closely on the reader press:
He more had pleas'd us, had he pleas'd us less.

See Misc. Wks., I, 32.

2. The Spectator, No. 70, March 27.

upon drinking¹ to Shaftesbury's utilization of Greek fable.² But there is nothing to indicate that he rates Swift or any of these other prose writers as highly as did some of the later Neo-classicists.³

Addison shows some reliance upon the writings of the philosophers mentioned above. He regarded Hobbes' Discourse of Human Nature as "the best of all his works." And he drew from the philosopher's theory of laughter, for he remarks that "men laugh at the follies of themselves past," provided that this remembrance does not contribute to "present dishonour."⁴ Locke's contributions to Addisonian criticism have been dealt with elsewhere, but it might be added that our critic made use of Locke's association of ideas in The Spectator, No. 110. This hypothesis was to play an important role in the theory of the imagination of Hartley, Kames,⁵ and Gerard⁶

1. The Spectator, No. 195, October 13.

2. Ibid., No. 183, September 29.

3. Goldsmith ranked Swift with Shakespeare in his "A Poetical Scale" (see J. W. M. Gibbs, ed., op. cit., IV, 417 ff.).

4. The Spectator, No. 47, April 24.

5. H. Home, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

6. One German critic said that rationalism was a system that would measure poetry by the yard stick of prose. See Hamelius, Die Kritik in der Englischen Literatur des 17 und 18 Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1897), p. 45.

a little later in the century.

A theologian of Addison's own day, Robert South, is alluded to in The Spectator, No. 592. This is of no major import except to further confirm the critic's interest in religion, if that need be done after his famous tract. Barrow and Tillotson have, however, eluded him.

One Restoration comedy which evoked a rather humorous observation from Addison was Sir Robert Howard's The Committee. Sir Roger states, "The last I saw...was the Committee, which I should not have gone to neither, had I not been told beforehand that it was a good Church of England comedy,"¹ a remark which contains some good-natured satire of a play which Pepys had labelled "merry but indifferent."²

Although Addison gives only sporadic criticism of English men of letters, exclusive of Milton, a trait common to most of the eighteenth century virtuosi, his comments upon Dryden are somewhat more satisfying than his remarks upon Swift and Pope. There are some indications that he regarded Dryden highly as a translator, because he refers to the translations

1. The Spectator, No. 335, March 25.

2. Pepys saw this drama presented on June 12, 1663. When considering the Restoration drama, one should notice that Addison that Addison considered the Italian stage very lewd, pedantic, and filthy. Four types of characters predominated, he tells us, the doctor, the harlequin, the pantalone, and the corredo (Misc. Wks., II, 60-61).

of Ovid,¹ Vergil,² and Perseus,³ though in one instance he mentions that Dryden had a faulty notion of Vergil's insight into human nature. "Mr. Dryden," he points out, "has in some places, which I may hereafter take notice of, misrepresented Virgil's way of thinking as to this particular, in the translation he has given us of the Æneid."⁴ Addison's remarks upon this subject carry the more weight because of his own efforts in this field.

Dryden's dramas are cited more frequently, it appears, than his other works. The Feigned Innocence is alluded to in connection with the employment of sparrows in opera.⁵ And Addison is obliged to tell us that his correspondents greatly favored All for Love and Aureng-Zebe.⁶ It should be mentioned here that many of the literati of Dryden's day considered the

1. The Spectator, No. 211, November 1.

2. Ibid., No. 297, February 9.

3. Ibid., No. 55, May 3.

4. Ibid., No. 279, January 19. Addison, nevertheless, acknowledged the prominent position of Dryden as a critic (ibid., No. 62, May 11).

5. Ibid., No. 5, March 6.

6. Ibid., No. 93, June 15.

adaptations of Shakespeare superior to the originals and Dryden's All for Love a more polished performance than Antony and Cleopatra.¹ The Spanish Fryar, strangely enough, receives Addison's instant approval, though it contains a double plot after the fashion of Terence and Plautus; yet Addison thought the unities were preserved in this play because the episodes run parallel.² Dryden and Lee are, on other occasions, sternly reprimanded for their rants "in several of their tragedies,"³ though Clio was well aware that the playwrights secured popular approval of their technique.

The essayist discusses MacFlecknoe in connection with his denial that Theocritus could have written poems "in the shape of wings and altars."⁴ Shadwell, who is the butt of most of Dryden's caustic remarks, is rebuked for representing "an empty rake...as very much surprised to hear one say that breaking of windows was not humour." Addison contended that such compositions proceeded from a "distempered brain,"⁵ a state-

1. See also William Shakespeare, The Tempest, in A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, ed., Horace H. Furness (Philadelphia, 1892), p. ix. Dryden did not tinker with Shakespeare as much as did D'Avenant (Harley Granville Barker and G. B. Harrison, A Companion to Shakespeare Studies (New York, 1940), p. 331 ff.).

2. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5.

3. Ibid., No. 40, April 16.

4. Ibid., No. 58, May 7.

5. Ibid., No. 35, April 10.

ment which may cast some light on Addison's failure to reprove Dryden for his attack upon the writer of Epsom Wells. Here is additional evidence of Addison's virtuosity and classicism, which become even more evident when the above assertion is compared with that of Lord Chesterfield on laughter.¹

Addison suggests that Dryden copied Sappho in both his dramatic and poetic compositions.² Although he takes exception to Dryden's defining wit as "a propriety of words and thoughts adapted to the subject," Addison is inclined to look upon Dryden as "not only a better poet, but a greater wit, than Mr. Cowley."³ Posterity has upheld Addison's position. To continue with the miscellaneous observations on Mr. Dryden, Addison was intrigued with Dryden's criticism of Paradise Lost, even though he repudiated such reflections as the one that Satan is the real hero of Milton's epic.⁴ However, all through his critical works, Addison betrays a healthy respect for Dryden, as is evidenced by the reception he gave the following lines by Dryden upon womankind:

Our thoughtless sex is caught by outward form
And empty noise, and loves itself in man. ⁵

1. Philip Stanhope, Letters to His Son (Washington and London, 1901), I, 57.

2. The Spectator, No. 229, November 22.

3. Ibid., No. 62, May 11.

4. Ibid., No. 297, February 9.

5. Ibid., No. 128, July 27.

There are numerous proofs of Addison's enjoyment of satire of the female, though his remarks are always playful and good-natured.

Perhaps Addison's greatest debt to Dryden derives from his borrowing the poet's formula for writing the fairy way. More will be said of this in a succeeding chapter. Let it suffice for the time being to assert that Addison was conscious of the contribution Dryden made to the papers, "The Pleasures of the Imagination," for he tells us:

This Mr. Dryden calls 'the fairy way of writing', which is, indeed, more difficult than any other that depends upon the poet's fancy, because he has no pattern to follow in it, and must work altogether out of his own invention.¹

Pope was not so great an influence upon Addison's aesthetic position as one might imagine, despite the fact that he was the dominant figure in English classicism. Addison recognized Pope as being "among the best judges" of poetry; still he strongly disapproved of his "attacking the reputations of all his brothers in the art."² Notwithstanding this criticism, Addison speaks of him in the same breath with Longinus, and he comments thus upon An Essay on Criticism:

...We have three poems in our tongue, which are of the same nature, and each of them a master-piece in its kind; the essay on translated verse, the essay on the art of poetry, and the essay upon criticism.³

1. The Spectator, No. 419, July 1.

2. Ibid., No. 253, December 20.

3. Ibid., No. 253, December 20; No. 333, March 22.

Unfortunately the friendship of Addison and Pope cooled perceptibly as early as 1715, so that the influence of one upon the other was reduced. Nearly everyone is aware of Pope's bitter denunciation of his former friend in "The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot:" the poet evidently thought Addison had hired Gildon to attack his poetry. Since Pope was embroiled in bitter quarrels with Dennis, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Cibber, and Theobald, among others, one would be inclined to dismiss Addison's part in the misunderstanding, in spite of the latter's quarrel with Steele, as being inconsequential. It must be admitted, however, that political prejudice poked its ugly head into the affair, for Pope was a Tory and Addison a Whig. Then, too, Pope's delineation of Addison character was just, although the whole picture was not presented. But, regardless of the merits of either case, it must be admitted that these men lived in an age marked by bitter controversies. Perhaps that may partially vindicate both writers. At any rate, the result of the quarrel appears to have been that Addison placed greater reliance upon the theory of Dryden than of Pope.

The date of the essays on imagination would tend to confirm the suspicion, though, that Addison thought independently of Pope long before any serious schism developed. Hence, it is probable that Addison perceived with characteristic astuteness the validity of Dryden's critical principles in an era

dominated by Pope. In July, 1712, Addison made definite strides toward the romantic ideal. Critics have certainly been aware of the importance of Addison's support of "the fairy way of writing," but no one seems to have fully recognized the tremendous implications of Addison's giving approval to the use of folkloristic materials in art. This step assumes greater proportions when one realizes that Pope still disparaged popular antiquities in The Dunciad.¹ He virtually castigated the Elizabethans for their researches in folklore, despite the authority of Browne's Hydriotaphia and The Garden of Cyrus. It does not follow, therefore, in view of the establishment of the Royal Society in the reign of Charles II, that progress in science be accompanied by similar advancement in the investigation of folklore. It is of great significance, then, that Addison uttered the following statement, for its impact has been felt right down to our own times:

There is a very odd turn of thought required for this sort of writing, and it is impossible for a poet to succeed in it, who has not a particular cast of fancy, an imagination naturally fruitful and superstitious. Besides this, he ought to be very well versed in legends and fables, antiquated romances, and the traditions of nurses and old women....²

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1. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 47 ff.
 2. The Spectator, No. 419, July 19. Antiquarian tendencies of the virtuosi are shown in Steele's "The Will of a Virtuoso" (The Tatler, No. 216, August 26, 1710.)

As is well recognized by modern writers, these folkloristic elements "raise a pleasing kind of horror in the mind of the reader and amuse his imagination with the strangeness and novelty of the persons who are represented in them!"¹ They have added magic to The Antiquary and Guy Mannering of Scott; they have given charm to the creative efforts of the modern Irish poets and dramatists. Thus Addison laid the foundations for the subsequent work of Thomas Warton, Tyrwhitt, Malone, Percy, and Steevens.² Many of the ballads of old England and much of the lore that adds lustre to the Anglo-Saxon heritage would have been lost but for Addison. His being a virtuoso made him more sensitive to the worth of superstitions, legends, and omens in writing.

Acceptance of Addison's contribution to the theory of art through his justification of the use of the imagination as one of the tests of literature, his extension of the term "imagination" to include fancy, and his sanction of the ballad does not mean that contemporary critics have been cognizant of Addison's exaltation of folklore.³ It was this approval of folk

1. The Spectator, No. 419, July 19.

2. A. Bosker, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

3. One of the reasons for Perrault's defence of the moderns may have been his own use of folk tales. See C. Claudel, "A Study of Two French Tales from Louisiana," in SFQ, Vol. VII, No. 4, December, 1943, p. 223; E. Johnson and C. E. Scott, Anthology of Children's Literature (Boston, 1935), p. 114 ff.

superstitions and old wives' tales which enabled Addison to put his stamp of approval upon Milton and Shakespeare. Writers in the Romantic tradition owe much to folklore. Without it the local color of Blackmore and O. Henry, the enchantment of Heyward, and the primitivism of Russell¹ would not have been possible. That Addison was well ahead of his times in taking this step is shown by his remark, "The ancients have not much of this poetry among them."² A simple, yet eloquent, statement! Pope and his school had followed the example of classical writers too closely to have been able to give their approval to the folkloristic element in literature.³

Addison was more of a literary theorist than a reviewer; consequently, his criticism of his contemporaries leaves much to be desired. There is nothing to compare with Johnson's estimate of Macpherson's Ossian or Goldsmith's attack on Wilkie's Epigoniad. Addison assails the lewdness of the contemporary stage by saying that Terence did not have to resort to cuckold-

1. Irwin Russell, author of "Christmas-Night in the Quarters."

2. The Spectator, No. 419, July 1.

3. Abercrombie's attitude toward folk diction is significant in this connection. He says: "And colloquialisms are not so perishable as is sometimes supposed" (Lascelles Abercrombie, The Theory of Poetry (New York, 1926), p. 114).

ry and adultery to create comic situations. Our critic remarks that there was much complaining about the licentiousness of the theatre, but that no action had been taken. "Cuckoldom is the basis," he asserts, "of most of our modern plays." So provoked was Addison that he contemplated for a time making a compilation called "Stage Morality." "I have often wondered," he muses, "that our ordinary poets cannot frame to themselves the idea of a fine man who is not a whore-master, or of a fine woman that is not a jilt." The decline in the morals of the stage¹ is attributed by Addison to the inability of his coetans to live up to the example of their predecessors. Surely Addison was aware that Restoration and Jacobean drama was, to put it mildly, equally obscene. The solution he proposes is that "the stage might be a perpetual source of the most noble and useful entertainments were it under proper regulation."² The same idea is reiterated in The Spectator.

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1. The Spectator, No. 446, August 1. Lamb typifies the sober judgment of better nineteenth century critics when he writes, "We have been spoiled with--not sentimental comedy--but a tyrant far more pernicious to our pleasures which has succeeded to it, the exclusive and all-devouring drama of common life; where the moral point is everything." See The Works of Charles Lamb(New York), III, 237.
 2. The Spectator, No. 93, June 16.

No. 446, wherein he cites the Athenian stage as an example of the well-regulated theatre.

Addison proved to be a little astonished at the poor reception Edmund Smith's Phaedra and Hippolitus received, particularly since he thought the production infinitely superior to Italian opera. That Addison's criticism may have been just is evidenced in the work's enjoying success as a closet drama later on.¹

Ambrose Phillips, a friend of Addison, received an adequate share of praise for his translation of "An Hymn to Venus" by Sappho. Addison observed that several "harmonious turns in the words" of the original are not lost in the translation, and that Phillips has preserved the sentiments and imagery of the Greek ode. Addison refers, moreover, to Phillips' "admirable pastorals and winter-piece" having been so well received.²

Addison helped his friend have The Distressed Mother, a turgid translation of Racine's Andromaque, produced. The fact that Mrs. Oldfield uttered the prologue gave it some

1. The Spectator, No. 18, March 21.

2. Ibid., No. 223, November 15.

vogue, but time has served to put The Distressed Mother in its proper place among the forgotten productions of the early eighteenth century. Editors seem to agree that Addison witnessed the fifth performance of the play at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. His comments upon the play are among the most puerile in his entire canon, varying from conversation upon widows to praise of two of the actors, M^{rs}srs. Booth and Powell. Of course, it must be admitted that Addison is satirizing the conversation of theatre-goers when he tells of Sir Roger's saying, "I like the old fellow in whiskers as well as any of them." Addison, strangely enough, seems to have been satisfied with the presentation, for he states that he was "highly pleased...not only with the performance of the excellent piece which had been presented, but with the satisfaction which it had given to the good old man."¹

This is not, however, the only piece of indifferent criticism of Addison's contemporaries which we meet with in The Spectator. The epic, Creation, by Sir Richard Blackmore,²

1. The Spectator, No. 335, March 25.

2. H. G. Paul tells us Dennis followed Le Bossus' scheme in judging Blackmore's Prince Arthur (H. G. Paul, op. cit., p. 116). A much more just evaluation of a contemporary may be found in his denunciation of Rymer's devices for improving The Tempest (The Spectator, No. 592, September 10).

who is mentioned also by Steele in The Spectator No. 6, evoked the comment from Addison that "the reader cannot but be pleased to find the depths of philosophy enlivened with all the charms of poetry, and to see so great a strength of reason, amidst so beautiful a redundancy of the imagination."¹ Perhaps here the tendency of our virtuoso to look for the good points in a literary work gets him into difficulty, though both Dennis and Johnson seem to have been impressed with Blackmore's writings. Swift's judgment was more to the point, with the result that it conforms to present-day evaluations of Blackmore.²

The authority Addison gave to the use of popular antiquities in literature is augmented by his own example. In one paper, he deals both with burial customs, in a manner reminiscent of William Gilmore Simms' The City of the Silent, and with North American Indian lore.³ The significance of the inclusion of this folk material in

1. The Spectator, No. 339, March 29.

2. G. W. Greene, ed., op. cit., II, 124, n.

3. The Spectator, No. 56, May 4. Steele also used Indian legend and anecdote (see Lawrence M. Price, Inkle and Yarico Album (Berkeley, California, 1937)).

the issue of The Spectator that deals with the legend of Marraton and Yaratilda should not be underestimated. This is the best possible proof that Addison really meant what he said in the essays, "On the Pleasures of the Imagination." Some credit for Addison's stand must go to Vergil, who, our critic tells us early in his career, gives us weather signs in the Georgics.¹ The example of Steele in praising the charm and wild graces of the Indian in The Spectator, No. 11 must have made Addison a little more confident of success.

There are innumerable minor references to British authors, notably to Herbert's Pindaric odes,² Southerne's Oroonoko,³ and the like, but these are inconsequential. What is more to the point is Addison's revealing his acquaintance with Fairfax's translation of Tasso (1600),⁴ and with the superb editions of the Elzevir and Aldine presses,⁵ as well as

1. Misc. Wks., II, 4 ff.

2. The Spectator, No. 58, May 7.

3. Ibid., No. 40, April 16. Cf. H. Home, op. cit., p. 214.

4. G. W. Greene, ed., op. cit., II, 86, n.

5. The Spectator, No. 367, May 1.

with the Hebraisms in the English language. He says on the subject of rhetoric:

There is a certain coldness and indifference in the phrases of our European languages, when they are compared with the oriental forms of speech, and it happens very luckily, that the Hebrew idioms run into the English tongue with a particular grace and beauty. Our language has received innumerable elegancies and improvements, from that infusion of Hebraisms, which are derived to it out of the poetical passages in holy writ.¹

Thus it may be seen that Addison was also conscious of the brilliant style of the Bible.

It is indeed a pity that Addison did not do the same magnificent job with his contemporaries or immediate predecessors that he did with Milton, the traditional ballad, wit, or even the writers of antiquity. Samuel Johnson commends him especially, by the bye, for his observations upon Ovid.² But it is noteworthy that Addison's correspondence is lamentably weak in the foregoing particular. There is little to compare with Hume's treatise on Ossian, or with his letters³ upon the same subject, for instance. Even Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's works provoke no comment, in spite of her being a personal acquaintance of the essayist. Nor

1. The Spectator, No. 403, June 12.

2. Samuel Johnson, The Life of Addison, in Johnson's Chief Lives of the Poets, ed., Matthew Arnold (New York, 1889), p. 218.

3. David Hume, "Letters," in British Museum Manuscript, Add. 34886, p. 16161.

is there anything in Addison's essays concerning Restoration or Augustan belles-lettres which compares with the exhaustive treatment they receive in Johnson's Lives of the Poets.¹

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1. In The Spectator, No. 523, October 30, Addison makes brief comment upon the "late miscellany published by Mr. Pope," and upon Tickell's "On the Prospect of Peace." At the same time he objects to excessive mythological trappings in the works of some other poets. In connection with Tickell; it should be noticed that Samuel Johnson maliciously ascribed the former's translation of the first Iliad to Addison (see Arthur Murphy, "An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson, LL. D.," in The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL. D. (New York, 1846), I, xxxi).

Chapter IV

Clio's Minor Critical Dissertations

As long as the name of Addison is remembered, much of his fame is destined to rest upon the reputation of his two major critical pieces, "The Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination" and the "Criticism of Paradise Lost." True, Addison wrote several other critical discourses not included in any of the periodicals, chief among which are his "Essay on Virgil's Georgics," "A Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning," "Dissertatio de Insignioribus Romanorum Poetis," and a poem, "An Account of the Greatest English Poets." These minor prose works serve little other purpose than to give us a complete picture of Addison as a literary critic. Even the historical importance of one or two ~~of~~^f these documents may be open to question; nevertheless, a knowledge of them is essential to a proper understanding of Addison's place in English literary criticism, and of the trends which shaped his opinions.

To fully appreciate Addison's position in the memorable controversy over ancient and modern learning, it is necessary to trace briefly the course run by this mammoth dispute. Indirectly, the quarrel had a decided effect upon the cult of original genius, because it led to the idea of progress, the perfectibility theory, and the noble savage hallucination. From

the quarrel of the ancients and moderns arose, too, the war on pedantry, culminating eventually in the almost complete disruption of the Neo-classic order.

Early in the seventeenth century the Renaissance reached a point of disillusionment, which is clearly discernible in the poetry of John Donne and the Metaphysical School.¹ The disintegration of the view of life held by the humanists of the Elizabethan era had commenced, surely, as early as 1616, the date of the publication of Goodwin's The Fall of Man. There was now to be found in its stead a certain asceticism, perfectly recognizable in both the Puritan and Anglican literature of the period; yet it is the increased distrust in nature, particularly human nature, which points to a change in sentiment.² But even with her Bacon and Goodman, it is doubtful whether England herself would have produced this bitter controversy. In 1687 Perrault fired the first volley of this quarrel by reading a poem at the French

1. See. John Donne, "The Calm," in The Poetical Works of Dr. Jno. Donne (Boston, 1864), p. 4, ff.

2. This is illustrated by Hooker's religious concepts. See E. Legouis and L. Cazamian, op. cit., p. 374.

Academy, resulting in his being aligned with La Motte and Fontenelle against Boileau¹ and Madame Dacier, the chief proponents of the classics. But it was Fontenelle who gave prestige to the arguments of the moderns when he declared in his Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes (1688) that he was a firm believer in the Baconian idea of the constancy of nature. He asserted that he could not concur in the belief of his adversaries that modern art was inferior to that of antiquity,² simply because he was convinced that there is a progress of knowledge which gives the moderns an advantage over the ancients. Reason and investigation, he declared, are the invincible possession of the moderns; imagination, the supreme attainment of antiquity. It may be perceived, then, that Fontenelle and his followers, basing their arguments on the assumption of the validity of Bacon's new scientific method, denied retrogression in nature, thereby making France the battle-ground of this famous dispute. From France the controversy spread to England, where it proceeded by three

1. Addison reported of Boileau: "He heartily hates an ill poet, and throws himself into a passion when he talks of anyone that has not a high respect for Homer and Virgil" (see "Letter to Bishop Hough, Lyons, December, 1700," in Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 333).

2. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 52.

distinct stages: first, the controversy over the decay of nature; second, the furore caused by the Royal Society; and third, the quarrel of the ancients and moderns proper.¹ Now Sir William Temple, it will be recalled, had furthered the cause of the ancients by writing his treatise "On Ancient and Modern Learning," only to be joined later by Dean Swift, who probably wrote his The Battle of the Books to please Sir William. Although among the classicists were numbered many Oxonians, including Boyle, the presence of such an eminent classics scholar as Bentley on the side of the moderns gave considerable prestige to the views of the latter group.

Now Addison's dissertation, if we may trust Hurd, was probably the product of the critic's younger days.² It is not unlikely that this discourse followed closely upon the heels of Temple's essay. Certainly it was written about

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1. For further information on the quarrel, see Richard Bentley, Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris (London, 1699); William Wotton, Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning (London, 1694); R. F. Jones, "The Background of the Battle of the Books," in Washington University Studies (Humanistic Series), Vol. VII, 1920.
 2. Temple's essay appeared in 1690, three years after Perrault's work. It is doubtful whether Addison's discourse preceded Temple's, for the latter makes no reference to it. Since Dryden is referred to as Mr. Dryden in the essay, the poet was probably still alive. The best possible conjecture is that Addison wrote it during his years of leisure between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-eight, no doubt before he left for the continent in 1699.

the time Boyle and his Oxford allies joined Temple in heaping abuse upon the protagonists of the moderns. It is not unlikely, either, that Addison's residence at the University of Oxford was responsible for his "Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning," many principles from which, Hurd asserts,¹ were incorporated in the study on Milton. That the discourse is not a product of a later period is at least partially established by Addison's defence of the Royal Society in some of his papers,² evidence that he knew in detail the early stages of the controversy. Addison would hardly have gone back to an early phase of the quarrel had he not been deeply concerned over its progress from its incipient stages.

This discourse is in no way notable for its content. About all the writer proposes to do is show that the modern reader is incapable of appreciating both the excellent flourishes and the vulgar parts in ancient authors. He observes with much cogency that "antiquity...draw(s) a kind of veil over any expression that is strained above nature, and recedes too much from the familiar forms of speech." ³

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 214, n.

2. The Spectator, No. 10, March 12.

3. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 226.

Violent Graecisms in Roman authors, obsolete words, and bold expressions fail to startle the modern reader the way they would have done a Roman. Yet the classics, Addison maintains, seem to lose more than they gain. Homer's characters, sometimes drawn after real persons, do not strike us so sharply as they did the Greek reader. Addison himself seems to have fallen into similar error for Vergil's characters are not so highly esteemed by him. Whereas Homer's Tychius and Mentor are particularly well drawn, having been modelled upon an honest cobbler familiar to Homer and upon a reputable figure in Ithica, Vergil's Aeneas, according to Addison, "is a compound of valor and piety; Achates calls himself his friend, but takes no occasion of showing himself so; Mnesteus, Sergestus, Gyas, and Cloanthus, are all of them men of the same stamp and character."¹ Furthermore, when the ancients indulged in satire, their readers knew at whom the shafts were aimed. The modern who peruses the classics benefits little from these admirable travesties.

Again Addison lauds the ancients for their choice of characters, giving unqualified approval to the practice of

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 215-216.

of selecting national heroes as the characters in their works. "By this means," he says, "they have humoured and delighted the vanity of a Grecian or Roman reader, they have powerfully engaged him on the hero's side and made him, as it were, a party in every action...."¹ Milton delights us, in Addison's opinion, by the use of similar tactics, one reason why many persons read him with more avidity than Homer, Vergil, or Ovid. Addison states:

I believe, therefore, no Englishman reads Homer or Virgil with such an inward triumph of thought, and such a passion of glory, as those who saw in them the exploits of their own countrymen or ancestors.²

The ancients derived, according to Addison, an advantage over their modern imitators from their living on the sacred ground of Vergil and Homer. Blackwell said of the latter that he was reputed to have been "a Native of Asia the less, which had a climate and soil which could vie with any in Europe." This critic placed a good deal of emphasis upon the effects of a congenial climate on the heroic verse of the Greek.³ Addison sensed a parallel in the enjoyment of metrical romances by Englishmen, who wish to be transported into the realm of their ancestors, and who take pride in the English setting.⁴ It appears, however, that

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 221.

2. Ibid., V, 221.

3. T. Blackwell, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

4. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 220.

Addison, being a Neo-classicist, did not sufficiently appreciate the escapist tendencies of the reader. Even a schoolboy will read Vathek, Robinson Crusoe, or Kidnapped because he enjoys a romantic tale that transports him. Familiarity with the topography of the setting does not appear to be a requisite to enjoyment. Addison's whole argument would tend to negate escapism in art.

