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BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

G. BIRKBECK HILL





JOHNSON.

By Sir J. Kneller.

BOSWELL'S
LIFE OF JOHNSON

*INCLUDING BOSWELL'S JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES
AND JOHNSON'S DIARY OF A JOURNEY INTO NORTH WALES*

EDITED BY

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PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD

IN SIX VOLUMES,

VOLUME I.—LIFE (1709-1765)

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[Title page to the Third Edition.]

THE
L I F E
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

COMPREHENDING

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDIES
AND NUMEROUS WORKS,
IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER;

A SERIES OF HIS EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE
AND CONVERSATIONS WITH MANY EMINENT PERSONS;

AND

VARIOUS ORIGINAL PIECES OF HIS COMPOSITION,
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED:

THE WHOLE EXHIBITING A VIEW OF LITERATURE AND
LITERARY MEN IN GREAT-BRITAIN, FOR NEAR
HALF A CENTURY, DURING WHICH
HE FLOURISHED.

BY *JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.*

————— *Quò fit ut OMNIS*
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
VITA SENIS. ———

HORAT.

THE THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND AUGMENTED,
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY H. BALDWIN AND SON,
FOR CHARLES DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.

—————
MDCCXCIX.



TO
THE REVEREND BENJAMIN JOWETT, M.A.,
MASTER OF BALLIOL COLLEGE
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
HONORARY LL.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
HONORARY D.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEYDEN
WHO IS NOT ONLY
'AN ACUTE AND KNOWING CRITIC'
BUT ALSO
'JOHNSONIANISSIMUS'
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE
KINDLY INTEREST THAT HE HAS THROUGHOUT TAKEN
IN THE PROGRESS OF THIS WORK
THIS EDITION
OF
BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

Is Dedicated

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PREFACE.

FIELDING, it is said, drank confusion to the man who invented the fifth act of a play. He who has edited an extensive work, and has concluded his labours by the preparation of a copious index, might well be pardoned, if he omitted to include the inventor of the Preface among the benefactors of mankind. The long and arduous task that years before he had set himself to do is done, and the last thing that he desires is to talk about it. Liberty is what he asks for, liberty to range for a time wherever he pleases in the wide and fair fields of literature. Yet with this longing for freedom comes a touch of regret and a doubt lest the 'fresh woods and pastures new' may never wear the friendly and familiar face of the plot of ground within whose narrower confines he has so long been labouring, and whose every corner he knows so well. May-be he finds hope in the thought that should his new world seem strange to him and uncomfortable, ere long he may be called back to his old task, and in the preparation of a second edition find the quiet and the peace of mind that are often found alone in 'old use and wont.'

With me the preparation of these volumes has, indeed, been the work of many years. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* I read for the first time in my boyhood, when I was too young for it to lay any hold on me. When I entered Pembroke College, Oxford, though I loved to think that Johnson had
been

been there before me, yet I cannot call to mind that I ever opened the pages of Boswell. By a happy chance I was turned to the study of the literature of the eighteenth century. Every week we were required by the rules of the College to turn into Latin, or what we called Latin, a passage from *The Spectator*. Many a happy minute slipped by while, in forgetfulness of my task, I read on and on in its enchanting pages. It was always with a sigh that at last I tore myself away, and sat resolutely down to write bad Latin instead of reading good English. From Addison in the course of time I passed on to the other great writers of his and the succeeding age, finding in their exquisitely clear style, their admirable common sense and their freedom from all the tricks of affectation, a delightful contrast to so many of the eminent authors of our own time. Those troublesome doubts, doubts of all kinds, which since the great upheaval of the French Revolution have harassed mankind, had scarcely begun to ruffle the waters of their life. Even Johnson's troubled mind enjoyed vast levels of repose. The unknown world alone was wrapped in stormy gloom; of this world 'all the complaints which were made were unjust'.¹ Though I was now familiar with many of the great writers, yet Boswell I had scarcely opened since my boyhood. A happy day came just eighteen years ago when in an old book-shop, almost under the shadow of a great cathedral, I bought a second-hand copy of a somewhat early edition of the *Life* in five well-bound volumes. Of all my books none I cherish more than these. In looking at them I have known what it is to feel Bishop Percy's 'uneasiness at the thoughts of leaving his books in death'.² They became my almost inseparable companions. Before long I began to note the parallel passages and allusions not only in their pages, but in the various authors whom I studied. Yet in these early

¹ *Post*, iv. 198.

² *Post*, iii. 355.

days I never dreamt of preparing a new edition. It fell to my lot as time went on to criticise in some of our leading publications works that bore both on Boswell and Johnson. Such was my love for the subject that on one occasion, when I was called upon to write a review that should fill two columns of a weekly newspaper, I read a new edition of the *Life* from beginning to end without, I believe, missing a single line of the text or a single note. At length, 'towering in the confidence'¹ of one who as yet has but set his foot on the threshold of some stately mansion in which he hopes to find for himself a home, I was rash enough more than twelve years ago to offer myself as editor of a new edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Fortunately for me another writer had been already engaged by the publisher to whom I applied, and my offer was civilly declined. From that time on I never lost sight of my purpose but when in the troubles of life I well-nigh lost sight of every kind of hope. Everything in my reading that bore on my favourite author was carefully noted, till at length I felt that the materials which I had gathered from all sides were sufficient to shield me from a charge of rashness if I now began to raise the building. Much of the work of preparation had been done at a grievous disadvantage. My health more than once seemed almost hopelessly broken down. Nevertheless even then the time was not wholly lost. In the sleepless hours of many a winter night I almost forgot my miseries in the delightful pages of Horace Walpole's Letters, and with pencil in hand and some little hope still in heart, managed to get a few notes taken. Three winters I had to spend on the shores of the Mediterranean. During two of them my malady and my distress allowed of no rival, and my work made scarcely any advance. The third my strength was returning, and in the six months that I spent three

¹ *Post*, i. 375.

years ago in San Remo I wrote out very many of the notes which I am now submitting to my readers.

An interval of some years of comparative health that I enjoyed between my two severest illnesses allowed me to try my strength as a critic and an editor. In *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and his Critics*, which I published in the year 1878, I reviewed the judgments passed on Johnson and Boswell by Lord Macaulay and Mr. Carlyle, I described Oxford as it was known to Johnson, and I threw light on more than one important passage in the *Life*. The following year I edited Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to Corsica* and his curious correspondence with the Hon. Andrew Erskine. The somewhat rare little volume in which are contained the lively but impudent letters that passed between these two friends I had found one happy day in an old book-stall underneath the town hall of Keswick. I hoped that among the almost countless readers of Boswell there would be many who would care to study in one of the earliest attempts of his joyous youth the man whose ripened genius was to place him at the very head of all the biographers of whom the world can boast. My hopes were increased by the elegance and the accuracy of the typography with which my publishers, Messrs. De La Rue & Co., adorned this reprint. I was disappointed in my expectations. These curious Letters met with a neglect which they did not deserve. Twice, moreover, I was drawn away from the task that I had set before me by other works. By the death of my uncle, Sir Rowland Hill, I was called upon to edit his *History of the Penny Postage*, and to write his *Life*. Later on General Gordon's correspondence during the first six years of his government of the Soudan was entrusted to me to prepare for the press. In my *Colonel Gordon in Central Africa* I attempted to do justice to the rare genius, to the wise and pure enthusiasm, and to the exalted beneficence of that
great

great man. The labour that I gave to these works was, as regards my main purpose, by no means wholly thrown away. I was trained by it in the duties of an editor, and by studying the character of two such men, who, though wide as the poles asunder in many things, were as devoted to truth and accuracy as they were patient in their pursuit, I was strengthened in my hatred of carelessness and error.

With all these interruptions the summer of 1885 was upon me before I was ready for the compositors to make a beginning with my work. In revising my proofs very rarely indeed have I contented myself in verifying my quotations with comparing them merely with my own manuscript. In almost all instances I have once more examined the originals. 'Diligence and accuracy,' writes Gibbon, 'are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit indeed can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty¹.' By diligence and accuracy I have striven to win for myself a place in Johnson's *school*—'a school distinguished,' as Sir Joshua Reynolds said, 'for a love of truth and accuracy².' I have steadily set before myself Boswell's example where he says:—'Let me only observe, as a specimen of my trouble, that I have sometimes been obliged to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly; which, when I had accomplished, I well knew would obtain me no praise, though a failure would have been to my discredit³.' When the variety and the number of my notes are considered, when it is known that a great many of the authors I do not myself possess, but that they could only be examined in the Bodleian or the British Museum, it will be seen that the labour of revising the proofs was, indeed, unusually severe. In the course of the eighteen months during which they have been passing through the press,

¹ *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. 1807, vol. i. p. xi.

² *Post*, iii. 260.

³ *Post*, i. 7.

fresh reading has given fresh information, and caused many an addition, and not a few corrections moreover to be made, in passages which I had previously presumed to think already complete. Had it been merely the biography of a great man of letters that I was illustrating, such anxious care would scarcely have been needful. But Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, as its author with just pride boasts on its title-page, 'exhibits a view of literature and literary men in Great Britain, for near half a century during which Johnson flourished.' Wide, indeed, is the gulf by which this half-century is separated from us. The reaction against the thought and style of the age over which Pope ruled in its prime, and Johnson in its decline,—this reaction, wise as it was in many ways and extravagant as it was perhaps in more, is very far from having spent its force. Young men are still far too often found in our Universities who think that one proof of their originality is a contempt of authors whose writings they have never read. Books which were in the hands of almost every reader of the *Life* when it first appeared are now read only by the curious. Allusions and quotations which once fell upon a familiar and a friendly ear now fall dead. Men whose names were known to every one, now often have not even a line in a Dictionary of Biography. Over manners too a change has come, and as Johnson justly observes, 'all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less¹.' But it is not only Boswell's narrative that needs illustration. Johnson in his talk ranges over a vast number of subjects. In his capacious memory were stored up the fruits of an almost boundless curiosity, and a wide and varied reading. I have sought to follow him wherever a remark of his required illustration, and have read through many a book that I might trace to its source a reference or an allusion. I have examined,

¹ *Post*, ii. 243.

moreover

moreover, all the minor writings which are attributed to him by Boswell, but which are not for the most part included in his collected works. In some cases I have ventured to set my judgment against Boswell's, and have refused to admit that Johnson was the author of the feeble pieces which were fathered on him. Once or twice in the course of my reading I have come upon essays which had escaped the notice of his biographer, but which bear the marks of his workmanship. To these I have given a reference. While the minute examination that I have so often had to make of Boswell's narrative has done nothing but strengthen my trust in his statements and my admiration of his laborious truthfulness, yet in one respect I have not found him so accurate as I had expected. 'I have,' he says, 'been extremely careful as to the exactness of my quotations'.¹ Though in preparing his manuscript he referred in each case 'to the originals,' yet he did not, I conjecture, examine them once more in revising his proof-sheets. At all events he has allowed errors to slip in. These I have pointed out in my notes, for in every case where I could I have, I believe, verified his quotations.

I have not thought that it was my duty as an editor to attempt to refute or even to criticise Johnson's arguments. The story is told that when Peter the Great was on his travels and far from his country, some members of the Russian Council of State in St. Petersburg ventured to withstand what was known to be his wish. His walking-stick was laid upon the table, and silence at once fell upon all. In like manner, before that editor who should trouble himself and his readers with attempting to refute Johnson's arguments, paradoxical as they often were, should be placed Reynold's portrait of that 'labouring working mind'.² It might make him reflect that if the mighty reasoner could rise up and meet him face to face, he would be sure, on

¹ *Post*, i. 7.

² *Post*, iv. 511.

which

which ever side the right might be, even if at first his pistol missed fire to knock him down with the butt-end of it¹. I have attempted therefore not to criticise but to illustrate Johnson's statements. I have compared them with the opinions of the more eminent men among his contemporaries, and with his own as they are contained in other parts of his *Life*, and in his writings. It is in his written works that his real opinion can be most surely found. 'He owned he sometimes talked for victory; he was too conscientious to make error permanent and pernicious by deliberately writing it².' My numerous extracts from the eleven volumes of his collected works will, I trust, not only give a truer insight into the nature of the man, but also will show the greatness of the author to a generation of readers who have wandered into widely different paths.

In my attempts to trace the quotations of which both Johnson and Boswell were somewhat lavish, I have not in every case been successful, though I have received liberal assistance from more than one friend. In one case my long search was rewarded by the discovery that Boswell was quoting himself. That I have lighted upon the beautiful lines which Johnson quoted when he saw the Highland girl singing at her wheel³, and have found out who was 'one Giffard,' or rather Gifford, 'a parson,' is to me a source of just triumph. I have not known many happier hours than the one in which in the Library of the British Museum my patient investigation was rewarded and I perused *Contemplation*.

Fifteen hitherto unpublished letters of Johnson⁴; his college composition in Latin prose⁵; a long extract from his manuscript diary⁶; a suppressed passage in his *Journey to the*

¹ *Post*, ii. 115.

² *Post*, iv. 495; v. 18.

³ *Post*, v. 133.

⁴ *Post*, i. 546, n. 4; iv. 300, n. 2; v. 461, n. 4, 518, n. 1; vi. xxi-xxxvii.

⁵ *Post*, i. 70, n. 3.

⁶ *Post*, ii. 547.

*Western Islands*¹; Boswell's letters of acceptance of the office of Secretary for Foreign Correspondence to the Royal Academy²; the proposal for the publication of a *Geographical Dictionary* issued by Johnson's beloved friend, Dr. Bathurst³; and Mr. Recorder Longley's record of his conversation with Johnson on Greek metres⁴, will, I trust, throw some lustre on this edition.

In many notes I have been able to clear up statements in the text which were not fully understood even by the author, or were left intentionally dark by him, or have become obscure through lapse of time. I would particularly refer to the light that I have thrown on Johnson's engaging in politics with William Gerard Hamilton⁵, and on Burke's 'talk of retiring'⁶. In many other notes I have established Boswell's accuracy against attacks which had been made on it apparently with success. It was with much pleasure that I discovered that the story told of Johnson's listening to Dr. Sacheverel's sermon is not in any way improbable⁷, and that Johnson's 'censure' of Lord Kames was quite just⁸. The ardent advocates of total abstinence will not, I fear, be pleased at finding at the end of my long note on Johnson's wine-drinking that I have been obliged to show that he thought that the gout from which he suffered was due to his temperance. 'I hope you persevere in drinking,' he wrote to his friend, Dr. Taylor. 'My opinion is that I have drunk too little'⁹.

In the Appendices I have generally treated of subjects which demanded more space than could be given them in the narrow limits of a foot-note. In the twelve pages of the essay on Johnson's *Debates in Parliament*¹⁰ I have com-

¹ *Post*, vi. xxxii.

² *Post*, iii. 525.

³ *Post*, vi. xxii.

⁴ *Post*, iv. 9, n. 5.

⁵ *Post*, i. 566, 601.

⁶ *Post*, iv. 258, n. 1.

⁷ *Post*, i. 45, n. 2.

⁸ *Post*, iii. 387, n. 1.

⁹ *Post*, i. 120, n. 2.

¹⁰ *Post*, i. 581.

pressed the result of the reading of many weeks. In examining the character of George Psalmanazar¹ I have complied with the request of an unknown correspondent who was naturally interested in the history of that strange man, 'after whom Johnson sought the most².' In my essay on Johnson's Travels and Love of Travelling³ I have, in opposition to Lord Macaulay's wild and wanton rhetoric, shown how ardent and how elevated was the curiosity with which Johnson's mind was possessed. In another essay I have explained, I do not say justified, his strong feelings towards the founders of the United States⁴; and in a fifth I have examined the election of the Lord Mayors of London, at a time when the City was torn by political strife⁵. To the other Appendices it is not needful particularly to refer.

In my Index, which has cost me many months' heavy work, 'while I bore burdens with dull patience and beat the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution⁶,' I have, I hope, shown that I am not unmindful of all that I owe to men of letters. To the dead we cannot pay the debt of gratitude that is their due. Some relief is obtained from its burthen, if we in our turn make the men of our own generation debtors to us. The plan on which my Index is made will, I trust, be found convenient. By the alphabetical arrangement in the separate entries of each article the reader, I venture to think, will be greatly facilitated in his researches. Certain subjects I have thought it best to form into groups. Under America, France, Ireland, London, Oxford, Paris, and Scotland, are gathered together almost all the references to those subjects. The provincial towns of France, however, by some mistake I did not include in the general article. One important but intentional omission I must justify. In the case of the quotations in which my notes

¹ *Post*, iii. 503.² *Post*, iii. 510.⁵ *Post*, iii. 521.² *Post*, iii. 357.⁴ *Post*, ii. 549, 550.⁶ *Post*, i. 219, *n.* 1.

abound I have not thought it needful in the Index to refer to the book unless the eminence of the author required a separate and a second entry. My labour would have been increased beyond all endurance and my Index have been swollen almost into a monstrosity had I always referred to the book as well as to the matter which was contained in the passage that I extracted. Though in such a variety of subjects there must be many omissions, yet I shall be greatly disappointed if actual errors are discovered. Every entry I have made myself, and every entry I have verified in the proof-sheets, not by comparing it with my manuscript, but by turning to the reference in the printed volumes. Some indulgence nevertheless may well be claimed and granted. If Homer at times nods, an index-maker may be pardoned, should he in the fourth or fifth month of his task at the end of a day of eight hours' work grow drowsy. May I fondly hope that to the maker of so large an Index will be extended the gratitude which Lord Bolingbroke says was once shown to lexicographers? 'I approve,' writes his Lordship, 'the devotion of a studious man at Christ Church, who was overheard in his oratory entering into a detail with God, and acknowledging the divine goodness in furnishing the world with makers of dictionaries.'

In the list that I give in the beginning of the sixth volume of the books which I quote, the reader will find stated in full the titles which in the notes, through regard to space, I was forced to compress.

The Concordance of Johnson's sayings which follows the Index² will be found convenient by the literary man who desires to make use of his strong and pointed utterances. Next to Shakespeare he is, I believe, quoted and misquoted the most frequently of all our writers. 'It is not every man that can *carry* a *bon-mot*³.' Bons-mots that are miscarried

¹ *Post*, i. 343, n. 3.

² *Post*, vi.

³ *Post*, ii. 401.

of all kinds of good things suffer the most. In this Concordance the general reader, moreover, may find much to delight him. Johnson's trade was wit and wisdom¹, and some of his best wares are here set out in a small space. It was, I must confess, with no little pleasure that in revising my proof-sheets I found that the last line in my Concordance and the last line in my six long volumes is Johnson's quotation of Goldsmith's fine saying: 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.'

In the 'forward' references in the notes to other passages in the book, the reader may be surprised at finding that while often I only give the date under which the reference will be found, frequently I am able to quote the page and volume. The explanation is a simple one: two sets of compositors were generally at work, and two volumes were passing through the press simultaneously.

In the selection of the text which I should adopt I hesitated for some time. In ordinary cases the edition which received the author's final revision is the one which all future editors should follow. The second edition, which was the last that was brought out in Boswell's lifetime, could not, I became convinced, be conveniently reproduced. As it was passing through the press he obtained many additional anecdotes and letters. These he somewhat awkwardly inserted in an Introduction and an Appendix. He was engaged on his third edition when he died. 'He had pointed out where some of these materials should be inserted,' and 'in the margin of the copy which he had in part revised he had written notes².' His interrupted labours were completed by Edmond Malone, to whom he had read aloud almost the whole of his original manuscript, and who had helped him in the revision of the first half of the book when it was in type³. 'These notes,' says Malone, 'are faithfully preserved.' He

¹ *Post*, iii. 155, n. 2, 442.

² *Post*, i. 17, 18.

³ *Post*, i. 8.

adds that 'every new remark, not written by the author, for the sake of distinction has been enclosed within crotchets!'. In the third edition therefore we have the work in the condition in which it would have most approved itself to Boswell's own judgment. In one point only, and that a trifling one, had Malone to exercise his judgment. But so skilful an editor was very unlikely to go wrong in those few cases in which he was called upon to insert in their proper places the additional material which the author had already published in his second edition. Malone did not, however, correct the proof-sheets. I thought it my duty, therefore, in revising my work to have the text of Boswell's second edition read aloud to me throughout. Some typographical errors might, I feared, have crept in. In a few unimportant cases early in the book I adopted the reading of the second edition, but as I read on I became convinced that almost all the verbal alterations were Boswell's own. Slight errors, often of the nature of Scotticisms, had been corrected, and greater accuracy often given. Some of the corrections and additions in the third edition that were undoubtedly from his hand were of considerable importance.

I have retained Boswell's spelling in accordance with the wish that he expressed in the preface to his *Account of Corsica*. 'If this work,' he writes, 'should at any future period be reprinted, I hope that care will be taken of my orthography².' The punctuation too has been preserved.

I should be wanting in justice were I not to acknowledge that I owe much to the labors of Mr. Croker. No one can know better than I do his great failings as an editor. His remarks and criticisms far too often deserve the contempt that Macaulay so liberally poured on them. Without being deeply versed in books, he was shallow in himself. Johnson's strong character was never known to him. Its breadth and

¹ *Post*, i. 17, 18.

² *Post*, iv. 37, n. 1.

length,

length, and depth and height were far beyond his measure. With his writings even he shows few signs of being familiar. Boswell's genius, a genius which even to Lord Macaulay was foolishness, was altogether hidden from his dull eye. No one surely but a 'blockhead,' a 'barren rascal,' could with scissors and paste-pot have mangled the biography which of all others is the delight and the boast of the English-speaking world. He is careless in small matters, and his blunders are numerous. These I have only noticed in the more important cases, remembering what Johnson somewhere points out, that the triumphs of one critic over another only fatigue and disgust the reader. Yet he has added considerably to our knowledge of Johnson. He knew men who had intimately known both the hero and his biographer, and he gathered much that but for his care would have been lost for ever. He was diligent and successful in his search after Johnson's letters, of so many of which Boswell with all his persevering and pushing diligence had not been able to get a sight. The editor of Mr. Croker's *Correspondence and Diaries*² goes, however, much too far when, in writing of Macaulay's criticism, he says: 'The attack defeated itself by its very violence, and therefore it did the book no harm whatever. Between forty and fifty thousand copies have been sold, although Macaulay boasted with great glee that he had smashed it.' The book that Macaulay attacked was withdrawn. That monstrous medley reached no second edition. In its new form all the worst excrescences had been cleared away, and though what was left was not Boswell, still less was it unchastened Croker. His repentance, however, was not thorough. He never restored the text to its old state; wanton transpositions of passages still remain, and numerous insertions break the narrative. It was my good fortune to become a sound Boswellian before I even looked at his

¹ ii. 199.

² vol. ii. p. 47.

edition. It was not indeed till I came to write out my notes for the press that I examined his with any thoroughness.

'Notes,' says Johnson, 'are often necessary, but they are necessary evils'.¹ To the young reader who for the first time turns over Boswell's delightful pages I would venture to give the advice Johnson gives about Shakespeare:—

'Let him that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased let him attempt exactness and read the commentators².'

So too let him who reads the *Life of Johnson* for the first time read it in one of the *Pre-Crokerian* editions. They are numerous and good. With his attention undiverted by notes he will rapidly pass through one of the most charming narratives that the world has ever seen, and if his taste is uncorrupted by modern extravagances, will recognise the genius of an author who, in addition to other great qualities, has an admirable eye for the just proportions of an extensive work, and who is the master of a style that is as easy as it is inimitable.

Johnson, I fondly believe, would have been pleased, perhaps would even have been proud, could he have foreseen this edition. Few distinctions he valued more highly than those which he received from his own great University. The honorary degrees that it conferred on him, the gown that it entitled him to wear, by him were highly esteemed. In the

¹ Johnson's *Works*, ed. 1825, vol. v. p. 152.

² id.

Clarendon Press he took a great interest¹. The efforts which that famous establishment has made in the excellence of the typography, the quality of the paper, and the admirably-executed illustrations and facsimiles to do honor to his memory and to the genius of his biographer would have highly delighted him. To his own college he was so deeply attached that he would not have been displeased to learn that his editor had been nursed in that once famous 'nest of singing birds.' Of Boswell's pleasure I cannot doubt. How much he valued any tribute of respect from Oxford is shown by the absurd importance that he gave to a sermon which was preached before the University by an insignificant clergyman more than a year and a half after Johnson's death². When Edmund Burke witnessed the long and solemn procession entering the Cathedral of St. Paul's, as it followed Sir Joshua Reynolds to his grave, he wrote: 'Everything, I think, was just as our deceased friend would, if living, have wished it to be; for he was, as you know, not altogether indifferent to this kind of observances³.' It would, indeed, be presumptuous in me to flatter myself that in this edition everything is as Johnson and Boswell would, if living, have wished it. Yet to this kind of observances, the observances that can be shown by patient and long labour, and by the famous press of a great University, neither man was altogether indifferent.

Should my work find favour with the world of readers, I hope again to labour in the same fields. I had indeed at one time intended to enlarge this edition by essays on Boswell, Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, and perhaps on other subjects. Their composition, would, however, have delayed publication more than seemed advisable, and their length might have rendered the volumes bulky beyond all reason. A more

¹ See *post*, ii. 39. 486-8, 504.

² See *post*, iv. 486.

³ *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, ii. 425.

favourable opportunity may come. I have in hand a *Selection of the Wit and Wisdom of Dr. Johnson*. I purpose, moreover, to collect and edit all of his letters that are not in the *Life*. Some hundreds of these were published by Mrs. Piozzi; many more are contained in Mr. Croker's edition; while others have already appeared in *Notes and Queries*¹. Not a few, doubtless, are still lurking in the desks of the collectors of autographs. As a letter-writer Johnson stands very high. While the correspondence of David Garrick has been given to the world in two large volumes, it is not right that the letters of his far greater friend should be left scattered and almost neglected. 'He that sees before him to his third dinner,' says Johnson, 'has a long prospect².' My prospect is still longer; for, if health be spared, and a fair degree of public favour shown, I see before me to my third book. When I have published my *Letters*, I hope to enter upon a still more arduous task in editing the *Lives of the Poets*.

In my work I have received much kind assistance, not only from friends, but also from strangers to whom I had applied in cases where special knowledge could alone throw light on some obscure point. My acknowledgments I have in most instances made in my notes. In some cases, either through want of opportunity or forgetfulness, this has not been done. I gladly avail myself of the present opportunity to remedy this deficiency. The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres I have to thank for so liberally allowing the original of the famous Round Robin, which is in his Lordship's possession, to be reproduced by a photographic process for this edition. It is by the kindness of Mr. J. L. G. Mowat, M.A., Fellow and Bursar of Pembroke College, Oxford, that I have been able to make a careful examination of the Johnsonian manuscripts

¹ To this interesting and accurate publication I am indebted for many valuable notes.

² *Post*, iii. 59, n. 3.

in which our college is so rich. If the vigilance with which he keeps guard over these treasures while they are being inspected is continued by his successors in office, the college will never have to mourn over the loss of a single leaf. To the Rev. W. D. Macray, M.A., of the manuscript department of the Bodleian, to Mr. Falconer Madan, M.A., Sub-Librarian of the same Library, and to Mr. George Parker, one of the Assistants, I am indebted for the kindness with which they have helped me in my inquiries. To Mr. W. H. Allnutt, another of the Assistants, I owe still more. When I was abroad, I too frequently, I fear, troubled him with questions which no one could have answered who was not well versed in bibliographical lore. It was not often that his acuteness was baffled, while his kindness was never exhausted. My old friend Mr. E. J. Payne, M.A., Fellow of University College, Oxford, the learned editor of the *Select Works of Burke* published by the Clarendon Press, has allowed me, whenever I pleased, to draw on his extensive knowledge of the history and the literature of the eighteenth century. Mr. C. G. Crump, B.A., of Balliol College, Oxford, has traced for me not a few of the quotations which had baffled my search. To Mr. G. K. Fortescue, Superintendent of the Reading Room of the British Museum, my most grateful acknowledgments are due. His accurate and extensive knowledge of books and his unfailing courtesy and kindness have lightened many a day's heavy work in the spacious room over which he so worthily presides. But most of all am I indebted to Mr. C. E. Doble, M.A., of the Clarendon Press. He has read all my proof-sheets, and by his almost unrivalled knowledge of the men of letters of the close of the seventeenth and of the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, he has saved my notes from some blunders and has enriched them with much valuable information. In my absence abroad he has in more instances than I care to think of consulted for me the Bodleian Library

Library. It is some relief to my conscience to know that the task was rendered lighter to him by his intimate familiarity with its treasures, and by the deep love for literature with which he is inspired.

There are other thanks due which I cannot here fittingly express. 'An author partakes of the common condition of humanity; he is born and married like another man; he has hopes and fears, expectations and disappointments, griefs and joys like a courtier or a statesman¹.' In the hopes and fears, in the expectations and disappointments, in the griefs and joys—nay, in the very labours of his literary life, if his hearth is not a solitary one, he has those who largely share.

I have now come to the end of my long labours. 'There are few things not purely evil,' wrote Johnson, 'of which we can say without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last*².' From this emotion I cannot feign that I am free. My book has been my companion in many a sad and many a happy hour. I take leave of it with a pang of regret, but I am cheered by the hope that it may take its place, if a lowly one, among the works of men who have laboured patiently but not unsuccessfully in the great and shining fields of English literature.

G. B. H.

CLARENS, SWITZERLAND:

March 16, 1887.

¹ Johnson's *Works*, ed. 1825, vol. iv. p. 446.

² *Post*, i. 384, n. 3.

DEDICATION.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

MY DEAR SIR,

EVERY liberal motive that can actuate an Author in the dedication of his labours, concurs in directing me to you, as the person to whom the following Work should be inscribed.

If there be a pleasure in celebrating the distinguished merit of a contemporary, mixed with a certain degree of vanity not altogether inexcusable, in appearing fully sensible of it, where can I find one, in complimenting whom I can with more general approbation gratify those feelings? Your excellence not only in the Art over which you have long presided with unrivalled fame, but also in Philosophy and elegant Literature, is well known to the present, and will continue to be the admiration of future ages. Your equal and placid temper¹, your variety of conversation, your true politeness, by which you are so amiable in private society, and that enlarged hospitality which has long made your house a common centre of union for the great, the accomplished, the learned, and the ingenious; all these qualities I can, in perfect confidence of not being accused of flattery, ascribe to you.

If a man may indulge an honest pride, in having it known to the world, that he has been thought worthy of particular

¹ Johnson said of him:—'Sir Joshua Reynolds is the same all the year round;' *post*, March 28, 1776. Boswell elsewhere describes him as 'he who used to be looked upon as perhaps the most happy man in the world.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 344.

attention by a person of the first eminence in the age in which he lived, whose company has been universally courted, I am justified in availing myself of the usual privilege of a Dedication, when I mention that there has been a long and uninterrupted friendship between us.

If gratitude should be acknowledged for favours received, I have this opportunity, my dear Sir, most sincerely to thank you for the many happy hours which I owe to your kindness,—for the cordiality with which you have at all times been pleased to welcome me,—for the number of valuable acquaintances to whom you have introduced me,—for the *noctes cœnæque Deum*¹, which I have enjoyed under your roof².

If a work should be inscribed to one who is master of the subject of it, and whose approbation, therefore, must ensure it credit and success, the *Life of Dr. Johnson* is, with the greatest propriety, dedicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was the intimate and beloved friend of that great man; the friend, whom he declared to be ‘the most invulnerable man he knew; whom, if he should quarrel with him, he should find the most difficulty how to abuse.’ You, my dear Sir, studied him, and knew him well: you venerated and admired him. Yet, luminous as he was upon the whole, you

¹ ‘O noctes cœnæque Deum!’

‘O joyous nights! delicious feasts!

At which the gods might be my guests.’

Francis. Horace, *Sat.* ii. 6. 65.

² Six years before this Dedication Sir Joshua had conferred on him another favour. ‘I have a proposal to make to you,’ Boswell had written to him, ‘I am for certain to be called to the English bar next February. Will you now do my picture? and the price shall be paid out of the first fees which I receive as a barrister in Westminster Hall. Or if that fund should fail, it shall be paid at any rate five years hence by myself or my representatives.’ Boswell told him at the same time that the debts which he had contracted in his father’s lifetime would not be cleared off for some years. The letter was endorsed by Sir Joshua:—‘I agree to the above conditions;’ and the portrait was painted. Taylor’s *Reynolds*, ii. 477.

² See Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Aug. 24, 1773.

perceived all the shades which mingled in the grand composition; all the little peculiarities and slight blemishes which marked the literary Colossus. Your very warm commendation of the specimen which I gave in my *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, of my being able to preserve his conversation in an authentick and lively manner, which opinion the Publick has confirmed, was the best encouragement for me to persevere in my purpose of producing the whole of my stores¹.

In one respect, this Work will, in some passages, be different from the former. In my *Tour*, I was almost unboundedly open in my communications, and from my eagerness to display the wonderful fertility and readiness of Johnson's wit, freely shewed to the world its dexterity, even when I was myself the object of it. I trusted that I should be liberally understood, as knowing very well what I was about, and by no means as simply unconscious of the pointed effects of the satire. I own, indeed, that I was arrogant enough to suppose that the tenour of the rest of the book would sufficiently guard me against such a strange imputation. But it seems I judged too well of the world; for, though I could scarcely believe it, I have been undoubtedly informed, that many persons, especially in distant quarters, not penetrating enough into Johnson's character, so as to understand his mode of treating his friends, have arraigned my judgement, instead of seeing that I was sensible of all that they could observe.

It is related of the great Dr. Clarke², that when in one of

¹ 'I surely have the art of writing agreeably. The Lord Chancellor [Thurlow] told me he had read every word of my *Hebridian Journal*;' he could not help it; adding, 'could you give a rule how to write a book that a man *must* read? I believe Longinus could not.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 322.

² Boswell perhaps quotes from memory the following* passage in Goldsmith's *Life of Nash*:—'The doctor was one day conversing with Locke and two or three more of his learned and intimate companions with that freedom, gaiety, and cheerfulness, which is ever the result of innocence. In the midst of their mirth and laughter, the

his leisure hours he was unbending himself with a few friends in the most playful and frolicsome manner, he observed Beau Nash approaching; upon which he suddenly stopped:—‘My boys, (said he,) let us be grave: here comes a fool.’ The world, my friend, I have found to be a great fool, as to that particular, on which it has become necessary to speak very plainly. I have, therefore, in this Work been more reserved¹, and though I tell nothing but the truth, I have still kept in my mind that the whole truth is not always to be exposed. This, however, I have managed so as to occasion no diminution of the pleasure which my book should afford; though malignity may sometimes be disappointed of its gratifications.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Your much obliged friend,

And faithful humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

London,

April 20, 1791.

doctor, looking from the window, saw Nash’s chariot stop at the door. “Boys, boys,” cried the philosopher, “let us now be wise, for here is a fool coming,”” Cunningham’s *Goldsmith’s Works*, iv. 96. Dr. Warton in his criticism on Pope’s line

‘Unthought of frailties cheat us in the wise,’

(*Moral Essays*, i. 69)

says:—‘For who could imagine that Dr. Clarke valued himself for his agility, and frequently amused himself in a private room of his house in leaping over the tables and chairs.’ Warton’s *Essay on Pope*, ii. 125. ‘It is a good remark of Montaigne’s,’ wrote Goldsmith, ‘that the wisest men often have friends with whom they do not care how much they play the fool.’ Forster’s *Goldsmith*, i. 166. Mr. Seward says in his *Anecdotes*, ii. 320, that ‘in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, Dr. Clarke was the most complete literary character that England ever produced.’ For Dr. Clarke’s sermons see *post*, April 7, 1778.

¹ See *post*, Oct. 16, 1769, note.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

I AT last deliver to the world a Work which I have long promised, and of which, I am afraid, too high expectations have been raised.¹ The delay of its publication must be imputed, in a considerable degree, to the extraordinary zeal which has been shewn by distinguished persons in all quarters to supply me with additional information concerning its illustrious subject; resembling in this the grateful tribes of ancient nations, of which every individual was eager to throw a stone upon the grave of a departed Hero, and thus to share in the pious office of erecting an honourable monument to his memory.²

¹ How much delighted would Boswell have been, had he been shewn the following passage, recorded by Miss Burney, in an account she gives of a conversation with the Queen:—THE QUEEN:—‘Miss Burney, have you heard that Boswell is going to publish a life of your friend Dr. Johnson?’ ‘No, ma’am!’ ‘I tell you as I heard, I don’t know for the truth of it, and I can’t tell what he will do. He is so extraordinary a man that perhaps he will devise something extraordinary.’ *Mme. D’Arblay’s Diary*, ii. 400. ‘Dr. Johnson’s history,’ wrote Horace Walpole, on June 20, 1785, ‘though he is going to have as many lives as a cat, might be reduced to four lines; but I shall wait to extract the quintessence till Sir John Hawkins, Madame Piozzi, and Mr. Boswell have produced their quartos.’ Horace Walpole’s *Letters*, viii. 557.

² The delay was in part due to Boswell’s dissipation and place-hunting, as is shewn by the following passages in his *Letters* to Temple:—‘Feb. 24, 1788, I have been wretchedly dissipated, so that I have not

The

The labour and anxious attention with which I have collected and arranged the materials of which these volumes are composed, will hardly be conceived by those who read them with careless facility.¹ The stretch of mind and prompt assiduity by which so many conversations were preserved,² I myself, at

written a line for a fortnight.' p. 266. 'Nov. 28, 1789, Malone's hospitality, and my other invitations, and particularly my attendance at Lord Lonsdale's, have lost us many evenings.' *Ib.* p. 311. 'June 21, 1790, How unfortunate to be obliged to interrupt my work! Never was a poor ambitious projector more mortified. I am suffering without any prospect of reward, and only from my own folly.' *Ib.* p. 326.

¹ 'You cannot imagine what labour, what perplexity, what vexation I have endured in arranging a prodigious multiplicity of materials, in supplying omissions, in searching for papers, buried in different masses, and all this besides the exertion of composing and polishing; many a time have I thought of giving it up.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 311.

² Boswell writing to Temple in 1775, says:—'I try to keep a journal, and shall shew you that I have done tolerably; but it is hardly credible what ground I go over, and what a variety of men and manners I contemplate in a day; and all the time I myself am *pars magna*, for my exuberant spirits will not let me listen enough.' *Ib.* p. 188. Mr. Barclay said that 'he had seen Boswell lay down his knife and fork, and take out his tablets, in order to register a good anecdote.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 837. The account given by Paoli to Miss Burney, shows that very early in life Boswell took out his tablets:—'He came to my country, and he fetched me some letter of recommending him; but I was of the belief he might be an impostor, and I supposed in my mite he was an espy; for I look away from him, and in a moment I look to him again, and I behold his tablets. Oh! he was to the work of writing down all I say. Indeed I was angry. But soon I discover he was no impostor and no espy; and I only find I was myself the monster he had come to discern. Oh! he is a very good man; I love him indeed; so cheerful, so gay, so pleasant! but at the first, oh! I was indeed angry.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 155. Boswell not only recorded the conversations, he often stimulated them. On one occasion 'he assumed,' he said, 'an air of ignorance to incite Dr. Johnson to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address.' See *post*, April 12, 1776. 'Tom Tyers,' said Johnson, 'described me the best. He once said to me, "Sir, you are like a ghost: you never speak till you are spoken to."' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 20, 1773. Boswell writing

some

some distance of time, contemplate with wonder; and I must be allowed to suggest, that the nature of the work, in other respects, as it consists of innumerable detached particulars, all which, even the most minute, I have spared no pains to ascertain with a scrupulous authenticity, has occasioned a degree of trouble far beyond that of any other species of composition. Were I to detail the books which I have consulted, and the inquiries which I have found it necessary to make by various channels, I should probably be thought ridiculously ostentatious. Let me only observe, as a specimen of my trouble, that I have sometimes been obliged to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly; which, when I had accomplished, I well knew would obtain me no praise, though a failure would have been to my discredit. And after all, perhaps, hard as it may be, I shall not be surprized if omissions or mistakes be pointed out with invidious severity. I have also been extremely careful as to the exactness of my quotations; holding that there is a respect due to the publick which should oblige every Author to attend to this, and never to presume to introduce them with,—‘I think I have read;’—or,—‘If I remember right;’—when the originals may be examined¹.

of this Tour said:—‘I also may be allowed to claim some merit in leading the conversation; I do not mean leading, as in an orchestra, by playing the first fiddle; but leading as one does in examining a witness—starting topics, and making him pursue them.’ *Ib.* Sept. 28. One day he recorded:—‘I did not exert myself to get Dr. Johnson to talk, that I might not have the labour of writing down his conversation.’ *Ib.* Sept. 7. His industry grew much less towards the close of Johnson’s life. Under May 8, 1781, he records:—‘Of his conversation on that and other occasions during this period, I neglected to keep any regular record.’ On May 15, 1783:—‘I have no minute of any interview with Johnson [from May 1] till May 15.’ May 15, 1784:—‘Of these days and others on which I saw him I have no memorials.’

¹ It is an interesting question how far Boswell derived his love of truth from himself, and how far from Johnson’s training. He was one of Johnson’s *school*. He himself quotes Reynolds’s observation, ‘that all who were of his *school* are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree if

I beg

I beg leave to express my warmest thanks to those who have been pleased to favour me with communications and advice in the conduct of my Work. But I cannot sufficiently acknowledge my obligations to my friend Mr. Malone, who was so good as to allow me to read to him almost the whole of my manuscript, and make such remarks as were greatly for the advantage of the Work¹; though it is but fair to him to mention, that upon many occasions I differed from him, and followed my own judgement. I regret exceedingly that I was deprived of the benefit of his revision, when not more than one half of the book had passed through the press; but after having completed his very laborious and admirable edition of Shakspeare, for which he generously would accept of no other reward but that fame which he has so deservedly obtained, he fulfilled his promise of a long-wished-for visit to his relations in Ireland; from whence his safe return finibus Atticis is desired by his friends here, with all the classical ardour of Sic te Diva potens Cypri²; for there is no man in whom more elegant and worthy qualities are united; and whose society, therefore, is more valued by those who know him.

It is painful to me to think, that while I was carrying on this Work, several of those to whom it would have been most interesting have died. Such melancholy disappointments we know to be incident to humanity; but we do not feel them the

they had not been acquainted with Johnson' (*post*, under March 30, 1778). Writing to Temple in 1789, he said:—'Johnson taught me to cross-question in common life.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 280. His quotations, nevertheless, are not unfrequently inaccurate. Yet to him might fairly be applied the words that Gibbon used of Tillemont:—'His inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 213.

¹ 'The revision of my *Life of Johnson*, by so acute and knowing a critic as Mr. Malone, is of most essential consequence, especially as he is *Johnsonianissimus*.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 310. A few weeks earlier he had written:—'Yesterday afternoon Malone and I made ready for the press thirty pages of Johnson's *Life*; he is much pleased with it; but I feel a sad indifference [he had lately lost his wife], and he says I have not the use of my faculties.' *Ib.* p. 308.

² Horace, *Odes*, i. 3. 1.

less. Let me particularly lament the Reverend Thomas Warton, and the Reverend Dr. Adams. Mr. Warton, amidst his variety of genius and learning, was an excellent Biographer. His contributions to my Collection are highly estimable; and as he had a true relish of my Tour to the Hebrides, I trust I should now have been gratified with a larger share of his kind approbation. Dr. Adams, eminent as the Head of a College, as a writer¹, and as a most amiable man, had known Johnson from his early years, and was his friend through life. What reason I had to hope for the countenance of that venerable Gentleman to this Work, will appear from what he wrote to me upon a former occasion from Oxford, November 17, 1785:—‘Dear Sir, I hazard this letter, not knowing where it will find you, to thank you for your very agreeable Tour, which I found here on my return from the country, and in which you have depicted our friend so perfectly to my fancy, in every attitude, every scene and situation, that I have thought myself in the company, and of the party almost throughout. It has given very general satisfaction; and those who have found most fault with a passage here and there, have agreed that they could not help going through, and being entertained with the whole. I wish, indeed, some few gross expressions had been softened, and a few of our hero’s foibles had been a little more shaded; but it is useful to see the weaknesses incident to great minds; and you have given us Dr. Johnson’s authority that in history all ought to be told².’

Such a sanction to my faculty of giving a just representation of Dr. Johnson I could not conceal. Nor will I suppress my satisfaction in the consciousness, that by recording so considerable a portion of the wisdom and wit of ‘the brightest

¹ He had published an answer to Hume’s *Essay on Miracles*. See *post*, March 20, 1776.

² ‘Macleod asked if it was not wrong in Orrery to expose the defects of a man [Swift] with whom he lived in intimacy. Johnson, “Why no, Sir, after the man is dead; for then it is done historically.”’ Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Sept. 22, 1773. See also *post*, Sept. 17, 1777.

ornament of the eighteenth century¹, 'I have largely provided for the instruction and entertainment of mankind.

London, April 20, 1791².

¹ See Mr. Malone's Preface to his edition of Shakspeare. BOSWELL.
² 'April 6, 1791.

'My *Life of Johnson* is at last drawing to a close . . . I really hope to publish it on the 25th current . . . I am at present in such bad spirits that I have every fear concerning it—that I may get no profit, nay, may lose—that the Public may be disappointed, and think that I have done it poorly—that I may make many enemies, and even have quarrels. Yet perhaps the very reverse of all this may happen.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 335.

'August 22, 1791.

'My *magnum opus* sells wonderfully; twelve hundred are now gone, and we hope the whole seventeen hundred may be gone before Christmas.' *Ib.* p. 342.

Malone in his Preface to the fourth edition, dated June 20, 1804, says that 'near four thousand copies have been dispersed.' The first edition was in 2 vols., quarto; the second (1793) in 3 vols., octavo; the third (1799), the fourth (1804), the fifth (1807), and the sixth (1811), were each in 4 vols., octavo. The last four were edited by Malone, Boswell having died while he was preparing notes for the third edition.

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TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THAT I was anxious for the success of a Work which had employed much of my time and labour, I do not wish to conceal: but whatever doubts I at any time entertained, have been entirely removed by the very favourable reception with which it has been honoured¹. That reception has excited my best exertions to render my Book more perfect; and in this endeavour I have had the assistance not only of some of my particular friends, but of many other learned and ingenious men, by which I have been enabled to rectify some mistakes, and to enrich the Work with many valuable additions. These I have ordered to be printed separately in quarto, for the accommodation of the purchasers of the first edition². May I be permitted to say that the typography of both editions does honour to the press of Mr. Henry Baldwin, now Master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, whom I have long known as a worthy man and an obliging friend.

In the strangely mixed scenes of human existence, our feelings are often at once pleasing and painful. Of this truth, the progress of the present Work furnishes a striking instance. It was highly gratifying to me that my friend, Sir Joshua

¹ 'Burke affirmed that Boswell's *Life* was a greater monument to Johnson's fame than all his writings put together.' *Life of Mackintosh*, i. 92.

² It is a pamphlet of forty-two pages, under the title of *The Principal Corrections and Additions to the First Edition of Mr. Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson*. Price two shillings and sixpence.

Reynolds,

Reynolds, to whom it is inscribed, lived to peruse it, and to give the strongest testimony to its fidelity; but before a second edition, which he contributed to improve, could be finished, the world has been deprived of that most valuable man¹; a loss of which the regret will be deep, and lasting, and extensive, proportionate to the felicity which he diffused through a wide circle of admirers and friends².

In reflecting that the illustrious subject of this Work, by being more extensively and intimately known, however elevated before, has risen in the veneration and love of mankind, I feel a satisfaction beyond what fame can afford. We cannot, indeed, too much or too often admire his wonderful powers of mind, when we consider that the principal store of wit and wisdom which this Work contains, was not a particular selection from his general conversation, but was merely his occasional talk at such times as I had the good fortune to be in his company³; and, without doubt, if his discourse at other periods

¹ Reynolds died on Feb. 23, 1792.

² Sir Joshua in his will left £200 to Mr. Boswell 'to be expended, if he thought proper, in the purchase of a picture at the sale of his paintings, to be kept for his sake.' Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 636.

³ Of the seventy-five years that Johnson lived, he and Boswell did not spend two years and two months in the same neighbourhood. Excluding the time they were together on their tour to the Hebrides, they were dwelling within reach of each other a few weeks less than two years. Moreover, when they were apart, there were great gaps in their correspondence. Between Dec. 8, 1763, and Jan. 14, 1766, and again between Nov. 10, 1769, and June 20, 1771, during which periods they did not meet, Boswell did not receive a single letter from Johnson. The following table shows the times they were in the same neighbourhood.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1763, May 16 to Aug. 6, | London. |
| 1766, a few days in February, | " |
| 1768, " " March, | Oxford. |
| 1768, " " May, | London. |
| 1769, end of Sept. to Nov. 10, | " |
| 1772, March 21 to about May 10, | " |
| 1773, April 3 to May 10, | " |
| " Aug. 14 to Nov. 22, | Scotland. |
| 1775, March 21 to April 18, May 2 to May 23, | London. |

had

had been collected with the same attention, the whole tenor of what he uttered would have been found equally excellent.

His strong, clear, and animated enforcement of religion, morality, loyalty, and subordination, while it delights and improves the wise and the good, will, I trust, prove an effectual antidote to that detestable sophistry which has been lately imported from France, under the false name of Philosophy, and with a malignant industry has been employed against the peace, good order, and happiness of society, in our free and prosperous country; but thanks be to GOD, without producing the pernicious effects which were hoped for by its propagators.

It seems to me, in my moments of self-complacency, that this extensive biographical work, however inferior in its nature, may in one respect be assimilated to the ODYSSEY. Amidst a thousand entertaining and instructive episodes the HERO is never long out of sight; for they are all in some degree connected with him; and HE, in the whole course of the History, is exhibited by the Authour for the best advantage of his readers.

‘— Quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssen!’

Should there be any cold-blooded and morose mortals who really dislike this Book, I will give them a story to apply.

| | |
|--|--|
| 1776, March 15 to May 16, with an interval of about a fortnight, when Johnson was at Bath and Boswell at London, | } London, Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield, Ashbourne, and Bath. |
| 1777, Sept. 14 to Sept. 24, | |
| 1778, March 18 to May 19, | |
| 1779, March 15 to May 3, | |
| „ Oct. 4 to Oct. 18, | |
| 1781, March 19 to June 5, | London and Southill. |
| 1783, March 21 to May 30, | London. |
| 1784, May 5 to June 30, | London and Oxford. |

‘To shew what wisdom and what sense can do,
The poet sets Ulysses in our view.’

Francis. Horace, *Ep.* i. 2. 17.

When

When the great Duke of Marlborough, accompanied by Lord Cadogan, was one day reconnoitering the army in Flanders, a heavy rain came on, and they both called for their cloaks. Lord Cadogan's servant, a good humoured alert lad, brought his Lordship's in a minute. The Duke's servant, a lazy sulky dog, was so sluggish, that his Grace being wet to the skin, reproved him, and had for answer with a grunt, 'I came as fast as I could,' upon which the Duke calmly said, 'Cadogan, I would not for a thousand pounds have that fellow's temper.'

There are some men, I believe, who have, or think they have, a very small share of vanity. Such may speak of their literary fame in a decorous style of diffidence. But I confess, that I am so formed by nature and by habit, that to restrain the effusion of delight, on having obtained such fame, to me would be truly painful. Why then should I suppress it? Why 'out of the abundance of the heart' should I not speak¹? Let me then mention with a warm, but no insolent exultation, that I have been regaled with spontaneous praise of my work by many and various persons eminent for their rank, learning, talents and accomplishments; much of which praise I have under their hands to be repositied in my archives at Auchinleck². An honourable and reverend friend speaking of the favourable reception of my volumes, even in the circles of fashion and elegance, said to me, 'you have made them all talk Johnson,'—Yes, I may add, I have Johnsonised the land; and I trust they will not only talk, but think, Johnson.

To enumerate those to whom I have been thus indebted, would be tediously ostentatious. I cannot however but name one whose praise is truly valuable, not only on account of his knowledge and abilities, but on account of the magnificent, yet

¹ In his *Letter to the People of Scotland*, p. 92, he wrote:—'Allow me, my friends and countrymen, while I with honest zeal maintain your cause—allow me to indulge a little more my own egotism and vanity. They are the indigenous plants of my mind; they distinguish it. I may prune their luxuriancy; but I must not entirely clear it of them; for then I should be no longer "as I am;" and perhaps there might be something not so good.'

² See *post*, April 17, 1778, note.

dangerous embassy, in which he is now employed¹, which makes every thing that relates to him peculiarly interesting. Lord MACARTNEY favoured me with his own copy of my book, with a number of notes, of which I have availed myself. On the first leaf I found in his Lordship's hand-writing, an inscription of such high commendation, that even I, vain as I am, cannot prevail on myself to publish it.

[July 1, 1793².]

¹ Lord Macartney was the first English ambassador to the Court of Peking. He left England in 1792 and returned in 1794.

² Boswell writing to Temple ten days earlier had said:—'Behold my *hand!* the robbery is only of a few shillings; but the cut on my head and bruises on my arms were sad things, and confined me to bed, in pain, and fever, and helplessness, as a child, many days. . . . This shall be a crisis in my life: I trust I shall henceforth be a sober regular man. Indeed, my indulgence in wine has, of late years especially, been excessive.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 346.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

SEVERAL valuable letters, and other curious matter, having been communicated to the Author too late to be arranged in that chronological order which he had endeavoured uniformly to observe in his work, he was obliged to introduce them in his Second Edition, by way of ADDENDA, as commodiously as he could. In the present edition these have been distributed in their proper places. In revising his volumes for a new edition, he had pointed out where some of these materials should be inserted; but unfortunately in the midst of his labours, he was seized with a fever, of which, to the great regret of all his friends, he died on the 19th of May, 1795¹. All the Notes

¹ On this day his brother wrote to Mr. Temple: 'I have now the painful task of informing you that my dear brother expired this morning at two o'clock; we have both lost a kind, affectionate friend, and I shall never have such another.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 357. What was probably Boswell's last letter is as follows:—

'MY DEAR TEMPLE,

'I would fain write to you in my own hand, but really cannot. [These words, which are hardly legible, and probably the last poor Boswell ever wrote, afford the clearest evidence of his utter physical prostration.] Alas, my friend, what a state is this! My son James is to write for me what remains of this letter, and I am to dictate. The pain which continued for so many weeks was very severe indeed, and when it went off I thought myself quite well; but I soon felt a conviction that I was by no means as I should be—so exceedingly weak, as my miserable attempt to write to you afforded a full proof. All then that can be said is, that I must wait with patience. But, O my friend!

that he had written in the margin of the copy which he had in part revised, are here faithfully preserved; and a few new Notes have been added, principally by some of those friends to whom the Author in the former editions acknowledged his obligations. Those subscribed with the letter B, were communicated by Dr. Burney: those to which the letters J B are annexed, by the Rev. J. Blakeway, of Shrewsbury, to whom Mr. Boswell acknowledged himself indebted for some judicious remarks on the first edition of his work: and the letters J B—O. are annexed to some remarks furnished by the Author's second son, a Student of Brazen-Nose College in Oxford. Some valuable observations were communicated by James Bindley, Esq. First Commissioner in the Stamp-Office, which have been acknowledged in their proper places. For all those without any signature, Mr. Malone is answerable.—Every new remark, not written by the Author, for the sake of distinction has been enclosed within crotchets: in one instance, however, the printer by mistake has affixed this mark to a note relative to the Rev. Thomas Fysche Palmer, which was written by Mr. Boswell, and therefore ought not to have been thus distinguished.

I have only to add, that the proof-sheets of the present edition not having passed through my hands, I am not answerable for any typographical errors that may be found in it. Having, however, been printed at the very accurate press of Mr. Baldwin, I make no doubt it will be found not less perfect than the former edition; the greatest care having been taken, by correctness and elegance to do justice to one of the most instructive and entertaining works in the English language.

EDMOND MALONE¹.

April 8, 1799.

how strange is it that, at this very time of my illness, you and Miss Temple should have been in such a dangerous state. Much occasion for thankfulness is there that it has not been worse with you. Pray write, or make somebody write frequently. I feel myself a good deal stronger to-day, notwithstanding the scrawl. God bless you, my dear Temple! I ever am your old and affectionate friend, here and I trust hereafter.

JAMES BOSWELL.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 353.

¹ Malone died on May 25, 1812.

A

CHRONOLOGICAL CATALOGUE

OF THE

PROSE WORKS¹ OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

[N. B. To those which he himself acknowledged is added *acknowl.* To those which may be fully believed to be his from internal evidence, is added *intern. evid.*]

1735. ABRIDGEMENT and translation of Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia. *acknowl.*

1738. Part of a translation of Father Paul Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent. *acknowl.*

[N. B. As this work after some sheets were printed, suddenly stopped, I know not whether any part of it is now to be found.]

For the Gentleman's Magazine.

Preface. *intern. evid.*

Life of Father Paul. *acknowl.*

1739. A complete vindication of the Licenser of the Stage from the malicious and scandalous aspersions of Mr. Brooke, authour of Gustavus Vasa. *acknowl.*

¹I do not here include his Poetical Works; for, excepting his Latin Translation of Pope's *Messiah*, his *London*, and his *Vanity of Human Wishes* imitated from *Juvenal*; his Prologue on the opening of Drury-Lane Theatre by Mr. Garrick, and his *Irene*, a Tragedy, they are very numerous, and in general short; and I have promised a complete edition of them, in which I shall with the utmost care ascertain their authenticity, and illustrate them with notes and various readings. BOSWELL. Boswell's meaning, though not well expressed, is clear enough. Mr. Croker needlessly suggests that he wrote 'they are *not* very numerous.' Boswell a second time (*post*, under Aug. 12, 1784. note) mentions his intention to edit Johnson's poems. He died without doing it. See also *post*, 1750, Boswell's note on Addison's style.

Marmor

Marmor Norfolciense: or, an Essay on an ancient prophetic inscription in monkish rhyme, lately discovered near Lynne in Norfolk; by PROBUS BRITANNICUS. *acknowl.*

For the Gentleman's Magazine.

Life of Boerhaave. *acknowl.*

Address to the Reader. *intern. evid.*

Appeal to the Publick in Behalf of the Editor. *intern. evid.*

Considerations on the case of Dr. Trapp's Sermons; a plausible attempt to prove that an authour's work may be abridged without injuring his property. *acknowl.*

1740. *For the Gentleman's Magazine.*

Preface. *intern. evid.*

Life of Admiral Drake. *acknowl.*

Life of Admiral Blake. *acknowl.*

Life of Philip Barretier. *acknowl.*

Essays on Epitaphs. *acknowl.*

1741. *For the Gentleman's Magazine.*

Preface. *intern. evid.*

A free translation of the Jestes of Hierocles, with an introduction. *intern. evid.*

Debate on the *Humble Petition and Advice* of the Rump Parliament to Cromwell in 1657, to assume the Title of King; abridged, methodized and digested. *intern. evid.*

Translation of Abbé Guyon's Dissertation on the Amazons. *intern. evid.*

Translation of Fontenelle's Panegyrick on Dr. Morin. *intern. evid.*

1742. *For the Gentleman's Magazine.*

Preface. *intern. evid.*

Essay on the Account of the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough. *acknowl.*

An Account of the Life of Peter Burman. *acknowl.*

The Life of Sydenham, afterwards prefixed to Dr. Swan's edition of his Works. *acknowl.*

Proposals for printing Bibliotheca Harleiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford, afterwards prefixed to

to the first Volume of that Catalogue, in which the Latin Accounts of the Books were written by him. *acknowl.*
Abridgement intitled, Foreign History. *intern. evid.*
Essay on the Description of China, from the French of Du Halde. *intern. evid.*

1743. Dedication to Dr. Mead of Dr. James's Medicinal Dictionary. *intern. evid.*

For the Gentleman's Magazine.

Preface. *intern. evid.*

Parliamentary Debates under the Name of Debates in the Senate of Lilliput, from Nov. 19, 1740, to Feb. 23, 1742-3, inclusive. *acknowl.*

Considerations on the Dispute between Crousaz and Warburton on Pope's Essay on Man. *intern. evid.*

A Letter announcing that the Life of Mr. Savage was speedily to be published by a person who was favoured with his Confidence. *intern. evid.*

Advertisement for Osborne concerning the Harleian Catalogue. *intern. evid.*

1744. Life of Richard Savage. *acknowl.*
Preface to the Harleian Miscellany. *acknowl.*

For the Gentleman's Magazine.

