Tollerators and Con-Tollerators (1703) and Archibald Pitcairne: Text, Background and Authorship

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TOLLERATORS AND CON-TOLLERATORS (1703) AND ARCHIBALD PITCAIRNE: TEXT, BACKGROUND AND AUTHORSHIP

John MacQueen

Tollerators and Con-Tollerators is an early eighteenth-century Scottish satirical comedy that represents a significant perspective on a crucial period in Scotland’s history. While the play’s author is not given in the only extant text, it is closely connected through provenance with the Jacobite poet, playwright and physician Dr. Archibald Pitcairne (1652-1713). This article makes the play easily available to students and scholars for the first time, with a full introduction discussing the historical background and the political and religious figures that the play satirizes. The introduction concludes by assessing the case for attributing the play’s authorship to Pitcairne, though the historical significance of the play does not depend on this attribution. In the text itself (pp. 90-104 below), page-by-page annotation explains contemporary references, glosses words or syntax that are distinctive or likely to be misunderstood by future readers, and comments on the staging of the play and the interactions of the characters.

The play now survives only as an extended note in George R. Kinloch’s 1830 edition of Pitcairne’s satirical poem Babell. Kinloch printed the play from one of the two manuscripts that included Babell, which he described as “a volume of Pasquils, &c, formerly belonging to that indefatigable collector Robert Milne, and … now in the library of Dundas of Arniston” (p. xiv). The manuscript is no longer at Arniston,

and it does not seem to have been recorded as being elsewhere.\footnote{I visited the library at Arniston House, Midlothian, in an unsuccessful attempt to find the volume described and must express my gratitude to Mrs Henrietta Dundas for permission to make a search and for her hospitality while I did so. I must also thank Mrs Frances and Professor Hector MacQueen for help with transport and details of Edinburgh topography.} James Maidment had used Kinloch’s other manuscript source for \textit{Babell}, the closely-related Keith manuscript, for his \textit{Scottish Pasquils and Lampoons}, but that manuscript (NLS MS. 3807) does not include \textit{Tollerators and Con-Tollerators}.\footnote{James Maidment, ed., \textit{Scottish Pasquils and Lampoons, now first printed from original manuscripts}, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: [Stevenson], 1827-1828), Ivi, noting that the MS contains “an entire copy of Dr. Pitcairn’s Assembly,” as well as Pitcairn’s then-unpublished satire “Babel,” and that “its original owner was a friend of Mylne’s, as well as of Pitcairn’s.” Cf. also Maidment’s “Some Account of Robert Mylne,” in his revised edition, \textit{A Book of Scotish Pasquils, 1568-1715} (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1868), pp. 422-433.} The text printed here is therefore Kinloch’s, though I have deleted one or two additions made by him, which he had enclosed in square brackets.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The play was written in 1703 at a crucial period in Scotland’s history. King William, II of Scotland and III of England, had died in 1702, a year after his ousted predecessor, the Stuart King James VII and II. For Scotland, William’s reign had been uniformly disastrous. Government had come into the hands of corrupt politicians, the Church had been “purged” of the majority of its ministers, there had been the tragedy of the 1692 Glencoe massacre, finance had been crippled by the failure of the Darien scheme, a failure blamed, with some justification, on lack of support by King William; bad weather and consequent failure of the crops had led to famine. There was a sense of relief when William was succeeded by a Stuart, Queen Anne, only surviving daughter of James VII and II. In the eyes of Jacobites (Latin \textit{Jacobus}, “James”), her young brother James Francis, taken into exile as an infant by his father, was now the legitimate monarch, James VIII and III. Anne they regarded as Regent until her brother achieved his majority.

Other signs were hopeful. The English parliamentary elections of 1702 had resulted in a substantial Tory majority with power in the hands of the supposed moderates, Godolphin, Marlborough and Harley. Tory in
England was not quite the same as Tory (i.e. Jacobite) in Scotland, but Jacobites generally regarded their triumph as a good omen for the future.

Anne held firmly to Episcopacy, Church government under the monarch by archbishops and diocesan bishops, as in the Church of England. During the reigns of Charles II and James VII, the system had been the norm in Scotland but had been strenuously opposed by a substantial minority of extreme Presbyterians, the Covenanters, whose ministers had been excluded from their parishes and held their services, “Conventicles,” in the open field, often under armed guard. They were prepared to fight for their cause but were crushed at the battle of Bothwell Brig (1679). A number of activists survived. The accession of William in 1689 gave them the advantage, which they exploited with considerable severity. More than five hundred Episcopalian ministers were ejected from their parishes. The accession of Anne raised hopes that the situation would soon be rectified.

The Scottish parliamentary elections of 1703 – the last to be held in a nominally independent Scotland – resulted in a minority administration for the governing Court party, sweepingly described by Lockhart of Carnwath as

subdivided into such as were Revolutioners [i.e., supporters of the Revolution under King William], and of anti-monarchical [i.e., anti-Stuart] principles, and such as were any thing that would procure or secure them in their employments and pensions. And these were directed by the court [i.e., the London government] in all their measures.\(^4\)

The Court party’s main aim was to bring about the Union of the Scottish with the English Parliament, in which they were eventually (1707) successful, and to secure a Hanoverian, rather than a Stuart, succession on the death of Queen Anne; more immediately, to secure a vote for an Act of Supply, the provision of government funds by a land tax. They aimed at preventing cooperation between the two opposition factions, the Country party, led by the Duke of Hamilton, made up, for the most part, of moderate Presbyterians, together with a few Episcopalians and Jacobites, and the out-and-out Jacobites, the Cavaliers, led by the Earl of Home. Jacobites were called Tories, members of the Court party Whigs.

The Queen’s Commissioner for the new parliament continued to be

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James Douglas (1667-1711), 2nd Duke of Queensberry. Well before the session began, an Act of Indemnity had been granted to all who had acted against the government since the “Glorious” Revolution of 1688-9, and a letter from Queen Anne had recommended to the Privy Council the care of the Episcopal clergy, ousted from their parishes since 1690. The rumour ran that she intended to bestow on them the rentals of the Scottish bishops, whose authority had been abolished by the Act of July 1689. The rentals were now in lay hands.

Tactical changes were made in the ministry, with one Tory, George Mackenzie (1630-1714), Viscount Tarbat (in January 1703 created Earl of Cromarty) designated as joint Secretary for Scotland (with Queensberry), while another Tory, James Ogilvy (1663-1730), 1st Earl of Seafield, became Chancellor, in effect Speaker of the Parliament. The apparent change of policy was initially so far successful that the leader of the Cavaliers, Charles Home (d. 1706), 6th Earl of Home, was persuaded to raise the vital Act of Supply.