When he wrote these early works, Addison had not learned what the Romanticists found so valuable: distance and strangeness lend enchantment. That Addison made a little progress in this direction may be seen in the later numbers of his newspapers.

Addison knew that the moderns face an insuperable obstacle in their attempts to properly evaluate the writings of antiquity. Our ignorance of "the sound and harmony of their language"¹ and our inability to discern the difference between the comic and serious situations render us incapable of appreciating some of the most sublime portions of ancient literature.² For example, there are many turns of wit in the orations of Cicero which elude us, and the prosaic passages encountered in Lucan or Ovid, on the contrary, appear majestic and splendid to us who have not known

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V , 223.

2. Ibid., V, 219.

Latin as a living language. We judge by appearances, unmindful of "the thing in itself." This, it appears is the main stream of thought in Addison's thesis, which he sums up in the opening paragraphs:

And here the first and most general advantage the ancients had over us, was, that they knew all the secret history of a composure: what was the occasion of such a discourse or poem, whom such a sentence aimed at, what person lay disguised in such a character: for by this means they could see their author in a variety of lights, and receive several different entertainments from the same passage. We, on the contrary, can only please ourselves with the wit or good sense of a writer as it stands stripped of all those accidental circumstances that at first helped to set it off: we have him but in a single view, and only discover such essential standing beauties as no time or years can possibly deface.¹

Not everyone will concur in the opinion that knowledge of the background of an objet d'art is a means to a better understanding of it. Some educators venture to such an extreme in their efforts to judge a composition per se that no attempt is made to delve beneath the surface into the artist's life, the circumstances responsible for the creative piece, or its relationship to other works of art. One cannot overlook, however, the statement of Professor E. Parker that there are "barriers to understanding"² which must

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, V, 214.

2. Roscoe Edward Parker, The Principles and Practice of Teaching English (New York, 1937), p. 94.

be removed so as to understand the "personality and purpose of the author as they are revealed in his work." Consequently, it seems that Addison's formula for appreciating literature is the vogue among a substantial and reputable majority of modern scholars.

Although the "Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning" does not commit Addison to any particular policy, it is evident that he leaned toward the side of the moderns; yet all the while he was mindful of the superiority of the ancients in certain spheres of learning.¹ Perhaps the most incontrovertible proof of such leanings is found in his Oratio, Nova Philosophia Veteri Praeferenda Est, in which he says boldly:

Quousque veterum vestigiis serviliter insistemus, Academici, nec ultra patres sapere audebimus! Quousque antiquitatis ineptias, ut senum deliria nonnulli solent, religiose venerabimur? Pudeat sane, dum tam praeclarum aetatis hujus specimen coram oculis praesens intuemur, ad antiquos encomia nostra transferre, et inter priora saecula quos celebremus sedulo investigare.²

This rather strong condemnation of the past might be more significant had it been delivered later than July, 7, 1693. De-

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, III, 147. Still Addison objects to Phillip's imitation of Spenser's versification, evidently preferring classical pastoral forms (see J. Addison, "Letter to Ambrose Phillips, London, March 10, (1710)," in Ibid., V, 380-381.

2. Works, ed. R. Hurd, VI, 607.

spite the fact this oration almost ranks among the juvenilia, Addison's remarks on Descartes are significant,¹ for they demonstrate the reaction which set in against Aristotelianism and scholasticism upon the publication of Bacon's Novum Organum. So prolific in his praise of Descartes was the exuberant, youthful Addison that he said, "Illustris ille vir, quem unum Galliae invidemus,"² Evidently Addison had felt some of the enthusiasm for modern culture of Perrault, scorning to join the Oxonian protagonists of antiquity, but by the time he wrote his discourse (certainly after 1693), a definite reaction had set in. Though he could never be classed as an outright defender of the ancients, after 1700, at the latest, Addison became more appreciative of the superlative genius of the Greeks and Romans in many fields of endeavor.

Compared to Temple's An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning, Addison's discourse is decidedly limited in scope. Temple attempts to cover the whole realm of knowledge in his pronouncement; Addison confines himself largely to literature.

1. Addison says: "Faeliciori tandem ingenio succedit Cartesius, qui contra omnes omnium oppugnatium vires veritatem pertinaciter asservit, et novum hoc introduxit philosophandi genus, si vero Philosophiae isti novitatis nomen tribuendum sit, quae, quanquam jam primum innotuerit, vel Peripateticam antiquitate superat, et ipsi materiae a qua derivatur, existit coaetanea" (ibid., VI, 608).

2. Ibid., VI, 608.

As a literary document Temple's treatise is important chiefly for its uncompromising defence of the ancients; Addison's is of no literary significance, largely because he vacillates from one side to the other, uncertain as to the proper course to pursue. Today we may admire Addison for his middle of the road stand, but we must confess that his discourse had little effect upon the progress of English letters. On the other hand, the veracity and energy of Temple's argument must not be minimized. He says:

The endless disputes and litigious quarrels upon all these subjects favoured and encouraged by the interests of the several princes engaged in them, either took up wholly, or generally employed, the thoughts, the studies, the applications, the endeavours of all or most of the finest wits, the deepest scholars and the most learned writers that the age produced. Many excellent spirits, and the most penetrating genii, that might have made admirable progresses and advances in many other sciences, were sunk and overwhelmed in the abyss of disputes about matters of religion, without ever turning their looks or thoughts any other way: To these disputes of the pen succeeded those of the sword.¹

Time has not dealt kindly with Sir William Temple, but it might have been otherwise. Modern developments in science have made Temple's claims for antiquity appear all the more ridiculous and hyperbolic. Temple, as advocated by John Morley in

1. W. Temple, op. cit., III, 465-466.

On Compromise, made up his mind and expressed himself. Addison, if we judge by his mollified praise of the moderns after 1693, was never positive of the validity of his choice. So it is that Addison's discourse, though it brought him no added glory, did not serve to diminish the fame. The pragmatic view would be justified, then, for Addison's course did not prove to his detriment: he venerated the ancients; he followed the moderns.

Of more significance than the Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning is the Dissertatio de Insignioribus Romanorum Poetis, an unpretentious Latin essay. Though the essay was omitted from the variorum edition of Addison's works, Doctor Parr considered the dissertation of great value.¹ In spite of some trivial remarks on the Latin poets, the little essay is something of a monumental work because herein Addison supports the opinion of Bacon "that history and epic poetry are by no means proper companions"² which is, of course, contrary to Lucan's practice

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 587, n.

2. Ibid., VI, 592. The Latin reads in full: "Ex quo satis patet, veram historiam cum epico poemate male convenire."

in his Pharsalia.¹ Written about 1692, the dissertation assigns first place among the Latin poets to Vergil, an opinion to which Addison clung throughout his life.

"In the purity of his style next follows Lucretius," but Claudian captures second honors for descriptive powers.² Ovid receives more honor than he ever again obtains from Addison, which may be accounted for in the words of Hume, "At twenty, OVID may be the favourite author; HORACE at forty; and perhaps TACITUS at fifty."³ And Statius receives praise mingled with blame, for Addison says:

Jam vero, quod ad Statium attinet, plurima certe composuit summis poetarum invidenda, sed, inter magnas virtutes, maxima occurrunt vitia. In dictione enim verba nimis admittit sesquipedalia, nullâque de argumento habita ratione, vana numeris miscet tonitrua; nec minus in descriptionibus peccat; nimio enim calori indulgens, dum totis viribus excellere conatur, ultra finem tendit opus, et in tumorem excrescit. In utrumque hujusmodi vitium aliquando incidit Claudianus.⁴

1. Despite his censure of Lucan's epic theory, Addison writes in The Freeholder, No. 40, May 7: "There is another author, whom I have long wished to see well translated into English, as his work is filled with a spirit of liberty, and more directly tends to raise sentiments of honour and virtue in his reader, than any of the poetical writings of antiquity, I mean the Pharsalia of Lucan.... The translation of this author is now in the hands of Mr. Rowe, who has already given the world some admirable specimens of it...." Hurd hints this encomium of Lucan may be insincere, a view which is supported by almost every other reference by Addison to the Latin poet.
2. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 589.
3. D. Hume, Essays and Treatises, I, 255.
4. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 591.

The theme of Statius' Thebaid, Addison concluded, was suited to the barbarity of his genius for bombast, but the fable was beneath the dignity of an epic.¹ Juvenal's satires brought forth objections occasioned by their bitterness, as did the satirical lampoons of Horace. The latter was usually highly pleasing to the Briton, who writes: "Reliqua certe Horatii opera, admiratione potius sunt digna quam encomiis, nec majora solum vituperatione sed etiam laude."² Seneca was regarded as a great genius with a propensity for concise, smart expression; but Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius evoked this comment: "Non tamen est operae pretium gemmas inter stercorea eruere."³ As for the epigrammatists, both Martial and Claudian made a favorable impression upon Addison during his early life.

The Tentamen de Poetis Romanis Elegiacis, a work often attributed to Addison by his editors, signed Major Pack, is believed by Bishop Hurd to be a Latin translation made for Curll by R. Young.⁴ Whether or not this is an authentic Add-

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 595.

2. Ibid., VI, 597.

3. Ibid., VI, 598-599.

4. Ibid., VI, 599.

isonian document, it is one of the most puerile and contradictory pieces ascribed to the great essayist. Admirers of Addison must feel loath to include this morsel of criticism in the Addison canon, just as Professor Felix E. Schelling does regarding the Titus Andronicus of Shakespeare.¹ Internal evidence in the former case would tend to negate Addison's authorship of the piece, because in his Dissertatio de Insignioribus Romanorum Poetis our critic reveals utmost contempt for both Tibullus and Propertius; whereas here the writer says, "I have always found my temper sooner composed by taking a turn with Tibullus in my hand than by having recourse to the lessons of philosophy, or the precepts of divines."² What an inconsistent attitude, especially for Addison! True, the obscenity of the writers in question is mentioned, but Vergil and Horace are indicted on similar grounds. Another evidence of the uncritical temper of the author! Addison himself, moreover, would scarcely have defended lewdness under any circumstances. He was too stunch a Neoclassic to have committed such a faux pas. But this next passage definitely shows the unskilled hand of its author, who says:

1. Felix E. Schelling, English Drama (London, New York, 1926), p. 123.

2. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 600. English is used in quoting because Hurd believed that to be the language of the original.

However, though all their poems (the elegiac poets) may be read in the originals with safety, I do not pretend to say they can all be translated with decency. But since many of them may, it is a pity, I think, we have not more of them in English, to enrich our language with a variety of pleasing images that are as innocent as they are delightful.¹

The Latin style of the "Tentamen" is another indication that it is spurious. Whereas in the "Dissertatio" accents are employed, the former work has none. Whereas in the "Dissertation" Addison is careless of his word order, particularly the placement of verbs, in the "Tentamen" verbs are generally placed scrupulously at the end of the sentence. Then, too, Addison displays a great facility in the use of gerunds and gerundives in the "Dissertatio," but he fails to show the same felicity in his choice of these forms in the lesser work. In the former work, moreover, the author does not indicate the source of his quotations; in the latter, no such omission occurs. Now it is admitted that this evidence is not incontestible proof that Addison did not write the continuation of the earlier work, but these facts should add much to Hurd's contention that other hands were responsible for the "Tentamen."

1. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 604.

A treatise much superior to the Tentamen de Poetis Romanis Elegiacis is Addison's An Essay on Virgil's Georgics. In this essay we see more emphatically enunciated Addison's preference for the Georgics over the Aeneid, a notion which he seems to have discarded by the time he edited The Spectator. The critic credits Vergil with having introduced to the Romans three new kinds of poetry, the pastoral copied from Theocritus, the heroics from Homer, the georgics from Hesiod.¹ The Roman is considered to have been inferior to Theocritus and Homer as a result of his adapting their particular forms to the Latin language, but vastly superior to Hesiod in the use of the georgics. Vergil fails to achieve the same heights as the greatest writers in the majestic and rustic styles, but he masters the middle style. Addison contends, further, that critics have considered insufficiently the Georgics, some even going so far as to cast them under the same head as pastorals. The difference between these forms, he tells us, is georgic's precepts are delivered, not with the rustic simplicity that is characteristic of the pastoral, but with the assurance of a poet. True, the scene is the same; only the speakers are different. Therefore, says Addison, the

1. Misc. Wks., II, 3.

rules for pastoral cannot be said to apply fully to the georgic: the precepts of morality in the latter do not attain the same beauty of description and vividness of imagery which are to be found in the pastoral. This is caused primarily by their being abstract. However, Addison writes:

Among these different kinds of subjects, that which the Georgics go upon, is I think the meanest and least improving, but the most pleasing and delightful.¹

This attitude reveals Addison most positively as a virtuoso. The virtuosi craved perfection and beauty, preferring something perfect in its kind to something of a more grandiose nature which is imperfect.

The georgic is in reality a type of folklore. Husbandry is one of the chief divisions of this social science. Georgics are concerned with husbandry; therefore, georgics are a species of folklore. Addison welcomes weather signs,² one of the chief branches of husbandry. His definition of this poetic form resolves itself into this: "A Georgic therefore is some part of the science of husbandry put into a pleasing dress, and set off with all the Beauties and Embel-

1. Misc. Wks., II, 4.

2. Ibid., II, 5.

lishments of Poetry."¹ That Addison recognized the importance of folklore in literature so early in his career is evidence of his mental acumen. This study may be regarded, therefore, as something of a prelude to the essays on the imagination. Most of the Neo-classicists never fully appreciated the import of Addison's writings on folk elements in literature.²

Vergil's rules for husbandry were to our critic more pleasant reading than Varro's because the Mantuan concealed his precept in description and action. This brings us to a realization that another tenet of Addison's classicism is that a work should instruct as well as please, but the didactic part should not be too obtrusive. There should be sufficient scope allowed for the imagination of the reader and for an unforced method of presentation. Vergil is lauded for the variety of his sentiments and descriptions, but Addison added, in true Neo-classic fashion, that this variety did not detract from the total effect.³ Later critics have advocated liberal use of variety, but those who

1. Misc. Wks., II, 4.

2. Joanna Baillie comments upon the improved reception given literature with a folkloristic background in her time (see J. Baillie, Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters (London, 1821), pp. xxxiv-xxxvi).

3. Misc. Wks., II, 4-6. Cf. Sidney's use of this Horatian principle that literature should please and instruct (Philip Sidney, The Defence of Poesie, ed., A. Feuillerat (Cambridge, 1923), p. 9).

adhered to the strict Neo-classic tradition, as did Burke¹ and Hume,² persisted in curbing the use of variety,³ novelty, and the like.

Elaborating his theory that poetry should please and instruct, Addison says that poems should not be encumbered too much with business; only occasionally should moral reflections and pointed digressions be introduced, because a succession of precepts, if not intermingled with entertainment, will fatigue the reader. Only once does he feel that Vergil violated this principle, that occasion being his observations on Pharsalia and Augustus in Book I.⁴

As to the style of the georgic: the subject should not debase the style. Addison opposes colloquialisms in a serious poem, holding that pomp of numbers and dignity of expression should prevail. In his opinion Vergil rose above

1. Edmund Burke, Introduction to Taste (London, 1823), p. 111.
- 2/ D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 203.
3. Addison was especially pleased with Vergil's variety of transition (Misc. Wks., II, 9). Before Addison and Steele, Neo-classic writers were not so inclined to look with favor upon variety. Of course, later on in the century we have Neo-classicists giving assent to its use (see H. Home, Elements of Criticism (Edinburgh, 1762), II, 370, n.; William Cooke, The Elements of Dramatic Criticism (London, 1775), p. 85ff; and Francis Hutcheson, An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (London, 1725)).
4. Misc. Wks., II, 6-8.

the plebeian style by a happy choice of Graecisms, circumlocutions, uncommon words, and metaphors. He thinks, furthermore, that Hesiod was too much the husbandman to surpass Vergil in the excellence of his georgics, largely because the Roman had mastered the art of affecting the imagination of his readers by the employment of strong word pictures.¹

It was Addison's opinion that the third Georgic was the most labored. "It was here," he says, "that the Poet strained hard to out-do Lucretius in the description of his plague, and if the reader would see what success he had, he may find it at large in Scaliger."² The bees in the fourth Georgic, Addison thought, pleased Vergil himself, and he comments that not even the battles in the Aeneid produce a better clamor than the swarming of the bees. The first Georgic, he conjectures, was the butt of a good deal of burlesque in the Augustan Age, but he will not stoop to criticize lest his own judgment be in error. The account on how to graft trees given in the second Georgic must have been a favorite of Addison, because he heaps abundant praise upon Maro's descriptive powers.³

1. Misc. Wks., II, 8.

2. Ibid., II, 10.

3. Ibid., II, 11.

Lest the student of Romanticism see too much of the genesis of late eighteenth century Romanticism in Addison's critical works, it should be noticed that in this essay the critic stands uncompromisingly opposed to simple rusticity, such as is to be met with in Crabbe's "The Village," Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village," and Wordsworth's "Michael."¹ As in the case with his position on variety, such practice must be conformable to the dictates of the leading advocates of classic purity and simplicity. What Vergil did is all right. What Homer did is also worthy of emulation. But what was approved by the Goths in art was displeasing, as a general rule, to Addison. Those who see in his theory of imagination and in his approval of the new scientific method something of the groundwork for romantic literature should remember that Addison lived before the dissolution of Neo-classicism had fairly commenced. Later developments have served, however, to place Addison in the position of high priest of the cult of the imagination.

Addison's letter on "God", a poem by the Rev. John Lloyd, A. M., which was evidently published about 1724, is not beyond being classed with his dissertations. Written in Latin,

1. Misc. Wks., II, 9.

this brief work lavishes plaudits upon an ephemeral work which retained not even the ghost of a reputation as early as 1791.¹ Had Wordsworth perused this item of literary criticism, he might not have been so ready to heap abuse upon Scottish reviewers, notably Adam Smith and David Hume.² Any attempt to hazard a guess as to the date of this Latin letter would be utter folly. The chief interest of the average editor of Addison's works lies in the excessive praise bestowed upon the poem it celebrates: "I have perused your poem, and cannot but mention it with a kind of divinity of attributes, and all the eulogies of a ravished imagination. . . Two sheets contain all the learning of two thousand years; and the united eloquence of Rome and Athens are now to be purchased for a sixpenny piece."³ This may have been Addison's way of acknowledging Lloyd's tribute to him----

With Addison, the biggest word of Fame,
Who tuned my soul, and gave the world my name.⁴

But it detracts somewhat from Addison's reputation as a critic.

The last minor critical works by Addison to be discussed are his poems, chief among which is "An Account of the Greatest English Poets," a work which Addison never published.

1. See Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. LXI, 1791, p. 502.

2. Wordsworth's Prefaces and Essays on Poetry, ed. A. J. George (Boston, 1892), p. 73.

3. Works, ed., R. Hurd, VI, 612. This may be sarcasm.

4. Ibid., VI, 613.

Written in 1694, "An Account of the Greatest English Poets" represents Addison at very close to his worst as a critic, if we may believe Saintsbury's statement: "To dwell at all severely on this luckless production of a young University wit would be not only unkind but uncritical. It shows that at this time Addison knew next to nothing about the English literature not of his own day, and judged very badly of what he pretended to know."¹

The minor poetical criticism of CLIO is immature and of little value. "To Mr. Dryden" and "An Account of the Greatest English Poets" are, indeed, the only poems meriting critical examination. The first is in praise of Dryden as a translator of Latin verse, particularly for his construals of Vergil, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. The tone of the first four lines is fairly indicative of the mediocrity of Addison's criticism:

How long, great Poet, shall thy sacred Lays
Provoke our Wonder, and transcend our Praise?
Can neither injuries of Time, or Age,
Damp thy Poetick Heat, and quench thy Rage?²

That Ovid in the original was not too highly regarded by the critic is evident when he says that Ovid's "drooping Muse

1. G. Saintsbury, History of Criticism (1905 ed.), II, 442-443. Despite his pretended tolerance of youth, Saintsbury devotes more space to this poem than to any other part of Addison's criticism.

2. Misc. Wks., I, 3.

betrays the Roman Genius in its last Decays."¹ But Dryden, he thought, was admirably fitted for the task of turning Ovid into "the British tongue:"

O mayst thou still the noble Task prolong,
Nor Age, nor Sickness interrupt thy song:
Then may we wondering read, how Human Limbs
Have water'd Kingdoms, and dissolv'd in Streams.

.
Then will thy Ovid, thus transform's, reveal
A Nobler Change than he himself can tell.²

This poem on Dryden, followed by a translation of Vergil's fourth Georgic, was Addison's "first English performance made public."³

"An Account of the Greatest English Poets" also reveals the critic's high opinion of Dryden's talents. The study begins, however, with that "merry bard,"⁴ Chaucer, of whom Addison states in the conventional Neo-classic vein:

But age has rusted what the Poet writ,
Worn out his language, and obscur'd his wit.⁵

1. Misc. Wks., I, 3.

2. Ibid., I, 4.

3. Ibid., I, xiv.

4. Ibid., I, 31.

5. Ibid., I, 31.

Gower and the Middle Scots were deemed unworthy of mention, so that the next poet considered is Spenser. The "long-spun allegories" of the Faerie Queene, as well as the background of floods, enchanted woods, fields of great expanse, and dragons' dens, pleased the young Addison no more than they did the mature critic. Spenser's age is branded as being "yet uncultivate and rude."

But now the mystick tale, that pleas'd of yore,
Can charm an understanding age no more.¹

Cowley is much more fortunate in his treatment by Addison, as was Sprat, author of the History of the Royal Society. The only fault Addison could find in Cowley's poetry was his excessive use of wit. Sprat, "the tuneful Prelate," seems to have been as much admired for his "spotless life" as for his "charming lays."²

Milton was to Addison "above the critick's nicer laws." Our critic, by the way, was one of the first of his profession to extol Paradise Lost beyond Il Penseroso and L'Allegro. The epic grandeur, discreet use of the supernatural, and the majesty of numbers appealed to young Addison. Although Waller shared some of Milton's glory, there is evidence that he was not regarded quite so highly, even at this time. Yet Addison thought enough of the Restoration poet to write:

1. Misc. Wks., I, 31-32.

2. Ibid., I, 33.

Thy verse, harmonious Bard, and flatt'ring song,¹
Can make the vanquish'd great, the coward strong.¹

There is decidedly too much emphasis upon the beauties to be found in Roscommon and in Denham's Cooper's Hill, though Denham did set the standard for the pastoral tradition for nearly a century. The evaluation of Dryden comes closer to sound criticism: the Restoration writer is praised abundantly for his "Comick sounds," "Tragick airs," and satires. It is interesting to notice the strong bond that Addison creates between the works of Dryden and those of Congreve, for he says:

Congreve! whose fancy's unexhausted store²
Has given already much, and promis'd more.
Congreve shall still preserve thy fame alive,
And Dryden's Muse shall in his Friend survive.³

The consciousness of the fusion by Dryden and Congreve of the best of the Restoration with the Renaissance spirit may serve to redeem Addison's poem from some of the calumny heaped upon it by inappreciative critics. But, for the most part, it is agreed, the work is an insipid performance.

The only other significant thing about the poem, aside

1. Misc. Wks., I, 33.

2. See also The Spectator No. 211, November 1.

3. Misc. Wks., I, 34.

from brief mention of Montaigne¹ and Dorset, is of a politico-religious nature.² Twice the Battle of the Boyne³ is mentioned in rather impassioned poetry, a fairly clear indication of Addison's Protestant bias. He is to be commended, in the light of this religious prejudice, for discarding so completely all denominational differences when evaluating the work of Dryden and Pope.

Although not to be numbered among CLIO's minor dissertations, "St. Cecilia's Day at Oxford" strikes a note of fantasy and primitivism in the following lines:

When Orpheus strikes the trembling Lyre,
The streams stand still, the stones admire;
The list'ning savages advance,
 The Wolf and Lamb around him trip,
 The Bear in awkward measures leap,
And Tigers mingle in the dance.⁴

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1. Cf. The Spectator, No. 562, July 2, wherein Addison says: "The most eminent egotist that ever appeared in the world, was Montaigne, the author of the celebrated essays."
 2. Ibid., No. 512, October 17 is a discussion, at one point, of Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel.
 3. Misc. Wks., I, 34-35. There is also mention of the battle in "To the King" (ibid., I, 41).
 4. Ibid., I, 22.

Outside of the orthodox sort of praise usually given to Vergil, as is to be found in "A Letter from Italy,"¹ there is little important critical comment remaining in our writer's minor works, unless it be in the "Prologue" to The Tender Husband, a comedy by Steele, in which Addison paints a rather disconcerting picture of the contemporary stage. The lines, which were spoken by Mr. Wilks, run:

But now our British theatre can boast
 Droles of all kinds, a vast Unthinking host!
 Fruitful of folly and of vice, it shows
 Cuckolds, and Citts, and Bawds, and Pimps, and Beaux;
 Rough-country Knights are found in every shire;
 Of every fashion gentle fops appear;
 And Punks of different characters we meet,
 As frequent on the Stage as in the Pit.²

1. Misc. Wks., I, 61.

2. Ibid., I, 173. In this prologue Addison says that Steele has shown a "Variety of fools" in his play (ibid., I, 174).

Chapter V

The Peak of Addison's Critical Powers

Addison developed rapidly as a literary critic after 1711, eventually producing before The Spectator expired two of the most significant critical documents of the Age of Pope. The first of these was the "Criticism of Paradise Lost;" the second, "Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination." With the publication of these epochal works, Addison may be said to have reached maturity as a critic. There is, indeed, a good deal of progress to be witnessed from the time he wrote "An Account of the Greatest English Poets" until he published the two series of essays mentioned above. In many respects these papers mark a change in the man from a virtuoso to a professional critic, though he again assumed the former character in some of the later issues of his newspaper.¹ By displaying an interest in particulars, instead of generalities, he shows that he is able to transcend the limitations usually associated with the virtuosi. That such a change took place in Addison's approach to literary matters is confirmed in the preface to a little collection of essays edited

1. For an example, see The Spectator, No. 345, April 3. He also numbers himself among the virtuosi (Ibid., No. 275, January 15).

by Basil H. Blackwell, in which he says: "To all save the student of poetry Addison is less entertaining when he writes of Milton than when he writes of Popular Superstitions."¹

Notwithstanding this fundamental change in technique, Addison retained some of his virtuosity when criticizing Milton's epic. This character is well illustrated by his assertion: "I have seen in the works of a modern philosopher, a map of the spots in the sun. My last paper of the faults and blemishes in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, may be considered a piece of the same nature."² Indeed, the entire transformation may be accounted for, perhaps, by Johnson's explanation that these essays were designed as a separate work and only went into the newspaper because Steele was too busy to fulfill his obligations.³

Addison examined *Paradise Lost* "by the rules of epic poetry" to see if it measured up to the performances of Homer and Vergil. "The number of books in *Paradise Lost*," he comments, "is equal to those of the *Aeneid*."⁴ From this statement and his approving the length of the action, ten days,⁵

1. *A Book of English Essays, 1600-1900*, ed. S. V. Makower and B. H. Blackwell (London, 1935), p. v-vi.
2. *The Spectator*, No. 303, February 16.
3. *S. Johnson, Life of Addison*, p. 193.
4. *The Spectator*, No. 369, May 3.
5. Addison recognizes the Aristotelian precept that the action should be great "in its nature," and "also in its duration" (*ibid.*, No. 267, January 5).

it is apparent that he felt that Milton had conformed to the classical pattern in these details. All the while he is cognizant of the fact that some critics might object to his calling it "an heroic poem:" he indicates that some persons may prefer to term it "a Divine Poem."¹ Of course the vogue for judging epics by criteria set up by the Greeks and Romans had been set long before the time of Pope and Addison.