Preface. *intern. evid.*

1745. Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with remarks on Sir T. H.'s (Sir Thomas Hanmer's) Edition of Shakspeare, and proposals for a new Edition of that Poet. *acknowl.*
1747. Plan for a Dictionary of the ENGLISH LANGUAGE, addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield. *acknowl.*

For the Gentleman's Magazine.

1748. Life of Roscommon. *acknowl.*
Foreign History, November. *intern. evid.*

For Dodsley's PRECEPTOR.

Preface. *acknowl.*

Vision of Theodore the Hermit. *acknowl.*

1750. The RAMBLER, the first Paper of which was published 20th
of

- of March this year, and the last 17th of March, 1752, the day on which Mrs. Johnson died. *acknowl.*
- Letter in the General Advertiser to excite the attention of the Publick to the Performance of Comus, which was next day to be acted at Drury-Lane Playhouse for the Benefit of Milton's Granddaughter. *acknowl.*
- Preface and Postscript to Lauder's Pamphlet intituled, 'An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost.' *acknowl.*
1751. Life of Cheynel in the Miscellany called 'The Student.' *acknowl.*
- Letter for Lauder, addressed to the Reverend Dr. John Douglas, acknowledging his Fraud concerning Milton in Terms of suitable Contrition. *acknowl.*
- Dedication to the Earl of Middlesex of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox's 'Female Quixotte.' *intern. evid.*¹
1753. Dedication to John Earl of Orrery, of Shakspeare Illustrated, by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox. *acknowl.*
- During this and the following year he wrote and gave to his much loved friend Dr. Bathurst the Papers in the Adventurer, signed T. *acknowl.*
1754. Life of Edw. Cave in the Gentleman's Magazine. *acknowl.*
1755. A DICTIONARY, with a Grammar and History, of the ENGLISH LANGUAGE. *acknowl.*
- An Account of an Attempt to ascertain the Longitude at Sea, by an exact Theory of the Variations of the Magnetic Needle, with a Table of the Variations at the most remarkable Cities in Europe from the year 1660 to 1680. *acknowl.* This he wrote for Mr. Zachariah Williams, an ingenious ancient Welch Gentleman, father of Mrs. Anna Williams whom he for many years kindly lodged in his House. It was published with a Translation into Italian by Signor Baretti. In a Copy of it which he presented to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, is pasted a Character of the late Mr. Zachariah Williams, plainly written by Johnson. *intern. evid.*
1756. An Abridgement of his Dictionary. *acknowl.*
- Several Essays in the Universal Visitor, which there is

¹ The *Female Quixote* was published in 1752. See *post*, 1762, note.

some difficulty in ascertaining. All that are marked with two Asterisks have been ascribed to him, although I am confident from internal Evidence, that we should except from these 'The Life of Chaucer,' 'Reflections on the State of Portugal,' and 'An Essay on Architecture:' And from the same Evidence I am confident that he wrote 'Further Thoughts on Agriculture,' and 'A Dissertation on the State of Literature and Authours.' The Dissertation on the Epitaphs written by Pope he afterwards acknowledged, and added to his 'Idler.'

Life of Sir Thomas Browne prefixed to a new Edition of his Christian Morals. *acknowl.*

In the Literary Magazine; or, Universal Review, which began in January, 1756.

His *Original Essays* are

Preliminary Address. *intern. evid.*

An introduction to the Political State of Great Britain. *intern. evid.*

Remarks on the Militia Bill. *intern. evid.*

Observations on his Britannick Majesty's Treaties with the Empress of Russia and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. *intern. evid.*

Observations on the Present State of Affairs. *intern. evid.*

Memoirs of Frederick III. King of Prussia. *intern. evid.*

In the same Magazine his Reviews are of the following books :

'Birch's History of the Royal Society.'—'Browne's Christian Morals.'—'Warton's Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, Vol. I.'—'Hampton's Translation of Polybius.'—'Sir Isaac Newton's Arguments in Proof of a Deity.'—'Borlase's History of the Isles of Scilly.'—'Home's Experiments on Bleaching.'—'Browne's History of Jamaica.'—'Hales on Distilling Sea Waters, Ventilators in Ships, and curing an ill Taste in Milk.'—'Lucas's Essay on Waters.'—'Keith's Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops.'—'Philosophical Transactions, Vol. XLIX.'—'Miscellanies by Elizabeth Harrison.'—'Evans's Map and Account of the Middle Colonies in America.'

The

- ‘The Cadet, a Military Treatise.’—‘The Conduct of the Ministry relating to the present War impartially examined.’ *intern. evid.*
- ‘Mrs. Lennox’s Translation of Sully’s Memoirs.’—‘Letter on the Case of Admiral Byng.’—‘Appeal to the People concerning Admiral Byng.’—‘Hanway’s Eight Days’ Journey, and Essay on ‘Tea.’—‘Some further Particulars in Relation to the Case of Admiral Byng, by a Gentleman of Oxford.’ *acknowl.*
- Mr. Jonas Hanway having written an angry Answer to the Review of his Essay on Tea, Johnson in the same Collection made a Reply to it. *acknowl.* This is the only Instance, it is believed, when he condescended to take Notice of any Thing that had been written against him; and here his chief Intention seems to have been to make Sport.
- Dedication to the Earl of Rochford of, and Preface to, Mr. Payne’s Introduction to the Game of Draughts. *acknowl.*
- Introduction to the London Chronicle, an Evening Paper which still subsists with deserved credit. *acknowl.*
1757. Speech on the Subject of an Address to the Throne after the Expedition to Rochefort; delivered by one of his Friends in some publick Meeting: it is printed in the Gentleman’s Magazine for October 1785. *intern. evid.*
- The first two Paragraphs of the Preface to Sir William Chambers’s Designs of Chinese Buildings, &c. *acknowl.*
1758. THE IDLER, which began April 5, in this year, and was continued till April 5, 1760. *acknowl.*
- An Essay on the Bravery of the English Common Soldiers was added to it when published in Volumes. *acknowl.*
1759. Rasselas Prince of Abyssinia, a Tale. *acknowl.*
- Advertisement for the Proprietors of the Idler against certain Persons who pirated those Papers as they came out singly in a Newspaper called the Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette. *intern. evid.*
- For Mrs. Charlotte Lennox’s English Version of Brumoy, —‘A Dissertation on the Greek Comedy,’ and the General Conclusion of the Book. *intern. evid.*
- Introduction to the World Displayed, a Collection of Voyages and Travels. *acknowl.*

- Three Letters in the Gazetteer, concerning the best plan for Blackfriars Bridge. *acknowl.*
1760. Address of the Painters to George III. on his Accession to the Throne. *intern. evid.*
Dedication of Baretti's Italian and English Dictionary to the Marquis of Abreu, then Envoy-Extraordinary from Spain at the Court of Great-Britain. *intern. evid.*
Review in the Gentleman's Magazine of Mr. Tytler's acute and able Vindication of Mary Queen of Scots. *acknowl.*
Introduction to the Proceedings of the Committee for Cloathing the French Prisoners. *acknowl.*
1761. Preface to Rolt's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce. *acknowl.*
Corrections and Improvements for Mr. Gwyn the Architect's Pamphlet, intitled 'Thoughts on the Coronation of George III.' *acknowl.*
1762. Dedication to the King of the Reverend Dr. Kennedy's Complete System of Astronomical Chronology, unfolding the Scriptures, Quarto Edition. *acknowl.*
Concluding Paragraph of that Work. *intern. evid.*
Preface to the Catalogue of the Artists' Exhibition. *intern. evid.*
1763. Character of Collins in the Poetical Calendar, published by Fawkes and Woty. *acknowl.*
Dedication to the Earl of Shaftesbury of the Edition of Roger Ascham's English Works, published by the Reverend Mr. Bennet. *acknowl.*
The Life of Ascham, also prefixed to that edition. *acknowl.*
Review of 'Telemachus, a Masque, by the Reverend George Graham of Eton College, in the Critical Review. *acknowl.*
Dedication to the Queen of Mr. Hoole's Translation of Tasso. *acknowl.*
- Account of the Detection of the Imposture of the Cock-Lane Ghost, published in the Newspapers and Gentleman's Magazine. *acknowl.*
1764. Part of a Review of Grainger's 'Sugar Cane, a Poem,' in the London Chronicle. *acknowl.*
Review of Goldsmith's Traveller, a Poem, in the Critical Review. *acknowl.*

1765. The Plays of William Shakspeare, in eight volumes, 8vo. with Notes. *acknowl.*
1766. The Fountains, a Fairy Tale, in Mrs. Williams's Miscellanies. *acknowl.*
1767. Dedication to the King of Mr. Adams's Treatise on the Globes. *acknowl.*
1769. Character of the Reverend Mr. Zachariah Mudge, in the London Chronicle. *acknowl.*
1770. The False Alarm. *acknowl.*
1771. Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands. *acknowl.*
1772. Defence of a Schoolmaster; dictated to me for the House of Lords. *acknowl.*
Argument in Support of the Law of *Vicious Intromission*; dictated to me for the Court of Session in Scotland. *acknowl.*
1773. Preface to Macbean's 'Dictionary of Ancient Geography.' *acknowl.*
Argument in Favour of the Rights of Lay Patrons; dictated to me for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. *acknowl.*
1774. The Patriot. *acknowl.*
1775. A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland. *acknowl.*
Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, in Three Volumes Quarto. *acknowl.*
Preface to Baretti's Easy Lessons in Italian and English. *intern. evid.*
Taxation no Tyranny; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. *acknowl.*
Argument on the Case of Dr. Memis; dictated to me for the Court of Session in Scotland. *acknowl.*
Argument to prove that the Corporation of Stirling was corrupt; dictated to me for the House of Lords. *acknowl.*
1776. Argument in Support of the Right of immediate, and personal reprehension from the Pulpit; dictated to me. *acknowl.*
Proposals for publishing an Analysis of the Scotch Celtick Language, by the Reverend William Shaw. *acknowl.*
1777. Dedication to the King of the Posthumous Works of Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. *acknowl.*

- Additions to the Life and Character of that Prelate ; prefixed to those Works. *acknowl.*
- Various Papers and Letters in Favour of the Reverend Dr. Dodd. *acknowl.*
1780. Advertisement for his Friend Mr. Thrale to the Worthy Electors of the Borough of Southwark. *acknowl.*
- The first Paragraph of Mr. 'Thomas Davies's Life of Garrick. *acknowl.*
1781. Prefaces Biographical and Critical to the Works of the most eminent English Poets ; afterwards published with the Title of *Lives of the English Poets*¹. *acknowl.*
- Argument on the Importance of the Registration of Deeds ; dictated to me for an Election Committee of the House of Commons. *acknowl.*
- On the Distinction between TORY and WHIG ; dictated to me. *acknowl.*
- On Vicarious Punishments, and the great Propitiation for the Sins of the World, by JESUS CHRIST ; dictated to me. *acknowl.*
- Argument in favour of Joseph Knight, an African Negro, who claimed his Liberty in the Court of Session in Scotland, and obtained it ; dictated to me. *acknowl.*
- Defence of Mr. Robertson, Printer of the Caledonian Mercury, against the Society of Procurators in Edinburgh, for having inserted in his Paper a ludicrous Paragraph against them ; demonstrating that it was not an injurious Libel ; dictated to me. *acknowl.*
1782. The greatest part, if not the whole, of a Reply, by the Reverend Mr. Shaw, to a Person at Edinburgh, of the Name of Clark, refuting his arguments for the authenticity of the Poems published by Mr. James Macpherson as Translations from Ossian. *intern. evid.*
1784. List of the Authours of the Universal History, deposited in the British Museum, and printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for December, this year. *acknowl.*

¹ The first four volumes of the *Lives* were published in 1779, the last six in 1781.

Various Years.

Letters to Mrs. Thrale. *acknowl.*

Prayers and Meditations, which he delivered to the Rev. Mr. Strahan, enjoining him to publish them. *acknowl.*

Sermons *left for Publication* by John Taylor, LL.D. Prebendary of Westminster, and given to the World by the Reverend Samuel Hayes, A.M. *intern. evid.*

Such was the number and variety of the Prose Works of this extraordinary man, which I have been able to discover, and am at liberty to mention ; but we ought to keep in mind, that there must undoubtedly have been many more which are yet concealed ; and we may add to the account, the numerous Letters which he wrote, of which a considerable part are yet unpublished. It is hoped that those persons in whose possession they are, will favour the world with them.

JAMES BOSWELL.

‘ After my death I wish no other herald,
 ‘ No other speaker of my living actions,
 ‘ To keep mine honour from corruption,
 ‘ But such an honest chronicler as Griffith¹.’

SHAKSPEARE, *Henry VIII.* [Act IV. Sc. 2.]

¹ See Dr. Johnson’s letter to Mrs. Thrale, dated ‘Ostick in Skie, September 30, 1773 :—‘ Boswell writes a regular Journal of our travels, which I think contains as much of what I say and do, as of all other occurrences together ; “for such a faithful chronicler is Griffith.”’ BOSWELL. See *Piozzi Letters*, i. 159, where however we read ‘as Griffith.’

THE LIFE OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

TO write the Life of him who excelled all mankind in writing the lives of others, and who, whether we consider his extraordinary endowments, or his various works, has been equalled by few in any age, is an arduous, and may be reckoned in me a presumptuous task.

Had Dr. Johnson written his own life, in conformity with the opinion which he has given¹, that every man's life may be best written by himself; had he employed in the preservation of his own history, that clearness of narration and elegance of language in which he has embalmed so many eminent persons, the world would probably have had the most perfect example of biography that was ever exhibited. But although he at different times, in a desultory manner, committed to writing many particulars of the progress of his mind and fortunes, he never had persevering diligence enough to form them into a regular composition². Of these

¹ *Idler*, No. 84. BOSWELL.—In this paper he says: 'Those relations are commonly of most value in which the writer tells his own story. He that recounts the life of another . . . lessens the familiarity of his tale to increase its dignity . . . and endeavours to hide the man that he may produce a hero.'

² 'It very seldom happens to man that his business is his pleasure. What is done from necessity is so often to be done when against the present inclination, and so often fills the mind with anxiety, that an habitual dislike steals upon us, and we shrink involuntarily from the remembrance of our task. . . . From this unwillingness to perform more than is required of that which is commonly performed with reluctance it proceeds that few authors write their own lives.' *Idler*, No. 102. See also *post*, May 1, 1783.

memorials a few have been preserved; but the greater part was consigned by him to the flames, a few days before his death.

As I had the honor and happiness of enjoying his friendship for upwards of twenty years; as I had the scheme of writing his life constantly in view; as he was well apprised of this circumstance¹, and from time to time obligingly satisfied my inquiries, by communicating to me the incidents of his early years; as I acquired a facility in recollecting, and was very assiduous in recording, his conversation, of which the extraordinary vigour and vivacity constituted one of the

¹ Mrs. Piozzi records the following conversation with Johnson, which, she says, took place on July 18, 1773. 'And who will be my biographer,' said he, 'do you think?' 'Goldsmith, no doubt,' replied I; 'and he will do it the best among us.' 'The dog would write it best to be sure,' replied he; 'but his particular malice towards me, and general disregard for truth, would make the book useless to all, and injurious to my character.' 'Oh! as to that,' said I, 'we should all fasten upon him, and force him to do you justice; but the worst is, the Doctor does not *know* your life; nor can I tell indeed who does, except Dr. Taylor of Ashbourne.' 'Why Taylor,' said he, 'is better acquainted with my *heart* than any man or woman now alive; and the history of my Oxford exploits lies all between him and Adams; but Dr. James knows my very early days better than he. After my coming to London to drive the world about a little, you must all go to Jack Hawkesworth for anecdotes: I lived in great familiarity with him (though I think there was not much affection) from the year 1753 till the time Mr. Thrale and you took me up. I intend, however, to disappoint the rogues, and either make you write the life, with Taylor's intelligence; or, which is better, do it myself after outliving you all. I am now,' added he, 'keeping a diary, in hopes of using it for that purpose some time.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 31. How much of this is true cannot be known. Boswell some time before this conversation had told Johnson that he intended to write his Life, and Johnson had given him many particulars (see *post*, March 31, 1772, and April 11, 1773). He read moreover in manuscript most of Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides*, and from it learnt his intention. 'It is no small satisfaction to me to reflect,' Boswell wrote, 'that Dr. Johnson, after being apprised of my intentions, communicated to me, at subsequent periods, many particulars of his life.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 14, 1773.

first features of his character; and as I have spared no pains in obtaining materials concerning him, from every quarter where I could discover that they were to be found, and have been favoured with the most liberal communications by his friends; I flatter myself that few biographers have entered upon such a work as this, with more advantages; independent of literary abilities, in which I am not vain enough to compare myself with some great names who have gone before me in this kind of writing.

Since my work was announced, several Lives and Memoirs of Dr. Johnson have been published¹, the most voluminous of which is one compiled for the booksellers of London, by Sir John Hawkins, Knight², a man, whom, during my long intimacy with Dr. Johnson, I never saw in his company, I think but once, and I am sure not above twice. Johnson might have esteemed him for his decent, religious demeanour, and his knowledge of books and literary history; but from the rigid formality of his manners, it is evident that they never could have lived together with companionable ease and familiarity³; nor had Sir John Hawkins that nice

¹ 'It may be said the death of Dr. Johnson kept the public mind in agitation beyond all former example. No literary character ever excited so much attention.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 3.

² The greatest part of this book was written while Sir John Hawkins was alive; and I avow, that one object of my strictures was to make him feel some compunction for his illiberal treatment of Dr. Johnson. Since his decease, I have suppressed several of my remarks upon his work. But though I would not 'war with the dead' *offensively*, I think it necessary to be strenuous in *defence* of my illustrious friend, which I cannot be without strong animadversions upon a writer who has greatly injured him. Let me add, that though I doubt I should not have been very prompt to gratify Sir John Hawkins with any compliment in his lifetime, I do now frankly acknowledge, that, in my opinion, his volume, however inadequate and improper as a life of Dr. Johnson, and however discredited by unpardonable inaccuracies in other respects, contains a collection of curious anecdotes and observations, which few men but its author could have brought together.

BOSWELL.

³ 'The next name that was started was that of Sir John Hawkins; and Mrs. Thrale said, "Why now, Dr. Johnson, he is another of those perception

perception which was necessary to mark the finer and less obvious part of Johnson's character. His being appointed one of his executors, gave him an opportunity of taking possession of such fragments of a diary and other papers as were left; of which, before delivering them up to the residuary legatee, whose property they were, he endeavoured to extract the substance. In this he has not been very successful, as I have found upon a perusal of those papers, which have been since transferred to me. Sir John Hawkins's ponderous labours, I must acknowledge, exhibit a *farrago*, of which a considerable portion is not devoid of entertainment to the lovers of literary gossiping; but besides its being swelled out with long unnecessary extracts from various works (even one of several leaves from Osborne's Harleian Catalogue, and those not compiled by Johnson, but by Oldys), a very small part of it relates to the person who is the subject of the book; and, in that, there is such an inaccuracy in the statement of facts, as in so solemn an authour is hardly excusable, and certainly makes his narrative very unsatisfactory. But what is still worse, there is throughout the whole of it a dark, uncharitable cast, by which the most unfavourable construction is put upon almost every circumstance in the character and conduct of my illustrious

whom you suffer nobody to abuse but yourself: Garrick is one too; for, if any other person speaks against him, you brow-beat him in a minute." "Why madam," answered he, "they don't know when to abuse him, and when to praise him; I will allow no man to speak ill of David that he does not deserve; and as to Sir John, why really I believe him to be an honest man at the bottom; but to be sure he is penurious, and he is mean, and it must be owned he has a degree of brutality, and a tendency to savageness, that cannot easily be defended." . . . He said that Sir John and he once belonged to the same club, but that as he eat no supper, after the first night of his admission he desired to be excused paying his share. "And was he excused?" "O yes; for no man is angry at another for being inferior to himself. We all scorned him, and admitted his plea. For my part, I was such a fool as to pay my share for wine, though I never tasted any. But Sir John was a most *unclubable* man." Madam D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 65.

friend;

friend¹; who, I trust, will, by a true and fair delineation, be vindicated both from the injurious misrepresentations of this authour, and from the slighter aspersions of a lady who once lived in great intimacy with him².

There is, in the British Museum, a letter from Bishop Warburton to Dr. Birch, on the subject of biography; which, though I am aware it may expose me to a charge of artfully raising the value of my own work, by contrasting it with that of which I have spoken, is so well conceived and expressed, that I cannot refrain from here inserting it:—

‘I shall endeavour, (says Dr. Warburton,) to give you what satisfaction I can in any thing you want to be satisfied in any subject of Milton, and am extremely glad you intend to write his life. Almost all the life-writers we have had before Toland and Desmaiseaux³, are indeed strange insipid creatures; and yet I had rather read the worst of them, than be obliged to go through with

¹ ‘In censuring Mr. [*sic*] J. Hawkins’s book I say: “There is throughout the whole of it a dark, uncharitable cast, which puts the most unfavourable construction on my illustrious friend’s conduct.” Malone maintains *cast* will not do; he will have “malignancy.” Is that not too strong? How would “disposition” do? . . . Hawkins is no doubt very malevolent. *Observe how he talks of me as quite unknown.*’ *Letters of Boswell*, p. 281. Malone wrote of Hawkins as follows: ‘The bishop [Bishop Percy of Dromore] concurred with every other person I have heard speak of Hawkins, in saying that he was a most detestable fellow. He was the son of a carpenter, and set out in life in the very lowest line of the law. Dyer knew him well at one time, and the bishop heard him give a character of Hawkins once that painted him in the blackest colours; though Dyer was by no means apt to deal in such portraits. Dyer said he was a man of the most mischievous, uncharitable, and malignant disposition. Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me that Hawkins, though he assumed great outward sanctity, was not only mean and grovelling in disposition, but absolutely dishonest. He never lived in any real intimacy with Dr. Johnson, who never opened his heart to him, or had in fact any accurate knowledge of his character.’ Prior’s *Malone*, pp. 425–7. See *post*, Feb. 1764, note.

² Mrs. Piozzi. See *post*, under June 30, 1784.

³ Voltaire in his account of Bayle says: ‘Des Maizeaux a écrit sa vie en un gros volume; elle ne devait pas contenir six pages.’ Voltaire’s *Works*, edition of 1819, xvii. 47.

this of Milton's, or the other's life of Boileau, where there is such a dull, heavy succession of long quotations of disinteresting passages, that it makes their method quite nauseous. But the verbose, tasteless Frenchman seems to lay it down as a principle, that every life must be a book, and what's worse, it proves a book without a life; for what do we know of Boileau, after all his tedious stuff? You are the only one, (and I speak it without a compliment,) that by the vigour of your stile and sentiments, and the real importance of your materials, have the art, (which one would imagine no one could have missed,) of adding agreements to the most agreeable subject in the world, which is literary history¹.

'Nov. 24, 1737.'

Instead of melting down my materials into one mass, and constantly speaking in my own person, by which I might have appeared to have more merit in the execution of the work, I have resolved to adopt and enlarge upon the excellent plan of Mr. Mason, in his *Memoirs of Gray*². Wherever narrative is necessary to explain, connect, and supply, I furnish it to the best of my abilities; but in the chronological series of Johnson's life, which I trace as distinctly as I can, year by year, I produce, wherever it is in my power, his own minutes, letters or conversation, being convinced that this mode is more lively, and will make my readers better acquainted with him, than even most of those were who actually knew him, but could know him only partially; whereas there is here an accumulation of intelligence from various points, by which his character is more fully understood and illustrated³.

¹ Brit. Mus. 4320, Ayscough's Catal., Sloane MSS. BOSWELL.—Horace Walpole describes Birch as 'a worthy, good-natured soul, full of industry and activity, and running about like a young setting-dog in quest of anything, new or old, and with no parts, taste, or judgment.' Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 326. See *post*, Sept. 1743.

² 'You have fixed the method of biography, and whoever will write a life well must imitate you.' Horace Walpole to Mason; Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 211.

³ 'I am absolutely certain that my mode of biography, which gives not only a *History* of Johnson's *visible* progress through the world, and of his publications, but a *view* of his mind in his letters and con-

Indeed

Indeed I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man's life, than not only relating all the most important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote, and said, and thought; by which mankind are enabled as it were to see him live, and to 'live o'er each scene'¹ with him, as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life. Had his other friends been as diligent and ardent as I was, he might have been almost entirely preserved. As it is, I will venture to say that he will be seen in this work more completely than any man who has ever yet lived².

And he will be seen as he really was; for I profess to write, not his panegyrick, which must be all praise, but his Life; which, great and good as he was, must not be supposed to be entirely perfect. To be as he was, is indeed subject of panegyrick enough to any man in this state of being; but in every picture there should be shade as well as light, and when I delineate him without reserve, I do what he himself recommended, both by his precept and his example³.

'If the biographer writes from personal knowledge, and makes haste to gratify the publick curiosity, there is danger lest his

versations, is the most perfect that can be conceived, and will be more of a Life than any work that has ever yet appeared.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 265.

¹ Pope's Prologue to Addison's *Cato*, l. 4.

² '... Boswell is the first of biographers. He has distanced all his competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place them. Eclipse is first, and the rest nowhere.' Macaulay's *Essays*, i. 374.

³ See *post*, Sept. 17, 1777, and Malone's note of March 15, 1781, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 22, 1773. Hannah More met Boswell when he was carrying through the press his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*. 'Boswell tells me,' she writes, 'he is printing anecdotes of Johnson, not his *Life*, but, as he has the vanity to call it, his *pyramid*. I besought his tenderness for our virtuous and most revered departed friend, and begged he would mitigate some of his asperities. He said roughly: "He would not cut off his claws, nor make a tiger a cat, to please anybody." It will, I doubt not, be a very amusing book, but, I hope, not an indiscreet one; he has great enthusiasm and some fire.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 403.

interest,

interest, his fear, his gratitude, or his tenderness overpower his fidelity, and tempt him to conceal, if not to invent. There are many who think it an act of piety to hide the faults or failings of their friends, even when they can no longer suffer by their detection; we therefore see whole ranks of characters adorned with uniform panegyric, and not to be known from one another but by extrinsick and casual circumstances. "Let me remember, (says Hale,) when I find myself inclined to pity a criminal, that there is likewise a pity due to the country." If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue and to truth¹.

What I consider as the peculiar value of the following work, is, the quantity it contains of Johnson's conversation; which is universally acknowledged to have been eminently instructive and entertaining; and of which the specimens that I have given upon a former occasion², have been received with so much approbation, that I have good grounds for supposing that the world will not be indifferent to more ample communications of a similar nature.

That the conversation of a celebrated man, if his talents have been exerted in conversation, will best display his character, is, I trust, too well established in the judgment of mankind, to be at all shaken by a sneering observation of Mr. Mason, in his *Memoirs of Mr. William Whitehead*, in which there is literally no *Life*, but a mere dry narrative of facts³. I do not think it was quite necessary to attempt a depreciation of what is universally esteemed, because it was not to be found in the immediate object of the ingenious writer's pen; for in truth, from a man so still and so tame, as to be contented to pass many years as the domestick companion of a superannuated lord and lady⁴, conversation could no more

¹ *Rambler*, No. 60. BOSWELL.

² In the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*.

³ 'Mason's *Life of Gray* is excellent, because it is interspersed with letters which show us the *man*. His *Life of Whitehead* is not a life at all, for there is neither a letter nor a saying from first to last.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 265.

⁴ The Earl and Countess of Jersey. WRIGHT.

be expected, than from a Chinese mandarin on a chimney-piece, or the fantastick figures on a gilt leather skreen.

If authority be required, let us appeal to Plutarch, the prince of ancient biographers. Οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις, καὶ ῥῆμα, καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησεν μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι, καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγιστα, καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. 'Nor is it always in the most distinguished achievements that men's virtues or vices may be best discerned; but very often an action of small note, a short saying, or a jest, shall distinguish a person's real character more than the greatest sieges, or the most important battles¹.'

To this may be added the sentiments of the very man whose life I am about to exhibit.

'The business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestick privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and by virtue. The account of Thuanus is with great propriety said by its authour to have been written, that it might lay open to posterity the private and familiar character of that man, *cujus ingenium et candorem ex ipsius scriptis sunt olim semper miraturi*, whose candour and genius will to the end of time be by his writings preserved in admiration.

'There are many invisible circumstances, which whether we read as enquirers after natural or moral knowledge, whether we intend to enlarge our science, or increase our virtue, are more important than publick occurrences. Thus Sallust, the great master of nature, has not forgot in his account of Catiline to remark, that his walk was now quick, and again slow, as an indication of a mind revolving² with violent commotion. Thus the story of Melancthon affords a striking lecture on the value of time, by informing us, that when he had made an appointment, he expected not only the hour, but the minute to be fixed, that the day might not run out in the idleness of suspence; and all the plans and enterprises

¹ Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, Langhorne's Translation. BOSWELL.

² In the original, *revolving something*.

of De Witt are now of less importance to the world than that part of his personal character, which represents him as careful of his health, and negligent of his life.

‘But biography has often been allotted to writers, who seem very little acquainted with the nature of their task, or very negligent about the performance. They rarely afford any other account than might be collected from publick papers, but imagine themselves writing a life, when they exhibit a chronological series of actions or preferments; ¹and have so little regard to the manners ¹ or behaviour of their heroes, that more knowledge may be gained of a man’s real character, by a short conversation with one of his servants, than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree, and ended with his funeral.

‘There are indeed, some natural reasons why these narratives are often written by such as were not likely to give much instruction or delight, and why most accounts of particular persons are barren and useless. If a life be delayed till interest and envy are at an end, we may hope for impartiality, but must expect little intelligence; for the incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory, ²and are transmitted ² by tradition. We know how few can pourtray a living acquaintance, except by his most prominent and observable particularities, and the grosser features of his mind; and it may be easily imagined how much of this little knowledge may be lost in imparting it, and how soon a succession of copies will lose all resemblance of the original ³.’

I am fully aware of the objections which may be made to the minuteness on some occasions of my detail of Johnson’s conversation, and how happily it is adapted for the petty exercise of ridicule, by men of superficial understanding and ludicrous fancy; but I remain firm and confident in my opinion, that minute particulars are frequently characteristick, and always amusing, when they relate to a distinguished man. I am therefore exceedingly unwilling that anything, however slight, which my illustrious friend thought it worth his while to express, with any degree of point, should perish. For

¹ In the original, *and so little regard the manners.*

² In the original, *and are rarely transmitted.*

³ *Rambler*, No. 60. BOSWELL.

this almost superstitious reverence, I have found very old and venerable authority, quoted by our great modern prelate, Secker, in whose tenth sermon there is the following passage :

‘ *Rabbi David Kimchi*, a noted Jewish Commentator, who lived about five hundred years ago, explains that passage in the first Psalm, *His leaf also shall not wither*, from Rabbins yet older than himself, thus : That *even the idle talk*, so he expresses it, *of a good man ought to be regarded* ; the most superfluous things he saith are always of some value. And other ancient authours have the same phrase, nearly in the same sense.’

Of one thing I am certain, that considering how highly the small portion which we have of the table-talk and other anecdotes of our celebrated writers is valued, and how earnestly it is regretted that we have not more, I am justified in preserving rather too many of Johnson’s sayings, than too few ; especially as from the diversity of dispositions it cannot be known with certainty beforehand, whether what may seem trifling to some, and perhaps to the collector himself, may not be most agreeable to many ; and the greater number that an authour can please in any degree, the more pleasure does there arise to a benevolent mind.

To those who are weak enough to think this a degrading task, and the time and labour which have been devoted to it misemployed, I shall content myself with opposing the authority of the greatest man of any age, JULIUS CÆSAR, of whom Bacon observes, that ‘ in his book of Apothegms which he collected, we see that he esteemed it more honour to make himself but a pair of tables, to take the wise and pithy words of others, than to have every word of his own to be made an apothegm or an oracle¹.’

Having said thus much by way of introduction, I commit the following pages to the candour of the Publick.

¹ Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning*, Book I. BOSWELL.

SAMUEL¹ JOHNSON was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, on the 18th of September, N.S., 1709; and his initiation into the Christian Church was not delayed; for his baptism is recorded, in the register of St. Mary's parish in that city, to have been performed on the day of his birth. His father is there stiled *Gentleman*, a circumstance of which an ignorant panegyrist has praised him for not being proud; when the truth is, that the appellation of *Gentleman*, though now lost in the indiscriminate assumption of *Esquire*², was commonly taken by those who could not boast of gentility. His father was Michael Johnson, a native of Derbyshire, of obscure extraction³, who settled in Lichfield as a bookseller and stationer⁴. His mother was Sarah Ford, descended of an ancient race of substantial yeomanry in Warwickshire⁵. They were well advanced in years when they

¹ Johnson's godfather, Dr. Samuel Swinfen, according to the author of *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Johnson*, 1785, p. 10, was at the time of his birth lodging with Michael Johnson. Johnson had uncles on the mother's side, named Samuel and Nathaniel (see *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. v. 13), after whom he and his brother may have been named. It seems more likely that it was his godfather who gave him his name.

² So early as 1709 *The Tatler* complains of this 'indiscriminate assumption.' 'I'll undertake that if you read the superscriptions to all the offices in the kingdom, you will not find three letters directed to any but Esquires. . . . In a word it is now *Populus Armigerorum*, a people of Esquires. And I don't know but by the late act of naturalisation, foreigners will assume that title as part of the immunity of being Englishmen.' *The Tatler*, No. 19.

³ 'I can hardly tell who was my grandfather,' said Johnson. See *post*, May 9, 1773.

⁴ Michael Johnson was born in 1656. He must have been engaged in the book-trade as early as 1681; for in the *Life of Dryden* his son says, 'The sale of *Absalom and Achitophel* was so large, that my father, an old bookseller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by Sacheverel's *Trial*.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 276. In the *Life of Sprat* he is described by his son as 'an old man who had been no careless observer of the passages of those times.' *Ib.* 392.

⁵ Her epitaph says that she was born at Kingsnorton. Kingsnorton is in Worcestershire, and not, as the epitaph says, 'in agro Varvicensi.' When Johnson a few days before his death burnt his papers, some married,



HOUSE IN LICHFIELD
(in which Dr. Johnson was born).



married, and never had more than two children, both sons; Samuel, their first born, who lived to be the illustrious character whose various excellence I am to endeavour to record, and Nathaniel, who died in his twenty-fifth year.

Mr. Michael Johnson was a man of a large and robust body, and of a strong and active mind; yet, as in the most solid rocks veins of unsound substance are often discovered, there was in him a mixture of that disease, the nature of which eludes the most minute enquiry, though the effects are well known to be a weariness of life, an unconcern about those things which agitate the greater part of mankind, and a general sensation of gloomy wretchedness¹. From him then his son inherited, with some other qualities, 'a vile melancholy,' which in his too strong expression of any disturbance of the mind, 'made him mad all his life, at least not sober².' Michael was, however, forced by the narrowness of his circumstances to be very diligent in business, not only in his shop³, but by occasionally resorting to several

fragments of his *Annals* escaped the flames. One of these was never seen by Boswell; it was published in 1805 under the title of *An Account of the Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, from his Birth to his Eleventh Year, written by himself*. In this he says (p. 14), 'My mother had no value for my father's relations; those indeed whom we knew of were much lower than hers.' Writing to Mrs. Thrale on his way to Scotland he said: 'We changed our horses at Darlington, where Mr. Cornelius Harrison, a cousin-german of mine, was perpetual curate. He was the only one of my relations who ever rose in fortune above penury, or in character above neglect.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 105. His uncle Harrison he described as 'a very mean and vulgar man, drunk every night, but drunk with little drink, very peevish, very proud, very ostentatious, but luckily not rich.' *Annals*, p. 28. In *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. x. 465, is given the following extract of the marriage of Johnson's parents from the Register of Packwood in Warwickshire:—

'1706. Mickell Johnsones of lichfield and Sara ford married June the 9th.'

¹ Mrs. Piozzi (*Ancc.* p. 3) records that Johnson told her that 'his father was wrong-headed, positive, and afflicted with melancholy.'

² *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 213 [Sept. 16]. BOSWELL.

³ Stockdale in his *Memoirs*, ii. 102, records an anecdote told him

TOWNS

towns in the neighbourhood¹, some of which were at a considerable distance from Lichfield². At that time book-sellers' shops in the provincial towns of England were very rare, so that there was not one even in Birmingham, in which town old Mr. Johnson used to open a shop every market-day. He was a pretty good Latin scholar, and a citizen so creditable as to be made one of the magistrates of Lichfield³; and, being a man of good sense, and skill in

by Johnson of 'the generosity of one of the customers of his father. "This man was purchasing a book, and pressed my father to let him have it at a far less price than it was worth. When his other topics of persuasion failed, he had recourse to one argument which, he thought, would infallibly prevail:—You know, Mr. Johnson, that I buy an almanac of you every year."'

¹ Extract of a letter, dated 'Trentham, St. Peter's day, 1716,' written by the Rev. George Plaxton, Chaplain at that time to Lord Gower, which may serve to show the high estimation in which the Father of our great Moralist was held: 'Johnson, the Litchfield Librarian, is now here; he propagates learning all over this diocese, and advanceth knowledge to its just height; all the Clergy here are his Pupils, and suck all they have from him; Allen cannot make a warrant without his precedent, nor our quondam John Evans draw a recognizance *sine directione Michaelis*.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1791. BOSWELL.

² In *Notes and Queries*, 3rd S. v. 33, is given the following title-page of one of his books: 'Φαρμακο-βασις: or the Touchstone of Medicine etc. By Sir John Floyer of the City of Litchfield, Kt., M.D., of Queen's College, Oxford. London: Printed for Michael Johnson, Bookseller, and are to be sold at his shops at Litchfield and Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire; and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire, 1687.'

³ Johnson writing of his birth says: 'My father being that year sheriff of Lichfield, and to ride the circuit of the county [Mr. Croker suggests city, not being aware that 'the City of Lichfield was a county in itself.' See Harwood's *Lichfield*, p. 1. In like manner, in the Militia Bill of 1756 (*post* 1756) we find entered, 'Devonshire with Exeter City and County,' 'Lincolnshire with Lincoln City and County'] next day, which was a ceremony then performed with great pomp, he was asked by my mother whom he would invite to the Riding; and answered, "all the town now." He feasted the citizens with uncommon magnificence, and was the last but one that maintained the splendour of the Riding,' *Annals*, p. 10. He served the office of church-warden in 1688; of sheriff in 1709; of junior bailiff in 1718; and senior bailiff in 1725.' Harwood's *Lichfield*, p. 449.

his

his trade, he acquired a reasonable share of wealth, of which however he afterwards lost the greatest part, by engaging unsuccessfully in a manufacture of parchment¹. He was a zealous high-church man and royalist, and retained his attachment to the unfortunate house of Stuart, though he reconciled himself, by casuistical arguments of expediency and necessity, to take the oaths imposed by the prevailing power².

There is a circumstance in his life somewhat romantick, but so well authenticated, that I shall not omit it. A young woman of Leek, in Staffordshire, while he served his apprenticeship there, conceived a violent passion for him; and though it met with no favourable return, followed him to Lichfield, where she took lodgings opposite to the house in which he lived, and indulged her hopeless flame. When he

¹ 'My father and mother had not much happiness from each other. They seldom conversed; for my father could not bear to talk of his affairs, and my mother being unacquainted with books cared not to talk of anything else. Had my mother been more literate, they had been better companions. She might have sometimes introduced her unwelcome topic with more success, if she could have diversified her conversation. Of business she had no distinct conception; and therefore her discourse was composed only of complaint, fear, and suspicion. Neither of them ever tried to calculate the profits of trade, or the expenses of living. My mother concluded that we were poor, because we lost by some of our trades; but the truth was, that my father, having in the early part of his life contracted debts, never had trade sufficient to enable him to pay them and maintain his family; he got something, but not enough.' *Annals*, p. 14. Mr. Croker noticing the violence of Johnson's language against the Excise, with great acuteness suspected 'some cause of *personal animosity*; this mention of the trade in parchment (an *exciseable* article) afforded a clue, which has led to the confirmation of that suspicion.' In the records of the Excise Board is to be found the following letter, addressed to the supervisor of excise at Lichfield: 'July 27, 1725. The Commissioners received yours of the 22nd instant, and since the justices would not give judgment against Mr. Michael Johnson, *the tanner*, notwithstanding the facts were fairly against him, the Board direct that the next time he offends, you do not lay an information against him, but send an affidavit of the fact, that he may be prosecuted in the Exchequer.'

² See *post*, March 27, 1775.

was informed that it so preyed upon her mind that her life was in danger, he with a generous humanity went to her and offered to marry her, but it was then too late: her vital power was exhausted; and she actually exhibited one of the very rare instances of dying for love. She was buried in the cathedral of Lichfield; and he, with a tender regard, placed a stone over her grave with this inscription:

Here lies the body of
Mrs. ELIZABETH BLANEY, a stranger.
She departed this life
20 of September, 1694.

Johnson's mother was a woman of distinguished understanding. I asked his old school-fellow, Mr. Hector, surgeon of Birmingham, if she was not vain of her son. He said, 'she had too much good sense to be vain, but she knew her son's value.' Her piety was not inferior to her understanding; and to her must be ascribed those early impressions of religion upon the mind of her son, from which the world afterwards derived so much benefit. He told me, that he remembered distinctly having had the first notice of Heaven, 'a place to which good people went,' and hell, 'a place to which bad people went,' communicated to him by her, when a little child in bed with her¹; and that it might be the better fixed in his memory, she sent him to repeat it to Thomas Jackson, their man-servant; he not being in the way, this was not done; but there was no occasion for any artificial aid for its preservation.

In following so very eminent a man from his cradle to his grave, every minute particular, which can throw light on the progress of his mind, is interesting. That he was remarkable, even in his earliest years, may easily be supposed; for to use his own words in his *Life of Sydenham*,

¹ 'I remember, that being in bed with my mother one morning, I was told by her of the two places to which the inhabitants of this world were received after death: one a fine place filled with happiness, called Heaven; the other, a sad place, called Hell. That this account much affected my imagination I do not remember.' *Annals*, p. 19.

That



MICHAEL JOHNSON,
Father of Dr. Samuel Johnson.



'That the strength of his understanding, the accuracy of his discernment, and ardour of his curiosity, might have been remarked from his infancy, by a diligent observer, there is no reason to doubt. For, there is no instance of any man, whose history has been minutely related, that did not in every part of life discover the same proportion of intellectual vigour¹.'

In all such investigations it is certainly unwise to pay too much attention to incidents which the credulous relate with eager satisfaction, and the more scrupulous or witty enquirer considers only as topicks of ridicule: Yet there is a traditional story of the infant Hercules of toryism, so curiously characteristick, that I shall not withhold it. It was communicated to me in a letter from Miss Mary Adye, of Lichfield:

'When Dr. Sacheverel was at Lichfield, Johnson was not quite three years old. My grandfather Hammond observed him at the cathedral perched upon his father's shoulders, listening and gaping at the much celebrated preacher. Mr. Hammond asked Mr. Johnson how he could possibly think of bringing such an infant to church, and in the midst of so great a croud. He answered, because it was impossible to keep him at home; for, young as he was, he believed he had caught the publick spirit and zeal for Sacheverel, and would have staid for ever in the church, satisfied with beholding him².'

¹ Johnson's *Works*, vi. 406.

² Mr. Croker disbelieves the story altogether. 'Sacheverel,' he says, 'by his sentence pronounced in Feb. 1710, was interdicted for three years from preaching; so that he could not have preached at Lichfield while Johnson was under three years of age. Sacheverel, indeed, made a triumphal progress through the midland counties in 1710; and it appears by the books of the corporation of Lichfield that he was received in that town, and complimented by the attendance of the corporation, "and a present of three dozen of wine," on June 16, 1710; but then "the *infant Hercules of Toryism*" was just *nine months* old.' It is quite possible that the story is in the main correct. Sacheverel was received in Lichfield in 1710 on his way down to Shropshire to take possession of a living. At the end of the suspension in March 1713 he preached a sermon in London, for which, as he told Swift, 'a bookseller gave him £100, intending to print 30,000' (Swift's
Nor

Nor can I omit a little instance of that jealous independence of spirit, and impetuosity of temper, which never forsook him. The fact was acknowledged to me by himself, upon the authority of his mother. One day, when the servant who used to be sent to school to conduct him home, had not come in time, he set out by himself, though he was then so near-sighted, that he was obliged to stoop down on his hands and knees to take a view of the kennel before he ventured to step over it. His school-mistress, afraid that he might miss his way, or fall into the kennel, or be run over by a cart, followed him at some distance. He happened to turn about and perceive her. Feeling her careful attention as an insult to his manliness, he ran back to her in a rage, and beat her, as well as his strength would permit.

Of the power of his memory, for which he was all his life eminent to a degree almost incredible¹, the following early instance was told me in his presence at Lichfield, in 1776, by his step-daughter, Mrs. Lucy Porter, as related to her by his mother. When he was a child in petticoats, and had learnt to read, Mrs. Johnson one morning put the common prayer-book into his hands, pointed to the collect for the day, and said, 'Sam, you must get this by heart.' She went up stairs, leaving him to study it: But by the time she had reached the second floor, she heard him following her. 'What's the matter?' said she. 'I can say it,' he replied, and repeated it distinctly, though he could not have read it more than twice.

But there has been another story of his infant precocity generally circulated, and generally believed, the truth of which I am to refute upon his own authority. It is told², that, when a child of three years old, he chanced to tread

Journal to Stella, April 2, 1713). It is likely enough that either on his way up to town or on his return journey he preached at Lichfield. In the spring of 1713 Johnson was three years old.

¹ See *post*, p. 56, and April 25, 1778, note; and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 28, 1773.

² *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson*, by Hester Lynch Piozzi, p. 11. *Life of Dr. Johnson*, by Sir John Hawkins, p. 6. BOSWELL.

upon a duckling, the eleventh of a brood, and killed it; upon which, it is said, he dictated to his mother the following epitaph:

‘Here lies good master duck,
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on;
If it had liv’d, it had been *good luck*,
For then we’d had an *odd one*.’

There is surely internal evidence that this little composition combines in it, what no child of three years old could produce, without an extension of its faculties by immediate inspiration; yet Mrs. Lucy Porter, Dr. Johnson's step-daughter, positively maintained to me, in his presence, that there could be no doubt of the truth of this anecdote, for she had heard it from his mother. So difficult is it to obtain an authentic relation of facts, and such authority may there be for error; for he assured me, that his father made the verses, and wished to pass them for his child's. He added, ‘my father was a foolish old man’¹; that is to say, foolish in talking of his children².

¹ ‘My father had much vanity which his adversity hindered from being fully exerted.’ *Annals*, p. 14.

² This anecdote of the duck, though disproved by internal and external evidence, has nevertheless, upon supposition of its truth, been made the foundation of the following ingenious and fanciful reflections of Miss Seward, amongst the communications concerning Dr. Johnson with which she has been pleased to favour me: ‘These infant numbers contain the seed of those propensities which through his life so strongly marked his character, of that poetick talent which afterwards bore such rich and plentiful fruits; for, excepting his orthographick works, every thing which Dr. Johnson wrote was Poetry, whose essence consists not in numbers, or in jingle, but in the strength and glow of a fancy, to which all the stores of nature and of art stand in prompt administration; and in an eloquence which conveys their blended illustrations in a language “more tuneable than needs or rhyme or verse to add more harmony.”

‘The above little verses also shew that superstitious bias which “grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength,” and, of late years particularly, injured his happiness, by presenting to him the gloomy side of religion, rather than that bright and cheering one which gilds the period of closing life with the light of pious hope.’

Young

Young Johnson had the misfortune to be much afflicted with the scrophula, or king's evil, which disfigured a countenance naturally well formed, and hurt his visual nerves so much, that he did not see at all with one of his eyes, though its appearance was little different from that of the other. There is amongst his prayers, one inscribed '*When my EYE was restored to its use*¹,' which ascertains a defect that many of his friends knew he had, though I never perceived it². I supposed him to be only near-sighted; and indeed I must observe, that in no other respect could I discern any defect in his vision; on the contrary, the force of his attention and perceptive quickness made him see and distinguish all manner of objects, whether of nature or of art, with a nicety that is rarely to be found. When he and I were travelling in the Highlands of Scotland, and I pointed out to him a mountain which I observed resembled a cone, he corrected my inaccuracy, by shewing me, that it was indeed pointed at the top, but that one side of it was larger than the other³. And the ladies with whom he was acquainted agree, that no man was more nicely and minutely critical in the elegance of female dress⁴. When I found that he saw the romantick beauties of Islam, in Derbyshire, much better than I did, I

This is so beautifully imagined, that I would not suppress it. But like many other theories, it is deduced from a supposed fact, which is, indeed, a fiction. BOSWELL.

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 27. BOSWELL.

² Speaking himself of the imperfection of one of his eyes, he said to Dr. Burney, 'the dog was never good for much.' MALONE.

³ Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 1, 1773.

⁴ 'No accidental position of a riband,' wrote Mrs. Piozzi, 'escaped him, so nice was his observation, and so rigorous his demands of propriety.' Piozzi's *Anc.* p. 287. Miss Burney says:—'Notwithstanding Johnson is sometimes so absent and always so near-sighted, he scrutinizes into every part of almost everybody's appearance [at Streat-ham]. And again she writes:—'His blindness is as much the effect of absence [of mind] as of infirmity, for he sees wonderfully at times. He can see the colour of a lady's top-knot, for he often finds fault with it.' *Mme. D'Arbly's Diary*, i. 85, ii. 174. He could, when well, distinguish the hour on Lichfield town-clock. *Post*, p. 74.

told

told him that he resembled an able performer upon a bad instrument¹. How false and contemptible then are all the remarks which have been made to the prejudice either of his candour or of his philosophy, founded upon a supposition that he was almost blind. It has been said, that he contracted this grievous malady from his nurse². His mother yielding to the superstitious notion, which, it is wonderful to think, prevailed so long in this country, as to the virtue of the regal touch; a notion, which our kings encouraged, and to which a man of such inquiry and such judgement as Carte³ could give credit; carried him to London, where he

¹ See *post*, Sept. 22, 1777.

² This was Dr. Swinfen's opinion, who seems also to have attributed Johnson's short-sightedness to the same cause. 'My mother,' he says, 'thought my diseases derived from her family.' *Annals*, p. 12. When he was put out at nurse, 'She visited me,' he says, 'every day, and used to go different ways, that her assiduity might not expose her to ridicule.'

³ In 1738 Carte published a masterly 'Account of Materials, etc., for a History of England with the method of his undertaking.' (*Gent. Mag.* viii. 227.) He proposed to do much of what has been since done under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. He asked for subscriptions to carry on his great undertaking, for in its researches it was to be very great. In 1744 the City of London resolved to subscribe £50 for seven years (*ib.* xiv. 393). In vol. i. of his history, which only came down to the reign of John (published in 1748), he went out of his way to assert that the cure by the king's touch was not due to the 'regal unction'; for he had known a man cured who had gone over to France, and had been there 'touched by the eldest lineal descendant of a race of kings who had not at that time been crowned or anointed.' (*ib.* xviii. 13.) Thereupon the Court of Common Council by a unanimous vote withdrew its subscription. (*ib.* 185). The old Jacobites maintained that the power did not descend to Mary, William, or Anne. It was for this reason that Boswell said that Johnson should have been taken to Rome; though indeed it was not till some years after he was 'touched' by Queen Anne that the Pretender dwelt there. The Hanoverian kings never 'touched.' The service for the ceremony was printed in the *Book of Common Prayer* as late as 1719. (*Penny Cyclo.* xxi. 113.) 'It appears by the newspapers of the time,' says Mr. Wright, quoted by Croker, 'that on March 30, 1712, two hundred persons were touched by Queen Anne.' Macaulay says that

was actually touched by Queen Anne. Mrs. Johnson indeed, as Mr. Hector informed me, acted by the advice of the celebrated Sir John Floyer¹, then a physician in Lichfield. Johnson used to talk of this very frankly; and Mrs. Piozzi has preserved his very picturesque description of the scene, as it remained upon his fancy. Being asked if he could remember Queen Anne, 'He had (he said) a confused, but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood².' This touch, however, was without any effect. I ventured to say to him, in allusion to the political principles in which he was educated, and of which he ever retained some odour, that 'his mother had not carried him far enough; she should have taken him to ROME.'

He was first taught to read English by Dame Oliver³, a widow, who kept a school for young children in Lichfield. He told me she could read the black letter, and asked him to borrow for her, from his father, a bible in that character. When he was going to Oxford, she came to take leave of him, brought him, in the simplicity of her kindness, a present of gingerbread, and said, he was the best scholar she ever had. He delighted in mentioning this early compliment: adding, with a smile, that 'this was as high a proof of his merit as he could conceive.' His next instructor in English was a master, whom, when he spoke of him to me, he familiarly called Tom Brown, who, said he, 'published a spelling-book, and dedicated it to the UNIVERSE; but, I fear, no copy of it can now be had⁴.'

¹ Charles the Second, in the course of his reign, touched near a hundred thousand persons. . . . The expense of the ceremony was little less than ten thousand pounds a year.' Macaulay's *England*, ch. xiv.

¹ See *post*, p. 106, note.

² *Anecdotes*, p. 10. BOSWELL.

³ Johnson, writing of Addison's schoolmasters, says:—'Not to name the school or the masters of men illustrious for literature is a kind of historical fraud, by which honest fame is injuriously diminished. I would therefore trace him through the whole process of his education.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 418.

⁴ Neither the British Museum nor the Bodleian Library has a copy.

He began to learn Latin¹ with Mr. Hawkins, usher, or under-master of Lichfield school, 'a man (said he) very skilful in his little way.' With him he continued two years², and then rose to be under the care of Mr. Hunter, the head-master, who, according to his account, 'was very severe, and wrong-headedly severe. He used (said he) to beat us unmercifully; and he did not distinguish between ignorance and negligence; for he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, as for neglecting to know it. He would ask a boy a question; and if he did not answer it, he would beat him, without considering whether he had an opportunity of knowing how to answer it. For instance, he would call up a boy and ask him Latin for a candlestick, which the boy could not expect to be asked. Now, Sir, if a boy could answer every question, there would be no need of a master to teach him.'

It is, however, but justice to the memory of Mr. Hunter to mention, that though he might err in being too severe, the school of Lichfield was very respectable in his time³.

¹ 'When we learned *Propria quæ maribus*, we were examined in the Accidence; particularly we formed verbs, that is, went through the same person in all the moods and tenses. This was very difficult to me, and I was once very anxious about the next day, when this exercise was to be performed in which I had failed till I was discouraged. My mother encouraged me, and I proceeded better. When I told her of my good escape, "We often," said she, dear mother! "come off best when we are most afraid." She told me that, once when she asked me about forming verbs, I said, "I did not form them in an ugly shape." "You could not," said she, "speak plain; and I was proud that I had a boy who was forming verbs." These little memorials soothe my mind.' *Annals*, p. 22.

² 'This was the course of the school which I remember with pleasure; for I was indulged and caressed by my master; and, I think, really excelled the rest.' *Annals*, p. 25.

³ Johnson said of Hunter:—'Abating his brutality, he was a very good master?' *post*, March 21, 1772. Steele in the *Spectator*, No. 157, two years after Johnson's birth, describes these savage tyrants of the grammar-schools. 'The boasted liberty we talk of,' he writes, 'is but a mean reward for the long servitude, the many heartaches and terrors to which our childhood is exposed in going through a grammar-

The late Dr. Taylor, Prebendary of Westminster, who was educated under him, told me, that 'he was an excellent master, and that his ushers were most of them men of eminence; that Holbrook, one of the most ingenious men, best scholars, and best preachers of his age, was usher during the greatest part of the time that Johnson was at school¹. Then came Hague, of whom as much might be said, with the addition that he was an elegant poet. Hague was succeeded by Green, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, whose character in the learned world is well known². In the same form with Johnson was Congreve³, who afterwards became chaplain to Archbishop Boulter, and by that connection obtained good preferment in Ireland. He was a younger son of the ancient family of Congreve, in Staffordshire, of which the poet was a branch. His brother

school. . . . No one who has gone through what they call a great school but must remember to have seen children of excellent and ingenuous natures (as has afterwards appeared in their manhood); I say no man has passed through this way of education but must have seen an ingenuous creature expiring with shame, with pale looks, beseeching sorrow and silent tears, throw up its honest eyes and kneel on its tender knees to an inexorable blockhead to be forgiven the false quantity of a word in making a Latin verse.' Likely enough Johnson's roughness was in part due to this brutal treatment; for Steele goes on to say:—'It is wholly to this dreadful practice that we may attribute a certain hardness and ferocity which some men, though liberally educated, carry about them in all their behaviour. To be bred like a gentleman, and punished like a malefactor, must, as we see it does, produce that illiberal sauciness which we see sometimes in men of letters.'

¹ Johnson described him as 'a peevish and ill-tempered man,' and not so good a scholar or teacher as Taylor made out. Once the boys perceived that he did not understand a part of the Latin lesson; another time, when sent up to the upper-master to be punished, they had to complain that when they 'could not get the passage,' the assistant would not help them. *Annals*, pp. 26, 32.

² One of the contributors to the *Athenian Letters*. See *Gent. Mag.* liv. 276.

³ Johnson, *post*, March 22, 1776, describes him as one 'who does not get drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy.'

so'd

sold the estate. There was also Lowe, afterwards Canon of Windsor¹.

Indeed Johnson was very sensible how much he owed to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Langton one day asked him how he had acquired so accurate a knowledge of Latin, in which, I believe, he was exceeded by no man of his time; he said, 'My master whipt me very well. Without that, Sir, I should have done nothing.' He told Mr. Langton, that while Hunter was flogging his boys unmercifully, he used to say, 'And this I do to save you from the gallows.' Johnson, upon all occasions, expressed his approbation of enforcing instruction by means of the rod². 'I would rather (said he)

¹ A tradition had reached Johnson through his school-fellow Andrew Corbet that Addison had been at the school and had been the leader in a barring out. (Johnson's *Works*, vii. 419). Garrick entered the school about two years after Johnson left. According to Garrick's biographer, Tom Davies (p. 3), 'Hunter was an odd mixture of the pedant and the sportsman. Happy was the boy who could slyly inform his offended master where a covey of partridges was to be found; this notice was a certain pledge of his pardon.' Lord Campbell in his *Lives of the Chief Justices*, ii. 279, says:—'Hunter is celebrated for having flogged seven boys who afterwards sat as judges in the superior courts at Westminster at the same time. Among these were Chief Justice Wilmot, Lord Chancellor Northington, Sir T. Clarke, Master of the Rolls, Chief Justice Willes, and Chief Baron Parker. It is remarkable that, although Johnson and Wilmot were several years class-fellows at Lichfield, there never seems to have been the slightest intercourse between them in after life; but the Chief Justice used frequently to mention the Lexicographer as "a long, lank, lounging boy, whom he distinctly remembered to have been punished by Hunter for idleness."' Lord Campbell blunders here. Northington and Clarke were from Westminster School (Campbell's *Chancellors*, v. 176). The school-house, famous though it was, was allowed to fall into decay. A writer in the *Gent. Mag.* in 1794 (p. 413) says that 'it is now in a state of dilapidation, and unfit for the use of either the master or boys.'

² Johnson's observation to Dr. Rose, on this subject, deserves to be recorded. Rose was praising the mild treatment of children at school, at a time when flogging began to be less practised than formerly: 'But then, (said Johnson,) they get nothing else: and what they gain at one end, they lose at the other.' BURNEY. See *post*, under Dec. 17, 1775.

have

have the rod to be the general terrour to all, to make them learn, than tell a child, if you do thus, or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters. The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas, by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundation of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other¹.

When Johnson saw some young ladies in Lincolnshire who were remarkably well behaved, owing to their mother's strict discipline and severe correction², he exclaimed, in one of Shakspeare's lines a little varied,

'Rod, I will honour thee for this thy duty³.'