Some members of the Court party feared the consequences if the Act of Supply were to be passed on the motion of a Cavalier. They saw that this would probably entail a successful passage for the Toleration Act, and possibly, ultimately, the succession of James Francis. The tactics which they adopted, over the opposition of the Queen’s Commissioner, are best set out by Lockhart:

That day in which the Earl of Home designed to move for a supply, his grace [the Duke of Queensberry] called a council and acquainted them of it. With which, all agreeing, they adjourned with a design to prosecute it. A few minutes thereafter the Duke of Argyle, the Marquis of Annandale and the Earl of Marchmont came to wait upon his grace, and, withdrawing privately with him, one of them told him the other two and himself had that morning met with a considerable number of Parliament-men, when it was resolved to move for an act ratifying the Revolution and another the presbyterian government, and press to have them preferred to the Act of Supply, which they were certain to carry, but first thought it fit to acquaint his grace with their design and ask his concurrence. This his grace the Commissioner begged them to forbear, because now he had an opportunity of obtaining a supply to Her Majesty, and if slipped at this time (as did happen) never again. And promised, if this were over, to go into whatever they proposed. But still the others refused to comply, being rather willing that there should be no supply granted at all than that it should proceed from the Cavaliers. And thus they left the Commissioner in a peck of troubles (Lockhart, 30-31).
The Episcopal clergy were predominantly Jacobite and favoured an independent Scottish Parliament. Toleration of their religious practices implied toleration of Jacobite beliefs and activities, something which helps to explain the hostility to them of so many members of the Court party. On Thursday 1 June the draft of an Act for a toleration of all Protestants in the exercise of religious worship, proposed by John Lyon, 2nd earl of Strathmore and Kinghorn (1663-1712) was given a first reading. The primary intention was to improve the situation of the ousted Episcopalian clergy. The Presbytery of Edinburgh, however, submitted a strongly worded representation against the proposal. Earlier on the same day, the Act, proposed by the Duke of Argyll, ratifying the first Act of the 1689 Scottish Parliament, was also given a first reading. This Act included a clause “declaring that it shall be treason to impugn or endeavour by writing, malicious and advised speaking or other open act or deed to alter the Claim of Right.” In 1689 King William had accepted the Scottish Claim of Right, one clause of which asserted that “prelacy,” Episcopacy, was “a great and insupportable grievance and trouble to this nation.” Later on the same day, a third Act, proposed by the Earl of Marchmont, “securing the true Protestant religion and Presbyterian government” also had a first reading. Under either Act Toleration became virtually impossible. Second readings took place on Thursday 3 June. The latter two Acts received rather unexpected parliamentary approval, the first slipped into oblivion. This is the historical background to the play.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

Except Queensberry, all the politicians so far mentioned play some part in Tollerators and Con-Tollerators. Another Tory, John Fleming (d. 1744), 9th Earl of Wigtown, makes a brief appearance. A Whig, Sir James...

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6 *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* (University of St Andrews, 2007-2013): 1703/5/51, 54, 55, 57: on line at [www.rps.ac.uk](http://www.rps.ac.uk); subsequent references in the text.

7 Minor characters are discussed in the annotations to the play.
TOLLERATORS AND CON-TOLLERATORS

Stewart of Goodtrees (1635-1715), Lord Advocate and, as such, manager of Parliamentary legal business, has a more prominent part.

Two Presbyterian clergymen from Edinburgh churches also appear in the play, Thomas Wilkie (1638-1715, minister of Lady Yester’s Church 1691-1708, and David Williamson (c.1635-1706), minister of the West Church 1689-1706. Their early careers had been contrasting. Throughout the reigns of Charles II and James VII, Wilkie served as a conforming parish minister who accepted Episcopal government of the Church. After the Revolution, nevertheless, he was not extruded, but succeeded in obtaining a better parish than any he had previously occupied. In Tollerators and Con-Tollerators, line 48, Tarbat calls him “turncoat Wilkie.” He may also be portrayed as the renegade Episcopalian clergyman Mr Turncoat in Act III, Scene 3 of Pitcairne’s earlier play, The Phanaticks (commonly titled The Assembly). 8

Williamson, by contrast, had an eventful career as a Covenanter and Conventicler before coming into his own at the Revolution. He was seven times married and fathered many children. He was particularly notorious for his betrayal of the lady of Cherrytrees in Roxburghshire, the lady who had concealed him in her daughter’s bed when he was under pursuit by dragoons. Williamson took full advantage of the opportunity. 9 His action was notorious, and Raffe asserts that, “for post-Revolution Episcopalians, there was no more ridiculous clergyman among their opponents” (Raffe, p. 171), but his reputation among Presbyterians remained good; he was chosen as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for the year 1702.

At the supposed time of the play Wilkie was sixty-five, Williamson sixty-eight. Like several other characters in the play, they are old men, antediluvians, whose memories extend as far back as the execution of Charles I, the Cromwellian republic and the subsequent Restoration.

The cast is all-male, with the leading parts taken by Viscount Tarbat and Sir James Stewart, both also men well advanced in years. For most of the play Tarbat (1630-1714) holds centre stage. He favours toleration, but

9 “Jacob Curate” (pseudonym), Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence; or, the foolishness of their teaching discovered from their books, sermons, and papers; and some remarks on Mr Rule’s late vindication of the kirk (London: Randal Taylor, 1692), 5-6; cf. Alasdair Raffe’s discussion of contemporary lampoons on Williamson and other Presbyterian clergy, in his ch. 6 (pp. 149-176).
does little to bring it about, and he notably fails to display any sign of it in his own personal relations and opinions. His ally, the Earl of Strathmore, who is to bring forward the bill, appears only towards the end of the play, says little, and seems unacquainted with the points at issue. Before his appearance the Duke of Argyll and the Earl of Marchmont have already laid their traps and, in effect, biased the result in their own favour. Near the middle of the play, Tarbat wastes some time baiting Mr David Williamson, a prelude to the cannibalistic finale which he shares with the Lord Chancellor.

Williamson was a main target of Episcopalian satire, but this does not quite excuse Tarbat’s behaviour when more important issues are to hand. Tarbat seems unable to focus his mind on a single strategic objective. When his interests are crossed, his language becomes profane, even incoherent: “God curse these whiggs, for I think they shall always carry the day. If I had said it, if they get a Tolleration to whore, drink, cheat, and curse, and betray, they’l hold be presbytrie.” “God” is a word often in his mouth, but not to express religious sentiments. Sometimes it is no more than the English “Gad,” but often it is in such phrases as “by God I’le hang,” “God damn me,” “God curse you,” “God damn him.” “Devill” and “Deill” also figure prominently in his vocabulary, especially when he refers to Presbyterians. Tarbat is in fact as little a Tollerator as are his opponents. All this fits well with Lockhart’s characterization of the man:

The satyrist, in his lampoon, speaking of George, Viscount of Tarbat, since Earl of Cromarty, uses these words:

*Some do compare him to an eel*

*Should mortal man be made of steel?*

And certainly this character suited him exactly, for never was there a more fickle, unsteady man in the world. He had sworn all the contradictory oaths, complyed with all the opposite governments that had been on foot since the year 1648, and was an humble servant to them all till he got what he aimed at, though often he did not know what that was. He was full of projects, and never rejected one, provided it was new. Since the Revolution (though he had a large share in carrying it on) he pretended to favour the royal family and Episcopal clergy; yet he never did one action in favour of any of them, excepting that when he was Secretary to Queen Anne he procured an Act of Indemnity [i.e., the occasion for *Tollerators and Con-Tollerators*], and a letter from her recommending the Episcopal clergy to the Privy Council’s protection. But whether this proceeded from a desire and design of serving them, or some political views, is easy to determine when we consider that no sooner did Queen Anne
TOLLERATORS AND CON-TOLLERATORS

desert the Tory party and maxims but his lordship turned as great a Whig as the best of them ... But, withall, so extremly maggoty and unsettled that he was never much to be relied upon or valued (Lockhart, 42-3).

Sir James Stewart, the Lord Advocate, appears throughout. For the most part, the action takes place in his “lodging,” the tenement which had been owned by his father, a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and which he had himself largely rebuilt. In the play, the forestage represents what had become known as Advocate’s Close, the approach to his lodging from the Edinburgh High Street. The inner stage represents a room in the building.