The qualifications for the fable of the epic have been discussed prior to this, but it should be mentioned that Addison held out for the unity of action and the "hastening into the midst of things."² The unity of Milton's action is preserved, in Addison's estimation, whether it be dated from the beginning of Book I, as he chose to do, or from Raphael's speech in Book II, which would have been in accordance with Le Bossu's practice.³ The plan of

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1. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5. Blackwell says of the poem: "It is true, the Plan of Paradise Lost, has little to do with our present Manners; It treats of a sublimer Theme, and refuses the Measure of Human Actions: Yet it every where bears some Analogy to the Affairs of Mankind" (T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 66). In the Sylvae, Poliziano dwells upon the divine origin of poetry, but there is no suggestion of this in Addison and Blackwell. Indeed Blackwell repudiates the theory of the divine inspiration of the Iliad (T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 3).
 2. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5.
 3. Ibid., No. 327, March 15.

beginning with the infernal council in session was in harmony with the example of Homer and Vergil. Addison expresses the view, moreover, that Milton not only chose one action, but that it has a beginning, a middle, and an ending,¹ as required by a leading tenet outlined in the Poetics. Addison was convinced that the theme had sufficient magnitude. Altogether, his observations on the plan of Paradise Lost are far more complimentary to the poet than Kames' on the wild, unconnected fable of the Orlando Furioso, though the latter admitted that Ariosto's design was probably adjusted to his subject.²

The epic fable, according to Aristotle, "must be either simple or complex, a story of character or one of suffering."³ Addison continues to adhere to Aristotelian precepts when he

1. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5. See also H. Home, op. cit., p. 266.

2. See ibid., p. 267. Kames had contended that unity of action could be secured by having the episodes well connected with the principal action, by having them short, lively, and interesting, and by using them when the main action relents. He cites as an example of the last feature the closing passages of Book II of Fingal (ibid., p. 259 ff.). Addison says that Milton's episodes, unlike Vergil's, "naturally arise from the subject." See The Spectator, No. 267, January 5. Cf. The Student's Oxford Aristotle, ed., W. D. Ross (Oxford, 1942), VI, sect. 1459a.

3. Ibid., VI, sect. 1459b.

undertakes his detailed analysis of the fable of Paradise Lost, just as he had done when considering the broader aspects of Milton's epic. He states that the simple fable requires no change in the fortunes of the hero, whereas the implex fable involves a change from good to bad fortune or vice versa. He does not think, however, that the implex fable in which the chief character falls "into misery and disgrace" is as well suited to heroic poetry as to tragedy.¹ Milton was probably conscious of this defect in his theme because the fall of the first parents ends in an optimistic vein. Nor does Addison wholly approve of the inability of Milton's chief actor to cope with his enemies. The critic's theology forces him into refusing to decide whether the theme of Paradise Lost is greater or "of a sub-

1. The Spectator, No. 297, February 9. Apparently Hazlitt's reasoning is more in harmony with that of Dryden. He gives some indication of considering Satan the dominant figure the Puritan poet created in his epic. Hazlitt says: "Satan is the most heroic subject that was ever chosen for a poem; and the execution is as perfect as the design is lofty." See William Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets and the English Comic Writers, ed., W. Carew Hazlitt (London, 1906), I, 85.

limer nature" than the designs of Homer or Vergil. But he does commit himself to this extent: "Paganism," he says, "could not furnish out a real action for a fable greater than that of the Iliad or Aeneid, and therefore an heathen could not form a higher notion of a poem than one of that kind which they call an heroic."¹ Maybe Addison adopted the proper course in refusing to pursue his comparison further.² It may be, as he implies, that Christian supernaturalism is of surpassing merit, which is exactly what Macaulay suggested in his "Milton:" "Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best."³

Taine tells us that many times the Teutonic spirit breaks through Addison's Greek and Latin exterior, in spite of the strong influence of Aristotle and Le Bossu.⁴ This is

1. The Spectator, No. 297, February 9.

2. In the same breath that he talks about the chief actor in an epic, Addison says, "The Paradise Lost is an epic, or a narrative poem, and he that looks for an hero in it, searches for that which Milton never intended" (ibid., No. 297, February 9). Cf. W. P. Ker, Epic and Romance (London, 1896), p. 158.

3. T. B. Macaulay, Critical, Historical, and Miscellaneous Essays and Poems (New York), I, 163.

4. H. A. Taine, History of English Literature, ed., John Fiske (New York, 1872), p. 311.

as true in the critique of Paradise Lost as in the papers on the imagination or on the ballad. Still, in one instance, Addison objects to the allegories saving of Spenser and Ariosto, rather than of the ancients, in connection with the depiction of Sin and Death. The episodes under surveillance, he contends, lack probability.¹

The Roman influence, as has been noticed previously, also breaks in upon Addison's theory of the epic in the explanation of the unity of the theme of Paradise Lost.

Beside the many other beauties in such an episode, its running parallel with the great action of the poem, hinders it from breaking the unity so much as another episode would have done, that had not so great an affinity with the principal subject. In short, this is the same kind of beauty which the critics admire in the Spanish Friar, or the Double Discovery, where two different plots look like counterparts and copies of one another.²

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1. The Spectator, No. 297, February 9. Cf. W. D. Ross, ed., The Student's Oxford Aristotle, VI, sect. 1460a. "Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty," says Johnson (see Samuel Johnson, The Life of Milton, in Johnson's Chief Lives of the Poets, ed., Matthew Arnold (New York, 1889), p. 56).
 2. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5.

There can be little doubt of Addison's debt to Plautus and Terence for the doctrine which enabled him to accept what is virtually a double plot, about the same sort of thing which one encounters in the Menaechmi. That our critic should have approved of double plots in the face of his caustic denunciations of violations of the unities and of the mixed wit in tragi-comedy is surely astonishing, to say the least.

Addison is impressed with the "indisputable and unquestioned magnificence" in Paradise Lost which transcends that of the Aeneid or the Iliad.¹ Greene offers the opinion that Addison was prejudiced against the book of games in the Aeneid;² but, be that as it may, Addison felt strongly that the English epic was enriched with a "variety of circumstances," which makes it a fine piece of invention.³ In fact, so enamoured of Milton's style was our journalist that he stated in a sort of prospectus to the papers on Paradise Lost that Milton should be accorded first place

1. The Spectator, No. 267, January 5.

2. G. W. Greene, ed., op. cit., II, 36, note. Tasso had held that the action of both the epic and tragedy should be illustrious, but that the epic need not move horror and compassion (see J. E. Spingarn, op. cit., p. 122). Addison admires the scenes in Milton which move the reader to pity and compassion toward Adam and Eve (The Spectator, No. 357, April 19).

3. Ibid., No. 267, January 5.

among English poets.¹ Such factors as Milton's having the actions and sentiments of his characters always in harmony with the nature of these personages contributed definitely to the high esteem Addison had for Milton.² Belial and Mammon, though admittedly portrayed less brilliantly than Belzebub, are cited by Addison as embodying this virtue.

Still adhering to the method of the Stagyrite, Addison proceeds to examine the characters of Milton's poem. "Homer," he says, "does not only out-shine all other poets in the variety, but also in the novelty of his characters."³ Blackwell, strangely enough, thought that Vergil's characters were better regulated than the Greek's because the Roman poet was more familiar with court life.⁴ Addison takes the contrary view, asserting that "Virgil falls infinitely short of Homer in the characters of his poem, both as to their variety and novelty." Milton, on the other hand, especially in his sketching of allegorical characters, "introduced all the variety his fable was capable of receiving."⁵

1. The Spectator, No. 262, December 31.

2. Ibid., No. 309, February 23.

3. Ibid., No. 273, January 12.

4. T. Blackwell, op. cit., pp. 325-327.

5. The Spectator, No. 273, January 12. Addison pays tribute to Boileau, too, for the beauty of the allegorical characters of Le Lutrin. Warton considered Milton's angels superior to those of both Tasso and Spenser (T. Warton, op. cit., II, 157).

The importance of Satan in the epic is not overlooked, but Addison hesitated to go so far as did Dryden, who called Satan the real hero of Paradise Lost.¹ The transcendent excellence of Milton's characters arose, however, from their universality. "The principal actors in this poem are not only our progenitors, but our representatives."²

Whereas Samuel Johnson contented himself with saying that "all the parts are not equal" in Paradise Lost, being satisfied that a poem must have transitions,³ Addison said that Milton may have weakened in his depiction of divine beings, the more so because "he dare(d) not give his imagination its full play."⁴ No doubt Milton was faced here

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1. Satan in Paradise Lost is called that great personage by Robert Burns (See The Letters of Robert Burns, ed., R. B. Johnson (London, 1928), p. 66). Lord Kames made no objection to the infernal characters in the poem, but he said allegorical figures should never mix in the principal action (H. Home, op. cit., p. 258).
 2. The Spectator, No. 273, January 12. Addison makes a momentous statement in this paper to the effect that Aristotle's rules cannot be expected "to square exactly with the heroic poems which have been made since his time."
 3. S. Johnson, The Life of Milton, p. 57.
 4. The Spectator, No. 315, March 1; No. 369, May 3.

with the same problem that confronted him when dealing with Adam's leading Eve to the nuptial bower: "Milton," says Addison, "avoid(ed) all thoughts on so delicate a subject, that might be offensive to religion or good manners."¹

The subject of Milton's use of Christian machinery is intimately connected with the problem of his characters. This topic has been discussed at some length elsewhere in this treatise, but it should be emphasized that Hume and Hurd were not alone in criticizing Milton for his choice of fable and personages. Johnson was a little more lenient with the poet, saying of the epic: "It contains the history of a miracle, of creation and redemption; it displays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being: the probable,^{therefore is marvellous and the marvellous is probable.}"² This critic thought there was more moral instruction in Paradise Lost, as is befitting a poem upon a sacred subject, than in Gerusalem Liberata.³ Johnson has, accordingly, hardly earned the scorn that is heaped upon him by

1. The Spectator, No. 345, April 5.

2. S. Johnson, The Life of Milton, p. 49. Cf. Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background (London, 1942), p. 252, who says: "God as an epic personage was less real than Satan."

3. Ibid., p. 52-53. The simplified spelling of Tasso's title has been followed in the text, though most editors use "Gerusalemme Liberata."

Macaulay in his commentary upon The Life of Milton: "... His observations on Shakespeare's plays and Milton's poems seem to us . . . as wretched as if they had been written by Rymer himself, whom we take to have been the worst critic that ever lived."¹

Addison took no exception to Milton's use of the Christian hierarchy; in fact, it was in harmony with his religious inclinations. Satan's walk outside of the universe is described as "natural and noble;" the introduction of the angels, as "beautiful and poetical."² Calling upon the authority of Aristotle and Le Bossu, Addison proceeds to defend Milton's fable as well as his characters, whom he states performed actions which "might possibly have been truths and realities." The marvellous is here, too, tempered by probability, so that this epic never descends to the level of romance.³ Addison tells us, in expounding his argument, that the conference between the Supreme Being and Adam on the subject of solitude "is as fine a part as any in the whole poem."

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1. T. B. Macaulay, "On Boswell's Life of Johnson," in Johnson's Chief Lives of the Poets, ed., M. Arnold (New York, 1889), p. 365.
 2. The Spectator, No. 315, March 1.
 3. Ibid., No. 315, March 1. Cf. section on miracles (ibid., No. 315, March 1).

"The more the reader examines the justness and delicacy of the sentiments," says the essayist, "the more he will find himself pleased with it."¹

In Addison's own day no furore had been caused by mythology in epic poetry. Voltaire's allegory in La Henriade created quite a stir, however, in 1726. The French philosophe accepted the challenge, expressing the view, in his Essay on Poetry (1727), that "the intervention of the gods is not absolutely required in an epic poem."² The issue did not really come to a showdown in England until the publication of Letters on Chivalry and Romance by Hurd in 1762. But before this time the situation had been complicated by opposition to pagan mythology in epics by Christian writers, which caused Wilkie such grave concern that he wrote in his preface to the Epigoniad:

The mythology in the following poem will probably give offence to some readers, who will think it indecent for a Christian to write in such a manner as to suppose

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1. The Spectator, No. 345, April 5. See also the comment upon the history which underlies Paradise Lost (ibid., No. 351, April 12).
 2. A. Clark, Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England, 1660-1830 (Paris, 1925), p. 315.

the truth of a Heathen religion. They will be of opinion, that it would have been better, either to have introduced no religious system at all, or to have chosen such a subject as would have admitted of the true system.¹

Hume, though he defended the Epigoniad from attacks by contributors to the Critical Review and the Monthly Review, began to doubt the suitability of the formal epic to modern times. All that saved Wilkie from Hume was his Scottish nationality.

It would seem, indeed, that if the machinery of the heathen gods be not admitted, epic poetry, at least all the marvellous part of it, must be entirely abandoned. The Christian religion, for many reasons, is unfit for the fabulous ornaments of poetry: the introduction of allegory, after the manner of Voltaire, is liable to many objections: and though a mere historical epic poem, like Leonidas,² may have its beauties, it will always be inferior to the force and pathetic of tragedy, and must resign to that species of poetry the pre-eminence which the former composition has always challenged among the productions of human genius.³

Hurd took up Hume's suggestion for the dissolution of the

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1. William Wilkie, "The Author's Preface to His Epigoniad," in The Works of English Poets from Chaucer to Cowper (London, 1810), p. 126. Mohammedanism seems to have been regarded as an heresy, rather than as a pagan theocracy. For that reason, the Saracens were frequently depicted in French epics without opposition (see W. W. Comfort, "The Literary Role of the Saracens in the French Epic," in PMLA, Vol. LV, No. 3, September, 1940, p.628 ff.).
 2. Written by Richard Glover in 1737.
 3. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 435. The letter from which this excerpt was taken was written in April, 1759.

formal epic with such vigor that the whole character of this species of poetry was changed within a span of fifty years at the most.¹ Except for Southey's Joan of Arc, Dwight's The Conquest of Canaan, and Barlow's Columbiad, all of which have suffered declines in reputation, few prominent English epics have been written since 1760. Yet Hurd hesitated to censure Milton's use of Christian accoutrements, another proof of the soundness of Addison's judgments on Milton. Hurd stated:

The pagan Gods, and Gothic Faeries were equally out of credit, when Milton wrote. He did well therefore to supply their room with angels and devils.²

Addison seemingly strengthens his position on Milton's use of Christian trappings when he compliments the Puritan poet for imitating the ancients.

Milton, notwithstanding the sublime genius he was master of, has in his book drawn to his assistance all the helps he could meet with among the ancient poets. The sword of Michael, which makes so great a havoc among the bad angels, was given him, we are told, out of the armory of God.³

1. E. J. Morley, ed., Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance, p. 143 ff.

2. Ibid., p. 144. About 1780 Johnson said that only ghosts, witches and faeries could still be employed advantageously (Boswell, 390).

3. The Spectator, No. 533, March 22. Pattison tells us: "In Addison's time (1712) some of the imaginary persons in Paradise Lost were beginning to make greater demands upon the faith of readers than those cool rationalistic times could meet" (M. Pattison, John Milton, in E. M. L. (New York and London, 1902), p. 194).

Aeneas, it will be recalled, used his sword of divine origin with equal advantage against Turnus.

In discussing the sentiments of the poem, Addison resorts to the pedagogical device of defining his term: "The sentiments in an epic poem are the thoughts and behaviour which the author ascribes to the persons whom he introduces, and are just when they are conformable to the characters of the several persons. The sentiments have likewise a relation to things as well as persons, and are then perfect when they are such as are adapted to the subject."¹

Although "Milton, through his own natural strength of genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect work," Addison felt that the imitation of those things recommended by Longinus had ennobled Paradise Lost.² Here is what Longinus said: "There may be a loftiness in sentiments, where there is no passion The pathetic . . . may animate and inflame the sublime, but is not essential to it. Accordingly . . . we very often find that those who excel most in stirring

1. The Spectator, No. 279, January 19. Spingarn calls attention to the fact that even variety of disagreeable things may be pleasing (see J. E. Spingarn, op. cit., p. 119).

2. There may be a hint of the coming cult of original genius herein. Cf. Edward Young, "Conjectures on Original Composition," in English Critical Essays, XVI-XVIII Century, ed., E. D. Jones (London, 1936), pp. 342-344. In his postscript he suggests Addison belonged to some extent to the cult (ibid., p. 364).

up the passions, very often want the talent of writing in the great and sublime manner."¹ Second, Longinus advocated the imitation of authors who have excelled in the same literary genre.² "Milton," declares Addison, "has shown himself a master in both these ways of writing."³

Homer's sentiments Addison believes to be defective at times; Vergil's are generally almost above reproach; and Milton's are very appropriate, the more so when one pauses to reflect upon their being "formed purely by his own invention." For a like reason Shakespeare had to show a greater genius in producing Caliban than Julius Caesar.⁴

Milton's difficulties in ascribing proper sentiments to Adam and Eve are explained at some length.

The loves of Dido and Aeneas are only copies of what has passed between other persons. Adam and Eve, before the fall, are a different species from that of mankind, who are descended from them; and none but a

1. The Spectator, No. 339, March 29.

2. Menuez suggests that Longinus adopted the broad Aristotelian conception of the artist's imitative faculty. See Carol Bird Menuez, "Longinus on the Equivalence of of the Arts," in The Classical Journal, Vol XXXVI, No.6, March, 1941, p. 353.

3. The Spectator, No. 339, March 29.

4. Ibid., No. 279, January 19.

poet of the most unbounded invention, and the most exquisite judgment, could have filled their conversation and behaviour with so many circumstances during their state of innocence.¹

A comment of this calibre, probably more than any other, illustrates the limited scope of the Neo-classic concept of the imagination before Addison's time. Even he is unable to break entirely the shackles. As a result, he indubitably lays too much stress upon Milton's invention, for the Puritan is hardly the equal of Ariosto, Tasso,² or Spenser³ in this respect.

Milton's thoughts were not only appropriate but sublime. Addison says erroneously, that only once did the poet resort to mirth: evidently the essayist failed to perceive the subtle humor of some of the most sublime, if occasionally bathetic, passages in Paradise Lost. Careful attention should be paid to the contention, nevertheless, that the epic's sentiments should not "raise laughter," and to the indictment of Homer on this particular.⁴ It seems, then, that although Addison classified Milton as an imitative genius, he was not

1. The Spectator, No. 279, January 19.

2. Even Addison was impressed with the popularity of Tasso in Italy. He records that the common people sang whole stanzas out of Tasso by memory (Misc. Wks., II, 62).

3. See T. Warton, op. cit., I, 92-93.

4. The Spectator, No. 279, January 19. Lord Kames intimates that only the slight and trivial provoke laughter; real distress is not risible but pathetic (H. Home, op. cit., p. 71).

unaware of the potential and actual power of the poet to produce something different than the models imitated.¹ Sight should not be lost of Addison's further praise of Milton for having abstained from the use of mixed wit,² one of the greatest compliments the critic could pay to an author.

The interest Addison displayed in the philosophy of Locke, particularly those aspects dealing with "the art of distinguishing between words and things," led him to the conclusion that Milton is culpable for failing in several respects to make the diction of Paradise Lost fit its sentiments. The reader tends to be distracted by numerous digressions, too "frequent allusion to heathen fable," an overabundance of ostentation of learning, not to mention occasional puns.³ Even the archaisms and Latinisms may be carried too far, thus obscuring thoughts otherwise sublime.⁴

Warton's examination of Spenser's language is much more

1. The Spectator, No. 160, September 3.

2. Ibid., No. 62, May 11.

3. Ibid., No. 291, February 2. Cf. J. W. M. Gibbs, ed., op. cit., IV, 422. Addison objects, too, to the display of knowledge of history, astronomy, and geography (The Spectator, No. 297, February 9).

4. Warton thinks Milton borrowed some of both from Spenser (T. Warton, op. cit., II, 67).

detailed, if not more scholarly, than Addison's commentary upon Milton's. At least Warton displays more interest in the linguistic aspects of his subject. T. S. Eliot has, by the way, regarded Milton as "an unconscious artist," but Professor John S. Diekhoff has refuted this argument rather thoroughly.¹ Addison was, as has been presignified, only interested in the perspicuity and sublimity of the diction of Paradise Lost, which is probably the proper attitude for the literary critic. Diekhoff has dissected Comus to examine minutely its syntax.² Addison, on the contrary, has a feeling for art: he excuses Milton for some syntactical errors on the basis of their occurring in verses of remarkable beauty. But he insists that such blemishes are rare in this epic.

Addison then searches for those beauties of diction in

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1. John S. Diekhoff, "Critical Activity of the Poetic Mind: John Milton," in PMLA, Vol. LV, No. 3, September, 1940, p. 748 ff.
 2. Ibid., p. 750 ff.
 3. The Spectator, No. 285, January 26. Many of the blemishes in Milton may be attributed to the fact that "our language sunk under him, and was unequal to the greatness of soul which furnished him with such glorious conceptions (ibid., No. 297, February 9).

Paradise Lost which contribute to its sublimity. By sparingly using bold, but just, metaphors, by injecting into the poem, Latinisms and other foreign idiom, by transposing words, and by "the lengthening of a phrase by the addition of words," as well as by employing coined or obsolete words, Milton achieved the grand style demanded by the epic form.¹

The uncommon modes of expression are defended by the critic because of Milton's metrical form. He says:

Rhyme, without any other assistance, throws the language off from prose, and very often makes an indifferent phrase pass unregarded; but where verse is not built upon rhymes, there pomp of sound, and energy of expression are indispensably necessary to support the style and keep it from falling into the flatness of prose.²

1. The Spectator, No. 285, January 26.

2. Ibid., No. 285, January 26. Havens says, "The unrimed translations of Roscommon and Addison and the Irene of Johnson betray no knowledge of other requisites" of blank verse (see R. Havens, op. cit., p. 55). Havens insinuates that Addison lacked the courage to use the Miltonic variety in his Cato, but the character of the blank verse of "Milton's Stile Imitated" confirms the belief of most critics that Addison simply had inadequate knowledge of the form, not insufficient courage to use it (cf. ibid., p. 67). Addison was wise, therefore, in refusing to employ Miltonic blank verse in the drama named.

But Addison does not only approve of blank verse, which he himself tried to use oftentimes, but of the Miltonic elisions, contractions, and other poetical devices. Hurd's intuition led him, years later, to a much less sympathetic stand on the blank verse of Paradise Lost. He claimed the poem would have been an even greater success had Milton resorted to rhyme.¹

Among the other defects in Milton's style and language² listed by Addison are technical terms and "a kind of jingle in his words."³ To illustrate the former, he

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1. The Works of Richard Hurd (London, 1811), II, pp. 23-24. For further information on Hurd's attempt to show that rhyme was suited to lyric and epic alike, see Hoyt Trowbridge, "Bishop Hurd: a Reinterpretation," in PMLA, Vol. LVIII, No. 2, June, 1943, p. 453.
 2. Blackwell has said of Homeric language: "A LANGUAGE thoroughly polished in the modern Sense, will not descend to the Simplicity of Manners absolutely necessary in Epic-Poetry: And if we feign the manners, we must likewise endeavour to imitate the Stile" (T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 59). Johnson said: "If the poetry of Milton be examined, with regard to pauses and flow of his verses into each other, it will appear that he has performed all that our language would admit" (The Rambler, No. 90, January 26, 1751). Yet Vicesimus Knox accused Johnson of being incapable of appreciating the higher forms of poetry (Vicesimus Knox, Essays, Moral and Literary (London, 1824), I, 465).
 3. Campion points out that the ancients were also guilty of irregularities, the Greeks being more licentious than the Latins in the quantity of their syllables (see Thomas Campion, "Observations in the Art of English Poesy," in Campion's Works, ed., Percival Vivian (Oxford, 1909), p. 53).

cites the use of "larboard" in the identical manner that Dryden employs it in his translation of the Aeneid.¹

More will be said of Milton's imagery and descriptive powers. Suffice it to say in connection with Addison's scrutiny of Milton's language that he felt the metaphors, allusions, and similes of Paradise Lost enabled the poet to conjure up glorious images:² these add to the sublimity of the descriptions³ and sustain the work by means of an "agreeable variety."⁴ He continues by asserting, with reference to Milton's use of rhetorical figures, that when the epic poet "alludes either to things or to persons, he never quits his simile till it rises to some very great idea, which is often foreign to the occasion that gave birth to it."⁵

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1. The Spectator, No. 297, February 9. Cf. Johnson's opinion of Milton's knowledge of sounds and music (The Rambler, No. 94, February 9, 1751).
 2. Ibid., No. 303, February 16. Cf. Edmund Burke, "Of the Sublime and Beautiful," in The Works of Edmund Burke (New York, 1860), I, 79.
 3. The Spectator, No. 369, May 3.
 4. Ibid., No. 303, February 16.
 5. Ibid., No. 303, February 16.