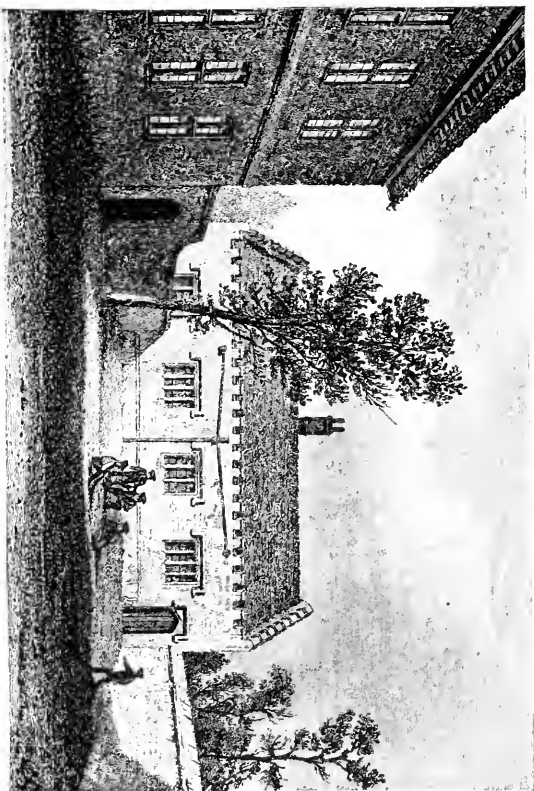
¹ This passage is quoted from Boswell's *Hebriides*, Aug. 24, 1773. Mr. Boyd had told Johnson that Lady Errol did not use force or fear in educating her children; whereupon he replied, 'Sir, she is wrong,' and continued in the words of the text.

Gibbon in his *Autobiography* says:—'The domestic discipline of our ancestors has been relaxed by the philosophy and softness of the age: and if my father remembered that he had trembled before a stern parent, it was only to adopt with his son an opposite mode of behaviour.' Gibbon's *Works*, i. 112. Lord Chesterfield writing to a friend on Oct. 18, 1752, says:—'Pray let my godson never know what a blow or a whipping is, unless for those things for which, were he a man, he would deserve them; such as lying, cheating, making mischief, and meditated malice.' Chesterfield's *Misc. Works*, iv. 130.

² Johnson, however, hated anything that came near to tyranny in the management of children. Writing to Mrs. Thrale, who had told him that she had on one occasion gone against the wish of her nurses, he said:—'That the nurses fretted will supply me during life with an additional motive to keep every child, as far as is possible, out of a nurse's power. A nurse made of common mould will have a pride in overcoming a child's reluctance. There are few minds to which tyranny is not delightful; power is nothing but as it is felt, and the delight of superiority is proportionate to the resistance overcome.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 67.

³ 'Sword, I will hallow thee for this thy deed.' 2 Henry VI, act iv. sc. 10. John Wesley's mother, writing of the way she had brought up her children, boys and girls alike, says:—'When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly;

That



GRAMMAR SCHOOL, LITCHFIELD.



That superiority over his fellows, which he maintained with so much dignity in his march through life, was not assumed from vanity and ostentation, but was the natural and constant effect of those extraordinary powers of mind, of which he could not but be conscious by comparison; the intellectual difference, which in other cases of comparison of characters, is often a matter of undecided contest, being as clear in his case as the superiority of stature in some men above others. Johnson did not strut or stand on tip-toe: He only did not stoop. From his earliest years his superiority was perceived and acknowledged¹. He was from the beginning "*Ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν*, a king of men. His school-fellow, Mr. Hector, has obligingly furnished me with many particulars of his boyish days²: and assured me that he never knew him corrected at school, but for talking and diverting other boys from their business. He seemed to learn by intuition; for though indolence and procrastination were inherent in his constitution, whenever he made an exertion he did more than any one else. In short, he is a memorable instance of what has been often observed, that the boy is the man in miniature: and that the distinguishing characteristics of each individual are the same, through the whole course of life. His favourites used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, such the desire to obtain his regard, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while

by which means they escaped abundance of correction they might otherwise have had.' Wesley's *Journal*, i. 370.

¹ 'There dwelt at Lichfield a gentleman of the name of Butt, to whose house on holidays he was ever welcome. The children in the family, perhaps offended with the rudeness of his behaviour, would frequently call him the great boy, which the father once overhearing said:—'You call him the great boy, but take my word for it, he will one day prove a great man.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 6.

² See *post*, March 22, 1776 and Johnson's visit to Birmingham in Nov. 1784.

he

he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him ; and thus he was borne triumphant. Such a proof of the early predominance of intellectual vigour is very remarkable, and does honour to human nature. Talking to me once himself of his being much distinguished at school, he told me, 'they never thought to raise me by comparing me to any one; they never said, Johnson is as good a scholar as such a one; but such a one is as good a scholar as Johnson; and this was said but of one, but of Lowe; and I do not think he was as good a scholar.'

He discovered a great ambition to excel, which roused him to counteract his indolence. He was uncommonly inquisitive; and his memory was so tenacious, that he never forgot any thing that he either heard or read. Mr. Hector remembers having recited to him eighteen verses, which, after a little pause, he repeated *verbatim*, varying only one epithet, by which he improved the line.

He never joined with the other boys in their ordinary diversions: his only amusement was in winter, when he took a pleasure in being drawn upon the ice by a boy barefooted, who pulled him along by a garter fixed round him; no very easy operation, as his size was remarkably large. His defective sight, indeed, prevented him from enjoying the common sports; and he once pleasantly remarked to me, 'how wonderfully well he had contrived to be idle without them.' Lord Chesterfield, however, has justly observed in one of his letters, when earnestly cautioning a friend against the pernicious effects of idleness, that active sports are not to be reckoned idleness in young people; and that the listless torpor of doing nothing, alone deserves that name¹. Of this dismal inertness of disposition, Johnson had all his life too great a share. Mr. Hector relates, that 'he could not oblige him more than by sauntering away the hours of vacation in

¹ 'You should never suffer your son to be idle one minute. I do not call play, of which he ought to have a good share, idleness; but I mean sitting still in a chair in total inaction; it makes boys lazy and indolent.' Chesterfield's *Misc. Works*, iv. 248.

the fields, during which he was more engaged in talking to himself than to his companion.'

Dr. Percy¹, the Bishop of Dromore, who was long intimately acquainted with him, and has preserved a few anecdotes concerning him, regretting that he was not a more diligent collector, informs me, that 'when a boy he was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life; so that (adds his Lordship) spending part of a summer² at my parsonage-house in the country, he chose for his regular reading the old Spanish romance of *Felixmarte of Hircania*, in folio, which he read quite through³. Yet I have heard him attribute to these extravagant fictions that unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing in any profession.'

1725: ÆTAT. 16.—AFTER having resided for some time at the house of his uncle, Cornelius Ford⁴, Johnson was, at the age of fifteen, removed to the school of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, of which Mr. Wentworth was then master.

¹ The author of the *Reliques*.

² The summer of 1764.

³ Johnson, writing of *Paradise Lost*, book ii. l. 879, says:—'In the history of *Don Bellianis*, when one of the knights approaches, as I remember, the castle of Brandezar, the gates are said to open, *grating harsh thunder upon their brazen hinges*.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 76. See *post*, March 27, 1776, where 'he had with him upon a jaunt Il Palmerino d'Inghilterra.' Prior says of Burke that 'a very favourite study, as he once confessed in the House of Commons, was the old romances, *Palmerin of England* and *Don Belianis of Greece*, upon which he had wasted much valuable time.' Prior's *Burke*, p. 9.

⁴ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 2) says that the uncle was Dr. Joseph Ford 'a physician of great eminence.' The son, Parson Ford, was Cornelius. In Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 15, 1773, Johnson mentions an uncle who very likely was Dr. Ford. In *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. v. 13, it is shown that by the will of the widow of Dr. Ford the Johnsons received £200 in 1722. On the same page the Ford pedigree is given, where it is seen that Johnson had an uncle Cornelius. It has been stated that 'Johnson was brought up by his uncle till his fifteenth year.' I understand Boswell to say that Johnson, after leaving Lichfield School, resided for some time with his uncle before going to Stourbridge.

This

This step was taken by the advice of his cousin, the Reverend Mr. Ford, a man in whom both talents and good dispositions were disgraced by licentiousness¹, but who was a very able judge of what was right. At this school he did not receive so much benefit as was expected. It has been said, that he acted in the capacity of an assistant to Mr. Wentworth, in teaching the younger boys. 'Mr. Wentworth (he told me) was a very able man, but an idle man, and to me very severe; but I cannot blame him much. I was then a big boy; he saw I did not reverence him; and that he should get no honour by me. I had brought enough with me, to carry me through; and all I should get at his school would be ascribed to my own labour, or to my former master. Yet he taught me a great deal.'

He thus discriminated, to Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, his progress at his two grammar-schools. 'At one, I learnt much in the school, but little from the master; in the other, I learnt much from the master, but little in the school.'

The Bishop also informs me, that 'Dr. Johnson's father, before he was received at Stourbridge, applied to have him admitted as a scholar and assistant to the Reverend Samuel Lea, M.A., head master of Newport school, in Shropshire (a very diligent, good teacher, at that time in high reputation, under whom Mr. Hollis² is said, in the Memoirs of his Life, to have been also educated³). This application to Mr. Lea

¹ He is said to be the original of the parson in Hogarth's *Modern Midnight Conversation*. BOSWELL.

In the *Life of Fenton* Johnson describes Ford as 'a clergyman at that time too well known, whose abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and dissolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 57. Writing to Mrs. Thrale on July 8, 1771, he says, 'I would have been glad to go to Hagley [close to Stourbridge] for I should have had the opportunity of recollecting past times, and wandering *per montes notos et flumina nota*, of recalling the images of sixteen, and reviewing my conversations with poor Ford.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 42. See also *post*, May 12, 1778.

² See *post*, April 20, 1781.

³ As was likewise the Bishop of Dromore many years afterwards. BOSWELL.

was not successful; but Johnson had afterwards the gratification to hear that the old gentleman, who lived to a very advanced age, mentioned it as one of the most memorable events of his life, that 'he was *very near* having that great man for his scholar.'

He remained at Stourbridge little more than a year, and then returned home, where he may be said to have loitered, for two years, in a state very unworthy his uncommon abilities. He had already given several proofs of his poetical genius, both in his school-exercises and in other occasional compositions. Of these I have obtained a considerable collection, by the favour of Mr. Wentworth, son of one of his masters, and of Mr. Hector, his school-fellow and friend; from which I select the following specimens:

Translation of VIRGIL. Pastoral I.

MELIBŒUS.

Now, Tityrus, you, supine and careless laid,
Play on your pipe beneath this beechen shade;
While wretched we about the world must roam,
And leave our pleasing fields and native home,
Here at your ease you sing your amorous flame,
And the wood rings with Amarillis' name.

TITYRUS.

Those blessings, friend, a deity bestow'd,
For I shall never think him less than God;
Oft on his altar shall my firstlings lie,
Their blood the consecrated stones shall dye:
He gave my flocks to graze the flowery meads,
And me to tune at ease th' unequal reeds.

MELIBŒUS.

My admiration only I exprest,
(No spark of envy harbours in my breast)
That, when confusion o'er the country reigns,
To you alone this happy state remains.
Here I, though faint myself, must drive my goats,
Far from their antient fields and humble cots.
This scarce I lead, who left on yonder rock

Two tender kids, the hopes of all the flock,
 Had we not been perverse and careless grown,
 This dire event by omens was foreshown ;
 Our trees were blasted by the thunder stroke,
 And left-hand crows, from an old hollow oak, }
 Foretold the coming evil by their dismal croak. }

Translation of HORACE. Book I. Ode xxii.

THE man, my friend, whose conscious heart
 With virtue's sacred ardour glows,
 Nor taints with death the envenom'd dart,
 Nor needs the guard of Moorish bows :

Though Scythia's icy cliffs he treads,
 Or horrid Africk's faithless sands ;
 Or where the fam'd Hydaspes spreads
 His liquid wealth o'er barbarous lands.

For while by Chloe's image charm'd
 Too far in Sabine's woods I stray'd ;
 Me singing, careless and unarm'd,
 A grizly wolf surprised, and fled.

No savage more portentous stain'd
 Apulia's spacious wilds with gore ;
 No fiercer Juba's thirsty land,
 Dire nurse of raging lions, bore.

Place me where no soft summer gale
 Among the quivering branches sighs ;
 Where clouds condens'd for ever veil
 With horrid gloom the frowning skies :

Place me beneath the burning line,
 A clime deny'd to human race ;
 I'll sing of Chloe's charms divine,
 Her heav'nly voice, and beauteous face.

Translation of HORACE. Book II. Ode ix.

CLOUDS do not always veil the skies,
 Nor showers immerse the verdant plain ;
 Nor do the billows always rise,
 Or storms afflict the ruffled main.

Nor, Valgius, on th' Armenian shores
Do the chain'd waters always freeze ;
Not always furious Boreas roars,
Or bends with violent force the trees.

But you are ever drown'd in tears,
For Mystes dead you ever mourn ;
No setting Sol can ease your care,
But finds you sad at his return.

The wise experienc'd Grecian sage
Mourn'd not Antilochus so long ;
Nor did King Priam's hoary age
So much lament his slaughter'd son.

Leave off, at length, these woman's sighs,
Augustus' numerous trophies sing ;
Repeat that prince's victories,
To whom all nations tribute bring.

Niphates rolls an humbler wave,
At length the undaunted Scythian yields,
Content to live the Roman's slave,
And scarce forsakes his native fields.

Translation of part of the Dialogue between HECTOR and ANDROMACHE ; from the Sixth Book of HOMER'S ILIAD.

SHE ceas'd : then godlike Hector answer'd kind,
(His various plumage sporting in the wind)
That post, and all the rest, shall be my care ;
But shall I, then, forsake the unfinished war ?
How would the Trojans brand great Hector's name !
And one base action sully all my fame,
Acquired by wounds and battles bravely fought !
Oh ! how my soul abhors so mean a thought.
Long since I learn'd to slight this fleeting breath,
And view with cheerful eyes approaching death.
The inexorable sisters have decreed
That Priam's house, and Priam's self shall bleed :
The day will come, in which proud Troy shall yield,
And spread its smoking ruins o'er the field.
Yet Hecuba's, nor Priam's hoary age,
Whose blood shall quench some Grecian's thirsty rage,
Nor

Nor my brave brothers, that have bit the ground,
 Their souls dismiss'd through many a ghastly wound,
 Can in my bosom half that grief create,
 As the sad thought of your impending fate:
 When some proud Grecian dame shall tasks impose,
 Mimick your tears, and ridicule your woes;
 Beneath Hyperia's waters shall you sweat,
 And, fainting, scarce support the liquid weight:
 Then shall some Argive loud insulting cry,
 Behold the wife of Hector, guard of Troy!
 Tears, at my name, shall drown those beauteous eyes,
 And that fair bosom heave with rising sighs!
 Before that day, by some brave hero's hand
 May I lie slain, and spurn the bloody sand.

*To a YOUNG LADY on her BIRTH-DAY*¹.

THIS tributary verse receive my fair,
 Warm with an ardent lover's fondest pray'r.
 May this returning day for ever find
 Thy form more lovely, more adorn'd thy mind;
 All pains, all cares, may favouring heav'n remove,
 All but the sweet solitudes of love!
 May powerful nature join with grateful art,
 To point each glance, and force it to the heart!
 O then, when conquered crouds confess thy sway,
 When ev'n proud wealth and prouder wit obey,
 My fair, be mindful of the mighty trust,
 Alas! 'tis hard for beauty to be just.
 Those sovereign charms with strictest care employ;
 Nor give the generous pain, the worthless joy:
 With his own form acquaint the forward fool,
 Shewn in the faithful glass of ridicule;
 Teach mimick censure her own faults to find,
 No more let coquettes to themselves be blind,
 So shall Belinda's charms improve mankind. }

THE YOUNG AUTHOUR².

WHEN first the peasant, long inclin'd to roam,
 Forsakes his rural sports and peaceful home,

¹ Mr. Hector informs me, that this was made almost *impromptu*, in his presence. BOSWELL.

² This he inserted, with many alterations, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* Pleas'd

Pleas'd with the scene the smiling ocean yields,
 He scorns the verdant meads and flow'ry fields ;
 Then dances jocund o'er the watery way,
 While the breeze whispers, and the streamers play :
 Unbounded prospects in his bosom roll,
 And future millions lift his rising soul ;
 In blissful dreams he digs the golden mine,
 And raptur'd sees the new-found ruby shine.
 Joys insincere ! thick clouds invade the skies,
 Loud roar the billows, high the waves arise ;
 Sick'ning with fear, he longs to view the shore,
 And vows to trust the faithless deep no more.
 So the young Authour, panting after fame,
 And the long honours of a lasting name,
 Entrusts his happiness to human kind,
 More false, more cruel, than the seas or wind.
 'Toil on, dull croud, in extacies he cries,
 For wealth or title, perishable prize ;
 While I those transitory blessings scorn,
 Secure of praise from ages yet unborn.'
 This thought once form'd, all council comes too late,
 He flies to press, and hurries on his fate ;
 Swiftly he sees the imagin'd laurels spread,
 And feels the unfading wreath surround his head.
 Warn'd by another's fate, vain youth be wise,
 Those dreams were Settle's² once, and Ogilby's³ :
 The pamphlet spreads, incessant hisses rise,
 To some retreat the baffled writer flies ;
 Where no sour criticks snarl, no sneers molest,
 Safe from the tart lampoon, and stinging jest ;
 There begs of heaven a less distinguished lot,
 Glad to be hid, and proud to be forgot.

zine, 1743 [p. 378]. BOSWELL. The alterations are not always for the better. Thus he alters

'And the long honours of a lasting name'

into

'And fir'd with pleasing hope of endless fame.'

² Settle was the last of the city-poets; *post*, May 15, 1776.

³ 'Here swells the shelf with Ogilby the great.' Dunciad, 1.

EPILOGUE, intended to have been spoken by a LADY who was to personate the Ghost of HERMIONE¹.

YE blooming train, who give despair or joy,
 Bless with a smile, or with a frown destroy ;
 In whose fair cheeks destructive Cupids wait,
 And with unerring shafts distribute fate ;
 Whose snowy breasts, whose animated eyes,
 Each youth admires, though each admirer dies ;
 Whilst you deride their pangs in barb'rous play, }
 Unpitying see them weep, and hear them pray, }
 And unrelenting sport ten thousand lives away ; }
 For you, ye fair, I quit the gloomy plains ;
 Where sable night in all her horror reigns ;
 No fragrant bowers, no delightful glades,
 Receive the unhappy ghosts of scornful maids.
 For kind, for tender nymphs the myrtle blooms,
 And weaves her bending boughs in pleasing glooms :
 Perennial roses deck each purple vale,
 And scents ambrosial breathe in every gale :
 Far hence are banish'd vapours, spleen, and tears,
 Tea, scandal, ivory teeth, and languid airs :
 No pug, nor favourite Cupid there enjoys
 The balmy kiss, for which poor Thyrsis dies ;
 Form'd to delight, they use no foreign arms,
 Nor torturing whalebones pinch them into charms ;
 No conscious blushes there their cheeks inflame,
 For those who feel no guilt can know no shame ;
 Unfaded still their former charms they shew,
 Around them pleasures wait, and joys for ever new.
 But cruel virgins meet severer fates ;
 Expell'd and exil'd from the blissful seats,
 To dismal realms, and regions void of peace,
 Where furies ever howl, and serpents hiss.
 O'er the sad plains perpetual tempests sigh,
 And pois'nous vapours, black'ning all the sky,
 With livid hue the fairest face o'ercast,

¹ Some young ladies at Lichfield having proposed to act *The Distressed Mother*, Johnson wrote this, and gave it to Mr. Hector to convey it privately to them. BOSWELL. See *post*, 1747, for *The Distressed Mother*.

And every beauty withers at the blast :
 Where e'er they fly their lovers' ghosts pursue,
 Inflicting all those ills which once they knew ;
 Vexation, Fury, Jealousy, Despair,
 Vex ev'ry eye, and every bosom tear ;
 Their foul deformities by all descry'd,
 No maid to flatter, and no paint to hide.
 Then melt, ye fair, while crouds around you sigh,
 Nor let disdain sit lowring in your eye ;
 With pity soften every awful grace,
 And beauty smile auspicious in each face ;
 To ease their pains exert your milder power,
 So shall you guiltless reign, and all mankind adore.'

The two years which he spent at home, after his return from Stourbridge, he passed in what he thought idleness¹, and was scolded by his father for his want of steady application². He had no settled plan of life, nor looked forward at all, but merely lived from day to day. Yet he read a great deal in a desultory manner, without any scheme of study, as chance threw books in his way, and inclination directed him through them. He used to mention one curious instance of his casual reading, when but a boy. Having imagined that his brother had hid some apples behind a large folio upon an upper shelf in his father's shop, he climbed up to search for them. There were no apples; but

¹ Yet he said to Boswell:—' Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now' (*post*, July 21, 1763). He told Mr. Langton, that 'his great period of study was from the age of twelve to that of eighteen' (*Ib.* note). He told the King that his reading had later on been hindered by ill-health (*post*, Feb. 1767).

² Hawkins (*Life*, p. 9) says that 'his father took him home, probably with a view to bring him up to his own trade; for I have heard Johnson say that he himself was able to bind a book.' 'It were better bind books again,' wrote Mrs. Thrale to him on Sept. 18, 1777, 'as you did one year in our thatched summer-house.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 375. It was most likely at this time that he refused to attend his father to Uttoxeter market, for which fault he made atonement in his old age (*post*, November 1784).

the large folio proved to be Petrarch, whom he had seen mentioned in some preface, as one of the restorers of learning. His curiosity having been thus excited, he sat down with avidity, and read a great part of the book. What he read during these two years he told me, was not works of mere amusement, 'not voyages and travels, but all literature, Sir, all ancient writers, all manly: though but little Greek, only some of Anacreon and Hesiod; but in this irregular manner (added he) I had looked into a great many books, which were not commonly known at the Universities, where they seldom read any books but what are put into their hands by their tutors; so that when I came to Oxford, Dr. Adams, now master of Pembroke College, told me I was the best qualified for the University that he had ever known come there¹.'

In estimating the progress of his mind during these two years, as well as in future periods of his life, we must not regard his own hasty confession of idleness; for we see, when he explains himself, that he was acquiring various stores; and, indeed he himself concluded the account with saying, 'I would not have you think I was doing nothing then.' He might, perhaps, have studied more assiduously; but it may be doubted whether such a mind as his was not more enriched by roaming at large in the fields of literature than if it had been confined to any single spot. The analogy between body and mind is very general, and the parallel will hold as to their food, as well as any other particular. The flesh of animals who feed excursively, is allowed to have a higher flavour than that of those who are cooped up. May there not be the same difference between

¹ Perhaps Johnson had his own early reading in mind when he thus describes Pope's reading at about the same age. 'During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent and insatiably curious; wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures, and having excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 239.

men who read as their taste prompts and men who are confined in cells and colleges to stated tasks?

That a man in Mr. Michael Johnson's circumstances should think of sending his son to the expensive University of Oxford, at his own charge, seems very improbable. The subject was too delicate to question Johnson upon. But I have been assured by Dr. Taylor that the scheme never would have taken place had not a gentleman of Shropshire, one of his school-fellows, spontaneously undertaken to support him at Oxford, in the character of his companion; though, in fact, he never received any assistance whatever from that gentleman¹.

He, however, went to Oxford, and was entered a Commoner of Pembroke College on the 31st of October, 1728², being then in his nineteenth year³.

¹ Andrew Corbet, according to Hawkins. Corbet had entered Pembroke College in 1727. Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, was a member of the College. I find the name of a Swinfen on the books in 1728.

² In the Caution Book of Pembroke College are found the two following entries:—

'Oct. 31, 1728. Recd. then of Mr. Samuel Johnson Comr. of Pem. Coll. ye sūm of seven Pounds for his Caution, which is to remain in ye Hands of ye Bursars till ye said Mr. Johnson shall depart ye said College leaving ye same fully discharg'd.

'Recd. by me, John Ratcliff, Bursar.'

'March 26, 1740. At a convention of the Master and Fellows to settle the accounts of the Caution it appear'd that the Persons Accounts under-written stood thus at their leaving the College:

Caution not Repay'd
Mr. Johnson £7 0 0
Battells not discharg'd
Mr. Johnson £7 0 0

Mr. Carlyle is in error in describing Johnson as a servitor. He was a commoner as the above entry shows. Though he entered on Oct. 31, he did not matriculate till Dec. 16. It was on Palm Sunday of this same year that Rousseau left Geneva, and so entered upon his eventful career. Goldsmith was born eleven days after Johnson entered (Nov. 10, 1728). Reynolds was five years old. Burke was born before Johnson left Oxford.

³ He was in his twentieth year. He was born on Sept. 18, 1709, and

The

The Reverend Dr. Adams, who afterwards presided over Pembroke College with universal esteem, told me he was present, and gave me some account of what passed on the night of Johnson's arrival at Oxford¹. On that evening, his father, who had anxiously accompanied him, found means to have him introduced to Mr. Jorden, who was to be his tutor. His being put under any tutor reminds us of what Wood says of Robert Burton, authour of the 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' when elected student of Christ Church: 'for form's sake, *though he wanted not a tutor*, he was put under the tuition of Dr. John Bancroft, afterwards Bishop of Oxon².'

His father seemed very full of the merits of his son, and told the company he was a good scholar, and a poet, and wrote Latin verses. His figure and manner appeared strange to them; but he behaved modestly, and sat silent, till upon something which occurred in the course of conversation, he suddenly struck in and quoted Macrobius; and thus he gave the first impression of that more extensive reading in which he had indulged himself.

His tutor, Mr. Jorden, fellow of Pembroke, was not, it seems, a man of such abilities as we should conceive requisite for the instructor of Samuel Johnson, who gave me the following account of him. 'He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his instructions. Indeed, I did not attend him much³. The first day

was therefore nineteen. He was somewhat late in entering. In his *Life of Ascham* he says, 'Ascham took his bachelor's degree in 1534, in the eighteenth year of his age; a time of life at which it is more common now to enter the universities than to take degrees.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 505. It was just after Johnson's entrance that the two Wesleys began to hold small devotional meetings at Oxford.

¹ Builders were at work in the college during all his residence. 'July 16, 1728. About a quarter of a year since they began to build a new chapel for Pembroke Coll. next to Slaughter Lane.' Hearne's *Remains*, iii. 9.

² *Athen. Oxon.* edit. 1721, i. 627. BOSWELL.

³ 'Johnson would oftener risk the payment of a small fine than attend his lectures . . . Upon occasion of one such imposition he said to Jorden:—"Sir, you have sconced [fined] me two pence for non-after

after I came to college I waited upon him, and then staid away four. On the sixth, Mr. Jorden asked me why I had not attended. I answered I had been sliding in Christ-Church meadow¹. And this I said with as much *nonchalance* as I am now² talking to you. I had no notion that I was wrong or irreverent to my tutor³. BOSWELL: 'That, Sir, was great fortitude of mind.' JOHNSON: 'No, Sir; stark insensibility⁴.'

The fifth of November⁵ was at that time kept with great

attendance at a lecture not worth a penny." Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 9. A passage in Whitefield's *Diary* shows that the sponce was often greater. He once neglected to give in the weekly theme which every Saturday had to be given to the tutor in the Hall 'when the bell rang.' He was fined half-a-crown. Tyerman's *Whitefield*, i. 22. In my time (1855-8) at Pembroke College every Saturday when the bell rang we gave in our piece of Latin prose—themes were things of the past.

¹ This was on Nov. 6, O. S., or Nov. 17, N. S.—a very early time for ice to bear. The first mention of frost that I find in the newspapers of that winter is in the *Weekly Journal* for Nov. 30, O. S.; where it is stated that 'the passage by land and water [i. e. the Thames] is now become very dangerous by the snow, frost, and ice.' The record of meteorological observations began a few years later.

² Oxford, 20th March, 1776. BOSWELL.

³ Mr. Croker discovers a great difference between this account and that which Johnson gave to Mr. Warton (*post*, under July 16, 1754). There is no need to have recourse, with Mr. Croker, 'to an ear spoiled by flattery.' A very simple explanation may be found. The accounts refer to different hours of the same day. Johnson's 'stark insensibility' belonged to the morning, and his 'beating heart' to the afternoon. He had been impertinent before dinner, and when he was sent for after dinner 'he expected a sharp rebuke.'

⁴ It ought to be remembered that Dr. Johnson was apt, in his literary as well as moral exercises, to overcharge his defects. Dr. Adams informed me, that he attended his tutor's lectures, and also the lectures in the College Hall, very regularly. BOSWELL.

⁵ Early in every November was kept 'a great gaudy [feast] in the college, when the Master dined in 'publick, and the juniors (by an ancient custom they were obliged to comply with) went round the fire in the hall.' Philipps's *Diary, Notes and Queries*, 2nd S., x. 443. We can picture to ourselves among the juniors in November 1728, Samuel solemnity

solemnity at Pembroke College, and exercises upon the subject of the day were required¹. Johnson neglected to perform his, which is much to be regretted; for his vivacity of imagination, and force of language, would probably have produced something sublime upon the gunpowder plot². To apologise for his neglect, he gave in a short copy of verses, entitled *Somnium*, containing a common thought; 'that the Muse had come to him in his sleep, and whispered, that it did not become him to write on such subjects as politicks; he should confine himself to humbler themes:' but the versification was truly Virgilian³.

Johnson, going round the fire with the others. Here he heard day after day the Latin grace which Camden had composed for the society. 'I believe I can repeat it,' Johnson said at St. Andrew's, 'which he did.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 19, 1773.

¹ Seven years before Johnson's time, on Nov. 5, 'Mr. Payne, Bachelor of Arts, made an oration in the hall suitable to the day.' Philipps's *Diary*.

² Boswell forgot Johnson's criticism on Milton's exercises on this day. 'Some of the exercises on Gunpowder Treason might have been spared.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 119.

³ It has not been preserved. There are in the college library four of his compositions, two of verse and two of prose. One of the copies of verse I give *post*, under July 16, 1754. Both have been often printed. As his prose compositions have never been published I will give one:—

'Mea nec Falernae

Temperant Vites, neque Formiani Pocula Colles.'

'Quaedam minus attente spectata absurda videntur, quae tamen penitus perspecta rationi sunt consentanea. Non enim semper facta per se, verum ratio occasioque faciendi sunt cogitanda. Deteriora ei offerre cui meliorum ingens copia est, cui non ridiculum videtur? Quis sanus hirtam agrestemque vestem Lucullo obtulisset, cujus omnia fere Serum opificia, omnia Parmae vellera, omnes Tyri colores latuerunt? Hoc tamen fecisse Horatium non puduit, quo nullus urbanior, nullus procerum convictui magis assuetus. Maecenatem scilicet nôrat non quaesiturum an meliora vina domi posset bibere, verum an inter domesticos quenquam propensiori in se animo posset invenire. Amorem, non lucrum, optavit patronus ille munificentissimus (*sic*). Pocula licet vino minus puro implerentur, satis habuit, si hospitius vultus laetitia perfusus sinceram puramque amicitiam testaretur.

He

Mea uxi Galornage

mirum quod lignis cecit arma Virum
id quod pulidulum nostra Camacha sonat.
um nobis Beonus dat calidus haushum.
irigilio uirio Uva Galorna dedit.
na us nostri scribant meliora Postea?
genium iubeas quires haushis alat.

Whinton
/

— Mea sor Falerna
Comprobat Vites, neque Formicam
Pocula Colles.

Quaedam minus attente spectata absurda videntur quo tamen
poetibus profecto rationi sunt contentatae. Non enim sompno facti
sunt ut verum ratio excipio, faciendi sunt cogitanda. Historiam
si optare cui meliorem ingenio caepia est, cui non ridiculum
videtur? Quis sanus huiusmodi agros hominum quibus oblati
cupis omnia fere solum opifera omnia Parma colore, Panis
Sui Colores habuerunt? Por tamen forte Horatium non puduit
quod nullus urbanior, nullus Procerum convivii magis apertus
fuit. Maceratam scilicet vocat non quod barum an melior
ra vinea domi potest libere, verum ad istud Ponsilices
quosquam proportionem in se animo potest inspicere. Amorem
non Lucrum optant, Patronus ille munificissimus, Pocula
licet vino minus puro implerentur, satis habuit, si hos
pitis vultus colitâ perfusus omnesque furang amicitiam
laboratur. Ut ab E. ston carmine celebramus, non fuit
dit, quod ipse melius potest scribere, verum Roma licet non
magni facit amorem scriptoris libenter amplectitur. Sic enim
in Manuscula animum grahum topelantia licet parvi sint
non nisi a superbo et moroso contemnerent. Non minus fuit
indigere sono certe nequam credit quos tamen ipsi gratos
preferant, quia Homines se non conspiciunt amemores
his testimoniis ostendunt.

Johnson

Mea sor Falerna

Quid mirum spero quod legas canit arma Virum
Quid quod pulchrum nostra Campana sonat?
Fimorum nobis Pomus dat calidus haustum,
Virgilio vices Mea Falerna dedit.
Parmine ut nostri servabat meliora Postea?
Fugonem iubeas furios haustus alati.

Johnson

He had a love and respect for Jorden, not for his literature, but for his worth. 'Whenever (said he) a young man becomes Jorden's pupil, he becomes his son.'

Having given such a specimen of his poetical powers, he was asked by Mr. Jorden, to translate Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse, as a Christmas exercise. He performed it with uncommon rapidity, and in so masterly a manner, that he obtained great applause from it, which ever after kept him high in the estimation of his College, and, indeed, of all the University¹.

It is said that Mr. Pope expressed himself concerning it in terms of strong approbation². Dr. Taylor told me, that it was first printed for old Mr. Johnson, without the knowledge of his son, who was very angry when he heard of it. A *Miscellany of Poems* collected by a person of the name of *Husbands*, was published at Oxford in 1731³. In that

Ut ubi poetam carmine celebramus, non fastidit, quod ipse melius posset scribere, verum poema licet non magni facit (*sic*), amorem scriptoris libenter amplectitur, sic amici munuscula animum gratum testantia licet parvi sint, non nisi a superbo et moroso contemnentur. Deos thuris fumis indigere nemo certè unquam credit, quos tamen iis gratos putarunt, quia homines se non beneficiorum immemores his testimoniis ostenderunt.

JOHNSON.

¹ 'The accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained Addison the patronage of Dr. Lancaster, afterwards Provost of Queen's College, by whose recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy' [a scholar]. Johnson's *Works*, vii. 420. Johnson's verses gained him nothing but 'estimation.'

² He is reported to have said:—'The writer of this poem will leave it a question for posterity, whether his or mine be the original.' Hawkins, p. 13.

³ 'A *Miscellany of Poems* by several hands. Published by J. Husbands, A.M., Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxon., Oxford. Printed by Leon. Lichfield, near the East-Gate, In the year MDCCXXXI.' Among the subscribers I notice the name of Richard Savage, Esq., for twenty copies. It is very doubtful whether he paid for one. Pope did not subscribe. Johnson's poem is thus mentioned in the preface:—'The translation of Mr. Pope's *Messiah* was deliver'd to his Tutor as a College Exercise by Mr. Johnson, a commoner of Pembroke-College in Oxford, and 'tis hoped will be no discredit to the excellent original.'

Miscellany

Miscellany Johnson's Translation of the Messiah appeared, with this modest motto from Scaliger's Poeticks. *Ex alieno ingenio Poeta, ex suo tantum versificator.*

I am not ignorant that critical objections have been made to this and other specimens of Johnson's Latin Poetry¹. I acknowledge myself not competent to decide on a question of such extreme nicety. But I am satisfied with the just and discriminative eulogy pronounced upon it by my friend Mr. Courtenay.

'And with like ease his vivid lines assume
The garb and dignity of ancient Rome.—
Let college *verse-men* trite conceits express,
Trick'd out in splendid shreds of Virgil's dress;
From playful Ovid cull the tinsel phrase,
And vapid notions hitch in pilfer'd lays:
Then with mosaick art the piece combine,
And boast the glitter of each dulcet line:
Johnson adventur'd boldly to transfuse
His vigorous sense into the Latian muse;
Aspir'd to shine by unreflected light,
And with a Roman's ardour *think* and write.
He felt the tuneful Nine his breast inspire,
And, like a master, wak'd the soothing lyre:
Horatian strains a grateful heart proclaim,
While Sky's wild rocks resound his Thralia's name².
Hesperia's plant, in some less skilful hands,
To bloom a while, factitious heat demands:
Though glowing Maro a faint warmth supplies,
The sickly blossom in the hot-house dies:
By Johnson's genial culture, art, and toil,
Its root strikes deep, and owns the fost'ring soil;
Imbibes our sun through all its swelling veins,
And grows a native of Britannia's plains³.'

The 'morbid melancholy,' which was lurking in his constitution, and to which we may ascribe those particularities,

¹ See *post*, under July 16, 1754.

² See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 6, 1773.

³ *Poetical Review of the Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson*, by John Courtenay, Esq., M.P. BOSWELL.

and that aversion to regular life, which, at a very early period, marked his character, gathered such strength in his twentieth year, as to afflict him in a dreadful manner. While he was at Lichfield, in the college vacation of the year 1729¹, he felt himself overwhelmed with an horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which

¹ Hector, in his account of Johnson's early life, says:—'After a long absence from Lichfield, when he returned, I was apprehensive of something wrong in his constitution which might either impair his intellect or endanger his life; but, thanks to Almighty God, my fears have proved false.' Hawkins, p. 8. The college books show that Johnson was absent but one week in the Long Vacation of 1729. It is by no means unlikely that he went to Lichfield in that week to consult Dr. Swinfen about his health. In that case his first attack, when he tried to overcome the malady by frequently walking to Birmingham, must have been at an earlier date. In his time students often passed the vacation at the University. The following table shows the number of graduates and undergraduates in residence in Pembroke College at the end of each fourth week, from June to December 1729:—

| | Members in residence. |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| June 20, 1729 | 54 |
| July 18, „ | 34 |
| Aug. 15, „ | 25 |
| Sept. 12, „ | 16 |
| Oct. 10, „ | 30 |
| Nov. 7, „ | 52 |
| Dec. 5, „ | 49 |

At Christmas there were still sixteen men left in the college. That under a zealous tutor the vacation was by no means a time of idleness is shown by a passage in Wesley's *Journal*, in which he compares the Scotch Universities with the English. 'In Scotland,' he writes, 'the students all come to their several colleges in November, and return home in May. So they *may* study five months in the year, and lounge all the rest! O where was the common sense of those who instituted such colleges? In the English colleges everyone *may* reside all the year, as all my pupils did; and I should have thought myself little better than a highwayman if I had not lectured them every day in the year but Sundays.' Wesley's *Journal*, iv. 75. Johnson lived to see Oxford empty in the Long Vacation. Writing on Aug. 1, 1775, he said:—'The place is now a sullen solitude.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 294.

made

made existence misery¹. From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labours, and all his enjoyments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence². How wonderful, how unsearchable are the ways of GOD! Johnson, who was blest with all the powers of genius and understanding in a degree far above the ordinary state of human nature, was at the same time visited with a disorder so afflictive, that they who know it by dire experience, will not envy his exalted endowments. That it was, in some degree, occasioned by a defect in his nervous system, that inexplicable part of our frame, appears highly probable. He told Mr. Paradise³ that he was sometimes so languid and inefficient, that he could not distinguish the hour upon the town-clock.

Johnson, upon the first violent attack of this disorder, strove to overcome it by forcible exertions⁴. He frequently walked to Birmingham and back again⁵, and tried many other expedients, but all in vain. His expression concerning

¹ Johnson, perhaps, was thinking of himself when he thus criticised the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. 'The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madness, which from time to time cloud reason without eclipsing it, it requires so much nicety to exhibit that Addison seems to have been deterred from prosecuting his own design.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 431.

² Writing in his old age to Hector, he said,—'My health has been from my twentieth year such as has seldom afforded me a single day of ease' (*post*, under March 21, 1782). Hawkins writes, that he once told him 'that he knew not what it was to be totally free from pain.' Hawkins, p. 396.

³ See *post*, Oct. 27, 1784, note.

⁴ In the *Rambler*, No. 85, he pointed out 'how much happiness is gained, and how much misery escaped, by frequent and violent agitation of the body.' See *post*, July 21, 1763, for his remedies against melancholy.

⁵ Thirty-two miles in all. Southey mentions that in 1728, the Wesleys, to save the more money for the poor, began to perform their journeys on foot. He adds,—'It was so little the custom in that age for men in their rank of life to walk any distance, as to make them think it a discovery that four or five-and-twenty miles are an easy and safe day's journey.' Southey's *Wesley*, i. 52.

it to me was 'I did not then know how to manage it.' His distress became so intolerable, that he applied to Dr. Swinfen, physician in Lichfield, his god-father, and put into his hands a state of his case, written in Latin. Dr. Swinfen was so much struck with the extraordinary acuteness, research, and eloquence of this paper, that in his zeal for his godson he shewed it to several people. His daughter, Mrs. Desmoulins, who was many years humanely supported in Dr. Johnson's house in London, told me, that upon his discovering that Dr. Swinfen had communicated his case, he was so much offended, that he was never afterwards fully reconciled to him. He indeed had good reason to be offended; for though Dr. Swinfen's motive was good, he inconsiderately betrayed a matter deeply interesting and of great delicacy, which had been entrusted to him in confidence; and exposed a complaint of his young friend and patient, which, in the superficial opinion of the generality of mankind, is attended with contempt and disgrace¹.

But let not little men triumph upon knowing that Johnson was an HYPOCHONDRIACK, was subject to what the learned, philosophical, and pious Dr. Cheyne has so well treated under the title of 'The English Malady².' Though he suffered severely from it, he was not therefore degraded. The powers of his great mind might be troubled, and their full exercise suspended at times; but the mind itself was ever entire. As a proof of this, it is only necessary to consider, that, when he was at the very worst, he composed that state of his own case, which shewed an uncommon vigour, not only of fancy and taste, but of judgement. I am aware that he himself was too ready to call such a complaint by the name of *madness*³; in conformity with which notion, he has traced

¹ Boswell himself suffered from hypochondria. He seems at times to boast of it, as Dogberry boasted of his losses; so that Johnson had some reason for writing to him with severity, as if he were 'affecting it from a desire of distinction.' *Post*, July 2, 1776.

² Johnson on April 7, 1776, recommended Boswell to read this book, and again on July 2 of the same year.

³ On Dec. 24, 1754, writing of the poet Collins, who was either mad
its

its gradations, with exquisite nicety, in one of the chapters of his *RASSELAS*¹. But there is surely a clear distinction between a disorder which affects only the imagination and spirits, while the judgement is sound, and a disorder by which the judgement itself is impaired. This distinction was made to me by the late Professor Gaubius of Leyden, physician to the Prince of Orange, in a conversation which I had with him several years ago, and he expanded it thus: 'If (said he) a man tells me that he is grievously disturbed, for that he *imagines* he sees a ruffian coming against him with a drawn sword, though at the same time he is *conscious* it is a delusion, I pronounce him to have a disordered imagination; but if a man tells me that he *sees* this, and in consternation calls to me to look at it, I pronounce him to be *mad*.'

It is a common effect of low spirits or melancholy, to make those who are afflicted with it imagine that they are actually suffering those evils which happen to be most strongly presented to their minds. Some have fancied themselves to be deprived of the use of their limbs, some to labour under acute diseases, others to be in extreme poverty; when, in truth, there was not the least reality in any of the suppositions; so that when the vapours were dispelled, they were convinced of the delusion. To Johnson, whose supreme enjoyment was the exercise of his reason, the disturbance or obscurcation of that faculty was the evil most to be dreaded. Insanity, therefore, was the object

or close upon it, he said,—'Poor dear Collins! I have often been near his state.' Woolf's *Warton*, p. 229. 'I inherited,' Johnson said, 'a vile melancholy from my father, which has made me mad all my life, at least not sober.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 16, 1773. 'When I survey my past life,' he wrote in 1777, 'I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body and disturbances of the mind very near to madness.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 155. Reynolds recorded that 'what Dr. Johnson said a few days before his death of his disposition to insanity was no new discovery to those who were intimate with him.' Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 455. See also *post*, Sept. 20, 1777.

¹ Ch. 44.

of his most dismal apprehension¹; and he fancied himself seized by it, or approaching to it, at the very time when he was giving proofs of a more than ordinary soundness and vigour of judgement. That his own diseased imagination should have so far deceived him, is strange; but it is stranger still that some of his friends should have given credit to his groundless opinion, when they had such undoubted proofs that it was totally fallacious; though it is by no means surprising that those who wish to depreciate him, should, since his death, have laid hold of this circumstance, and insisted upon it with very unfair aggravation².

Amidst the oppression and distraction of a disease which very few have felt in its full extent, but many have experienced in a slighter degree, Johnson, in his writings, and in his conversation, never failed to display all the varieties of intellectual excellence. In his march through this world to a better, his mind still appeared grand and brilliant, and impressed all around him with the truth of Virgil's noble sentiment—

*'Igneus est ollis vigor et cœlestis origo'*³.

The history of his mind as to religion is an important article. I have mentioned the early impressions made upon his tender imagination by his mother, who continued her pious care with assiduity, but, in his opinion, not with judgement. 'Sunday (said he) was a heavy day to me when I was a boy. My mother confined me on that day, and made me read "The Whole Duty of Man," from a great part of which I could derive no instruction. When, for instance, I had read the chapter on theft, which from my infancy I had been taught was wrong, I was no more convinced that theft was wrong than before; so there was no accession of knowledge.

¹ 'Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason.' *Rasselas*, ch. 43.

² Boswell refers to Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.*, pp. 77, 127), and Hawkins (*Life*, pp. 287-8).

³ 'Quick in these seeds is might of fire and birth of heavenly place.' Morris, *Æneids*, vi. 730.

A boy

A boy should be introduced to such books, by having his attention directed to the arrangement, to the style, and other excellencies of composition; that the mind being thus engaged by an amusing variety of objects, may not grow weary.'

He communicated to me the following particulars upon the subject of his religious progress. 'I fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Lichfield, in which we had a seat, wanted reparation¹, so I was to go and find a seat in other churches; and having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I used to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my fourteenth year; and still I find a great reluctance to go to church². I then became a sort of lax *talker* against religion, for I did not much *think* against it; and this lasted till I went to Oxford, where it would not be *suffered*³. When at Oxford, I took up '*Law's Serious Call*

¹ On Easter Sunday 1716 during service some pieces of stone from the spire of St. Mary's fell on the roof of the church. The congregation, thinking that the steeple was coming down, in their alarm broke through the windows. Johnson, we may well believe, witnessed the scene. The church was pulled down, and the new one was opened in Dec. 1721. Harwood's *Lichfield*, p. 460.

² 'Sept. 23, 1771. I have gone voluntarily to church on the week day but few times in my life. I think to mend. April 9, 1773. I hope in time to take pleasure in public worship. April 6, 1777. I have this year omitted church on most Sundays, intending to supply the deficiency in the week. So that I owe twelve attendances on worship. I will make no more such superstitious stipulations, which entangle the mind with unbidden obligations.' *Pr. and Med.* pp. 108, 121, 161. In the following passage in the *Life of Milton*, Johnson, no doubt, is thinking of himself:—'In the distribution of his hours there was no hour of prayer, either solitary or with his household; omitting public prayers he omitted all. . . . That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himself, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.' *Johnson's Works*, vii. 115. See *post*, Oct. 10, 1779.

³ We may compare with this a passage in Verecundulus's letter in
to

to a *Holy Life*’, expecting to find it a dull book (as such books generally are), and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion, after I

The Rambler, No. 157:—‘Though many among my fellow students [at the university] took the opportunity of a more remiss discipline to gratify their passions, yet virtue preserved her natural superiority, and those who ventured to neglect were not suffered to insult her.’ Oxford at this date was somewhat wayward in her love for religion. Whitefield records:—‘I had no sooner received the sacrament publicly on a week-day at St. Mary’s, but I was set up as a mark for all the polite students that knew me to shoot at. By this they knew that I was commenced Methodist, for though there is a sacrament at the beginning of every term, at which all, especially the seniors, are by statute obliged to be present, yet so dreadfully has that once faithful city played the harlot, that very few masters, and no undergraduates but the Methodists attended upon it. I daily underwent some contempt at college. Some have thrown dirt at me; others by degrees took away their pay from me.’ Tyerman’s *Whitefield*, i. 19. Story, the Quaker, visiting Oxford in 1731, says, ‘Of all places wherever I have been the scholars of Oxford were the rudest, most giddy, and unruly rabble, and most mischievous.’ Story’s *Journal*, p. 675.

¹ John Wesley, who was also at Oxford, writing of about this same year, says:—‘Meeting now with Mr. Law’s *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* the light flowed in so mightily upon my soul that everything appeared in a new view.’ Wesley’s *Journal*, i. 94. Whitefield writes:—‘Before I went to the University, I met with Mr. Law’s *Serious Call*, but had not then money to purchase it. Soon after my coming up to the University, seeing a small edition of it in a friend’s hand I soon procured it. God worked powerfully upon my soul by that and his other excellent treatise upon Christian perfection.’ Tyerman’s *Whitefield*, i. 16. Johnson called the *Serious Call* ‘the finest piece of hortatory theology in any language;’ *post*, 1770. A few months before his death he said:—‘William Law wrote the best piece of parenetic divinity; but William Law was no reasoner;’ *post*, June 9, 1784. Law was the tutor of Gibbon’s father, and he died in the house of the historian’s aunt. In describing the *Serious Call* Gibbon says:—‘His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel; his satire is sharp, but it is drawn from the knowledge of human life; and many of his portraits are not unworthy of the pen of La Bruyère. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader’s mind he will soon kindle it to a flame.’ Gibbon’s *Misc. Works*, i. 21.

became

became capable of rational inquiry¹. From this time forward religion was the predominant object of his thoughts²;

¹ Mrs. Piozzi has given a strange fantastical account of the original of Dr. Johnson's belief in our most holy religion. 'At the age of *ten* years his mind was disturbed by scruples of infidelity, which preyed upon his spirits, and made him very uneasy, the more so, as he revealed his uneasiness to none, being naturally (as he said) of a sullen temper, and reserved disposition. He searched, however, diligently, but fruitlessly, for evidences of the truth of revelation; and, at length, *recollecting* a book he had *once* seen [*I suppose at five years old*] in his father's shop, intitled *De veritate Religionis*, etc., he began to think himself *highly culpable* for neglecting such a means of information, and took himself severely to task for this *sin*, adding many acts of voluntary, and, to others, unknown *penance*. The first opportunity which offered, of course, he seized the book with avidity; but, on examination, *not finding himself scholar enough to peruse its contents*, set his heart at rest; and not thinking to enquire whether there were any English books written on the subject, followed his usual amusements and *considered his conscience as lightened of a crime*. He redoubled his diligence to learn the language that contained the information he most wished for; but from the pain which *guilt* [*namely having omitted to read what he did not understand*] had given him, he now began to deduce the soul's immortality [*a sensation of pain in this world being an unquestionable proof of existence in another*], which was the point that belief first stopped at; and from that moment *resolving to be a Christian*, became one of the most zealous and pious ones our nation ever produced.' *Anecdotes*, p. 17.

This is one of the numerous misrepresentations of this lively lady, which it is worth while to correct; for if credit should be given to such a childish, irrational, and ridiculous statement of the foundation of Dr. Johnson's faith in Christianity, how little credit would be due to it. Mrs. Piozzi seems to wish, that the world should think Dr. Johnson also under the influence of that easy logick, *Stet pro ratione voluntas*. BOSWELL. On April 28, 1783, Johnson said:—'Religion had dropped out of my mind. It was at an early part of my life. Sickness brought it back, and I hope I have never lost it since.' Most likely it was the sickness in the long vacation of 1729 mentioned *ante*, p. 73.

² In his *Life of Milton*, writing of *Paradise Lost*, he says:—'But these truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversations, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life.' *Johnson's Works*, vii. 134.

though

though, with the just sentiments of a conscientious Christian, he lamented that his practice of its duties fell far short of what it ought to be.

This instance of a mind such as that of Johnson being first disposed, by an unexpected incident, to think with anxiety of the momentous concerns of eternity, and of 'what he should do to be saved', may for ever be produced in opposition to the superficial and sometimes profane contempt that has been thrown upon those occasional impressions which it is certain many Christians have experienced; though it must be acknowledged that weak minds, from an erroneous supposition that no man is in a state of grace who has not felt a particular conversion, have, in some cases, brought a degree of ridicule upon them; a ridicule of which it is inconsiderate or unfair to make a general application.

How seriously Johnson was impressed with a sense of religion, even in the vigour of his youth, appears from the following passage in his minutes kept by way of diary: Sept. 7², 1736. I have this day entered upon my twenty-eighth year. 'Mayest thou, O God, enable me, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake, to spend this in such a manner that I may receive comfort from it at the hour of death, and in the day of judgement! Amen.'

The particular course of his reading while at Oxford, and during the time of vacation which he passed at home, cannot be traced. Enough has been said of his irregular mode of study. He told me that from his earliest years he loved to read poetry, but hardly ever read any poem to an end; that he read Shakspeare at a period so early, that the speech of the ghost in Hamlet terrified him when he was alone³; that Horace's Odes were the compositions in which he took most

¹ Acts xvi. 30.

² Sept. 7, Old Style, or Sept. 18, New Style.

³ 'He that peruses Shakspeare looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 71. 'I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.' *Ib.* p. 175.

delight, and it was long before he liked his Epistles and Satires. He told me what he read *solidly* at Oxford was Greek; not the Grecian historians, but Homer¹ and Euripides, and now and then a little Epigram; that the study of which he was the most fond was Metaphysics, but he had not read much, even in that way. I always thought that he did himself injustice in his account of what he had read, and that he must have been speaking with reference to the vast portion of study which is possible, and to which a few scholars in the whole history of literature have attained; for when I once asked him whether a person, whose name I have now forgotten, studied hard, he answered 'No, Sir; I do not believe he studied hard. I never knew a man who studied hard. I conclude, indeed, from the effects, that some men have studied hard, as Bentley and Clarke.' Trying him by that criterion upon which he formed his judgement of others, we may be absolutely certain, both from his writings and his conversation, that his reading was very extensive. Dr. Adam Smith, than whom few were better judges on this subject, once observed to me that 'Johnson knew more books than any man alive.' He had a peculiar facility in seizing at once what was valuable in any book, without submitting to the labour of perusing it from beginning to end².

¹ He told Mr. Windham that he had never read through the *Odyssey* completely. Windham's *Diary*, p. 17. At college, he said, he had been 'very idle and neglectful of his studies.' *Ib.*

² 'It may be questioned whether, except his Bible, he ever read a book entirely through. Late in life, if any man praised a book in his presence, he was sure to ask, "Did you read it through?" If the answer was in the affirmative, he did not seem willing to believe it.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 12. It would be easy to show that Johnson read many books right through, though, according to Mrs. Piozzi, he asked, 'was there ever yet anything written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress?' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 281. Nevertheless in Murphy's statement there is some truth. See what has been just stated by Boswell, that 'he hardly ever read any poem to an end,' and *post*, April 19, 1773, and June 15, 1784. To him might be applied his own description of Barretier:—'He had a quickness of apprehension and
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He had, from the irritability of his constitution, at all times, an impatience and hurry when he either read or wrote. A certain apprehension, arising from novelty, made him write his first exercise at College twice over¹; but he never took that trouble with any other composition; and we shall see that his most excellent works were struck off at a heat, with rapid exertion².

Yet he appears, from his early notes or memorandums in my possession, to have at various times attempted, or at least planned, a methodical course of study, according to computation, of which he was all his life fond, as it fixed his

firmness of memory which enabled him to read with incredible rapidity, and at the same time to retain what he read, so as to be able to recollect and apply it. He turned over volumes in an instant, and selected what was useful for his purpose.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 390.

¹ See *post*, June 15, 1784. Mr. Windham (*Diary*, p. 17) records the following 'anecdote of Johnson's first declamation at college; having neglected to write it till the morning of his being (*sic*) to repeat it, and having only one copy, he got part of it by heart while he was walking into the hall, and the rest he supplied as well as he could extempore.' Mrs. Piozzi, recording the same anecdote, says that 'having given the copy into the hand of the tutor who stood to receive it as he passed, he was obliged to begin by chance, and continue on how he could. . . . "A prodigious risk, however," said some one. "Not at all," exclaims Johnson, "no man, I suppose, leaps at once into deep water who does not know how to swim."' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 30.

² He told Dr. Burney that he never wrote any of his works that were printed, twice over. Dr. Burney's wonder at seeing several pages of his *Lives of the Poets*, in Manuscript, with scarce a blot or erasure, drew this observation from him. MALONE. 'He wrote forty-eight of the printed octavo pages of the *Life of Savage* at a sitting (*post*, Feb. 1744), and a hundred lines of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* in a day (*post*, under Feb. 15, 1766). The *Ramblers* were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed' (*post*, beginning of 1750). In the second edition, however, he made corrections. 'He composed *Rasselas* in the evenings of one week' (*post*, under January 1759). '*The False Alarm* was written between eight o'clock on Wednesday night and twelve o'clock on Thursday night.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 41. '*The Patriot*,' he says, 'was called for on Friday, was written on Saturday' (*post*, Nov. 26, 1774).

attention

attention steadily upon something without, and prevented his mind from preying upon itself¹. Thus I find in his handwriting the number of lines in each of two of Euripides' Tragedies, of the Georgicks of Virgil, of the first six books of the Æneid, of Horace's Art of Poetry, of three of the books of Ovid's Metamorphosis, of some parts of Theocritus, and of the tenth Satire of Juvenal; and a table, shewing at the rate of various numbers a day (I suppose verses to be read), what would be, in each case, the total amount in a week, month, and year².

No man had a more ardent love of literature, or a higher respect for it than Johnson. His apartment in Pembroke College was that upon the second floor, over the gateway. The enthusiasts of learning will ever contemplate it with veneration. One day, while he was sitting in it quite alone, Dr. Panting³, then master of the College, whom he called 'a fine Jacobite fellow,' overheard⁴ him uttering this soliloquy in his strong, emphatick voice: 'Well, I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I'll go and visit

¹ 'When Mr. Johnson felt his fancy, or fancied he felt it, disordered, his constant recurrence was to the study of arithmetic.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 77. 'Ethics, or figures, or metaphysical reasoning, was the sort of talk he most delighted in;' *ib.* p. 80. See *post*, Sept. 24, 1777.

² 'Sept. 18, 1764, I resolve to study the Scriptures; I hope in the original languages. 640 verses every Sunday will nearly comprise the Scriptures in a year.' *Pr. and Med.* p. 58. '1770, 1st Sunday after Easter. The plan which I formed for reading the Scriptures was to read 600 verses in the Old Testament, and 200 in the New, every week;' *ib.* p. 100.

³ 'August 1, 1715. This being the day on which the late Queen Anne died, and on which George, Duke and Elector of Brunswick, usurped the English throne, there was very little rejoicing in Oxford. . . . There was a sermon at St. Marie's by Dr. Panting, Master of Pembroke; . . . He is an honest gent.' His sermon took no notice, at most very little, of the Duke of Brunswick.' Hearne's *Remains*, ii. 6.

⁴ The outside wall of the gateway-tower forms an angle with the wall of the Master's house, so that any one sitting by the open window and speaking in a strong emphatic voice might have easily been overheard.



PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

the Universities abroad. I'll go to France and Italy. I'll go to Padua'.—And I'll mind my business. For an *Athenian* blockhead is the worst of all blockheads².'

Dr. Adams told me that Johnson, while he was at Pembroke College, 'was caressed and loved by all about him, was a gay and frolicksome³ fellow, and passed there the happiest part of his life.' But this is a striking proof of the fallacy of appearances, and how little any of us know of the real internal state even of those whom we see most frequently; for the truth is, that he was then depressed by poverty, and irritated by disease. When I mentioned to him this

¹ Goldsmith did go to Padua, and stayed there some months. Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 71.

