The life and works of James Miller, 1704-1744, with particular reference to the satiric content of his poetry and plays.

Abstract
James Miller was born the son of a Dorset rector in 1704. He was himself ordained, but acquired no benefice until just before his early death, probably because of a scathing portrayal of the Bishop of London in one of his verse satires. At Oxford he wrote a vivacious comedy of humours, set in the University. Its production in 1730 began his dramatic career, at a time when the number of London theatres had just doubled, and new dramatic forms were being invented. In 1731 his poem Harlequin-Horace, a witty inversion of the Ars Poetica, attacked pantomime and opera, but also painted a lively portrait of the entire theatrical world, in the tradition of the Dunciad. After collaborating in a translation of Moliere's works Miller wrote two plays based on this author. Of all his dramatic works these were the most successful with his contemporaries, and were followed by a modernisation of Much Ado, and a ballad-opera adapted from an afterpiece by Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, and rendered highly topical. Miller made similar use of a recent French comedy showing a Red Indian's reactions to civilisation, a satiric "fable" by Walsh and Voltaire's Mahomet. A large quantity of original material was incorporated into most of these, and this is generally satirical in nature. The Indian is made to voice almost egalitarian sentiments. An afterpiece, "The Camp Visitants", satirised military inaction in the war, and was apparently banned. The manuscripts of the six plays produced after the Licensing Act bear the examiner's deletions, and illustrate the nature of the censorship at this time. Miller's greatest strength is probably his flexible, vigorously colloquial dialogue. His political satire is mostly contained in the poetry, which attacks Walpole's administration with increasing vehemence through the seventeen-thirties, until its fall. In 1740 two poems that used Pope in symbolic contrast to Walpole caused a sensation. In both poetry and plays Miller is also a social satirist, who lays unusually strong emphasis on false taste and the deterioration of culture.
James Miller (1704–1744) was an English playwright, poet, librettist, and minister. Miller was born in Bridport, Dorset on 11 August 1704, the son of a clergyman who possessed two considerable livings in the county. He studied at Wadham College, Oxford, and while there wrote part of his famous comedy, The Humours of Oxford, which contained music by Richard Charke and was first performed on 9 January 1730, to great success. Throughout his life Lowell attempted to master a lyrical voice, but his efforts were largely unsuccessful. The deficiencies that characterize his work in his first volume of poems, A Year's Life (1841), are never entirely absent from his more mature performances—technical infelicities and irregularities, didacticism, obscurity, and excessive literariness. His reference to the book of poems Under the Willows (1869) as "Under the Billows or dredgings from the Atlantic" is not only a masterful pun (many of the poems had first appeared in The Atlantic Monthly) but close to the truth. As a public poet, however, both in his Pindaric odes and in his satiric verse, Lowell has few equals in American literature. Toward the end of 1844 Lowell married Maria White.