The sweetness of Milton's verse caused Addison to remark, "In those poems, wherein shepherds are actors, the thoughts ought always to take a tincture from the woods, fields, and rivers."¹ This has prompted one modern critic to conjecture that perhaps Addison felt that Milton had occasionally introduced a note of the pastoral into his epic.² Dr. Allan H. Gilbert, Duke University, is struck by the resemblance of Book IV, lines 312-318, as well as parts of Book V, to Tasso's Aminta. Addison either ignored this borrowing, or he was unaware of it.³ Gilbert adds a very penetrating comment on the merits of Milton's style, however, when he says the fusion of biblical and Renaissance scholarship gave Milton richness.⁴ Addison, too, was aware of this enrichment with scriptural, if not pastoral, materials.⁵

1. The Spectator, No. 321, March 8.

2. Allan H. Gilbert, "Milton and Tasso's Aminta, in Modern Philology, Vol. XXV, No. 1, August, 1927, p.95 ff.

3. Ibid., pp. 95-97.

4. Ibid., p. 99.

5. The Spectator, No. 357, April 19.

Addison had the impression that the total effect of Paradise Lost was highly satisfactory; but he was sufficiently the disciple of Longinus to seek¹ purple patches and to undertake a detailed explication de texte. Some of the aspects of the poem which pleased him most were the invocation of the muses, which he considered beautiful in language and sentiment, as well as happy in its transition into the fable, the eloquence of Satan, and the "agreeable variety in his (Milton's) visions."² Then, too, the catalogue of evil spirits appealed to Addison, as the catalogue of Grecian ships in Homer struck a sympathetic note in Blackwell in 1735,³ and as the catalogue of trees in Spenser was welcomed by Warton.⁴ Approval of catalogues⁵

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1. Longinus became prominent in French and English criticism after Boileau translated him in 1674 (see C. D. Thorpe, op. cit., p. 1124). Addison praises Boileau's translation in The Guardian, No. 117, July 25.
 2. The Spectator, No. 363, April 26.
 3. T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 286. Cf. Alden Sampson, Studies in Milton and An Essay on Poetry (New York, 1913), p. 39.
 4. T. Warton, op. cit., I, 189, 192. Warton thought that the ancients' lists of trees were sometimes superfluous.
 5. Misc. Wks., II, 42.

on the part of our critic even extends to the list of rivers in Claudian.

Although Longinus and Aristotle,¹ as well as Le Bossu and Horace, furnished Addison with his chief criteria for judging epic poetry, he calls attention to his fusion of certain principles, and to his independent thinking on some issues.² It was this feature of Addison's criticism which caused Samuel Johnson to place him in the School of Taste, saying: "He is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles."³ Only the narrow Neo-classicists could hold such an opinion in the face of Addison's repeated reliance upon Aristotle, though it is true that his criticism was colored by his taste, but not to the extent that Shaftesbury's or Rymer's was.

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1. Addison states in one instance, "In the description of Paradise, the poet has observed Aristotle's rule of lavishing all the ornaments of diction on the weak inactive parts of the fable" See The Spectator, No. 321, March 8.
 2. Ibid., No. 321, March 8. René Le Bossu must have influenced Addison in his stress upon variety and novelty in epic poetry (René Le Bossu, Treatise of the Epick Poem (London, 1695), BK. I, Chapt. II, p. 5). The Spectator papers show strong antipathy, however, toward "those mixed embellishments of Tasso" (The Spectator, No. 279, January 19).
 3. S. Johnson, The Life of Addison, p. 217.

Bosker points out that Gray ridiculed criticism by rule in one of his letters to Mason, wherein he speaks of Gil Morrice, an old Scottish ballad, and remarks that "Aristotle's best rules are observed in it in a manner that shews the author had never heard of Aristotle."¹ Yet Gray ridicules our critic for having compared Chevy Chase with the Aeneid.²

Addison makes much ado about the subject of pre-existence as brought out in Paradise Lost. He says:

Virgil, in compliment to the Roman common-wealth, makes the heroes of it appear in their state of pre-existence; but Milton does a far greater honour to mankind in general, as he gives us a glimpse of them even before they are in being.³

This excerpt calls our attention to the emphasis placed upon parallels in Milton and Vergil, for Addison was not only interested in the poet's obedience to Aristotelian regulations, but in his imitation of the most eminent heroic poets. It is pointed out that Paradise Lost embodies "literal trans-

1. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 87, See also Francis B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad (Boston and New York, 1907), pp. 73, 182-183.

2. Ibid., p. 87.

3. The Spectator, No. 309, February 23.

lations, taken from the greatest of the Greek and Latin poets!"¹ Too much is often made of these two factors, albeit the epic is classical in character, for the words of Taine must not be discounted. He writes:

"Milton has acknowledged to me," writes Dryden, "that Spenser was his original." In fact by the purity and elevation of their morals, by the fulness and connection of their style, by the noble chivalric sentiments, and their fine classical arrangement, they are brothers.²

The Spectator, No. 321 is at once an enigma and a fine discussion of the eloquence of Paradise Lost. It is the former because Addison oftentimes loses sight of the vital issues, even lapsing occasionally into a seeming ignorance of the character of the epic. While condescending to praise Milton for "exuberance of imagination" in his descriptions of external nature, which the critic unenthusiastically refers to as "the drawings of gardens, rivers, rainbows, and the like dead pieces of nature," he demonstrates his aversion to lengthy descriptions of this sort in some epics. He commits another faux pas when he speaks disparagingly of the hyperbole in his discussion of Adam and Eve in the state of

1. The Spectator, No. 321, March 28. Hughes, in "An Essay on Allegorical Poetry," enumerates some of Milton's borrowings from the classics, taking particular notice of the story of Circe (see W. H. Durham, Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century (New Haven and Oxford, 1915), pp. 90-95.

2. H. A. Taine, op. cit., p. 213.

pristine innocence. Again the critic shows a disposition to exonerate Milton. Addison might, consequently, be excused for his failure to comprehend the fullness of the epic were it not for his dwelling at great length upon trivia. The following is an example:

Most of the modern heroic poets have imitated the ancients in beginning a speech without premising that the person said thus or thus; but as it is easy to imitate the ancients in the omission of two or three words, it requires judgment to do it in such a manner as they shall not be missed, and that the speech may begin naturally without them. There is a fine instance of this kind out of Homer, in the twenty-third chapter of Longinus.¹

Such criticisms add nothing to Addison's reputation as a critic. Too often he lingers over sentiments, instead of rhetoric; too frequently he misses the main beauties of the speeches.² This becomes more apparent when one reads Johnson, who has summed up Milton's sentiments so well that little remains to be said.

Of his moral sentiments it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets;

1. The Spectator, No. 321. March 8.

2. This may well be explained by Graham's statement on Addison and Steele to the effect that "their principles as well as their methods were well adapted to popularize literary criticism among the readers of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian" (W. Graham, English Literary Periodicals, p. 79). This audience would hardly have appreciated too much rhetoric.

for this superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with sacred writings.¹

To the Milton scholar, the weakness displayed by Addison in rhetoric attains alarming proportions at times. Such matters as hymns interspersed throughout Paradise Lost have more attraction for him than rhetorical technicalities. These sacred songs appealed to his religious sense, largely because they were framed in imitation of the Psalms.² Rhetorical aspects of the speeches, with a few exceptions, are neglected without any qualms. It would be difficult to cite a more unscholarly part of Addison's "Criticism of Paradise Lost" than the papers dealing with the eloquence. It will be recalled, however, that he exhibited no exceptional ability as a theorist on oratory. Perhaps the reason for his failure to examine the speeches of the epic from the technical standpoint may be traced to the lack of a model, but Addison should have been capable of less puerile criticism than that upon the dialogue and eloquence of Adam and Eve: "There is scarce a speech of Adam or Eve..., wherein the sentiments and allusions are

1. S. Johnson, The Life of Milton, p. 52.

2. The Spectator, Nos. 327, 321, March 15 and 8.

not taken from this their delightful habitation." Compare this with a more widely accepted view, as expressed by Hazlitt:

Of Adam and Eve it has been said, that the ordinary reader can feel little interest in them, because they have none of the passions, pursuits, or even relations of human life, except that of man and wife, the least interesting of all others, if not to the parties concerned, at least to the bystanders.¹

But Addison was impressed with the dignity and tenderness of Adam's affectionate speeches to Eve. These qualities, rather than the technical devices, of the speeches he calls to the attention of his bourgeois readers. Fortunately, he did notice in Satan's eloquence some of the finest instances of epic grandeur. Remorse, misery, envy, and terror are among the chief emotions highlighted in the speeches of the lord of Pandemonium.² Again Addison succumbed to the attraction of Milton's sentiments.

On one occasion the essayist speaks of the "great delicacy in the moralities which are interspersed in Adam's discourses," but he partially redeems himself from this did-

1. Wm. Hazlitt, op. cit., I, 88.

2. The Spectator, No. 321, March 8. Cf. Wm. Hazlitt, op. cit., I, 86.

actic approach by bursting into an encomium of the passion Adam voices when he resolves to perish, instead of to live without Eve after she has yielded to temptation.¹ "Milton's art," Addison reiterates, "is no where more shewn than in his conducting the parts of these our first parents."² Particularly did he like the "soft and womanish" sentiments in Eve's speeches and the "masculine and elevated" turns in Adam's.³

Dr. Samuel Johnson disagreed with Addison on the propriety and justness of the imagery in certain descriptive passages of the epic. Addison is probably correct in his estimation of Milton's handling of heroic action, but Johnson reveals a little more discrimination in questioning the description of spirits. He maintains that Milton saw the immateriality of his ethereal actors provided no images, and the doctor thinks that Milton was unable to cope with the situation in his depiction of the

1. The Spectator, No. 351, April 12.

2. Ibid., No. 357, April 19.

3. Ibid., No. 363, April 26.

activities of the fallen angels.¹ Our critic, on the contrary, observed that these were "described with great pregnancy of thought and copiousness of invention."² Continuing his case, he asserts, "An ordinary poet would indeed have spun out so many circumstances to a great length, and by that means have weakened, instead of illustrated,³ the principal fable."⁴

The inventiveness and strength in Milton's handling of battle descriptions and heroic actions also command the attention of our essayist. The embellishment of the passages dealing with the chariot of the Messiah,⁵ the "lively colours" of the representation of Raphael's descent to earth, and the natural majesty of Adam are in keeping with the illustrious action. "The poet," Addison tells us of the battle of the angels, "never mentions any thing of this battle, but in such

1. S. Johnson, The Life of Milton, pp. 55-56.

2. The Spectator, No. 309, February 23.

3. Sic in text.

4. Ibid., No. 309, February 23. See also ibid., No. 333, March 22.

5. The Spectator, No. 327, March 15.

images of greatness and terror as are suitable to the subject."¹ "The first engagement," he relates, "is carried on under a cope of fire, occasioned by the flights of innumerable burning darts and arrows which are discharged from either host. The second onset is still more terrible, as it is filled with those artificial thunders which seem to make the victory doubtful, and produce a kind of consternation even in the good angels."² But, he goes on to say, "The second day's engagement is apt to startle an imagination which has not been raised and qualified for such a description by the reading of the ancient poets, and of Homer in particular."³ Thus it appears that Addison was satisfied with the harmonious blending of heroes and heroic actions, as well as with the majesty and grace of the main characters. In Milton's depiction of the battle of the angels, Addison says, "the author's imagination was so inflamed with this great scene of action . . . he rises, if possible, above himself."⁴

1. The Spectator, No. 333, March 22.

2. Ibid., No. 333, March 22.

2. Ibid., No. 333, March 22.

4. Ibid., No. 333, March 22.

He questions not that Le Bossu and the two Daciers, who "are for vindicating every thing that is censured in Homer, by something parallel in holy writ," would have been well satisfied with most of Milton's circumstances.¹ But he was convinced that Milton, in his narrative of the civil war in heaven, "avoided everything that is mean and trivial in the descriptions of the Latin and Greek poets." Addison leaves no stone unturned in belittling burlesque in the epic.²

The terseness of Milton's descriptions, the propriety of his episodes,³ and the magnificence of his portrayal of the heavenly hosts⁴ stirred Addison's soul. The adroit handling of incident by the poet was enhanced by a vivid, but regulated, invention which enabled him to take a fable even more "bare of circumstances" than the narratives of Achilles, Ulysses, and Aeneas and elaborate it with consummate skill.⁵

1. The Spectator, No. 327, March 15.

2. Ibid., No. 333, March 22.

3. Ibid., Nos. 339, 345, March 29 and April 5. The epic, in Addison's opinion, does not admit of digressions (ibid., No. 297, February 9). Cf. William W. Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), p. 107.

4. Ibid., No. 363, April 26.

5. Ibid., No. 351, April 12.

Burke concurred in the opinion that Milton was a master of description. He says:

No person seems better to have understood the secret of heightening, or of setting terrible things, if I may use this expression, in their strongest light, by the force of a judicious obscurity, than Milton.¹

The gloomy pomp of portions of Book II received substantial support from this late eighteenth century apostle of Longinus. Burke does not appear to have had, however, so intimate a knowledge as Addison of the battle array and heroic machinery of the poem.²

Whether Milton's use of the Ptolemaic, instead of the Copernican, cosmography added an Homeric flavor to Milton's description is debatable.³ Ker has indicated that not all of the seventeenth century thinkers were convinced of the validity of the Copernican theory.⁴ Milton may have been, however. In any event, Addison was pleased with Milton's manipulation of celestial bodies, for he says:

Under this head of celestial persons we must likewise

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1. E. Burke, op. cit., I, 55.
 2. The Spectator, No. 333, March 22. Not content with ordinary praise, Addison compares Milton's battles with those in Homer and the "book of Maccabees."
 3. The Copernican element is sometimes attributed to Milton's humanism (see Edwin Greenlaw, "Spenser's Influence on Paradise Lost," in Studies in Philology, Vol. XVII, July, 1920, pp. 320-359).
 4. Temple is cited as not being "quite sure." See W. P. Ker, ed., Essays of John Dryden, II, 286.

take notice of the command which the angels received to produce the several changes in nature, and sully the beauty of creation. Accordingly they are represented as infecting the stars and planets with malignant influences, weakening the light of the sun, bringing down the winter into the milder regions of nature, planting winds and storms in several quarters of the sky, storing the clouds with thunder, and, in short, perverting the whole frame of the universe to the condition of its criminal inhabitants.¹

The part in which the angels heave up the earth into a different position in relation to the sun "is conceived with that sublime imagination which was so peculiar to this great author."² It is not without import that in an earlier paper Addison observed that Milton must have "heated his imagination" with passages from Homer.³ So sublime was Milton in his description of the universe!

Too much should not be made of the Homeric influence upon Milton's cosmography and description of the universe. The poet was in command of most of the learning of his age: he had familiarized himself with practically every important production in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin,⁴ something Addison must have pondered upon when he said that Milton's genius was aided by "all the helps of learning."⁵

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1. The Spectator, No. 357, April 19.
 2. Ibid., No. 357, April 19.
 3. Ibid., No. 333, March 22.
 4. Mark Pattison, op. cit., p. 17 ff.
 5. The Spectator, No. 333, March 22.

Perhaps the character of the virtuoso comes out most forcefully in Addison's summation of Milton's use of the Ptolemaic system. Addison approached the entire matter from the aesthetic standpoint: he was interested in science only as the handmaiden of art. The archangel is, accordingly, commended for refusing to give sanction to any specific hypothesis. "The chief points in the Ptolemaic and Copernican hypothesis¹ are described with great conciseness and perspicuity, and at the same time dressed in very pleasing and poetical images."² This dualism in Milton's cosmography was also detected by Mark Pattison, who says:

And the systems confront each other in the poem, in much the same relative position which they occupy in the mind of the public. The ordinary, habitual mode of speaking of celestial phenomena is Ptolemaic (see Paradise Lost, vii.339; iii.481). The conscious, or doctrinal, exposition of the same phenomena is Copernican (see Paradise Lost, viii.122). Sharp as is the contrast between the two systems, the one being the direct contradictory of the other, they are lodged together, not harmonised, within the vast circuit of the poet's imagination.³

1. Sic in text.

2. The Spectator, No. 345, April 5.

3. Mark Pattison, op. cit., p. 176.

Milton's attitude toward women undoubtedly affected the actions of his chief actors, particularly of Adam. Modern scholars have concluded that Milton's writings show that for him women served three functions: (1) to gratify the senses, (2) to regulate the passions, (3) to serve as intellectual companions. Rascoe, in his unsympathetic treatment of Milton,¹ has contended that Milton became less amiable and more distrustful of women with the passing of the years. At first the poet held the female in childish esteem; then he held her in reverence; and finally, "after many years of varied experience," he came almost to the point where he hated women.² Now Addison does not say much on this subject, but it is obvious that he felt that Milton regarded the female as being something of a cloistered, innocent creature, whose ears were not meant for certain conversation. Then, too, Eve is represented "as withdrawing from this part of their conversation to amusements more suitable to her sex."³

1. Burton Rascoe, Titans of Literature (New York, 1932), p. 281. He calls Paradise Lost "one of the baldest plagiarisms in the history of literature," asserting that Milton stole "the whole scheme from Salandras Adamo Canuto."

2. Ibid., p. 287.

3. The Spectator, No. 345, April 5. See also M. Pattison, op. cit., p. 143 ff.

This attitude would of itself be of little account were it not for Milton's depicting Adam carrying on a courtship devoid of "flattery and falsehood."¹ Here Milton's opinion of the female definitely enters into his handling of the action, especially in the episodes, of Paradise Lost.

The papers on Paradise Lost comprise one of the most distinguished performances in English literary criticism, entitling Addison to a place alongside Sidney, Johnson, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Hazlitt is a little less labored in his comparisons in Lectures on the English Poets, and Macaulay is a little more concise in his Essay on Milton; but Addison is more substantial. Many things are left unsaid in the essays, it is true, but they represent the first dispassionate, nonpartisan evaluation of Milton's genius, notwithstanding Dodge's allegation of a bias caused by Addison's being a Whig, which left him undisturbed by "the poet's political tenets and activities."² Addison approached his task with the equanimity of a dialectician. Puritanism was a reaction, a movement characterized by Protestant confidence in the authority of the

1. The Spectator, No. 327, March 15.

2. R. E. Neil Dodge, "Theology in Paradise Lost," in University Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, No. 2 (Madison, 1918), p. 10.

Scriptures,¹ and "a zeal for primitive truth" which Catholicism had outgrown.² As a true artist, he was concerned not with political philosophies, but with the force³ and sublimity of Milton's expression, and with the justness of Milton's sentiments. Only the warming profusion of biblical allusion was able to divert Addison slightly from his purpose.⁴ There is no hint of revolt in his essays against the dogmatism of Milton, though Paradise Lost is as replete with dogma as Dante's Divine Comedy. Thus it is evident that Addison freed himself of religious and political prejudice when he undertook this project.

Many aspects of Paradise Lost dealt with in The Spectator fall into a different category than any set up by Aristotle. Unfortunately, Addison did not carry this practice far enough. Milton's sources have not been scientifically explored by him;

1. Basil Willey, op. cit., p. 251.

2. R. E. N. Dodge, op. cit., p. 15.

3. See Wm. Hazlitt, op. cit., I, 80.

4. The Spectator, No. 357, April 19. Dryden blames occasional flatness of thought in Milton on his getting "into a track of Scripture" (W. P. Ker, ed., Essays of John Dryden, II, 29). That Addison was not alone in his favorable reaction to Milton's religious leanings may be seen in nineteenth century American denominational reviews (see Annabel Newton, Wordsworth in Early American Criticism (Chicago, 1928), pp. 120, 122, and 177).

there is no reference, for example, to the possibility of Milton's having been introduced to Caedmon's Genesis B by Isaac Vossius, nephew of Junius.¹ Tasso is likewise neglected, because Addison did not regard the Italian as a sufficient "voucher."² Emblems, which certainly added a decorative touch to Paradise Lost, also pass by unnoticed, even though our essayist had previously demonstrated his familiarity with this art form.³ Since Pope had deprecated Quarles' work in The Dunciad,⁴ it is not unlikely that Addison also knew this compilation first hand. Neither is there any hint of the epic's being a plagiarism, which may be taken to mean that Addison had not encountered the Adamo Canuto while in Italy, or that he had dismissed it as a source. Probably no competent modern critic will take Rascoe seriously anyway.

Several important critical pronouncements are made in Addison's essays on Milton. He gives assent to the winding up of the epic fable as a dramatist would his theme in "the last act of a well written tragedy."⁵ An epic should, moreover,

1. C. W. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 163.

2. The Spectator, No. 369, May 3.

3. Ibid., No. 15, March 17. Cf. Blackwell on Homeric emblems (T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 164).

4. The Dunciad, Bk. I, l. 140. See also Quarles' Emblems (London, 1886).

5. The Spectator, No. 357, April 19.

end happily, another respect in which Milton's poem is defective.¹ From the comments that "Milton's poem ends very nobly," and that "the last speeches of Adam and the archangel are full of moral and instructive sentiments, it may be deduced that the didactic purpose of poetry was firmly established in Addison's mind, despite his disagreement with Le Bossu about the poet's first striking upon a moral before constructing the story."² Then, too, Addison's theory of variety assumes greater proportions as a result of his speaking favorably of Milton's variety of persons, celestial, infernal, human, and imaginary, in Book X,³ and of the "agreeable variety in his visions."⁴

Untrammelled by the rigidity of Pseudo-classic doctrine, our critic says unhesitatingly that Paradise Lost "does an honour to the English nation."⁵ The entire work receives

1. The Spectator, No. 369, May 3. Cf. Hazlitt, op. cit., I, 89.

2. Ibid., No. 369, May 3.

3. Ibid., No. 357, April 19. Willey says, "(All) the persons have the solidity of real persons" (see B. Willey, op. cit., p. 251).

4. The Spectator, No. 363, April 26.

5. Ibid., No. 369, May 3.

his approbation, although the later books, particularly Book XI, gave him almost unbounded pleasure. The book named is termed "among the most shining books of this poem."¹ The Homeric qualities of the episode in which the forbidden fruit is eaten,² the romantic description of morning, the Shakespearean soliloquy of the "infernal agent,"³ as well as the solemnity of those passages dealing with the natural elements⁴--all are deemed sublime and pleasing by the Neo-classicist. A few rhetorical effects also had limited appeal for him, notably the contrasts in Book XI, the similitudes relating to Eve's temptation,⁵ and the allegorical descriptions of imaginary persons. He qualifies his praise of the last, however, by commenting:

Such beautiful extended allegories are certainly some of the finest compositions of genius; but as I have before observed, are not agreeable to the nature of an heroic poem.

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1. The Spectator, No. 363, April 26.
 2. Ibid., No. 351, April 12. Cf. B. Willey, op. cit., p. 255.
 3. Ibid., No. 351, April 12. Here Addison seems to sense the importance of the olfactory pleasures of the imagination.
 4. Ibid., No. 363, April 26. Ovid, he says, is surpassed in these descriptions. See also ibid., No. 339, March 29.
 5. Ibid., No. 351, April 12.

Yet the virtuoso, the man sometimes guided by taste, overcame his classical bias and recognized that some of the allegories of the poem were surely "exquisite."¹

Miscellaneous items of interest in the Milton criticism include an apology for the length of the treatise, the half-humorous animadversion of a virtuoso,² the almost complete absence of contrasts between Paradise Lost and its "sequel,"³ and the remonstrance of Vergil for his ludicrous prophecies.⁴ The visions, Addison believes, surpass the narrative portions of the epic.⁵ And he offers no protest to Milton's copying Homer in calling things, in the language of the gods, "by different names from those they go by in the language of men."⁶ This custom is comparable to the Hebrew tabu on the name of Jahweh.

Addison lauded the purpose of the poet in justifying the ways of God toward mankind. Obedience to the Summum Bonum

1. The Spectator, No. 357, April 19.

2. Ibid., No. 369, May 3.

3. Ibid., No. 303, February 16.

4. Ibid., No. 351, April 12.

5. Ibid., No. 369, May 3.

6. Ibid., No. 327, March 15.

brings happiness;¹ disobedience leads to misery. Milton's quest of beauty in embellishing the theme with descriptions of superb aesthetic quality,² abetted by all the powers of novelty and variety, struck an equally responsive chord in the critic's fancy. However, the devotion he showed to those parts of the poem which were "founded in reason"³ or which imparted a moral⁴ refutes the arguments of those savants who would place Addison among the first Romanticists.⁵ English Neo-classicism was never wholly divorced from the romantic outlook. The didactic aim of literature was fully recognized by Addison, then, at the

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1. Dowden carries this argument further, regarding Paradise Regained, "By obedience Christ regains paradise" (Edward Dowden, Transcripts and Studies (London, 1896), p. 468).
 2. The Spectator, No. 339, March 29. "The truth is," De Quincey states in his "Richard Bentley," "that the ancient poets are much more than the Christian poets within the province of unimaginative good sense" (Thomas De Quincey, The Eighteenth Century in Scholarship and Literature (Boston and New York, 1877), p. 124).
 3. The Spectator, No. 345, April 5.
 4. Ibid., No. 363, April 26.
 5. See W. Graham, English Literary Periodicals, p. 79.

same time that he admired the entertaining nature of the fable. Sight should not be lost of the fact that the sentiments of the poem were pleasing chiefly because they were appropriate and instructive. Indeed Addison seemed to think that Milton was trying to inculcate in his readers a stern, but timely, moral: Adam fell because of his excessive love for Eve.¹

In introducing this series of papers, Addison subscribes to the Renaissance theory of art expounded by Boileau "that wit and fine writing doth not consist so much in advancing things that are new, as in giving things that are known an agreeable turn."² This is also capable of being interpreted according to strict Neo-classic standards. Some of the Renaissance writers had, nevertheless, entered the camp of the Romanticists by using this very principle. Too much has been made of the Romantic

1. The Spectator, No. 357, April 19.

2. The Spectator carries no comment, unfortunately, on the new turn Addison's predecessor, Dryden, gave to Paradise Lost in his operatic perversion of the epic, The State of Innocence. In this work Adam has an innate understanding of seventeenth century philosophy (see Louis Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, in University of Michigan Publications, Language and Literature, Vol. XII (Ann Arbor, 1934), p. 67). Notice that Dryden also discusses Boileau, as well as Rapin and Italian Aristotelians. His conclusion is that all agree that the purpose of poetry is to please and instruct (W. P. Ker, ed., Essays of John Dryden, I, 181).

traits in Addison's criticism, though the spirit permeating the ostensibly Aristotelian pattern of the critique is that of Longinus.¹ What is more evident than any budding Romanticism is that Addison, by drawing with discrimination from Aristotle, Longinus, Boileau, the Daciers, and Le Bossu,² became an important precursor of Hume and Gibbon, the chief representatives of the French classical school in Great Britain.³ It is extremely doubtful, then, that the transition from Neo-classicism to Romanticism numbers Addison among its first proponents. Later developments may have made Addison a part of the early stages of movement. But Addison sought diligently, it is believed, to conform to the spirit of a robust classicism of which Longinus is a part. This accounts for our critic's work being tinged with doctrines alien to the tradition of Pope and Johnson. However, this does not mean that Addison did not play an important role in the disruption of a stilted Pseudo-classicism.

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1. For borrowings from Longinus, see Appendix A.
 2. Addison combined the Aristotelian aim of judging a work in toto with Longinus' plan of examining the great parts. See The Spectator, Nos. 267, 592, January 5 and September 10.
 3. John Frederick Doering, The Chief Scottish Proponent of the French Classical School of Criticism (Master's dissertation: University of Toronto, 1939), p. 160. Cardinal Newman said of Gibbon, "He was half a Frenchman" (see Wilfrid Ward, The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman (New York, 1912), II, 44).