² I had this anecdote from Dr. Adams, and Dr. Johnson confirmed it. Bramston, in his *Man of Taste*, has the same thought:

'Sure, of all blockheads, scholars are the worst.' BOSWELL.

Johnson's meaning, however, is, that a scholar who is a blockhead must be the worst of all blockheads, because he is without excuse. But Bramston, in the assumed character of an ignorant coxcomb, maintains that *all* scholars are blockheads on account of their scholarship. J. BOSWELL, JUN. There is, I believe, a Spanish proverb to the effect that, 'to be an utter fool a man must know Latin.' A writer in *Notes and Queries* (5th S. xii. 285) suggests that Johnson had in mind Acts xvii. 21.

³ 'It was the practice in his time for a servitor, by order of the Master, to go round to the rooms of the young men, and knocking at the door to enquire if they were within; and if no answer was returned to report them absent. Johnson could not endure this intrusion, and would frequently be silent, when the utterance of a word would have ensured him from censure, and would join with others of the young men in the college in hunting, as they called it, the servitor who was thus diligent in his duty, and this they did with the noise of pots and candlesticks, singing to the tune of Chevy Chase the words in the old ballad,—

"To drive the deer with hound and horn!"' *Hawkins*, p. 12.

Whitefield, writing of a few years later, says:—'At this time Satan used to terrify me much, and threatened to punish me if I discovered his wiles. It being my duty, as servitor, in my turn to knock at the gentlemen's rooms by ten at night, to see who were in their rooms, I thought the devil would appear to me every stair I went up.' Tyerman's *Whitefield*, i. 20.

account as given me by Dr. Adams, he said, 'Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolick'. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority¹.'

The Bishop of Dromore observes in a letter to me,

'The pleasure he took in vexing the tutors and fellows has been often mentioned. But I have heard him say, what ought to be recorded to the honour of the present venerable master of that College, the Reverend William Adams, D.D., who was then very young, and one of the junior fellows; that the mild but judicious expostulations of this worthy man, whose virtue awed him, and whose learning he revered, made him really ashamed of himself, "though I fear (said he) I was too proud to own it."

'I have heard from some of his cotemporaries that he was generally seen lounging at the College gate, with a circle of young students round him, whom he was entertaining with wit, and keeping from their studies, if not spiring them up to rebellion against the College discipline, which in his maturer years he so much extolled.'

He very early began to attempt keeping notes or memorandums, by way of a diary of his life. I find, in a parcel of loose leaves, the following spirited resolution to contend against his natural indolence:

'Oct. 1729. *Desidiæ valedixi; syrenis istius cantibus surdam post-hac aurem obversurus.*—I bid farewell to Sloth, being resolved henceforth not to listen to her syren strains.'

I have also in my possession a few leaves of another *Libellus*, or little book, entitled ANNALES, in which some of the early particulars of his history are registered in Latin.

I do not find that he formed any close intimacies with

¹ See *post*, June 12, 1784.

² Perhaps his disregard of all authority was in part due to his genius, still in its youth. In his *Life of Lyttelton* he says:—'The letters [Lyttelton's *Persian Letters*] have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 488.

his fellow-collegians. But Dr. Adams told me that he contracted a love and regard for Pembroke College, which he retained to the last. A short time before his death he sent to that College a present of all his works, to be deposited in their library¹; and he had thoughts of leaving to it his house at Lichfield; but his friends who were about him very properly dissuaded him from it, and he bequeathed it to some poor relations². He took a pleasure in boasting of the many eminent men who had been educated at Pembroke. In this list are found the names of Mr. Hawkins the Poetry Professor³, Mr. Shenstone, Sir William Blackstone, and others⁴; not forgetting the celebrated popular preacher,

¹ Dr. Hall [formerly Master of the College] says, 'Certainly not all.' CROKER.

² 'I would leave the interest of the fortune I bequeathed to a college to my relations or my friends for their lives. It is the same thing to a college, which is a permanent society, whether it gets the money now or twenty years hence; and I would wish to make my relations or friends feel the benefit of it;' *post*, April 17, 1778. Hawkins (*Life*, p. 582.) says that 'he meditated a devise of his house to the corporation of that city for a charitable use, but, it being freehold he said, "I cannot live a twelvemonth, and the last statute of Mortmain stands in my way." The same statute, no doubt, would have hindered the bequest to the College.

³ Garrick refused to act one of Hawkins's plays. The poet towards the end of a long letter which he signed,—'Your much dissatisfied humble servant,' said:—'After all, Sir, I do not desire to come to an open rupture with you. I wish not to exasperate, but to convince; and I tender you once more my friendship and my play.' *Garrick Corres.* ii. 8. See *post*, April 9, 1778.

⁴ See Nash's *History of Worcestershire*, vol. i. p. 529. BOSWELL. To the list should be added, Francis Beaumont, the dramatic writer; Sir Thomas Browne, whose life Johnson wrote; Sir James Dyer, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Lord Chancellor Harcourt, John Pym, Francis Rous, the Speaker of Cromwell's parliament, and Bishop Bonner. WRIGHT. Some of these men belonged to the ancient foundation of Broadgates Hall, which in 1624 was converted into Pembroke College. It is strange that Boswell should have passed over Sir Thomas Browne's name. Johnson in his life of Browne says that he was 'the first man of eminence graduated from the new college, to which the zeal or gratitude of those that love it most can

Mr.

Mr. George Whitefield, of whom, though Dr. Johnson did not think very highly¹, it must be acknowledged that his eloquence was powerful, his views pious and charitable, his assiduity almost incredible; and, that since his death, the integrity of his character has been fully vindicated. Being himself a poet, Johnson was peculiarly happy in mentioning how many of the sons of Pembroke were poets; adding, with a smile of sportive triumph, 'Sir, we are a nest of singing birds².'

wish little better than that it may long proceed as it began.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 476. To this list Nash adds the name of the Revd. Richard Graves, author of *The Spiritual Quixote*, who took his degree of B.A. on the same day as Whitefield, whom he ridiculed in that romance.

¹ See *post*, Oct. 6, 1769, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 15, 1773.

² In his *Life of Shenstone* he writes:—'From school Shenstone was sent to Pembroke College in Oxford, a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name in the book ten years, though he took no degree.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 408. Johnson's name would seem to have been in like manner continued for more than eleven years, and perhaps for the same reasons. (*Ante*, p. 67 note.) Hannah More was at Oxford in June 1782, during one of Johnson's visits to Dr. Adams. 'You cannot imagine,' she writes, 'with what delight Dr. Johnson showed me every part of his own college. . . . After dinner he begged to conduct me to see the college; he would let no one show it me but himself. "This was my room; this Shenstone's." Then, after pointing out all the rooms of the poets who had been of his college, "In short," said he, "we were a nest of singing-birds. Here we walked, there we played at cricket." [It may be doubted whether he ever played.] He ran over with pleasure the history of the juvenile days he passed there. When we came into the Common Room, we spied a fine large print of Johnson, framed and hung up that very morning, with this motto: "And is not Johnson ours, himself a host;" under which stared you in the face, "From Miss More's *Sensibility*.'" Hannah More's *Memoirs*, i. 261. At the end of 'the ludicrous analysis of Pocockius' quoted by Johnson in the *Life of Edmund Smith* are the following lines:—'Subito ad Batavos proficiscor, lauro ab illis donandus. Prius vero Pembrochienses voco ad certamen poeticum.' Smith was at Christ Church. He seems to be mocking the neighbouring 'nest of singing-birds.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 381.

He

He was not, however, blind to what he thought the defects of his own College; and I have, from the information of Dr. Taylor, a very strong instance of that rigid honesty which he ever inflexibly preserved. Taylor had obtained his father's consent to be entered of Pembroke, that he might be with his school-fellow Johnson, with whom, though some years older than himself, he was very intimate. This would have been a great comfort to Johnson. But he fairly told Taylor that he could not, in conscience, suffer him to enter where he knew he could not have an able tutor. He then made inquiry all round the University, and having found that Mr. Bateman, of Christ Church, was the tutor of highest reputation, Taylor was entered of that College¹. Mr. Bateman's lectures were so excellent, that Johnson used to come and get them at second-hand from Taylor, till his poverty being so extreme that his shoes were worn out, and his feet appeared through them, he saw that this humiliating circumstance was perceived by the Christ Church men, and he came no more². He was too proud to accept of money, and somebody having set a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation³. How must we feel when we read such an anecdote of Samuel Johnson!

¹ Taylor matriculated on Feb. 24, 1729. Mr. Croker in his note has confounded him with another John Taylor who matriculated more than a year later. Richard West, writing of Christ Church in 1735, says:—'Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves Doctors and Masters of Arts; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown.' Gray's *Letters*, ii. 1.

² 'Si toga sordidula est et rupta calceus alter
Pelle patet.'

'Or if the shoe be ript, or patches put.' Dryden, *Juvenal*, iii. 149. Johnson in his *London*, in describing 'the blockhead's insults,' while he mentions 'the tattered cloak,' passes over the ript shoe. Perhaps the wound had gone too deep to his generous heart for him to bear even to think on it.

³ 'Yet some have refused my bounties, more offended with my quickness to detect their wants than pleased with my readiness to succour them.' *Rasselas*, ch. 25. 'His [Savage's] distresses, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his lowest state he wanted not spirit

His

His spirited refusal of an eleemosynary supply of shoes, arose, no doubt, from a proper pride. But, considering his ascetick disposition at times, as acknowledged by himself in his 'Meditations,' and the exaggeration with which some have treated the peculiarities of his character, I should not wonder to hear it ascribed to a principle of superstitious mortification; as we are told by Tursellinus, in his Life of St. Ignatius Loyola, that this intrepid founder of the order of Jesuits, when he arrived at Goa, after having made a severe pilgrimage through the Eastern deserts persisted in wearing his miserable shattered shoes, and when new ones were offered him rejected them as an unsuitable indulgence.

The *res angusta domi*¹ prevented him from having the advantage of a complete academical education². The friend to whom he had trusted for support had deceived him. His debts in College, though not great, were increasing³; and his scanty remittances from Lichfield, which had all along been made with great difficulty, could be supplied no longer, his father having fallen into a state of insolvency. Compelled,

to assert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repress that insolence which the superiority of fortune incited; . . . he never admitted any gross familiarities, or submitted to be treated otherwise than as an equal. . . . His clothes were worn out; and he received notice that at a coffee-house some clothes and linen were left for him. But though the offer was so far generous, it was made with some neglect of ceremonies, which Mr. Savage so much resented that he refused the present, and declined to enter the house till the clothes that had been designed for him were taken away.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 161 and 169.

¹ . . . 'Haud facile emergunt quorum virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi.' Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 164.

Paraphrased by Johnson in his *London*, 'Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.'

² Cambridge thirty-six years later neglected Parr as Oxford neglected Johnson. Both these men had to leave the University through poverty. There were no open scholarships in those days.

³ Yet his college bills came to only some eight shillings a week. As this was about the average amount of an undergraduate's bill it is clear that, so far as food went, he lived, in spite of Mr. Carlyle's assertion, as well as his fellow-students.

therefore,

therefore, by irresistible necessity, he left the College in autumn, 1731, without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years¹.

¹ Mr. Croker states that 'an examination of the college books proves that Johnson, who entered on the 31st October, 1728, remained there, even during the vacations, to the 12th December, 1729, when he personally left the college, and never returned—though his *name* remained on the books till 8th October, 1731.' I have gone into this question at great length in my *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and His Critics*, p. 329. I am of opinion that Mr. Croker's general conclusion is right. The proof of residence is established, and alone established, by the entries in the buttery books. Now these entries show that Johnson, with the exception of the week in October 1729 ending on the 24th, was in residence till December 12, 1729. He seems to have returned for a week in March 1730, and again for a week in the following September. On three other weeks there is a charge against him of fivepence in the books. Mr. Croker has made that darker which was already dark enough by confounding, as I have shewn, two John Taylors who both matriculated at Christ Church. Boswell's statement no doubt is precise, but in this he followed perhaps the account given by Hawkins. He would have been less likely to discover Hawkins's error from the fact that, as Johnson's name was for about three years on the College books, he was so long, in name at least, a member of the College. Had Boswell seen Johnson's letter to Mr. Hickman, quoted by Mr. Croker (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 20), he would at once have seen that Johnson could not have remained at college for a little more than three years. For within three years all but a day of his entrance at Pembroke, he writes to Mr. Hickman from Lichfield, '*As I am yet unemployed*, I hope you will, if anything should offer, remember and recommend, Sir, your humble servant, Sam. Johnson.'

In Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (Aug. 15, 1773) there is a very perplexing passage bearing on Johnson's residence at College. 'We talked of Whitefield. He said he was at the same college with him, and knew him before he began to be better than other people.' Now Johnson, as Boswell tells us, read this journal in manuscript. The statement therefore seems to be well-established indeed. Yet Whitefield did not matriculate till Nov. 7, 1732, a full year after Johnson, according to Boswell, had left Oxford. We are told that, when Johnson was living at Birmingham, he borrowed Lobo's *Abysinia* from the library of Pembroke College. It is probable enough that a man who frequently walked from Lichfield to Birmingham and back would have trudged all the way to Oxford to fetch the book. In that case he might have seen Whitefield. But Thomas Warton says

Dr.

Dr. Adams, the worthy and respectable master of Pembroke College, has generally had the reputation of being Johnson's tutor. The fact, however, is, that in 1731 Mr. Jorden quitted the College, and his pupils were transferred to Dr. Adams; so that had Johnson returned, Dr. Adams *would have been his tutor*. It is to be wished, that this connection had taken place. His equal temper, mild disposition, and politeness of manner, might have insensibly softened the harshness of Johnson, and infused into him those more delicate charities, those *petites morales*, in which, it must be confessed, our great moralist was more deficient than his best friends could fully justify. Dr. Adams paid Johnson this high compliment. He said to me at Oxford, in 1776, 'I was his nominal tutor'; but he was above my mark.' When I repeated it to Johnson, his eyes flashed with grateful satisfaction, and he exclaimed, 'That was liberal and noble.'

And now (I had almost said *poor*) Samuel Johnson returned to his native city, destitute, and not knowing how he should gain even a decent livelihood. His father's misfortunes in trade rendered him unable to support his son²; and that 'the first time of his being at Oxford after quitting the University was in 1754' (*post*, under July 16, 1754).

¹ 'March 16, 1728-9. Yesterday in a Convocation Mr. Wm. Jorden of Pembroke Coll. was elected by the Univ. of Oxford rector of Astocke in com. Wilts (which belongs to a Roman Catholic family):' Hearne's *Remains*, iii. 17. His fellowship was filled up on Dec. 23, 1730. Boswell's statement therefore is inaccurate. If Johnson remained at college till Nov. 1731, he would have really been for at least ten months Adams's pupil. We may assume that as his name remained on the books after Jorden left so he was *nominally* transferred to Adams. It is worthy of notice that Thomas Warton, in the account that he gives of Johnson's visit to Oxford in 1754, says:—'He much regretted that his *first* tutor was dead.'

² According to Hawkins (*Life*, pp. 17, 582, and *post*, Dec. 9, 1784) Johnson's father was at one time a bankrupt. Johnson, in the epitaph that he wrote for him (*post*, Dec. 2, 1784), describes him as 'bibliopola admodum peritus,' but 'rebus adversis diu conflictatus.' He certainly did not die a bankrupt, as is shown by his leaving property to his widow and son, and also by the following MS. letter, that is preserved with two others of the same kind in Pembroke College.

for

for some time there appeared no means by which he could maintain himself. In the December of this year his father died.

The state of poverty in which he died, appears from a note in one of Johnson's little diaries of the following year, which strongly displays his spirit and virtuous dignity of mind.

'1732, Julii 15. Undecim aureos deposui, quo die quicquid ante matris funus (quod serum sit precor) de paternis bonis sperari licet, viginti scilicet libras, accepi. Usque adeo mihi fortuna fingenda est. Interea, ne paupertate vires animi languescant, nec in flagitia egestas abigat, cavendum.—I layed by eleven guineas on this day, when I received twenty pounds, being all that I have reason to hope for out of my father's effects, previous to the death of my mother; an event which I pray GOD may be very remote. I now therefore see that I must make my own fortune. Meanwhile, let me take

Good Sr.,

Ashby, April 19, 1736.

I must trouble you again, my sister who desiurs her surviv to you, & begs you will be so good if you can to pravale with Mr. Wumsley to paye you the little money due to her you may have an oportunity to speak to him & it will be a great trouble for me to have a jerney for it when if he pleasd he might paye it you, it is a poore case she had but little left by Mr. Johnson but his books (not but he left her all he had) & those sold at a poore reat, and be kept out of so small a sune by a gentleman so well able to paye, if you will doe yr best for the widow will be varey good in you, which will oblige yr reall freund
JAMES BATE.

To Mr. John Newton a Sider Seller at Litchfield.

Pd. £5 to Mr. Newton.

In another hand is written,

To Gilbert Walmesley Esq. at Lichfield.

And in a third hand,

Pd. £5 to Mr. Newton.

The exact amount claimed, as is shewn by the letter, dated Jan. 31, 1735, was £5 6s. 4d. There is a yet earlier letter demanding payment of £5 6s. 4d. as 'due to me' for books, signed D. Johnson, dated Swarkstone, Aug. 21, 1733. It must be the same account. Perhaps D. Johnson was the executor. He writes from Ashby, where Michael Johnson had a branch business. But I know of no other mention of him or of James Bate. John Newton was the father of the Bishop of Bristol. *Post*, June 3, 1784, and Bishop Newton's *Works*, i. 1.

care

care that the powers of my mind may not be debilitated by poverty, and that indigence do not force me into any criminal act.'

Johnson was so far fortunate, that the respectable character of his parents, and his own merit, had, from his earliest years, secured him a kind reception in the best families at Lichfield. Among these I can mention Mr. Howard¹, Dr. Swinfen, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Levett², Captain Garrick, father of the great ornament of the British stage; but above all, Mr. Gilbert Walmsley³, Register of the Prerogative Court of Lichfield, whose character, long after his decease, Dr. Johnson has, in his *Life of Edmund Smith*⁴, thus drawn in the glowing colours of gratitude:

'Of Gilbert Walmsley⁵, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge myself in the remembrance. I knew him very early; he was one of the first friends that literature procured me, and I hope that, at least, my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

'He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy, yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him and he endured me.

'He had mingled with the gay world without exemption from its vices or its follies; but had never neglected the cultivation of his

¹ Johnson, in a letter to Dr. Taylor, dated Aug. 18, 1763, advised him, in some trouble that he had with his wife, 'to consult our old friend Mr. Howard. His profession has acquainted him with matrimonial law, and he is in himself a cool and wise man.' *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 342. See *post*, March 20, 1778, for mention of his son.

² See *post*, Dec. 1, 1743, note. Robert Levett, made famous by Johnson's lines (*post*, Jan. 20, 1782), was not of this family.

³ Mr. Warton informs me, 'that this early friend of Johnson was entered a Commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, aged seventeen, in 1698; and is the authour of many Latin verse translations in the *Gent. Mag.* (vol. xv. 102). One of them is a translation of

'My time, O ye Muses, was happily spent,' &c.

He died Aug. 3, 1751, and a monument to his memory has been erected in the Cathedral of Lichfield, with an inscription written by Mr. Seward, one of the Prebendaries. BOSWELL.

⁴ Johnson's *Works*, vii. 380.

⁵ See *post*, 1780, note at end of Mr. Langton's 'Collection.'

mind.

mind. His belief of revelation was unshaken ; his learning preserved his principles ; he grew first regular, and then pious.

‘His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great, and what he did not immediately know, he could, at least, tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now passes, in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

‘At this man’s table I enjoyed many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions, such as are not often found—with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life ; with Dr. James¹, whose skill in physick will be long remembered ; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend. But what are the hopes of man ! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the publick stock of harmless pleasure².’

In these families he passed much time in his early years. In most of them, he was in the company of ladies, particularly at Mr. Walmsley’s, whose wife and sisters-in-law, of the name of Aston, and daughters of a Baronet, were remarkable for good breeding ; so that the notion which has been industriously circulated and believed, that he never was in good company till late in life, and, consequently had been confirmed in coarse and ferocious manners by long habits, is wholly without foundation. Some of the ladies have assured me, they recollected him well when a young man, as distinguished for his complaisance.

And that this politeness was not merely occasional and temporary, or confined to the circles of Lichfield, is ascertained by the testimony of a lady, who, in a paper with which I have been favoured by a daughter of his intimate friend and physician, Dr. Lawrence, thus describes Dr. Johnson some years afterwards :

‘As the particulars of the former part of Dr. Johnson’s life do

¹ See *post*, 1743.

² See *post*, April 24, 1779.

not seem to be very accurately known, a lady hopes that the following information may not be unacceptable.

'She remembers Dr. Johnson on a visit to Dr. Taylor, at Ashbourn, some time between the end of the year 37, and the middle of the year 40; she rather thinks it to have been after he and his wife were removed to London¹. During his stay at Ashbourn, he made frequent visits to Mr. Meynell², at Bradley, where his company was much desired by the ladies of the family, who were, perhaps, in point of elegance and accomplishments, inferior to few of those with whom he was afterwards acquainted. Mr. Meynell's eldest daughter was afterwards married to Mr. Fitzherbert³, father to Mr. Alleyne Fitzherbert, lately minister to the court of Russia. Of her, Dr. Johnson said, in Dr. Lawrence's study, that she had the best understanding he ever met with in any human being⁴. At Mr. Meynell's he also commenced that friendship with Mrs. Hill Boothby⁵, sister to the present Sir Brook Boothby, which continued till her death. *The young woman whom he used to call Molly Aston*⁶, was sister to Sir Thomas Aston, and daughter to a Baronet;

¹ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 61) says that in August, 1738 (? 1739), Johnson went to Appleby, in Leicestershire, to apply for the mastership of Appleby School. This was after he and his wife had removed to London. It is likely that he visited Ashbourne.

² 'Old Meynell' is mentioned, *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's 'Collection,' as the author of 'the observation, "For anything I see, foreigners are fools;"' and 'Mr. Meynell,' *post*, April 1, 1779, as saying that 'The chief advantage of London is, that a man is always *so near his burrow*.'

³ See *post*, under March 16, 1759, note, and April 21, 1773. Mr. Alleyne Fitzherbert was created Lord St. Helens.

⁴ See *post*, 1780, end of Mr. Langton's 'Collection.'

⁵ Johnson, writing to Dr. Taylor on July 31, 1756, said,—'I find myself very unwilling to take up a pen, only to tell my friends that I am well, and indeed I never did exchange letters regularly but with dear Miss Boothby.' *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 304. At the end of the *Piozzi Letters* are given some of his letters to her. They were republished together with her letters to him in *An Account of the Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, 1805.

⁶ The words of Sir John Hawkins, p. 316. BOSWELL. 'When Mr. Thrale once asked Johnson which had been the happiest period of his past life, he replied, "it was that year in which he spent one whole evening with Molly Aston. That, indeed," said he, "was not happiness, it was rapture; but the thoughts of it sweetened the whole year." I must add that the evening alluded to was not passed tête-à-she

she was also sister to the wife of his friend Mr. Gilbert Walmsley¹. Besides his intimacy with the above-mentioned persons who were surely people of rank and education, while he was yet at Lichfield he used to be frequently at the house of Dr. Swinfen, a gentleman of a very ancient family in Staffordshire, from which, after the death of his elder brother, he inherited a good estate. He was, besides, a physician of very extensive practice; but for want of due attention to the management of his domestick concerns, left a very large family in indigence. One of his daughters, Mrs. Desmoulins, afterwards found an asylum in the house of her old friend, whose doors were always open to the unfortunate, and who well observed the precept of the Gospel, for he "was kind to the unthankful and to the evil²."

In the forlorn state of his circumstances, he accepted of an offer to be employed as usher in the school of Market-Bosworth, in Leicestershire, to which it appears, from one of his little fragments of a diary, that he went on foot, on the 16th of July.—'Julii 16. *Bosvortiam pedes petii*³.' But it

tête, but in a select company of which the present Lord Kilmorey was one. "Molly," says Dr. Johnson, "was a beauty and a scholar, and a wit and a whig; and she talked all in praise of liberty; and so I made this epigram upon her—She was the loveliest creature I ever saw—

'Liber ut esse velim suasisti pulchra Maria;

Ut maneam liber—pulchra Maria vale.'

'Will it do this way in English, Sir,' said I:—

'Persuasions to freedom fall oddly from you;

If freedom we seek—fair Maria, adieu !'

'It will do well enough,' replied he; 'but it is translated by a lady, and the ladies never loved Molly Aston.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 157. See *post*, May 8, 1778.

¹ Sir Thomas Aston, Bart., who died in January 1724-5, left one son, named Thomas also, and eight daughters. Of the daughters, Catherine married Johnson's friend, the Hon. Henry Hervey [*post*, 1737]; Margaret, Gilbert Walmsley. Another of these ladies married the Rev. Mr. Gastrell [the man who cut down Shakspeare's mulberry tree, *post*, March 25, 1776]; Mary, or *Molly* Aston, as she was usually called, became the wife of Captain Brodie of the navy. MALONE.

² Luke vi. 35.

³ If this was in 1732 it was on the morrow of the day on which he received his share of his father's property, *ante*, p. 93. A letter pub-

is not true, as has been erroneously related, that he was assistant to the famous Anthony Blackwall, whose merit has been honoured by the testimony of Bishop Hurd¹, who was his scholar; for Mr. Blackwall died on the 8th of April, 1730², more than a year before Johnson left the University³.

This employment was very irksome to him in every respect, and he complained grievously of it in his letters to his friend Mr. Hector, who was now settled as a surgeon at Birmingham. The letters are lost; but Mr. Hector recollects his writing 'that the poet had described the dull sameness of his existence in these words, "*Vitam continet una dies*" (one day contains the whole of my life); that it was unvaried as the note of the cuckow; and that he did not know whether it was more disagreeable for him to teach, or the boys to learn, the grammar rules.' His general aversion to this painful drudgery was greatly enhanced by a disagreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixey, the patron of the school, in whose house, I have been told, he officiated as a kind of domestick chaplain, so far, at least, as to say grace at table, but was treated with what he represented as intolerable harshness⁴; and, after suffering for a few months such complicated misery⁵, he relinquished a situation which

lished in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. x. 421, shews that for a short time he was tutor to the son of Mr. Whitby of Heywood.

¹ Bishop Hurd does not praise Blackwall, but the Rev. Mr. Budworth, headmaster of the grammar school at Brewood, who had himself been bred under Blackwall. MALONE. Mr. Nichols relates (*post*, Dec. 1784) that Johnson applied for the post of assistant to Mr. Budworth.

² See *Gent. Mag.* Dec. 1784, p. 957. BOSWELL.

³ See *ante*, p. 91.

⁴ The patron's manners were those of the neighbourhood. Hutton, writing of this town in 1770, says,—'The inhabitants set their dogs at me merely because I was a stranger. Surrounded with impassable roads, no intercourse with man to humanize the mind, no commerce to smooth their rugged manners, they continue the boors of nature.' *Life of W. Hutton*, p. 45.

⁵ It appears from a letter of Johnson's to a friend, dated Lichfield, July 27, 1732, that he had left Sir Wolstan Dixie's house recently, before that letter was written. MALONE.

all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even a degree of horror¹. But it is probable that at this period, whatever uneasiness he may have endured, he laid the foundation of much future eminence by application to his studies.

Being now again totally unoccupied, he was invited by Mr. Hector to pass some time with him at Birmingham, as his guest, at the house of Mr. Warren, with whom Mr. Hector lodged and boarded. Mr. Warren was the first established bookseller in Birmingham, and was very attentive to Johnson, who he soon found could be of much service to him in his trade, by his knowledge of literature; and he even obtained the assistance of his pen in furnishing some numbers of a periodical Essay printed in the newspaper, of which Warren was proprietor². After very diligent inquiry, I have not been able to recover those early specimens of that particular mode of writing by which Johnson afterwards so greatly distinguished himself.

He continued to live as Mr. Hector's guest for about six months, and then hired lodgings in another part of the

¹ 'The despicable wretchedness of teaching,' wrote Carlyle, in his twenty-fourth year, when he was himself a teacher, 'can be known only to those who have tried it, and to Him who made the heart and knows it all. One meets with few spectacles more afflicting than that of a young man with a free spirit, with impetuous though honourable feelings, condemned to waste the flower of his life in such a calling; to fade in it by slow and sure corrosion of discontent; and at last obscurely and unprofitably to leave, with an indignant joy, the miseries of a world which his talents might have illustrated and his virtues adorned. Such things have been and will be. But surely in that better life which good men dream of, the spirit of a Kepler or a Milton will find a more propitious destiny.' Conway's *Carlyle*, p. 176.

² This newspaper was the *Birmingham Journal*. In the office of the *Birmingham Daily Post* is preserved the number (No. 28) for May 21, 1733. It is believed to be the only copy in existence. Warren is described by W. Hutton (*Life*, p. 77) as one of the 'three eminent booksellers' in Birmingham in 1750. 'His house was "over against the Swan Tavern," in High Street; doubtless in one of the old half-timbered houses pulled down in 1838 [1850].' Timmins's *Dr. Johnson in Birmingham*, p. 4.

town¹, finding himself as well situated at Birmingham² as he supposed he could be any where, while he had no settled plan of life, and very scanty means of subsistence. He made some valuable acquaintances there, amongst whom were Mr. Porter, a mercer, whose widow he afterwards married, and Mr. Taylor³, who by his ingenuity in mechanical inventions, and his success in trade, acquired an immense fortune. But the comfort of being near Mr. Hector, his old school-fellow and intimate friend, was Johnson's chief inducement to continue here.

In what manner he employed his pen at this period, or whether he derived from it any pecuniary advantage, I have not been able to ascertain. He probably got a little money from Mr. Warren; and we are certain, that he executed here one piece of literary labour, of which Mr. Hector has favoured me with a minute account. Having mentioned that he had read at Pembroke College a Voyage to Abyssinia, by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit, and that he thought an abridgment and translation of it from the French into English might be an useful and profitable publication, Mr. Warren and Mr. Hector joined in urging him to undertake it.

¹ 'In the month of June 1733, I find him resident in the house of a person named Jarvis, at Birmingham.' Hawkins, p. 21. His wife's maiden name was Jarvis or Jervis.

² In 1741, Hutton, a runaway apprentice, arrived at Birmingham. He says,—'I had never seen more than five towns, Nottingham, Derby, Burton, Lichfield and Walsall. The outskirts of these were composed of wretched dwellings, visibly stamped with dirt and poverty. But the buildings in the exterior of Birmingham rose in a style of elegance. Thatch, so plentiful in other places, was not to be met with in this. The people possessed a vivacity I had never beheld. I had been among dreamers, but now I saw men awake. Their very step along the street showed alacrity. Every man seemed to know what he was about. The faces of other men seemed tinctured with an idle gloom; but here with a pleasing alertness. Their appearance was strongly marked with the modes of civil life.' *Life of W. Hutton*, p. 41.

³ Hutton, in his account of the Birmingham riots of 1791, describing the destruction of a Mr. Taylor's house, says,—'The sons of plunder forgot that the prosperity of Birmingham was owing to a Dissenter, father to the man whose property they were destroying;' ib. p. 181.

He

He accordingly agreed; and the book not being to be found in Birmingham, he borrowed it of Pembroke College. A part of the work being very soon done, one Osborn, who was Mr. Warren's printer, was set to work with what was ready, and Johnson engaged to supply the press with copy as it should be wanted; but his constitutional indolence soon prevailed, and the work was at a stand. Mr. Hector, who knew that a motive of humanity would be the most prevailing argument with his friend, went to Johnson, and represented to him, that the printer could have no other employment till this undertaking was finished, and that the poor man and his family were suffering. Johnson upon this exerted the powers of his mind, though his body was relaxed. He lay in bed with the book, which was a quarto, before him, and dictated while Hector wrote. Mr. Hector carried the sheets to the press, and corrected almost all the proof sheets, very few of which were even seen by Johnson. In this manner, with the aid of Mr. Hector's active friendship, the book was completed, and was published in 1735, with LONDON upon the title-page, though it was in reality printed at Birmingham, a device too common with provincial publishers. For this work he had from Mr. Warren only the sum of five guineas¹.

This being the first prose work of Johnson, it is a curious object of inquiry how much may be traced in it of that style which marks his subsequent writings with such peculiar excellence; with so happy an union of force, vivacity, and perspicuity. I have perused the book with this view, and have found that here, as I believe in every other translation, there is in the work itself no vestige of the translator's own style; for the language of translation being adapted to the thoughts of another person, insensibly follows their cast, and, as it were, runs into a mould that is ready prepared².

¹ Johnson, it should seem, did not think himself ill-used by Warren; for writing to Hector on April 15, 1755, he says,—'What news of poor Warren? I have not lost all my kindness for him.' *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. iii. 301.

² That it is by no means an exact translation Johnson's *Preface*
Thus,

Thus, for instance, taking the first sentence that occurs at the opening of the book, p. 4.

‘I lived here above a year, and completed my studies in divinity; in which time some letters were received from the fathers of Ethiopia, with an account that Sultan Segned¹, Emperour of Abyssinia, was converted to the church of Rome; that many of his subjects had followed his example, and that there was a great want of missionaries to improve these prosperous beginnings. Every body was very desirous of seconding the zeal of our fathers, and of sending them the assistance they requested; to which we were the more encouraged, because the Emperour’s letter informed our Provincial, that we might easily enter his dominions by the way of Dancala; but, unhappily, the secretary wrote Geila² for Dancala, which cost two of our fathers their lives.’

Every one acquainted with Johnson’s manner will be sensible that there is nothing of it here; but that this sentence might have been composed by any other man.

But, in the Preface, the Johnsonian style begins to appear; and though use had not yet taught his wing a permanent and equable flight, there are parts of it which exhibit his best manner in full vigour. I had once the pleasure of examining it with Mr. Edmund Burke, who confirmed me in this opinion, by his superiour critical sagacity, and was, I remember, much delighted with the following specimen:

‘The Portuguese traveller, contrary to the general vein of his countrymen, has amused his reader with no romantick absurdity, or incredible fictions; whatever he relates, whether true or not, is at least probable; and he who tells nothing exceeding the bounds of probability, has a right to demand that they should believe him who cannot contradict him.

‘He appears, by his modest and unaffected narration, to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from the life, and to have consulted his senses, not his imagination. He meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes, his crocodiles

shows. He says that in the dissertations alone an exact translation has been attempted. The rest of the work he describes as an epitome.

¹ In the original, *Segued*.

² In the original, *Zcila*.

devour their prey without tears, and his cataracts fall from the rocks without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants¹.

'The reader will here find no regions cursed with irremediable barrenness, or blessed with spontaneous fecundity; no perpetual gloom, or unceasing sunshine; nor are the nations here described either devoid of all sense of humanity, or consummate in all private or social virtues. Here are no Hottentots without religious polity or articulate language²; no Chinese perfectly polite, and completely skilled in all sciences; he will discover, what will always be discovered by a diligent and impartial enquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contest of passion and reason; and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distributions, but has balanced, in most countries, their particular inconveniences by particular favours.'

Here we have an early example of that brilliant and energetic expression, which, upon innumerable occasions in his subsequent life, justly impressed the world with the highest admiration.

Nor can any one, conversant with the writings of Johnson, fail to discern his hand in this passage of the Dedication to John Warren, Esq. of Pembroke-shire, though it is ascribed to Warren the bookseller:

'A generous and elevated mind is distinguished by nothing more certainly than an eminent degree of curiosity³; nor is that curiosity

¹ Lobo, in describing a waterfall on the Nile, had said:—'The fall of this mighty stream from so great a height makes a noise that may be heard to a considerable distance; but I could not observe that the neighbouring inhabitants were at all deaf. I conversed with several, and was as easily heard by them as I heard them,' p. 101.

² In the original, *without religion, polity, or articulate language.*

³ See *Rambler*, No. 103. BOSWELL. Johnson in other passages insisted on the high value of curiosity. In this same *Rambler* he says:—'Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect.' In the allegory in *Rambler*, No. 105, he calls curiosity his 'long-loved protectress,' who is known by truth 'among the most faithful of her followers.' In No. 150 he writes:—'Curiosity is in great and generous minds the first passion and the last; and perhaps always predominates in proportion to the strength of the contemplative faculties.' In No. 5 he asserts that 'he that enlarges his
ever

ever more agreeably or usefully employed, than in examining the laws and customs of foreign nations. I hope, therefore, the present I now presume to make, will not be thought improper; which, however, it is not my business as a dedicator to commend, nor as a bookseller to depreciate.⁷

It is reasonable to suppose that his having been thus accidentally led to a particular study of the history and manners of Abyssinia, was the remote occasion of his writing, many years afterwards, his admirable philosophical tale¹, the principal scene of which is laid in that country.

Johnson returned to Lichfield early in 1734, and in August² that year he made an attempt to procure some little subsistence by his pen; for he published proposals for printing by subscription the Latin Poems of Politian³: *'Angeli Politiani Poemata Latina, quibus, Notas cum historiâ Latinæ poescos, à Petrarchæ ævo ad Politiani tempora deductâ, et vitâ Politiani fusius quam antehac enarratâ, addidit SAM. JOHNSON⁴.*

curiosity after the works of nature demonstrably multiplies the inlets to happiness.'

¹ Rasselas, *post*, 1759.

² Hawkins (p. 163) gives the following extract from Johnson's *Annals*:—'Friday, August 27 (1734), 10 at night. This day I have trifled away, except that I have attended the school in the morning. I read to-night in Rogers's sermons. To-night I began the breakfast law (sic) anew.'

³ May we not trace a fanciful similarity between Politian and Johnson? Huetius, speaking of Paulus Pelissonius Fontanerius, says, '... in quo Natura, ut olim in Angelo Politiano, deformitatem oris excellentis ingenii præstantia compensavit.' *Comment. de reb. ad eum pertin.* Edit. Amstel. 1718, p. 200. BOSWELL. In Paulus Pelissonius Fontanerius we have difficulty in detecting Mme. de Sévigné's friend, Pelisson, of whom M. de Guilleragues used the phrase, 'qu'il abusait de la permission qu'ont les hommes d'être laids.' See *Mme. de Sévigné's Letter*, 5 Jan., 1674. CROKER.

⁴ The book was to contain more than thirty sheets, the price to be two shillings and sixpence at the time of subscribing, and two shillings and sixpence at the delivery of a perfect book in quires. BOSWELL. 'Among the books in his library, at the time of his decease, I found a very old and curious edition of the works of Politian, which appeared to belong to Pembroke College, Oxford.' HAWKINS, p. 445. See *post*,

It appears that his brother Nathanael¹ had taken up his father's trade; for it is mentioned that 'subscriptions are taken in by the Editor, or N. Johnson, bookseller, of Lichfield.' Notwithstanding the merit of Johnson, and the cheap price at which this book was offered, there were not subscribers enough to insure a sufficient sale; so the work never appeared, and probably, never was executed.

We find him again this year at Birmingham, and there is preserved the following letter from him to Mr. Edward Cave², the original compiler and editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* :

TO MR. CAVE.

'SIR,

Nov. 25, 1734.

'As you appear no less sensible than your readers of the defects of your poetical article, you will not be displeas'd, if, in order to the improvement of it, I communicate to you the sentiments of a person, who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

'His opinion is, that the publick would not give you a bad

Nov. 1784. In his last work he shews his fondness for modern Latin poetry. He says:—'Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 299.

¹ A writer in *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. xii. 266, says 'that he has a letter written by Nathanael, in which he makes mention of his brother "scarcely using him with common civility," and says, "I believe I shall go to Georgia in about a fortnight!"' Nathanael died in Lichfield in 1737; see *post*, Dec. 2, 1784, for his epitaph. Among the MSS. in Pembroke College Library are bills for books received by Nath. Johnson and by Sarah Johnson (his mother). She writes like a person of little education.

² Miss Cave, the grand-niece of Mr. Edward Cave, has obligingly shewn me the originals of this and the other letters of Dr. Johnson, to him, which were first published in the *Gent. Mag.* [lv. 3], with notes by Mr. John Nichols, the worthy and indefatigable editor of that valuable miscellany, signed N.; some of which I shall occasionally transcribe in the course of this work. BOSWELL. I was able to examine some of these letters while they were still in the possession of one of Cave's collateral descendants, and I have in one or two places corrected errors of transcription.

reception,

reception, if, beside the current wit of the month, which a critical examination would generally reduce to a narrow compass, you admitted not only poems, inscriptions, &c. never printed before, which he will sometimes supply you with ; but likewise short literary dissertations in Latin or English, critical remarks on authours ancient or modern, forgotten poems that deserve revival, or loose pieces, like Floyer's¹, worth preserving. By this method, your literary article, for so it might be called, will, he thinks, be better recommended to the publick than by low jests, aukward buffoonery, or the dull scurrilities of either party.

'If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me in two posts, what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer² gives me no reason to distrust

¹ Sir John Floyer's Treatise on Cold Baths. *Gent. Mag.* 1734, p. 197. BOSWELL. This letter shews how uncommon a thing a cold bath was. Floyer, after recommending 'a general method of bleeding and purging' before the patient uses cold bathing, continues, 'I have commonly cured the rickets by dipping children of a year old in the bath every morning; and this wonderful effect has encouraged me to dip four boys at Lichfield in the font at their baptism, and none have suffered any inconvenience by it.' (For mention of Floyer, see *ante*, p. 50, and *post*, March 27 and July 20, 1784.) Locke, in his *Treatise on Education*, had recommended cold bathing for children. Johnson, in his review of Lucas's *Essay on Waters* (*post*, 1756), thus attacks cold bathing:—'It is incident to physicians, I am afraid, beyond all other men, to mistake subsequence for consequence. "The old gentleman," says Dr. Lucas, "that uses the cold bath, enjoys in return an uninterrupted state of health." This instance does not prove that the cold bath produces health, but only that it will not always destroy it. He is well with the bath, he would have been well without it.' *Literary Magazine*, p. 229.

² A prize of fifty pounds for the best poem on 'Life, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell.' See *Gent. Mag.* vol. iv. p. 560. N. BOSWELL. 'Cave sometimes offered subjects for poems, and proposed prizes for the best performers. The first prize was fifty pounds, for which, being but newly acquainted with wealth, and thinking the influence of fifty pounds extremely great, he expected the first authors of the kingdom to appear as competitors; and offered the allotment of the prize to the universities. But when the time came, no name was seen among the writers that had ever been seen before; the universities and several private men rejected the province of assigning the prize.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 432.

your

your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects besides this paper, I have other designs to impart, if I could be secure from having others reap the advantage of what I should hint.

‘Your letter by being directed to *S. Smith*, to be left at the Castle in¹ Birmingham, Warwickshire, will reach

‘Your humble servant.’

Mr. Cave has put a note on this letter, ‘Answered Dec. 2.’ But whether anything was done in consequence of it we are not informed.

Johnson had, from his early youth, been sensible to the influence of female charms. When at Stourbridge school, he was much enamoured of Olivia Lloyd, a young quaker, to whom he wrote a copy of verses, which I have not been able to recover; but with what facility and elegance he could warble the amorous lay, will appear from the following lines which he wrote for his friend Mr. Edmund Hector.

VERSES to a LADY, on receiving from her a SPRIG of MYRTLE.

‘WHAT hopes, what terrors does thy gift create,
 Ambiguous emblem of uncertain fate:
 The myrtle, ensign of supreme command,
 Consign’d by Venus to Melissa’s hand;
 Not less capricious than a reigning fair,
 Now grants, and now rejects a lover’s prayer.
 In myrtle shades oft sings the happy swain,
 In myrtle shades despairing ghosts complain;
 The myrtle crowns the happy lovers’ heads,
 The unhappy lovers’ grave the myrtle spreads:
 O then the meaning of thy gift impart,
 And ease the throbbings of an anxious heart!
 Soon must this bough, as you shall fix his doom,
 Adorn Philander’s head, or grace his tomb².’

¹ I suspect that Johnson wrote ‘the Castle *Inn*, Birmingham.’

² Mrs. Piozzi gives the following account of this little composition from Dr. Johnson’s own relation to her, on her inquiring whether it was rightly attributed to him:—‘I think it is now just forty years ago, that a young fellow had a sprig of myrtle given him by a girl he courted, and asked me to write him some verses that he might present her in return. I promised, but forgot; and when he called for his

His

His juvenile attachments to the fair sex were, however, very transient; and it is certain that he formed no criminal

lines at the time agreed on—Sit still a moment, (says I) dear Mund' [see *post*, May 7, 1773, for Johnson's 'way of contracting the names of his friends'], 'and I'll fetch them thee—So stepped aside for five minutes, and wrote the nonsense you now keep such a stir about.' *Anc.* p. 34.

In my first edition I was induced to doubt the authenticity of this account, by the following circumstantial statement in a letter to me from Miss Seward, of Lichfield:—'I *know* those verses were addressed to Lucy Porter, when he was enamoured of her in his boyish days, two or three years before he had seen her mother, his future wife. He wrote them at my grandfather's, and gave them to Lucy in the presence of my mother, to whom he showed them on the instant. She used to repeat them to me, when I asked her for *the Verses Dr. Johnson gave her on a Sprig of Myrtle, which he had stolen or begged from her bosom*. We all know honest Lucy Porter to have been incapable of the mean vanity of applying to herself a compliment not *intended* for her.' Such was this lady's statement, which I make no doubt she supposed to be correct; but it shews how dangerous it is to trust too implicitly to traditional testimony and ingenious inference; for Mr. Hector has lately assured me that Mrs. Piozzi's account is in this instance accurate, and that he was the person for whom Johnson wrote those verses, which have been erroneously ascribed to Mr. Hammond.

I am obliged in so many instances to notice Mrs. Piozzi's incorrectness of relation, that I gladly seize this opportunity of acknowledging, that however often, she is not always inaccurate.

The author having been drawn into a controversy with Miss Anna Seward, in consequence of the preceding statement, (which may be found in the *Gent. Mag.* vol. liii. and liv.) received the following letter from Mr. Edmund Hector, on the subject:

'DEAR SIR,

'I am sorry to see you are engaged in altercation with a Lady, who seems unwilling to be convinced of her errors. Surely it would be more ingenuous to acknowledge, than to persevere.

'Lately, in looking over some papers I meant to burn, I found the original manuscript of the *Myrtle*, with the date on it, 1731, which I have inclosed.

'The true history (which I could swear to) is as follows: Mr. Morgan Graves, the elder brother of a worthy Clergyman near Bath, with whom I was acquainted, waited upon a lady in this neighbourhood, who at parting presented him the branch. He shewed it to me, and wished much to return the compliment in verse. I applied to John-
connection

connection whatsoever. Mr. Hector, who lived with him in his younger days in the utmost intimacy and social freedom, has assured me, that even at that ardent season his conduct was strictly virtuous in that respect¹; and that though he loved to exhilarate himself with wine, he never knew him intoxicated but once².

In a man whom religious education has secured from licentious indulgences, the passion of love, when once it has seized him, is exceedingly strong; being unimpaired by dissipation, and totally concentrated in one object. This was experienced by Johnson, when he became the fervent admirer of Mrs. Porter, after her first husband's death³. Miss Porter told me, that when he was first introduced to her mother, his appearance was very forbidding: he was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrophula

son, who was with me, and in about half an hour dictated the verses which I sent to my friend.

'I most solemnly declare, at that time Johnson was an entire stranger to the Porter family; and it was almost two years after that I introduced him to the acquaintance of Porter, whom I bought my cloaths of.

'If you intend to convince this obstinate woman, and to exhibit to the publick the truth of your narrative, you are at liberty to make what use you please of this statement.

'I hope you will pardon me for taking up so much of your time. Wishing you *multos et felices annos*, I shall subscribe myself,

'Your obliged humble servant,

'E. HECTOR.'

Birmingham, Jan. 9th, 1794.

BOSWELL. For a further account of Boswell's controversy with Miss Seward, see *post*, June 25, 1784.

¹ See *post*, beginning of 1744, April 28, 1783, and under Dec. 2, 1784.

² See *post*, near end of 1762, note.

³ In the registry of St. Martin's Church, Birmingham, are the following entries:—'Baptisms, Nov. 8, 1715, Lucy, daughter of Henry Porter. Jan. 29, 1717 [O. S.], Jarvis Henry, son of Henry Porter. Burials, Aug. 3, 1734, Henry Porter of Edgbaston.' There were two sons; one, Captain Porter, who died in 1763 (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 130), the other who died in 1783 (*post*, Nov. 29, 1783).

were

were deeply visible¹. He also wore his hair², which was straight and stiff, and separated behind: and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprize and ridicule³. Mrs. Porter was so much engaged by his conversation that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter, 'this is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life.'

Though Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson⁴, and her person and manner, as described to me by the late Mr. Garrick, were by no means pleasing to others, she must have had a superiority of understanding and talents, as she certainly inspired him with a more than ordinary passion; and she having signified her willingness to accept of his hand,

¹ According to Malone, Reynolds said that 'he had paid attention to Johnson's limbs; and far from being unsightly, he deemed them well formed.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 175. Mrs. Piozzi says:—'His stature was remarkably high, and his limbs exceedingly large; his features were strongly marked, and his countenance particularly rugged; though the original complexion had certainly been fair, a circumstance somewhat unusual; his sight was near, and otherwise imperfect; yet his eyes, though of a light-grey colour, were so wild, so piercing, and at times so fierce, that fear was, I believe, the first emotion in the hearts of all his beholders.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 297. See *post*, end of the book, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, near the beginning.

² If Johnson wore his own hair at Oxford, it must have exposed him to ridicule. Graves, the author of *The Spiritual Quixote*, tells us that Shenstone had the courage to wear his own hair, though 'it often exposed him to the ill-natured remarks of people who had not half his sense. After I was elected at All Souls, where there was often a party of loungers in the gateway, on my expostulating with Mr. Shenstone for not visiting me so often as usual, he said, "he was ashamed to face his enemies in the gate."'

³ See *post*, 1739.

⁴ Mrs. Johnson was born on Feb. 4, 1688-9. MALONE. She was married on July 9, 1735, in St. Werburgh's Church, Derby, as is shewn by the following copy of the marriage register: '1735, July 9, Mar^d Sam^l Johnson of ye parish of St Mary's in Litchfield, and Elizth Porter of ye parish of St Phillip in Burmingham.' *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. vi. 44. At the time of their marriage, therefore, she was forty-six, and Johnson only two months short of twenty-six.

he went to Lichfield to ask his mother's consent to the marriage, which he could not but be conscious was a very imprudent scheme, both on account of their disparity of years, and her want of fortune¹. But Mrs. Johnson knew too well the ardour of her son's temper, and was too tender a parent to oppose his inclinations.

I know not for what reason the marriage ceremony was not performed at Birmingham; but a resolution was taken that it should be at Derby, for which place the bride and bridegroom set out on horseback, I suppose in very good humour. But though Mr. Topham Beauclerk used archly to mention Johnson's having told him, with much gravity, 'Sir, it was a love marriage on both sides,' I have had from my

¹ The author of the *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Johnson*, 1785, p. 25, says:—'Mrs. Porter's husband died insolvent, but her settlement was secured. She brought her second husband about seven or eight hundred pounds, a great part of which was expended in fitting up a house for a boarding-school.' That she had some money can be almost inferred from what we are told by Boswell and Hawkins. How otherwise was Johnson able to hire and furnish a large house for his school? Boswell says that he had but three pupils. Hawkins gives him a few more. 'His number,' he writes (p. 36) 'at no time exceeded eight, and of those not all were boarders.' After nearly twenty months of married life, when he went to London, 'he had,' Boswell says, 'a little money.' It was not till a year later still that he began to write for the *Gent. Mag.* If Mrs. Johnson had not money, how did she and her husband live from July 1735 to the spring of 1738? It could scarcely have been on the profits made from their school. Inference, however, is no longer needful, as there is positive evidence. Mr. Timmins in his *Dr. Johnson in Birmingham* (p. 4) writes:—'My friend, Mr. Joseph Hill, says, A copy of an old deed which has recently come into my hands, shews that a hundred pounds of Mrs. Johnson's fortune was left in the hands of a Birmingham attorney named Thomas Perks, who died insolvent; and in 1745, a bulky deed gave his creditors 7s. 4d. in the pound. Among the creditors for £100 were "Samuel Johnson, gent., and Elizabeth his wife, executors of the last will and testament of Harry Porter, late of Birmingham aforesaid, woollen draper, deceased." Johnson and his wife were almost the only creditors who did not sign the deed, their seals being left void. It is doubtful, therefore, whether they ever obtained the amount of the composition £36 13s. 4d.'

illustrious

illustrious friend the following curious account of their journey to church upon the nuptial morn :

9th JULY:—‘ Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, Sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me ; and, when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice ; and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not miss it ; and I contrived that she should soon come up with me. When she did, I observed her to be in tears.’

This, it must be allowed, was a singular beginning of conjugal felicity ; but there is no doubt that Johnson, though he thus shewed a manly firmness, proved a most affectionate and indulgent husband to the last moment of Mrs. Johnson’s life : and in his *Prayers and Meditations*, we find very remarkable evidence that his regard and fondness for her never ceased, even after her death.

He now set up a private academy¹, for which purpose he hired a large house, well situated near his native city. In the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for 1736, there is the following advertisement :

‘ At Edial, near Lichfield², in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON.’

But the only pupils that were put under his care were the celebrated David Garrick and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of good fortune who died early. As yet, his name had nothing of that celebrity which afterwards commanded the highest attention and respect of mankind. Had such an advertisement appeared after the

¹ Sir Walter Scott has recorded Lord Auchinleck’s ‘ sneer of most sovereign contempt,’ while he described Johnson as ‘ a dominie, mon—an auld dominie ; he kept a schüle, and cau’d it an acaadamy.’ Croker’s *Boswell*, p. 397, note.

² ‘ Edial is two miles west of Lichfield.’ Harwood’s *Lichfield*, p. 564.
publication

publication of his *London*, or his *Rambler*, or his *Dictionary*, how would it have burst upon the world! with what eagerness would the great and the wealthy have embraced an opportunity of putting their sons under the learned tuition of SAMUEL JOHNSON. The truth, however, is, that he was not so well qualified for being a teacher of elements, and a conductor in learning by regular gradations, as men of inferior powers of mind. His own acquisitions had been made by fits and starts, by violent irruptions into the regions of knowledge; and it could not be expected that his impatience would be subdued, and his impetuosity restrained, so as to fit him for a quiet guide to novices. The art of communicating instruction, of whatever kind, is much to be valued; and I have ever thought that those who devote themselves to this employment, and do their duty with diligence and success, are entitled to very high respect from the community, as Johnson himself often maintained¹. Yet I am of opinion that the greatest abilities are not only not required for this office, but render a man less fit for it.

¹ Johnson in more than one passage in his writings seems to have in mind his own days as a schoolmaster. Thus in the *Life of Milton* he says:—'This is the period of his life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a schoolmaster; but, since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful. His father was alive; his allowance was not ample; and he supplied its deficiencies by an honest and useful employment.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 75. In the *Life of Blackmore* he says:—'In some part of his life, it is not known when, his indigence compelled him to teach a school, an humiliation with which, though it certainly lasted but a little while, his enemies did not forget to reproach him, when he became conspicuous enough to excite malevolence; and let it be remembered for his honour, that to have been once a schoolmaster is the only reproach which all the perspicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 36.

While we acknowledge the justness of Thomson's beautiful remark,

'Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
And teach' the young idea how to shoot!'

we must consider that this delight is perceptible only by 'a mind at ease,' a mind at once calm and clear; but that a mind gloomy and impetuous like that of Johnson, cannot be fixed for any length of time in minute attention, and must be so frequently irritated by unavoidable slowness and error in the advances of scholars, as to perform the duty, with little pleasure to the teacher, and no great advantage to the pupils². Good temper is a most essential requisite in a Preceptor. Horace paints the character as *bland*:

'. . . . Ut pueris olim dant crustula blandi
Doctores, elementa velint ut discere prima³.'

Johnson was not more satisfied with his situation as the master of an academy, than with that of the usher of a school; we need not wonder, therefore, that he did not keep his academy above a year and a half. From Mr. Garrick's account he did not appear to have been profoundly revered by his pupils. His oddities of manner, and uncouth gesticulations, could not but be the subject of merriment to them; and, in particular, the young rogues used to listen at the door of his bed-chamber, and peep through the key-hole, that they might turn into ridicule his tumultuous and awkward fondness for Mrs. Johnson, whom he used to name by the familiar appellation of *Tetty* or *Tetsey*, which,

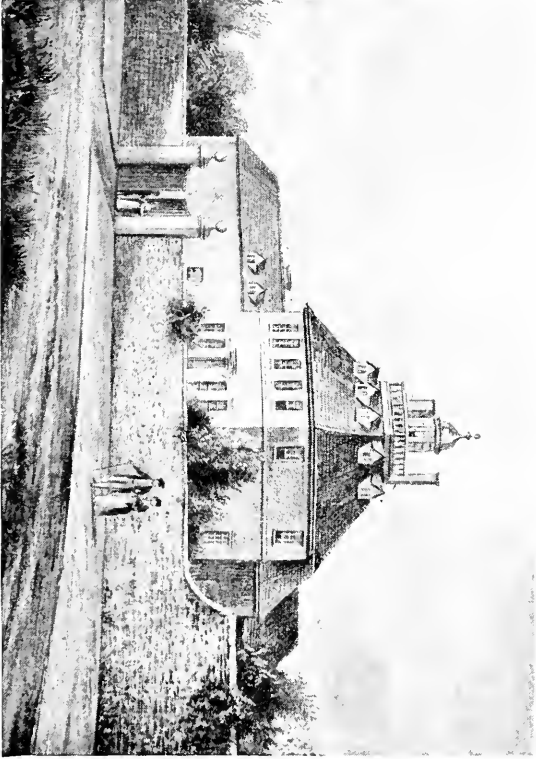
¹ In the original *To Teach*. *Seasons, Spring*, l. 1149, Thomson is speaking, not of masters, but of parents.

² In the *Life of Milton*, Johnson records his own experience. 'Every man that has ever undertaken to instruct others can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 76.

³ 'As masters fondly soothe their boys to read
With cakes and sweetmeats.'

Francis, Hor. i. Sat. 1. 25.

like



EDIAL HALL, NEAR LICHFELD,

The Residence of Dr. Samuel Johnson in 1736.

like *Betty* or *Betsey*, is provincially used as a contraction for *Elisabeth*, her christian name, but which to us seems ludicrous when applied to a woman of her age and appearance. Mr. Garrick described her to me as very fat, with a bosom of more than ordinary protuberance, with swelled cheeks of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials; flaring and fantastick in her dress, and affected both in her speech and her general behaviour. I have seen Garrick exhibit her, by his exquisite talent of mimicry, so as to excite the heartiest bursts of laughter; but he, probably, as is the case in all such representations, considerably aggravated the picture¹.

That Johnson well knew the most proper course to be pursued in the instruction of youth, is authentically ascertained by the following paper² in his own hand-writing, given about this period to a relation, and now in the possession of Mr. John Nichols:

‘SCHEME for the CLASSES of a GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

‘WHEN the introduction, or formation of nouns and verbs, is perfectly mastered, let them learn . . .

‘Corderius by Mr. Clarke, beginning at the same time to translate out of the introduction, that by this means they may learn the syntax. Then let them proceed to

‘Erasmus, with an English translation, by the same authour.

¹ As Johnson kept Garrick much in awe when present, David, when his back was turned, repaid the restraint with ridicule of him and his dulcinea, which should be read with great abatement. PERCY. He was not consistent in his account, for ‘he told Mrs. Thrale that she was a *little painted puppet* of no value at all.’ . . . ‘He made out,’ Mrs. Piozzi continues, ‘some comical scenes, by mimicking her in a dialogue he pretended to have overheard. I do not know whether he meant such stuff to be believed or no, it was so comical. The picture I found of her at Lichfield was very pretty, and her daughter said it was like. Mr. Johnson has told me that her hair was eminently beautiful, quite *blonde* like that of a baby.’ Piozzi’s *Anec.* p. 148.

