



The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing The Dunciad In Four Books

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

I. A Preface prefixed to the five first imperfect editions of the Dunciad.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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APPENDIX.

I.

P R E F A C E

Prefixed to the five first imperfect Editions of the DUNCIAD, in three books, printed at DUBLIN and LONDON, in octavo and duodecimo, 1727.

The PUBLISHER * to the READER.

IT will found a true observation, tho' somewhat surprizing, that when any scandal is vented against a man of the highest distinction and character, either in the state or in literature, the public in general afford it a most quiet reception; and the larger part accept it as favourably as if it were some kindness done to themselves: whereas if a known scoundrel or blockhead but chance to be touch'd upon, a whole legion is up in arms, and it becomes the common cause of all scriblers, bookfellers, and printers whatsoever.

* *The Publisher*] Who he was is uncertain; but Edward Ward tells us, in his preface to *Durgen*, "that most judges are of opinion this preface is not of English extraction, but Hibernian," &c. He means it was written by Dr. Swift, who, whether publisher or not, may be said in a sort to be author of the poem. For when he, together with Mr. Pope (for reasons spe-

cified in the preface to their *Miscellanies*) determined to own the most trifling pieces in which they had any hand, and to destroy all that remained in their power; the first sketch of this poem was snatched from the fire by Dr. Swift, who persuaded his friend to proceed in it, and to him it was therefore inscribed. But the occasion of printing it was as follows:

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Not to search too deeply into the reason hereof, I will only observe as a fact, that every week for these two months past, the town has been persecuted with ^b pamphlets, advertisements, letters, and weekly essays, not only against the wit and writings, but against the character and person of Mr. Pope. And that of all those men who have received pleasure from his works, which by modest computation may be about a ^c hundred thousand in these kingdoms of England and Ireland; (not to mention Jersey, Guernsey, the Orcades, those in the new world,

There was published in those Miscellanies, a Treatise of the Bathos, or Art of Sinking in Poetry, in which was a chapter, where the species of bad writers were ranged in classes, and initial letters of names prefixed, for the most part at random. But such was the Number of Poets eminent in that art, that some one or other took every letter to himself. All fell into so violent a fury, that for half a year, or more, the common News-papers (in most of which they had some property, as being hired writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehoods and scurrilities they could possibly devise; a liberty no ways to be wondered at in those people, and in those papers, that, for many years, during the uncontrolled Licence of the press, had aspersed almost all the great characters of the age; and this with impunity, their own persons and names being utterly secret and obscure. This gave Mr. Pope the thought, that he had now some opportunity of doing good, by detecting and dragging into light these common Enemies of mankind; since to invalidate this universal slander, it sufficed to shew what contemptible men

were the authors of it. He was not without hopes, that by manifesting the dulness of those who had only malice to recommend them; either the booksellers would not find their account in employing them, or the men themselves, when discovered, want courage to proceed in so unlawful an occupation. This it was that gave birth to the Dunciad; and he thought it an happiness, that by the late flood of slander on himself, he had acquired such a peculiar right over their Names as was necessary to his design.

^b *pamphlets, advertisements, &c.*] See the List of those anonymous papers, with their dates and authors annexed, inserted before the Poem.

^c *about a hundred thousand*] It is surprizing with what stupidity this preface, which is almost a continued irony, was taken by those authors. All such passages as these were understood by Curl, Cook, Cibber, and others, to be serious. Hear the Laureate (Letter to Mr. Pope, p. 9) "Tho' I grant the Dunciad a better poem of its kind than ever was writ; yet, when I read it with those *vain-glorious* encumbrances of Notes and Remarks upon it, &c. — it is

and foreigners who have translated him into their languages) of all this number not a man hath stood up to say one word in his defence.

The only exception is the ^d author of the following poem, who doubtless had either a better insight into the grounds of this clamour, or a better opinion of Mr. Pope's integrity, join'd with a greater personal love for him, than any other of his numerous friends and admirers.

Farther, that he was in his peculiar intimacy, appears from the knowledge he manifests of the most private authors of all the anonymous pieces against him, and from his having in this poem attacked ^e no man living, who had not before printed, or published, some scandal against this gentleman.

How I came possess'd of it, is no concern to the reader; but it would have been a wrong to him had I detain'd the publication; since those names which are its chief ornaments die off daily so fast, as must render it too soon unintelligible. If it provoke the author to give us a more perfect edition, I have my end.