Chapter VI

The Fairy Way of Writing

"The English," wrote a French translator of Swift's The Tale of a Tub in 1732, "are extremely deficient in restraint and moderation not only as regards conduct and manners, but also in their frame of mind: their wanton imagination exhausts itself in similes and metaphors."¹ Besides giving impetus to the bourgeois spirit in letters² and stimulating periodical literature in Germany, France, and the Low Countries, Addison came to exemplify in the early eighteenth century the creative imagination of the English. He was given to restraint considerably more than was Swift, but his espousal of fancy and imagination in his "Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination" had a profound influence upon Akenside and other imitators of Spenser and Milton.

To recapitulate, most of the Neo-classicists went back to Hobbes for their interpretation of imagination. The philosopher had stated in his "Answer to Sir William Davenant:"

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1. Jonathan Swift, Le Conte du Tonneau (The Hague, 1732), I, preface.
 2. Joseph Texte, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature, tr., J. W. Matthews (London, 1899), p. 123 ff.

Time and education beget experience; experience begets memory; memory begets judgment and fancy; judgment begets the strength and structure, and fancy begets the ornaments of a poem. The ancients therefore fabled not absurdly, in making Memory the mother of the Muses.¹

Imagination and memory were almost synonymous from Hobbes's time to the mid-eighteenth century, as is manifested in the writings of Hume.² Fancy was almost always used with an odious connotation, though Hobbes cannot be held accountable for this. He had said that fancy, "when any work of art is to be performed, finds her materials at hand and prepared for use, and needs no more than a swift motion over them."³ Judgment, on the other hand, must busy itself with an examination of all the parts of nature. But Hobbes, though averse to bold fictions,⁴ said that insofar as "the fancy of man has traced the ways of true philosophy, so far it hath produced very marvellous effects to the benefit of mankind."⁵ Hobbes limited the scope of fancy, thus

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1. Thomas Hobbes, The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, ed., William Molesworth (London, 1840), IV, 449.
 2. David Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 242. He says, "It is a certain rule, that wit and passion are entirely incompatible. When the affections are moved, there is no place for the imagination."
 3. T. Hobbes, op. cit., IV, 449.
 4. Ibid., IV, 451.
 5. Ibid., IV, 449

allowing for the narrow interpretations of the word for nearly a century.

Dryden deviated somewhat from the conventional viewpoint, furnishing his readers with an elaborate definition of imagination which includes fancy:

So then the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding, of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression.¹

Obviously the basis of Dryden's theory originates with Hobbes, but both Dryden and Addison used fancy and imagination with a more savory connotation than did the majority of the English classicists. The Romanticists built upon the foundations for the fairy way of writing laid by Dryden, Addison, and Akenside. Indeed Wordsworth includes the two powers mentioned, along with observation or description, sensibility, judgment, reflection, and invention, as requisites "for the production of poetry."²

1. W. P. Ker, ed., Essays of John Dryden, I, 15.

2. A. J. George, ed., op. cit. (1909 edition), p. 15. Coleridge says about the same thing as Wordsworth about the two cardinal points of poetry, which are "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination" (see S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria (London, 1817), II, 1).

Their function was "to modify, to create, and to associate" perceptions, feelings, and ideas.¹ Dowden even went so far as to associate imagination with ^{the} didactic upon occasion, saying: "It seems inevitable that in such comprehensive works as the "Divine Comedy," the "Paradise Lost," the two parts of "Faust," the "Faery Queen," the stream of pure imagination should sometimes well out of rocky masses of intellectual argument or didactic meditation."² Of course Dowden is employing the term "imagination" in the romantic sense. Imagination and the didactic were wholly reconcilable to the Neo-classicist.

Longinus,³ not Aristotle, is the ancient preceptor copied by Addison in formulating his conception of the imagination. Hobbes, Locke, and Dryden are the chief modern contributors.⁴

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1. A. J. George, ed., op. cit. (1909 edition), pp. 40-41.
 2. E. Dowden, op. cit., p. 287. Edward Young, who regarded Addison as a pure classicist, suggests a linking of the didactic and imaginative elements in Addison's own writing:
And Guilt's chief Foe in Addison is fled.
See Edward Young, The Universal Passion (London, 1725), p. 3.
 3. The Spectator, No. 409, June 19.
 4. Bosker points out, with much truth, that for Hobbes imagination meant memory, for Dryden, wit, and that wit and fancy were synonymous to Locke. Addison started from this point in The Spectator. Not until Stewart were fancy and imagination properly separated (see A. Bosker, op. cit., pp. 29-33).

Now Longinus had written:-

Imagination is no doubt a name given generally to anything which suggests, no matter how, a thought which engenders speech; but the word has in our time come to be applied specially to those cases, where, moved by enthusiasm and passion, you seem to see the things of which you speak, and place them under the eyes of your hearers. Imagination means one thing in rhetoric, another with the poets.¹

As early as March 14, 1711, before he had formed clear-cut conceptions of variety and novelty,² Addison had become increasingly aware of the importance of imagination, for he said, "The truth of it is, I look upon a sound imagination as the greatest blessing of life, next to a clear judgment and a good conscience."³ There is here still much more of a Neo-classic veneer than in the later papers, for he is inclined to view with disapprobation "old women's fables."

There are two types of pleasures of the imagination, according to Addison, primary and secondary. The first "proceed from such objects as are before our eyes;" the second arise "from the ideas of visible objects, when the objects are not actually before the eye."⁴ These are manifest in descriptive music, poetry,

1. A. O. Prickard, tr., op. cit., pp. 32-33.

2. Cf. Akenside's approval of folklore in connection with novelty (see Mark Akenside, The Pleasures of Imagination (London, 1754), p. 31.

3. The Spectator, No. 12, March 14.

4. Ibid., No. 411, June 21.

and painting, not to mention statuary.¹ They proceed from representation, or "from that action of the mind, which compares the ideas arising from the original objects, with the ideas we receive from the statue, picture, description, or sound that represents them."²

The critic was forced into a philosophical discussion of the imagination, partly because the terms were so loosely circumscribed by his generation,³ and partly because many of the operations of the imaginative faculties of the mind defied explanation.⁴ He did know, however, that the human being derived pain as well as pleasure from the imagination.⁵ What he, along with Locke, did not realize was that the mind is furnished with ideas from other sources than the visual.⁶ "We cannot, indeed,"

1. The Spectator, No. 416, June 27.

2. Ibid., No. 416, June 27. Akenside also recognizes pleasures arising from sound (M. Akenside, op. cit., p. 21).

3. The Spectator, No. 411, June 21.

4. Ibid., No. 416, June 27.

5. Ibid., No. 421, July 3.

6. Ibid., No. 411, June 21.

he says, "have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight." Only the secondary pleasures does he ascribe to the other senses, pointing out that words provide one of the chief media.¹ Fortunately Addison realized far more than Pope or Johnson the place of non-visual sensations in literary composition. Sound and perfume share the spotlight with color in this treatise.² The "music of birds," the "fall of water,"³ and the fragrance of flowers are deemed equally capable of giving pleasure as the hue of "the heavens at the rising and setting of the sun," called in romantic fashion "a glorious, pleasing show in nature."⁴

But, to return to the philosophical discourse on the imagination, Addison tells us that "when the fancy thus reflects on the scenes that have past in it formerly, those, which were at first pleasant to behold, appear more so upon reflection, and that the memory heightens the delightfulness of the original." This is explained by the Cartesian prin-

1. The Spectator, No. 418, June 30.

2. Cf. M. Akenside, op. cit., p. 16.

3. See The Spectator, Nos. 412 and 413, June 23 and 24.

4. Ibid., No. 412, June 23.

ciple of association by which one idea awakens other ideas of the same set"¹ with which the imagination is furnished. Such modern psychologists as Pavlow and Watson have, however, questioned the adequacy of the theory of the association of ideas² as it was understood by Addison. He comprehended the stimuli much better than the mechanism of association.

Rymer insisted that Aristotle was responsible for the appeal to the two "cheating Sences," sight and hearing.³ Addison considers only those pleasures deriving from visual perception to be of the primary category. "We cannot," he says, "have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight." This is a strong repudiation of those schools of thought supporting innate ideas, intuitive perception, and the like. "It is but opening the eye, and the scene enters. The colours paint them-

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1. The Spectator, No. 417, June 28.
 2. Peter Sandiford, Educational Psychology (London and Toronto, 1929), pp. 167-168.
 3. Thomas Rymer, A Short View of Tragedy, bound with The Tragedies of the Last Age (London, 1692-1693), pp2-9.

selves on the fancy, with very little attention of thought or application of the mind in the beholder."¹ Indeed, coloring seems to have been considered a very important factor in the forming of mental images, because Addison backs the exploitation of variety and gaiety in coloring by saying, "Among these kinds of beauty the eye takes most delight in colours."² Elaborating this thought in a later essay, he suggests, "Colours speak all languages, but words are understood only by such a people or nation."³

Symmetry,⁴ strangeness, beauty, and greatness impress us most. Not mere bulk, "but the largeness of a whole view" compels us to stand in awe. Everything that is novel or uncommon fills us "with an agreeable surprise" and satiates our curiosity. Variety is a source of satisfaction even when we look upon a monster or some imperfection in nature.⁵ But

1. The Spectator, No. 411, June 21.

2. Ibid., No. 412, June 23.

3. Ibid., No. 416, June 27.

4. Ibid., No. 411, June 21.

5. "There is not," the critic says, "perhaps any real beauty or deformity more in one piece of matter than another" (ibid., No. 412, June 23).

nothing stirs our soul more than beauty. Symmetry and proportion, though intrinsically beautiful,¹ do not engender the warmth and violence which accompanies contemplation of the "infinite variety of images" in the "rough careless strokes of nature," which are always superior to those created by art.² As Akenside has put it,

Know then, whate'er of Nature's pregnant stores,
Whate'er of Mimic Art's reflected forms
With love and admiration thus inflame
The powers of Fancy, her delighted sons
To their illustrious orders have referred.³

Addison's use of the term "soul" in accounting for the pleasures we enjoy may arouse the ire of so-called intellectuals who cannot reconcile, as did St. Thomas Aquinas, faith and reason. It must be confessed, though, that our critic used the word in a restricted sense, more or less as modern philosophers employ the term "mind." Regardless of this, the Christian fervor of the essayist which permeates his exposition of pleasures arising from final causes is the delight of theologians and Christian laymen alike.

1. The Spectator, No. 412, June 23. No. 415, June 26, is a discussion of greatness in architecture.

2. Ibid., No. 414, June 25.

3. M. Akenside, op. cit., p. 22.

The Supreme Author of our being has so formed the soul of man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate, and proper happiness. Because, therefore, a great part of our happiness must arise from the contemplation of this Being, that he might give our souls a just relish of such a contemplation, has made them naturally delight in the apprehension of what is great or unlimited.¹

The same applies to our appreciation of novelty and beauty,² whether they stem from the enchantment of birds and streams or from the galaxy of color in a sunset.³

The relationship of nature to art is simply outlined by Addison in the following assumption: "If the products of nature rise in value, according as they more or less resemble those of art, we may be sure that artificial works receive a greater advantage from their resemblance of such as are natural."⁴ "We have before observed," Addison continues, "that there is generally in nature something more grand and august, than what we meet with in the curiosities of art."⁵ This

1. The Spectator, No. 413, June 24.

2. S. T. Coleridge, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

3. Akenside says on the subject of beauty: "Thus Beauty was sent from Heaven." Again he says, "Truth and Good are one" (M. Akenside, op. cit., p. 37). The latter concept originated with the Earl of Shaftesbury, according to leading editors of the poet's works (ibid., p. 37, note).

4. The Spectator, No. 414, June 25.

5. Ibid., No. 414, June 25.

assertion is pregnant with romantic implications; even the example of the gardens involves external nature, of which we have scarcely any in Pope and only a little in transitional poets such as Thomson. Sentiment for nature is, though, almost absent in the essays of Addison. Were it not that The Spectator, No. 414 is an isolated example of almost romantique application of natural landscape, Addison could be classified along with Cowper and Thomson, if not with the "return to nature" group. Almost everywhere else, however, Addison adheres to the Popean tradition of copying after human nature. The purity of his classicism is attested to by Edward Young in a poem written upon the journalist's death:

See, see, she cry'd, old MARO'S Muse appears,
 Wak'd from her Slumber of Two Thousand Years:
 Her finish'd Charms to ADDISON she brings
 Thinks in his Thought, and in his Numbers Sings
 All read transported his pure Classic Page,
 Read, and forget their Climate and their Age.¹

Secondary pleasures of the imagination, Addison repeats, proceed "from that action of the mind, which compares the ideas arising from the original objects, with the ideas we receive from the statue, picture, description, or sound that represents them."² Description, the use of words, departs

1. Edward Young, A Letter to Mr. Tickell (London and Dublin), p. 4.

2. The Spectator, No. 416, June 27.

more from the original than painting.¹ This is one of the most convincing pieces of evidence that the imagination was for Addison much more of a creative faculty than it had been for Hobbes.² "Words, when well chosen, have so great a force in them, that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves." Thus, if well executed, factors promoting secondary pleasures can outdo the objects exciting primary pleasures. "In this case," Addison says, "the poet seems to get the better of nature."³ A poet may, for example, give a more complex representation than is inherent in the original, thereby causing art to surpass nature. Such an interpretation is well within the pattern formulated by Pope:

Those rules of old, discover'd, not devised
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.⁴

Here Addison's classicism is again of a healthy variety, as was the French. Indeed, Addison's was less stilted and confined than James Harris would have us believe when he says

1. The Spectator, No. 416, June 27.

2. See Chapter VI, p. 229.

3. The Spectator, No. 416, June 27.

4. The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, Esq., ed., W. C. Armstrong (New York, 1848), i, 399.

there was no classical purity before Tillotson, Dryden, Addison, Shaftesbury, Pope, Prior, and Atterbury.¹ Addison does not deserve being lumped with the others, Dryden excepted. The essays on the imagination demonstrate clearly that Addison achieved classical purity by observing the spirit, rather than the letter, of classicism.

Addison perceived that some writers are unable to commit themselves to the fairy way of writing: geographers, historians, and the like² "are obliged to follow nature more closely than writers of poetry and fiction."³ Yet history, philosophy, and geography, he concludes, are capable of pleasing the imagination in much the same way as poetry, architecture, and sculpture.

"A poet," we are told, "should take as much pains in forming his imagination, as a philosopher in cultivating his understanding. Although a multiplicity of examples is presented, the

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1. James Harris, Works (London, 1803), IV, 51. He indicates, furthermore, that "men of sense opposed reason to...sophistry," ample proof that reason was for some writers the dominating passion as late as 1744, when Harris began publishing (see J. Harris, The Works of James Harris, Esq. (Oxford, 1841), p. 286. See also p. 392.
 2. The popularity of travel books and similar non-fictional works is attested to in B. Coplestone, Advice to a Young Reviewer (Oxford, 1807), p. 5.
 3. The Spectator, No. 420, July 2. The manner in which "fiction" is employed by Addison implies that he meant by it the imitation of truth or real objects.

best intimates that a rustic could not go beyond pastoral poetry unless he acquainted himself "with the pomp and magnificence of the courts."¹ Everything stately or noble in the cultural heritage merit's the poet's attention. Milton is singled out for special commendation for being a "master in all these arts of working on the imagination."

Addison readily admits that the great, surprising, and beautiful strike the imagination more favorably than the little, common, or deformed.² But such objects as arouse the passions of the reader entertain him splendidly. That is why tragedy, which moves the hearer to pity and fear, ordinarily unpleasant emotions, has such universal appeal. Passages of literature which stir hope, joy, admiration, love, and so forth are equally acceptable as a rule. But Addison does not differentiate too much between the stimuli. He recognizes the same basic appeals as did Sidney, Shakespeare, and Waller.

That Addison discerned the almost unlimited potentialities of the terrible is to his credit. ~~Senecanism~~ was out

1. The Spectator, No. 417, June 28.

2. Ibid., No. 418, June 30.

of fashion among the virtuosi and disciples of Pope; the Gothic novel lay over two score years ahead. The justice of Addison's reflections upon horror may be seen by even a cursory perusal of the following summary:-

If we consider, therefore, the nature of this pleasure, we shall find that it does not arise so properly from the description of what is terrible, as from the reflection we make on ourselves at the time of reading it. When we look on such hideous objects, we are not a little pleased to think we are in no danger of them In short, we look upon the terrors of a description, with the same¹ curiosity and satisfaction that we survey a dead monster.

Addison displays here an interest in the psychological aspects of pleasure. It is obvious that he understood horror almost as well as did the Elizabethan imitators of Seneca. But this half-scientific attitude of the essayist is truly another discordant note in the character of the virtuoso.

Past torments and melancholy accounts of dangers experienced by others hold less terror for the reader than present mishaps, because he understands that the poet uses frequently fictitious events or happenings of the remote past. Poets may, therefore, humor the imagination in describing "a fiction"² so as to make his description the more pleasing. Pro-

1. The Spectator, No. 418, June 30.

2. Ibid., No. 418, June 30.

vided he does not conjure up absurdities or extravagant images, the poet is permitted a good deal of freedom by Addison: "he has the modelling of nature in his own hands."

Previous mention has been made of the significance of folklore in the fairy way of writing. Let it pass, then, with only the comment that variety and novelty are heightened by the use of popular superstitions and legendary materials.¹ Addison is compelled to admit that critics who are cold, calculating individuals will not see the beauties in this type of writing, but he feels sure that the "noble extravagance of fancy" which was Shakespeare's, "the shadowy persons" created by Spenser, and the allegorical depictions of Milton are adequate testimonials to its merit. English writers, he maintains, have excelled all others in this type of writing.²

"A man of polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures, that the vulgar are not capable of receiving,"³ says Addison. This seemingly orthodox statement is harmless

1. The Spectator, No. 419, July 1.

2. Ibid., No. 419, July 1.

3. Ibid., No. 411, June 21.

enough from the Neo-classic standpoint, but our critic elaborates it in a manner which is about as advanced toward the romantic ideal as some of the sentiments of Goldsmith or Crabbe. Addison asserts, "It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in everything he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated parts of nature administer to his pleasures."¹ Theoretically, at least, this sort of criticism condones the type of poetry written later on by Macpherson, Burns, and Ramsay.

What are the signs by which the "great art of a writer shews itself?" First, by the felicity with which he alludes to the works of art or nature. Second, by the clarity and beauty of his allegories. And third, by the ease with which he creates a variety of imagery.² Allusion, in particular, "sets off all writings in general, but is the very life and highest perfection of poetry."³ The artist who possesses the talent of appeal to the imagination of his readers can transport them "with such beautiful and glorious visions, as cannot possibly enter our present conceptions," or he can haunt

1. The Spectator, No. 411, June 21.

2. Ibid., No. 421, July 3.

3. Ibid., No. 421, July 3.

us" with such ghastly spectres and apparitions, as would make us hope for annihilation, and think existence no better than a curse."¹

Addison extends the scope of imagination to embrace several forms of writing which are not at present associated with the province of creative art. Even astronomy and mineralogy enter into our critic's discussion, as do non-literary arts such as architecture, painting,² and sculpture. Since this dissertation is concerned only with Addison's principles of literary criticism, these matters should hardly be treated here.³ One fact which has a decided bearing upon the entire problem of the imagination comes out, nevertheless, in these sections: Addison placed a considerable limitation upon this faculty. "It is," he states, "confined to a very small quant-

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1. The Spectator, No. 421, July 3. This is in sharp contrast with Sprat's remarks upon the rather strictly classical style of Cowley: "This perhaps may be the reason, that in some few places, thereis (sic) more youthfulness, and redundancy of Fancy, than his riper judgment would have allow'd!" See T. Sprat, "An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Abraham Cowley," in The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley (London, 1681), pref., no pagination.
 2. Sir Joshua Reynolds recommended a little more enthusiasm in painting, but warned against extremes (A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 37). It should be noticed that such men as Kames, John Byrom, Reynolds, Knox, Hume, and Beattie refrained from making emotional or imaginative appeal the conditio sine qua non of literary excellence.
 3. Addison, strangely enough, perceives the value of suspense in connection with historical writings, though he hardly was master of it in his own narratives (see The Spectator, No. 420, July 2).

ity of space, and (is) immediately stopt in its operations, when it endeavours to take in any thing that is very great, or very little."¹ This restriction upon the imagination is not explained very well by the essayist. He possesses only a vague idea that it lies not in the mind, but in its interaction with the body. Perhaps, he conjectures, there is not "room in the brain" for such a variety of impressions as to admit of free play for the imagination on tremendous or minute details. This means, furthermore, that Addison thought, as did the associationalists--Burke, Kames, Gerard, Beattie, Hume, and Hartley²--that the imagination always acts in accordance with the laws of association. That Addison had a sanguine attitude toward the possible development of the faculty of imagination may also mean that to a very limited degree he accepted the idea of progress,³ made popular later on by Godwin and Shelley as applied to other realms of

1. The Spectator, No. 420, July 2.

2. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 40. See The Spectator, No. 420, July 2.

3. The Spectator, No. 420, July 2.

thought.¹

It would be well-nigh impossible to decide which is the greater, "The Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination" or the "Criticism of Paradise Lost." Both have their partisans; both have their spheres of influence. The latter fairly established the reputation of Milton, so that even the barbed shafts of Samuel Johnson could not impede the ascent of his star; the former induced Akenside to write his Pleasures of Imagination and influenced most of the prominent pre-Romantics. Both series of essays have some romantic traits, but that has been true of the best works of the English classical tradition.

Without Addison's courageous stand in approving appeal to the imagination as one of the chief tests of a literary work, contemporary literature might have been

1. H. N. Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin and Their Circle (London, 1930), p. 94 ff. See also Chas. W. Hendel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Moralists (London and New York, 1934), I, 189 ff. These studies show that the Romanticists adopted the French materialistic philosophy, resulting in their conviction that man was basically good. According to the doctrines enunciated in Godwin's Political Justice, man could lift himself by his own bootstraps. This contention is refuted by J. F. Murphy, who says: "The claims of the Romantic poets about the essential goodness of human nature goes against all evidence." It would seem that Murphy is dubious of the validity of the idea of progress without divine intervention (see John F. Murphy, Francis Thompson, a Catholic Poet of Nature (Ph.D. thesis: Université d' Ottawa, 1944), p. 76.

different.¹ Certainly eighteenth and nineteenth century men of letters who belong to the cults of the imagination or of original genius owe some tribute to the man who stemmed the tide of adverse criticism of fancy. Young, Ramsay,² Burns,³ Beckford, Wordsworth, and Coleridge are but a few men who seem to have profited from Addison's example. Yet Addison commanded the respect of Neo-classicists and Romanticists alike. That he was considered a model for over a century is evidenced by such comments as the following:

Fielding has as much humor, perhaps, as Addison; but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting.⁴

There is no doubt that Addison believed in fusing the beauties of imagination with those of grace, clarity, and orderliness. By this means the imagination could be properly held in check.⁵

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1. When H. S. Canby, for example, says of John Brown's Body, "The margins of experience will be attained by sheer skill of imaginative suggestion," one should be conscious of Addison's contribution to this fairy way of writing (see Stephen Vincent Benet, John Brown's Body (New York, 1928), p. X V).
 2. Harry Hayden Clark, The Romanticism of Edward Young (unaccessioned copy in University of Toronto Library), p. 21.
 3. Burns says, "And the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the Spectator" ("Letter to Dr. John Moore, 2nd August, 1787,") in Burns, Poetry and Prose, ed., R. Dewar (Oxford, 1929), p. 136.
 4. The Literary Correspondence of John Pinkerton (London, 1830), I, 73.
 5. A. Bosker, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

Chapter VII

Further Critical Principles

Someone has related a humorous anecdote of Swinburne's writing the epic-drama, Bothwell. A friend looked over the poet's shoulder while he was poring over the manuscript and remarked, "You can't do that!" Swinburne replied casually, "There's no law against writing a drama in the form of a poem." The yarn ends with the observation, "There wasn't, so nobody stopped him." This little story indicates the confusion which distinguishes modern criticism from that of the Neo-classic age. In Addison's day the law of the realm of criticism was the stern discipline of the classics. Men like Addison searched the complete canon of antiquity for new interpretations without daring to deviate too broadly from the doctrines of the ancients. Critics of the early eighteenth century are comparable to fundamentalist theologians of some of our contemporary religious sects. Aristotle and Horace are the counterpart of the Bible as the infallible handbook of conduct.

Hazlitt has defined poetry as "the language of the imagination and the passions."¹ Such an interpretation is hardly

1. Wm. Hazlitt, op. cit., I, 1. "Poetry is the image of man and nature," Wordsworth said (see A. J. George, ed., op. cit., (1909 edition), p. 16).

consonant with Addison's temperament. Although he commends the "beautiful complaints" of Otway and Ovid in dealing with love, there is incontestable evidence that the emotions are under strict regulation in Addison's theory of poetry.¹ Yet he extols those writers who, following in the footsteps of the ancient tragedians, have departed from rules "on extraordinary occasions," rising to what the Italians call the gusto grande, or sublime.² "There is nothing," he points out,

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1. The Spectator, No. 241, December 6. See the passage in which he says, "Love was the mother of poetry" (ibid., No. 377, May 13). For devotion to Horatian decorum, see ibid., No. 44, April 20 and No. 183, September 29.
 2. See The Spectator, No. 592, September 10. Before the paper ceased publication, Addison set down two rules of art: "First, there is sometimes greater judgment shewn in deviating from the rules of art, than in adhering to them; and, Secondly, That there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of all the rules of art, than in the works of a little genius, who not only knows, but scrupulously observes them." Cf. Hume's general rules founded on experience and observation, to which the feelings of men are not always conformable (see D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, I, 270). In the same issue of The Spectator, Dennis' new methods of making thunder are ridiculed, but it should be noticed that the poet was equally unfair to Addison. "He praised Vergil as deviating from historical truth to gain greater beauties for the Aeneid, though he condemned Shakspeare's Roman plays as sinning against history and was equally severe with Addison's Cato" (H. G. Paul, op. cit., p. 131).

"that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to any thing that is great or uncommon."¹

The mild cynicism and satire of The Spectator won the paper many readers. Addison's cynical remarks about the transitory fame of poets are typical of his half-serious, half-humorous attitude toward some of the grave literary problems. He says, "In the poetical quarter (of the cemetery), I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets."² Perhaps Addison would be embarrassed today by some of the monuments he raised, particularly to Dr. Garth, author of The Dispensary.³ His expostulation of the "monstrous compositions," stilted Pindaric odes, of his era is more a propos.⁴

1. The Spectator, No. 412, June 23. Hume said later, "Beauty, whether moral or natural, is felt, more properly than perceived" (D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 135).