Stewart was a lawyer of some distinction, author of Dirleton’s Doubts and Questions in the Law of Scotland Resolved and Answered (1715). He was also a devout lay Covenanter, co-author of Naphtali, or, The Wrestlings of the Church of Scotland (1667), primarily a justification of the 1666 Pentland Rising by Covenanters from the South-West. In 1669 he was sole author of a sequel, Jus populi vindicatum, or, the people’s right to defend themselves and their covenanted religion, vindicated. Both works became covenanting classics. In 1682 he retreated to Holland, and in 1685 he was outlawed for his support of Argyll’s unsuccessful rebellion against James VII, in favour of the Duke of Monmouth, Charles II’s illegitimate but Protestant son. In 1687 James offered him a pardon, which he accepted and entered the royal service, probably acting as a double agent for William of Orange. On William’s accession he retained favour, becoming Lord Advocate in 1692.

On one occasion, early in the play, his words reveal the hypocrisy which Episcopalians regarded as a main characteristic of extreme Presbyterians. When Wigtown remarks that the Duke of Hamilton, leader of the Country party, intends to obtain government pensions for the impoverished Episcopalian clergy, he reacts violently: “What say you? God, I fear my pension loup then; and I’d rather kirk and country were ruined.” For him, whatever his outward show, money, a pension, outweighs both church and country. His language generally is that of a lawyer, brief, precise, sometimes a little affected.

THE EPILOGUE

At a first glance, the Epilogue appears to suggest that the play is an attack on the Tollerators, the members of parliament who dared to bring forward so iniquitous an act:

什么 bloody designs they daylie do hatch,
The poor presbyterians on a trouble to catch ...
Let them do what they can, they cannot prevail,
So in vain they’ve lost their strength and their zeal (5-6: 11-12)
The first couplet hints at something different – the church is in Comedian’s dress and the play shows how, as a result, ‘statesmen’, the political figures in the drama, express themselves – often profanely, it must be said and to little purpose. In the seventeenth century the word “statesman” tended to have derogatory overtones: one recollects, for instance, Dryden’s Zimri, who
In the course of one revolving Moon
Was Chymist, Fidler, States-man, and Buffoon.
(Absalom and Achitophel, 549-50)
The terms here are arranged in declining order of respectability. It is quite possible that the Epilogue was delivered by a comic figure in the garb of a Presbyterian minister (Mr Wilkie, say, or better, Mr. Williamson), whose style of speech made it clear that his words were to be taken at something other than face-value. The playwright belonged to neither side. In the language of the time he was a Trimmer.

TITLE, DATE OF ACTION
The word Con-Tollerators, second element in the title, is unique, a hapax. As the first element, Tollerators, means “supporters of toleration,” the second is presumably intended to mean “opponents of toleration.” The moral of the play is that it is impossible to make any such distinction. The Episcopalians are as intolerant as the Presbyterians

In terms of history, the action took place during the morning of May 31, 1703. Instead the title states firmly that it took place on June 10, fifteenth birthday of James Francis, son of the late James VII and II. There is an obvious Jacobite significance – how much better everything would be under a male Stuart monarch. The date might easily have received stage-emphasis by a wall-calendar, or something of the sort, prominently displayed in the Lord Advocate’s room. On the printed page, the point is less immediately apparent, but in a production it forces itself upon an audience.

PERFORMANCE
Tollerators and Con-Tollerators, like The Phanaticks, appears to have been written for an Edinburgh stage production. It presupposes an

10 A participial form, con-tollerating, appears late in the play (p.103).
audience well aware of current political intrigue and the pamphlet warfare, often in the form of published sermons, which accompanied it. Such productions for such an audience have generally been deemed unlikely. Long after 1703 the Kirk retained a pious horror of the stage. Fear of performance’s power to catalyse dangerous affiliations [i.e. to Episcopacy and Jacobitism] led the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in 1727, to issue an “Admonition and Exhortation” against “the infection of the stage and its illegal and dangerous entertainments.” The presumption, it may be noted, is the stage-plays with dangerous affiliations already figured in the social life of the town. Alan Ramsay’s verse-play, The Gentle Shepherd, published in 1725, a play with marked Jacobite overtones, received many performances in Edinburgh and elsewhere. Nevertheless, as late as 1756, bitter controversy still followed the performance of Home’s Douglas, exacerbated by the fact that Home was himself a Presbyterian clergyman.

Both dialogue and action in Tollerators and Con-Tollerators indicate performance. The action would fit readily into a theatre of the kind usual in post-Restoration drama, equipped with a narrow forestage, behind which was a proscenium arch and curtain and an inner stage. The forestage had entrances on either side, allowing the actors to appear or depart from either direction. A door was at the rear of the inner stage. Moveable wings, shutters and borders were used to indicate and change settings on the inner stage.

In this play, the outer stage represents the approach to the Lord Advocate’s lodging, Advocate’s Close. At the opening, when the proscenium curtain rises, most of the inner stage, is concealed by a shutter, with a representation of the exterior of the lodging. Later in the play, the wings and shutters change to represent the interior of the lodging, with a central desk and a calendar prominently displayed. “Boy,” whose participation is only once indicated, ushers visitors from the fore-stage into the lodging. The Lord Advocate makes his final enraged disappearance by way of a rear exit. Other characters exit in either direction by way of the fore-stage.


Each of the main characters speaks in an individual fashion, a feature which would come out in an actual performance, but is less immediately obvious on the printed page.

Unlike The Phanaticks or The Gentle Shepherd, both in five acts, the play is brief, an Interlude, perhaps intended to be performed as a prelude to a lengthier performance, or as an entertainment at some social function, perhaps in some great house.\footnote{Cf., for an instance set in a fairly remote region, the Manx “Prologue to a Play Acted in Castle Rushin,” quoted in John Kerrigan, \textit{Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics, 1603-1707} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 81-2.}

**LANGUAGE**

The play exploits a wide range of Early Modern Scots, partly disguised by an Anglicised system of spelling. For the most part, the language used might be called Educated Urban Scots. The opening lines will illustrate. The Lord Advocate for instance, uses the phrases “I se warrant you” (6) and “kirk and country” (13). When his emotions are roused, however, his language tends more to the vernacular: “I fear my pension loup” (13) and, at the very end of the play, “Deil catch you both if you have it yet” (171).

The Duke of Argyll uses a distinctively Scottish weak past tense, “Seed you the Essay upon Toleration?” The preposition “anent” is used in a legal context by Mr. Wilkie (15) and the Duke of Argyll (24). Mr. Wilkie says “You was ay” where English would have “You were always.” Tarbat uses the word “bees” (34) in the double sense of “troublesome species of insect” and “(wild) fantasies.” His “Na, God she” (44) represents English “God! Not she.” The definite article is used, when in English it would be omitted. Wigtown, for instance, says “the last night” (10) where English would have ‘last night’.

Mr. David Williamson stands a little apart; when moved, he uses a more vivid and more vernacular form of the language: “we maun leave wife and bairns and gang to open field; and e’en, my Lord, commit the foull fact to keep us from being catched by our enemies” (77-8). It is possible to assess the social class of a speaker by the extent to which he uses Vernacular, as opposed to Urban Educated Scots.

**AUTHORSHIP**

Kinloch’s transcript gives no direct indication of the play’s authorship,
but it may be the work of the Edinburgh physician and surgeon Archibald Pitcairne (1652-1713), author, among much else, of the long poem *Babell*, and the five-act comedy, *The Phanaticks*.  