² Mr. Croker points out that in this paper ‘there are two separate schemes, the first for a school—the second for the individual studies of some young friend.’

‘Class

‘Class II. Learns Eutropius and Cornelius Nepos, or Justin, with the translation.

‘N.B. The first class gets for their part every morning the rules which they have learned before, and in the afternoon learns the Latin rules of the nouns and verbs.

‘They are examined in the rules which they have learned every Thursday and Saturday.

‘The second class does the same whilst they are in Eutropius; afterwards their part is in the irregular nouns and verbs, and in the rules for making and scanning verses. They are examined as the first.

‘Class III. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in the morning, and *Cæsar’s Commentaries* in the afternoon.

‘Practise in the Latin rules till they are perfect in them; afterwards in Mr. Leeds’s *Greek Grammar*. Examined as before.

‘Afterwards they proceed to *Virgil*, beginning at the same time to write themes and verses, and to learn Greek; from thence passing on to *Horace*, &c. as shall seem most proper.

‘I know not well what books to direct you to, because you have not informed me what study you will apply yourself to. I believe it will be most for your advantage to apply yourself wholly to the languages, till you go to the University. The Greek authours I think it best for you to read are these:

‘Cebes.

‘Ælian.

‘Lucian by Leeds.

‘Xenophon.

‘Homer.

‘Theocritus.

‘Euripides.

} Attick.

Ionick.

Dorick.

Attick and Dorick.

‘Thus you will be tolerably skilled in all the dialects, beginning with the Attick, to which the rest must be referred.

‘In the study of Latin, it is proper not to read the latter authours, till you are well versed in those of the purest ages; as *Terence*, *Tully*, *Cæsar*, *Sallust*, *Nepos*, *Velleius Paterculus*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Phædrus*.

‘The greatest and most necessary task still remains, to attain a habit of expression, without which knowledge is of little use. This is necessary in Latin, and more necessary in English; and can only be acquired by a daily imitation of the best and correctest authours.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

While

While Johnson kept his academy, there can be no doubt that he was insensibly furnishing his mind with various knowledge; but I have not discovered that he wrote any thing except a great part of his tragedy of *Irene*. Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, told me that he remembered Johnson's borrowing the *Turkish History*¹ of him, in order to form his play from it. When he had finished some part of it, he read what he had done to Mr. Walmsley, who objected to his having already brought his heroine into great distress, and asked him, 'how can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity?' Johnson, in sly allusion to the supposed oppressive proceedings of the court of which Mr. Walmsley was register, replied, 'Sir, I can put her into the Spiritual Court!'

Mr. Walmsley, however, was well pleased with this proof of Johnson's abilities as a dramatick writer, and advised him to finish the tragedy, and produce it on the stage.

Johnson now thought of trying his fortune in London, the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind have the fullest scope, and the highest encouragement. It is a memorable circumstance that his pupil David Garrick went thither at the same time², with intention to complete his education, and follow the profession of the law, from which he was soon diverted by his decided preference for the stage.

¹ In the *Rambler*, No. 122, Johnson, after stating that 'it is observed that our nation has been hitherto remarkably barren of historical genius,' praises Knolles, who, he says, 'in his *History of the Turks*, has displayed all the excellencies that narration can admit.'

² Both of them used to talk pleasantly of this their first journey to London. Garrick, evidently meaning to embellish a little, said one day in my hearing, 'we rode and tied.' And the Bishop of Killaloe informed me, that at another time, when Johnson and Garrick were dining together in a pretty large company, Johnson humorously ascertaining the chronology of something, expressed himself thus: 'that was the year when I came to London with two-pence half-penny in my pocket.' Garrick overhearing him, exclaimed, 'eh? what do you say? with two-pence half-penny in your pocket?'—JOHNSON, 'Why yes; when I came with two-pence half-penny in *my* pocket, and thou, Davy, with three half-pence in thine.' BOSWELL.

This joint expedition of those two eminent men to the metropolis, was many years afterwards noticed in an allegorical poem on Shakspeare's Mulberry Tree, by Mr. Lovibond, the ingenious authour of *The Tears of Old-May-day*¹.

They were recommended to Mr. Colson², an eminent mathematician and master of an academy, by the following letter from Mr. Walmsley :

‘TO THE REVEREND MR. COLSON.

‘Lichfield, March 2, 1737.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I had the favour of yours, and am extremely obliged to you ; but I cannot say I had a greater affection for you upon it than I had before, being long since so much endeared to you, as well by an early friendship, as by your many excellent and valuable qualifications ; and, had I a son of my own, it would be my ambition, instead of sending him to the University, to dispose of him as this young gentleman is.

‘He, and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. Samuel Johnson, set out this morning for London together. Davy Garrick is to be with you early the next week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a tragedy, and to see to get himself employed in some translation, either from the Latin or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy-writer. If it should any way lie in your way, doubt³ not but you would be ready to recommend and assist your countryman.

‘G. WALMSLEY.’

How he employed himself upon his first coming to London is not particularly known⁴. I never heard that he

¹ See *Gent. Mag.* xxiv. 333.

² Mr. Colson was First Master of the Free School at Rochester. In 1739 he was appointed Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. MALONE. Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 49) says that ‘by Gelidus the philosopher (*Rambler*, No. 24), Johnson meant to represent Colson.’

³ This letter is printed in the *Garrick Corres.* i. 2. There we read *I doubt not*.

⁴ One curious anecdote was communicated by himself to Mr. John Nichols. Mr. Wilcox, the bookseller, on being informed by him that his intention was to get his livelihood as an authour, eyed his robust frame attentively, and with a significant look, said, ‘You had better buy a porter's knot.’ He however added, ‘Wilcox was one of my best found

found any protection or encouragement by the means of Mr. Colson, to whose academy David Garrick went. Mrs. Lucy Porter told me, that Mr. Walmsley gave him a letter of introduction to Lintot¹ his bookseller, and that Johnson wrote some things for him; but I imagine this to be a mistake, for I have discovered no trace of it, and I am pretty sure he told me that Mr. Cave was the first publisher by whom his pen was engaged in London.

He had a little money when he came to town, and he knew how he could live in the cheapest manner. His first lodgings were at the house of Mr. Norris, a staymaker, in Exeter-street, adjoining Catharine-street, in the Strand. 'I dined (said he) very well for eight-pence, with very good company, at the Pine Apple in New-street, just by. Several

friends.' BOSWELL. Hawkins (*Life*, p. 43) states that Johnson and Garrick had soon exhausted their small stock of money in London, and that on Garrick's suggestion they applied for a loan to Wilcox, of whom he had a slight knowledge. 'Representing themselves to him, as they really were, two young men, friends and travellers from the same place, and just arrived with a view to settle here, he was so moved with their artless tale, that on their joint note he advanced them all that their modesty would permit them to ask (five pounds), which was soon after punctually repaid.' Perhaps Johnson was thinking of himself when he recorded the advice given by Cibber to Fenton, 'When the tragedy of Mariamne was shewn to Cibber, it was rejected by him, with the additional insolence of advising Fenton to engage himself in some employment of honest labour, by which he might obtain that support which he could never hope from his poetry. The play was acted at the other theatre; and the brutal petulance of Cibber was confuted, though perhaps not shamed, by general applause.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 56. Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* (Book i. ch. 2) says that 'the difference between the most dissimilar characters, between a philosopher and a common street-porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education.' Wilcox's shop was in Little Britain. Benjamin Franklin, in 1725, lodged next door to him. 'He had,' says Franklin (*Memoirs*, i. 64), 'an immense collection of second-hand books. Circulating libraries were not then in use; but we agreed that on certain reasonable terms I might read any of his books.'

¹ Bernard Lintot (*post*, July 19, 1763) died Feb. 3, 1736. *Gent. Mag.* vi. 110. This, no doubt, was his son.

of them had travelled. They expected to meet every day; but did not know one another's names. It used to cost the rest a shilling, for they drank wine; but I had a cut of meat for six-pence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny; so that I was quite well served, nay, better than the rest, for they gave the waiter nothing¹.

He at this time, I believe, abstained entirely from fermented liquors: a practice to which he rigidly conformed for many years together, at different periods of his life².

¹ Dr. A. Carlyle (*Auto.* p. 195) says that being in London in 1746 he dined frequently with a club of officers, where they had an excellent dinner at ten-pence. From what he adds it is clear that the tavern-keeper made his profit on the wine. At Edinburgh, four years earlier, he and his fellow-students used to get 'at four-pence a-head a very good dinner of broth and beef, and a roast and potatoes every day, with fish three or four times a-week, and all the small beer that was called for till the cloth was removed' (*ib.* p. 63). W. Hutton, who in 1750 opened a very small book-shop in Birmingham, for which he paid rent at a shilling a week, says (*Life of Hutton*, p. 84):—'Five shillings a week covered every expense; as food, rent, washing, lodging, &c.' He knew how to live wretchedly.

² On April 17, 1778, Johnson said:—'Early in life I drank wine; for many years I drank none. I then for some years drank a great deal. I then had a severe illness, and left it off, and I have never begun it again.' Somewhat the same account is given in Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 16, 1773. Roughly speaking, he seems to have been an abstainer from about 1736 to at least as late as 1757, and from about 1765 to the end of his life. In 1751 Hawkins (*Life*, p. 286) describes him as drinking only lemonade 'in a whole night spent in festivity' at the Ivy Lane Club. In 1757 he described himself 'as a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for twenty years diluted his meals with only tea' (Johnson's *Works*, vi. 21). It was, I believe in his visit to Oxford in 1759 that 'University College witnessed his drinking three bottles of port without being the worse for it' (*post*, April 7, 1778). When he was living in the Temple (between 1760-65) he had the frisk with Langton and Beauclerk when they made a bowl of *Bishop* (*post*, 1753). On his birthday in 1760, he 'resolved to drink less strong liquors' (*Pr. and Med.* p. 42). In 1762 on his visit to Devonshire he drank three bottles of wine after supper. This was the only time Reynolds had seen him intoxicated. (Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 161). In 1763 he affected Boswell's nerves by keeping him up late to drink port with him (*post*, July 14, 1763). On April 21, 1764, he records:—

His

His Ofellus in the *Art of Living in London*, I have heard him relate, was an Irish painter, whom he knew at Birmingham,

'From the beginning of this year I have in some measure forborne excess of strong drink' (*Pr. and Med.* p. 51). On Easter Sunday he records: 'Avoided wine' (*ib.* p. 55). On March 1, 1765, he is described at Cambridge as 'giving Mrs. Macaulay for his toast, and drinking her in two bumpers.' It was about this time that he had the severe illness (*post*, under Oct. 17, 1765, note). In Feb. 1766, Boswell found him no longer drinking wine. He shortly returned to it again; for on Aug. 2, 1767, he records, 'I have for some days forborne wine;' and on Aug. 17, 'By abstinence from wine and suppers I obtained sudden and great relief' (*Pr. and Med.* pp. 73, 4). According to Hawkins, Johnson said:—'After a ten years' forbearance of every fluid except tea and sherbet, I drank one glass of wine to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds on the evening of the day on which he was knighted' (Hawkins's *Johnson's Works* (1787), xi. 215). As Reynolds was knighted on April 21, 1769 (Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 321), Hawkins's report is grossly inaccurate. In Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 16, 1773, and *post*, March 16, 1776, we find him abstaining. In 1778 he persuaded Boswell to be 'a water-drinker upon trial' (*post*, April 28, 1778). On April 7, 1779, 'he was persuaded to drink one glass of claret that he might judge of it, not from recollection.' On March 20, 1781, Boswell found that Johnson had lately returned to wine. 'I drink it now sometimes,' he said, 'but not socially.' He seems to have generally abstained however. On April 20, 1781, he would not join in drinking Lichfield ale. On March 17, 1782, he made some punch for himself, by which in the night he thought 'both his breast and imagination disordered' (*Pr. and Med.* p. 205). In the spring of this year Hannah More urged him to take a little wine. 'I can't drink a little, child,' he answered; 'therefore I never touch it' (H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 251). On July 1, 1784, Beattie, who met him at dinner, says, 'he cannot be prevailed on to drink wine' (Beattie's *Life*, p. 316). On his death-bed he refused any 'inebriating sustenance' (*post*, Dec. 1784). It is remarkable that writing to Dr. Taylor on Aug. 5, 1773, he said:—'Drink a great deal, and sleep heartily;' and that on June 23, 1776, he again wrote to him:—'I hope you persevere in drinking. My opinion is that I have drunk too little, and therefore have the gout, for it is of my own acquisition, as neither my father had it nor my mother' (*Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. pp. 422, 3). On Sept. 19, 1777 (*post*), he even 'owned that in his opinion a free use of wine did not shorten life.' Johnson disapproved of fermented liquors only in the case of those who, like himself and Boswell, could not keep from excess.

and

and who had practised his own precepts of œconomy for several years in the British capital'. He assured Johnson, who, I suppose, was then meditating to try his fortune in London, but was apprehensive of the expence, 'that thirty pounds a year was enough to enable a man to live there without being contemptible. He allowed ten pounds for clothes and linen. He said a man might live in a garret at eighteen-pence a week; few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, "Sir, I am to be found at such a place."' By spending three-pence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for six-pence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt-day* he went abroad, and paid visits.' I have heard him more than once talk of this frugal friend, whom he recollected with esteem and kindness, and did not like to have one smile at the recital. 'This man (said he, gravely) was a very sensible man, who perfectly understood common affairs: a man of a great deal of knowledge of the world, fresh from life, not strained through books². He borrowed a horse and ten pounds at Birmingham. Finding himself master of so much money, he set off for West Chester³, in order to get

¹ Ofellus, or rather Ofella, is the 'rusticus, abnormis sapiens, crassa-que Minerva' of Horace's *Satire*, ii. 2. 3. What he teaches is briefly expressed in Pope's Imitation, ii. 2. 1:

'What, and how great, the virtue and the art
To live on little with a cheerful heart'
(A doctrine sage, but truly none of mine);
Let's talk, my friends, but talk before we dine.'

In 1769 was published a worthless poem called *The Art of Living in London*; in which 'instructions were given to persons who live in a garret, and spend their evenings in an ale-house.' *Gent. Mag.* xxxix. 45. To this Boswell refers.

² 'Johnson this day, when we were by ourselves, observed how common it was for people to talk from books; to retail the sentiments of others, and not their own; in short, to converse without any originality of thinking. He was pleased to say, "You and I do not talk from books."' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Nov. 3, 1773.

³ The passage to Ireland was commonly made from Chester.

to Ireland. He returned the horse, and probably the ten pounds too, after he got home.'

Considering Johnson's narrow circumstances in the early part of his life, and particularly at the interesting æra of his launching into the ocean of London, it is not to be wondered at, that an actual instance, proved by experience of the possibility of enjoying the intellectual luxury of social life, upon a very small income, should deeply engage his attention, and be ever recollected by him as a circumstance of much importance. He amused himself, I remember, by computing how much more expence was absolutely necessary to live upon the same scale with that which his friend described, when the value of money was diminished by the progress of commerce. It may be estimated that double the money might now with difficulty be sufficient.

Amidst this cold obscurity, there was one brilliant circumstance to cheer him; he was well acquainted with Mr. Henry Hervey¹, one of the branches of the noble family of that name, who had been quartered at Lichfield as an officer of the army, and had at this time a house in London, where Johnson was frequently entertained, and had an opportunity of meeting genteel company. Not very long before his death, he mentioned this, among other particulars of his life, which he was kindly communicating to me; and he described this early friend, 'Harry Hervey,' thus: 'He was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog HERVEY, I shall love him.'

He told me he had now written only three acts of his *Irene*, and that he retired for some time to lodgings at Greenwich, where he proceeded in it somewhat further, and used to compose, walking in the Park²; but did not stay long enough at that place to finish it.

¹ The honourable Henry Hervey, third son of the first Earl of Bristol, quitted the army and took orders. He married a sister of Sir Thomas Aston, by whom he got the Aston Estate, and assumed the name and arms of that family. Vide Collins's *Peerage*. BOSWELL.

² The following brief mention of Greenwich Park in 1750 is found in one of Miss Talbot's Letters. 'Then when I come to talk of

At this period we find the following letter from him to Mr. Edward Cave, which, as a link in the chain of his literary history, it is proper to insert :

‘TO MR. CAVE.

‘Greenwich, next door to the Golden Heart,
Church-street, July 12, 1737.

‘SIR,

‘Having observed in your papers very uncommon offers of encouragement to men of letters, I have chosen, being a stranger in London, to communicate to you the following design, which, I hope, if you join in it, will be of advantage to both of us.

‘The History of the Council of Trent having been lately translated into French, and published with large Notes by Dr. Le Courayer¹, the reputation of that book is so much revived in England, that, it is presumed, a new translation of it from the Italian, together with Le Courayer’s Notes from the French, could not fail of a favourable reception.

‘If it be answered, that the History is already in English, it must be remembered, that there was the same objection against Le Courayer’s undertaking, with this disadvantage, that the French had a version by one of their best translators, whereas you cannot read three pages of the English History without discovering that the style is capable of great improvements; but whether those improvements are to be expected from the attempt, you must judge from the specimen, which, if you approve the proposal, I shall submit to your examination.

‘Suppose the merit of the versions equal, we may hope that the addition of the Notes will turn the balance in our favour, considering the reputation of the Annotator.

‘Be pleased to favour me with a speedy answer, if you are not willing to engage in this scheme; and appoint me a day to wait upon you, if you are.

‘I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

Greenwich—Did you ever see it? It was quite a new world to me, and a very charming one. Only on the top of a most inaccessible hill in the park, just as we were arrived at a view that we had long been aiming at, a violent clap of thunder burst over our heads.’—*Carter and Talbot Corres.* i. 345.

¹ At the Oxford Commemoration of 1733 Courayer returned thanks

It should seem from this letter, though subscribed with his own name, that he had not yet been introduced to Mr. Cave. We shall presently see what was done in consequence of the proposal which it contains.

In the course of the summer he returned to Lichfield, where he had left Mrs. Johnson, and there he at last finished his tragedy, which was not executed with his rapidity of composition upon other occasions, but was slowly and painfully elaborated. A few days before his death, while burning a great mass of papers, he picked out from among them the original unformed sketch of this tragedy, in his own hand-writing, and gave it to Mr. Langton, by whose favour a copy of it is now in my possession. It contains fragments of the intended plot, and speeches for the different persons of the drama, partly in the raw materials of prose, partly worked up into verse; as also a variety of hints for illustration, borrowed from the Greek, Roman, and modern writers. The hand-writing is very difficult to be read, even by those who were best acquainted with Johnson's mode of penmanship, which at all times was very particular. The King having graciously accepted of this manuscript as a literary curiosity, Mr. Langton made a fair and distinct copy of it, which he ordered to be bound up with the original and the printed tragedy; and the volume is deposited in the King's library¹. His Majesty was pleased to permit Mr. Langton to take a copy of it for himself.

The whole of it is rich in thought and imagery, and happy expressions; and of the *disjecta membra*² scattered throughout, and as yet unarranged, a good dramattick poet might avail himself with considerable advantage. I shall give my readers some specimens of different kinds, distinguishing them by the Italick character.

in his robes to the University for the honour it had done him two years before in presenting him with his degree. *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and His Critics*, p. 94.

¹ This library was given by George IV to the British Museum.
CROKER.

² Ovid, *Meta.* iii. 724.

*'Nor think to say, here will I stop,
Here will I fix the limits of transgression,
Nor farther tempt the avenging rage of heaven.
When guilt like this once harbours in the breast,
Those holy beings, whose unseen direction
Guides through the maze of life the steps of man,
Fly the detested mansions of impiety,
And quit their charge to horror and to ruin.'*

A small part only of this interesting admonition is preserved in the play, and is varied, I think, not to advantage:

*'The soul once tainted with so foul a crime,
No more shall glow with friendship's hallow'd ardour,
Those holy beings whose superior care
Guides erring mortals to the paths of virtue,
Affrighted at impiety like thine,
Resign their charge to baseness and to ruin!'*

*'I feel the soft infection
Flush in my cheek, and wander in my veins.
Teach me the Grecian arts of soft persuasion.'*

'Sure this is love, which heretofore I conceived the dream of idle maids, and wanton poets.'

'Though no comets or prodigies foretold the ruin of Greece, signs which heaven must by another miracle enable us to understand, yet might it be foreshezon, by tokens no less certain, by the vices which always bring it on.'

This last passage is worked up in the tragedy itself, as follows:

LEONTIUS.

*'—— That power that kindly spreads
The clouds, a signal of impending showers,
To warn the wand'ring linnet to the shade,
Beheld, without concern, expiring Greece,
And not one prodigy foretold our fate.'*

DEMETRIUS.

*'A thousand horrid prodigies foretold it;
A feeble government, eluded laws,*

¹ Act iii. sc. 8.

A factious populace, luxurious nobles,
 And all the maladies of sinking States.
 When publick villainy, too strong for justice,
 Shows his bold front, the harbinger of ruin,
 Can brave Leontius call for airy wonders,
 Which cheats interpret, and which fools regard?
 When some neglected fabrick nods beneath
 The weight of years, and totters to the tempest,
 Must heaven despatch the messengers of light,
 Or wake the dead, to warn us of its fall!'

MAHOMET (to IRENE). *'I have tried thee, and joy to find that thou deservest to be loved by Mahomet, —with a mind great as his own. Sure, thou art an error of nature, and an exception to the rest of thy sex, and art immortal; for sentiments like thine were never to sink into nothing. I thought all the thoughts of the fair had been to select the graces of the day, dispose the colours of the flaunting (flowing) robe, tune the voice and roll the eye, place the gem, choose the dress, and add new roses to the fading cheek, but—sparkling.'*

Thus in the tragedy:

'Illustrious maid, new wonders fix me thine;
 Thy soul completes the triumphs of thy face:
 I thought, forgive my fair, the noblest aim,
 The strongest effort of a female soul
 Was but to choose the graces of the day,
 To tune the tongue, to teach the eyes to roll,
 Dispose the colours of the flowing robe,
 And add new roses to the faded cheek².'

I shall select one other passage, on account of the doctrine which it illustrates. IRENE observes,

'That the Supreme Being will accept of virtue, whatever outward circumstances it may be accompanied with, and may be delighted with varieties of worship: but is answered, That variety cannot affect that Being, who, infinitely happy in his own perfections, wants no external gratifications; nor can infinite truth be delighted with falsehood; that though he may guide or pity those he leaves in darkness, he abandons those who shut their eyes against the beams of day.'

¹ Act i. sc. 1.

² Act ii. sc. 7.

Johnson's residence at Lichfield, on his return to it at this time, was only for three months; and as he had as yet seen but a small part of the wonders of the Metropolis, he had little to tell his townsmen. He related to me the following minute anecdote of this period: 'In the last age, when my mother lived in London, there were two sets of people, those who gave the wall, and those who took it; the peaceable and the quarrelsome. When I returned to Lichfield, after having been in London, my mother asked me, whether I was one of those who gave the wall, or those who took it. *Now* it is fixed that every man keeps to the right; or, if one is taking the wall, another yields it; and it is never a dispute¹.'

He now removed to London with Mrs. Johnson; but her daughter, who had lived with them at Edial, was left with her relations in the country². His lodgings were for some time in Woodstock-street, near Hanover-square, and afterwards in Castle-street, near Cavendish-square. As there is something pleasingly interesting, to many, in tracing so great a man through all his different habitations, I shall, before this work is concluded, present my readers with an exact list of his lodgings and houses, in order of time, which, in placid condescension to my respectful curiosity, he one evening dictated to me³, but without specifying how long he lived at each. In the progress of his life I shall have occasion to mention some of them as connected with particular incidents, or with the writing of particular parts of his works. To some, this minute attention may appear trifling; but when we consider the punctilious exactness with which the different houses in which Milton resided have been traced

¹ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 232 [Sept. 20, 1773]. BOSWELL.

² Johnson's letter to her of Feb. 6, 1759, shows that she was, at that time, living in his house at Lichfield. Miss Seward (*Letters*, i. 116) says that 'she boarded in Lichfield with his mother.' Some passages in other of his letters (Croker's *Boswell*, pp. 144, 145, 173) lead me to think that she stayed on in this house till 1766, when she had built herself a house with money left by her brother.

³ See *post*, Oct. 10, 1779.

by the writers of his life, a similar enthusiasm may be pardoned in the biographer of Johnson.

His tragedy being by this time, as he thought, completely finished and fit for the stage, he was very desirous that it should be brought forward. Mr. Peter Garrick told me, that Johnson and he went together to the Fountain tavern, and read it over, and that he afterwards solicited Mr. Fleetwood, the patentee of Drury-lane theatre, to have it acted at his house; but Mr. Fleetwood would not accept it, probably because it was not patronized by some man of high rank¹; and it was not acted till 1749, when his friend David Garrick was manager of that theatre.

The Gentleman's Magazine, begun and carried on by Mr. Edward Cave, under the name of SYLVANUS URBAN², had attracted the notice and esteem of Johnson, in an eminent degree, before he came to London as an adventurer in literature. He told me, that when he first saw St. John's Gate, the place where that deservedly popular miscellany³ was originally printed, he 'beheld it with reverence.' I suppose,

¹ He could scarcely have solicited a worse manager. Horace Walpole writing in 1744 (*Letters*, i. 332) says: 'The town has been trying all this winter to beat pantomimes off the stage very boisterously. Fleetwood, the master of Drury-Lane, has omitted nothing to support them as they supported his house. About ten days ago, he let into the pit great numbers of Bear-garden *bruisers* (that is the term) to knock down everybody that hissed. The pit rallied their forces and drove them out.'

² It was not till volume v. that Cave's name was given on the title-page. In volumes viii. and ix., and volumes xii. to xvii. the name is Edward Cave, Jun. Cave in his examination before the House of Lords on April 30, 1747, said:—'That he was concerned in the *Gentleman's Magazine* at first with his nephew; and since the death of his nephew he has done it entirely himself.' *Parl. Hist.* xiv. 59.

³ Its sale, according to Johnson, was ten thousand copies. *Post*, April 25, 1778. So popular was it that before it had completed its ninth year the fifth edition of some of the earliest numbers was printed. Johnson's *Works*, v. 349. In the *Life of Cave* Johnson describes it as 'a periodical pamphlet, of which the scheme is known wherever the English language is spoken.' *Ib.* vi. 431.

⁴ Yet the early numbers contained verses as grossly indecent as
I.—9 indeed,

indeed, that every young authour has had the same kind of feeling for the magazine or periodical publication which has first entertained him, and in which he has first had an opportunity to see himself in print, without the risk of exposing his name. I myself recollect such impressions from '*The Scots Magazine*,' which was begun at Edinburgh in the year 1739, and has been ever conducted with judgement, accuracy, and propriety. I yet cannot help thinking of it with an affectionate regard. Johnson has dignified the *Gentleman's Magazine*, by the importance with which he invests the life of Cave; but he has given it still greater lustre by the various admirable Essays which he wrote for it.

Though Johnson was often solicited by his friends to make a complete list of his writings, and talked of doing it, I believe with a serious intention that they should all be collected on his own account, he put it off from year to year, and at last died without having done it perfectly. I have one in his own hand-writing, which contains a certain number¹; I indeed doubt if he could have remembered every one of them, as they were so numerous, so various, and scattered in such a multiplicity of unconnected publications; nay, several of them published under the names of other persons, to whom he liberally contributed from the abundance of his mind. We must, therefore, be content to discover them, partly from occasional information given by him to his friends, and partly from internal evidence².

His first performance in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which

they were dull. Cave moreover advertised indecent books for sale at St. John's Gate, and in one instance, at least, the advertisement was in very gross language.

¹ See *post*, April 25, 1778.

² While in the course of my narrative I enumerate his writings, I shall take care that my readers shall not be left to waver in doubt, between certainty and conjecture, with regard to their authenticity; and, for that purpose, shall mark with an *asterisk* (*) those which he acknowledged to his friends, and with a *dagger* (†) those which are ascertained to be his by internal evidence. When any other pieces are ascribed to him, I shall give my reasons. BOSWELL.

for



ST. JOHN'S GATE,
The Residence of Edward Cave.

for many years was his principal source for employment and support, was a copy of Latin verses, in March 1738, addressed to the editor in so happy a style of compliment, that Cave must have been destitute both of taste and sensibility had he not felt himself highly gratified¹.

‘*Ad URBANUM* *.

‘*URBANE*², *nullis fesse laboribus*,
URBANE, *nullis victe calumniis*³,

¹ Hawkins says that ‘Cave had few of those qualities that constitute the character of urbanity. Upon the first approach of a stranger his practice was to continue sitting, and for a few minutes to continue silent. If at any time he was inclined to begin the discourse, it was generally by putting a leaf of the *Magazine* then in the press into the hand of his visitor and asking his opinion of it. He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson’s abilities that, meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendour of some of those luminaries in literature who favoured him with their correspondence, he told him that, if he would in the evening be at a certain alehouse in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or two of the persons mentioned in the preceding note. [The note contained the names of some of Cave’s regular writers.] Johnson accepted the invitation; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman’s coat, and such a great bushy uncombed wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified.’ [Mr. Carlyle writes of ‘bushy-wigged Cave;’ but it was Johnson whose wig is described, and not Cave’s. On p. 327 Hawkins again mentions his ‘great bushy wig,’ and says that ‘it was ever nearly as impenetrable by a comb as a quickset hedge.’] Hawkins’s *Johnson*, pp. 45–50. Johnson, after mentioning Cave’s slowness, says: ‘The same chillness of mind was observable in his conversation; he was watching the minutest accent of those whom he disgusted by seeming inattention; and his visitant was surprised, when he came a second time, by preparations to execute the scheme which he supposed never to have been heard.’ Johnson’s *Works*, vi. 434.

² ‘The first lines put one in mind of Casimir’s Ode to Pope Urban:—

“Urbane, regum maxime, maxime
 Urbane vatum.”

The Polish poet was probably at that time in the hands of a man who had meditated the history of the Latin poets.’ Murphy’s *Johnson*, p. 42.

³ Cave had been grossly attacked by rival booksellers; see *Gent.*

Cui

*Cui fronte sertum in eruditâ
Perpetuò viret et virebit;*

*Quid moliatur gens imitantium,
Quid et minetur, sollicitus parùm,
Vacare solis perge Musis,
Juxta animo studiisque felix.*

*Linguae procacis plumbea spicula,
Fidens, superbo frange silentio;
Victrix per obstantes catervas
Sedulitas animosa tendet.*

*Intende nervos, fortis, inanibus
Risurus olim nisibus æmuli;
Intende jam nervos, habebis
Participes operæ Camœnas.*

*Non ulla Musis pagina gratior,
Quam quæ severis ludicra jungere
Novit, fatigatamque nugis
Utilibus recreare mentem.*

*Texente Nymphis sarta Lycoride,
Rosæ ruborem sic viola adjuvat
Immista, sic Iris refulget
Æthereis variata fucis¹.*

S. J.

Mag. viii. 156. Hawkins says (*Life*, p. 92), 'With that sagacity which we frequently observe, but wonder at, in men of slow parts, he seemed to anticipate the advice contained in Johnson's ode, and forbore a reply, though not his revenge.' This he gratified by reprinting in his own Magazine one of the most scurrilous and foolish attacks.

¹ A translation of this Ode, by an unknown correspondent, appeared in the *Magazine* for the month of May following:

'Hail, URBAN! indefatigable man,
Unwearied yet by all thy useful toil!
Whom num'rous slanderers assault in vain;
Whom no base calumny can put to foil.
But still the laurel on thy learned brow
Flourishes fair, and shall for ever grow.

'What mean the servile imitating crew,
What their vain blust'ring, and their empty noise,
Ne'er seek: but still thy noble ends pursue,
Unconquer'd by the rabble's venal voice.

It

It appears that he was now enlisted by Mr. Cave as a regular coadjutor in his magazine, by which he probably obtained a tolerable livelihood. At what time, or by what means, he had acquired a competent knowledge both of French¹

Still to the Muse thy studious mind apply,
Happy in temper as in industry.

'The senseless sneerings of an haughty tongue,
Unworthy thy attention to engage,
Unheeded pass: and tho' they mean thee wrong,
By manly silence disappoint their rage.
Assiduous diligence confounds its foes,
Resistless, tho' malicious crouds oppose.

'Exert thy powers, nor slacken in the course,
Thy spotless fame shall quash all false reports;
Exert thy powers, nor fear a rival's force,
But thou shalt smile at all his vain efforts;
Thy labours shall be crown'd with large success;
The Muse's aid thy Magazine shall bless.

'No page more grateful to th' harmonious nine
Than that wherein thy labours we survey;
Where solemn themes in fuller splendour shine,
(Delightful mixture,) blended with the gay,
Where in improving, various joys we find,
A welcome respite to the wearied mind.

'Thus when the nymphs in some fair verdant mead,
Of various flow'rs a beauteous wreath compose,
The lovely violet's azure-painted head
Adds lustre to the crimson-blushing rose.
Thus splendid Iris, with her varied dye,
Shines in the æther, and adorns the sky. BRITON.'

BOSWELL.

¹ 'I have some reason to think that at his first coming to town he frequented Slaughter's coffee-house with a view to acquire a habit of speaking French, but he never could attain to it. Lockman used the same method and succeeded, as Johnson himself once told me.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 516. Lockman is *l'illustre Lockman* mentioned *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*. It was at 'Old Slaughter's Coffee-house, when a number of foreigners were talking loud about little matters, that Johnson one evening said, "Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation, *For anything I see, foreigners are fools*?"' *post*, *ib.*

and

and Italian', I do not know; but he was so well skilled in them, as to be sufficiently qualified for a translator. That part of his labour which consisted in emendation and improvement of the productions of other contributors, like that employed in levelling ground, can be perceived only by those who had an opportunity of comparing the original with the altered copy. What we certainly know to have been done by him in this way, was the Debates in both houses of Parliament, under the name of 'The Senate of Lilliput,' sometimes with feigned denominations of the several speakers, sometimes with denominations formed of the letters of their real names, in the manner of what is called anagram, so that they might easily be decyphered. Parliament then kept the press in a kind of mysterious awe, which made it necessary to have recourse to such devices. In our time it has acquired an unrestrained freedom, so that the people in all parts of the kingdom have a fair, open, and exact report of the actual proceedings of their representatives and legislators, which in our constitution is highly to be valued; though, unquestionably, there has of late been too much reason to complain of the petulance with which obscure scribblers have presumed to treat men of the most respectable character and situation².

¹ He had read Petrarch 'when but a boy;' *ante*, p. 66.

² Horace Walpole, writing of the year 1770, about libels, says: 'Their excess was shocking, and in nothing more condemnable than in the dangers they brought on the liberty of the press.' This evil was chiefly due to 'the spirit of the Court, which aimed at despotism, and the daring attempts of Lord Mansfield to stifle the liberty of the press. His innovations had given such an alarm that scarce a jury would find the rankest satire libellous.' *Memoirs of the Reign of George III*, iv. 167. Smollett in *Humphrey Clinker* (published in 1771) makes Mr. Bramble write, in his letter of June 2: 'The public papers are become the infamous vehicles of the most cruel and perfidious defamation; every rancorous knave—every desperate incendiary, that can afford to spend half-a-crown or three shillings, may skulk behind the press of a newsmonger, and have a stab at the first character in the kingdom, without running the least hazard of detection or punishment.' The scribblers who had of late shewn their petulance were

This

This important article of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was, for several years, executed by Mr. William Guthrie, a man who deserves to be respectably recorded in the literary annals of this country. He was descended of an ancient family in Scotland; but having a small patrimony, and being an adherent of the unfortunate house of Stuart, he could not accept of any office in the state; he therefore came to London, and employed his talents and learning as an 'Authour by profession'.¹ His writings in history, criticism, and politics, had considerable merit². He was the first English historian who had recourse to that authentick source of information, the Parliamentary Journals; and such was the power of his political pen, that, at an early period, Government thought it worth their while to keep it quiet by a pension, which he enjoyed till his death. Johnson esteemed him enough to wish that his life should be written³. The debates

not always obscure. Such scurrilous but humorous pieces as *Probationary Odes for the Laureateship*, *The Rolliad*, and *Royal Recollections*, which were all published while Boswell was writing *The Life of Johnson*, were written, there can be little doubt, by men of position. In the first of the three (p. 27) Boswell is ridiculed. He is made to say: — 'I know Mulgrave is a bit of a poet as well as myself; for I dined in company once where he dined that very day twelvemonth.' This evil of libelling had extended to America. Benjamin Franklin (*Memoirs*, i. 148), writing in 1784, says that 'libelling and personal abuse have of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Many of our printers make no scruple of gratifying the malice of individuals by false accusations of the fairest characters.'

¹ Boswell perhaps refers to a book published in 1758, called *The Case of Authors by Profession*. *Gent. Mag.* xxviii. 130. Guthrie applies the term to himself in the letter below.

² How much poetry he wrote, I know not: but he informed me, that he was the authour of the beautiful little piece, *The Eagle and Robin Redbreast*, in the collection of poems entitled *The Union*, though it is there said to be written by Archibald Scott, before the year 1600. BOSWELL. Mr. P. Cunningham has seen a letter of Jos. Warton's which states that this poem was written by his brother Tom, who edited the volume. CROKER.

³ Dr. A. Carlyle in his *Autobiography* (p. 191) describes a curious scene that he witnessed in the British Coffee-house. A Captain
in

in Parliament, which were brought home and digested by Guthrie, whose memory, though surpassed by others who have since followed him in the same department, was yet very quick and tenacious, were sent by Cave to Johnson for his revision¹; and, after some time, when Guthrie had

Cheap was employed by Lord Anson to look out for a proper person to write his voyage. Cheap had a predilection for his countrymen, and having heard of Guthrie, he had come down to the coffee-house to inquire about him. Not long after Cheap had sat down, Guthrie arrived, dressed in laced clothes, and talking loud to everybody, and soon fell awrangling with a gentleman about tragedy and comedy and the unities, &c., and laid down the law of the drama in a peremptory manner, supporting his arguments with cursing and swearing. I saw Cheap was astonished, when, going to the bar, he asked who this was, and finding it was Guthrie he paid his coffee and slunk off in silence.' Guthrie's meanness is shown by the following letter in D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*, i. 5:—

' June 3, 1762.

' My Lord,

' In the year 1745-6 Mr. Pelham, then First Lord of the Treasury, acquainted me that it was his Majesty's pleasure I should receive till better provided for, which never has happened, 200*l.* a year, to be paid by him and his successors in the Treasury. I was satisfied with the august name made use of, and the appointment has been regularly and quarterly paid me ever since. I have been equally punctual in doing the Government all the services that fell within my abilities or sphere of life, especially in those critical situations that call for unanimity in the service of the Crown.

' Your Lordship may possibly now suspect that I am an Author by profession; you are not deceived; and will be less so, if you believe that I am disposed to serve his Majesty under your Lordship's future patronage and protection with greater zeal, if possible, than ever.

' I have the honour to be my Lord &c.

' WILLIAM GUTHRIE.'

The lord's name is not given. See *post*, spring of 1768, and 1780 in Mr. Langton's *Collection* for further mention of Guthrie.

¹ Perhaps there were Scotticisms for Johnson to correct; for Churchill in *The Author*, writing of Guthrie, asks:—

' With rude unnatural jargon to support
Half *Scotch*, half *English*, a declining Court

Is there not Guthrie?'

Churchill's Poems, ii. 39.
attained

attained to greater variety of employment, and the speeches were more and more enriched by the accession of Johnson's genius, it was resolved that he should do the whole himself, from the scanty notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both houses of Parliament. Sometimes, however, as he himself told me, he had nothing more communicated to him than the names of the several speakers, and the part which they had taken in the debate¹.

Thus was Johnson employed during some of the best years of his life, as a mere literary labourer 'for gain, not glory²,' solely to obtain an honest support. He however indulged himself in occasional little sallies, which the French so happily express by the term *jeux d'esprit*, and which will be noticed in their order, in the progress of this work.

But what first displayed his transcendent powers, and 'gave the world assurance of the MAN³,' was his *London, a Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal*: which came out in May this year, and burst forth with a splendour, the rays of which will for ever encircle his name. Boileau had imitated the same satire with great success, applying it to Paris; but an attentive comparison will satisfy every reader, that he is much excelled by the English Juvenal. Oldham had also imitated it, and applied it to London; all which performances concur to prove, that great cities, in every age, and in every country, will furnish similar topics of satire⁴. Whether Johnson had previously read Oldham's imitation, I do not know; but it is not a little remarkable,

¹ See Appendix A.

² Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, ii. 1. 71.

³ 'To give the world assurance of a man.' *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 4.

⁴ 'In his *Life of Pope* Johnson says: 'This mode of imitation . . . was first practised in the reign of Charles II. by Oldham and Rochester; at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement, for he has carried it farther than any former poet.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 295.

that

that there is scarcely any coincidence found between the two performances, though upon the very same subject. The only instances are, in describing London as the *sink* of foreign worthlessness :

‘———the *common shore*,
Where France does all her filth and ordure pour.’
OLDHAM.
‘The *common shore* of Paris and of Rome.’
JOHNSON.

and,

‘No calling or profession comes amiss,
A *needy monsieur* can be what he please.’
OLDHAM.
‘All sciences a *fasting monsieur* knows.’
JOHNSON.

The particulars which Oldham has collected, both as exhibiting the horrors of London, and of the times, contrasted with better days, are different from those of Johnson, and in general well chosen, and well exprest¹.

There are, in Oldham’s imitation, many prosaick verses and bad rhymes, and his poem sets out with a strange inadvertent blunder :

‘Tho’ much concern’d to *leave* my dear old friend,
I must, however, *his* design commend
Of fixing in the country——.’

¹ I own it pleased me to find amongst them one trait of the manners of the age in London, in the last century, to shield from the sneer of English ridicule, which was some time ago too common a practice in my native city of Edinburgh :—

‘If what I’ve said can’t from the town affright,
Consider other *dangers of the night*;
When brickbats are from upper stories thrown,
And *emptied chamberpots come pouring down*
From garret windows.’
BOSWELL.

See Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Aug. 14, 1773. where Johnson, on taking his first walk in Edinburgh, ‘grumbled in Boswell’s ear, “I smell you in the dark.”’ I once spent a night in a town of Corsica, on the great road between Ajaccio and Bastia, where, I was told, this Edinburgh practice was universal. It certainly was the practice of the hotel.

It

It is plain he was not going to leave his *friend*; his friend was going to leave *him*. A young lady at once corrected this with good critical sagacity, to

‘Tho’ much concern’d *lose* my dear old friend.’

There is one passage in the original, better transfused by Oldham than by Johnson :

*‘Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quàm quod ridiculos homines facit;’*

which is an exquisite remark on the galling meanness and contempt annexed to poverty: JOHNSON’S imitation is,

‘Of all the griefs that harass the distrest,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest.’

OLDHAM’S, though less elegant, is more just :

‘Nothing in poverty so ill is borne,
As its exposing men to grinning scorn.’

Where, or in what manner this poem was composed, I am sorry that I neglected to ascertain with precision, from Johnson’s own authority. He has marked upon his corrected copy of the first edition of it, ‘Written in 1738;’ and, as it was published in the month of May in that year, it is evident that much time was not employed in preparing it for the press. The history of its publication I am enabled to give in a very satisfactory manner; and judging from myself, and many of my friends, I trust that it will not be uninteresting to my readers.

We may be certain, though it is not expressly named in the following letters to Mr. Cave, in 1738, that they all relate to it:

‘TO MR. CAVE.

‘Castle-street, Wednesday Morning.

[*No date.* 1738.]

‘SIR,

‘When I took the liberty of writing to you a few days ago, I did not expect a repetition of the same pleasure so soon; for a pleasure I shall always think it, to converse in any manner with an ingenious and candid man; but having the inclosed poem in
my

my hands to dispose of for the benefit of the authour (of whose abilities I shall say nothing, since I send you his performance,) I believed I could not procure more advantageous terms from any person than from you, who have so much distinguished yourself by your generous encouragement of poetry; and whose judgment of that art nothing but your commendation of my trifle¹ can give me any occasion to call in question. I do not doubt but you will look over this poem with another eye, and reward it in a different manner, from a mercenary bookseller, who counts the lines he is to purchase², and considers nothing but the bulk. I cannot help taking notice, that, besides what the authour may hope for on account of his abilities, he has likewise another claim to your regard, as he lies at present under very disadvantageous circumstances of fortune. I beg, therefore, that you will favour me with a letter tomorrow, that I may know what you can afford to allow him, that he may either part with it to you, or find out, (which I do not expect,) some other way more to his satisfaction.

'I have only to add, that as I am sensible I have transcribed it very coarsely, which, after having altered it, I was obliged to do, I will, if you please to transmit the sheets from the press, correct it for you; and take the trouble of altering any stroke of satire which you may dislike.

'By exerting on this occasion your usual generosity, you will not only encourage learning, and relieve distress, but (though it be in comparison of the other motives of very small account) oblige in a very sensible manner, Sir,

'Your very humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'TO MR. CAVE.

'Monday, No. 6, Castle-street.

'SIR,

'I am to return you thanks for the present you were so kind as to send by me, and to intreat that you will be pleased to inform me by the penny-post³, whether you resolve to print the

¹ His Ode *Ad Urbanum* probably. NICHOLS. BOSWELL.

² Johnson, on his death-bed, had to own that 'Cave was a penurious paymaster; he would contract for lines by the hundred, and expect the long hundred.' See *post*, Dec. 1784.

³ Cave sent the present by Johnson to the unknown author.

⁴ See *post*, p. 151, note 5.

poem. If you please to send it me by the post, with a note to Dodsley, I will go and read the lines to him, that we may have his consent to put his name in the title-page. As to the printing, if it can be set immediately about, I will be so much the authour's friend, as not to content myself with mere solicitations in his favour. I propose, if my calculation be near the truth, to engage for the reimbursement of all that you shall lose by an impression of 500; provided, as you very generously propose, that the profit, if any, be set aside for the authour's use, excepting the present you made, which, if he be a gainer, it is fit he should repay. I beg that you will let one of your servants write an exact account of the expense of such an impression, and send it with the poem, that I may know what I engage for. I am very sensible, from your generosity on this occasion, of your regard to learning, even in its unhappiest state, and cannot but think such a temper deserving of the gratitude of those who suffer so often from a contrary disposition. I am, Sir,

‘Your most humble servant,
‘SAM. JOHNSON!.’

‘TO MR. CAVE.

[No date².]

‘SIR,

‘I waited on you to take the copy to Dodsley's: as I remember the number of lines which it contains, it will be no longer than *Eugenio*³, with the quotations, which must be subjoined at the bottom of the page; part of the beauty of the performance (if any beauty be allowed it) consisting in adapting Juvenal's sentiments to modern facts and persons. It will, with those additions, very conveniently make five sheets. And since the expense will be no

¹ The original letter has the following additional paragraph:—‘I beg that you will not delay your answer.’

² In later life Johnson strongly insisted on the importance of fully dating all letters. After giving the date in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, he would add,—‘Now there is a date, look at it’ (*Piozzi Letters*, ii. 109); or, ‘Mark that—you did not put the year to your last’ (*Ib.* p. 112); or, ‘Look at this and learn’ (*Ib.* p. 138). She never did learn. The arrangement of the letters in the *Piozzi Letters* is often very faulty. For an omission of the date by Johnson in late life see *post*, under March 5, 1774.

³ A poem, published in 1737, of which see an account under April 30, 1773. BOSWELL.

more.

more, I shall contentedly insure it, as I mentioned in my last. If it be not therefore gone to Dodsley's, I beg it may be sent me by the penny-post, that I may have it in the evening. I have composed a Greek epigram to Eliza¹, and think she ought to be celebrated in as many different languages as Lewis le Grand². Pray send me word when you will begin upon the poem, for it is a long way to walk. I would leave my Epigram, but have not daylight to transcribe it³. I am, Sir,

'Your's, &c.,

'SAM. JOHNSON⁴.'

¹ The learned Mrs. Elizabeth Carter. BOSWELL. She was born Dec. 1717, and died Feb. 19, 1806. She never married. Her father gave her a learned education. Dr. Johnson, speaking of some celebrated scholar [perhaps Langton], said, 'that he understood Greek better than any one whom he had ever known, except Elizabeth Carter.' Pennington's *Carter*, i. 13. Writing to her in 1756 he said, 'Poor dear Cave! I owed him much; for to him I owe that I have known you' (*Ib.* p. 40). Her father wrote to her on June 25, 1738:— 'You mention Johnson; but that is a name with which I am utterly unacquainted. Neither his scholastic, critical, or poetical character ever reached my ears. I a little suspect his judgment, if he is very fond of Martial' (*Ib.* p. 39). Since 1734 she had written verses for the *Gent. Mag.* under the name of Eliza (*Ib.* p. 37). They are very poor. Her *Ode to Melancholy* her biographer calls her best. How bad it is three lines will show:—

'Here, cold to pleasure's airy forms,

Consociate with my sister worms,

And mingle with the dead.' *Gent. Mag.* ix. 599.

Hawkins records that Johnson, upon hearing a lady commended for her learning, said:—'A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table than when his wife talks Greek. My old friend, Mrs. Carter, could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus.' Johnson's *Works* (1787), xi. 205. Johnson, joining her with Hannah More and Fanny Burney, said:—'Three such women are not to be found.' *Post*, May 15, 1784.

² See Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, ch. xxv.

³ At the end of his letter to Cave, quoted *post*, 1742, he says:—'The boy found me writing this almost in the dark, when I could not quite easily read yours.' A man who at times was forced to walk the streets, for want of money to pay for a lodging, was likely also at times to be condemned to idleness for want of a light.

⁴ At the back of this letter is written:—'Sir, Please to publish the

'To

‘TO MR. CAVE.

[No date.]

‘SIR,

‘I am extremely obliged by your kind letter, and will not fail to attend you to-morrow with *Irene*, who looks upon you as one of her best friends.

‘I was to day with Mr. Dodsley, who declares very warmly in favour of the paper you sent him, which he desires to have a share in, it being, as he says, *a creditable thing to be concerned in*. I knew not what answer to make till I had consulted you, nor what to demand on the authour’s part, but am very willing that, if you please, he should have a part in it, as he will undoubtedly be more diligent to disperse and promote it. If you can send me word to-morrow what I shall say to him, I will settle matters, and bring the poem with me for the press, which, as the town empties, we cannot be too quick with. I am, Sir,

‘Your’s, &c.,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

To us who have long known the manly force, bold spirit, and masterly versification of this poem, it is a matter of curiosity to observe the diffidence with which its authour brought it forward into publick notice, while he is so cautious as not to avow it to be his own production; and with what humility he offers to allow the printer to ‘alter any stroke of satire which he might dislike¹.’ That any such alteration was made, we do not know. If we did, we could not but feel an indignant regret; but how painful is it to see that a writer of such vigorous powers of mind was actually in such distress, that the small profit which so short a poem, however excellent, could yield, was courted as a ‘relief.’

It has been generally said, I know not with what truth, that Johnson offered his *London* to several booksellers, none

enclosed in your paper of first, and place to acct of Mr. Edward Cave. For whom I am, Sir, your hum. sert J. Bland. St. John’s Gate, April 6, 1738.’ *London* therefore was written before April 6.

¹ Boswell misread the letter. Johnson does not offer to allow the printer to make alterations. He says:—‘I will take the trouble of altering any stroke of satire which you may dislike.’ The law against libel was as unjust as it was severe, and printers ran a great risk.

of

of whom would purchase it. To this circumstance Mr. Derrick alludes in the following lines of his *Fortune, a Rhapsody*:

‘Will no kind patron JOHNSON own?
Shall JOHNSON friendless range the town?
And every publisher refuse
The offspring of his happy Muse?’

But we have seen that the worthy, modest, and ingenious Mr. Robert Dodsley² had taste enough to perceive its uncommon merit, and thought it creditable to have a share in it. The fact is, that, at a future conference, he bargained for the whole property of it, for which he gave Johnson ten guineas³; who told me, ‘I might, perhaps, have accepted of less; but that Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead.’

I may here observe, that Johnson appeared to me to undervalue Paul Whitehead upon every occasion when he was mentioned, and, in my opinion, did not do him justice; but when it is considered that Paul Whitehead was a member of a riotous and profane club⁴, we may account for Johnson’s having a prejudice against him. Paul Whitehead was, indeed, unfortunate in being not only slighted by

¹ Derrick was not merely a poet, but also Master of the Ceremonies at Bath; *post*, May 16, 1763. For Johnson’s opinion of his ‘Muse’ see *post*, under March 30, 1783. *Fortune, a Rhapsody*, was published in Nov. 1751. *Gent. Mag.* xxi. 527. He is described in *Humphrey Clinker* in the letters of April 6 and May 6.

² See *post*, March 20, 1776.

³ Six years later Johnson thus wrote of Savage’s *Wanderer*:—‘From a poem so diligently laboured, and so successfully finished, it might be reasonably expected that he should have gained considerable advantage; nor can it without some degree of indignation and concern be told, that he sold the copy for ten guineas.’ Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 131. Mrs. Piozzi sold in 1788 the copyright of her collection of Johnson’s Letters for £500; *post*, Feb. 1767.

⁴ The Monks of Medmenham Abbey. See Almon’s *Life of Wilkes*, iii. 60, for Wilkes’s account of this club. Horace Walpole (*Letters*, i. 92) calls Whitehead ‘an infamous, but not despicable poet.’

Johnson,

Johnson, but violently attacked by Churchill, who utters the following imprecation :

‘May I (can worse disgrace on manhood fall?)
Be born a Whitehead, and baptiz’d a Paul!’¹

yet I shall never be persuaded to think meanly of the authour of so brilliant and pointed a satire as *Manners*².

Johnson’s *London* was published in May 1738³; and it is

¹ From *The Conference*, Churchill’s *Poems*, ii. 15.

² In the *Life of Pope* Johnson writes :—‘ Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the Lords for a poem called *Manners*, together with Dodsley his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, sculked and escaped; but Dodsley’s shop and family made his appearance necessary.’ Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 297. *Manners* was published in 1739. Dodsley was kept in custody for a week. *Gent. Mag.* ix. 104. ‘The whole process was supposed to be intended rather to intimidate Pope [who in his *Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-Eight* had given offence] than to punish Whitehead, and it answered that purpose.’ CHALMERS, quoted in *Parl. Hist.* x. 1325.

³ Sir John Hawkins, p. 86, tells us :—‘ The event is *antedated*, in the poem of *London*; but in every particular, except the difference of a year, what is there said of the departure of Thales, must be understood of Savage, and looked upon as *true history*.’ This conjecture is, I believe, entirely groundless. I have been assured, that Johnson said he was not so much as acquainted with Savage when he wrote his *London*. If the departure mentioned in it was the departure of Savage, the event was not *antedated* but *foreseen*; for *London* was published in May 1738, and Savage did not set out for Wales till July 1739. However well Johnson could defend the credibility of *second sight* [see *post*, Feb. 1766], he did not pretend that he himself was possessed of that faculty. BOSWELL. I am not sure that Hawkins is altogether wrong in his account. Boswell does not state of *his own knowledge* that Johnson was not acquainted with Savage when he wrote *London*. The death of Queen Caroline in Nov. 1737 deprived Savage of her yearly bounty, and ‘abandoned him again to fortune’ (Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 166). The elegy on her that he composed on her birth-day (March 1) brought him no reward. He was ‘for some time in suspense,’ but nothing was done. ‘He was in a short time reduced to the lowest degree of distress, and often wanted both lodging and food’ (*Ib.* p. 169). His friends formed a scheme that ‘he should retire into Wales.’ ‘While this scheme was ripening,’ he lodged ‘in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be secure from his
I.—10
remarkable,

remarkable, that it came out on the same morning with creditors' (*Ib.* p. 170). After many delays a subscription was at length raised to provide him with a small pension, and he left London in July 1739 (*Ib.* p. 173). *London*, as I have shewn, was written before April 6, 1738. That it was written with great rapidity we might infer from the fact that a hundred lines of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* were written in a day. At this rate *London* might have been the work of three days. That it was written in a very short time seems to be shown by a passage in the first of these letters to Cave. Johnson says:—'When I took the liberty of writing to you a few days ago, I did not expect a repetition of the same pleasure so soon; . . . but having the enclosed poem, &c.' It is probable that in these few days the poem was written. If we can assume that Savage's elegy was sent to the Court not later than March 1—it may have been sent earlier—and that Johnson's poem was written in the last ten days of March, we have three weeks for the intervening events. They are certainly not more than sufficient, if indeed they are sufficient. The coincidence is certainly very striking between Thales's retirement to 'Cambria's solitary shore' and Savage's retirement to Wales. There are besides lines in the poem—additions to Juvenal and not translations—which curiously correspond with what Johnson wrote of Savage in his *Life*. Thus he says that Savage 'imagined that he should be transported to scenes of flowery felicity; . . . he could not bear . . . to lose the opportunity of listening, without intermission, to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life' (*Ib.* p. 170). In like manner Thales prays to find:—

'Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,
Some peaceful vale, with nature's paintings gay.

There every bush with nature's musick rings;
There every breeze bears health upon its wings.'

Mr. Croker objects that 'if Thales had been Savage, Johnson could never have admitted into his poem two lines that point so forcibly at the drunken fray, in which Savage stabbed a Mr. Sinclair, for which he was convicted of *murder*:—

"Some frolic *drunkard*, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and *stabs* you in a jest."

But here Johnson is following Juvenal. Mr. Croker forgets that, if Savage was convicted of murder, 'he was soon after admitted to bail, and pleaded the King's pardon.' 'Persons of distinction' testified that he was 'a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to broils or to in-

Pope's

Pope's satire, entitled '1738¹;' so that England had at once its Juvenal and Horace² as poetical monitors. The Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, to whom I am indebted for some obliging communications, was then a student at Oxford, and remembers well the effect which *London* produced. Every body was delighted with it; and there being no name to it, the first buz of the literary circles was 'here is an unknown poet, greater even than Pope.' And it is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of that year³, that it 'got to the second edition in the course of a week.'

One of the warmest patrons of this poem on its first appearance was General Oglethorpe, whose 'strong benevolence of soul⁴,' was unabated during the course of a very

solence;' the witnesses against him were of the lowest character, and his judge had shewn himself as ignorant as he was brutal. Sinclair had been drinking in a brothel, and Savage asserted that he had stabbed him 'by the necessity of self defence' (*Ib.* p. 117). It is, however, not unlikely that Wales was suggested to Johnson as Thales's retreat by Swift's lines on Steele, in *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (v. 181), published only three years before *London*:—

'Thus Steele who owned what others writ,
And flourished by imputed wit,
From perils of a hundred jails
Withdrew to starve and die in Wales.'

¹ The first dialogue was registered at Stationers' Hall, 12th May, 1738, under the title *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight*. The second dialogue was registered 17th July, 1738, as *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight, Dialogue 2*. Elwin's *Pope*, iii. 455.

David Hume was in London this spring, finding a publisher for his first work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. J. H. Burton's *Hume*, i. 66.

² Pope had published *Imitations of Horace*.

³ P. 269. BOSWELL. 'Short extracts from *London, a Poem*, become remarkable for having got to the second edition in the space of a week.' *Gent. Mag.* viii. 269. The price of the poem was one shilling. Pope's satire, though sold at the same price, was longer in reaching its second edition (*Ib.* p. 280).

⁴ 'One driven by strong benevolence of soul
Shall fly, like Oglethorpe, from pole to pole.'

Pope's *Imitations of Horace*, ii. 2. 276.

⁵ General Oglethorpe, died 1785, earned commemoration in Pope's gallery of worthies by his Jacobite politics. He was, however, a re-long

long life¹; though it is painful to think, that he had but too much reason to become cold and callous, and discontented with the world, from the neglect which he experienced of his publick and private worth, by those in whose power it was to gratify so gallant a veteran with marks of distinction. This extraordinary person was as remarkable for his learning and taste, as for his other eminent qualities; and no man was more prompt, active, and generous, in encouraging merit. I have heard Johnson gratefully acknowledge, in his presence, the kind and effectual support which he gave to his *London*, though unacquainted with its authour.