2. Ibid., No. 26, March 30.

3. Ibid., No. 249, December 15.

4. Ibid., No. 160, September 3.

Hazlitt has said, "Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps."¹ Some persons evidently prefer weeping to other forms of entertainment. Who has not seen a happy female emerge from the cinema with tear-stained cheeks? Addison, though he exhibited uncertainty at times, poked fun at the partisans of both tragedy and epic poetry in one of his last issues of The Spectator, No. 529, in which he said:

There has been a long dispute for precedence between the tragic and heroic poets. Aristotle would have the latter yield the pas to the former, but Mr. Dryden and many others would never submit to this decision. Burlesque writers pay the same deference to the heroic, as comic writers to their serious brothers in the drama.²

About the only additional observation which may be advanced on Addison's attitude toward the highest forms of poetry is that he felt a moral should be imbued in the reader.³ Special commendation is given the writings of Horace and Epictetus for their moral precepts.⁴

Our critic was much more concerned about imitation and wit. "Imitation," he observes, "is natural to us, and when

1. Wm. Hazlitt, op. cit., II, 1.

2. Richmond Bond says that Beattie took a more conservative view of mock-heroic poetry than did Ozell, Addison, Murphy, Somerville, Kames, and Warton (Richmond P. Bond, English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750 (Cambridge, 1932), p. 62).

3. Cf. Edmund Waller who said pleasure is legitimately the end of some types of poetry (The Poems of Edmund Waller, ed. G. Thorn Drury (London, 1893), pp. 224-225).

4. The Spectator, No. 68, May 18.

it does not raise the mind to poetry, painting, or music, or other more noble arts, it often breaks out in puns and quibbles."¹ It is these last by-products of imitation which worry Addison most. Puns are repudiated in the harshest terms, in harmony with the practice of Steele, Hume, and other literary theorists of his century. A pun, he explains, is a "conceit arising from the use of two words that agree in sound but differ in the sense." He uses Mercerus' translation of a gem by Aristenetus to distinguish between true wit and the false:

"Induitor, formosa est: Exuitur, ipsa forma est." Punning relies upon a sound and nothing else. The sermons of Andrews, the plays of Shakespeare, and the writings of the reign of James I everywhere bear evidence of paranomasia.²

1. Cf. Aristotle's view of the unity of imitation (W. D. Ross, ed., op. cit., 1451a). Addison, too, wanted purified imitation. See also The Spectator, No. 61, May 10.

2. Ibid., No. 61, May 10. "Mixt wit," he says, "therefore, is a composition of pun and true wit, and is more or less perfect as the resemblance lies in the ideas, or in the words: its foundations are laid partly in falsehood, and partly in truth (ibid., No. 62, May 11). He has more respect for Saunderson, Barrow, and Tillotson than for Andrews, but offers no technical criticism (ibid., No. 106, July 2).

It may be fitting to reiterate at this juncture that although Addison never became an outright imitator of French classicism, his tastes in some matters were French. Truth is accepted as the foundation of genuine wit, as it was by Bouhours and Boileau.¹ The latter, it will be remembered, was also praised by Horace Walpole for his "good sense and propriety."² Now Addison rejects mixt wit on the ground that it is incapable of construal into a foreign language, a conclusion vigorously contested by Hazlitt who asserted dogmatically, "But this is by no means the case."³ Dryden's definition of wit is likewise spurned by Addison: "It is not so properly a definition of wit, as of good writing." By this token Euclid would be a judged, he says, "the greatest wit that ever set pen to paper."⁴

In his discussion of wit, Addison tells of his obligation to Dryden for acquainting him with Segrais' separation of read-

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1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11. For an illustration of Boileau's theory and practice, see Nicholas Boileau, Oeuvres de Boileau-Despréaux, ed., Alphonse Pauly (Paris, 1875), II, 40. Clark has done a rather exhaustive study showing the effects of Boileau's theories upon Addison (see A. F. B. Clark, op. cit., pp. 33-34, 246-247). For further information on Bouhours and true wit, see ibid., pp. 266-267.
 - 2/ The Literary Correspondence of John Pinkerton, I, 75. The novelist did object, though, to Boileau's austerity.
 3. Wm. Hazlitt, op. cit., II, 25.
 4. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11. Lord Kames set up elaborate distinctions between four types of wit, namely, wit in thought, wit in sound, wit in words, but never wit in actions. He defines his term thus: "Wit is a quality of certain thoughts and expressions" (H. Home, op. cit., pp. 92-98).

ers into three distinct classes.¹ That Addison had equal contempt for people devoid of taste is shown by his narrative of "a woman of quality" who inquired at a performance of Macbeth, "When will the dear witches enter?"²

Before leaving Addison's treatment of poetry, one should notice that he advocated turning dramatic dialogue into "plain English" before moulding it into blank verse.³ The folly of such a habit was well understood by Hurd, who commented in a footnote: "Mr. Addison is a much better poet, in prose, than in verse."⁴

The subject of rhyme had caused quite a furore ever since Cowley had emerged victorious from the battle of the couplets,

1. The Spectator, No. 62, May 11. In this early paper, Addison already showed that he was not in full agreement with Dryden and Segrays on the precedence of the epic style over the tragic (cf. W. P. Ker, ed., The Essays of John Dryden, II, 165). Addison adopted, as this notation illustrates, an eclectic approach to criticism. Cf. Aristotle's giving epic poetry preference because tragedy appeals to the mob (W. D. Ross, ed., op. cit., 1462a).

2. The Spectator, No. 45, April 21.

3. Ibid., No. 39, April 14. In the same issue he asserts that he is very much offended by rhyme in tragedy.

4. G. W. Greene, ed., op. cit., I, 383, note.

thereby setting the fashion for several generations. The Davideis,¹ the plan of which is analogous to that of Paradise Lost, sank into oblivion beneath the weight of its own rhymed couplets. By the time Dryden wrote his essay, "Of Heroic Plays," prefixed to The Conquest of Granada (1672), there was already some doubt in critics' minds whether tragedies not in heroic verse could obtain satisfactory popular reception. Dryden argued that because Fletcher and Shakespeare had not used rhyme in describing their passions was no reason for deducing "rhyme was not capable of describing (them)."² However, he had thought when he wrote his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" that tragedy should conform to the dicta of Aristotle, being written in that kind of verse nearest prose. Rhyme is as superior in other types of poetry as blank verse is in drama.³ Dryden strove to prove that rhyme is admirably suited to serious subjects.⁴ He was probably

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1. For the stilted effect of rhyme in Cowley's poem, see The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley, p. 193 ff.
 2. W. P. Ker, ed., The Essays of John Dryden, I, 148-149.
 3. Ibid., I, 91.
 4. Ibid., I, 113. Cf. N. Boileau, op. cit., II, 15.

right, but there is every indication that many Neo-classicists did not take seriously enough Boileau's admonition:

La Rime est une esclave, & ne doit qu'obeir.¹

Dennis seems to have agreed implicitly with Dryden's earlier stand, for he says, in his preface to Britannia Triumphans,² on the subject of rhyme:

It has something effeminating in its jingling Nature, and emasculates our English Verse, and consequently is unfit for the Greater Poetry. English Tragedies that have been writ in Rime, most of them rowl upon Love.

Addison goes even farther than Dennis: he also gives approval to the use of blank verse in the epic. Thus he takes his place in the early stages of the revolt against excessive metrical restriction of the rigid classicists. In order to see the fruition of these seeds of revolt, one need only peruse the Conjectures on Original Composition by Young, in which it is stated rhyme "in epic poetry, is a sore disease, in the tragic, absolute death." "Must rhyme," he asks, "be banished?" His answer is vigorous and blunt: "I wish the nature of our

1. W. P. Ker, ed., II, 4.

2. See The Select Works of John Dennis (London, 1718).

language could bear its entire expulsion; but our lesser poetry stands in need of a toleration for it; it raises that, but sinks the great."¹

This reminds one of the opposite view held by Samuel Johnson. Boswell gives us a terse, humorous account of his celebrated master's predilection for rhyme:²

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him in the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. JOHNSON: "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have HUGGED him."

No connoisseur of belles-lettres could question Addison's taste, even though he might disagree with his standards. Poetry became for Addison partially an emotional, rather than a purely intellectual, experience. It is true that he began as an apostle of Locke on wit and a follower of Hobbes on truth,³

1. E. Morley, ed., Edward Young's Conjectures on Original Composition, p. 37.

2. James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (London, 1924), I, 283.

3. A. Bosker, op. cit., pp. 11, 25, 32.

but the essays on imagination and Milton transformed Addison into something of a non-conformist. The influence of Longinus must not, therefore, be ignored because it was from him that Dennis derived his emphasis upon emotion and his nickname "Sir Longinus." Nor should it be forgotten that Dennis' theories colored those of our critic.¹ Both Longinus and Dennis prompted Addison to place more stress on emotion, and Longinus, as was stated in the previous chapter, gave force to Addison's theory of the imagination. Reason tended to become more and more submerged in his critical writings.

The Spectator contains a systematic analysis of taste. The definition offered by Addison is that taste is "that faculty of the soul, which discerns the beauties of an author

1. Marion Bryce, "A Rare Find in the Canadian Archives," in Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada (Toronto, 1911), Sect. I I, p. 4. Mrs. Bryce says: "Of the two great contemporaries, Dennis seems to have been most familiar with Pope. On one occasion when the latter paid a visit to Dennis in his room he found pinned on the walls many sheets of Addison's Cato with epithets such as "absurd," "preposterous," attached to them." This is a typical comment on the deterioration of relations between Addison and Dennis. For further information upon the English school of Longinus, see A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 27.

with pleasure and the imperfections with dislike." The said faculty enables the writer to "discover the several ways of thinking and expressing himself" which will set him apart from all others of his profession. But how can this talent be cultivated? First, the novice should acquaint himself with "the celebrated works of antiquity" which have stood the Johnsonian test of time; second, he should take specific notice of "the distinguishing perfections" in these masterpieces; third, he should contrast the same thought expressed by a genius and a man of ordinary intellectual stature; fourth, he must converse with the most polite gentlemen; and, lastly, he should pay attention to "the best critics both ancient and modern," but particularly Longinus, who considered those aspects of art which appeal to the fancy.¹ But Addison says, in a philosophical vein, "The faculty must in some degree be born with us, and it very often happens, that those who have other qualities in perfection, are wholly void of this."²

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1. The Spectator, No. 409, June 19. There is a suggestion of the influence of Boileau's "Reflexions critiques sur quelques passages du rheteur Longin" (N. Boileau, op. cit., II, 211 ff.).
 2. Ibid., No. 409, June 19. Wordsworth agreed with Reynoldas that "accurate taste in poetry...is an acquired talent" (see A. J. George, ed., op. cit., p. 30 (1909 edition). Cf. Thomas Warton, Sr., "Ode to Taste," in Poems (London, 1748), pp. 180-183.

Whereas David Hume observed that the standard of taste is flexible, allowing for a great variety of judgments,¹ Addison conceives of taste as being more or less synonymous with propriety. Decorum is emphasized especially in his rules governing the staging of plays,² in connection with both the sentiments expressed and the mode of expression. His theory, as is demonstrated by the essays on wit and on tragedy, remains stringently Neo-classic, comparable in many respects to Pope's. Simplicity, naturally, was prized as the keystone of superlative structure, with Dryden and Vergil held up as illustrious examples of it. In the early issues of The Spectator writers who could not "come up to the beautiful simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans" were regarded as Goths, a stand which was modified slightly later on. But one must not forget the ignominy heaped upon Tasso, evidence that Addison remained rather conservative in the interpretation of his principles. The most wholesome feature of his entire theory of taste is, perhaps, his reaction to the conceits of Cowley's age.⁴ True simplicity had won an ardent convert.

1. J. F. Doering, "David Hume on the Standard of Taste," in Ver- such eines Jahrbuches für allgemeine Wissenschaften (Berne, 1939)

2. The Spectator, No. 529, November 6. The rules appear in the midst of satire, so that the interpretation might be questioned.

3. Ibid., No. 409, June 19. He still attacks epigrams, forced conceits, and other manifestations of Gothic taste.

4. Ibid., No. 62, May 11.

Perhaps one of the most typical proclamations we have on Addison's principles of taste is incorporated in the following summary:

If writings are thus durable, and may pass from age to age throughout the whole course of time, how careful should an author be of committing any thing to print that may corrupt posterity, and poison the minds of men with vice and error? Writers of great talents who employ their parts in propagating immorality, and seasoning vicious sentiments with wit and humour are to be looked upon as the pest of society and the enemies of mankind.

"Books," he tells us, "are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation."¹ Time hereby becomes the criterion for judging works in good taste.

Internal evidence of Addison's standard of taste is plentiful, for everyone is conscious of his appeal to the middle class reader. This has been his outstanding bequest to modern readers and writers alike. M. Joseph Texte, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Lyons, while corroborating the debt of Addison and the younger Neoclassicists to La Bruyère,² says: "The English moralist's

1. The Spectator, No. 166, September 10.

2. H. G. Paul, op. cit., p. 112.

narrow horizon, his profoundly bourgeois character, his moderation and amiable tolerance, all seemed fresh and original."¹ Still Addison set for the literary man a standard much above that of the average periodical reader. This tendency manifests itself in the purity, elegance, harmony, exactness, and moral elevation of his own style.

But Addison could on occasion depart from the strictest Neo-classic standards, as did some of the other virtuosi, notably Dryden and Temple, who recognized in taste a vague poetic characteristic.² So it is that our virtuoso interests himself in diverse classes of folklore,³ witchcraft,⁴

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1. Joseph Texte, op. cit., p. 121. For Addison's comment on newspaper tastes, see The Spectator, No. 452, August 8.
 2. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 17.
 3. Fairchild suffers from a misconception that Addison did much to further the noble savage idea, using The Spectator, No. 50, as evidence, but he misses frequent use of folkloristic material. Neither does he grasp the significance of Addison's statements upon the use of magic, legend, superstition, and the like in art. See Hoxie N. Fairchild, The Noble Savage (New York, 1928), p. 45. In the matter of archaisms in literature, Addison agrees more with Dion than with Cassius Longinus (A. O. Prickard, ed., op. cit., pp. 93, 103).
 4. The Spectator, No. 117, July 14.

pseudo-science,¹ astrology,² superstitions,³ and other exotic branches of learning, such as fevers,⁴ epitaphs, Rosicrucianism,⁵ shells,⁶ and spiritualism.⁷ Steele, by way of comparison, exhibited similar curiosities, as may be seen in his treatment of Ligon's A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados (1657).⁸ Steele had, however,

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1. Albertus Magnus' dissertation on lodestones is drawn upon (The Spectator, No. 56, May 4).
 2. He read "a very whimsical treatise," Ramsay's Vindication of Astrology (ibid., No. 582, August 18).
 3. Ibid., No. 13, March 15; No. 7, March 8. It is unlikely Addison was influenced by the French in this matter. Bouhours, it will be recalled, assailed the superstitions of the North American Indians (The Life of St. Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus by Dominick Bohours, tr., John Dryden (London, 1688), p. 91. Dennis has an interesting treatment of an Indian theme in Liberty Asserted. Addison refers to this play in a "Letter to John Wyche, Amsterdam, September, 1703," in The Letters of Joseph Addison, ed., Walter Graham (Oxford, 1941), p. 47.
 4. The Spectator, No. 25, March 29.
 5. Ibid., No. 574, July 30.
 6. Misc. Wks., II, 24.
 7. The Spectator, No. 12, March 14. Here is the first indication of his interest in Paradise Lost.
 8. Ibid., No. 11, March 13. For information regarding Steele's wife's inheritance, see Rae Blanchard, ed., The Correspondence of Richard Steele (London, 1941), p. 21.

another motive for investigating West Indian lore: his wife had inherited a property there.

At one juncture, Addison evinces a striking resemblance to the honnête homme when he looks upon laughter "as a weakness in the composition of human nature." He rescues himself from a precarious position by adding that it is one of the joys of life which we would not want to do without. Although he deplores "raillery among the moderns," he is content to regard many burlesque and comic performances in good taste.¹

One of the most amusing reflections on the subject of taste in the entire works of Addison occurs, however, in the "Essay on the Conduct of Lions at the Opera," in which he rails at Signior Nicolini's compliance with "the wretched taste" of his audience, though most editors are agreed that Addison and Steele enjoyed Nicolini's friendship. However, Addison says, "Audiences have often been reproached by writers for the coarseness of their taste; but our present griev-

1. The Spectator, No. 249, December 15. There are two types of burlesque: "the first represents mean persons in accoutrements of heroes, the other describes great persons acting and speaking like the basest among people."

ance does not seem to be the want of a good taste, but of common sense."¹ There is every indication that Addison thought only nonsense was fit to be set to music,² though this, admittedly, may be a misconception arising from the bitterness of the remarks upon Italian opera. That Addison's taste for complex musical compositions was as defective as Hume's can hardly be doubted. The type of music which appealed most to him was ecclesiastical, and he was greatly perturbed by the decline in the quality of anthems and sacred songs.³

Lord Kames informs us that Addison employed ridicule in an elegant manner.⁴ This is readily discerned in those essays in which he ridicules the frivolities and foibles of the female. It is interesting, then, to have Addison make a few statements on this subject. The efficacy of rid-

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1. The Spectator, No. 13, March 15.
 2. For nonsense in writing, see The Reader, No. 3, April 16, 1714.
 3. The Spectator, No. 405, June 14. Addison realized music excites the passions. In the Politics, Aristotle denies the vulgarizing effects of music in spite of its arousing enthusiasm (see W. D. Ross, ed., op. cit., 1340b). Harris has this interesting comparison of music and poetry: "Now music seems to imitate nature better as to motion, and poetry as to sound." See J. Harris, op. cit. (1841 edition), p. 33.
 4. H. Home, op. cit., p. 255. He says, however, to diminish the force of his encomium, that ridicule at its best is "but a gross pleasure" (ibid., p. 35).

icule is called to our attention in the following remnant of homely philosophy:

Ridicule, perhaps, is a better expedient against love than sober advice, and I am of opinion that Hudibras and Don Quixote may be as effectual to cure the extravagances of this passion, as any of the old philosophers.¹

As a general rule, however, the essayist is loath to give his sanction to the use of this type of wit because it usually results in mischief. The indiscreet writer "is more hurtful," in fact, than the ill-tempered one.²

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1. The Spectator, No. 227, November 20.
 2. Ibid., No. 23, March 27. Pope objected to Addison's insinuation that he employed strokes of ill-nature, even going so far as to deny it flatly ("Letter to Joseph Addison, October 10, 1714," in G. W. Greene, op. cit., II, 3, note). In one letter, though, Pope said he was not sorry for the bluntness of his satire (see The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. (London, 1778), IV, 31). Addison usually expressed himself freely, though in friendly terms, before his quarrel with Pope (W. Graham, ed., The Letters of Joseph Addison, p. 281). De Quincey has substantiated Addison's charges (The Spectator, No. 253, December 20): "Pope should have been counselled never to write satire, except on those evenings when he was suffering horribly from indigestion. By this means the indignation would have been ready-made. The rancor against all mankind would have been sincere; and there would have needed to be no extra expense in getting up the steam. As it is, the short puffs of anger, the uneasy snorts of fury, in Pope's satires, give one painfully the feeling of a steam-engine with unsound lungs" (T. De Quincey, op. cit., p. 401).

Addison becomes more verbose when dealing with humor. Truth, good sense, and mirth, he says in Platonic fashion, are the ingredients of humor. But here, too, he admonishes the literary profession to beware lest their ambitions exceed their talents. Nonsense, he points out with much cogency, is definitely not humor.¹ With this foremost in mind, he constructs for his readers a chart showing the "different pedigrees and relations" of True Humor and False Humor. This is reproduced herewith.

CHART ONE

The Types of Humor

FALSEHOOD.

NONSENSE.

FRENZY.-----LAUGHTER.

FALSE HUMOUR.

TRUTH.

GOOD SENSE.

WIT.-----MIRTH.

HUMOUR.²

1. The Spectator, No. 35, April 10. Nonsense in writing is discussed in The Reader, No. 4, May 28, as well as in issue No. 3. High and low nonsense, dealt with elsewhere in this study, are differentiated. See Works (1858 edition), ed., R. Hurd, V, 309 ff.
2. The Spectator, No. 35, April 10. Cf. the modern conception of humor (Morris Bishop, ed., A Treasury of British Humor (New York, 1942), p. xiii ff.).

"For as True Humour," he continues, "generally looks serious while every body laughs about him; False Humour is always laughing, whilst every body about him looks serious."¹

In a "Letter to Ambrose Philips, March 10, 1704, "Addison speaks disparagingly of the poetry of his time. Evidently he felt that there was a good deal of false humor in it, for he says, "Our poetry in England at present runs all into Lampoon which has seldom any thing of true satire in it besides Rhime and Ill nature."²

So it is that false humor descends to ridicule, and our author pities, rather than laughs at, the unskilful humorist. This species of humor, he says in a well-chosen similitude, differs from the genuine "as a monkey does from a man." The Buffoon is given over to mimicry, ingratitude, apish tricks, personalities, and unreasoned jests. There is no "point either of morality or instruction" in his design.³

Some of the Renaissance traits spoken of in Chapter V in connection with Milton were also the possession of Addison.

1. The Spectator, No. 35, April 10.

2. W. Graham, ed., The Letters of Joseph Addison, p. 49.

3. The Spectator, No. 35, April 10.

Thorpe designates Addison as one of the disciples of Dennis in novelty, quoting as proof the latter's adoption of Hobbes' principles a section from Remarks upon Prince Arthur:

For the Mind does not care for dwelling too long upon an Object, but loves to pass from one thing to another; because such a Transition keeps it from languishing, and gives it more Agitation . . . Besides that every large incident gives fresh Surprise.¹

Novelty and variety are almost inextricably woven together, in spite of Kames' assertion that the latter is distinguished from the former by its need for plurality of objects.² They gave distinction to the dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher, the epics of Milton, the essays of Browne, and the emblems of Quarles. Addison showed excellent judgment in appreciating the value of things that are surprising, varied, strange, or wonderful long before he set about writing his essays on the imagination.³ The marvellous part of heroic poetry must not,

1. C. D. Thorpe, op. cit., p. 1121.

2. H. Home, op. cit., p. 68. Though Kames approved of variety in comedy (ibid., p. 260), he said it is difficult to say whether Ovid disgusts more by his variety or uniformity (ibid., p. 79). Novelty is admired, he contends, chiefly by children and people of mean taste (ibid., p. 69). Blackwell, on the other hand, found beauty in the variety of characters in Homer (T. Blackwell, op. cit., p. 251).

3. For examples, see The Spectator, No. 309, February 23 and Misc. Wks., II, 10.

however, be included under this head, for Neo-classicists generally accepted this on the authority of ancient critics.

Although Longinus, with curiously senile bitterness, said, "All these undignified faults spring up in literature from a single cause, the craving for intellectual novelties, on which, above all else, our generation goes wild,"¹ he gave prestige to novelty when he extolled surprise and imagination,² not to forget novel phrases, even to the limit of "vulgar idiom."³ It was, no doubt, from Longinus and his modern imitators, Boileau and Denis, that Addison obtained his theory of novelty and variety. Suggestions that Muratori influenced Addison are based upon the flimsiest evidence.

The defence of imagination and the acceptance of variety and novelty in Paradise Lost⁴ comprise a preliminary step in the process of breaking down the judicial method of criticism, replaced in the time of Warton and Hurd by the historical. Even the fopperies, conceits, and affectations of former ages, ridiculed by the majority of stunch classicists, came to be recognized as imitations of real life⁵ to such an extent that Lord

1. A. O. Prickard, tr., op. cit., p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 37.

3. Ibid., p. 56.

4. An early comment on Gothic architecture runs: "A vast Gothic pile of building" (Misc. Wks., II, 29).

5. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 51.

Kames, whose Elements of Criticism was dedicated to the monarch,¹ began to show a disinclination to accept any rules based upon mere authority, whether these arbitrary regulations sprang from Le Bossu or from Aristotle and Homer. Percival Stockdale, in An Inquiry into the Nature and Genuine Laws of Poetry (1778), carried this movement forward by making a strong plea for nature and reason against authority. The house of Neo-classicism became divided against itself, and Joseph Addison, unconscious as he may have been as to what he was fomenting, must be held partially responsible. The climax of the whole trend was reached when John Pinkerton, forger of Hardy Kanute, denounced Aristotle and Longinus as incompetent judges of poetry in his Letters of Literature (1785).² Of course, everyone is familiar with the biting satire of the opening portion of Book IV of Sterne's Tristram Shandy, where the novelist, ostensibly rallying to the rules of Aristotle, declared that his story of Hafen Slawkenbergius of Nasis had all the essential parts of a drama, protasis, epitasis, catastasis, and catastrophe or peripeitia.³

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1. For further information, see A. F. Tytler, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames (Edinburgh, 1807), I, 272 ff.
 2. A. Bosker, op. cit., p. 251.
 3. The Works of Laurence Sterne (New York, 1860), I, 217.

Convinced as he was of the attractions lying in variety, Addison seems to have overlooked opportunities afforded it by the chorus, something to which the Elizabethans were not blind. Rymer, for different reasons, had advocated in his Short View of Tragedy the reintroduction of this Greek device into the English drama.¹ But Addison was satisfied to relate only the historical role of the chorus in the development of tragedy, about which he says, "The chorus so far remembered its first office, as to brand every thing that was vicious, and recommend every thing that was laudable, to intercede with heaven for the innocent, and to implore its vengeance on the criminal."²

The most conservative phase of Addison's Neo-classicism pertains to his advising imitation of outstanding writers and the copying of nature.³ These two tenets were among the most prominent in Pope's Essay on Criticism. He said regarding the imitation of nature:

First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,

1. T. Rymer, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

2. The Spectator, No. 405, June 14.

3. Ibid., No. 229, November 22. Cf. Thomas Blackwell, op. cit., p. 319. He claims close copying of nature by Homer.

Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, the end, and test of art.¹

A third Neo-classic principle to which Addison subscribed has already been dealt with: literature should please and instruct.²

It is in these three respects and in his virtuosity that his Popean Neo-classicism manifests itself most. He did not transgress the laws of pure classicism at any time; but he did ignore, modify, or violate some of the arbitrary rules of a doomed Pseudo-classicism. To justify his action, he generally drew on the best authorities of Greece, Rome, and France.

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1. W. C. Armstrong, ed., op. cit., I, 398.