*Babell* is the major item in the Arniston MS. The title as given there reads “Babell: or The Assembly, A Poem, MDCXCII, written originally in the Irish Tongue and translated into Scottish for the benefit of the ledges, by A.P. a well wisher to the cause.” Pitcairne was a Jacobite, who had some interest in Erse, the Irish (Gaelic) language, most speakers of which were, like him, Jacobites. He regularly referred to himself by way of his initials.

The poem purports to describe the 1692 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, intended by King William to reconcile Presbyterians with the defeated and persecuted Episcopalians. Instead, speakers almost unanimously indulge in violent denunciation of their Episcopal brethren. Most of the poem is in rugged Hudibrastic octosyllabics. The only two advocates of moderation speak in smooth heroic couplets, but are shouted down. The Royal Commissioner who oversees the Assembly eventually loses patience and closes proceedings, but the ministers and elders present are unimpressed and agree to meet again in 1693.

To a limited extent, the poem’s author favoured the Episcopalians. There is, however, a passage near the beginning of the poem which is significant in terms not only of *Babell*, but also, perhaps, of *Tollerators and Con-Tollerators*:

Episcopalls and Presbyters  
Were yok’d together by the ears  
About the form of Government,  
For never one could both content;  
While both did strive to rule the roast –  
Whoever wins it’s to our cost.  
Meanwhile the cold phlegmatic trimmer,  
(Who is a kind of lukewarm sinner,  

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15 The “cause” is the Jacobite movement.  
16 The term was originally derogatory but was made politically more acceptable by George Savile, 1st Marquess of Halifax (1633-95) in his 1688 essay “Character of a Trimmer.”
And for no side would lose his dinner)
Stood by and gentle smil'd to see
Brethren thus live in unitie.
Quoth he, 'This wars amongst divines,
Shamefa' them wins, shamefa' them tines' (19-31).
Pitcairne sees himself as “the cold phlegmatick trimmer.” He was a
Jacobite, as were most Episcopalians; to that extent he was on the
Episcopalians’ side, but his first loyalty was to the exiled king. The
Presbyterian clergy were Williamites, although only so far as it gave them
power. Pitcairne opposed and despised them.

Speech dominates in Babell, but the poem is not formally a drama. A
year earlier, in 1691 (possibly in collaboration with two friends, David
Gregorie, 1661-1708 and Sir Bertram Stott, d. ca. 1707), Pitcairne had
used the dramatic form for writing The Phanaticks, which also touches on
the feud between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. In it two young
women, sisters, plot successfully to escape from the rigid Presbyterian
household of their aunt and from forced marriage to Presbyterian
ministers, members of a Committee set up by the General Assembly of
that year to “purge” the Church of Episcopalians. The young women
cleverly make arrangements for their own marriages (off-stage, by an
ousted Episcopalian curate) to a pair of young men whose affiliation to
any form of religion is at best doubtful.¹⁷ David Williamson appears in
both Babell and The Phanaticks, as he also does in David and Venus, one
of Pitcairne’s best Latin poems.¹十八

In Babell the speakers are named or clear hints are given of their
identity. Treatment in The Phanaticks is slightly more complex. The
young women, their families and their two young men are fictitious.
Other characters are given fanciful, but appropriate names which make
their real-life equivalents readily identifiable. The names of the clergy
involved are revealed in the Drammati (sic) Personæ. Members of the
nobility are spared that embarrassment, but, nevertheless, are readily
identifiable. Most are politicians. Each scene has an Edinburgh setting,
also readily identifiable. Like The Phanaticks, Tollerators and Con-
Tollerators is fully dramatic in form, the names of the characters depicted
are given without disguise, and the Edinburgh setting would have been
familiar to the original audience.

Similarities of theme, setting, and, to a lesser extent, style, between

¹⁷ Pitcairne, Phanaticks, as in n. 6 above, 3-76.
¹⁸ Pitcairne, The Latin Poems, as in n. 14 above, 102-107.
Tollerators and Con-Tollerators and the two other works suggest Pitcairne as the likeliest author. If so, in the course of a decade, he had become even more disillusioned with the political and religious situation. In Babell and The Phanaticks, while there is some sympathy for the plight of theEpiscopalian clergy, there is none for their assailants. In Tollerators and Con-Tollerators, neither side receives any favours.

University of Edinburgh (Emeritus)
TOLLERATORS AND CON-TOLLERATORS: A COMEDY,
Acted in my Lord Advocat’s Lodgeing,
June 10, 1703.

ACTORS
Duke of Argyle. E. of Marchmont.
Mr. Da. Williamson. Mr. Tho. Wilkie.
The Vis. Of Tarbat. Lord Strathmore.
E. of Wigton. Earl of Hume.
E. of Annandale. Lord Advocat.
Lord Chanclour.

Wig. Good morrow, my Lo. Advocat: How is your Lordship’s inclination running to day; for rebellious presbyterie, or not?
Ad. Yes, my Lord, I’d have you do so too.
Wig. No, God curse me then; I’d rather ye cuckold me, as Montrose did:
But hark, by God, we’le have a Tolleration.
Ad. That you wont get, I’se warrant you.
Wig. We have made a great part for us.
Ad. Ay, but the country partie is altogether against itt, and you’ll find...

The opening dialogues take place on the fore-stage, representing Advocate’s Close (closs), outside the Lord Advocate’s lodging. A screen behind the proscenium arch depicts the actual tenement. The Lord Advocate is standing outside, in the Close, as if awaiting a visitor. The Earl of Wigton enters frontstage left. He is not the expected visitor.

Wig[town]: John Fleming, 7th Earl of Wigtown succeeded his father in 1681 and died in 1744. His younger brother, Charles, played a somewhat ludicrous part in the abortive 1709 Jacobite invasion (Lockhart 1995, 225).

rebellious presbyterie: i.e, the Presbyterians, who had rebelled against Charles II and James VII. The phrase reveals the Jacobite inclinations of the Earl of Wigtown. The remark is aimed particularly at the Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart, on whom see Introduction, p.83.

Montrose: James Graham, 9th Earl and 1st Duke of Montrose (d. 1742). The scandal was notorious, as was Wigtown’s reaction; the remark allows the audience to identify the speaker.

tolleration: the Act, put forward by Tarbat and Strathmore, for the toleration of services held by Episcopal clergymen. In Scots legal phraseology, the word has the limited sense ‘something permitted by law;’ contrast p. 94 and n.
We ... us: i.e. “We have persuaded a majority to vote for us.”
country party: see above, pp. 78.
that they'll come better speed this parliament than ever.

Wig. What devill say you, was I not with the Duke Hamilton the last night, the ringleader of that party, who told me he would have a Tolleration; but sayes he, if it will not do, I’le see to gett a pension to that poor sect of people.

Ad. What say you? God, I fear my pension loup then; and I’d rather kirk and country were ruined.

Wig. God be thanked you are converted.

exit Wigton.

Enter Duke of Argyle and Mr. Wilkie.

Mr. W. Good morrow, my Lord Advocate: I hope all things anent the church will goe right this day.

Ad. Ill enough I fear, Sir, but I hope good.

Mr. W. You do well of it, my Lord; be faithfull to the end, for its Gods cause we plead for.

Duke Argyle. My Lord Advocate I have an act to present to morrow; I would have your opinion of it.

come better speed: ‘fare better’.


pension: private grant from the (London) government.

poor sect: the Episcopalian clergy.

loup: “(may) leap,”, i.e. “disappear.” The Lord Advocate is in the pay of the London government.

converted: i.e. “your motives are now identical with those of the Opposition.” Wigtown hints at corruption on both sides.