Pope, who then filled the poetical throne without a rival, it may reasonably be presumed, must have been particularly

markable man. He first directed attention to the abuses of the London jails. His relinquishment of all the attractions of English life and fortune for the settlement of the colony of Georgia is as romantic a story as that of Bishop Berkeley' (Pattison's *Pope*, p. 152). It is very likely that Johnson's regard for Oglethorpe was greatly increased by the stand that he and his brother-trustees in the settlement of Georgia made against slavery (see *post*, Sept. 23, 1777). 'The first principle which they laid down in their laws was that no slave should be employed. This was regarded at the time as their great and fundamental error; it was afterwards repealed' (Southey's *Wesley*, i. 75). In spite, however, of Oglethorpe's 'strong benevolence of soul' he at one time treated Charles Wesley, who was serving as a missionary in Georgia, with great brutality (*Ib.* p. 88). According to Benjamin Franklin (*Memoirs*, i. 162) Georgia was settled with little forethought. 'Instead of being made with hardy industrious husbandmen, it was with families of broken shop-keepers, and other insolvent debtors; many of idle habits, taken out of the jails, who being set down in the woods, unqualified for clearing land, and unable to endure the hardships of a new settlement, perished in numbers, leaving many helpless children unprovided for.' Johnson wished to write Oglethorpe's life; *post*, April 10, 1775.

¹ Horace Walpole (*Letters*, viii. 548), writing of him 47 years after *London* was published, when he was 87 years old, says:—'His eyes, ears, articulation, limbs, and memory would suit a boy, if a boy could recollect a century backwards. His teeth are gone; he is a shadow, and a wrinkled one; but his spirits and his spirit are in full bloom: two years and a-half ago he challenged a neighbouring gentleman for trespassing on his manor.'

struck

struck by the sudden appearance of such a poet; and, to his credit, let it be remembered, that his feelings and conduct on the occasion were candid and liberal. He requested Mr. Richardson, son of the painter¹, to endeavour to find out who this new authour was. Mr. Richardson, after some inquiry, having informed him that he had discovered only that his name was Johnson, and that he was some obscure man, Pope said, 'he will soon be *déterré*.' We shall presently see, from a note written by Pope, that he was himself afterwards more successful in his inquiries than his friend.

That in this justly-celebrated poem may be found a few rhymes² which the critical precision of English prosody at this day would disallow, cannot be denied; but with this small imperfection, which in the general blaze of its excellence is not perceived, till the mind has subsided into cool attention, it is, undoubtedly, one of the noblest productions in our language, both for sentiment and expression. The nation was then in that ferment against the court and the

¹ 'Once Johnson being at dinner at Sir Joshua's in company with many painters, in the course of conversation Richardson's *Treatise on Painting* happened to be mentioned. "Ah!" said Johnson, "I remember, when I was at college, I by chance found that book on my stairs. I took it up with me to my chamber, and read it through, and truly I did not think it possible to say so much upon the art." Sir Joshua desired of one of the company to be informed what Johnson had said; and it being repeated to him so loud that Johnson heard it, the Doctor seemed hurt, and added, "But I did not wish, Sir, that Sir Joshua should have been told what I then said." Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 236. Jonathan Richardson the painter had published several works on painting before Johnson went to college. He and his son, Jonathan Richardson, junior, brought out together *Explanatory Notes on Paradise Lost*.

² Sir Joshua Reynolds, from the information of the younger Richardson. BOSWELL. See *post*, Oct. 16, 1769, where Johnson himself relates this anecdote. According to Murphy, 'Pope said, "The author, whoever he is, will not be long concealed;" alluding to the passage in Terence [*Eun.* ii. 3, 4], *Ubi, ubi est, diu celeri non potest.*' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 35.

³ Such as *far* and *air*, which comes twice; *vain* and *man*, *despair* and *bar*.

ministry, which some years after ended in the downfall of Sir Robert Walpole; and as it has been said, that Tories are Whigs when out of place, and Whigs, Tories when in place; so, as a Whig administration ruled with what force it could, a Tory opposition had all the animation and all the eloquence of resistance to power, aided by the common topics of patriotism, liberty, and independence! Accordingly, we find in Johnson's *London* the most spirited invectives against tyranny and oppression, the warmest predilection for his own country, and the purest love of virtue; interspersed with traits of his own particular character and situation, not omitting his prejudices as a 'true-born Englishman', not only against foreign countries, but against Ireland and Scotland². On some of these topics I shall quote a few passages:

'The cheated nation's happy fav'rites see;
Mark whom the great caress, who frown on me.'

'Has heaven reserv'd in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert yet unclaim'd by Spain?

¹ It is, however, remarkable, that he uses the epithet, which undoubtedly, since the union between England and Scotland, ought to denominate the natives of both parts of our island:—

'Was early taught a BRITON'S rights to prize.' BOSWELL.

Swift, in his *Journal to Stella* (Nov. 23, 1711), having to mention England, continues:—'I never will call it *Britain*, pray don't call it Britain.' In a letter written on Aug. 8, 1738, again mentioning England, he adds,—'Pox on the modern phrase Great Britain, which is only to distinguish it from Little Britain, where old clothes and old books are to be bought and sold' (Swift's *Works*, 1803, xx. 185). George III 'gloried in being born a Briton;' *post*, 1760. Boswell thrice more at least describes Johnson as 'a true-born Englishman;' *post*, under Feb. 7, 1775, under March 30, 1783, and Boswell's *Hebrides* under Aug. 11, 1773. The quotation is from *Richard II*, Act i. sc. 3.

² 'For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land,
Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
There none are swept by sudden fate away,
But all, whom hunger spares, with age decay.'

London, l. 9–12.

Quick

Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,
And bear Oppression's insolence no more¹!

'How, when competitors like these contend,
Can *surlly* *Virtue* hope to fix a friend?'

'This mournful truth is every where confess'd,
SLOW RISES WORTH, BY POVERTY DEPRESS'D²!'

We may easily conceive with what feeling a great mind like his, cramped and galled by narrow circumstances, uttered this last line, which he marked by capitals. The whole of the poem is eminently excellent, and there are in it such proofs of a knowledge of the world, and of a mature acquaintance with life, as cannot be contemplated without wonder, when we consider that he was then only in his twenty-ninth year, and had yet been so little in the 'busy haunts of men³.'

Yet, while we admire the poetical excellence of this poem, candour obliges us to allow, that the flame of patriotism and zeal for popular resistance with which it is fraught, had no just cause. There was, in truth, no 'oppression;' the 'nation' was *not* 'cheated.' Sir Robert Walpole was a wise and a benevolent minister, who thought that the happiness and prosperity of a commercial country like ours, would be best

¹ In the *Life of Savage*, Johnson, criticising the settlement of colonies, as it is considered by the poet and the politician, seems to be criticising himself. 'The politician, when he considers men driven into other countries for shelter, and obliged to retire to forests and deserts, and pass their lives, and fix their posterity, in the remotest corners of the world, to avoid those hardships which they suffer or fear in their native place, may very properly enquire, why the legislature does not provide a remedy for these miseries, rather than encourage an escape from them. He may conclude that the flight of every honest man is a loss to the community. . . . The poet guides the unhappy fugitive from want and persecution to plenty, quiet, and security, and seats him in scenes of peaceful solitude, and undisturbed repose.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 156.

² Three years later Johnson wrote:—'Mere unassisted merit advances slowly, if, what is not very common, it advances at all.' *Ib.* vi. 393.

³ 'The busy *hum* of men.' Milton's *L'Allegro*, l. 118.

promoted

promoted by peace, which he accordingly maintained, with credit, during a very long period. Johnson himself afterwards honestly acknowledged the merit of Walpole, whom he called 'a fixed star;' while he characterized his opponent, Pitt, as 'a meteor¹.' But Johnson's juvenile poem was naturally impregnated with the fire of opposition, and upon every account was universally admired.

Though thus elevated into fame, and conscious of uncommon powers, he had not that bustling confidence, or, I may rather say, that animated ambition, which one might have supposed would have urged him to endeavour at rising in life. But such was his inflexible dignity of character, that he could not stoop to court the great; without which, hardly any man has made his way to a high station². He could not expect to produce many such works as his *London*, and he felt the hardships of writing for bread; he was, therefore, willing to resume the office of a schoolmaster, so as to have

¹ See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 21, 1773. and *post*, March 21, 1775, for Johnson's attack on Lord Chatham. In the *Life of Thomson* Johnson wrote:—'At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 370. Hawkins says (*Life*, p. 514):—'Of Walpole he had a high opinion. He said of him that he was a fine fellow, and that his very enemies deemed him so before his death. He honoured his memory for having kept this country in peace many years, as also for the goodness and placability of his temper.' Horace Walpole (*Letters* v. 509), says:—'My father alone was capable of acting on one great plan of honesty from the beginning of his life to the end. He could for ever wage war with knaves and malice, and preserve his temper; could know men, and yet feel for them; could smile when opposed, and be gentle after triumph.'

² Johnson in the *Life of Milton* describes himself:—'Milton was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praise, nor solicitation of support.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 142. See *post*, Feb. 1766, for Johnson's opinion on 'courting great men.'

a sure, though moderate income for his life; and an offer being made to him of the mastership of a school¹, provided

¹ In a billet written by Mr. Pope in the following year, this school is said to have been in *Shropshire*; but as it appears from a letter from Earl Gower, that the trustees of it were 'some worthy gentlemen in Johnson's neighbourhood,' I in my first edition suggested that Pope must have, by mistake, written *Shropshire*, instead of *Staffordshire*. But I have since been obliged to Mr. Spearing, attorney-at-law, for the following information:—'William Adams, formerly citizen and haberdasher of London, founded a school at Newport, in the county of Salop, by deed dated 27th November, 1656, by which he granted "the yearly sum of *sixty pounds* to such able and learned schoolmaster from time to time, being of godly life and conversation, who should have been educated at one of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, and had taken the degree of *Master of Arts*, and was well read in the Greek and Latin tongues, as should be nominated from time to time by the said William Adams, during his life, and after the decease of the said William Adams, by the Governours (namely, the Master and Wardens of the Haberdashers' Company of the City of London) and their successors." The manour and lands out of which the revenues for the maintenance of the school were to issue are situate at *Knighton and Adbaston, in the county of Stafford*.' From the foregoing account of this foundation, particularly the circumstances of the salary being sixty pounds, and the degree of *Master of Arts* being a requisite qualification in the teacher, it seemed probable that this was the school in contemplation; and that Lord Gower erroneously supposed that the gentlemen who possessed the lands, out of which the revenues issued, were trustees of the charity.

Such was probable conjecture. But in the *Gent. Mag.* for May 1793, there is a letter from Mr. Henn, one of the masters of the school of Appleby, in Leicestershire, in which he writes as follows:—

'I compared time and circumstance together, in order to discover whether the school in question might not be this of Appleby. Some of the trustees at that period were "worthy gentlemen of the neighbourhood of Litchfield." Appleby itself is not far from the neighbourhood of Litchfield. The salary, the degree requisite, together with the *time of election*, all agreeing with the statutes of Appleby. The election, as said in the letter, "could not be delayed longer than the 11th of next month," which was the 11th of September, just three months after the annual audit-day of Appleby school, which is always on the 11th of June; and the statutes enjoin *ne ullius præceptorum electio diutius tribus mensibus moraretur, etc.*

'These I thought to be convincing proofs that my conjecture was
he

he could obtain the degree of Master of Arts, Dr. Adams was applied to, by a common friend, to know whether that could be granted him as a favour from the University of Oxford. But though he had made such a figure in the literary world, it was then thought too great a favour to be asked.

Pope, without any knowledge of him but from his *London*, recommended him to Earl Gower, who endeavoured to procure for him a degree from Dublin, by the following letter to a friend of Dean Swift :

‘SIR,

‘Mr. Samuel Johnson (authour of *London*, a satire, and some other poetical pieces) is a native of this country, and much respected by some worthy gentlemen in his neighbourhood, who are trustees of a charity school now vacant ; the certain salary is sixty pounds a year, of which they are desirous to make him master ; but, unfortunately, he is not capable of receiving their bounty, which *would make him happy for life*, by not being a *Master of Arts* ; which, by the statutes of this school, the master of it must be.

‘Now these gentlemen do me the honour to think that I have interest enough in you, to prevail upon you to write to Dean Swift, to persuade the University of Dublin to send a diploma to me, constituting this poor man Master of Arts in their University.

not ill-founded, and that, in a future edition of that book, the circumstance might be recorded as fact.

‘But what banishes every shadow of doubt is the *Minute-book* of the school, which declares the headmastership to be *at that time VACANT.*’

I cannot omit returning thanks to this learned gentleman for the very handsome manner in which he has in that letter been so good as to speak of this work. BOSWELL.

Hawkins (*Life*, p. 61) says that ‘Johnson went to Appleby in Aug. 1738, and offered himself as a candidate for the mastership.’ The date of 1738 seems to be Hawkins’s inference. If Johnson went at all, it was in 1739. Pope, the friend of Swift, would not of course have sought Lord Gower’s influence with Swift. He applied to his lordship, no doubt, as a great midland-county landowner, likely to have influence with the trustees. Why, when the difficulty about the degree of M.A. was discovered, Pope was not asked to solicit Swift cannot be known. See *post*, beginning of 1780 in BOSWELL’S account of the *Life of Swift*.

They

They highly extol the man's learning and probity; and will not be persuaded, that the University will make any difficulty of conferring such a favour upon a stranger, if he is recommended by the Dean. They say he is not afraid of the strictest examination, though he is of so long a journey; and will venture it, if the Dean thinks it necessary; choosing rather to die upon the road, *than be starved to death in translating for booksellers*; which has been his only subsistence for some time past.

'I fear there is more difficulty in this affair, than those good-natured gentlemen apprehend; especially as their election cannot be delayed longer than the 11th of next month. If you see this matter in the same light that it appears to me, I hope you will burn this, and pardon me for giving you so much trouble about an impracticable thing; but, if you think there is a probability of obtaining the favour asked, I am sure your humanity, and propensity to relieve merit in distress, will incline you to serve the poor man, without my adding any more to the trouble I have already given you, than assuring you that I am, with great truth, Sir,

Your faithful servant,

GOWER.

'Trentham, Aug. 1, 1739.'

It was, perhaps, no small disappointment to Johnson that this respectable application had not the desired effect; yet how much reason has there been, both for himself and his country, to rejoice that it did not succeed, as he might probably have wasted in obscurity those hours in which he afterwards produced his incomparable works.

About this time he made one other effort to emancipate himself from the drudgery of authorship. He applied to Dr. Adams, to consult Dr. Smalbroke of the Commons, whether a person might be permitted to practise as an advocate there, without a doctor's degree in Civil Law. 'I am (said he) a total stranger to these studies; but whatever is a profession, and maintains numbers, must be within the reach of common abilities, and some degree of industry.' Dr. Adams was much pleased with Johnson's design to employ his talents in that manner, being confident he would have attained to great eminence. And, indeed, I cannot conceive a man better qualified to make a distinguished figure as a lawyer; for, he
would

would have brought to his profession a rich store of various knowledge, an uncommon acuteness, and a command of language, in which few could have equalled, and none have surpassed him'. He who could display eloquence and wit in defence of the decision of the House of Commons upon Mr. Wilkes's election for Middlesex², and of the unconstitutional taxation of our fellow-subjects in America³, must have been a powerful advocate in any cause. But here, also, the want of a degree was an insurmountable bar.

He was, therefore, under the necessity of persevering in that course, into which he had been forced; and we find, that his proposal from Greenwich to Mr. Cave, for a translation of Father Paul Sarpi's History, was accepted⁴.

Some sheets of this translation were printed off, but the design was dropt; for it happened, oddly enough, that

¹ 'What a pity it is, Sir,' said to him Sir William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, 'that you did not follow the profession of the law! You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain.' *Post*, April 17, 1778.

² See *post*, beginning of 1770.

³ See *post*, March 21, 1775.

⁴ In the *Weekly Miscellany*, October 21, 1738, there appeared the following advertisement:—'Just published, Proposals for printing the *History of the Council of Trent*, translated from the Italian of Father Paul Sarpi; with the Authour's Life, and Notes theological, historical, and critical, from the French edition of Dr. Le Courayer. To which are added, Observations on the History, and Notes and Illustrations from various Authours, both printed and manuscript. By S. Johnson. 1. The work will consist of two hundred sheets, and be two volumes in quarto, printed on good paper and letter. 2. The price will be 18s. each volume, to be paid, half-a-guinea at the delivery of the first volume, and the rest at the delivery of the second volume in sheets. 3. Two-pence to be abated for every sheet less than two hundred. It may be had on a large paper, in three volumes, at the price of three guineas; one to be paid at the time of subscribing, another at the delivery of the first, and the rest at the delivery of the other volumes. The work is now in the press, and will be diligently prosecuted. Subscriptions are taken in by Mr. Dodsley in Pall-Mall, Mr. Rivington in St. Paul's Church-yard, by E. Cave at St. John's Gate, and the Translator, at No. 6, in Castle-street, by Cavendish-square.' BOSWELL.

another

another person of the name of Samuel Johnson, Librarian of St. Martin's in the Fields, and Curate of that parish, engaged in the same undertaking, and was patronised by the Clergy, particularly by Dr. Pearce, afterwards Bishop of Rochester. Several light skirmishes passed between the rival translators, in the newspapers of the day; and the consequence was, that they destroyed each other, for neither of them went on with the work. It is much to be regretted, that the able performance of that celebrated genius FRA PAOLO, lost the advantage of being incorporated into British literature by the masterly hand of Johnson.

I have in my possession, by the favour of Mr. John Nichols, a paper in Johnson's hand-writing, entitled 'Account between Mr. Edward Cave and Sam. Johnson, in relation to a version of Father Paul, &c. begun August the 2d, 1738;' by which it appears, that from that day to the 21st of April, 1739, Johnson received for this work £49 7s. in sums of one, two, three, and sometimes four guineas at a time, most frequently two. And it is curious to observe the minute and scrupulous accuracy with which Johnson has pasted upon it a slip of paper, which he has entitled 'Small Account,' and which contains one article, 'Sept. 9th, Mr. Cave laid down 2s. 6d.' There is subjoined to this account, a list of some subscribers to the work, partly in Johnson's hand-writing, partly in that of another person; and there follows a leaf or two on which are written a number of characters which have the appearance of a short hand, which, perhaps, Johnson was then trying to learn.

'TO MR. CAVE.

'Wednesday.

'SIR,

'I did not care to detain your servant while I wrote an answer to your letter, in which you seem to insinuate that I had promised more than I am ready to perform. If I have raised your expectations by any thing that may have escaped my memory, I am sorry; and if you remind me of it, shall thank you for the favour. If I made fewer alterations than usual in the Debates, it was only because there appeared, and still appears to be, less need of alteration.

alteration. The verses to Lady Firebrace¹ may be had when you please, for you know that such a subject neither deserves much thought, nor requires it.

‘The Chinese Stories² may be had folded down when you please to send, in which I do not recollect that you desired any alterations to be made.

‘An answer to another query I am very willing to write, and had consulted with you about it last night if there had been time; for I think it the most proper way of inviting such a correspondence as may be an advantage to the paper, not a load upon it.

‘As to the Prize Verses, a backwardness to determine their degrees of merit is not peculiar to me. You may, if you please, still have what I can say; but I shall engage with little spirit in an affair, which I shall *hardly* end to my own satisfaction, and *certainly* not to the satisfaction of the parties concerned³.

‘As to Father Paul, I have not yet been just to my proposal, but have met with impediments, which, I hope, are now at an end; and if you find the progress hereafter not such as you have a right to expect, you can easily stimulate a negligent translator.

‘If any or all of these have contributed to your discontent, I will endeavour to remove it; and desire you to propose the question to which you wish for an answer.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘TO MR. CAVE.

[*No date.*]

‘SIR,

‘I am pretty much of your opinion, that the Commentary cannot be prosecuted with any appearance of success; for as the names of the authours concerned are of more weight in the performance than its own intrinsick merit, the publick will be soon satisfied with it. And I think the Examen should be pushed forward with the utmost expedition. Thus, “This day, &c., An

¹ They afterwards appeared in the *Gent. Mag.* [viii. 486] with this title—*Verses to Lady Firebrace, at Bury Assizes.* BOSWELL.

² Du Halde’s Description of China was then publishing by Mr. Cave in weekly numbers, whence Johnson was to select pieces for the embellishment of the *Magazine.* NICHOLS. BOSWELL.

³ The premium of forty pounds proposed for the best poem on the Divine Attributes is here alluded to. NICHOLS. BOSWELL.

Examen

Examen of Mr. Pope's Essay, &c., containing a succinct Account of the Philosophy of Mr. Leibnitz on the System of the Fatalists, with a Confutation of their Opinions, and an Illustration of the Doctrine of Free-will;" [with what else you think proper].

'It will, above all, be necessary to take notice, that it is a thing distinct from the Commentary.

'I was so far from imagining they stood still¹, that I conceived them to have a good deal before-hand, and therefore was less anxious in providing them more. But if ever they stand still on my account, it must doubtless be charged to me; and whatever else shall be reasonable, I shall not oppose; but beg a suspense of judgment till morning, when I must entreat you to send me a dozen proposals, and you shall then have copy to spare.

'I am, Sir,

'Your's, *impransus*²,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'Pray muster up the Proposals if you can, or let the boy recall them from the booksellers.'

But although he corresponded with Mr. Cave concerning a translation of Crousaz's *Examen* of Pope's *Essay on Man*, and gave advice as one anxious for its success, I was long ago convinced by a perusal of the Preface, that this translation was erroneously ascribed to him; and I have found this point ascertained, beyond all doubt, by the following article in Dr. Birch's *Manuscripts in the British Museum*:

'ELISÆ CARTERÆ. S. P. D. THOMAS BIRCH.

'*Versionem tuam Examinis Crousaziani jam perlegi. Summam styli et elegantiam, et in re difficillimâ proprietatem, admiratus.*

'*Dabam Novemb. 27^o 1738³.*'

Indeed Mrs. Carter has lately acknowledged to Mr. Seward, that she was the translator of the *Examen*.

¹ The Compositors in Mr. Cave's printing-office, who appear by this letter to have then waited for copy. NICHOLS. BOSWELL.

² Twenty years later, when he was lodging in the Temple, he had fasted for two days at a time; 'he had drunk tea, but eaten no bread; this was no intentional fasting, but happened just in the course of a literary life.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 4, 1773. See *post*, Aug. 5, 1763.

³ Birch MSS. Brit. Mus. 4323. BOSWELL.

It is remarkable, that Johnson's last quoted letter to Mr. Cave concludes with a fair confession that he had not a dinner; and it is no less remarkable, that, though in this state of want himself, his benevolent heart was not insensible to the necessities of an humble labourer in literature, as appears from the very next letter:

‘TO MR. CAVE.

[No date.]

‘DEAR SIR,

‘You may remember I have formerly talked with you about a Military Dictionary. The eldest Mr. Macbean¹, who was with Mr. Chambers², has very good materials for such a work, which I have seen, and will do it at a very low rate³. I think the terms of War and Navigation might be comprised, with good explanations, in one 8vo. Pica, which he is willing to do for twelve shillings a sheet, to be made up a guinea at the second impression. If you think on it, I will wait on you with him.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Pray lend me Topsisel on Animals⁴.’

I must not omit to mention, that this Mr. Macbean was a native of Scotland.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of this year, Johnson gave a Life of Father Paul;* and he wrote the Preface to the Volume⁵, which, though prefixed to it when bound, is always published with the Appendix, and is therefore the last composition belonging to it. The ability and nice adaptation

¹ See *post*, under Dec. 30, 1747, and Oct. 24, 1780.

² See *post*, 1750.

³ This book was published. BOSWELL. I have not been able to find it.

⁴ *The Historic of four-footed beasts and serpents*. By Edward Topsell. London, 1607. Isaac Walton, in the *Complete Angler*, more than once quotes Topsisel. See p. 99 in the reprint of the first edition, where he says:—‘As our Topsisel hath with great diligence observed.’

⁵ In this preface he describes some pieces as ‘deserving no other fate than to be hissed, torn, and forgotten.’ Johnson's *Works*, v. 346.
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with which he could draw up a prefatory address, was one of his peculiar excellencies.

It appears too, that he paid a friendly attention to Mrs. Elizabeth Carter; for in a letter from Mr. Cave to Dr. Birch, November 28, this year, I find 'Mr. Johnson advises Miss C. to undertake a translation of *Boethius de Cons.* because there is prose and verse, and to put her name to it when published.' This advice was not followed; probably from an apprehension that the work was not sufficiently popular for an extensive sale. How well Johnson himself could have executed a translation of this philosophical poet, we may judge from the following specimen which he has given in the *Rambler*: (*Motto to No. 7.*)

'*O qui perpetuâ mundum ratione gubernas,
Terrarum cœlique sator!———
Disjice terrene nebulas et pondera molis,
Atque tuo splendore mica! Tu namque serenum,
Tu requies tranquilla piis. Te cernere finis,
Principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus, idem.'*

'O thou whose power o'er moving worlds presides,
Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides,
On darkling man in pure effulgence shine,
And cheer the clouded mind with light divine.
'Tis thine alone to calm the pious breast,
With silent confidence and holy rest;
From thee, great God! we spring, to thee we tend,
Path, motive, guide, original, and end!

In 1739, beside the assistance which he gave to the Parliamentary Debates, his writings in the *Gentleman's Magazine*¹ were, 'The Life of Boerhaave,'* in which it is to be observed, that he discovers that love of chymistry² which never forsook him; 'An appeal to the publick in behalf of the Editor;†

¹ The letter to Mr. Urban in the January number of this year (p. 3) is, I believe, by Johnson.

² 'Yet did Boerhaave not suffer one branch of science to withdraw his attention from others; anatomy did not withhold him from chymistry, nor chymistry, enchanting as it is, from the study of botany.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 276. See *post*, under Sept. 9, 1779.

'An Address to the Reader;' † 'An Epigram both in Greek and Latin to Eliza',* and also English verses to her;* and, 'A Greek Epigram to Dr. Birch'.* It has been erroneously supposed, that an Essay published in that Magazine this year, entitled 'The Apotheosis of Milton,' was written by Johnson; and on that supposition it has been improperly inserted in the edition of his works by the Booksellers, after his decease. Were there no positive testimony as to this point, the style of the performance, and the name of Shakspeare not being mentioned in an Essay professedly reviewing the principal English poets, would ascertain it not to be the production of Johnson. But there is here no occasion to resort to internal evidence; for my Lord Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Douglas) has assured me, that it was written by Guthrie. His separate publications were⁴, 'A Complete Vindication of the Licensers of

¹ *Gent. Mag.* viii. 210, and Johnson's *Works*, i. 170.

² What these verses are is not clear. On p. 372 there is an epigram *Ad Elisam Popi Horto Lauros carpentem*, of which on p. 429 there are three translations. That by Urbanus may be Johnson's.

³ *Ib.* p. 654, and Johnson's *Works*, i. 170. On p. 211 of this volume of the *Gent. Mag.* is given the epigram 'To a lady who spoke in defence of liberty.' This was 'Molly Aston' mentioned *ante*, p. 96.

⁴ To the year 1739 belongs *Considerations on the Case of Dr. T[rapp]'s Sermons. Abridged by Mr. Cave, 1739*; first published in the *Gent. Mag.* of July 1787. (See *post* under Nov. 5, 1784, note.) Cave had begun to publish in the *Gent. Mag.* an abridgment of four sermons preached by Trapp against Whitefield. He stopped short in the publication, deterred perhaps by the threat of a prosecution for an infringement of copy-right. 'On all difficult occasions,' writes the Editor in 1787, 'Johnson was Cave's oracle; and the paper now before us was certainly written on that occasion.' Johnson argues that abridgments are not only legal but also justifiable. 'The design of an abridgment is to benefit mankind by facilitating the attainment of knowledge . . . for as an incorrect book is lawfully criticised, and false assertions justly confuted . . . so a tedious volume may no less lawfully be abridged, because it is better that the proprietors should suffer some damage, than that the acquisition of knowledge should be obstructed with unnecessary difficulties, and the valuable hours of thousands thrown away.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 465. Whether we have here Johnson's own opinion cannot be known. He was writing as Cave's advocate. See also Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 20, 1773.

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the Stage, from the malicious and scandalous Aspersions of Mr. Brooke, Authour of *Gustavus Vasa*,* being an ironical Attack upon them for their Suppression of that Tragedy¹; and, 'Marmor Norfolciense; or an Essay on an ancient prophetical Inscription in monkish Rhyme, lately discovered near Lynne in Norfolk, by PROBUS BRITANNICUS.'** In this performance, he, in a feigned inscription, supposed to have been found in Norfolk, the county of Sir Robert Walpole, then the obnoxious prime minister of this country, inveighs against the Brunswick succession, and the measures of government consequent upon it². To this supposed prophecy he added a Commentary, making each expression apply to the times, with warm Anti-Hanoverian zeal.

This anonymous pamphlet, I believe, did not make so much noise as was expected, and, therefore, had not a very extensive circulation³. Sir John Hawkins relates⁴, that, 'warrants were issued, and messengers employed to apprehend the authour; who, though he had forborne to subscribe his name to the pamphlet, the vigilance of those in pursuit of him had discovered;' and we are informed, that he lay concealed in Lambeth-marsh till the scent after him grew cold. This, however, is altogether without foundation; for Mr. Steele, one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, who amidst a variety of important business, politely obliged me with his attention to my inquiry, informed me, that 'he

¹ In his *Life of Thomson* Johnson writes:—'About this time the act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of *Gustavus Vasa*, a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the public recompensed by a very liberal subscription; the next was the refusal of *Edward and Eleonora*, offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 373.

² The Inscription and the Translation of it are preserved in the *London Magazine* for the year 1739, p. 244. BOSWELL. See Johnson's *Works*, vi. 89.

³ It is a little heavy in its humour, and does not compare well with the like writings of Swift and the earlier wits.

⁴ Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 72.

directed every possible search to be made in the records of the Treasury and Secretary of State's Office, but could find no trace whatever of any warrant having been issued to apprehend the authour of this pamphlet.'

Marmor Norfolciense became exceedingly scarce, so that I, for many years, endeavoured in vain to procure a copy of it. At last I was indebted to the malice of one of Johnson's numerous petty adversaries, who, in 1775, published a new edition of it, 'with Notes and a dedication to SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D. by TRIBUNUS;' in which some puny scribbler invidiously attempted to found upon it a charge of inconsistency against its authour, because he had accepted of a pension from his present Majesty, and had written in support of the measures of government. As a mortification to such impotent malice, of which there are so many instances towards men of eminence, I am happy to relate, that this *telum imbelle*¹ did not reach its exalted object, till about a year after it thus appeared, when I mentioned it to him, supposing that he knew of the re-publication. To my surprize, he had not yet heard of it. He requested me to go directly and get it for him, which I did. He looked at it and laughed, and seemed to be much diverted with the feeble efforts of his unknown adversary, who, I hope, is alive to read this account. 'Now (said he) here is somebody who thinks he has vexed me sadly; yet, if it had not been for you, you rogue, I should probably never have seen it.'

As Mr. Pope's note concerning Johnson, alluded to in a former page, refers both to his *London*, and his *Marmor Norfolciense*, I have deferred inserting it till now. I am indebted for it to Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who permitted me to copy it from the original in his possession. It was presented to his Lordship by Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom it was given by the son of Mr. Richardson the painter, the person to whom it is addressed. I have transcribed it

¹ 'Sic fatus senior, telumque imbelle sine ictu
Conjecit.'

'So spake the elder, and cast forth a toothless spear and vain.'
Morris, *Æneids*, ii. 544.

with minute exactness, that the peculiar mode of writing, and imperfect spelling of that celebrated poet, may be exhibited to the curious in literature. It justifies Swift's epithet of 'paper-sparing Pope', for it is written on a slip no larger than a common message-card, and was sent to Mr. Richardson, along with the *Imitation of Juvenal*.

'This is imitated by one Johnson who put in for a Publick-school in Shropshire², but was disappointed. He has an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes, so as to make him a sad Spectacle. Mr. P. from the Merit of this Work which was all the knowledge he had of him endeavour'd to serve him without his own application; & wrote to my L^d gore, but he did not succeed. Mr. Johnson published afterw^{ds} another Poem in Latin with Notes the whole very Humerous call'd the Norfolk Prophecy³.'

'P.'

Johnson had been told of this note; and Sir Joshua Reynolds informed him of the compliment which it contained,

1 'Get all your verses printed fair,
 Then let them well be dried;
 And Curll must have a special care
 To leave the margin wide.
 Lend these to paper-sparing Pope;
 And when he sits to write,
 No letter with an envelope
 Could give him more delight.'

Advice to the Grub-Street Verse-Writers.

(Swift's *Works*, 1803, xi. 32.) Nichols, in a note on this passage, says:—'The original copy of Pope's *Homer* is almost entirely written on the covers of letters, and sometimes between the lines of the letters themselves.' Johnson, in his *Life of Pope*, writes:—'Of Pope's domestic character frugality was a part eminently remarkable . . . This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the *Iliad*, by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 312.

² See note, p. 153. BOSWELL.

³ The *Marmor Norfolciense*, price one shilling, is advertised in the *Gent. Mag.* for 1739 (p. 220) among the books for April.

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but, from delicacy, avoided shewing him the paper itself. When Sir Joshua observed to Johnson that he seemed very desirous to see Pope's note, he answered, 'Who would not be proud to have such a man as Pope so solicitous in inquiring about him?'

The infirmity to which Mr. Pope alludes, appeared to me also, as I have elsewhere¹ observed, to be of the convulsive kind, and of the nature of that distemper called St. Vitus's dance; and in this opinion I am confirmed by the description which Sydenham gives of that disease. 'This disorder is a kind of convulsion. It manifests itself by halting or unsteadiness of one of the legs, which the patient draws after him like an idiot. If the hand of the same side be applied to the breast, or any other part of the body, he cannot keep it a moment in the same posture, but it will be drawn into a different one by a convulsion, notwithstanding all his efforts to the contrary.' Sir Joshua Reynolds, however, was of a different opinion, and favoured me with the following paper:

'Those motions or tricks of Dr. Johnson are improperly called convulsions². He could sit motionless, when he was told so to do,

¹ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 8. BOSWELL.

² According to Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'Every person who knew Dr. Johnson must have observed that the moment he was left out of the conversation, whether from his deafness or from whatever cause, but a few minutes without speaking or listening, his mind appeared to be preparing itself. He fell into a reverie accompanied with strange antic gestures; but this he never did when his mind was engaged by the conversation. These were therefore improperly called convulsions, which imply involuntary contortions; whereas, a word addressed to him, his attention was recovered. Sometimes, indeed, it would be near a minute before he would give an answer, looking as if he laboured to bring his mind to bear on the question.' (Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 456). 'I still, however, think,' wrote Boswell, 'that these gestures were involuntary; for surely had not that been the case, he would have restrained them in the public streets' (Boswell's *Hebrides*, under date of Aug. 11, 1773, note). Dr. T. Campbell, in his *Diary of a Visit to England*, p. 33, writing of Johnson on March 16, 1775, says:—'He has the aspect of an idiot, without the faintest ray of sense gleaming from any one feature—with the most awkward garb, and unpowdered grey
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as well as any other man; my opinion is that it proceeded from a habit which he had indulged himself in, of accompanying his thoughts with certain untoward actions, and those actions always appeared to me as if they were meant to reprobate some part of his past conduct. Whenever he was not engaged in conversation, such thoughts were sure to rush into his mind; and, for this reason, any company, any employment whatever, he preferred to being alone¹. The great business of his life (he said) was to escape

wig, on one side only of his head—he is for ever dancing the devil's jig, and sometimes he makes the most driveling effort to whistle some thought in his absent paroxysms.' Miss Burney thus describes him when she first saw him in 1778:—'Soon after we were seated this great man entered. I have so true a veneration for him that the very sight of him inspires me with delight and reverence, notwithstanding the cruel infirmities to which he is subject; for he has almost perpetual convulsive movements, either of his hands, lips, feet, or knees, and sometimes of all together.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 63. See *post*, under March 30, 1783, Boswell's note on Johnson's peculiarities.

¹ 'Solitude,' wrote Reynolds, 'to him was horror; nor would he ever trust himself alone but when employed in writing or reading. He has often begged me to go home with him to prevent his being alone in the coach. Any company was better than none; by which he connected himself with many mean persons whose presence he could command.' Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 455. Johnson writing to Mrs. Thrale, said:—'If the world be worth winning, let us enjoy it; if it is to be despised, let us despise it by conviction. But the world is not to be despised but as it is compared with something better. Company is in itself better than solitude, and pleasure better than indolence.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 242. In *The Idler*, No. 32, he wrote:—'Others are afraid to be alone, and amuse themselves by a perpetual succession of companions; but the difference is not great; in solitude we have our dreams to ourselves, and in company we agree to dream in concert. The end sought in both is forgetfulness of ourselves.' In *The Rambler*, No. 5, he wrote:—'It may be laid down as a position which will seldom deceive, that when a man cannot bear his own company, there is something wrong. He must fly from himself, either because he feels a tediousness in life from the equipoise of an empty mind . . . or he must be afraid of the intrusion of some displeasing ideas, and, perhaps, is struggling to escape from the remembrance of a loss, the fear of a calamity, or some other thought of greater horror.'

Cowper, whose temperament was in some respects not unlike Johnson's, wrote:—'A vacant hour is my abhorrence; because, when I am
from

from himself; this disposition he considered as the disease of his mind, which nothing cured but company.

‘One instance of his absence and particularity, as it is characteristic of the man, may be worth relating. When he and I took a journey together into the West, we visited the late Mr. Banks, of Dorsetshire; the conversation turning upon pictures, which Johnson could not well see, he retired to a corner of the room, stretching out his right leg as far as he could reach before him, then bringing up his left leg, and stretching his right further on. The old gentleman observing him, went up to him, and in a very courteous manner assured him, that though it was not a new house, the flooring was perfectly safe. The Doctor started from his reverie, like a person waked out of his sleep, but spoke not a word.’

While we are on this subject, my readers may not be displeased with another anecdote, communicated to me by the same friend, from the relation of Mr. Hogarth.

Johnson used to be a pretty frequent visitor at the house of Mr. Richardson, authour of *Clarissa*, and other novels of extensive reputation. Mr. Hogarth came one day to see Richardson, soon after the execution of Dr. Cameron, for having taken arms for the house of Stuart in 1745-6; and being a warm partisan of George the Second, he observed to Richardson¹, that certainly there must have been some very unfavourable circumstances lately discovered in this particular case, which had induced the King to approve of an execution for rebellion so long after the time when it was committed, as this had the appearance of putting a man to death in cold blood², and was very unlike his Majesty’s usual

not occupied, I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament.’ Southey’s *Cowper*, vi. 146.

¹ Richardson was of the same way of thinking as Hogarth. Writing of a speech made at the Oxford Commemoration of 1754 by the Jacobite Dr. King (see *post*, Feb. 1755), he said:—‘There cannot be a greater instance of the lenity of the government he abuses than his pestilent harangues so publicly made with impunity furnishes (*sic*) all his readers with.’—*Rich. Corresp.* ii. 197.

² Impartial posterity may, perhaps, be as little inclined as Dr. Johnson was to justify the uncommon rigour exercised in the case of Dr. Archibald Cameron. He was an amiable and truly honest man; and clemency.

clemency. While he was talking, he perceived a person standing at a window in the room, shaking his head, and rolling himself about in a strange ridiculous manner. He concluded that he was an idiot, whom his relations had put under the care of Mr. Richardson, as a very good man. To his great surprize, however, this figure stalked forwards to where he and Mr. Richardson were sitting, and all at once took up the argument, and burst out into an invective against George the Second, as one, who, upon all occasions, was unrelenting and barbarous¹; mentioning many instances,

his offence was owing to a generous, though mistaken principle of duty. Being obliged, after 1746, to give up his profession as a physician, and to go into foreign parts, he was honoured with the rank of Colonel, both in the French and Spanish service. He was a son of the ancient and respectable family of Cameron, of Lochiel; and his brother, who was the Chief of that brave clan, distinguished himself by moderation and humanity, while the Highland army marched victorious through Scotland. It is remarkable of this Chief, that though he had earnestly remonstrated against the attempt as hopeless, he was of too heroic a spirit not to venture his life and fortune in the cause, when personally asked by him whom he thought his prince. BOSWELL.

Sir Walter Scott states, in his Introduction to *Redgauntlet*, that the government of George II were in possession of sufficient evidence that Dr. Cameron had returned to the Highlands, *not*, as he alleged on his trial, for family affairs merely, but as the secret agent of the Pretender in a new scheme of rebellion: the ministers, however, preferred trying this indefatigable partisan on the ground of his undeniable share in the insurrection of 1745, rather than rescuing themselves and their master from the charge of harshness, at the expense of making it universally known, that a fresh rebellion had been in agitation so late as 1752. LOCKHART. He was executed on June 7, 1753. *Gent. Mag.* xxiii. 292. Lord Campbell (*Lives of the Chancellors*, v. 109) says:—‘I regard his execution as a wanton atrocity.’ Horace Walpole, however, inclined to the belief that Cameron was engaged in a new scheme of rebellion. Walpole’s *Memoirs of George II*, i. 333.

¹ Horace Walpole says that towards convicts under sentence of death ‘George II’s disposition in general was merciful, if the offence was not murder.’ He mentions, however, a dreadful exception, when the King sent to the gallows at Oxford a young man who had been ‘guilty of a most trifling forgery,’ though he had been recommended to mercy by the Judge, who ‘had assured him his pardon.’ Mercy particularly,

particularly, that when an officer of high rank had been acquitted by a Court Martial, George the Second had with his own hand, struck his name off the list. In short, he displayed such a power of eloquence, that Hogarth looked at him with astonishment, and actually imagined that this ideot had been at the moment inspired. Neither Hogarth nor Johnson were made known to each other at this interview¹.

1740²: ÆTAT. 31.]—IN 1740 he wrote for the *Gentleman's Magazine* the 'Preface'³, † 'Life of Sir Francis Drake,'* and the first parts of those of 'Admiral Blake'⁴,* and of 'Philip Baretier'⁵,* both which he finished the following year. He

was refused, merely because the Judge, Willes, 'was attached to the Prince of Wales.' It is very likely that this was one of Johnson's 'instances,' as it had happened about four years earlier, and as an account of the young man had been published by an Oxonian. Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, i. 175.

¹ It is strange that when Johnson had been sixteen years in London he should not be known to Hogarth by sight. 'Mr. Hogarth,' writes Mrs. Piozzi, 'was used to be very earnest that I should obtain the acquaintance, and if possible, the friendship of Dr. Johnson, "whose conversation was to the talk of other men, like Titian's painting compared to Hudson's," he said. . . . Of Dr. Johnson, when my father and he were talking together about him one day, "That man," says Hogarth, "is not contented with believing the Bible, but he fairly resolves, I think, to believe nothing *but* the Bible.'" Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 136.

² On October 29 of this year James Boswell was born.

³ In this preface is found the following lively passage:—'The Roman Gazetteers are defective in several material ornaments of style. They never end an article with the mystical hint, *this occasions great speculation*. They seem to have been ignorant of such engaging introductions as, *we hear it is strongly reported*; and of that ingenious, but thread-bare excuse for a downright lie, *it wants confirmation*.'

⁴ The *Lives* of Blake and Drake were certainly written with a political aim. The war with Spain was going on, and the Tory party was doing its utmost to rouse the country against the Spaniards. It was 'a time,' according to Johnson, 'when the nation was engaged in a war with an enemy, whose insults, ravages, and barbarities have long called for vengeance.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 293.

⁵ Barretier's childhood surpassed even that of J. S. Mill. At the age of nine he was master of five languages, Greek and Hebrew being two of them. 'In his twelfth year he applied more particularly to also

also wrote an 'Essay on Epitaphs',[†] and an 'Epitaph on Philips, a Musician,'* which was afterwards published with some other pieces of his, in Mrs. Williams's *Miscellanies*. This Epitaph is so exquisitely beautiful, that I remember even Lord Kames², strangely prejudiced as he was against Dr. Johnson, was compelled to allow it very high praise. It has been ascribed to Mr. Garrick, from its appearing at first with the signature G; but I have heard Mr. Garrick declare, that it was written by Dr. Johnson, and give the following account of the manner in which it was composed. Johnson and he were sitting together; when, amongst other things, Garrick repeated an Epitaph upon this Philips by a Dr. Wilkes, in these words:

'Exalted soul! whose harmony could please
The love-sick virgin, and the gouty ease;
Could jarring discord, like Amphion, move
To beauteous order and harmonious love;
Rest here in peace, till angels bid thee rise,
And meet thy blessed Saviour in the skies.'

Johnson shook his head at these common-place funereal lines, and said to Garrick, 'I think, Davy, I can make a better.' Then, stirring about his tea for a little while, in a state of meditation, he almost extempore produced the following verses:

'Philips, whose touch harmonious could remove
The pangs of guilty power or³ hapless love;
Rest here, distress'd by poverty no more,
Here find that calm thou gav'st so oft before;

the study of the fathers.' At the age of fourteen he published *Anti-Artemonius; sive initium evangelii S. Joannis adversus Artemonium vindicatum*. The same year the University of Halle offered him the degree of doctor in philosophy. 'His theses, or philosophical positions, which he printed, ran through several editions in a few weeks.' He was a deep student of mathematics, and astronomy was his favourite subject. His health broke down under his studies, and he died in 1740 in the twentieth year of his age. Johnson's *Works*, vi. 376.

¹ He wrote also in 1756 *A Dissertation on the Epitaphs written by Pope*.

² See *post*, Oct. 16, 1769.

³ In the original *and*. *Gent. Mag.* x. 464. The title of this poem
Sleep,

Sleep, undisturb'd, within this peaceful shrine,
Till angels wake thee with a note like thine!¹

At the same time that Mr. Garrick favoured me with this anecdote, he repeated a very pointed Epigram by Johnson, on George the Second and Colley Cibber, which has never yet appeared, and of which I know not the exact date². Dr. Johnson afterwards gave it to me himself³:

as there given is:—'An epitaph upon the celebrated Claudy Philips, Musician, who died very poor.'

¹ The epitaph of Phillips is in the porch of Wolverhampton Church. The prose part of it is curious:—

'Near this place lies
Charles Claudius Phillips,
Whose absolute contempt of riches
and inimitable performances upon the violin
made him the admiration of all that knew him.
He was born in Wales,
made the tour of Europe,
and, after the experience of both kinds of fortune,
Died in 1732.'

Mr. Garrick appears not to have recited the verses correctly, the original being as follows:—

'Exalted soul, *thy various sounds* could please
The love-sick virgin and the gouty ease;
Could jarring *crowds*, like old Amphion, move
To beauteous order and harmonious love;
Rest here in peace, till Angels bid thee rise,
And meet thy Saviour's *consort* in the skies.' BLAKEWAY.

Consort is defined in Johnson's *Dictionary* as a number of instruments playing together.

² I have no doubt that it was written in 1741; for the second line is clearly a parody of a line in the chorus of Cibber's *Birthday Ode* for that year. The chorus is as follows:

'While thou our Master of the Main
Revives Eliza's glorious reign,
The great Plantagenets look down,
And see *your* race adorn your crown.

Gent. Mag. xi. 549.

In the *Life of Barretier* Johnson has also this fling at George II:—'Princes are commonly the last by whom merit is distinguished.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 381.

³ See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 23 and Nov. 21, 1773.

'Augustus

'Augustus still survives in Maro's strain,
 And Spenser's verse prolongs Eliza's reign;
 Great George's acts let tuneful Cibber sing;
 For Nature form'd the Poet for the King.'

In 1741¹ he wrote for the *Gentleman's Magazine* 'the Preface,'* 'Conclusion of his lives of Drake and Baretier,'† 'A free translation of the Jestes of Hierocles², with an Introduction;† and, I think, the following pieces: 'Debate on the Proposal of Parliament to Cromwell, to assume the Title of King, abridged, modified, and digested³;'† 'Translation of Abbé Guyon's Dissertation on the Amazons;'† 'Translation of Fontenelle's Panegyrick on Dr. Morin.'† Two notes upon this appear to me undoubtedly his. He this year, and the

¹ Hester Lynch Salusbury, afterwards Mrs. Thrale, and later on Mrs. Piozzi, was born on Jan. 27, 1741.

² This piece is certainly not by Johnson. It contains more than one ungrammatical passage. It is impossible to believe that he wrote such a sentence as the following:—'Another having a cask of wine sealed up at the top, but his servant boring a hole at the bottom stole the greatest part of it away; sometime after, having called a friend to taste his wine, he found the vessel almost empty,' &c.

³ Mr. Carlyle, by the use of the term 'Imaginary Editors' (*Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, iii. 229), seems to imply that he does not hold with Boswell in assigning this piece to Johnson. I am inclined to think, nevertheless, that Boswell is right. If it is Johnson's it is doubly interesting as showing the method which he often followed in writing the Parliamentary Debates. When notes were given him, while for the most part he kept to the speaker's train of thoughts, he dealt with the language much as it pleased him. In the *Gent. Mag.* Cromwell speaks as if he were wearing a flowing wig and were addressing a Parliament of the days of George II. He is thus made to conclude Speech xi.:—'For my part, could I multiply my person or dilate my power, I should dedicate myself wholly to this great end, in the prosecution of which I shall implore the blessing of God upon your counsels and endeavours.' *Gent. Mag.* xi. 100. The following are the words which correspond to this in the original:—'If I could help you to many, and multiply myself into many, that would be to serve you in regard to settlement. . . . But I shall pray to God Almighty that He would direct you to do what is according to His will. And this is that poor account I am able to give of myself in this thing.' Carlyle's *Cromwell*, iii. 255.

two following, wrote the *Parliamentary Debates*. He told me himself, that he was the sole composer of them for those three years only. He was not, however, precisely exact in his statement, which he mentioned from hasty recollection; for it is sufficiently evident, that his composition of them began November 19, 1740, and ended February 23, 1742-3¹.

It appears from some of Cave's letters to Dr. Birch, that Cave had better assistance for that branch of his Magazine, than has been generally supposed; and that he was indefatigable in getting it made as perfect as he could.

Thus, 21st July, 1735. 'I trouble you with the inclosed, because you said you could easily correct what is here given for Lord C——ld's² speech. I beg you will do so as soon as you can for me, because the month is far advanced.'

And 15th July, 1737. 'As you remember the debates so far as to perceive the speeches already printed are not exact, I beg the favour that you will peruse the inclosed, and, in the best manner your memory will serve, correct the mistaken passages, or add anything that is omitted. I should be very glad to have something of the Duke of N——le's³ speech, which would be particularly of service.

'A gentleman has Lord Bathurst's speech to add something to.'

And July 3, 1744. 'You will see what stupid, low, abominable stuff is put⁴ upon your noble and learned friend's⁵ character, such as I should quite reject, and endeavour to do something better towards doing justice to the character. But as I cannot expect to attain my desires in that respect, it would be a great satisfaction, as well as an honour to our work to have the favour of the genuine speech. It is a method that several have been pleased to take, as I could show, but I think myself under a restraint. I shall say so far, that I have had some by a third hand, which I

¹ See Appendix A.

² Lord Chesterfield.

³ Duke of Newcastle.

⁴ I suppose in another compilation of the same kind. BOSWELL.

⁵ Doubtless, Lord Hardwick. BOSWELL.

understood

understood well enough to come from the first; others by penny-post¹, and others by the speakers themselves, who have been pleased to visit St. John's Gate, and show particular marks of their being pleased².

There is no reason, I believe, to doubt the veracity of Cave. It is, however, remarkable, that none of these letters are in the years during which Johnson alone furnished the Debates, and one of them is in the very year after he ceased from that labour. Johnson told me that as soon as he found that the speeches were thought genuine, he determined that he would write no more of them; for 'he would not be accessory to the propagation of falsehood.' And such was the tenderness of his conscience, that a short time before his death he expressed his regret for having been the authour of fictions, which had passed for realities³.

He nevertheless agreed with me in thinking, that the debates which he had framed were to be valued as orations upon questions of publick importance. They have accordingly been collected in volumes, properly arranged, and recommended to the notice of parliamentary speakers by a preface, written by no inferior hand⁴. I must, however, observe, that although there is in those debates a wonderful store of political information, and very powerful eloquence,

¹ The delivery of letters by the penny-post 'was originally confined to the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and the respective suburbs thereof.' In 1801 the postage was raised to two-pence. The term 'suburbs' must have had a very limited signification, for it was not till 1831 that the limits of this delivery were extended to all places within three miles of the General Post Office. *Ninth Report of the Commissioners of the Post Office*, 1837, p. 4.

² Birch's *MSS. in the British Museum*, 4302. BOSWELL.

³ See *post*, Dec. 1784, in Nichols's *Anecdotes*. If we may trust Hawkins, it is likely that Johnson's 'tenderness of conscience' cost Cave a good deal; for he writes that, while Johnson composed the *Debates*, the sale of the *Magazine* increased from ten to fifteen thousand copies a month. 'Cave manifested his good fortune by buying an old coach and a pair of older horses.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 123.

⁴ I am assured that the editor is Mr. George Chalmers, whose commercial works are well known and esteemed. BOSWELL.

I cannot

I cannot agree that they exhibit the manner of each particular speaker, as Sir John Hawkins seems to think. But, indeed, what opinion can we have of his judgement, and taste in publick speaking, who presumes to give, as the characteristics of two celebrated orators, ‘the deep-mouthed rancour of Pulteney¹, and the yelping pertinacity of Pitt².’

This year I find that his tragedy of *Irene* had been for some time ready for the stage, and that his necessities made him desirous of getting as much as he could for it, without delay; for there is the following letter from Mr. Cave to Dr. Birch, in the same volume of manuscripts in the British Museum, from which I copied those above quoted. They were most obligingly pointed out to me by Sir William Musgrave, one of the Curators of that noble repository.

‘Sept. 9. 1741.

‘I have put Mr. Johnson’s play into Mr. Gray’s³ hands, in order to sell it to him, if he is inclined to buy it; but I doubt whether he will or not. He would dispose of the copy, and whatever advantage may be made by acting it. Would your society⁴, or any gentleman, or body of men that you know, take such a bargain? He and I are very unfit to deal with theatrical persons. Fleetwood was to have acted it last season, but Johnson’s diffidence or⁵ prevented it.’

I have already mentioned that *Irene* was not brought into publick notice till Garrick was manager of Drury-lane theatre.

¹ The characteristic of Pulteney’s oratory is thus given in Hazlitt’s *Northcote’s Conversations* (p. 288):—‘Old Mr. Tolcher used to say of the famous Pulteney—“My Lord Bath always speaks in blank verse.”’

² Hawkins’s *Life of Johnson*, p. 100. BOSWELL.

³ A bookseller of London. BOSWELL.

⁴ Not the Royal Society; but the Society for the encouragement of learning, of which Dr. Birch was a leading member. Their object was to assist authors in printing expensive works. It existed from about 1735 to 1746, when having incurred a considerable debt, it was dissolved. BOSWELL.

⁵ There is no erasure here, but a mere blank; to fill up which may be an exercise for ingenious conjecture. BOSWELL.

1742: ÆTAT. 33.]—IN 1742¹ he wrote for the *Gentleman's Magazine* the 'Preface,'[†] the 'Parliamentary Debates,'^{**} 'Essay on the Account of the conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough,'^{**} then the popular topick of conversation. This 'Essay' is a short but masterly performance. We find him in No. 13 of his *Rambler*, censuring a profligate sentiment in that 'Account²;' and again insisting upon it strenuously in conversation³. 'An account of the Life of Peter Burman,'^{**} I believe chiefly taken from a foreign publication; as, indeed, he could not himself know much about Burman; 'Additions to his Life of Baretier,'^{**} 'The Life of Sydenham,'^{**} afterwards prefixed to Dr. Swan's edition of his works; 'Proposals for Printing Bibliotheca Harleiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford'.^{**} His account of that celebrated collection of books, in which he displays the importance to literature of what the French call a *catalogue raisonné*, when the subjects of it are extensive and various, and it is executed with ability, cannot fail to impress all his readers with admiration of his philological attainments. It was afterwards prefixed to the first volume of the Catalogue, in which the Latin accounts of books were written by him.

¹ Johnson, writing to Dr. Taylor on June 10, 1742, says:—'I propose to get *Charles of Sweden* ready for this winter, and shall therefore, as I imagine, be much engaged for some months with the dramatic writers into whom I have scarcely looked for many years. Keep *Irene* close, you may send it back at your leisure.' *Notes and Queries*, 6th S., v. 303. *Charles of Sweden* must have been a play which he projected.

² The profligate sentiment was, that 'to tell a secret to a friend is no breach of fidelity, because the number of persons trusted is not multiplied, a man and his friend being virtually the same.' *Rambler*, No. 13.

³ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 167. [Sept. 10, 1773.] BOSWELL.

⁴ This piece contains a passage in honour of some great critic. 'May the shade, at least, of one great English critick rest without disturbance; and may no man presume to insult his memory, who wants his learning, his reason, or his wit.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 182. Bentley had died on July 14 of this year, and there can be little question that Bentley is meant.

He was employed in this business by Mr. Thomas Osborne the bookseller, who purchased the library for 13,000*l.*, a sum which Mr. Oldys' says, in one of his manuscripts, was not more than the binding of the books had cost; yet, as Dr. Johnson assured me, the slowness of the sale was such, that there was not much gained by it. It has been confidently related, with many embellishments, that Johnson one day knocked Osborne down in his shop, with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. The simple truth I had from Johnson himself. 'Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him. But it was not in his shop: it was in my own chamber².'

A very diligent observer may trace him where we should not easily suppose him to be found. I have no doubt that he wrote the little abridgment entitled 'Foreign History,' in the *Magazine* for December. To prove it, I shall quote the Introduction. 'As this is that season of the year in which Nature may be said to command a suspension of hostilities, and which seems intended, by putting a short stop to violence and slaughter, to afford time for malice to relent, and animosity to subside; we can scarce expect any other accounts than of plans, negotiations and treaties, of proposals for peace, and preparations for war.' As also this passage: 'Let those who despise the capacity of the Swiss, tell us by what wonderful policy, or by what happy conciliation of interests, it is brought to pass, that in a body made up of

¹ See *post*, end of 1744.

² 'There is nothing to tell, dearest lady, but that he was insolent and I beat him, and that he was a blockhead and told of it, which I should never have done. . . . I have beat many a fellow, but the rest had the wit to hold their tongues.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 233. In the *Life of Pope* Johnson thus mentions Osborne:—'Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for the prize among the booksellers [*Dunciad*, ii. 167]. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. . . . The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dullness of the other.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 302.

different

different communities and different religions, there should be no civil commotions¹, though the people are so warlike, that to nominate and raise an army is the same.'

I am obliged to Mr. Astle² for his ready permission to copy the two following letters, of which the originals are in his possession. Their contents shew that they were written about this time, and that Johnson was now engaged in preparing an historical account of the British Parliament.

'TO MR. CAVE.

[No date.]

'SIR,

'I believe I am going to write a long letter, and have therefore taken a whole sheet of paper. The first thing to be written about is our historical design.

'You mentioned the proposal of printing in numbers, as an alteration in the scheme, but I believe you mistook, some way or other, my meaning; I had no other view than that you might rather print too many of five sheets, than of five and thirty.

'With regard to what I shall say on the manner of proceeding, I would have it understood as wholly indifferent to me, and my opinion only, not my resolution. *Emptoris sit eligere.*

'I think the insertion of the exact dates of the most important events in the margin, or of so many events as may enable the reader to regulate the order of facts with sufficient exactness, the proper medium between a journal, which has regard only to time, and a history which ranges facts according to their dependence on each other, and postpones or anticipates according to the convenience of narration. I think the work ought to partake of the spirit of history, which is contrary to minute exactness, and of the regularity of a journal, which is inconsistent with spirit. For this reason, I neither admit numbers or dates, nor reject them.

'I am of your opinion with regard to placing most of the resolutions &c., in the margin, and think we shall give the most complete account of Parliamentary proceedings that can be contrived. The naked papers, without an historical treatise interwoven, require some other book to make them understood. I will date the

¹ In the original *contentions*.