Who he is I cannot say, and (which is a great pity) there is certainly ^f nothing in his style and manner of writing, which can distinguish or discover him: For if it bears any resemblance to that of Mr. Pope, 'tis not improbable but it might be done on purpose, with a view to have it pass for his. But by the frequency of his allusions to Virgil, and a labour'd (not to say affected) *shortness* in imitation of him, I should think him more an admirer of the Roman poet than of the Grecian, and in that not of the same taste with his friend.

“ amazing, that you, who have
 “ writ with such masterly spirit
 “ upon the ruling Passion, should
 “ be so blind a slave to your
 “ own, as not to see how far a
 “ low avarice of Praise,” &c.
 (taking it for granted that the notes of Scriblerus and others, were the author's own.)

^d The author of the following poem, &c.] A very plain irony, speaking of Mr. Pope himself.

^e The publisher in these words went a little too far; But it is certain, whatever names the rea-

der finds that are unknown to him, are of such; and the exception is only of two or three, whose dulness, impudent scurrility, or self-conceit, all mankind agreed to have justly entitled them to a place in the Dunciad.

^f there is certainly nothing in his style, &c.] This irony had small effect in concealing the author. The Dunciad, imperfect as it was, had not been published two days, but the whole Town gave it to Mr. Pope.

I have been well inform'd, that this work was the labour of full ^s six years of his life, and that he wholly retired himself from all the avocations and pleasures of the world, to attend diligently to its correction and perfection; and six years more he intended to bestow upon it, as it should seem by this verse of Statius, which was cited at the head of his manuscript,

*Oh mihi bisseños multum vigilata per annos,
Duncia^h!*

Hence also we learn the true title of the poem; which with the same certainty as we call that of Homer the Iliad, of Virgil the Æneid, of Camoens the Lusiad, we may pronounce, could have been, and can be no other than

The D U N C I A D.

It is styled *Heroic*, as being *doubly* so; not only with respect to its nature, which, according to the best rules of the ancients, and strictest ideas of the moderns, is critically such; but also with regard to the heroical disposition and high courage of the writer, who dar'd to stir up such a formidable, irritable, and implacable race of mortals.

There may arise some obscurity in chronology from the *Names* in the poem, by the inevitable removal of some authors, and insertion of others, in their niches. For whoever will consider the unity of the whole design, will be sensible, that the poem was not made for these authors, but these authors for the

^s the labour of full six years, &c.) This also was honestly and seriously believed by divers gentlemen of the Dunciad. J. Ralph, pref. to Sawney. "We are told it was the labour of six years, with the utmost assiduity and application: It is no great compliment to the author's sense, to have employed so large a part of his life," &c. So also Ward, pref. to Durgin, "The Dunciad, as the publisher very wisely confesses, cost the author six years retirement from all the pleasures of life; though it is somewhat diffi-

"cult to conceive, from either its bulk or beauty, that it could be so long in hatching, &c. But the length of time and closeness of application were mentioned to prepossess the reader with a good opinion of it."

They just as well understood what Scriblerus said of the Poem.

^h The prefacer to Curl's Key, p. 3. took this word to be really in Statius: "By a quibble on the word *Duncia*, the *Dunciad* is formed," Mr. Ward also follows him in the same opinion.

poem. I should judge that they were clapp'd in as they rose, fresh and fresh, and chang'd from day to day; in like manner as when the old boughs wither, we thrust new ones into a chimney.

I would not have the reader too much troubled or anxious, if he cannot decypher them; since when he shall have found them out, he will probably know no more of the persons than before.

Yet we judg'd it better to preserve them as they are, than to change them for fictitious names; by which the satire would only be multiplied, and applied to many instead of one. Had the hero, for instance, been called Codrus, how many would have affirm'd him to have been Mr. T. Mr. E. Sir R. B. &c. but now all that unjust scandal is saved by calling him by a name, which by good luck happens to be that of a real person.

II.

A LIST of
BOOKS, PAPERS, and VERSES,
In which our Author was abused, before the Publication of the DUNCIAD; with the true Names of the Authors.

REFLECTIONS critical and satyrical on a late Rhapsody, called An Essay on Criticism. By Mr. Dennis, printed by B. Lintot, price 6*d.*

A New Rehearsal, or Bays the younger; containing an Examination of Mr. Rowe's plays, and a word or two on Mr. Pope's Rape of the Lock. Anon. [by Charles Gildon] printed for J. Roberts, 1714. price 1*s.*

Homerides, or a Letter to Mr. Pope, occasioned by his intended translation of Homer. By Sir Iliad Dogrel. [Tho. Burnet and G. Duckett esquires] printed for W. Wilkins, 1715. price 9*d.*