The Earl exits forestage right, passing, but ignoring, Mr Wilkie entering.

Mr. Wilkie: see above p. 81. ‘Mr.’ indicates that he is a graduate, an MA, and therefore, almost inevitably, a clergyman.

The Lord Advocate and Mr Wilkie exchange a few words.

faithfull to the end ... plead for: hypocritical words from Wilkie, who has not himself been ‘faithfull to the end’.

Duke of Argyll enters forestage left, carrying a document case.

Duke of Argyll: Archibald Campbell (1658-1703), 1st Duke of Argyll. In 1689 King William restored to him the earldom of Argyll, forfeited by his father, the 9th Earl, who in 1681 had raised a rebellion for the succession of the Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate but Protestant son of Charles II. The 9th Earl was eventually captured and executed. The dukedom was created in 1701. Argyll’s death, later in 1703, resulted from a brawl in a brothel.
Ad. What is it, my Lord Duke?

Arg. My Lord, it is an act for Ratefieing the Claim of Right, aproveing the whole proceedings of the Convention of Estates, and King William’s Parliament, and I know my Lord Marchmont hes an act to present anent the church goverment.

Ad. And it please your Grace, if your act goe through I hope the Tolleration will fall to the ground; but I fear.

Mr. W. God bless your Grace, my Lord Argyle, for you was ay a worthie worker for the cause.

Ad. But that damn’d cuckold, my Lord Wigton, give me bad hearting just now.

Arg. Ut, ut, my Lord, take honest Mr. Wilkie’s advice, be faithfull to the end.

Ad. I resolve to do so, come of it what will.

Exit Wilkie.

Enter Tarbat.

Tar. Boy, who is with my Lord Advocat?

Boy. My Lord Argyle.

Ad. Your servant, my Lord Tarbat.

Tar. Your humble servant, My Lord: I see my Lord Advocat is troubled with Presbyterian bees this morning.

Claim of Right: On 11th April 1689 the Scottish Convention of Estates (not Parliament) declared that James VII by his unconstitutional acts had forfeited the throne, which they offered to William of Orange and his wife Mary, James’s elder daughter; included was a clause abjuring Episcopacy.

my Lord Marchmont hes an act: above, pp. 79-80. Marchmont himself enters below, p. 98 and n.

the Tolleration: the proposed Act, permitting the church activities of Episcopalian clergymen.

God bless … the cause: a sycophantic and hypocritical outburst by the timeserving Mr Wilkie.

gave me bad hearting: ‘disheartened me,’ a usage not recorded in SND or DOST.

Ut, ut: ‘Tut! tut!’: The modern form is ‘Hoots’, classified in SND as General Scots, on the basis of examples which are much later than this. The suggestion in the play is that the usage is Highland.

Notes for speeches at the top of p. 93: honest: ironic.

Deill confound me: the first of Tarbat’s many oaths.

profession: i.e. that of a Presbyterian minister. The fact that Tarbat’s own ideas of tolerance are severely limited begins to appear.

Hold … point: the Presbyterian Argyll is shocked by Tarbat’s hostility to his church. Tarbat continues to ignore him.
Ad. I met with Mr. Tho. Wilkie in the closs just now. He’s a very honest man, my Lord.

Tar. Deill confound me, if ever I knew any of his profession honest.

Arg. Hold, my Lord, with your reflections, for that will not gain your point.

Ad. But what news about the Tolleration?

Tar. God, I hope there shall be no hinderance of it, if the Devill do not oppose it, for I am sure God is for it: But Presbytrie, that rebellious Devill, is its strongest enemie.

Ad. Oh! oh! oh! What a figure is this, my Lord. I’d alwayes thoughts you had been of these rebellious divills yourself. Hes not your holy Lady converted you as yet?

Tar. Na, God she, I am to be hanged, and then converted.

Arg. Seed you the Essay upon the Tolleration, my Lord Secretary.

Tar. By God did I; and he’s a damned nationall blockhead, more fit for a webster than a minister that wrot it: For Mr. Meldrum’s sermon he cannot prove the half of his arguments; but an ye live to see it you’l see him turn as oft as turncoat Wilkie in the Lady Yester’s church, or by God I’le hang.

Notes for the first three speeches above are on the facing page (p. 92).

Tolleration: above: the Lord Advocate attempts to change the subject.

Presbytrie, that rebellious Devill: the reference is probably to the representation made by the Edinburgh Presbytery against the proposed Toleration Act (above, p. 80).

holy Lady: Tarbat’s marriage in 1700 to the much younger Margaret Wemyss (1659-1705), in her own right Countess of Wemyss, had caused a great sensation. Apart from the difference in age, the Countess was an ardent Presbyterian.

No, God, she: ‘Not she, by God’.

Essay upon the Tolleration: James Webster, An Essay upon Toleration. By a sincere Lover of Church and State (Edinburgh: Andrew Symson, 1703).

webster: ‘weaver’. Tarbat plays on the name of the author of the Essay. The weaver was the typical early-eighteenth-century Scottish working man, despised by Tarbat.

Mr. Meldrum’s sermon: George Meldrum, A Sermon preached in the New Church of Edinburgh, on Sabbath, May 16 1703 ... on Psalm 122.6, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee, Edinburgh: Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1703.

turncoat: above, p. 81.

Lady Yester’s church: an Edinburgh church, built in 1647 on the site of the pre-Reformation Dominican house, known as Blackfriars, now High School Yards. The living was one of the most comfortable in Edinburgh.
Arg. I hope to see the latter, but not the first.

exit Argyle.

Ad. My Lord Secretary, I’d have you leaveing off thoughts of pleading for a Tolleration, for it will be in vain.

Tar. Why, the devill, now what will stop it?

Ad. His Grace, the Duke of Argyle is to present an Act ratifieing the Claim of Right, and declareing it high treason to quarrell it, or any part of it.

Tar. Ut, ut; that clause abjureing Episcopacie shall be rescinded.

Ad. No, no, no; each point of it will be ratified, and I would have you forbear thoughts.

Tar. No, when I am hanged you may advise me; but not till then. But Argyle must have a Tolleration to his whoredoms, adulteries, – ther’s the point; and I think it should be insert in the Claime of Right.

Ad. No, you’r mistaken; my Lord Argyle has good reason, for his life and fortune depends upon the Claime of Right.

Tar. God, I think so; but it shall be against my will if it be ratified.

Ad. My Lord Marchmont has ane other act for ratifieing the Presbyterian Goverment.

Tar. Why not, I shant be against it, but, by God, if these damned hot headed whiggs had said, I’le have a Tolleration.

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*the latter, but not the first*: i.e. he hopes to see Tarbat hang.

*Argyll exits at the rear of the inner stage. When he has gone, the Lord Advocate addresses Tarbat with confidence renewed by the perusal of Argyll’s Act. He adopts the style of a lawyer giving sound advice to a client.*

*what will stop it?:* Tarbat’s confidence begins to falter. He has not yet heard of Argyll’s proposal.

*Act … part of it:* above, pp. 70-80.

*Ut, ut … rescinded:* Tarbat still thinks that his own Act will be passed – a hope dashed by the Lord Advocate’s next words.