² 'Dec. 21, 1775. In the Paper Office there is a wight, called Thomas Astle, who lives like moths on old parchments.' Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 299.

succeeding

succeeding facts with some exactness, but I think in the margin. You told me on Saturday that I had received money on this work, and found set down 13*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, reckoning the half guinea of last Saturday. As you hinted to me that you had many calls for money, I would not press you too hard, and therefore shall desire only, as I send it in, two guineas for a sheet of copy; the rest you may pay me when it may be more convenient; and even by this sheet-payment I shall, for some time, be very expensive.

'The *Life of Savage*¹ I am ready to go upon; and in Great Primer, and Pica notes, I reckon on sending in half a sheet a day; but the money for that shall likewise lye by in your hands till it is done. With the debates, shall not I have business enough? if I had but good pens.

'Towards Mr. Savage's *Life* what more have you got? I would willingly have his trial, &c., and know whether his defence be at Bristol, and would have his collection of poems, on account of the Preface.—*The Plain Dealer*²,—all the magazines that have anything of his, or relating to him.

'I thought my letter would be long, but it is now ended; and I am, Sir,

'Yours, &c. SAM. JOHNSON.'

'The boy found me writing this almost in the dark, when I could not quite easily read yours.

'I have read the Italian—nothing in it is well.

'I had no notion of having any thing for the Inscription³. I hope you don't think I kept it to extort a price. I could think of nothing, till to day. If you could spare me another guinea for the history, I should take it very kindly, to night; but if you do not I shall not think it an injury.—I am almost well again.'

'TO MR. CAVE.

'SIR,

'You did not tell me your determination about the 'Soldier's

¹ Savage died on Aug. 1, 1743, so that this letter is misplaced.

² *The Plain Dealer* was published in 1724, and contained some account of Savage. BOSWELL.

³ In the *Gent. Mag.* for Sept. 1743 (p. 490) there is an epitaph on R—d S—c, Esq., which may perhaps be this inscription. 'His life was want,' this epitaph declares. It is certainly not the Runick Inscription in the number for March 1742, as Malone suggests; for the earliest possible date of this letter is seventeen months later.

Letter,

Letter¹, which I am confident was never printed. I think it will not do by itself, or in any other place, so well as the *Mag. Extraordinary*². If you will have it at all, I believe you do not think I set it high, and I will be glad if what you give, you will give quickly.

'You need not be in care about something to print, for I have got the State Trials, and shall extract Layer, Atterbury, and Macclesfield from them, and shall bring them to you in a fortnight; after which I will try to get the South Sea Report.'

[No date, nor signature.]

I would also ascribe to him an 'Essay on the Description of China, from the French of Du Halde³.'†

His writings in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1743, are, the 'Preface',† the 'Parliamentary Debates,'† 'Considerations on the Dispute between Crousaz⁵ and Warburton, on Pope's Essay on Man;† in which, while he defends Crousaz, he shews an admirable metaphysical acuteness and temperance in controversy⁶; 'Ad Lauram parituram Epigramma⁷;'*

¹ I have not discovered what this was. BOSWELL.

² The *Mag.-Extraordinary* is perhaps the Supplement to the December number of each year.

³ This essay contains one sentiment eminently Johnsonian. The writer had shown how patiently Confucius endured extreme indignance. He adds:—'This constancy cannot raise our admiration after his former conquest of himself; for how easily may he support pain who has been able to resist pleasure.' *Gent. Mag.* xii. 355.

⁴ In this Preface there is a complaint that has been often repeated—'All kinds of learning have given way to politicks.'

⁵ In the *Life of Pope* (Johnson's *Works*, viii. 287) Johnson says that Crousaz, 'however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist.'

⁶ It is not easy to believe that Boswell had read this essay, for there is nothing metaphysical in what Johnson wrote. Two-thirds of the paper are a translation from Crousaz. Boswell does not seem to have distinguished between Crousaz's writings and Johnson's. We have here a striking instance of the way in which Cave sometimes treated his readers. One-third of this essay is given in the number for March, the rest in the number for November.

⁷ *Angliacas inter pulcherrima Laura puellus,
Mox uteri pondus depositura grave,
Adsit, Laura, tibi facilis Lucina dolenti,
Nec tibi noceat prænituisse Dea.*

and,

and, 'A Latin Translation of Pope's Verses on his Grotto¹;'* and, as he could employ his pen with equal success upon a small matter as a great, I suppose him to be the authour of an advertisement for Osborne, concerning the great Harleian Catalogue².

But I should think myself much wanting, both to my illustrious friend and my readers, did I not introduce here, with more than ordinary respect, an exquisitely beautiful Ode, which has not been inserted in any of the collections of Johnson's poetry, written by him at a very early period, as Mr. Hector informs me, and inserted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of this year.

FRIENDSHIP, an ODE.*

'Friendship, peculiar boon of heav'n,
The noble mind's delight and pride,
To men and angels only giv'n,
To all the lower world deny'd.

While love, unknown among the blest,
Parent of thousand wild desires,
The savage and the human breast
Torments alike with raging fires;

Mr. Hector was present when this Epigram was made *impromptu*. The first line was proposed by Dr. James, and Johnson was called upon by the company to finish it, which he instantly did. BOSWELL. Macaulay (*Essays*, i. 364) criticises Mr. Croker's criticism of this epigram.

¹ The lines with which this poem is introduced seem to show that it cannot be Johnson's. He was not the man to allow that haste of performance was any plea for indulgence. They are as follows:— 'Though several translations of Mr. Pope's verses on his Grotto have already appeared, we hope that the following attempt, which, we are assured, was the casual amusement of half an hour during several solicitations to proceed, will neither be unacceptable to our readers, nor (these circumstances considered) dishonour the persons concerned by a hasty publication.' *Gent. Mag.* xiii. 550.

² See *Gent. Mag.* xiii. 560. I doubt whether this advertisement be from Johnson's hand. It is very unlikely that he should make the advertiser in one and the same paragraph when speaking of himself use *us* and *mine*. Boswell does not mention the Preface to vol. iii. of

With

With bright, but oft destructive, gleam,
 Alike o'er all his lightnings fly;
 Thy lambent glories only beam
 Around the fav'rites of the sky.

Thy gentle flows of guiltless joys
 On fools and villains ne'er descend;
 In vain for thee the tyrant sighs,
 And hugs a flatterer for a friend.

Directress of the brave and just,
 O guide us through life's darksome way!
 And let the tortures of mistrust
 On selfish bosoms only prey.

Nor shall thine ardours cease to glow,
 When souls to blissful climes remove;
 What rais'd our virtue here below,
 Shall aid our happiness above.'

Johnson had now an opportunity of obliging his school-fellow Dr. James, of whom he once observed, 'no man brings more mind to his profession'.¹ James published this year his *Medicinal Dictionary*, in three volumes folio. Johnson, as I understood from him, had written, or assisted in writing, the proposals for this work; and being very fond of the study of physick, in which James was his master, he furnished some of the articles². He, however, certainly wrote for it the Dedication to Dr. Mead,[†] which is conceived with great address, to conciliate the patronage of that very eminent man³.

the *Harleian Catalogue*. It is included in Johnson's *Works* (v. 198). Its author, be he who he may, in speaking of literature, says:—'I have idly hoped to revive a taste well-nigh extinguished.'

¹ Johnson did not speak equally well of Dr. James's morals. 'He will not,' he wrote, 'pay for three box tickets which he took. It is a strange fellow.' The tickets were no doubt for Miss Williams's benefit (Crocker's *Boswell*, 8vo. p. 101). See *ante*, p. 95, and *post*, March 28, 1776, end of 1780, note.

² See *post*, April 5, 1776.

³ 'TO DR. MEAD.

'SIR,

'THAT the *Medicinal Dictionary* is dedicated to you, is to be imputed only to your reputation for superior skill in those sciences

It

It has been circulated, I know not with what authenticity, that Johnson considered Dr. Birch as a dull writer, and said of him, 'Tom Birch is as brisk as a bee in conversation; but no sooner does he take a pen in his hand, than it becomes a torpedo to him, and benumbs all his faculties.' That the literature of this country is much indebted to Birch's activity and diligence must certainly be acknowledged. We have seen that Johnson honoured him with a Greek Epigram²; and his correspondence with him, during many years, proves that he had no mean opinion of him.

which I have endeavoured to explain and facilitate: and you are, therefore, to consider this address, if it be agreeable to you, as one of the rewards of merit; and if, otherwise, as one of the inconveniences of eminence.

'However you shall receive it, my design cannot be disappointed; because this publick appeal to your judgement will shew that I do not found my hopes of approbation upon the ignorance of my readers, and that I fear his censure least, whose knowledge is most extensive.

'I am, Sir,

'Your most obedient humble servant,

'R. JAMES.'

BOSWELL. See *post*, May 16, 1778, where Johnson said, 'Dr. Mead lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man.'

¹ 'Johnson was used to speak of him in this manner:—"Tom is a lively rogue; he remembers a great deal, and can tell many pleasant stories; but a pen is to Tom a torpedo, the touch of it benumbs his hand and his brain."' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 209. Goldsmith in his *Life of Nash* (Cunningham's *Goldsmith's Works*, iv. 54) says:—"Nash was not born a writer, for whatever humour he might have in conversation, he used to call a pen his torpedo; whenever he grasped it, it benumbed all his faculties.' It is very likely that Nash borrowed this saying from Johnson. In Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 24, 1773, we read: 'Dr. Birch being mentioned, Dr. Johnson said he had more anecdotes than any man. I said, Percy had a great many; that he flowed with them like one of the brooks here. JOHNSON. "If Percy is like one of the brooks here, Birch was like the River Thames. Birch excelled Percy in that as much as Percy excels Goldsmith."' Disraeli (*Curiosities of Literature*, iii. 425) describes Dr. Birch as 'one to whom British history stands more indebted than to any superior author. He has enriched the British Museum by thousands of the most authentic documents of genuine secret history.'

² *Ante*, p. 162.

‘TO DR. BIRCH.

‘Thursday, Sept. 29, 1743.

‘SIR,

‘I hope you will excuse me for troubling you on an occasion on which I know not whom else I can apply to; I am at a loss for the Lives and Characters of Earl Stanhope, the two Craggs, and the minister Sunderland; and beg that you will inform [me] where I may find them, and send any pamphlets, &c. relating to them to Mr. Cave, to be perused for a few days by, Sir,

‘Your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

His circumstances were at this time much embarrassed; yet his affection for his mother was so warm, and so liberal, that he took upon himself a debt of her's, which, though small in itself, was then considerable to him. This appears from the following letter which he wrote to Mr. Levett, of Lichfield, the original of which lies now before me.

‘TO MR. LEVETT; IN LICHFIELD.

‘December 1, 1743.

‘SIR,

‘I am extremely sorry that we have encroached so much upon your forbearance with respect to the interest, which a great perplexity of affairs hindered me from thinking of with that attention that I ought, and which I am not immediately able to remit to you, but will pay it (I think twelve pounds,) in two months. I look upon this, and on the future interest of that mortgage, as my own debt; and beg that you will be pleased to give me directions how to pay it, and not mention it to my dear mother. If it be necessary to pay this in less time, I believe I can do it; but I take two months for certainty, and beg an answer whether you can allow me so much time. I think myself very much obliged to your forbearance, and shall esteem it a great happiness to be able to serve you. I have great opportunities of dispersing anything that you may think proper to make publick¹. I will give a note for the

¹ In 1761 Mr. John Levett was returned for Lichfield, but on petition was declared to be not duly elected (*Parl. Hist.* xv. 1088). Perhaps he was already aiming at public life.

money,

money, payable at the time mentioned, to any one here that you shall appoint. I am, Sir,

‘Your most obedient,
‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘At Mr. Osborne’s, bookseller, in Gray’s Inn.’

1744: ÆTAT. 35.]—IT does not appear that he wrote any thing in 1744 for the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, but the Preface.† His *Life of Baretier* was now re-published in a pamphlet by itself. But he produced one work this year, fully sufficient to maintain the high reputation which he had acquired. This was *The Life of Richard Savage*;* a man, of whom it is difficult to speak impartially, without wondering that he was for some time the intimate companion of Johnson¹; for his character was marked by profligacy, insolence, and ingratitude²: yet, as he undoubtedly had a warm and vigorous,

¹ One explanation may be found of Johnson’s intimacy with Savage and with other men of loose character. ‘He was,’ writes Hawkins, ‘one of the most quick-sighted men I ever knew in discovering the good and amiable qualities of others’ (Hawkins’s *Johnson*, p. 50). ‘He was,’ says Boswell (*post*, April 13, 1778), ‘willing to take men as they are, imperfect, and with a mixture of good and bad qualities.’ How intimate the two men were is shown by the following passage in Johnson’s *Life of Savage*:—‘Savage left London in July, 1739, having taken leave with great tenderness of his friends, and parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes.’ Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 173.

² As a specimen of his temper, I insert the following letter from him to a noble Lord, to whom he was under great obligations, but who, on account of his bad conduct, was obliged to discard him. The original was in the hands of the late Francis Cockayne Cust, Esq., one of His Majesty’s Counsel learned in the law:

‘*Right Honourable* BRUTE, and BOOBY,

‘I FIND you want (as Mr. — is pleased to hint,) to swear away my life, that is, the life of your creditor, because he asks you for a debt.—The publick shall soon be acquainted with this, to judge whether you are not fitter to be an Irish Evidence, than to be an Irish Peer.—I defy and despise you.

‘I am,

‘Your determined adversary,

‘R. S.’

though

though unregulated mind, had seen life in all its varieties, and been much in the company of the statesmen and wits of his time¹, he could communicate to Johnson an abundant supply of such materials as his philosophical curiosity most eagerly desired; and as Savage's misfortunes and misconduct had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness as a writer for bread², his visits to St. John's Gate naturally brought Johnson and him together³.

BOSWELL. The noble Lord was no doubt Lord Tyrconnel. See Johnson's *Works*, viii. 140. Mr. Cust is mentioned *post*, p. 170.

¹ 'Savage took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestic behaviour with that acuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestic engagements.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 135.

² 'Thus he spent his time in mean expedients and tormenting suspense, living for the greatest part in the fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and consequently skulking in obscure parts of the town, of which he was no stranger to the remotest corners.' *Ib.* p. 165.

³ Sir John Hawkins gives the world to understand, that Johnson, 'being an admirer of genteel manners, was captivated by the address and demeanour of Savage, who, as to his exterior, was, to a remarkable degree, accomplished.' Hawkins's *Life*, p. 52. But Sir John's notions of gentility must appear somewhat ludicrous, from his stating the following circumstance as presumptive evidence that Savage was a good swordsman: 'That he understood the exercise of a gentleman's weapon, may be inferred from the use made of it in that rash encounter which is related in his life.' The dexterity here alluded to was, that Savage, in a nocturnal fit of drunkenness, stabbed a man at a coffee-house, and killed him; for which he was tried at the Old-Bailey, and found guilty of murder.

Johnson, indeed, describes him as having 'a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien; but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners.' [Johnson's *Works*, viii. 187.] How highly Johnson admired him for that knowledge which he himself so much cultivated, and what kindness he entertained for him, appears from the following lines in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April 1738, which I am assured were written by Johnson:

It

It is melancholy to reflect, that Johnson and Savage were sometimes in such extreme indigence¹, that they could not pay for a lodging; so that they have wandered together whole nights in the streets². Yet in these almost incredible

'Ad RICARDUM SAVAGE.

'*Humani studium generis cui pectore fervet
O colat humanum te foveatque genus.*'

BOSWELL. The epigram is inscribed Ad Ricardum Savage, Arm. Humani Generis Amatorem. *Gent. Mag.* viii. 210.

¹ The following striking proof of Johnson's extreme indigence, when he published the *Life of Savage*, was communicated to the author, by Mr. Richard Stow, of Apsley, in Bedfordshire, from the information of Mr. Walter Harte, author of the *Life of Gustavus Adolphus*:

'Soon after Savage's *Life* was published, Mr. Harte dined with Edward Cave, and occasionally praised it. Soon after, meeting him, Cave said, "You made a man very happy t'other day."—"How could that be," says Harte; "nobody was there but ourselves." Cave answered, by reminding him that a plate of victuals was sent behind a screen, which was to Johnson, dressed so shabbily, that he did not choose to appear; but on hearing the conversation, was highly delighted with the encomiums on his book.' MALONE. 'He desired much to be alone, yet he always loved good talk, and often would get behind the screen to hear it.' Great-Heart's account of Fearing, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Part II. Harte was tutor to Lord Chesterfield's son. See *post*, 1770, in Dr. Maxwell's *Collectanea*, and March 30, 1781.

² 'Johnson has told me that whole nights have been spent by him and Savage in a perambulation round the squares of Westminster, St. James's in particular, when all the money they could both raise was less than sufficient to purchase for them the shelter and sordid comforts of a night's cellar.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 53. Where was Mrs. Johnson living at this time? This perhaps was the time of which Johnson wrote, when, after telling of a silver cup which his mother had bought him, and marked SAM. I., he says:—"The cup was one of the last pieces of plate which dear Tetty sold in our distress." *Account of Johnson's Early Life*, p. 18. Yet it is not easy to understand how, if there was a lodging for her, there was not one for him. She might have been living with friends. We have a statement by Hawkins (p. 89) that there was 'a temporary separation of Johnson from his wife.' He adds that, 'while he was in a lodging in Fleet Street, she was harboured by a friend near the Tower.' This separation, he insinuates, rose by an estrangement caused by Johnson's 'indifference in the discharge of the domestic virtues.' It is far more likely that it rose from destitution.

scenes

scenes of distress, we may suppose that Savage mentioned many of the anecdotes with which Johnson afterwards enriched the life of his unhappy companion, and those of other Poets.

He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that one night in particular, when Savage and he walked round St. James's-square for want of a lodging, they were not at all depressed by their situation; but in high spirits and brimful of patriotism, traversed the square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and 'resolved they would *stand by their country*'.

I am afraid, however, that by associating with Savage, who was habituated to the dissipation and licentiousness of the town, Johnson, though his good principles remained steady, did not entirely preserve that conduct, for which, in days of greater simplicity, he was remarked by his friend Mr. Hector; but was imperceptibly led into some indulgencies which occasioned much distress to his virtuous mind².

That Johnson was anxious that an authentick and favourable account of his extraordinary friend should first get

Shenstone, in a letter written in 1743, gives a curious account of the streets of London through which Johnson wandered. He says:— 'London is really dangerous at this time; the pickpockets, formerly content with mere filching, make no scruple to knock people down with bludgeons in Fleet Street and the Strand, and that at no later hour than eight o'clock at night; but in the Piazzas, Covent Garden, they come in large bodies, armed with *couteaus*, and attack whole parties, so that the danger of coming out of the play-houses is of some weight in the opposite scale, when I am disposed to go to them oftener than I ought.' Shenstone's *Works* (3rd edit.), iii. 73.

¹ 'Savage lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, . . . and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expenses of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glasshouse. In this manner were passed those days and those nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated speculations, useful studies, or pleasing conversation.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 159.

² See *ante*, p. 109.

possession of the publick attention, is evident from a letter which he wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August of the year preceding its publication.

‘MR. URBAN,

‘As your collections show how often you have owed the ornaments of your poetical pages to the correspondence of the unfortunate and ingenious Mr. Savage, I doubt not but you have so much regard to his memory as to encourage any design that may have a tendency to the preservation of it from insults or calumnies; and therefore, with some degree of assurance, intreat you to inform the publick, that his life will speedily be published by a person who was favoured with his confidence, and received from himself an account of most of the transactions which he proposes to mention, to the time of his retirement to Swansea in Wales.

‘From that period, to his death in the prison of Bristol, the account will be continued from materials still less liable to objection; his own letters, and those of his friends, some of which will be inserted in the work, and abstracts of others subjoined in the margin.

‘It may be reasonably imagined, that others may have the same design; but as it is not credible that they can obtain the same materials, it must be expected they will supply from invention the want of intelligence; and that under the title of “The Life of Savage,” they will publish only a novel, filled with romantick adventures, and imaginary amours. You may therefore, perhaps, gratify the lovers of truth and wit, by giving me leave to inform them in your Magazine, that my account will be published in 8vo. by Mr. Roberts, in Warwick-lane!’

[No signature.]

In February 1744, it accordingly came forth from the shop

¹ Cave was the purchaser of the copyright, and the following is a copy of Johnson's receipt for the money:—‘The 14th day of December, received of Mr. Ed. Cave the sum of fifteen guineas, in full, for compiling and writing *The Life of Richard Savage, Esq.*, deceased; and in full for all materials thereto applied, and not found by the said Edward Cave. I say, received by me, SAM. JOHNSON. Dec. 14, 1743.’ WRIGHT. The title-page is as follows:—‘An account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage, son of the Earl Rivers. London. Printed for J. Roberts, in Warwick-Lane. MDCCLXIV.’ It reached a second edition in 1748, a third in 1767, and a fourth in 1769. A French translation was published in 1771.

of

of Roberts, between whom and Johnson I have not traced any connection, except the casual one of this publication¹. In Johnson's *Life of Savage*, although it must be allowed that its moral is the reverse of—'Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo²,' a very useful lesson is inculcated, to guard men of warm passions from a too free indulgence of them; and the various incidents are related in so clear and animated a manner, and illuminated throughout with so much philosophy, that it is one of the most interesting narratives in the English language. Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, that upon his return from Italy³ he met with it in Devonshire, knowing nothing of its authour, and began to read it while he was standing with his arm leaning against a chimney-piece. It seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed. The rapidity with which this work was composed, is a wonderful circumstance. Johnson has been heard to say, 'I wrote forty-eight of the printed octavo pages of the *Life of Savage* at a sitting; but then I sat up all night⁴.'

He exhibits the genius of Savage to the best advantage in the specimens of his poetry which he has selected, some of which are of uncommon merit. We, indeed, occasionally find such vigour and such point, as might make us suppose that the generous aid of Johnson had been imparted to his friend. Mr. Thomas Warton made this remark to me; and, in support of it, quoted from the poem entitled *The Bastard*, a line, in which the fancied superiority of one 'stamped in Nature's mint with extasy⁵,' is contrasted with a regular lawful descendant of some great and ancient family:

¹ Roberts published in 1745 Johnson's *Observations on Macbeth*. See *Gent. Mag.* xv. 112, 224.

² Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 317.

³ In the autumn of 1752. Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 52.

⁴ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd ed. p. 35 [p. 55. Aug. 19, 1773]. BOSWELL.

⁵ 'mint of ecstasy.' Savage's *Works* (1777), ii. 91.

‘No tenth transmitter of a foolish face’¹.

But the fact is, that this poem was published some years before Johnson and Savage were acquainted².

¹ ‘He lives to build, not boast a generous race :
No tenth transmitter of a foolish face.’

Savage's Works (1777), ii. 91.

² ‘*The Bastard*: A poem, inscribed with all due reverence to Mrs. Bret, once Countess of Macclesfield. By Richard Savage, son of the late Earl Rivers. London, printed for T. Worrall, 1728.’ Fol. first edition. P. CUNNINGHAM. Between Savage’s character, as drawn by Johnson, and Johnson himself there are many points of likeness. Each ‘always preserved a steady confidence in his own capacity,’ and of each it might be said:—‘Whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of suffering well cannot be denied him.’ Each ‘excelled in the arts of conversation and therefore willingly practised them.’ In Savage’s refusal to enter a house till some clothes had been taken away that had been left for him ‘with some neglect of ceremonies,’ we have the counterpart of Johnson’s throwing away the new pair of shoes that had been set at his door. Of Johnson the following lines are as true as of Savage:—‘His distresses, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his lowest state he wanted not spirit to assert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repress that insolence which the superiority of fortune incited; . . . he never admitted any gross familiarities, or submitted to be treated otherwise than as an equal.’ Of both men it might be said that ‘it was in no time of his life any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate.’ Each ‘would prolong his conversation till midnight, without considering that business might require his friend’s application in the morning;’ and each could plead the same excuse that, ‘when he left his company, he was abandoned to gloomy reflections.’ Each had the same ‘accurate judgment,’ the same ‘quick apprehension,’ the same ‘tenacious memory.’ In reading such lines as the following who does not think, not of the man whose biography was written, but of the biographer himself?—‘He had the peculiar felicity that his attention never deserted him; he was present to every object, and regardful of the most trifling occurrences . . . To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the small time which he spent in visible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadiness of attention as others apply to a lecture . . . His judgment was eminently exact both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment.’ Of Johnson’s *London*, as of Savage’s

It

It is remarkable, that in this biographical disquisition there appears a very strong symptom of Johnson's prejudice against players¹; a prejudice which may be attributed to the following causes: first, the imperfection of his organs, which were so defective that he was not susceptible of the fine impressions which theatrical excellence produces upon the generality of mankind; secondly, the cold rejection of his tragedy; and, lastly, the brilliant success of Garrick, who had been his pupil, who had come to London at the same time with him, not in a much more prosperous state than himself, and whose talents he undoubtedly rated low, compared with his own. His being outstripped by his pupil in the race of immediate fame, as well as of fortune, probably made him feel some indignation, as thinking that whatever might be Garrick's merits in his art, the reward was too great when compared with what the most successful efforts of literary labour could attain. At all periods of his life Johnson used to talk contemptuously of players²; but in this work he speaks of them with peculiar acrimony; for which, perhaps, there was formerly too much reason from the licentious and dissolute manners of those engaged in that profession³. It is but

The Wanderer, it might equally well be said:—'Nor can it without some degree of indignation and concern be told that he sold the copy for ten guineas.'

¹ 'Savage was now again abandoned to fortune without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered for his virtues, which are not often to be found in the world, and perhaps less often in his profession than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid is a very high degree of merit in any case, but those qualities deserve still greater praise when they are found in that condition which makes almost every other man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 107.

² In his old age he wrote as he had written in the vigour of his manhood:—'To the censure of Collier . . . he [Dryden] makes little reply; being at the age of sixty-eight attentive to better things than the claps of a play-house.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 295. See *post*, April 29, 1773, and Sept. 21, 1777.

³ Johnson, writing of the latter half of the seventeenth century, says:—'The playhouse was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by

justice to add, that in our own time such a change has taken place, that there is no longer room for such an unfavourable distinction¹.

His schoolfellow and friend, Dr. Taylor, told me a pleasant anecdote of Johnson's triumphing over his pupil David Garrick. When that great actor had played some little time at Goodman's Fields, Johnson and Taylor went to see him perform, and afterwards passed the evening at a tavern with him and old Giffard². Johnson, who was ever depreciating stage-players, after censuring some mistakes in emphasis which Garrick had committed in the course of that night's acting, said, 'the players, Sir, have got a kind of rant, with which they run on, without any regard either to accent or emphasis³.' Both Garrick and Giffard were offended at this sarcasm, and endeavoured to refute it; upon which Johnson rejoined, 'Well now, I'll give you something to speak, with which you

those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 270. The following lines in Churchill's *Apology* (*Poems*, i. 65), published in 1761, shew how strong, even at that time, was the feeling against strolling players:—

'The strolling tribe, a despicable race,
Like wand'ring Arabs shift from place to place.
Vagrants by law, to Justice open laid,
They tremble, of the beadle's lash afraid,
And fawning cringe, for wretched means of life,
To Madam May'ress, or his Worship's Wife.'

¹ Johnson himself recognises the change in the public estimation:—'In Dryden's time,' he writes, 'the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained.' *Works*, vii. 270.

² Giffard was the manager of the theatre in Goodman's Fields, where Garrick, on Oct. 19, 1741, made his first appearance before a London audience. Murphy's *Garrick*, pp. 13, 16.

³ 'Colonel Pennington said, Garrick sometimes failed in emphasis; as, for instance, in Hamlet,

"I will speak *daggers* to her; but use *none*;"

instead of

"I will *speak* daggers to her; but *use* none."

Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 28, 1773.

are

are little acquainted, and then we shall see how just my observation is. That shall be the criterion. Let me hear you repeat the ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Both tried at it, said Dr. Taylor, and both mistook the emphasis, which should be upon *not* and *false witness*¹. Johnson put them right, and enjoyed his victory with great glee.

His *Life of Savage* was no sooner published, than the following liberal praise was given to it, in *The Champion*, a periodical paper: 'This pamphlet is, without flattery to its authour, as just and well written a piece as of its kind I ever saw; so that at the same time that it highly deserves, it certainly stands very little in need of this recommendation. As to the history of the unfortunate person, whose memoirs compose this work, it is certainly penned with equal accuracy and spirit, of which I am so much the better judge, as I know many of the facts mentioned to be strictly true, and fairly related. Besides, it is not only the story of Mr. Savage, but innumerable incidents relating to other persons, and other affairs, which renders this a very amusing, and, withal, a very instructive and valuable performance. The authour's observations are short, significant, and just, as his narrative is remarkably smooth, and well disposed. His reflections open to all the recesses of the human heart; and, in a word, a more just or pleasant, a more engaging or a more improving treatise, on all the excellencies and defects of human nature, is scarce to be found in our own, or, perhaps, any other language².'

¹ I suspect Dr. Taylor was inaccurate in this statement. The emphasis should be equally upon *shalt* and *not*, as both concur to form the negative injunction; and *false witness*, like the other acts prohibited in the Decalogue, should not be marked by any peculiar emphasis, but only be distinctly enunciated. BOSWELL.

² This character of the *Life of Savage* was not written by Fielding as has been supposed, but most probably by Ralph, who, as appears from the minutes of the partners of *The Champion*, in the possession of Mr. Reed of Staple Inn, succeeded Fielding in his share of the paper, before the date of that eulogium. BOSWELL. Ralph is men-
Johnson's

Johnson's partiality for Savage made him entertain no doubt of his story, however extraordinary and improbable. It never occurred to him to question his being the son of the Countess of Macclesfield, of whose unrelenting barbarity he so loudly complained, and the particulars of which are related in so strong and affecting a manner in Johnson's life of him. Johnson was certainly well warranted in publishing his narrative, however offensive it might be to the lady and her relations, because her alledged unnatural and cruel conduct to her son, and shameful avowal of guilt, were stated in a *Life of Savage* now lying before me, which came out so early as 1727, and no attempt had been made to confute it, or to punish the authour or printer as a libeller: but for the honour of human nature, we should be glad to find the shocking tale not true; and, from a respectable gentleman¹ connected with the lady's family, I have received such information and remarks, as joined to my own inquiries, will, I think, render it at least somewhat doubtful, especially when we consider that it must have originated from the person himself who went by the name of Richard Savage.

If the maxim *falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus*, were to be received without qualification, the credit of Savage's narrative, as conveyed to us, would be annihilated; for it contains some assertions which, beyond a question, are not true².

1. In order to induce a belief that Earl Rivers, on account of a criminal connection with whom, Lady Macclesfield is said to have been divorced from her husband, by Act of

tioned in *The Dunciad*, iii. 165. A curious account of him is given in Benjamin Franklin's *Memoirs*, i. 54-87, and 245.

¹ The late Francis Cockayne Cust, Esq., one of his Majesty's Counsel. BOSWELL.

² 'Savage's veracity was questioned, but with little reason; his accounts, though not indeed always the same, were generally consistent. When he loved any man, he suppressed all his faults: and, when he had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues: but his characters were generally true so far as he proceeded; though it cannot be denied that his partiality might have sometimes the effect of falsehood.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 190.

Parliament,

Parliament¹, had a peculiar anxiety about the child which she bore to him, it is alledged, that his Lordship gave him his own name, and had it duly recorded in the register of St. Andrew's, Holborn². I have carefully inspected that register, but no such entry is to be found³.

2. It is stated, that 'Lady Macclesfield having lived for some

¹ 1697. BOSWELL.

² Johnson's *Works*, viii. 98.

³ The story on which Mr. Cust so much relies, that Savage was a supposititious child, not the son of Lord Rivers and Lady Macclesfield, but the offspring of a shoemaker, introduced in consequence of her real son's death, was, without doubt, grounded on the circumstance of Lady Macclesfield having, in 1696, previously to the birth of Savage, had a daughter by the Earl Rivers, who died in her infancy; a fact which was proved in the course of the proceedings on Lord Macclesfield's Bill of Divorce. Most fictions of this kind have some admixture of truth in them. MALONE. From *The Earl of Macclesfield's Case*, it appears that 'Anne, Countess of Macclesfield, under the name of Madam Smith, in Fox Court, near Brook Street, Holborn, was delivered of a male child on the 16th of January, 1696-7, who was baptized on the Monday following, the 18th, and registered by the name of Richard, the son of John Smith, by Mr. Burbridge; and, from the privacy, was supposed by Mr. Burbridge to be "a by-blow or bastard."' It also appears, that during her delivery, the lady wore a mask; and that Mary Pegler, on the next day after the baptism, took a male child, whose mother was called Madam Smith, from the house of Mrs. Pheasant, in Fox Court [running from Brook Street in Gray's Inn Lane], who went by the name of Mrs. Lee.

Conformable to this statement is the entry in the register of St. Andrew's, Holborn, which is as follows, and which unquestionably records the baptism of Richard Savage, to whom Lord Rivers gave his own Christian name, prefixed to the assumed surname of his mother: — 'Jan. 1696-7. Richard, son of John Smith and Mary, in Fox Court, in Gray's Inn Lane, baptized the 18th.' BINDLEY. According to Johnson's account Savage did not learn who his parents were till the death of his nurse, who had always treated him as her son. Among her papers he found some letters written by Lady Macclesfield's mother proving his origin. Johnson's *Works*, viii. 102. Why these letters were not laid before the public is not stated. Johnson was one of the least credulous of men, and he was convinced by Savage's story. Horace Walpole, too, does not seem to have doubted it. Walpole's *Letters*, i. cv.

time

time upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a publick confession of adultery the most obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty¹; and Johnson, assuming this to be true, stigmatises her with indignation, as ‘the wretch who had, without scruple, proclaimed herself an adulteress².’ But I have perused the Journals of both houses of Parliament at the period of her divorce, and there find it authentically ascertained, that so far from voluntarily submitting to the ignominious charge of adultery, she made a strenuous defence by her Counsel; the bill having been first moved 15th January, 1697, in the House of Lords, and proceeded on, (with various applications for time to bring up witnesses at a distance, &c.) at intervals, till the 3d of March, when it passed. It was brought to the Commons, by a message from the Lords, the 5th of March, proceeded on the 7th, 10th, 11th, 14th, and 15th, on which day, after a full examination of witnesses on both sides, and hearing of Counsel, it was reported without amendments, passed, and carried to the Lords.

That Lady Macclesfield was convicted of the crime of which she was accused, cannot be denied; but the question now is, whether the person calling himself Richard Savage was her son.

It has been said³, that when Earl Rivers was dying, and anxious to provide for all his natural children, he was informed by Lady Macclesfield that her son by him was dead. Whether, then, shall we believe that this was a malignant lie, invented by a mother to prevent her own child from receiving the bounty of his father, which was accordingly the consequence, if the person whose life Johnson wrote, was her son; or shall we not rather believe that the person who then assumed the name of Richard Savage was an impostor, being in reality the son of the shoemaker, under whose wife’s care⁴

¹ Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 97.

² *Ib.* p. 142.

³ *Ib.* p. 101.

⁴ According to Johnson’s account (Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 102), the shoemaker under whom Savage was placed on trial as an apprentice was not the husband of his nurse.

Lady Macclesfield's child was placed; that after the death of the real Richard Savage, he attempted to personate him; and that the fraud being known to Lady Macclesfield, he was therefore repulsed by her with just resentment?

There is a strong circumstance in support of the last supposition, though it has been mentioned as an aggravation of Lady Macclesfield's unnatural conduct, and that is, her having prevented him from obtaining the benefit of a legacy left to him by Mrs. Lloyd his god-mother. For if there was such a legacy left, his not being able to obtain payment of it, must be imputed to his consciousness that he was not the real person. The just inference should be, that by the death of Lady Macclesfield's child before its god-mother, the legacy became lapsed, and therefore that Johnson's Richard Savage was an impostor. If he had a title to the legacy, he could not have found any difficulty in recovering it; for had the executors resisted his claim, the whole costs, as well as the legacy, must have been paid by them, if he had been the child to whom it was given¹.

The talents of Savage, and the mingled fire, rudeness, pride, meanness, and ferocity of his character², concur in making it credible that he was fit to plan and carry on an ambitious and daring scheme of imposture, similar instances of which have not been wanting in higher spheres, in the history of different countries, and have had a considerable degree of success.

¹ He was in his tenth year when she died. 'He had none to prosecute his claim, to shelter him from oppression, or call in law to the assistance of justice.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. p. 99.

² Johnson's companion appears to have persuaded that lofty-minded man, that he resembled him in having a noble pride; for Johnson, after painting in strong colours the quarrel between Lord Tyrconnel and Savage, asserts that 'the spirit of Mr. Savage, indeed, never suffered him to solicit a reconciliation: he returned reproach for reproach, and insult for insult.' [*Ib.* p. 141.] But the respectable gentleman to whom I have alluded, has in his possession a letter from Savage, after Lord Tyrconnel had discarded him, addressed to the Reverend Mr. Gilbert, his Lordship's Chaplain, in which he requests him, in the humblest manner, to represent his case to the Viscount. BOSWELL.

Yet, on the other hand, to the companion of Johnson, (who through whatever medium he was conveyed into this world,—be it ever so doubtful ‘To whom related, or by whom begot’,) was, unquestionably, a man of no common endowments,) we must allow the weight of general repute as to his *Status* or parentage, though illicit; and supposing him to be an impostor, it seems strange that Lord Tyrconnel, the nephew of Lady Macclesfield, should patronise him, and even admit him as a guest in his family². Lastly, it must ever appear very suspicious, that three different accounts of the Life of Richard Savage, one published in *The Plain Dealer*, in 1724, another in 1727, and another by the powerful pen of Johnson, in 1744, and all of them while Lady Macclesfield was alive, should, notwithstanding the severe attacks upon her³, have been suffered to pass without any publick and effectual contradiction.

‘How loved, how honoured once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot.’

POPE'S *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*.

* Trusting to Savage's information, Johnson represents this unhappy man's being received as a companion by Lord Tyrconnel, and pensioned by his Lordship, as if posteriour to Savage's conviction and pardon. But I am assured, that Savage had received the voluntary bounty of Lord Tyrconnel, and had been dismissed by him, long before the murder was committed, and that his Lordship was very instrumental in procuring Savage's pardon, by his intercession with the Queen, through Lady Hertford. If, therefore, he had been desirous of preventing the publication by Savage, he would have left him to his fate. Indeed I must observe, that although Johnson mentions that Lord Tyrconnel's patronage of Savage was ‘upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother,’ [Johnson's *Works*, viii. 124], the great biographer has forgotten that he himself has mentioned, that Savage's story had been told several years before in *The Plain Dealer*; from which he quotes this strong saying of the generous Sir Richard Steele, that ‘the inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father.’ [*Ib.* p. 104.] At the same time it must be acknowledged, that Lady Macclesfield and her relations might still wish that her story should not be brought into more conspicuous notice by the satirical pen of Savage. BOSWELL.

³ According to Johnson, she was at Bath when Savage's poem of
I have

I have thus endeavoured to sum up the evidence upon the case, as fairly as I can; and the result seems to be, that the world must vibrate in a state of uncertainty as to what was the truth.

This digression, I trust, will not be censured, as it relates to a matter exceedingly curious, and very intimately connected with Johnson, both as a man and an authour¹.

The Bastard was published. 'She could not,' he wrote, 'enter the assembly-rooms or cross the walks without being saluted with some lines from *The Bastard*. This was perhaps the first time that she ever discovered a sense of shame, and on this occasion the power of wit was very conspicuous; the wretch who had without scruple proclaimed herself an adulteress, and who had first endeavoured to starve her son, then to transport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear the representation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though she felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the utmost haste to shelter herself among the crowds of London.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 141.

¹ Miss Mason, after having forfeited the title of Lady Macclesfield by divorce, was married to Colonel Brett, and, it is said, was well known in all the polite circles. Colley Cibber, I am informed, had so high an opinion of her taste and judgement as to genteel life, and manners, that he submitted every scene of his *Careless Husband* to Mrs. Brett's revision and correction. Colonel Brett was reported to be too free in his gallantry with his Lady's maid. Mrs. Brett came into a room one day in her own house, and found the Colonel and her maid both fast asleep in two chairs. She tied a white handkerchief round her husband's neck, which was a sufficient proof that she had discovered his intrigue; but she never at any time took notice of it to him. This incident, as I am told, gave occasion to the well-wrought scene of Sir Charles and Lady Easy and Edging. BOSWELL. Lady Macclesfield died 1753, aged above 80. Her eldest daughter, by Col. Brett, was, for the few last months of his life, the mistress of George I. (Walpole's *Reminiscences*, i. cv.) Her marriage ten years after her royal lover's death is thus announced in the *Gent. Mag.*, 1737:—'Sept. 17. Sir W. Leman, of Northall, Bart., to Miss Brett [Britt] of Bond Street, an heiress;' and again next month—'Oct. 8. Sir William Leman, of Northall, Baronet, to Miss Brett, half sister to Mr. Savage, son to the late Earl Rivers;' for the difference of date I know not how to account; but the second insertion was, no doubt, made by Savage to countenance his own pretensions. CROKER.

He this year wrote the *Preface to the Harleian Miscellany*¹.* The selection of the pamphlets of which it was composed was made by Mr. Oldys², a man of eager curiosity and indefatigable diligence, who first exerted that spirit of inquiry into the literature of the old English writers, by which the works of our great dramattick poet have of late been so signally illustrated.

In 1745 he published a pamphlet entitled *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with remarks on Sir T. H.'s (Sir Thomas Haunmer's) Edition of Shakspeare*.* To which he affixed, proposals for a new edition of that poet³.

As we do not trace any thing else published by him during the course of this year, we may conjecture that he was occupied entirely with that work. But the little encouragement

¹ 'Among the names of subscribers to the *Harleian Miscellany* there occurs that of "Sarah Johnson, bookseller in Lichfield."' *Johnsoniana*, p. 466.

² A brief account of Oldys is given in the *Gent. Mag.* liv. 161, 260. Like so many of his fellows he was thrown into the Fleet. 'After poor Oldys's release, such was his affection for the place that he constantly spent his evenings there.'

³ In the Feb. number of the *Gent. Mag.* for this year (p. 112) is the following advertisement:—'Speedily will be published (price 1s.) *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth*, with remarks on Sir T. H.'s edition of *Shakspeare*; to which is affix'd proposals for a new edition of *Shakspeare*, with a specimen. Printed for J. Roberts in Warwick Lane.' In the March number (p. 114), under the date of March 31, it is announced that it will be published on April 6. In spite of the two advertisements, and the title-page which agrees with the advertisements, I believe that the Proposals were not published till eleven years later (see *post*, end of 1756). I cannot hear of any copy of the *Miscellaneous Observations* which contains them. The advertisement is a third time repeated in the April number of the *Gent. Mag.* for 1745 (p. 224), but the Proposals are not this time mentioned. Tom Davies the bookseller gives 1756 as the date of their publication (*Misc. and Fugitive Pieces*, ii. 87). Perhaps Johnson or the booksellers were discouraged by Hanmer's *Shakspeare* as well as by Warburton's. Johnson at the end of the *Miscellaneous Observations* says:—'After the foregoing pages were printed, the late edition of *Shakspeare* ascribed to Sir T. H. fell into my hands.'

which

which was given by the publick to his anonymous proposals for the execution of a task which Warburton was known to have undertaken, probably damped his ardour. His pamphlet, however, was highly esteemed, and was fortunate enough to obtain the approbation even of the supercilious Warburton himself, who, in the Preface to his *Shakspeare* published two years afterwards, thus mentioned it: 'As to all those things which have been published under the titles of *Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c.* on Shakspeare, if you except some critical notes on *Macbeth*, given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius, the rest are absolutely below a serious notice.'

Of this flattering distinction shewn to him by Warburton, a very grateful remembrance was ever entertained by Johnson, who said, 'He praised me at a time when praise was of value to me.'

1746: ÆTAT. 37.]—IN 1746 it is probable that he was still employed upon his *Shakspeare*, which perhaps he laid aside for a time, upon account of the high expectations which were formed of Warburton's edition of that great poet¹. It is somewhat curious, that his literary career appears to have been almost totally suspended in the years 1745 and 1746, those years which were marked by a civil war in Great-Britain, when a rash attempt was made to restore the House of Stuart to the throne. That he had a tenderness for that unfortunate House, is well known; and some may fancifully imagine, that a sympathetick anxiety impeded the exertion of his intellectual powers: but I am inclined to think, that he was, during this time, sketching the outlines of his great philological work².

¹ 'The excellence of the edition proved to be by no means proportionate to the arrogance of the editor.' *Cambridge Shakespeare*, i. xxxiv.

² 'When you see Mr. Johnson pray [give] my compliments, and tell him I esteem him as a great genius—quite lost both to himself and the world?' *Gilbert Walmesley to Garrick*, Nov. 3, 1746. *Garrick Correspondence*, i. 45. Mr. Walmesley's letter does not shew that Johnson was idle. The old man had expected great things from him. 'I have

None of his letters during those years are extant, so far as I can discover. This is much to be regretted. It might

great hopes,' he had written in 1737 (see *ante*, p. 118), 'that he will turn out a fine tragedy writer.' In the nine years in which Johnson had been in town he had done, no doubt, much admirable work; but by his poem of *London* only was he known to the public. His *Life of Savage* did not bear his name. His *Observations on Macbeth* were published in April, 1745; his *Plan of the Dictionary* in 1747. What was Johnson doing meanwhile? Boswell conjectures that he was engaged on his *Shakespeare* and his *Dictionary*. That he went on working at his *Shakespeare* when the prospect of publishing was so remote that he could not issue his proposals is very unlikely. That he had been for some time engaged on his *Dictionary* before he addressed Lord Chesterfield is shewn by the opening sentences of the *Plan*. Mr. Croker's conjecture that he was absent or concealed on account of some difficulties which had arisen through the rebellion of 1745 is absurd. At no time of his life had he been an ardent Jacobite. 'I have heard him declare,' writes Boswell, 'that if holding up his right hand would have secured victory at Culloden to Prince Charles's army, he was not sure he would have held it up;' *post*, July 14, 1763. 'He had never in his life been in a nonjuring meeting-house;' *post*, June 9, 1784.

For the fact that he wrote very little, if indeed anything, in the *Gent. Mag.* during these years more than one reason may be given. In the first place, public affairs take up an unusual amount of room in its columns. Thus in the number for Dec. 1745 we read:—'Our readers being too much alarmed by the present rebellion to relish with their usual delight the *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput* we shall postpone them for a season, that we may be able to furnish out a fuller entertainment of what we find to be more suitable to their present taste.' In the Preface it is stated:—'We have sold more of our books than we desire for several months past, and are heartily sorry for the occasion of it, the present troubles.' During these years then much less space was given to literature. But besides this, Johnson likely enough refused to write for the *Magazine* when it shewed itself strongly Hanoverian. He would highly disapprove of *A New Protestant Litany*, which was written after the following fashion:—

'May Spaniards, or French, all who join with a Highland,
In disturbing the peace of this our bless'd island,
Meet tempests on sea and halters on dry land.
We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.'

Gent. Mag. xv. 551.

He would be disgusted the following year at seeing the Duke of
afford

afford some entertainment to see how he then expressed himself to his private friends, concerning State affairs. Dr. Adams informs me, that 'at this time a favourite object which he had in contemplation was *The Life of Alfred*; in which, from the warmth with which he spoke about it, he would, I believe, had he been master of his own will, have engaged himself, rather than on any other subject.'

1747: ÆTAT. 38.]—IN 1747 it is supposed that the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May was enriched by him with five¹ short poetical pieces, distinguished by three asterisks. The first is a translation, or rather a paraphrase, of a Latin Epitaph on Sir Thomas Hanmer. Whether the Latin was his, or not, I have never heard, though I should think it probably was, if it be certain that he wrote the English²; as to which my only cause of doubt is, that his slighting character of Hanmer as an editor, in his *Observations on Macbeth*, is very different from that in the 'Epitaph.' It may be said, that there is the same contrariety between the character in the *Observations*, and that in his own Preface to Shakspeare³; but a considerable time elapsed between the

Cumberland praised as 'the greatest man alive' (*Gent. Mag.* xvi. 235), and sung in verse that would have almost disgraced Cibber (p. 36). It is remarkable that there is no mention of Johnson's *Plan of a Dictionary* in the *Magazine*. Perhaps some coolness had risen between him and Cave.

¹ Boswell proceeds to mention six.

² In Mrs. Williams's *Miscellanies*, in which this paraphrase is inserted, it is stated that the Latin epitaph was written by Dr. Freind. I do not think that the English version is by Johnson. I should be sorry to ascribe to him such lines as:—

'Illustrious age! how bright thy glories shone.

When Hanmer filled the chair—and Anne the throne.'

³ In the *Observations*, Johnson, writing of Hanmer, says:—'Surely the weapons of criticism ought not to be blunted against an editor who can imagine that he is restoring poetry while he is amusing himself with alterations like these:—

For,—This is the serjeant

Who like a good and hardy soldier fought;

—This is the serjeant who

Like a *right* good and hardy soldier fought.

one publication and the other, whereas the *Observations* and the 'Epitaph' came close together. The others are 'To Miss ——, on her giving the Authour a gold and silk network Purse of her own weaving;' 'Stella in Mourning;' 'The Winter's Walk;' 'An Ode;' and, 'To Lyce, an elderly Lady.' I am not positive that all these were his productions¹; but as 'The Winter's Walk' has never been controverted to be his, and all of them have the same mark, it is reasonable to conclude that they are all written by the same hand. Yet to the Ode, in which we find a passage very characteristick of him, being a learned description of the gout,

'Unhappy, whom to beds of pain
Arthritick tyranny consigns;'

Such harmless industry may surely be forgiven, if it cannot be praised; may he therefore never want a monosyllable who can use it with such wonderful dexterity.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 93. In his Preface to *Shakespeare* published eighteen years later, he describes Hanmer as 'A man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies.' *Ib.* p. 139. The editors of the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (i. xxxii) thus write of Hanmer:—'A country gentleman of great ingenuity and lively fancy, but with no knowledge of older literature, no taste for research, and no ear for the rhythm of earlier English verse, amused his leisure hours by scribbling down his own and his friend's guesses in Pope's *Shakespeare*.'

¹ In the *Universal Visiter*, to which Johnson contributed, the mark which is affixed to some pieces unquestionably his, is also found subjoined to others, of which he certainly was not the author. The mark therefore will not ascertain the poems in question to have been written by him. They were probably the productions of Hawkesworth, who, it is believed, was afflicted with the gout. MALONE.

It is most unlikely that Johnson wrote such poor poems as these. I shall not easily be persuaded that the following lines are his:—

'Love warbles in the vocal groves,
And vegetation paints the plain.'

'And love and hate alike implore

The skies—"That Stella mourn no more."

'The Winter's Walk' has two good lines, but these may have been supplied by Johnson. The lines to 'Lyce, an elderly Lady,' would, if written by him, have been taken as a satire on his wife.

there

there is the following note: 'The authour being ill of the gout:' but Johnson was not attacked with that distemper till at a very late period of his life'. May not this, however, be a poetical fiction? Why may not a poet suppose himself to have the gout, as well as suppose himself to be in love, of which we have innumerable instances, and which has been admirably ridiculed by Johnson in his *Life of Cowley*?² I have also some difficulty to believe that he could produce such a group of *conceits*³ as appear in the verses to Lyce, in which he claims for this ancient personage as good a right to be assimilated to *heaven*, as nymphs whom other poets have flattered; he therefore ironically ascribes to her the attributes of the *sky*, in such stanzas as this:

'Her teeth the *night* with *darkness* dies,
She's *starr'd* with pimples o'er;
Her tongue like nimble *lightning* plies,
And can with *thunder* roar.'

But as at a very advanced age he could condescend to trifle in *namby-pamby*⁴ rhymes, to please Mrs. Thrale and her daughter, he may have, in his earlier years, composed such a piece as this.

It is remarkable, that in this first edition of *The Winter's Walk*, the concluding line is much more Johnsonian than it was afterwards printed; for in subsequent editions, after praying Stella to 'snatch him to her arms,' he says,

'And *shield* me from the *ills* of life.'

Whereas in the first edition it is

'And *hide* me from the *sight* of life.'

¹ See *post* under Sept. 18, 1783.

² See Johnson's *Works*, vii. 4, 34.

³ Boswell italicises *conceits* to shew that he is using it in the sense in which Johnson uses it in his criticism of Cowley:—'These conceits Addison calls mixed wit; that is, wit which consists of thoughts true in one sense of the expression and false in the other.' *Ib.* vii. 35.

⁴ *Namby Pamby* was the name given to Ambrose Philips by Pope. *Ib.* viii. 395.

A horror at life in general is more consonant with Johnson's habitual gloomy cast of thought.

I have heard him repeat with great energy the following verses, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April this year; but I have no authority to say they were his own. Indeed one of the best critics of our age¹ suggests to me, that 'the word *indifferently* being used in the sense of *without concern*,' and being also very unpoetical, renders it improbable that they should have been his composition.

‘On Lord LOVAT’S Execution.

‘Pity’d by *gentle minds* KILMARNOCK died;
The *brave*, BALMERINO, were on thy side;
RADCLIFFE, unhappy in his crimes of youth²,
Steady in what he still mistook for truth,
Beheld his death so decently unmov’d,
The *soft* lamented, and the *brave* approv’d.

¹ Malone most likely is meant. Mr. Croker says:—‘Johnson has “*indifferently*” in the sense of “*without concern*” in his *Dictionary*, with this example from *Shakespeare*, ‘And I will look on death indifferently.’ Johnson however here defines indifferently as *in a neutral state; without wish or aversion*; which is not the same as *without concern*. The passage, which is from *Julius Cæsar*, i. 2, is not correctly given. It is—

‘Set honour in one eye and death i’ the other
And I will look on both indifferently.’

We may compare Johnson's use of *indifferent* in his Letter to Chesterfield, *post*, Feb. 7, 1755:—‘The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours . . . has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it.’

² ‘Radcliffe, when quite a boy, had been engaged in the rebellion of 1715, and being attainted had escaped from Newgate. . . . During the insurrection [of 1745], having been captured on board a French vessel bound for Scotland, he was arraigned on his original sentence which had slumbered so long. The only trial now conceded to him was confined to his identity. For such a course there was no precedent, except in the case of Sir Walter Raleigh, which had brought shame upon the reign of James I.’ Campbell's *Chancellors* (edit. 1846), v. 108. Campbell adds, ‘his execution, I think, reflects great disgrace upon Lord Hardwicke [the Lord Chancellor].’

But

But LOVAT's fate¹ indifferently we view,
 True to no *King*, to no *religion* true:
 No *fair* forgets the *ruin* he has done;
 No *child* laments the *tyrant* of his *son*;
 No *tory* pities, thinking what he was;
 No *whig* compassions, *for he left the cause*;
 The *brave* regret not, for he was not brave;
 The *honest* mourn not, knowing him a knave²!

This year his old pupil and friend, David Garrick, having become joint patentee and manager of Drury-lane theatre, Johnson honoured his opening of it with a Prologue³,* which for just and manly dramatick criticism, on the whole range of the English stage, as well as for poetical excellence⁴,

¹ In the original *end*.

² These verses are somewhat too severe on the extraordinary person who is the chief figure in them, for he was undoubtedly brave. His pleasantry during his solemn trial (in which, by the way, I have heard Mr. David Hume observe, that we have one of the very few speeches of Mr. Murray, now Earl of Mansfield, authentically given) was very remarkable. When asked if he had any questions to put to Sir Everard Fawkener, who was one of the strongest witnesses against him, he answered, 'I only wish him joy of his young wife.' And after sentence of death, in the horrible terms in cases of treason, was pronounced upon him, and he was retiring from the bar, he said, 'Fare you well, my Lords, we shall not all meet again in one place.' He behaved with perfect composure at his execution, and called out '*Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori*.'

['What joys, what glories round him wait,

Who bravely for his country dies!'

FRANCIS. Horace, *Odes*, iii. 2. 13.] BOSWELL.

'Old Lovat was beheaded yesterday,' wrote Horace Walpole on April 10, 1747, 'and died extremely well: without passion, affectation, buffoonery, or timidity; his behaviour was natural and intrepid.' *Letters*, ii. 77.

³ See *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*.

⁴ My friend, Mr. Courtenay, whose eulogy on Johnson's Latin Poetry has been inserted in this Work [*ante*, p. 72], is no less happy in praising his English poetry.

But hark, he sings! the strain ev'n Pope admires;
 Indignant virtue her own bard inspires.

is unrivalled. Like the celebrated Epilogue to the *Distressed Mother*¹, it was, during the season, often called for by the audience. The most striking and brilliant passages of it have been so often repeated, and are so well recollected by all the lovers of the drama and of poetry, that it would be superfluous to point them out. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December this year, he inserted an 'Ode on Winter,' which is, I think, an admirable specimen of his genius for lyric poetry².

But the year 1747 is distinguished as the epoch, when Johnson's arduous and important work, his DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, was announced to the world, by the publication of its Plan or *Prospectus*.

How long this immense undertaking had been the object of his contemplation, I do not know. I once asked him by what means he had attained to that astonishing knowledge of our language, by which he was enabled to realise a design of such extent, and accumulated difficulty. He told me, that 'it was not the effect of particular study; but that it had grown up in his mind insensibly.' I have been informed by Mr. James Dodsley, that several years before this period,

Sublime as Juvenal he pours his lays,

And with the Roman shares congenial praise;—

In glowing numbers now he fires the age,

And Shakspeare's sun relumes the clouded stage. BOSWELL.

¹ The play is by Ambrose Philips. 'It was concluded with the most successful Epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The three first nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play; but, whenever it is recalled to the stage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epilogue is still expected, and is still spoken.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 389. See *post*, April 21, 1773, note on Eustace Budgel. The Epilogue is given in vol. v. p. 228 of Bohn's *Addison*, and the great success that it met with is described in *The Spectator*, No. 341.

² Such poor stuff as the following is certainly not by Johnson:—

'Let musick sound the voice of joy!

Or mirth repeat the jocund tale;

Let Love his wanton wiles employ,

And o'er the season wine prevail.'

when

when Johnson was one day sitting in his brother Robert's shop, he heard his brother suggest to him, that a Dictionary of the English Language would be a work that would be well received by the publick¹; that Johnson seemed at first to catch at the proposition, but, after a pause, said, in his abrupt decisive manner, 'I believe I shall not undertake it.' That he, however, had bestowed much thought upon the subject, before he published his *Plan*, is evident from the enlarged, clear, and accurate views which it exhibits; and we find him mentioning in that tract, that many of the writers whose testimonies were to be produced as authorities, were selected by Pope²; which proves that he had been furnished, probably by Mr. Robert Dodsley, with whatever hints that eminent poet had contributed towards a great literary project, that had been the subject of important consideration in a former reign.

The booksellers who contracted with Johnson, single and unaided, for the execution of a work, which in other countries has not been effected but by the co-operating exertions of many, were Mr. Robert Dodsley, Mr. Charles Hitch³, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messieurs Longman, and the two Messieurs Knapton. The price stipulated was fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds⁴.

¹ 'Dodsley first mentioned to me the scheme of an English Dictionary; but I had long thought of it.' *Post*, Oct. 10, 1779.

² It would seem from the passage to which Boswell refers that Pope had wished that Johnson should undertake the *Dictionary*. Johnson, in mentioning Pope, says:—'Of whom I may be justified in affirming that were he still alive, solicitous as he was for the success of this work, he would not be displeased that I have undertaken it.' *Works*, v. 20. As Pope died on May 30, 1744, this renders it likely that the work was begun earlier than Boswell thought.

³ In the title-page of the first edition after the name of Hitch comes that of L. Hawes.

⁴ 'During the progress of the work he had received at different times the amount of his contract; and when his receipts were produced to him at a tavern-dinner given by the booksellers, it appeared that he had been paid a hundred pounds and upwards more than his due.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 78. See *post*, beginning of 1756.