2. See P. Sidney, op. cit., p. 9 ff.

Chapter VIII

Addison's Place in English Criticism

So widespread was the popularity of The Tatler and The Spectator that many periodicals, varying from organs of political opinion like The North Briton to papers for eighteenth century intellectual Amazons, such as Eliza Haywood's The Female Spectator and The Parrot, followed in their wake. Johnson's The Rambler and The Idler, Boswell's Hypochondriac, Edward Moore's The World, and Goldsmith's The Bee, as well as three of Leigh Hunt's papers, The Indicator, The Examiner, and The Reflector, are among the most memorable. Others sprang up to meet the diverse tastes of the reading public, notably The Champion, The Plain Dealer of Aaron Hill and William Bond, The Covent-Garden Journal, The Connoisseur, Mackenzie's The Mirror and The Lounger, The Public Ledger, with which Goldsmith was associated, and The Observer, for which Richard Cumberland was a leading contributor. Vicesimus Knox, though publishing his works in volumes, employed the Addisonian technique of the periodical essay in two of his works.¹ In the United States Salmagundi by Washington Irving and James Kirke Paulding² and a

1. Hugh Walker, The English Essay and Essayists (London and Toronto, 1934), p. 117.

2. See Vernon L. Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860 (New York, 1927), p. 213.

typically Addisonian publication, The Portfolio,¹ were the chief imitations of The Spectator. In 1716, however, Mémoires de Trévoux, not to forget Marivaux's Spectateur français, had appeared in France,² while a Spectateur hollandais eventually introduced the Addisonian tradition to the Low Countries. Even Bodmer modelled his German periodical, Discourse der Mahlern, upon Addison's journal.³

The most interesting of all the imitations of The Spectator from the standpoint of its being unique was Joseph Addison Turner's The Countryman, probably the only newspaper ever published on a plantation in the American South.⁴ The editor plainly stated his purpose in his Prospectus, October 27, 1862:

My aim is to model my journal after Addison's Little Paper, The Spectator, The Tatler, Johnson's Little Papers, The Rambler and The Adventurer, and Goldsmith's Little Paper, The Bee: neither of which, I believe was as large as The Countryman.⁵

Joel Chandler Harris served as printer's devil on the staff

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1. W. P. Trent, Littérature américaine (Paris, 1911), p. 142.
 2. J. Texte, op. cit., p. 120. Bédier and Hazard seem unimpressed (see J. Bédier et P. Hazard, Histoire de la Littérature française illustrée (Paris, 1924), II, 61. An interesting sidelight on English interest in Marivaux after his imitation of Addison and Steele may be found in an advertisement for the Life of Marianne appearing in The General Evening Post, No. 1213, London, June 27-30, 1741.
 3. G. Saintsbury, op. cit., III, 21 (1905 edition).
 4. For further information, see Julia C. Harris, Joel Chandler Harris, Editor and Essayist (Chapel Hill, 1931), pp. 87-88.
 5. Joseph Addison Turner, The Countryman (Turnwold, Ga., 1862-1866), prospectus, p. 40.

of this remote echo of The Spectator.¹

Although Augustin Filon's reaction to Addison's contribution to The Spectator represents the opinion of a formidable section of modern authorities, not everyone is willing to grant Addison precedence over Steele; and there are still many pedants who do not like the journalistic tinge of the critical papers. Filon says: "Mais ces écrivains pâlissent dans le rayonnement d'Addison. Quand il se fatigue et cesse d'écrire, le Spectator n'a plus qu'à disparaître."²

The other side of the argument is pointed to by Professor Hugh Walker, who calls special attention to Landor's preference for Steele as a literary critic; but Walker willingly admits that Addison set the fashion for periodical essays from Steele to Johnson, Goldsmith, and Mackenzie.³ The existence of so great a diversity of opinion is not so amazing, however, when one surveys Blair's estimate of Addison's critical abilities: "The character of Sir Roger de Coverly discovers more genius than the critique on Milton."⁴ Blair ignores

1. Persons interested in Canadiana may delight in the knowledge that Turner used several feature articles on trips to Quebec and Niagara Falls.

2. Augustin Filon, Histoire de la Littérature anglaise (Paris, 1922), p. 317.

3. H. Walker, op. cit., p. 117.

4. Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Philadelphia), p. 209.

the fact that Hall, Overbury, and Dekker wrote acceptable character essays, whereas Addison was the first critic, not a contemporary of Milton, to endorse Paradise Lost.

Before referring the reader to representative evaluations of Addison's critical powers, let us briefly take inventory of the main characteristics of his criticism as brought out in this dissertation. Johnson has told us that Addison sometimes formed his judgments in an unscientific manner, reminiscent of the School of Taste comprising Rymer, Dryden, and Temple. More frequently our essayist, when failing to adhere to orthodox Augustan Neo-classicism, draws from the well of French classicism. He displays oftentimes the taste of a Frenchman. Borrowing from such unimpeachable sources as Bouhours, Boileau, and Le Bossu, he constructs far more impressive foundations for the British imitators of French classicism than Dryden had created, despite allegations by Raysor that Addison broke with the French classicists.¹ But for Boileau's translation

1. T. R. Raysor, Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism (London, 1930), I, xlvi-xlvii. Gray's projected history of English poetry confirms the contentions of the writer of this thesis. Gray says, in a "Letter to Thomas Warton, April 15, 1770," that chapter V of the proposed work would contain the following information: "School of France, introduced after the Restoration. Waller, Dryden, Addison, Prior, and Pope--which has continued to our own times."

of Longinus, Addison might not have propounded many of his main critical principles: Longinus gave motive force to Addisonian classical purity. Addison objected, moreover, to mixed wit and bloody representations upon the stage in compliance with the dictates of French dramatists and critics.¹ He sought truth in art and purity in wit after the manner of Boileau and Bouhours. Like Bossu, he was a firm believer in the moral outcomes of poetry, particularly the epic. As Vicesimus Knox so aptly said of Addison's style,

Addison is also particularly distinguished for his talent of moral painting.²

But his French leanings manifest themselves in other directions, one of which was his elation over the success of French translators.³

The delicacy of taste and passion that characterized Addison as a critic aided in his being a virtuoso. This was of itself not enough. But witness his sanction of the ballad, his attitude toward laughter, his broad viewpoint on the

1. Hazlitt said, "Neither can the disagreement between the French and English school of tragedy ever be reconciled, till the French became English, or the English French" (see A. R. Waller and A. Glover, The Collected Works of William Hazlitt (London, 1903), VI, 223).

2. Vicesimus Knox, Winter Evenings (London, 1790), II, 372.

3. Even in his religious essays Addison draws on such men as Fontenelle (see The Spectator, No. 575, August 2).

rational emancipation of the female, his inconsistency in the matter of double plots¹ and other current problems. Are these not marks of the virtuoso, as well as his learning and habits? Perhaps these examples do not suffice. Then one need only remember his attitude toward historical research and his haphazard treatments of the essay and oratory. As with all other virtuosi, science was for Addison a tool of art, though his interest in psychology threatened his status as a virtuoso occasionally. Like the Earl of Shaftesbury, Addison was consumed by only certain interests: the entire domain of learning did not command his attention.

Combined with the aforementioned tendencies is another distinguishing quality: Addison tried to ferret out the beauties of a work, rather than the faults. This fitted him superbly for his dual role of critic and virtuoso. There is in his criticism, as a consequence, few of the huffs and puffs which mar even the better critical writings of Pope, Gray, and Johnson. The broad outlook and equanimity of the virtuoso

1. Cf. The Spectator No. 40, April 16 and No. 267, January 5.

must have contributed to this saving grace in Addison. Maybe it was a derivative of those coffee-house chats or frequent drinking bouts for which the essayist was famous. Even Dean Swift reports "an evening spent over a bottle of old wine with Mr. Wortley and Mr. Addison."¹

That penetrating critic, Professor Babbitt, was correct in assuming that Addison was primarily an Augustan, albeit there are romantic traits in many of his most distinguished performances. It may even be that the romantic, instead of the Neo-classic, qualities are responsible for the homage paid to him today. Nevertheless, an enumeration of some of his main classical tenets and tendencies presents a rather convincing array of evidence as to the mainstream of robust classicism flowing through his critical papers, treatises, and poems.

1. Addison, in spite of the influence of Locke, evidently believed thoroughly in certain a priori rules governing art. This is substantiated by his reliance upon Aristotelian standards in the Miltonic criticism.
2. There is a supreme devotion to Horatian decorum, as well as to Aristotelian dicta, as may be seen in diverse comments upon the nature of poetry.
3. The aversion to puns expressed in The Spectator could

1. Walter Bagehot, Literary Studies, ed. Richard H. Hutton (London, 1891), I, 225.

scarcely be matched except in an equally ardent classicist.

4. Imitation of great writers, especially the classics, was considered of paramount import.¹
5. Addison's interpretation of nature, except for occasional lapses, corresponded to Pope's before The Essay on Man.
6. The opposition to tragi-comedy, mixed wit, and the mingling of rhyme and blank verse was typical of Addison's age.
7. Throughout his literary career Addison maintained, as had Sidney and Horace, that literature should please and instruct. He showed little disposition in theory or practice to let down this barrier to Romanticism.
8. Although a Whig, Addison evinces great respect for constituted authority. Even when interpreting Longinus in a half-romantic way, the Augustan critic shows his veneration for the status quo and conventional criteria.
9. Like Aristotle, he is negligent in his treatment of comic drama, though he should have been aware that only a small portion of the Poetics has been transmitted to us. Hence it is likely that Aristotle actually had more to say on this subject.
10. The lucidus ordo reigns supreme in Addison's writings. Cato is an example of his application of this principle.
11. Addison, in common with Hume, Rymer, and Pope, displayed contempt for pre-Elizabethan literature. Even most of Shakespeare's contemporaries were looked upon as insufferable Goths.
12. Moral precept is overemphasized in Addison's theory.

1. "Imitation," says Goldsmith, "is indeed the basis of all the liberal arts; invention and enthusiasm constitute genius in whatever manner it may be displayed" (see The Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith (London, 1919), p. 326).

Knox's statement should afford ample testimony to its presence in Addison's purely creative works.

13. The minutiae of classical example are adhered to strictly in most instances. This is best illustrated by Addison's fervent praise of Milton for having used twelve books in Paradise Lost.
14. The stress upon propriety of sentiment in the "Criticism of Paradise Lost" and in the papers on the ballad is alien to Romanticism.¹

Still there are some indisputable traces of a breakdown in the Pseudo-classicism of Addison's more conservative confreres. These, too, add up to an imposing total when tabulated; but the will to revolt was weak in Addison. He was content, as a rule, to set up only the machinery for radical change. Either he was too wise to oppose the literary gentry or he was too much the virtuoso to push his inclinations to satisfactory goals. Here are some of the traits of transition in his criticism:

1. Almost unqualified approval is given to the use of folklore. Beginning as early as "An Essay on Virgil's Georgics," Addison came more and more to the support of popular antiquities, as folklore was called before the early part of the last century. Many branches of this department of anthropology and ethnology received his sanction, among which are legends, ballads, husbandry, superstitions, old wives' tales, and the like.
2. Addison was the founder of the cult of the imagination.

1. Cf. Blake's romantic intensity and variety of sentiment (see Pierre Berger, William Blake, Mysticism et Poésie (Paris), p. 270 ff.).

Young himself acknowledged him to have been a forerunner, also, of the cult of original genius. True, imagination was still shackled by reason,¹ but imagination became, to say the least, ONE of the chief tests of art. The influence Addison exercised upon Young, Duff, Akenside, and others determined, to a large extent, the course of literature during the period of transition to Romanticism.

3. External nature description receives recognition in the "Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination."
4. Upon occasion there is a willingness expressed to depart from the tyranny of rule. Even Vergil is exposed to a blast arising from a latent desire within our critic to disregard authorities arbitrarily selected by the fraternity of critics.
5. The differentiation between authorities found in Addison is a sign of healthy scholarship, something lacking in Pope.
6. The fairy way of writing designated by Dryden received staunch support from Addison. To accomplish this, senses other than the visual are accorded a place in creative writing, notwithstanding bold statements to the contrary by an eminent twentieth century scholar.
7. Variety and novelty are seen in their true light for the first time since Milton. This is apparent in numerous issues of the journal, but particularly in the series on Paradise Lost and on fancy.
8. Limited rusticity is condoned, though Addison's escapism and glorification of the noble savage have certainly been exaggerated. Fairchild, especially, is remiss in this particular.
9. Addison exploited the principle formulated by Longinus

1. Cf. B. Pascal, Pensées, ed., Abbé Margival (Paris, 1899), p. 33.

that the principal parts of a work should be examined judiciously for sublimity and beauty. Addison combined this doctrine effectively with the Aristotelian custom of judging a production in toto. Longinus was responsible, too, for Addison's generous views on imagination and fancy.¹

10. Addison approved of blank verse in the epic. Perhaps it would be unfair to Young to say that Addison paved the way for his statement on rhyme; but it cannot be denied that the papers in The Spectator played a major role in the decline of the heroic couplet.² Addison even made a crude attempt to master blank verse in "Milton's Stile Imitated." The Cato is said to be in heroic couplets minus the rhyme.

11. The bourgeois spirit received unbounded impetus from both Addison and Steele, as well as from Defoe. This was achieved, however, more by example than by critical pronouncement.

Addison's reputation rests today largely upon his periodical essays and upon his associations with Steele. That was not always true, for Alexander Pope regarded Cato as a major theatrical attraction even though he advised the author he con-

1. The modernity of Addison's stand on imagination may be seen in its close resemblance to the following French theory: "En fait, comme l'imagination nous est apparue en collaboration intime et continue avec l'intelligence, tout de même exigences littéraires de la volonté se mêlent étroitement à celles de la sensibilité" (G. Longhaye, Théorie des Belles-Lettres, l'Ame et les choses dans la parole (Paris, 1924), p. 21. Keats, of course, extended the definitions of Addison and Akenside, saying, "What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth" (see John Keats, "Letter to Benjamin Bailey, Leatherhead, November 22, 1817," in The Complete Works of John Keats, ed., H. Buxton Forman (Glasgow, 1901), IV, 46.

2. Young was in many ways obligated to Addison for his ideas (see Paul Van Tieghem, Le Prérromantisme (Paris, 1930), pp. 35, 49. Cowper said of rhyme, by the way, "We are of one mind as to the agreeable effect of rhyme or euphony in the lighter kinds of poetry" (see E. V. Lucas, ed., Cowper's Letters (London), p. 437.

sidered it more properly a closet drama. Pope said of this rigidly classical drama: "Cato was not so much the wonder of Rome in his days, as he is of Britain in ours."¹ Provoked to jealousy by Addison's augmented reputation, Pope is said to have engaged John Dennis to criticize the production. This critique, Remarks upon Cato, together with Rymer's Criticism of Cato, comprises the main assault upon Addison's rank as a dramatist.² On the other side of the ledger is to be found the approval given Cato by Voltaire, who was so enamoured of this tragedy that he frequently compared it with the whole of Shakespeare.³

Bellessort tells us, however, that Voltaire had little or nothing to say of Addison's criticism and essays: "Il ne

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1. Alexander Pope, Works(1871 edition), VI, 183.
 2. H. G. Paul, op. cit., p. 69. Addison was charitable enough toward Dennis, if we may trust Steele, who says in "A Letter to Lintot, August 4, 1713:" "Mr. Addison desires me to tell you that he wholly disapproves the Manner of treating Mr. Dennis in a little Pamphlet by the way of Dr. Norris's Account"(ibid., p. 69). Macaulay's version of the Dennis-Addison controversy differs from current accounts, though Addison is exonerated completely (see T. B. Macaulay, Essays and Poems(1880 edition), III, 59).
 3. J. Texte, op. cit., p. 118. Johnson called it "the noblest production of Addison's genius" (see S. Johnson, The Life of Addison, p. 206).

dit rien ni d'Addison, ni de Daniel de Foë, dont le Robinson était déjà célèbre, ni de Thompson(sic), le poète des Saisons.¹ Happily Pope's "Letter to Addison, October, 1714" gives us an insight into the favorable reaction of one of Addison's contemporaries to his worth as a critic. Swift, who for a long time associated with the newspaperman, called him "immortal Addison," praised him for his use of Biblical materials,² but jeered at the antics of the actors at a rehearsal of Cato which he attended.³ He conjectured that Addison and Steele may have been connected with the printing of a cheap pamphlet, The State of Wit.

Most of the later eighteenth century writers, Young, Akenside, Burns, and one or two others, were too much interested in Addison as a stylist to bother a great deal with his literary theory. Still others became embroiled in controversies over the merit of some of his minor works, several of which caused miniature tempests in literary circles. Nevertheless, Johnson and Blair perceived the value of Addison's critical essays.

1. Andre Bellessort, Essai sur Voltaire (Paris, 1926), p.73.

2. The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D., ed., Temple Scott (London, 1907), XI, 96.

3. Ibid., II, 452.

Lord Kames, kindly disposed as he was to some of Addison's doctrines, rebuked him for the conduct of one of his characters in The Drummer:

In the fifth Act of the Drummer, Addison makes his gardener act even below the character of an ignorant credulous rustic; he gives him the behavior of a gaping idiot.¹

Hume recognized Addison far more as "an elegant writer" than as a critic,² going even so far as to heap praises upon his "elegant Discourses of Religion."³ That Hume, a sceptic, should have taken a fancy to Addison's religious tracts is amazing: sanctimonious Presbyterians sat at Hume's grave for almost a fortnight, certain that Almighty God would give some sign of his disapproval of the conduct of the impious Scottish philosopher, who had not only denied the authenticity of miracles, but had scoffed at the entire supernatural element in religion. It was in Scotland, though, that Addison achieved considerable fame as a critic, for Tytler, in his comprehensive biography of Kames, pointed to Akenside's debt to Addison:

1. H. Home, op. cit., p. 118.

2. D. Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, II, 145.

3. Ibid., II, 370.

From Dr Hutcheson's Theory of Reflex Senses, and various hints to be found in the Essay on Beauty and Virtue, as well as from Mr Addison's papers in the Spectator, Dr Akenside conceived the plan of his poem On the Pleasures of Imagination.¹

Again Tytler provides us with an intriguing account of Addison's influence upon Scottish letters.

A taste for polite literature had, however begun gradually to diffuse itself in Scotland, even from the time of the publication of the Tatlers, Speccators and Guardians; and, as in England, the effect of those writings, and more particularly the papers of Addison, was conspicuous in substituting an ease and elegance of composition as a more engaging vehicle for subjects of taste, in the room of the dry scholastic style in which they had hitherto been treated.²

Surely Tytler is referring here to Addison's theories of style as well as to his example, for he also mentions that Addison became a model for Scottish writers.³

Before proceeding further with the examination of representative opinion of Addison as a critic, there are one or two other cases to be dealt with which reveal serious ignorance of his real worth. George Sewell's preface

1. A. F. Tytler, op. cit., I , 289.

2. Ibid., I, 164.

3. Ibid., I, 165.

to his 1719 Miscellany has a handsome discussion of Addison's mock-heroics. Lest one chuckle at the tastes of eighteenth century savants, one should look into Thackeray, where it is stated unequivocally that Addison's Latin verses are "the best since Virgil, or Statius at any rate."¹ Neglectful of the critical papers, Thackeray proceeds to tell us Addison "had deeply imbued himself with the Latin poetical literature, and had these poets at his fingers' end when he travelled in Italy."² Latin poems could throw this Victorian novelist into a state of near-ecstasy; the less prosaic critical essays moved him not at all.

Certainly Young and Akenside, and possibly Shenstone, among the imitators of Spenser and Milton, showed their admiration for Addison by putting into practice some of his more radical ideas. Young speaks of the critic reverently in the Conjectures on Original Composition; ³ and Akenside readily acknowledged his indebtedness to Addison's progressive notion of the imagination.⁴ Even die-hard Neo-classicists

1. William M. Thackeray, "Lecture on Addison," in Essays on Addison, ed., G. E. Hadow (Oxford, 1907), p. 97.

2. Ibid., p. 94.

3. Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780 (New York, 1928), I, 374. He says of the Conjectures: "All these ideas had long been in the air, and many a parallel can be quoted from Addison and Pope."

4. Ibid., I, 382.

like Harris saw the wisdom of Addison's sane criticism. "Mr. Addison," wrote Harris, gave us "many polite and elegant Spectators on the conduct and beauties of Paradise Lost."¹

By Johnson's heyday, the redoubtable critic brought himself to admit "Addison is now to be considered a critic; a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him."² Johnson did not deny that Addison's judgments were often tentative or experimental,³ rather than scientific, but he admonished his coetans not to rest easily in their superiority over Addison,⁴ telling them to peruse the remarks on Ovid, wit, and imagination if they wished to read "subtle and refined" critical opinions.⁵ Although Johnson could not refrain from mentioning that Addison had

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1. J. Harris, op.cit., p. 394(1841 edition). Even Johnson concurred in this opinion: "It is justly remarked by Addison that this poem has, by the nature of its subject, the advantage above all others, that it is universally and perpetually interesting." See S. Johnson, Life of Milton, pp. 49-50
 2. S. Johnson, Life of Addison, p. 217.
 3. Joseph Ratner, ed., Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy(New York, 1939), p. 356. Dewey contends that it is wise to keep judgments tentative.
 4. That it was necessary to deliver this warning is shown by the paucity and insipidity of Goldsmith's comments on Addison (see Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith, p. 329).
 5. S. Johnson, Life of Addison, p. 218.

exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaffe for his Chevy-Chase articles, the biographer does Addison a service by dispelling somewhat the aura that had formed about Steele by saying:.

Addison never considered Steele as a rival, but Steele lived, as he confesses, under an habitual subjection to the predominating genius of Addison, whom he always mentioned with reverence and treated with obsequiousness.¹

But Johnson, too, was carried away by the chaste style of Addison, as is testified to in this famous passage:

Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.²

Dr. Hugh Blair gives us a more detailed estimate of Addison as a critic than is to be expected in a work of the type of his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. Nor is he always flattering to the essayist. Blair, like Johnson, displayed some interest in the style of The Spectator, for Lecture XX is entitled "A Critical Examination of the Style of Mr. Addison in No. 411 of the Spec-

1. S. Johnson, Life of Addison, p. 180.

2. Ibid., p. 219.

tator."¹ Nevertheless, he succeeds in presenting an almost unique interpretation of the "Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination," when he says:

He (Addison) has reduced these pleasures under three heads,--beauty, grandeur, and novelty. His speculations on this subject, if not exceedingly profound, are, however, very beautiful and entertaining; and he has the merit of having opened a track, which was before unbeaten. The advances made since his time in this curious part of philosophical criticism, are not very considerable; though some ingenious writers have pursued the subject.²

Blair is out of sympathy with Addison's attitude toward Tasso. Indeed, he leans a little toward the side of Shelley and the Romantics on this topic. Addison is, accordingly, sharply censured for his partiality in The Guardian, No. 38, in which Tasso's Aminta is spoken of unfavorably. Blair's deduction reveals him to be a better critic than defamers of his treatise on Macpherson have intimated: he boldly asserts that he suspects Addison had never read Tasso's work.³

The author of the Lectures thinks, furthermore, that Addison actually applied the principles set forth in the papers

1. Hugh Blair, Lectures, p. 216 ff.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid., p. 441.

on creative imagination, for he states, "We see no labour, no stiffness or affectation; but an author writing from the native flow of a gay and pleasing imagination."¹ This is a substantial tribute from a fairly competent critic, a man who commanded respect despite his part in the Ossianic fiasco.

Cowper was one man who should have had a wholesome respect for Addison as a critic. He, too, was fascinated by Milton's poetry; he, too, approved of the ballad.² Like Addison, he realized that rhyme was not suited to all types of composition,³ because he says, "You delight me when you call blank verse the English heroic."⁴ But he was a devotee to Johnson, Pope, and Gray. Had he not referred to Pope as the "king of critics" in several of his letters?⁵ Perhaps this was the reason Cowper could do no better than offer this pusillanimous comment upon our critic:

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1. H. Blair, Lectures, p. 224. Raysor interprets Addison's action in defending imagination in art as a rebuff to French interpreters of Aristotle. He says: "Not until Addison was there any important protest against this viciously censorious point of view, and not until Coleridge and his great contemporaries was the battle won, though the last quarter of the eighteenth century saw a great development of liberal criticism" (T. R. Raysor, op. cit., p. xlvi ff.).
 2. E. V. Lucas, ed., op. cit., p. 140.
 3. Cowper even opposed rhyme in translations, which would have caused Pope, his idol, much dismay. See ibid., pp. 435, 437.
 4. Ibid., p. 412.
 5. Ibid., p. 83.

To what mean artifices could Addison stoop, in hopes of injuring the reputation of his friend.¹

Doubtless his sympathies were all with Pope, so that he saw Addison through a glass darkly.

Vicesimus Knox, whom Cooper had read, was a little more kindly disposed toward Addison. Not that he praised him especially as a critic! Rather, he patterned his Winter Evenings and Essays, Moral and Literary upon the Addisonian papers, even though his efforts appeared in bound volumes. Like Cowper, Knox relied chiefly upon the critical writings of Pope, Gray, and Johnson, but he adds Dryden to the honor roll. Even his treatment of Milton is Johnsonian in character, though not in sentiment; consequently, his approval of Addison's treatment of all subjects is the best sort of comment one could expect of Knox. He says in Winter Evenings:

Addison, who could write so agreeably on all subjects, was not an entertaining companion, unless the circle was select.²

1. E. V. Lucas, ed., op. cit., p. 161.

2. V. Knox, Winter Evenings, II, 74.

Horace Walpole was another who was more absorbed with the style of Addison than with his abilities as a reviewer. His comment is so appropriate, nevertheless, that it should hardly be omitted. Oliver Elton reports his saying, "Virgil, Homer, Boileau, Corneille, Racine, Pope exploded the licentiousness that reigned before them. Before Addison and Swift style (in prose) was scarce aimed at by our best authors."¹ Elton also calls attention to Burke's achievements in criticism, but he minimizes Addison's influence. Elton may be correct in assuming that Burke "was opening new ground," forging far ahead of Addison in his investigation of the sublime and the imagination.² There is a suspicion, however, that Burke saw in Addison's treatment of Milton the essence of true sublimity. How far he was indebted to Addison for his prose style can only be guessed at, but Walpole's statement should be kept in mind.

The wilful neglect of Addison by Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and even Matthew Arnold is lamentable. Whole volumes of their letters betray no trace of interest in Add-

1. O. Elton, op. cit., I, 30.

2. Ibid., II, 247.

ison's literary theory,¹ so completely had some of these men divorced themselves from the Neo-classic group. Leigh Hunt, by temperament more like Steele, displays a little concern over Addison's collaborator.² Lord Byron is more obliging, though his careless assertion in Canto XVI of Don Juan has evoked objections from supporters of Addison's technique of criticism. Lord Macaulay, in particular, attacked all those who he believed were unfair to our critic. It may be, however, that Byron had not intended to cast aspersions upon Addison's ability as a critic when he said:

But then 't was to the purpose what she spoke:
Like Addison's "faint praise," so wont to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrame.³

Anyway, Macaulay was determined not to allow anyone to accuse Addison of this fault, whether it be Pope or Byron. He says, "That Addison was not in the habit of "damning with faint praise" appears from innumerable passages in his writings, and from none more than those in which he mentions Pope. And it

1. For example, see Roger Ingpen, ed., The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley (London, 1909). The works of the other poets mentioned are equally destitute of favorable comment on Addison.