*Tolleration … Claim of Right:* Tarbat now uses the word Tolleration in a pejorative sense, approaching modern usage, but applied satirically to Argyll’s behaviour. A clause condoning such behaviour should be inserted, he maintains, in the Claim of Right. The Lord Advocate cynically retorts that Argyll survives as a result of the acceptance of the Claim of Right in its present form; see p. 92 n.

*Marchmont … Presbyterian government:* the second nail in the coffin for Tarbat’s Act; see pp. 79-80.

*I shant be against it:* Tarbat is prepared to admit that, Presbyterianism will remain the dominant form of religion in Scotland. He begins by regarding Marchmont as less bigoted than Argyll.

*if: ‘despite what’; damned hot headed whiggs:* extreme Presbyterians.
Ad. You may do so. You may present your act.

Tar. By God I’ll present it, have it voted, and carried, or God damn me if some of you don’t repent it.

Enter Mr. David Williamson.

Ad. There is Mr. David Williamson: Mr. David, good morrow.

Mr. Da. Your Lordship’s humble servant.

Ad. Here’s a man cannot be buckled to Presbytrie.

Mr. Da. My Lord, worse is his own.

Tar. Indeed, Mr. David, I am for no more changes nor Revolutions; but I would have all Godly folk to live, and you ken, Mr. David, the Bishops tollerat you, and why not you them.

Mr. Da. Indeed, my Lord, an ye look to the glory of God, and the good of the nation, you would all appear against a Toleration; for it will breed division, and ther will be another revolution; and we maun leave wife and bairns, and gang to open field; and e’en, my Lord, commit the foull fact to keep us from being catched by our enemies.

You may do so: the emphasis falls on may.

You may present your act: the Lord Advocate is now confident that Tarbat’s Act will fail.

Having finished their business, the Lord Advocate and Tarbat move forward towards the forestage. Behind them the shutter representing the Advocate’s lodging moves back into position. Mr. David Williamson enters forestage right.

For Williamson’s history see above p. 81.

There is: the Lord Advocate sees Williamson in the Close and walks forward with Tarbat to have a word.

a man: Tarbat; buckled to: ‘mated with,’ a cross-reference to Tarbat’s marriage.

his own: i.e., Episcopacy, favoured by Tarbat.

no more changes nor Revolutions: i.e., like the events of 1688-9, the ‘Glorious Revolution’. Tarbat tries to adopt a placatory tone.

to live: i.e. ‘live and let live’; ken: ‘know’.

an: ‘if’.

appear: Scots and English legal usage, ‘appear before an authority, court etc.’ (DOST); ‘present oneself formally before an authority or tribunal’ (OED). The tribunal in the present case is the High Court of Parliament. In effect, the meaning is ‘cast your parliamentary vote’.

maun: ‘must’; bairns: ‘children’; gang ‘go’; open field: ‘open country,’ where, as in Covenanting times, open air conventicles, religious services, might be held when a clergyman was prevented by law from holding them in his parish church.

foull fact: above, p. 81.

catched: ‘caught’; enemies: i.e. ‘Government dragoons’.
**Queen’s my master**: Queen Anne had appointed Tarbat as Secretary for Scotland in her Government and had expressed a wish that the position of the Episcopal clergy should be improved. Tarbat sees himself as having a dual mandate.

*where the Lasses*: ‘where the Lasses (are present)’. The Lassies are present only verbally. Tarbat has mentioned Queen Anne and sworn ‘by God’ in his next sentence.

*clap to it*: ‘cover my ears so that I can’t hear it’; *clap*, ‘press down, flatten’.

*atheism oaths*: ‘atheistic oaths’.

*Williamson makes to go off*. His hypocritical reaction provokes Tarbat.

*Be modest, my Lord Secretary …* Very modest: The Puritan Lord Advocate urges Tarbat to observe the decencies in his treatment of Williamson. Tarbat ironically agrees.

*Deil speed me*: ‘May the Devil give me success!’, ‘I’ll be damned!’ Tarbat is more than usually profane. The example of the phrase given in *DOST* is an extract from a 1666 witch trial: “Quhan on of vs or mor ar in the shap of catis, and meit with ony vtheris our neighbouris, we will say ‘Divell speid the, goe thow with me!’ And immediately they will turn in the shape of an catt, and goe with vs.”

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*Tar*. Mr. David, God’s your master, the Queen’s my master; see ye to the glory of your master, for by God I’le see to the glory of mine.

*Mr. Da.* Fy! fy! fy! Swearing where the Lasses: ho! let me clap to it, for I’le hear non of such athism oaths goe.

*Tar*. Stay, stay, Mr. David. How many revolutions have you seen?

*Ad.* Be modest, my Lord Secretary, be modest.

*Tar*. Very modest; but Mr. David, how many have you really seen?

*Mr. Da.* Only one my Lord, and the deill had said it, I hope I shall see no more.

*Tar*. Indeed, Mr. David, you’ve seen seven; and I’le cause your three worthy members testifie it.

*Mr. Da.* Indeed, my Lord, I never saw any revolutions but one; and what you mean by the three worthy members, I don’t know, and the truth is ther is some members of the Kirk of Scotland better qualified than others.

*Tar*. Deil speed me, Mr. David, if I ken any in the kirk, or out of the kirk, hes better qualifications than yourself: and I’le tell you what I mean.
by the three worthy members that sometime conversed with the Ladie’s daughter.

Mr. Da. Away, profanity! Procull o procull esto profani! God qualifie you, and convert you from the back gait to the fore gait; for an you gang in at the back gait, you’l gang a’ wrong.

exit Mr. David angrey.

Tar. Heard you ever better sport than I had with Mr. David?

Ad. All your hellish reflections were to no purpose, and ought not to have been uttered by you.

Tar. What should those expect who preach satyre, write satyre, and discourse in satyre? A pack of satyrick divells, but to be payed home in their own coine.

Ad. How so? I know non of them either wryte satyre, preach satyre, or discourse satyre.

Tar. God curse you for an old whiggish divill; where Mr. Williamson’s sermon befor the Assembly? Wher Mr. Webster’s Essay? And ther whole

sometime ... daughter: a reference to the Cherrytrees episode in Williamson’s earlier life; above p. 81.

Procull (sic) ... profani: Virgil, Aeneid vi, 258; ‘Stand well away, ye profane’, a formula used to begin a Roman religious ritual. Here it is a little inappropriate.

qualifie: ‘give [you] legal sanction’, i.e ‘convert you from Jacobitism,’ an earlier example than any quoted in SND. Until 1792 Scottish Episcopalians were not permitted to practise until they renounced allegiance to the Jacobite monarchy.

back gait ... fore gait: ‘back street’, ‘front street’, i.e., metaphorically, ‘Episcopacy’, ‘Presbyterianism’. In Scottish burghs at this time the front street (fore gait) was usually kept more or less clear and passable; the back street, behind the houses, was full of rubbish, potentially the scene of criminal activity, and in no sense a thoroughfare. Tarbat, of course, would have rejected the metaphor. The phrase also implies that Tarbat is homosexual.

an ye gang in ... a’ wrong: ‘if you go in by the back street, you’ll go all the wrong way’.

Mr Williamson exits left.

All ... you: the Lord Advocate’s observation is just. Tarbat has simply been letting off steam.

preach satyre ... in satyre: for Tarbat, ‘satire’ means the violent invective characteristic of much Presbyterian speech and writing. The Lord Advocate, of course, fails to understand.

sermon before the Assembly: the reference is to Sermon preached in Edinburgh at the opening of the General Assembly of the National Church of Scotland upon the 10th day of March 1703.