2. See R. Brimley Johnson, ed., Essays and Sketches by Leigh Hunt (London), p. 149.

3. The Works of Lord Byron, ed., E. Hartley Coleridge (London, 1903), VI, 602.

is not merely unjust, but ridiculous, to describe a man who made the fortune of almost every one of his intimate friends, as 'so obliging that he ne'er obliged.'"¹ Macaulay's arguments are borne out by Addison's remaining silent upon the mediocre writings of Wortley. Added to this, he helped D'Urfey with a "good natured puff,"² as Hutton points out, because the old poet "had written more odes than Horace and four times as many comedies as Terence."³

De Quincey exhibited at times a half-belligerent attitude toward Addison as a critic. He found the papers on Paradise Lost singularly ineffectual. "In the midst," he says, "of much just feeling, which one could only wish a little deeper, in the Addisonian papers on 'Paradise Lost,' there are some gross blunders of criticism, as there are in

1. T. B. Macaulay, Essays and Poems (1880 edition), II, 440.

2. G. Saintsbury, op. cit., II, 440 (1902 edition).

3. Laurence Hutton, From the Books of Laurence Hutton (New York, 1892), p. 98.

Dr. Johnson, and from the self-same cause--an understanding suddenly palsied from defective passion."¹ There may be room for criticism of the Milton papers on the ground of lack of depth, but only a prejudiced Romanticist could possibly have charged the essayist with having a "defective passion." That was one flaw which did not enter into Addison's mental profile.

Not content with this damaging attack upon Addison, De Quincey heaps vituperation on our critic for ascribing Grecian amplitude, symmetry, and the like to the epic. "Addison," he asserts, "though quite content with it in English, still could have wished it in Greek." He seems unmindful that French writers did very well, indeed, by infusing into their work a Greek flavor.² Then, too, De Quincey insinuates that Addison was utterly confused by the intricacies of the Puritan poet's pattern, for he says: "But, after all, the worst thing uttered by Addison in these papers is, not against Milton, but meant to be com-

1. T. De Quincey, op. cit., p. 309.

2. See F. Fénelon, Les Aventures de Télémaque (Paris, 1836), p. ii ff. Hazlitt, like Addison, is carried away by the Greek elegance and precision of Paradise Lost (A. R. Waller and A. Glover, ed., op. cit., I, 39).

plimentary."¹ These slurring remarks would have to be taken seriously were it not for two or three blunders by De Quincey. His "Pope's Retort upon Addison" shows him in his true colors, a sympathizer with Pope against Addison.² Added to this, De Quincey's own critical genius is open to question after his quip upon Blenheim, never considered by serious nineteenth century critics one of Addison's best works: "Addison's "Blenheim" is poor enough; one might think it a translation from some German original of those times."³ The romantic essayist shows better judgment when reflecting upon Addison's originality and grace.⁴

The critical comments of Hazlitt and Lamb shed further light upon Addison's reputation in the age of Wordsworth. Hazlitt, who formed himself upon eighteenth century essayists, calls Addison and Steele "our ingenious predecessors" in his delightful little essay "On the Tat-

1. T. De Quincey, op. cit., pp. 309-310.

2. Ibid., p. 492 ff.

3. Ibid., p. 313.

4. M. R. Ridley, ed., De Quincey Selections (Oxford, 1927), p. 154.

ler."¹"The best criticism in the Spectator," he ventures to say, "that on the Cartoons by Raphael, is by Steele."² That he tends to favor Steele most of the time is obvious from his decided preference for The Tatler.³ Hazlitt is scrupulously honest, though, as is shown by his calling to our attention the reasons for the wide acclaim accorded The Spectator. These suggest that in certain quarters Addison's critical doctrines were acceptable.

What has given its superior popularity to the Spectator is the greater gravity of its pretensions, its moral dissertations and critical reasonings, by which we confess we are less edified than by other things.⁴

One other observation made by Hazlitt which may be construed as a compliment to the fairness of Addison and Steele appears in Hazlitt's famous letter to Gifford, in which he says that the two collaborators would have been more kind to their imitators than Gifford was to Hunt.⁵

1. A. R. Waller and A. Glover, ed., op. cit., I, 7.

2. Ibid., I, 9.

3. Ibid., I, 8.

4. Ibid., I, 9.

5. Ibid., I, 374.

Hazlitt has a little review on the revival of Cato on October 25, 1816; but he finds Mr. Kemble's acting more provocative than Addison's dramatic theory and practice.¹

A typical comment of Lamb's substantiates Johnson's linking Addison with Sir William Temple of the School of Taste. Lamb, in common with most early nineteenth century essayists, displays only passing interest in Addison as a critic, but he does furnish us with at least one new angle on the formation of Addison's style and taste:

The writings of Temple are, in general, after this easy copy. On one occasion, indeed, his wit, which was mostly subordinate to nature and tenderness, has seduced him into a string of felicitous anti-theses: which, it is obvious to remark have been a model to Addison and succeeding essayists.²

Macaulay helped to sustain Addison's reputation in the Victorian era. He was to Addison almost what our critic was to Milton: his Essay on Addison is considered by some authorities to be the definitive study of Addison's life and work. In his Essay on Men and Books, the historian proves to be a little more impartial than his fellow critics

1. Wm. Hazlitt, A View of the English Stage (London, 1906), p. 264.

2. E. M. W. Tillyard, Lamb's Criticism (Cambridge, 1923), p. 80.

in discerning the beauties of both classical and romantic art.

If we were to lay down these canons, and to call Pope, Goldsmith, and Addison incorrect writers for not having complied with our whims, we should act precisely as those critics who find incorrectness in the magnificent imagery and the varied music of Coleridge and Shelley.¹

Such statements as this and the one quoted in Chapter I entitle Macaulay to a foremost position among Addisonians. He showed none of the scorn for Neo-classic literary traditions that may be found in the most enthusiastic Romanticists. Nor was he biased in favor of Pope, for he says, "As a satirist he (Addison) was, at his own weapons, more than Pope's match."² Cowper's allegations lose force in the face of the opinions of such a cool-headed historian as Macaulay.

Some critics, as has been duly pointed out, have preferred Steele to Addison. This is only natural when two writers excel in the same art medium. Walker indicates that Landor is to be numbered among the admirers of Steele in view of his high esteem for Steele's criticism.³ Per-

1. T. B. Macaulay, Essays on Men and Books, ed., A. H. Japp (London, 1892), p. 295.

2. T. B. Macaulay, Essays and Poems (1880 edition), III, 70.

3. H. Walker, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

haps Landor went too far in saying that Steele may never have been surpassed as a critic because Walker remarks: "It is not always safe to accept Landor's judgments, and this one bears the mark of exaggeration." Continuing his comparison of Steele and Addison, Walker says of the latter's criticism:

The value of his criticism has been estimated at a very high rate by so thoughtful a critic as Mr. Worsfold. But to others, probably the majority, much of it seems antiquated.¹

Of course there are many modern scholars who look upon Aristotle, Longinus, Boileau, Pope, and even Wordsworth as literary curios. Still there may be some point to Walker's remark that we no longer ask the questions regarding Milton that Addison tried to answer. That is quibbling to some extent, though, for the main significance of these Addisonian papers seems to lie in their regeneration of interest in Paradise Lost.

A digression may be in order at this point to introduce a portion of one of Landor's dialogues, an admirable caricature of Addison. Landor has Steele say of his associate:

The calmest poet, the most quiet patriot; dear Addison! drunk, deliberate, moral, sentimental, foaming over with truth and virtue, with tenderness and friendship, and only the worse in one ruffle for the wine.²

1. Hugh Walker, op. cit., p. 119.

2. The Works of Walter Savage Landor (London, 1895), II, 152.

When one reads such a human account as this one from Imaginary Conversations, one is inclined to forgive the author for any shortcomings evinced in his inability to sense the significance of principles of criticism.

John Dennis, the late critic, discovered in Addison a proclivity for perceiving the true nature of Neo-classic poetry, as may be seen in the following excerpt from Dennis' sketch on Pope:

It is true that the source of many of these lines can be traced to other minds, but Addison is right in saying that the known truths in the poem are placed in so beautiful a light that they have all the graces of novelty.¹

Another critic of the last century, Walter Bagehot, offers a somewhat startling evaluation of the critical papers appearing in The Tatler and The Spectator. Writing upon "The First Edinburgh Reviewers," he discusses the role of these papers in the evolution of the critical review.

The appeal now is to the mass of sensible persons. Professed students are not generally suspected of common sense; and though they often show acuteness in their peculiar pursuits, they have not the various experience, the changing imagination, the feeling nature, the realised detail which are necessary for a thousand quest-

1. John Dennis, Studies in English Literature (London, 1876), p. 55.

ions. Whatever we may think on this point, however, the transition has been made. The Edinburgh Review was at its beginning, a material step in the change. Unquestionably, the Spectator and Tatler, and such-like writings had opened a similar vein, but their size was too small. They could only deal with small fragments, or the extreme essence of a subject.¹

Here we find an emphasis upon the Addisonian technique as a means of appealing to popular taste. It was Bagehot's opinion that the essay-like criticism of his day was of appropriate length for the Victorian reader. Thus Addison and Steele receive merited recognition as progenitors of modern literary periodicals and of bourgeois culture.

Bagehot was intensely interested in Mr. Wortley, a crony of Addison's, but he was at a loss to discover any excellence in Wortley's literary style. "Whatever good qualities Addison and Steele discovered in Mr. Wortley," the Victorian says, "they were certainly not those of a good writer."² It is to Addison's credit that he did not allow his friendship for Wortley, as well as for Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to influence his position as a reviewer. It was far better to discuss Wortley's works over a bottle of wine than to expose them to public ridicule. Praise was evidently out of the question.

1. W. Bagehot, op. cit., I , 6.

2. Ibid., I , 226.

As a result, Addison refrained from any editorial comment upon Wortley's literary efforts.

Minto, a critic who is receiving renewed attention in the United States, took De Quincey to task for branding Addison's treatises on Milton and the pleasures of the imagination as superficial. Minto's reaction to the essays on literary subjects leaves much to be desired, but at least he was aware of the need for a popular approach to these matters. Unfortunately, he loses track of historical perspective when he says:

Still, it should be possible, without going into more abstruse considerations, to make such papers as those on the Pleasures of the Imagination not only more accurate, but even more intelligible and more easily remembered.¹

Pioneers in the field of the imagination in art deserve a happier fate. Yet there is much truth in the indictment of the papers for being among Addison's less entertaining essays. When it is realized, however, that they treat with psychological and philosophical problems related to aesthetics, rather than to the art of reviewing,

1. William Minto, A Manual of English Prose Literature (Boston, 1901), p. 384.

it should not be difficult to excuse Addison for want of greater perspicuity. Only within our own day has psychology emerged as a full-fledged science. What is equally obvious, also, is that Pope's Essay on Criticism and Reynolds' Discourses are weighed down by both form and matter. At least Addison selected an entertaining form for his heavy discourses. Few Neo-classic writers have dealt with the philosophical aspects of art half as happily as did our essayist.

Three modern critics who present varying viewpoints on Addison's theories are Courthope, Babbitt, and Sikes. Their being scholars should not detract from the legitimacy of their observations. Courthope's repute as editor of Pope's works and biographer of Addison indeed adds weight to his commendatory remarks. After confirming his belief in Addison's exposition of the relationship of art and taste,¹ Courthope evolves one of the most sane and scholarly evaluations we have of the Miltonic papers. He says:

The locus classicus for the appreciation of the poem is of course the series of papers written by

1. W. J. Courthope, Life in Poetry: Law in Taste (London, 1901), p. 150. He says, "'The Art,' says Addison, 'is to conform to the Taste, not the Taste to the Art.' A true sayings, but one that needs to be understood."

2. Ibid., p. 331.

Addison in the Spectator, and I should recommend every one who wishes to get a well-proportioned view of the whole composition to study carefully that excellent criticism.¹

Sikes is far from an admirer of Addisonian technique, as may be seen from the following diatribe, the general tone of which is in sharp conflict with earlier critical opinion such as that of Stockdale:²

Addison (oblivious of Lycidas) warned the poet not to rest content with "pastoral and the lower kinds of poetry;" and, although Theocritus had anticipated his advice to "acquaint himself with the pomp and magnificence of Courts," even this stage of poetic development would not have weighed with a critic fresh from the study of Homer and Sophocles.³

There is indubitably a hint here that Addison, as De Quincey had indicated, was too much steeped in the higher forms of Greek art to be considered typically English in outlook.

But Babbitt really comes forth with a meritorious piece of criticism, confirming one of the major conclusions arrived at in this treatise. Professor Babbitt writes:

This contrast between the imitator and the inspired original was developed by Addison, in a

1. W. J. Courthope, op. cit., p. 351.

2. Stockdale had a healthy respect for Addison as a critic of Milton (see Percival Stockdale, Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets (London, 1807), I, 114.

3. E. E. Sikes, The Greek View of Poetry (London, 1931), p. 225.

paper ("Spectator," 160) that was destined to be used against the very school to which he himself belonged. For Addison was in his general outlook a somewhat tame Augustan.¹

The moderns have reason to be more kindly disposed than they are toward Addison, for Bernard Smith has stated bluntly that there has been an ever-increasing refinement of the critic's sensorium from Addison's age to our own.² Addison has had a potent influence upon critics because where the periodical essay is to be found, there the hand of Steele or Addison extends. The latter has helped form the methods, attitudes, and tastes of contemporary critics. When a reader in Boston, Massachusetts, or Boone, North Carolina, picks up the Atlantic Monthly or The Southern Literary Messenger, he unconsciously profits from Addison's bequest to posterity. There is no need for an elaboration of this aspect of Addison's influence in view of Dr. Walter Graham's research, but there are a few other manifestations of Addison's permanence as a critic which merit consideration.

Addison popularized the character essay to such an extent that his success led to such modern imitations as

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1. I. Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (Boston and New York), p.35
 2. B. Smith, Forces in American Criticism (New York, 1939), p. 276.

as Smalley's London Letters. Even Vogt's letters to the Revue de Deux Mondes bear the mark of some of Addison's epistolary efforts in belittling materialism and puerile art.¹ Smalley, by the way, even employed anecdotes such as the one concerning the predominant position of the London Times in Addisonian fashion.² And his "Prince Bismarck" and other character sketches have some of the intimacy of the portrayals of coffee-house frequenters. Then, too, critics like Basil de Sélincourt have adopted from Addison the popular approach to a literary subject, well illustrated by the former's narrative on Lamartine at the beginning of his essay "A French Romantic," one of a series appearing in the Times Literary Supplement.³

Other critics of the present have resorted to Addison's ideas on literature, demonstrated equally well by Birrell's referring to Milton's diction and style being as safe as Virgil's⁴ and by Baring's remark that "didactic poetry

1. See his Varvara Afanasievna (1894).

2. George W. Smalley, London Letters (New York, 1891), I, 63.

3. Basil de Sélincourt, The English Secret and Other Essays (London, 1923), p. 14 ff.

4. Augustine Birrell, Obiter Dicta (London, 1950), p. 157.

affords special facilities to the translator."¹ P. G. Thomas goes so far as to point to two methods of judging Paradise Lost; namely, the one tried by Addison and then Johnson; the other, a modern technique whereby the poem's spirit permeates our minds.² Here, as in Baring's contributions to the Edinburgh Review, there is a strong current of bourgeois classicism.

Long before the War between the States, Addison had been a popular model below the border. Colonial weeklies were nearly all patterned after the papers of the coffee-house wits until the North American Review broke with the classical tradition and followed in the footsteps of Wordsworth and Coleridge about 1825.³ The chief American poets were cognizant also of Addison's worth. Even Swedish writers, if we are to believe Viglione, drew grace and elegance from Addison.⁴ But the main contribution of Addison to America was the bourgeois character of his papers: a democracy needed a peculiar literary form. The periodical essay and the newspaper filled that need admirably. American news agencies teem with offsprings of the Tatler and the Spectator, mute test-

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1. Evelyn Baring, Political and Literary Essays, 1908-1913 (London, 1913), p. 61.
 2. P. G. Thomas, Aspects of Literary Theory and Practice, 1550-1870 (London, 1931), p. 46.
 3. B. Smith, op. cit., pp. 8-11.
 4. Francesco Viglione, La Critica Letterario di Henry W. Longfellow (Florence, 1934), II, 391.

imonials to the ingenuity of Steele and Addison.

Such are the vagaries in the career of a literary critic! Addison's reputation has risen and fallen spasmodically, remaining stable for only a comparatively short time. Both Romanticists and Neo-classicists have been disposed to value him highly as a stylist, no matter how much they differed in their estimates of his criticism.

So diverse are the appraisals of Addison's genius as a critic that it would be folly to predict the permanence or ultimate significance of his work in this field. Virtuoso that he was, he was drawn irresistibly^{is} into making superficial comments upon the literary heritage of the peoples he knew most intimately. A journalist, he was obliged to make his speculations appeal to the mass mind, something which neither Pope nor Johnson was able to do, though the latter entertained hopes in this direction. The ease and grace with which Addison deals with literary problems commands respect; but his furtherance of bourgeois **concern** with belles-lettres incurred for him the scorn of more prosaic and cloistered men of letters. An eclectic,

he selected his principles, though not always with impeccable scholarship, from the best sources to which he had access, a sufficient proof of his integrity. Yet this tendency alienated from him a group of his Neo-classic confreres, because total conformity to the school of Pope was usually demanded except by the pre-romantics.

It would be idle to attempt a wholesale rebuttal of the charges levelled against our critic. Rather, one should survey the progress made by Addison toward a healthier classicism. He had a profound effect upon the most forward-looking pre-romanticists, Young, Akenside, and Blair in particular; he and Steele set a fashion for periodical essays which has stood, with only minor changes, for nearly two centuries. It matters little, then, whether Gray and Landor, De Quincey and Saintsbury wholly approve of his critical treatises. Addison, the leading journalist and dramatist of his day, had sufficient backing to be able to flaunt his opinions in the faces of the conservative Pseudo-classic element by giving his sanction to the imagination as a test of art, to blank verse in epic and dramatic poetry, to Milton's Paradise Lost, to the vulgar ball-

ad,¹ defence of which caused even Bishop Percy some embarrassment, and to folklore. That adds up to an impressive total of gains registered against the stilted classicism of the Augustan age, the shortcomings of which Addison must have seen clearly. What is more astonishing is that Addison, evidencing supreme discrimination, preserved in his own style most of the traits after which his contemporaries strove in vain. No wonder, then, men like Swift, Steele, and Tickell were honored to be associated with him. Because of his classical purity, even his enemies could not suggest that he opposed some of the trends of his times because he was unable to discipline himself by the rules of Aristotle and Pope.

1. Percy paid tribute to Addison and several other defenders of the ballad in the following passage: "Yet they have, for the most part, a pleasing simplicity, and many artless graces, which in the opinion of no mean critics have been thought to compensate for the want of higher beauties, and if they do not dazzle the imagination, are frequently found to interest the heart" (Thomas Percy, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (London, 1747), I, xii). Scott also recognized Addison's part in the revival of folk literature, but thought our critic should have suspected the language of his stall copy of Chevy-Chase (Walter Scott, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, ed., T. F. Henderson (Edinburgh and London, 1932), I, 12).

Joseph Addison was the first important people's critic in Britain. He did much to engender in the upper middle classes a genuine love of literature. He opposed conceits and affectations fearlessly, and the people knew that they could trust his judgments. Thus he helped mould the character of the prose and poetry of succeeding generations, despite stiff opposition from his opponents, some of which may have been justified. When one looks at Wagstaffe, Rymer, Gray, and Landor--even De Quincey--one realizes that their reputations have become more tarnished than Addison's. Only De Quincey enjoys a substantial following today, though not so much for his criticism as for his familiar essays.

The least that can be said for Addison as a critic appears in Saintsbury's History of Criticism, in which the conservative modern viewpoint is expressed:

Though by no means a very great critic, he is a useful, an interesting, and a representative one. He represents the classical attitude tempered, not merely by good sense almost in quintessence, but by a large share of tolerance and positive good taste, by freedom from the more utterly ridiculous pseudo-Aristotelianisms, and by a wish to extend a concordat to everything good even if it be not "faultless."¹

Much more of an encomium was delivered by Young in a few choice phrases:

Swift is a singular wit, Pope a correct poet, Addison a great author.²

1. G. Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 447 (1902 edition).

2. Richard Phillips, Addisoniana (London, 1803), II, 91.

Not the least important aspect of this thesis is the reinterpretation of Addisonian literary theory in the light of modern criticism and scholarship. The entire canon of Addison's critical work has been evaluated for the first time. Still several significant discoveries and interpretations should be mentioned at this juncture. Paramount among these is the evidence unearthed concerning Addison's justification of folklore in art, the first attempt of its kind in Neoclassic criticism except for sporadic defences of the ballad. Former notions that Addison had repudiated the Greek denouement in tragedy have been exploded by the discovery of an equivalent of the catharsis.¹ Then, too, as a result of the exploration of Addison's sources, notably Longinus, it has been concluded that our critic was an Aristotelian with strong eclectic tendencies. This is reflected in his theory of the imagination, which, as has been indicated prior to this, has been improperly assessed by Bosker and Saintsbury. Addison believed that the imagination, properly controlled by reason, was ONE of the chief tests of an objet d'art.

But the new departures in Addisonian criticism do not end here. Our essayist has been linked with the virtuosi as a critic as well as in other respects,² his doctrine of liter-

1. See pp. 53-54.

2. See p. 40.

ary types being one of the chief indications of this character. He has moreover, been linked with the Spenserian revival,¹ not to forget the groups possessing progressive ideas about rustic diction² and the spectacle.³ An approximate dating of his "Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning" has been accomplished;⁴ internal evidence has been advanced to prove the "Tentamen" spurious;⁵ and the "Dissertatio de Insignioribus Romanorum Poetis" has been re-evaluated in the light of Addison's contention that history and epic poetry are by no means compatible. Far more intriguing than some of these isolated advances in Addisonian scholarship is the discovery in Addison of the beginnings of the breakdown of the judicial system of criticism, formerly thought to have begun later in the century.

It is felt, too, that the position of Addison as a precursor of the French classical school in Great Britain has been strengthened, if not actually established. And it has been pointed out, with specific examples, that non-visual senses definitely entered into Addison's conception of imaginative art, in spite of contrary contentions by Saintsbury.

1. See p. 115.

2. See p. 112.

3. See p. 51.

4. See p. 153.

5. See p. 166.

Equally interesting from the historical standpoint is the debt of Turner's The Countryman to The Spectator, hitherto inadequately established by Julia C. Harris and Dr. B. H. Flanders of Emory University.

APPENDIX A

Longinus and Addison

The writer of this dissertation has detected the parallels tabulated below in the works of Longinus and our critic. Addison's debt to the ancient theorist is clear except in one or two cases. References to Longinus may be found in Longinus on the Sublime, tr., A. O. Prickard (Oxford, 1930); those to Addison, in Greene's edition.

Topic	Longinus	Addison
<u>Language</u>	XII, p. 27	No. 285, II, p. 51
<u>Genius</u>	XXXVI, p. 66	No. 291, II, p. 59
<u>Jingling Rhythm</u>	XLI, p. 74	No. 297, II, p. 66
<u>Hyperboles</u>	XXXVIII, p. 68	No. 321, II, p. 99 ff.
<u>Strength of Imagination</u>	XV, pp. 32-33	No. 333, II, p. 110
<u>Zoilus</u>	IX, p. 21	No. 279, II, p. 47
<u>Passion</u>	VIII, p. 13	No. 339, II, p. 117
<u>Imitation</u>	XIV, p. 31 or XIII, p. 30	No. 339, II, p. 118
<u>Premising Speakers</u>	XXVII, p. 51	No. 321, II, p. 101
<u>Sweetness in Poetry</u>	XXVIII, p. 53	No. 321, II, p. 94
<u>Homer</u>	VIII, p. 12	No. 333, II, p. 112
<u>Moses</u>	I X, p. 18	No. 339, II, p. 118 ff.
<u>Arrangement of Words</u>	XXXIX, p. 70	No. 285, II, p. 53

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Autobiography of the Candidate

John Frederick Doering was born on March 16, 1912, in Waterloo, Ontario, where his family had lived for many generations. He attended the local public schools, the Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate Institute, and Upper Canada College. From 1928-1930 he attended St. Jerome's College, following which he enrolled at the University of Western Ontario. He secured his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1933, but part of that year and two subsequent summers were spent in graduate study. The candidate later secured the Master of Arts from Duke University (1935), the Master of Theology from Mount Vernon University (1943), the Master of Arts from the University of Toronto (1939), and the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Mount Vernon University (1943). The summer of 1943 was spent in post-doctoral research at Columbia University, where the candidate undertook a study of the accreditation of Canadian colleges and universities in the United States and Great Britain.

The candidate secured a Graduate Assistantship in English at Duke University in 1934, but was elevated to University Fellow the following year when he headed the list of fellows. After a year of folkloristic research in Cuba and the South, he became Professor of English and Head of the Department of Speech at Anderson College (Indiana). In January, 1940, he accepted an appointment for one semester as Assistant Professor of English at Louisiana Tech. That fall he went to Evansville College as Instructor in Speech and Director of Radio. In 1942 he was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of English at Fairleigh Dickinson Junior College; but he resigned a year later to become Professor of English and Chairman of the Division of Language and Literature at Ottawa University (Kansas).

The candidate holds gold medals in oratory from St. Jerome's College and the University of Western Ontario. He is a member of Tau Kappa Alpha Forensic Fraternity, Phi Zeta, and the American Association of University Professors. He is a past president of the national organization of Tri Mu Radio Fraternity. After graduation from Mt. Vernon University, he was appointed to the board of that institution. He is a Canadian citizen, married, and father of one daughter. His wife served as Assistant Dean at Mount Vernon University in Washington, D. C.

He has published two multigraphed texts in radio and speech and over twenty articles in PMLA, JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY, AMERICAN NOTES AND QUERIES, JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION, QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH, SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER, and a Swiss yearbook.

Errata

- p. 34 l. 4. Should read "Judged" instead of "Judging."
- p. 60. A period, not a colon, should follow "tragic writers."
- p. 117. Footnote 1 should read The Spectator, No. 61, May 10.
- p. 122. Omit italics from W. J. Courthope.
- p. 162 ll.5-6. Should read "to diminish his fame."
- p. 316. Footnote should read, " Yet have they."
- Bibliography. "John Stewart Mill" should read "John Stuart Mill."
- p. 299. Footnote **L** should read: "III, 70."