Webster’s Essay: above, p. 93.
preachings and writings are so bitter that I doubt not but they have been
insinuated by the devill in hell.
Ad. O cursed wretch, the quintisence of venom against God and his
cause. God curse you, and I am sure he will curse you, if you do not
repent: But no more of it.

Enter E. of Marchmont.
Mar. Good morrow, my Lord Advocat.
Ad. Your Lordship’s humble servant.
Mar. How do your Lordship today.
Tar. Not well.
Mar. My Lord Secretary, I hope you wont appear against the settlement
of the government now established by law.
Tar. My Lord I wont appear against it. I think a tolleration of
Episcopacie necessary at this time, when so many pious and learned men
are famished for want of bread, and I think no charitable christian should
offer to oppose it.
Mar. They want not tolleration; and some of them by their sermons on
the 30 day of Jan., such as Mr. Cant and Cadell, may come to gaine more

But no more of it: the Lord Advocate regains self-control as the Earl of
Marchmont enters frontstage right.
Marchmont: Sir Patrick Hume, Lord Polwarth (1641-1724), created Earl of
Marchmont in 1697, had a long history as a confirmed Presbyterian. He joined the
Earl of Argyll’s 1685 rebellion and on its failure fled to Holland, but returned
with King William, who held him in high favour.
How do ... Not well: the text as printed is corrupt. How do your Lordship today is
fairly obviously an ironic greeting to Tarbat by Marchmont, who is fully aware of
the parliamentary position, and it is Tarbat who answers Not well. He is depressed
by the sight of another of his opponents, and perhaps also by the verbal drubbing
he has just received from the Lord Advocate.
My Lord Secretary ... by law: Marchmont is almost triumphant.
appear against; ‘vote against’.
worst ... oppose it: see above, p. 94. Tarbat, as himself a lawyer, is unwilling to
act against the law. All he asks is some mitigation of the law at its most rigorous.
He makes his appeal, not in terms of Calvinistic dogma, but of Christianity. This
is perhaps his best moment in the play.
They want not tolleration: i.e., ‘They have it already’, with the implication ‘and
look what they do with it.’
30 day of Jan.: the anniversary of the execution of Charles I in 1649.
Episcopalians generally regarded it as a fast day. Some Presbyterians treated it as
a feast day.
Mr. Cant: Andrew Cant (d. 1730), appointed minister of Trinity Church, Edin-
than if they had a benefice, for staining their native country with the bloodshed of King Charles I. a crime which very strangers in such anniversary sermons exempts us from: What Mr. Cadell got for his, I know not: Mr. Cant got above 800 merks, which is near the double of some benefice in the Kingdom, and if such men deserve toleration I know not, but shall leave it to the judgment of the honourable House.

But my Lord, Mr. Cant is not the whole Episcopal clergie; he is but one member.

It is true he is so; but if each of them had blasphemed as he did in their sermons, why might they not get as much, and I know there are few

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burgh 1673; deposed 1690; appointed Bishop in the Episcopal Church with no fixed diocese 1722. Author of Sermon preached on the 30th day of Jan., 1703. Cadell: i.e, Robert Calder (1650-1733), also a deprived minister, who became the incumbent of the Episcopalian meeting-house in Todrick’s Wynd to the south of the High Street at the east end of the original burgh of Edinburgh. He was a prolific defender in print of Episcopalian order and practices, possibly the author of Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence. He and Archibald Pitcairne were friends; the wife and family of the latter may have attended services in Todrick’s Wynd. The reference is probably to Calder’s Reasons for a toleration of the Episcopal clergie; and objections against it answered.

staining ... Charles I: in May 1646, during the English Civil War, Charles I ‘slipped out of beleaguered Oxford and surrendered to the Scottish army, lying before Newark. The Scots almost at once withdrew to Newcastle, there to consider, in greater security, the fate of their prize... After the financial negotiations were concluded (23 December) the Scots withdrew from Newcastle (30 January), leaving Charles a prisoner in English hands’ (Donaldson 1965, 325-6). Two years later the king was executed. Scottish Episcopalians, and many others, regarded the action of the Presbyterian Scottish army as contributing directly to the execution, a charge bitterly resented by the majority of Scots Presbyterians.

800 merks: The merk was valued at two-thirds of the pound Scots (i.e 13 shillings and 4 pence Scots) In terms of the pound sterling the value was 1shilling and 1½ pence, (5 ½ pence in modern currency). The payment was thus £533-13/4 Scots, £44.00 sterling, at the beginning of the eighteenth century a considerable sum.

deserve toleration: this is not entirely a non sequitur. Episcopalians who held such views were almost necessarily Jacobites and so, even from a moderate Presbyterian view, enemies of the state.


why might they not get as much: Marchmont abandons reason in favour of his own prejudices.

few of them want: a bigoted refusal to acknowledge fact.
of them wants, and for my part, though the whole house should be for it, I’le protest against it, and take God to witnes.

Ad. I’se warrant I’se back you, my Lord.

Mar. See, my Lord, read my act; Argyle hes another.

Ad. I seed Argyle’s this morning. His Grace was with me.

Tar. God curse these whiggs, for I think they shall alwayes carry the day. If I had said it, if they get a Tolleration to whore, drink, cheat, and curse, and betray, they’le hold be presbytrie.

Mar. Wo, my Lord, be sober; for presbytrie only supresses these vices.

Ad. I’ve read your act, and approves of it: cause get some draughts of it ready, and sound some of the members, for if it pass I fear not Argyle’s.

exit Marchmont.

Enter Annandale & Strathmore.

Ann. Good morrow, my Lords.

Tar. Good morrow, my Lords, I am vexed to the heart.

Stra. Why?

Tar. With Argyle’s act; that damn’d rascal, God damn him.

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I’se warrant … back you: a breach of the impartiality required from Crown officers.

See … act: Marchmont cuts short the discussion, turning his back on Tarbat and addressing the Lord Advocate only. His rude behaviour enrages Tarbat.

God curse … vices: during the exchange between Tarbat and Marchmont, the Lord Advocate reads Marchmont’s proposed Act.

whiggs: Presbyterian extremists.

be sober: Marchmont insinuates the Tarbat is drunk.

presbytrie … vices: by way of Church censure – the stool of repentance, public denunciation and possible excommunication. The means were not always successful.

draughts: ‘drafts, copies’; sound: get the opinion of.

members: MPs, Members of Parliament.

if … Argyle’s: i.e. the fate of the latter depends on that of the former. Marchmont’s Act is to come to the vote before Argyll’s. In reality Argyll’s Act received a reading before Marchmont’s.

Marchmont exits forestage left. Annandale and Strathmore enter from opposite sides of the forestage.


Strathmore: John Lyon (1663-1712), 2nd Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorn.
Str. Amen. But what is his act?

Ann. Ratefieing the Claim of Right in all points, and declareing it treason to quarrell it.

Str. God, what then?

Tar. Ut, you ignorant villan. Is not episcopacy abjured?

Str. I did not know so much, but there is my act anent the Tolleration. Wont it do think you?

Tar. God, I fear it will not do: But, however, present it immediately after Marchmont’s, and I will know by the first reading if it will pass.

Enter the Earl of Hume.

Tar. There the Earl of Hume, that peer of the Merse. He wad not care to stop all your presbyterian noses in his mickle a——, as Robert Cadell sayes.

Ad. Your Lordship’s servant.

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what then?: almost ‘So what? Strathmore fails to see the implications.

I did not know so much: Strathmore has been overconfident in the strength of his party and has failed to do the homework necessary for his Act.

immediately after Marchmont’s: i.e. before Argyll’s Act, in an attempt to pre-empt approval of the crucial clause in the Claim of Right. Unlike Strathmore, Tarbat has some sense of strategy. See, however, pp. 81-82.

The Earl of Home enters forestage right. He is fat and somewhat self-important in manner.

There the Earl … Cadell says: a satirical aside to the audience. Tarbat has no faith in Home.

Earl of Hume: Charles Home, (d. 1706), 6th Earl of Home, parliamentary leader of the Cavaliers; see above p. 78. The estimate of Home given, or rather, implied here differs sharply from that found in Lockhart: “though he was one that did not express himself with any tolerable share of eloquence, yet he was master of a sound judgment and clear conception and had a peculiar talent of procuring intelligence of his adversaries’ most secret designs, so that generally he informed his friends of them and thereby gave them an opportunity to thwart them … And so well was his reputation established that he proved an awe-band over others, and frequently obliged the Cavaliers to suspend their private grudges and joyn cordially in one measure” (Lockhart 1995, 133-4).

the Merse: Berwickshire, where Hume had his estates. Also present is a play on mers, ‘round-top, top-gallant (sail)’, from Dutch mers, literally ‘basket’, referring to Home’s portly figure. mickle: big; a—: arse.

as Robert Cadell says: Tarbat emphasises that the phrase is his own by putting it in the mouth of another, but unlikely, person, well known to the audience. For Robert Cadell, see above, p. 99.
Hume. Your servant, my Lord Advocat. Well my Lord, I have an act to present anent the cess.

Ad. It wont be heard until the affairs of church and state be discust.

Tar. God damn your a— my Lord, it would file all the presbyterian noses.

Ad. Neither his nor your’s shall do it.

Tar. If mine could doe, your’s should go in first, and by God, I’d choack you with f—.

Ann. Oh, oh, oh, away with such discourse.

exit Hume.

Enter Lord Chancellor.

Cha. Good morrow, my Lord Advocat, good morrow.

Ad. Your Lordship’s humble servant. How does your Lordship to day?

Cha. Your Lordship’s humble servant. My Lord Secretary how do you to day.

Tar. Not well.

act … anent the cess: the Act of Supply, vital for the carrying-out of government policy; anent: about, concerning; the cess: the king’s or land tax, levied on landed property, the principal source of government revenue.

It wont … be discust: see above pp. 78-79. The Lord Advocate’s abrupt dismissal of the Cavalier Hume and his Act stands in complete contrast to his earlier behaviour towards Argyll, Tarbat and Marchmont. Hume is struck dumb with astonishment. His silence shows his inadequacy.

affairs of church and state: i.e. the Acts to be submitted by Marchmont, Strathmore and Argyll. The phrase is hypocritical. The Act of Supply should have taken precedence over every other Act.

God … my Lord: Tarbat expresses his disgust at Hume’s silence and at his figure.

file: defile.

Neither … with f–: the Lord Advocate grabs the opportunity of a smart response.

Tarbat responds in kind; f–: fart.

Oh … discourse: Annandale’s one shocked remark in the play.

The Earl of Hume exits forestage right. The Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Seafield, enters forestage left. He and Tarbart are political allies, but, unlike Tarbat, Seafield is in a high good humour.

Lord Chancellor: James Ogilvy (1663-1730), 1st Earl of Seafield. “He was believed to be of loyal enough principles, but so mean and selfish a soul that he wanted both resolution and honesty enough to adhere to them. Which evidently appeared from his changing sides so often, and cleaving to the party he found rising” (Lockhart 1995, 19).

Your Lordship’s humble servant: Seaforth’s answer to the Lord Advocate’s question. My Lord Secretary: Tarbat.
TOLLERATORS AND CON-TOLLERATORS

Cha. What troubles you? A tollerating disease? Will you die of it, think you?
Tar. God I’se warrant me never die of a tollerating or con-tollerating disease, if these damned whiggs git their will.
Cha. Ay, but you’l anger the Presbyterians.
Tar. O for them all minshed in a dish to day to your dinner and myne. God, I would eat them heartosomely without a drink.
Stra. God, I wou’d dine with you.
Ad. Be sober, my Lord Secretary, you must both dine on cheaper meat.
Tar. God, against my will, my Lord.
Cha. But after what manner wou’d you have them dressed?
Tar. Mr. David Williamson in the midst, with his three members ad longum; a presbyterian sauce, groat ale and brandy.
Cha. God damn me if the Tolleration would bide a host then.
Tar. No God, it would pass nemine contradicente, an these damned villains had said it.

A tolerating ... die of it: Seaforth is already aware of the outcome now likely for Tarbat’s Act. It will not particularly affect him, but he is concerned, or pretends to be concerned, that the rejection of his Act may prove too much for an old man like Tarbat.

God ... disease: Tarbat rejects Seaforth’s concerns. God: ‘Gad!’, the expletive, not affecting the syntax of the following sentence.
con-tollerating: cf. the title of the play. Tarbat’s troubles arise both from those in favour of toleration and those against. He is also, perhaps, punning on the word ‘contagious’; if: i.e. ‘even if’; git: get.
mished: ‘mixed, mashed’; heartosomely: ‘heartily’.
without a drink: claret in quantity was the usual accompaniment to upper-class Scottish meals. Tarbat is willing to forego even such an essential.
God ... with you: a feeble interjection by Strathmore.
Be sober: the Lord Advocate again implies that Tarbat is drunk.
dressed: ‘served’.
ad longum: ‘at length’, ‘fully extended’.
presbyterian sauce: from Tarbat’s point of view, ‘a thin, meagre sauce’.
groat ale: weak, cheap ale. The groat was a coin valued at four 4pence Scots, i.e. almost valueless; brandy: despised by the aristocracy.
Tolleration ... a host: would sustain (i.e. defeat) the Whig forces in Parliament.
Nemine contradicente: ‘with no-one opposing’, ‘unanimously’.
an: (even) if:
these damned villains: the Whigs.
had said it: had said it would not pass.
Ad. Deill catch you both if you have it yet.

Exeunt omnes in a rage.

EPILOGUE

When church is in Comedians’ dress,
You may see how statesmen themselves express:
What cursed, what foolish schism creators
Are these sect of men they name Tollerators;
What bloody designs they daylie do hatch,
The poor presbyterians on a trouble to catch.
To procure their design what lyes they invent,
That both kirk and country they may bring to contempt.
The nation’s wisdome I hope shall oppose
The Kingdom’s enemies, and the kirk’s foes:
Let them do what they can, they cannot prevail,
So in vain they’ve lost their strength and their zeall.

FINIS.

_Deil … have it yet_: The Lord Advocate loses his composure and lapses into vernacular Scots: _Deill_: the Devil; _it_: the Act for Toleration.

_When church … express_: the coarse language and behaviour of politicians results from the parody of religious language used by Calvinist ministers. This couplet was probably delivered in a normal voice; the remainder of the Epilogue in the whining tone characteristic of a Presbyterian sermon; see Jacob Curate 1692, 7-8; _church_ is the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

_schism creators_: cf. Williamson’s remark, “it will bring division,” p. 95 above.

_bloody designs_: e.g. Tarbat’s proposed cannibalistic feast?

_lies_: e.g. staining their native country with the bloodshed of King Charles I.

_Kingdom’s enemies … kirk’s foes_: Jacobites and Episcopalians.