The *Plan* was addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, then one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State¹; a nobleman who was very ambitious of literary distinction, and who, upon being informed of the design, had expressed himself in terms very favourable to its success. There is, perhaps in every thing of any consequence, a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated. Johnson told me², 'Sir, the way in which the *Plan* of my *Dictionary* came to be inscribed to Lord Chesterfield, was this: I had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it might be better done, and let Dodsley have his desire. I said to my friend, Dr. Bathurst, "Now if any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chesterfield, it will be ascribed to deep policy, when, in fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness."'

It is worthy of observation, that the *Plan* has not only the substantial merit of comprehension, perspicuity, and precision, but that the language of it is unexceptionably excellent; it being altogether free from that inflation of style, and those uncommon but apt and energetick words³, which in some of his writings have been censured, with more petulance than justice; and never was there a more dignified

¹ 'The truth is, that the several situations which I have been in having made me long the *plastron* [butt] of dedications, I am become as callous to flattery as some people are to abuse.' Lord Chesterfield, date of Dec. 15, 1755; Chesterfield's *Misc. Works*, iv. 266.

² September 22, 1777, going from Ashbourne in Derbyshire, to see Islam. BOSWELL.

³ Boswell here says too much, as the following passages in the *Plan* prove:—'Who upon this survey can forbear to wish that these fundamental atoms of our speech might obtain the firmness and immutability of the primogential and constituent particles of matter?' 'Those translators who, for want of understanding the characteristical difference of tongues, have formed a chaotick dialect of heterogeneous phrases;' 'In one part refinement will be subtilised beyond exactness, and evidence dilated in another beyond perspicuity.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 12, 21, 22.

strain of compliment than that in which he courts the attention of one who, he had been persuaded to believe, would be a respectable patron.

‘With regard to questions of purity or propriety, (says he) I was once in doubt whether I should not attribute to myself too much in attempting to decide them, and whether my province was to extend beyond the proposition of the question, and the display of the suffrages on each side ; but I have been since determined by your Lordship’s opinion, to interpose my own judgement, and shall therefore endeavour to support what appears to me most consonant to grammar and reason. Ausonius thought that modesty forbade him to plead inability for a task to which Cæsar had judged him equal :

Cur me posse negem posse quod ille putat¹ ?

And I may hope, my Lord, that since you, whose authority in our language is so generally acknowledged, have commissioned me to declare my own opinion, I shall be considered as exercising a kind of vicarious jurisdiction ; and that the power which might have been denied to my own claim, will be readily allowed me as the delegate of your Lordship.’

This passage proves, that Johnson’s addressing his *Plan* to Lord Chesterfield was not merely in consequence of the result of a report by means of Dodsley, that the Earl favoured the design ; but that there had been a particular communication with his Lordship concerning it. Dr. Taylor told me, that Johnson sent his *Plan* to him in manuscript, for his perusal ; and that when it was lying upon his table, Mr. William Whitehead² happened to pay him a visit, and being shewn it, was highly pleased with such parts of it as he had time to read, and begged to take it home with him, which he was allowed to do ; that from him

¹ Ausonius, *Epigram* i. 12.

² Whitehead in 1757 succeeded Colley Cibber as poet-laureate, and dying in 1785 was followed by Thomas Warton. From Warton the line of succession is Pye, Southey, Wordsworth, Tennyson. See *post*, under June 13, 1763.

it got into the hands of a noble Lord, who carried it to Lord Chesterfield'. When Taylor observed this might be an advantage, Johnson replied, 'No, Sir; it would have come out with more bloom, if it had not been seen before by any body.'

The opinion conceived of it by another noble authour, appears from the following extract of a letter from the Earl of Orrery to Dr. Birch:

'Caledon, Dec. 30, 1747.

'I have just now seen the specimen of Mr. Johnson's Dictionary, addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I am much pleased with the plan, and I think the specimen is one of the best that I have ever read. Most specimens disgust, rather than prejudice us in favour of the work to follow; but the language of Mr. Johnson's is good, and the arguments are properly and modestly expressed. However, some expressions may be cavilled at, but they are trifles. I'll mention one. The *barren* Laurel. The laurel is not barren, in any sense whatever; it bears fruits and flowers². *Sed hæc sunt nugæ*, and I have great expectation from the performance³.'

That he was fully aware of the arduous nature of the undertaking, he acknowledges; and shews himself perfectly sensible of it in the conclusion of his *Plan*⁴; but he had a

¹ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 176) likewise says that the manuscript passed through Whitehead and 'other hands' before it reached Chesterfield. Mr. Croker had seen 'a draft of the prospectus carefully written by an amanuensis, but signed in great form by Johnson's own hand. It was evidently that which was laid before Lord Chesterfield. Some useful remarks are made in his lordship's hand, and some in another. Johnson adopted all these suggestions.'

² This poor piece of criticism confirms what Johnson said of Lord Orrery:—'He grasped at more than his abilities could reach; tried to pass for a better talker, a better writer, and a better thinker than he was.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 22, 1773. See *post*, under April 7, 1778.

³ Birch, *MSS. Brit. Mus.* 4303. BOSWELL.

⁴ 'When I survey the *Plan* which I have laid before you, I cannot, my Lord, but confess that I am frightened at its extent, and, like the soldiers of Cæsar, look on Britain as a new world, which it is almost madness to invade.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 21.

noble consciousness of his own abilities, which enabled him to go on with undaunted spirit¹.

Dr. Adams found him one day busy at his *Dictionary*, when the following dialogue ensued. 'ADAMS. This is a great work, Sir. How are you to get all the etymologies? JOHNSON. Why, Sir, here is a shelf with Junius, and Skinner², and others; and there is a Welch gentleman who has published a collection of Welch proverbs, who will help me with the Welch³. ADAMS. But, Sir, how can you do this in three years? JOHNSON. Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years. ADAMS. But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary. JOHNSON. Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman.' With so much ease and pleasantry could he talk of that prodigious labour which he had undertaken to execute.

The publick has had, from another pen⁴, a long detail of

¹ There might be applied to him what he said of Pope:—'Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings. He, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to error; but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 237.

² 'For the Teutonick etymologies I am commonly indebted to Junius and Skinner . . . Junius appears to have excelled in extent of learning and Skinner in rectitude of understanding . . . Skinner is often ignorant, but never ridiculous: Junius is always full of knowledge, but his variety distracts his judgment, and his learning is very frequently disgraced by his absurdities.' *Ib.* v. 29. Francis Junius the younger was born at Heidelberg in 1589, and died at Windsor, at the house of his nephew Isaac Vossius, in 1678. His *Etymologicum Anglicanum* was not published till 1743. Stephen Skinner, M.D., was born in 1623, and died in 1667. His *Etymologicum Linguae Anglicanae* was published in 1671. Knight's *Eng. Cyclo.*

³ Thomas Richards published in 1753 *Antiquæ Linguae Britannicæ Thesaurus*, to which is prefixed a *Welsh Grammar* and a collection of British proverbs.

⁴ See Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Johnson* [p. 171]. BOSWELL.

what

what had been done in this country by prior Lexicographers; and no doubt Johnson was wise to avail himself of them, so far as they went: but the learned, yet judicious research of etymology¹, the various, yet accurate display of definition, and the rich collection of authorities, were reserved for the superior mind of our great philologist². For the mechanical part he employed, as he told me, six amanuenses; and let it be remembered by the natives of North-Britain, to whom he is supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them were of that country. There were two Messieurs Macbean; Mr. Shiels, who we shall hereafter see partly wrote the *Lives of the Poets* to which the name of Cibber is affixed³; Mr. Stewart, son of Mr. George Stewart, bookseller at Edinburgh; and a Mr. Maitland. The sixth of these humble assistants was Mr. Peyton, who, I believe, taught French, and published some elementary tracts.

To all these painful labourers, Johnson shewed a never-ceasing kindness, so far as they stood in need of it. The elder Mr. Macbean had afterwards the honour of being Librarian to Archibald, Duke of Argyle, for many years, but was left without a shilling. Johnson wrote for him a Preface to *A System of Ancient Geography*; and, by the favour of Lord Thurlow, got him admitted a poor brother of the Charterhouse⁴. For Shiels, who died of a consumption, he

¹ 'The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist.' Macaulay's *Misc. Writings*, p. 382. See *post*, May 13, 1778, for mention of Horne Tooke's criticism of Johnson's etymologies.

² 'The etymology, so far as it is yet known, was easily found in the volumes where it is particularly and professedly delivered. . . . But to COLLECT the WORDS of our language was a task of greater difficulty: the deficiency of dictionaries was immediately apparent; and when they were exhausted, what was yet wanting must be sought by fortuitous and unguided excursions into books, and gleaned as industry should find, or chance should offer it, in the boundless chaos of a living speech.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 31.

³ See *post*, under April 10, 1776. BOSWELL.

⁴ 'Mr. Macbean,' said Johnson in 1778, 'is a man of great learning, had

had much tenderness; and it has been thought that some choice sentences in the *Lives of the Poets* were supplied by him¹. Peyton, when reduced to penury, had frequent aid from the bounty of Johnson, who at last was at the expense of burying both him and his wife².

While the *Dictionary* was going forward, Johnson lived part of the time in Holborn, part in Gough-square, Fleet-street; and he had an upper room fitted up like a counting-house for the purpose, in which he gave to the copyists their several tasks³. The words, partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and

and for his learning I respect him, and I wish to serve him. He knows many languages, and knows them well; but he knows nothing of life. I advised him to write a geographical dictionary; but I have lost all hopes of his ever doing anything properly, since I found he gave as much labour to Capua as to Rome.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 114. See *post*, beginning of 1773, and Oct. 24, 1780.

¹ Boswell is speaking of the book published under the name of *Cibber* mentioned above, but 'entirely compiled,' according to Johnson, by Shiels. See *post*, April 10, 1776.

² See *Piozzi Letters*, i. 312, and *post*, May 21, 1775, note.

³ 'We ourselves, not without labour and risk, lately discovered Gough Square . . . and on the second day of search the very House there, wherein the *English Dictionary* was composed. It is the first or corner house on the right hand, as you enter through the arched way from the North-west . . . It is a stout, old-fashioned, oak-balus-traded house: "I have spent many a pound and penny on it since then," said the worthy Landlord; "here, you see, this bedroom was the Doctor's study; that was the garden" (a plot of delved ground somewhat larger than a bed-quilt) "where he walked for exercise; these three garret bedrooms" (where his three [six] copyists sat and wrote) "were the place he kept his—*pupils* in"! *Tempus edax rerum!* Yet *ferax* also: for our friend now added, with a wistful look, which strove to seem merely historical: "I let it all in lodgings, to respectable gentlemen; by the quarter or the month; it's all one to me."—"To me also," whispered the ghost of Samuel, as we went pensively our ways.' *Carlyle's Miscellanies*, edit. of 1872, iv. 112.

various

various significations¹. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced². I have seen several of them, in which that trouble had not been taken; so that they were just as when used by the copyists³. It is remarkable, that he was so attentive in the choice of the passages in which words were authorised, that one may read page after page of his *Dictionary* with improvement and pleasure; and it should not pass unobserved, that he has quoted no authour whose writings had a tendency to hurt sound religion and morality⁴.

¹ Boswell's account of the manner in which Johnson compiled his *Dictionary* is confused and erroneous. He began his task (as he himself expressly described to me), by devoting his first care to a diligent perusal of all such English writers as were most correct in their language, and under every sentence which he meant to quote he drew a line, and noted in the margin the first letter of the word under which it was to occur. He then delivered these books to his clerks, who transcribed each sentence on a separate slip of paper, and arranged the same under the word referred to. By these means he collected the several words and their different significations; and when the whole arrangement was alphabetically formed, he gave the definitions of their meanings, and collected their etymologies from Skinner, Junius, and other writers on the subject.

PERCY.

² 'The books he used for this purpose were what he had in his own collection, a copious but a miserably ragged one, and all such as he could borrow; which latter, if ever they came back to those that lent them, were so defaced as to be scarce worth owning, and yet some of his friends were glad to receive and entertain them as curiosities.' Hawkins, p. 175.

³ In the copy that he thus marked of Sir Matthew Hale's *Primitive Origination of Mankind*, opposite the passage where it is stated, that 'Averroes says that if the world were not eternal . . . it could never have been at all, because an eternal duration must necessarily have anteceded the first production of the world,' he has written:—'This argument will hold good equally against the writing that I now write.'

⁴ Boswell must mean 'whose writings *taken as a whole* had a tendency,' &c. Johnson quotes Dryden, and of Dryden he says:—'Of The

The necessary expense of preparing a work of such magnitude for the press, must have been a considerable deduction from the price stipulated to be paid for the copy-right. I understand that nothing was allowed by the booksellers on that account; and I remember his telling me, that a large portion of it having by mistake been written upon both sides of the paper, so as to be inconvenient for the compositor, it cost him twenty pounds to have it transcribed upon one side only.

He is now to be considered as 'tugging at his oar', as engaged in a steady continued course of occupation, sufficient to employ all his time for some years; and which was the

the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity. Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had Dryden has afforded by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 293. He quotes Congreve, and of Congreve he says: 'It is acknowledged, with universal conviction, that the perusal of his works will make no man better; and that their ultimate effect is to represent pleasure in alliance with vice, and to relax those obligations by which life ought to be regulated.' *Ib.* viii. 28. He would not quote Dr. Clarke, much as he admired him, because he was not sound upon the doctrine of the Trinity. *Post*, Dec. 1784, note.

¹ In the *Plan to the Dictionary*, written in 1747, he describes his task as one that 'may be successfully performed without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience, and beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution.' *Works*, v. 1. In 1751, in the *Rambler*, No. 141, he thus pleasantly touches on his work: 'The task of every other slave [except the "wit"] has an end. The rower in time reaches the port; the lexicographer at last finds the conclusion of his alphabet.' On April 15, 1755, he writes to his friend Hector:—'I wish, come of wishes what will, that my work may please you, as much as it now and then pleased me, for I did not find dictionary making so very unpleasant as it may be thought.' *Notes and Queries*, 6th S., 111, 301. He told Dr. Blacklock that 'it was easier to him to write poetry, than to compose his *Dictionary*. His mind was less on the stretch in doing the one than the other.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 17, 1773.

best

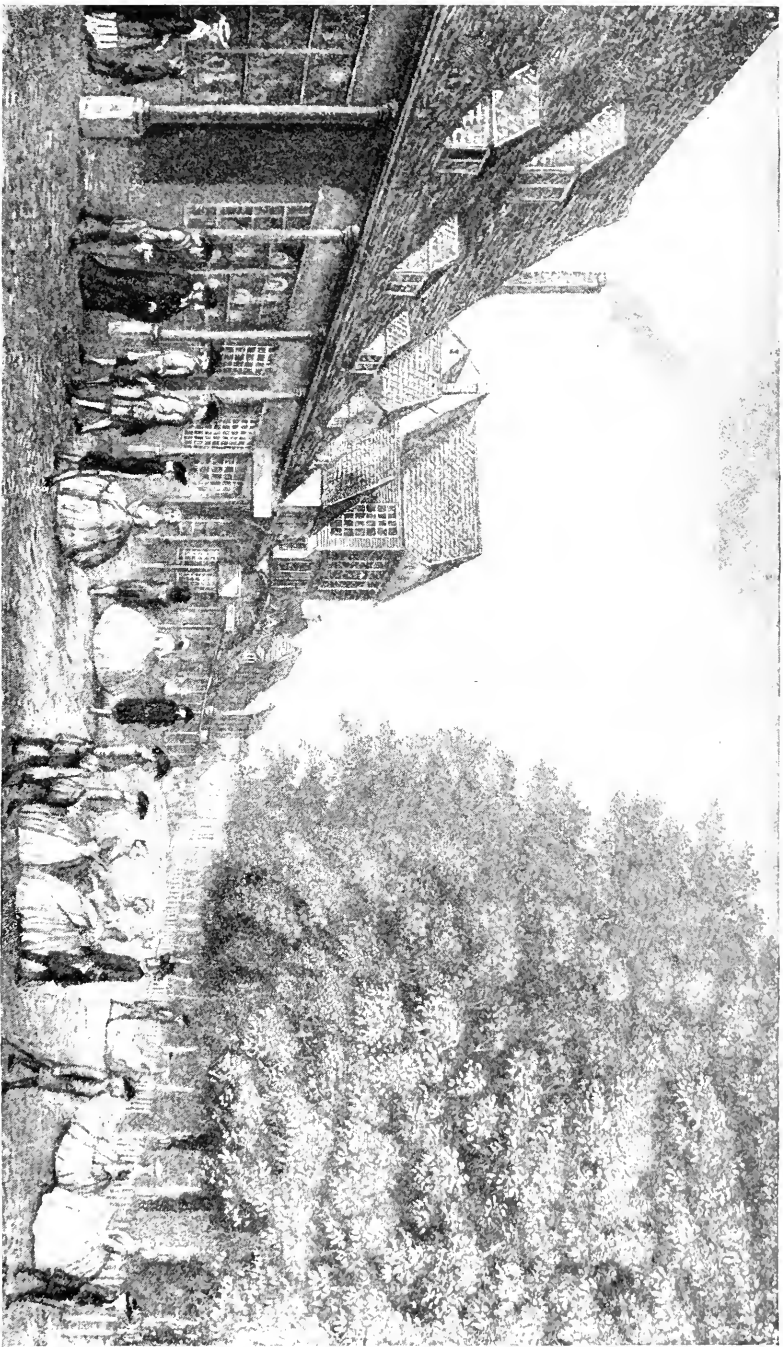
best preventive of that constitutional melancholy which was ever lurking about him, ready to trouble his quiet. But his enlarged and lively mind could not be satisfied without more diversity of employment, and the pleasure of animated relaxation¹. He therefore not only exerted his talents in occasional composition very different from Lexicography, but formed a club in Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and amuse his evening hours. The members associated with him in this little society were his beloved friend Dr. Richard Bathurst², Mr. Hawkesworth³, afterwards well known by his writings, Mr. John

¹ The well-known picture of the company at Tunbridge Wells in Aug. 1748, with the references in Richardson's own writing, is given as a frontispiece to vol. iii. of Richardson's *Correspondence*. There can be no doubt that the figure marked by Richardson as Dr. Johnson is not Samuel Johnson, who did not receive a doctor's degree till more than four years after Richardson's death.

² 'Johnson hardly ever spoke of Bathurst without tears in his eyes.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 56. Mrs. Piozzi, after recording an anecdote that he had related to her of his childhood, continues:—"I cannot imagine," said he, "what makes me talk of myself to you so, for I really never mentioned this foolish story to anybody except Dr. Taylor, not even to my dear, dear Bathurst, whom I loved better than ever I loved any human creature; but poor Bathurst is dead!" Here a long pause and a few tears ensued.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 18. Another day he said to her:—"Dear Bathurst was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a very good hater.' *Ib.* p. 83. In his *Meditations on Easter-Day*, 1764, he records:—"After sermon I recommended Tetty in a prayer by herself; and my father, mother, brother, and Bathurst in another.' *Pr. and Med.* p. 54. See also *post*, under March 18, 1752, and 1780 in Mr. Langton's *Collection*.

³ Of Hawkesworth Johnson thus wrote: 'An account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteness, by Dr. Hawkesworth, according to a scheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendship. I cannot therefore be expected to say much of a life concerning which I had long since communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narrations with so much elegance of language and force of sentiment.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 192. Hawkesworth was an imitator of Johnson's style; *post*, under Jan. 1, 1753.

Hawkins,



- 1748's day:
- 1 Dr Johnson
 - 2 Pop. of Salsbery (at concert)
 - 3 Mr Harcourt
 - 4 Mr Ciller (Clergy)
 - 5
 - 6 Mrs Greke (the Singer)
 - 7 Mr Nash
 - 8 Mrs Radley (Duchess of Kingston)
 - 9 Mr Pitt (First of Chatham)
 - 10
 - 11 Mr Down
 - 12 Du Rofey's wife
 - 13 Mrs Banks
 - 14 Lady Lincoln
 - 15
 - 16 The Baron Apsalmon's wife
 - 17 Mrs Norton (at Parliament)
 - 18 Mrs Orlean
 - 19 Mrs Duffin
 - 20 Mrs Hill

Hawkins, an attorney¹, and a few others of different professions².

¹ He was afterwards for several years Chairman of the Middlesex Justices, and upon occasion of presenting an address to the King, accepted the usual offer of Knighthood. He is authour of 'A History of Musick,' in five volumes in quarto. By assiduous attendance upon Johnson in his last illness, he obtained the office of one of his executors; in consequence of which, the booksellers of London employed him to publish an edition of Dr. Johnson's works, and to write his Life. BOSWELL. This description of Hawkins, as 'Mr. John Hawkins, an attorney,' is a reply to his description of Boswell as 'Mr. James Boswell, a native of Scotland.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 472. According to Miss Hawkins, 'Boswell complained to her father of the manner in which he was described. Where was the offence? It was one of those which a complainant hardly dares to embody in words; he would only repeat, "Well, but *Mr. James Boswell*, surely, surely, *Mr. James Boswell*.'" Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, i. 235. Boswell in thus styling Hawkins remembered no doubt Johnson's sarcasm against attorneys. See *post*, 1770, in Dr. Maxwell's *Collectanea*. Hawkins's edition of *Johnson's Works* was published in 1787-9, in 13 vols., 8vo., the last two vols. being edited by Stockdale. In vol. xi. is a collection of Johnson's sayings, under the name of *Apothegms*, many of which I quote in my notes.

² Boswell, it is clear, has taken his account of the club from Hawkins, who writes:—'Johnson had, in the winter of 1749, formed a club that met weekly at the King's Head, a famous beef-steak house in Ivy Lane, near St. Paul's, every Tuesday evening. Thither he constantly resorted with a disposition to please and be pleased. Our conversations seldom began till after a supper so very solid and substantial as led us to think that with him it was a dinner. By the help of this refection, and no other incentive to hilarity than lemonade, Johnson was in a short time after our assembling transformed into a new creature; his habitual melancholy and lassitude of spirit gave way; his countenance brightened.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, pp. 219, 250. Other parts of Hawkins's account do not agree with passages in Johnson's letters to Mrs. Thrale written in 1783-4. 'I dined about a fortnight ago with three old friends [Hawkins, Ryland, and Payne]; we had not met together for thirty years. In the thirty years two of our set have died.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 339. 'We used to meet weekly about the year fifty.' *Ib.* p. 361. 'The people whom I mentioned in my letter are the remnant of a little club that used to meet in Ivy Lane about three and thirty years ago, out of which we have lost Hawkesworth and Dyer, the rest are yet on this side the grave.' *Ib.* p. 363.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May of this year he wrote a 'Life of Roscommon,'* with Notes, which he afterwards much improved, indented the notes into text, and inserted it amongst his *Lives of the English Poets*.

Mr. Dodsley this year brought out his *Preceptor*, one of the most valuable books for the improvement of young minds that has appeared in any language; and to this meritorious work Johnson furnished 'The Preface,'* containing a general sketch of the book, with a short and perspicuous recommendation of each article; as also, 'The Vision of Theodore the Hermit, found in his Cell,'* a most beautiful allegory of human life, under the figure of ascending the mountain of Existence. The Bishop of Dromore heard Dr. Johnson say, that he thought this was the best thing he ever wrote¹.

1749: ÆTAT. 40.]—IN January 1749, he published *The Vanity of Human Wishes, being the Tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated*². He, I believe, composed it the preceding

Hawkins says the club broke up about 1756 (*Life*, p. 361). Johnson in the first of the passages says they had not met at all for thirty years—that is to say, not since 1753; while in the last two passages he implies that their weekly meetings came to an end about 1751. I cannot understand moreover how, if Bathurst, 'his beloved friend,' belonged to the club, Johnson should have forgotten it. Bathurst died in the expedition to the Havannah about 1762. Two others of those given in Hawkins's list were certainly dead by 1783, M'Ghie, who died while the club existed (*Ib.* p. 361), and Dr. Salter. A writer in the *Builder* (Dec. 1884) says, 'The King's Head was burnt down twenty-five years ago, but the cellarage remains beneath No. 4, Alldis's dining-rooms, on the eastern side.'

¹ Tom Tyers said that Johnson 'in one night composed, after finishing an evening in Holborn, his *Hermit of Teneriffe*.' *Gent. Mag.* for 1784, p. 901. The high value that he set on this piece may be accounted for in his own words. 'Many causes may vitiate a writer's judgment of his own works. . . . What has been produced without toilsome efforts is considered with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 110. He had said much the same thirty years earlier in *The Rambler* (No. 21).

² 'On January 9 was published, long wished, another satire from Juvenal, by the author of *London*.' *Gent. Mag.* xviii. 598, 9.

year.

year¹. Mrs. Johnson, for the sake of country air, had lodgings at Hampstead, to which he resorted occasionally, and there the greatest part, if not the whole, of this *Imitation* was written². The fervid rapidity with which it was produced, is scarcely credible. I have heard him say, that he composed seventy lines of it in one day, without putting one of them upon paper till they were finished³. I remember when I once regretted to him that he had not given us more of Juvenal's *Satires*, he said he probably should give more, for he had them all in his head; by which I understood that he had the originals and correspondent allusions floating in his mind, which he could, when he pleased, embody and render permanent without much labour. Some of them, however, he observed were too gross for imitation.

The profits of a single poem, however excellent, appear to have been very small in the last reign, compared with what a publication of the same size has since been known to yield. I have mentioned, upon Johnson's own authority, that for his *London* he had only ten guineas; and now, after his fame was established, he got for his *Vanity of Human Wishes* but

¹ Sir John Hawkins, with solemn inaccuracy, represents this poem as a consequence of the indifferent reception of his tragedy. But the fact is, that the poem was published on the 9th of January, and the tragedy was not acted till the 6th of the February following. BOSWELL. Hawkins perhaps implies what Boswell says that he represents; but if so, he implies it by denying it. Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 201.

² 'I wrote,' he said, 'the first seventy lines in *The Vanity of Human Wishes* in the course of one morning in that small house beyond the church at Hampstead.' *Works* (1787), xi. 212.

³ See *post* under Feb. 15, 1766. That Johnson did not think that in hasty composition there is any great merit, is shewn by *The Rambler*, No. 169, entitled *Labour necessary to excellence*. There he describes 'pride and indigence as the two great hasteners of modern poems.' He continues:—'that no other method of attaining lasting praise [than *multa dies et multa litura*] has been yet discovered may be conjectured from the blotted manuscripts of Milton now remaining, and from the tardy emission of Pope's compositions.' He made many corrections for the later editions of his poem.

five guineas more, as is proved by an authentick document in my possession¹.

It will be observed, that he reserves to himself the right of printing one edition of this satire, which was his practice upon occasion of the sale of all his writings; it being his fixed intention to publish at some period, for his own profit, a complete collection of his works².

His *Vanity of Human Wishes* has less of common life, but more of a philosophick dignity than his *London*. More readers, therefore, will be delighted with the pointed spirit of *London*, than with the profound reflection of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.³ Garrick, for instance, observed in his

¹ 'Nov. 25, 1748. I received of Mr. Dodsley fifteen guineas, for which I assign to him the right of copy of an imitation of the *Tenth Satire of Juvenal*, written by me; reserving to myself the right of printing one edition. SAM. JOHNSON.'

'London, 29 June, 1786. A true copy, from the original in Dr. Johnson's handwriting. JA^s. DODSLEY.' BOSWELL.

London was sold at a shilling a copy. Johnson was paid at the rate of about 9½*d.* a line for this poem; for *The Vanity of Human Wishes* at the rate of about 10*d.* a line. Dryden by his engagement with Jacob Tonson (see Johnson's *Works*, vii. 298) undertook to furnish 10,000 verses at a little over 6*d.* a verse. Goldsmith was paid for *The Traveller* £21, or about 11¼*d.* a line.

² He never published it. See *post* under Dec. 9, 1784.

³ 'Jan. 9, 1821. Read Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*,—all the examples and mode of giving them sublime, as well as the latter part, with the exception of an occasional couplet. I do not so much admire the opening. The first line, "Let observation," etc., is certainly heavy and useless. But 'tis a grand poem—and so true!—true as the Tenth of Juvenal himself. The lapse of ages *changes* all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and everything "about, around, and underneath" man, *except man himself*. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment.' *Byron*, vol. v. p. 66. WRIGHT. Sir Walter Scott said 'that he had more pleasure in reading *London*, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* than any other poetical composition he could mention.' Lockhart's *Scott*, iii. 269. Mr. Lockhart adds that 'the last line of MS. that Scott sent to the press was a quotation from *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.' Of the first lines

sprightly

sprightly manner, with more vivacity than regard to just discrimination, as is usual with wits, 'When Johnson lived much with the Herveys, and saw a good deal of what was passing in life, he wrote his *London*, which is lively and easy. When he became more retired, he gave us his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, which is as hard as Greek. Had he gone on to imitate another satire, it would have been as hard as Hebrew'.

But *The Vanity of Human Wishes* is, in the opinion of the best judges, as high an effort of ethick poetry as any language can shew. The instances of variety of disappointment are chosen so judiciously and painted so strongly, that, the moment they are read, they bring conviction to every thinking mind. That of the scholar must have depressed the too sanguine expectations of many an ambitious student².

'Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru,'

De Quincey quotes the criticism of some writer, who 'contends with some reason that this is saying in effect:—"Let observation with extensive observation observe mankind extensively."' De Quincey's *Works*, x. 72.

¹ From Mr. Langton. BOSWELL.

² In this poem one of the instances mentioned of unfortunate learned men is *Lydiat*:

'Hear Lydiat's life, and Galileo's end.'

The history of Lydiat being little known, the following account of him may be acceptable to many of my readers. It appeared as a note in the Supplement to the *Gent. Mag.* for 1748, in which some passages extracted from Johnson's poem were inserted, and it should have been added in the subsequent editions.—A very learned divine and mathematician, fellow of New College, Oxon, and Rector of Okerton, near Banbury. He wrote, among many others, a Latin treatise *De Natura cæli*, etc., in which he attacked the sentiments of Scaliger and Aristotle, not bearing to hear it urged, *that some things are true in philosophy and false in divinity*. He made above 600 Sermons on the harmony of the Evangelists. Being unsuccessful in publishing his works, he lay in the prison of Bocardo at Oxford, and in the King's Bench, till Bishop Usher, Dr. Laud, Sir William Boswell, and Dr. Pink, released him by paying his debts. He petitioned King Charles I. to be sent into Ethiopia, etc., to procure MSS. Having spoken in favour of

That of the warrior, Charles of Sweden, is, I think, as highly finished a picture as can possibly be conceived.

Were all the other excellencies of this poem annihilated, it must ever have our grateful reverence from its noble conclusion; in which we are consoled with the assurance that happiness may be attained, if we 'apply our hearts' to piety:

'Where then shall hope and fear their objects find?
 Shall dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
 Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
 Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
 Shall no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
 No cries attempt the mercy of the skies?
 Enthusiast², cease; petitions yet remain,
 Which Heav'n may hear, nor deem Religion vain.
 Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
 But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.
 Safe in His hand, whose eye discerns afar
 The secret ambush of a specious pray'r;
 Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
 Secure whate'er He gives He gives the best.
 Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
 And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
 Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
 Obedient passions, and a will resign'd;
 For love, which scarce collective man can fill,
 For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
 For faith, which panting for a happier seat,
 Counts death kind Nature's signal for retreat.
 These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
 These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain;
 With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
 And makes the happiness she does not find.'

Monarchy and bishops, he was plundered by the parliament forces, and twice carried away prisoner from his rectory; and afterwards had not a shirt to shift him in three months, without he borrowed it, and died very poor in 1646. BOSWELL.

¹ Psalm xc. 12.

² In the original *Inquirer*.

Garrick being now vested with theatrical power by being manager of Drury-lane theatre, he kindly and generously made use of it to bring out Johnson's tragedy, which had been long kept back for want of encouragement. But in this benevolent purpose he met with no small difficulty from the temper of Johnson, which could not brook that a drama which he had formed with much study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years of Horace¹, should be revised and altered at the pleasure of an actor². Yet Garrick knew well, that without some alterations it would not be fit for the stage. A violent dispute having ensued between them, Garrick applied to the Reverend Dr. Taylor to interpose. Johnson was at first very obstinate. 'Sir, (said he) the fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels³.' He was, however, at last, with difficulty, prevailed on to comply with Garrick's wishes, so as to allow of some changes; but still there were not enough.

Dr. Adams was present the first night of the representation of *Irene*, and gave me the following account: 'Before the curtain drew up, there were catcalls whistling, which alarmed Johnson's friends. The Prologue, which was written by himself in a manly strain, soothed the audience⁴, and the play

¹ '... nonumque prematur in annum.' Horace, *Ars Poet.* l. 388.

² 'Of all authors,' wrote Johnson, 'those are the most wretched who exhibit their productions on the theatre, and who are to propitiate first the manager and then the public. Many an humble visitant have I followed to the doors of these lords of the drama, seen him touch the knocker with a shaking hand, and after long deliberation adventure to solicit entrance by a single knock.' *Works*, v. 360.

³ Mahomet was, in fact, played by Mr. Barry, and Demetrius by Mr. Garrick: but probably at this time the parts were not yet cast. BOSWELL.

⁴ The expression used by Dr. Adams was 'soothed.' I should rather think the audience was *awed* by the extraordinary spirit and dignity of the following lines:

'Be this at least his praise, be this his pride,
To force applause no modern arts are tried:

went off tolerably, till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard¹, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out "*Murder! Murder!*" She several times attempted to speak; but in vain. At last she was obliged to go off the stage alive.' This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, as the play now has it². The Epilogue, as Johnson informed me, was written by Sir William Yonge⁴. I know not how his play came to be thus

Should partial catcalls all his hopes confound,
 He bids no trumpet quell the fatal sound;
 Should welcome sleep relieve the weary wit,
 He rolls no thunders o'er the drowsy pit;
 No snares to captivate the judgement spreads,
 Nor bribes your eyes to prejudice your heads.
 Unmov'd, though witlings sneer and rivals rail,
 Studious to please, yet not ashamed to fail,
 He scorns the meek address, the suppliant strain,
 With merit needless, and without it vain;
 In Reason, Nature, Truth, he dares to trust;
 Ye fops be silent, and ye wits be just! BOSWELL.

¹ Johnson said of Mrs. Pritchard's playing in general that 'it was quite mechanical;' *post*, April 7, 1775. See also *post* under Sept. 30, 1783.

² The strangling of Irene in the view of the audience was suggested by Mr. Garrick.' Davies's *Garrick*, i. 128. Dryden in his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (edit. 1701, i. 13), says:—'I have observed that in all our tragedies the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die; 'tis the most comick part of the whole play.' 'Suppose your piece admitted, acted; one single ill-natured jest from the pit is sufficient to cancel all your labours.' Goldsmith's *Present State of Polite Learning*, chap. x.

³ In her last speech two of the seven lines are very bad:—

'Guilt and despair, pale spectres! grin around me,
 And stun me with the yellings of damnation!' Act. v. sc. 9.

⁴ Murphy referring to Boswell's statement says:—'The Epilogue, we are told in a late publication, was written by Sir William Young. This is a new discovery, but by no means probable. When the appendages to a Dramatic Performance are not assigned to a friend, or an unknown hand, or a person of fashion, they are always supposed to
 graced

graced by the pen of a person then so eminent in the political world.

Notwithstanding all the support of such performers as Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and every advantage of dress and decoration, the tragedy of *Irene* did not please the publick¹. Mr. Garrick's zeal carried it through for nine nights², so that the authour had his three nights' profits; and from a receipt signed by him, now in the hands of Mr. James

be written by the author of the Play.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 154. He overlooks altogether the statement in the *Gent. Mag.* (xix. 85) that the Epilogue is 'by another hand.' Mr. Croker points out that the words 'as Johnson informed me' first appear in the second edition. The wonder is that Johnson accepted this Epilogue, which is a little coarse and a little profane. Yonge was Secretary at War in Walpole's ministry. Walpole said of him 'that nothing but Yonge's character could keep down his parts, and nothing but his parts support his character.' Horace Walpole's *Letters*, i. 98, note.

¹ I know not what Sir John Hawkins means by the *cold reception* of *Irene*. (See *ante*, note, p. 223.) I was at the first representation, and most of the subsequent. It was much applauded the first night, particularly the speech on *to-morrow* [Act. iii. sc. 2]. It ran nine nights at least. It did not indeed become a stock-play, but there was not the least opposition during the representation, except the first night in the last act, where Irene was to be strangled on the stage, which *John* could not bear, though a dramattick poet may stab or slay by hundreds. The bow-string was not a Christian nor an ancient Greek or Roman death. But this offence was removed after the first night, and Irene went off the stage to be strangled.—BURNEY.

² According to the *Gent. Mag.* (xix. 76) 'it was acted from Monday, Feb. 6, to Monday, Feb. 20, inclusive.' A letter in the *Garrick Corres.* (i. 32), dated April 3, 1745, seems to shew that so long a run was uncommon. The writer addressing Garrick says:—'You have now performed it [*Tancred*] for nine nights; consider the part, and whether nature can well support the frequent repetition of such shocks. Permit me to advise you to resolve not to act upon any account above three times a week.' Yet against this may be set the following passage in *The Rambler*, No. 123:—'At last a malignant author, whose performance I had persecuted through the nine nights, wrote an epigram upon Tape the critic, which drove me from the pit for ever.' Murphy writing in 1792 said that *Irene* had not been exhibited on any stage since its first representation. Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 52.

Dodsley,

Dodsley, it appears that his friend Mr. Robert Dodsley gave him one hundred pounds for the copy, with his usual reservation of the right of one edition¹.

Irene, considered as a poem, is intitled to the praise of superiour excellence². Analysed into parts, it will furnish a rich store of noble sentiments, fine imagery, and beautiful language; but it is deficient in pathos, in that delicate power of touching the human feelings, which is the principal end of the drama³. Indeed Garrick has complained to me, that Johnson not only had not the faculty of producing the impressions of tragedy, but that he had not the sensibility to perceive them. His great friend Mr. Walmsley's prediction, that he would 'turn out a fine tragedy-writer⁴,' was, therefore, ill-founded. Johnson was wise enough to be convinced that he had not the talents necessary to write successfully for the stage, and never made another attempt in that species of composition⁵.

¹ Mr. Croker says that 'it appears by a MS. note in Isaac Reed's copy of Murphy's *Life*, that the receipts of the third, sixth, and ninth nights, after deducting sixty guineas a night for the expenses of the house, amounted to £195 17s.: Johnson cleared therefore, with the copyright, very nearly £300.' *Irene* was sold at the price of 1s. 6d. a copy (*Gent. Mag.* xix. 96); so that Dodsley must have looked for a very large sale.

² See *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection* for Johnson's estimate of *Irene* in later life.

³ Aaron Hill (vol. ii. p. 355), in a letter to Mr. Mallett, gives the following account of *Irene* after having seen it: 'I was at the anomalous Mr. Johnson's benefit, and found the play his proper representative; strong sense ungraced by sweetness or decorum.' BOSWELL.

⁴ See *ante*, p. 118.

⁵ Murphy (*Life*, p. 53) says that 'some years afterwards, when he knew Johnson to be in distress, he asked Garrick why he did not produce another tragedy for his Lichfield friend? Garrick's answer was remarkable: "When Johnson writes tragedy, declamation roars, and passion sleeps: when Shakespeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his own heart."' Johnson was perhaps aware of the causes of his failure as a tragedy-writer. In his criticism of Addison's *Cato* he says:—'Of *Cato* it has been not unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant

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When asked how he felt upon the ill success of his tragedy, he replied, 'Like the Monument'; meaning that he continued firm and unmoved as that column. And let it be remembered, as an admonition to the *genus irritabile*² of dramattick writers, that this great man, instead of peevishly complaining of the bad taste of the town, submitted to its decision without a murmur. He had, indeed, upon all

language than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. . . . The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. . . . Its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffected elegance and chill philosophy.' *Works*, vii. 456. 'Johnson thought *Cato* the best model of tragedy we had; yet he used to say, of all things the most ridiculous would be to see a girl cry at the representation of it.' Johnson's *Works* (1787) xi. 207. *Cato*, if neglected, has added at least eight 'habitual quotations' to the language (see Thackeray's *English Humourists*, p. 98). *Irene* has perhaps not added a single one. It has nevertheless some quotable lines, such as—

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|--|-----------------|
| 'Crowds that hide a monarch from himself.' | Act i. sc. 4. |
| 'To cant . . . of reason to a lover.' | Act iii. sc. 1. |
| 'When c'en as love was breaking off from wonder, And tender accents quiver'd on my lips.' | Ib. |
| 'And fate lies crowded in a narrow space.' | Act iii. sc. 6. |
| 'Reflect that life and death, affecting sounds, Are only varied modes of endless being.' | Act iii. sc. 8. |
| 'Directs the planets with a careless nod.' | Ib. |
| 'Far as futurity's untravell'd waste.' | Act iv. sc. 1. |
| 'And wake from ignorance the western world.' | Act iv. sc. 2. |
| 'Through hissing ages a proverbial coward, The tale of women, and the scorn of fools.' | Act iv. sc. 3. |
| 'No records but the records of the sky.' | Ib. |
| ' . . . thou art sunk beneath reproach.' | Act v. sc. 2. |
| 'Oh hide me from myself.' | Act v. sc. 3. |

¹ Johnson wrote of Milton:—'I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 108.

² 'Genus irritabile vatium.'

'The fretful tribe of rival poets.'

Francis, *Horace*, Ep. ii. 2. 102.

occasions,

occasions, a great deference for the general opinion¹: 'A man (said he) who writes a book, thinks himself wiser or wittier than the rest of mankind; he supposes that he can instruct or amuse them, and the publick to whom he appeals, must, after all, be the judges of his pretensions.'

On occasion of his play being brought upon the stage, Johnson had a fancy that as a dramattick authour his dress should be more gay than what he ordinarily wore; he therefore appeared behind the scenes, and even in one of the side boxes, in a scarlet waistcoat, with rich gold lace, and a gold-laced hat². He humourously observed to Mr. Langton, 'that when in that dress he could not treat people with the same ease as when in his usual plain clothes³.' Dress indeed, we

¹ This deference he enforces in many passages in his writings; as for instance:—'Dryden might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 252. 'The authority of Addison is great; yet the voice of the people, when to please the people is the purpose, deserves regard.' *Ib.* 376. 'About things on which the public thinks long, it commonly attains to think right.' *Ib.* 456. 'These apologies are always useless: "de gustibus non est disputandum;" men may be convinced, but they cannot be pleased against their will.' *Ib.* viii. 26. 'Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible.' *Ib.* viii. 316. Lord Chesterfield in writing to his son about his first appearance in the world said, 'You will be tried and judged there, not as a boy, but as a man; and from that moment *there is no appeal for character*.' Lord Chesterfield's *Letters*, iii. 324. Addison in *The Guardian*, No. 98, had said that 'men of the best sense are always diffident of their private judgment, till it receives a sanction from the public. *Provoco ad populum*, I appeal to the people, was the usual saying of a very excellent dramatic poet, when he had any disputes with particular persons about the justness and regularity of his productions.' See *post*, March 23, 1783.

² 'Were I,' he said, 'to wear a laced or embroidered waistcoat, it should be very rich. I had once a very rich laced waistcoat, which I wore the first night of my tragedy.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 27, 1773.

³ 'Topham Beauclerc used to give a pleasant description of this greenroom finery, as related by the author himself: "But," said Johnson, with great gravity, "I soon laid aside my gold-laced hat, lest it should make me proud."' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 52. In *The Idler* (No.

must

must allow, has more effect even upon strong minds than one should suppose, without having had the experience of it. His necessary attendance while his play was in rehearsal, and during its performance, brought him acquainted with many of the performers of both sexes, which produced a more favourable opinion of their profession than he had harshly expressed in his *Life of Savage*¹. With some of them he kept up an acquaintance as long as he and they lived, and was ever ready to shew them acts of kindness. He for a considerable time used to frequent the *Green Room*, and seemed to take delight in dissipating his gloom, by mixing in the sprightly chit-chat of the motley circle then to be found there². Mr. David Hume related to me from Mr. Garrick, that Johnson at last denied himself this amusement, from considerations of rigid virtue; saying, 'I'll come no more behind your scenes, David; for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities.'

1750: ÆTAT. 41.]—IN 1750 he came forth in the character for which he was eminently qualified, a majestick teacher of moral and religious wisdom. The vehicle which he chose was that of a periodical paper, which he knew had been, upon former occasions, employed with great success. *The Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, were the last of the kind published in England, which had stood the test of a long trial³; and such an interval had now elapsed since their publication, as made him justly think that, to many of his readers, this form

62) we have an account of a man who had longed to 'issue forth in all the splendour of embroidery.' When his fine clothes were brought, 'I felt myself obstructed,' he wrote, 'in the common intercourse of civility by an uneasy consciousness of my new appearance; as I thought myself more observed, I was more anxious about my mien and behaviour; and the mien which is formed by care is commonly ridiculous.'

¹ See *ante*, p. 193.

² See *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*.

³ *The Tatler* came to an end on Jan. 2, 1710-1; the first series of *The Spectator* on Dec. 6, 1712; *The Guardian* on Oct. 1, 1713; and the second series of *The Spectator* on Dec. 20, 1714.

of instruction would, in some degree, have the advantage of novelty. A few days before the first of his *Essays* came out, there started another competitor for fame in the same form, under the title of *The Tatler Revived*¹, which I believe was 'born but to die².' Johnson was, I think, not very happy in the choice of his title, *The Rambler*, which certainly is not suited to a series of grave and moral discourses; which the Italians have literally, but ludicrously translated by *Il Vagabondo*³; and which has been lately assumed as the denomination of a vehicle of licentious tales, *The Rambler's Magazine*. He gave Sir Joshua Reynolds the following account of its getting this name: 'What *must* be done, Sir, *will* be done. When I was to begin publishing that paper, I was at a loss how to name it. I sat down at night upon my bedside, and resolved that I would not go to sleep till I had fixed its title. *The Rambler* seemed the best that occurred, and I took it⁴.'

With what devout and conscientious sentiments this paper was undertaken, is evidenced by the following prayer, which he composed and offered up on the occasion: 'Almighty GOD, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labor is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is

¹ 'Two new designs have appeared about the middle of this month [March 1750], one entitled, *The Tatler Revived; or The Christian Philosopher and Politician*, half a sheet, price 2d. (stamped); the other, *The Rambler*, three half sheets (unstamped); price 2d.' *Gent. Mag.* xx. 126.

² Pope's *Essay on Man*, ii. 10.

³ See *post*, under Oct. 12, 1779.

⁴ I have heard Dr. Warton mention, that he was at Mr. Robert Dodsley's with the late Mr. Moore, and several of his friends, considering what should be the name of the periodical paper which Moore had undertaken. Garrick proposed *The Sallad*, which, by a curious coincidence, was afterwards applied to himself by Goldsmith:

'Our Garrick's a sallad, for in him we see
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness agree!'

[*Retaliation*, line 11.]

At last, the company having separated, without any thing of which they approved having been offered, Dodsley himself thought of *The World*. BOSWELL.

folly; grant, I beseech Thee, that in this undertaking¹ thy Holy Spirit may not be with-held from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others: grant this, O LORD, for the sake of thy son JESUS CHRIST. Amen².

The first paper of *The Rambler* was published on Tuesday the 20th of March, 1750; and its authour was enabled to continue it, without interruption, every Tuesday and Friday, till Saturday the 17th of March, 1752³, on which day it closed. This is a strong confirmation of the truth of a remark of his, which I have had occasion to quote elsewhere⁴, that 'a man may write at any time, if he will set himself doggedly to it⁵;' for, notwithstanding his constitutional indolence, his depression of spirits, and his labour in carrying on his *Dictionary*, he answered the stated calls of the press twice a week from the stores of his mind, during all that time; having received no assistance, except four billets in No. 10, by Miss Mulso, now Mrs. Chapone⁶; No. 30, by Mrs. Catharine Talbot⁷; No. 97, by Mr. Samuel Richardson, whom he describes in an introductory note as 'An author who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at

¹ In the original MS. 'in this *my* undertaking,' and below, 'the salvation *both* of myself and others.'

* *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 9. BOSWELL.

³ In the original folio edition of *The Rambler* the concluding paper is dated Saturday, March 17. But Saturday was in fact March 14. This circumstance is worth notice, for Mrs. Johnson died on the 17th. MALONE.

⁴ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3d edit. p. 28. [Aug. 16, 1773]. BOSWELL.

⁵ 'Gray had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastic foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and virtue wishes him to have been superior.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 482. See *post*, under April 15, 1758.

⁶ Her correspondence with Richardson and Mrs. Carter was published in 1807.

⁷ The correspondence between her and Mrs. Carter was published in 1808.

the command of virtue;' and Nos. 44 and 100 by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Posterity will be astonished when they are told, upon the authority of Johnson himself, that many of these discourses, which we should suppose had been laboured with all the slow attention of literary leisure, were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed¹. It can be accounted for only in this way; that by reading and meditation, and a very close inspection of life, he had accumulated a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, which, by a peculiar promptitude of mind, was ever ready at his call, and which he had constantly accustomed himself to clothe in the most apt and energetick expression. Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked him by what

¹ Dr. Birch says:—'The proprietor of the *Rambler*, Cave, told me that copy was seldom sent to the press till late in the night before the day of publication.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 121, note. See *post*, April 12, 1776, and beginning of 1781.

Johnson carefully revised the *Ramblers* for the collected edition. The editor of the Oxford edition of Johnson's *Works* states (ii. x), that 'the alterations exceeded six thousand.' The following passage from the last number affords a good instance of this revision.

First edition.

'I have never complied with temporary curiosity, nor furnished my readers with abilities to discuss the topic of the day; I have seldom exemplified my assertions by living characters; from my papers therefore no man could hope either censures of his enemies or praises of himself, and they only could be expected to peruse them, whose passions left them leisure for the contemplation of abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by her native dignity without the assistance of modish ornaments.' *Gent. Mag.* xxii. 117.

Revised Edition.

'I have never complied with temporary curiosity, nor enabled my readers to discuss the topic of the day; I have rarely exemplified my assertions by living characters; in my papers no man could look for censures of his enemies, or praises of himself; and they only were expected to peruse them, whose passions left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity.' Johnson's *Works*, iii. 462.

means

means he had attained his extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. He told him, that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion, and in every company; to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expressions to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him¹.

Yet he was not altogether unprepared as a periodical writer; for I have in my possession a small duodecimo volume, in which he has written, in the form of Mr. Locke's *Common-Place Book*, a variety of hints for essays on different subjects. He has marked upon the first blank leaf of it, 'To the 128th page, collections for the *Rambler*;' and in another place, 'In fifty-two there were seventeen provided; in 97—21; in 190—25.' At a subsequent period (probably after the work was finished) he added, 'In all, taken of provided materials, 30².'

Sir John Hawkins, who is unlucky upon all occasions, tells us, that 'this method of accumulating intelligence had been practised by Mr. Addison, and is humourously described in one of the *Spectators*³, wherein he feigns to have dropped his paper of *notanda*, consisting of a diverting medley of broken sentences and loose hints, which he tells us he had collected, and meant to make use of. Much of the same kind is Johnson's *Adversaria*⁴.' But the truth is, that there is no resemblance at all between them. Addison's note was a fiction, in which unconnected fragments of his lucubrations were purposely jumbled together, in as odd a manner as he could, in order to produce a laughable effect. Whereas Johnson's

¹ 'Such relics [Milton's early manuscripts] shew how excellence is acquired; what we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 119.

² Of the first 52 *Ramblers* 49 were wholly by Johnson; of the last 156, 154. He seems to say that in the first 49, 17 were written from notes, and in the last 154 only 13.

³ No. 46.

⁴ Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, p. 268 [p. 265]. BOSWELL.

abbreviations are all distinct, and applicable to each subject of which the head is mentioned.

For instance, there is the following specimen :

Youth's Entry, &c.

'Baxter's account of things in which he had changed his mind as he grew up. Voluminous.—No wonder.—If every man was to tell, or mark, on how many subjects he has changed, it would make vols. but the changes not always observed by man's self.—From pleasure to bus. [*business*] to quiet; from thoughtfulness to reflect. to piety; from dissipation to domestic. by impercept. gradat. but the change is certain. Dial' *non progredi, progress. esse conspicimus*. Look back, consider what was thought at some dist. period.

'*Hope predom. in youth. Mind not willingly indulges unpleasing thoughts.* The world lies all enameled before him, as a distant prospect sun-gilt²; inequalities only found by coming to it. *Love is to be all joy—children excellent—Fame to be constant—caresses of the great—applauses of the learned—smiles of Beauty.*

'*Fear of disgrace—bashfulness—Finds things of less importance. Miscarriages forgot like excellencies;—if remembered, of no import. Danger of sinking into negligence of reputation. Lest the fear of disgrace destroy activity.*

'*Confidence in himself.* Long tract of life before him.—No thought of sickness.—Embarrassment of affairs.—Distraction of family. Publick calamities.—No sense of the prevalence of bad habits.—Negligent of time—ready to undertake—careless to pursue—all changed by time.

'*Confident of others—unsuspecting as unexperienced—imagining himself secure against neglect, never imagines they will venture to treat him ill. Ready to trust; expecting to*

¹ 'The sly shadow steals away upon the dial, and the quickest eye can distinguish no more than that it is gone.' Glanville, quoted in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

² This most beautiful image of the enchanting delusion of youthful prospect has not been used in any of Johnson's essays. BOSWELL.

be trusted. Convinced by time of the selfishness, the meanness, the cowardice, the treachery of men.

‘Youth ambitious, as thinking honours easy to be had.

‘Different kinds of praise pursued at different periods. Of the gay in youth. dang. hurt, &c. despised.

‘Of the fancy in manhood. Ambit.—stocks—bargains.—Of the wise and sober in old age—seriousness—formality—maxims, but general—only of the rich, otherwise age is happy—but at last every thing referred to riches—no having fame, honour, influence, without subjection to caprice.

‘Horace’.

‘Hard it would be if men entered life with the same views with which they leave it, or left as they enter it.—No hope—no undertaking—no regard to benevolence—no fear of disgrace, &c.

‘Youth to be taught the piety of age—age to retain the honour of youth.’

This, it will be observed, is the sketch of Number 196 of *The Rambler*. I shall gratify my readers with another specimen:

‘*Confederacies difficult; why.*

‘Seldom in war a match for single persons—nor in peace, therefore kings make themselves absolute. Confederacies in learning—every great work the work of one. *Bruy.* Scholar’s friendship like ladies. *Scriebamus, &c. Mart.*² the apple of discord—the laurel of discord—the poverty of criticism. Swift’s opinion of the power of six geniuses united³. That union scarce possible. His remarks just;

¹ From Horace (*Ars Poet.* l. 175) he takes his motto for the number:—

‘*Multa ferunt anni venientes comoda secum,
Multa recedentes adimunt.*’

‘The blessings flowing in with life’s full tide

Down with our ebb of life decreasing glide.’ FRANCIS.

² Lib. xii. 96 [95]. ‘*In Tuccam æmulum omnium suorum studiorum.*’ MALONE.

³ ‘There never appear,’ says Swift, ‘more than five or six men of genius in an age; but if they were united, the world could not stand before them.’ Johnson’s *Works*, iv. 18.

man

man a social, not steady nature. Drawn to man by words, repelled by passions. Orb drawn by attraction rep. [*repelled*] by centrifugal.

‘Common danger unites by crushing other passions—but they return. Equality hinders compliance. Superiority produces insolence and envy. Too much regard in each to private interest—too little.

‘The mischiefs of private and exclusive societies—the fitness of social attraction diffused through the whole. The mischiefs of too partial love of our country. Contraction of moral duties—*οἱ φίλοι οὐ φίλος*¹.

‘Every man moves upon his own center, and therefore repels others from too near a contact, though he may comply with some general laws.

‘Of confederacy with superiours, every one knows the inconvenience. With equals, no authority;—every man his own opinion—his own interest.

‘Man and wife hardly united;—scarce ever without children. Computation, if two to one against two, how many against five? If confederacies were easy—useless;—many oppresses many.—If possible only to some, dangerous. *Principum amicitias*².’

Here we see the embryo of Number 45 of *The Adventurer*; and it is a confirmation of what I shall presently have occasion to mention³, that the papers in that collection marked T. were written by Johnson.

¹ In the first edition this is printed *φῖ φίλοι οὐ φίλος*; in the second, *φῖ φίλοι οὐ φίλος*; in the ‘Corrections’ to the second, we find ‘for *ω* read *οἱ*’; in the third it is printed as above. In three editions we have therefore five readings of the first word. See *post*, April 15, 1778, where Johnson says: ‘An old Greek said, “He that has friends has no friend,”’ and April 24, 1779, where he says: ‘Garrick had friends but no friend.’

² ‘gravesque

Principum amicitias.’

‘And fatal friendships of the guilty great.’

FRANCIS, Horace, *Odes*, ii. 1. 4.

³ *Post*, under Jan. 1, 1753.

This scanty preparation of materials will not, however, much diminish our wonder at the extraordinary fertility of his mind; for the proportion which they bear to the number of essays which he wrote, is very small; and it is remarkable, that those for which he had made no preparation, are as rich and as highly finished as those for which the hints were lying by him. It is also to be observed, that the papers formed from his hints are worked up with such strength and elegance, that we almost lose sight of the hints, which become like 'drops in the bucket.' Indeed, in several instances, he has made a very slender use of them, so that many of them remain still unapplied¹.

As *The Rambler* was entirely the work of one man, there was, of course, such a uniformity in its texture, as very much to exclude the charm of variety²; and the grave and often solemn cast of thinking, which distinguished it from other periodical papers, made it, for some time, not generally liked. So slowly did this excellent work, of which twelve editions

¹ Sir John Hawkins has selected from this little collection of materials, what he calls the 'Rudiments of two of the papers of the *Rambler*.' But he has not been able to read the manuscript distinctly. Thus he writes, p. 266, 'Sailor's fate any mansion;' whereas the original is 'Sailor's life my aversion.' He has also transcribed the unappropriated hints on *Writers for bread*, in which he decyphers these notable passages, one in Latin, *fatui non famæ*, instead of *fami non famæ*; Johnson having in his mind what Thuanus says of the learned German antiquary and linguist, Xylander, who, he tells us, lived in such poverty, that he was supposed *fami non famæ scribere*; and another in French, *Dégente de fate* [fatu] *et affamé d'argent*, instead of *Dégouté de fame*, (an old word for *renommée*) *et affamé d'argent*. The manuscript being written in an exceedingly small hand, is indeed very hard to read; but it would have been better to have left blanks than to write nonsense. BOSWELL.

² When we know that of the 208 *Ramblers* all but five were written by Johnson, it is amusing to read a passage in one of Miss Talbot's letters to Mrs. Carter, dated Oct. 20, 1750:—'Mr. Johnson would, I fear, be mortified to hear that people know a paper of his own by the sure mark of somewhat a little excessive, a little exaggerated in the expression.' *Carter Corres.* i. 357.

have now issued from the press, gain upon the world at large, that even in the closing number the authour says, 'I have never been much a favourite of the publick¹.'

Yet, very soon after its commencement, there were who felt and acknowledged its uncommon excellence. Verses in its praise appeared in the newspapers; and the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* mentions, in October, his having received several letters to the same purpose from the learned².

¹ The *Ramblers* certainly were little noticed at first. Smart, the poet, first mentioned them to me as excellent papers, before I had heard any one else speak of them. When I went into Norfolk, in the autumn of 1751, I found but one person, (the Rev. Mr. Squires, a man of learning, and a general purchaser of new books,) who knew anything of them. Before I left Norfolk in the year 1760, the *Ramblers* were in high favour among persons of learning and good taste. Others there were, devoid of both, who said that the *hard words* in the *Rambler* were used by the authour to render his *Dictionary* indispensably necessary. BURNNEY. We have notices of *The Rambler* in the *Carter Corres.*:—'May 28, 1750. The author ought to be cautioned not to use over many hard words. In yesterday's paper (a very pretty one indeed) we had *equiponderant*, and another so hard I cannot remember it [adscititious], both in one sentence.' 'Dec. 17, 1750:—Mr. Cave complains of him for not admitting correspondents; this does mischief. In the main I think he is to be applauded for it. But why then does he not write now and then on the living manners of the times?' In writing on April 22, 1752, just after *The Rambler* had come to an end, Miss Talbot says:—'Indeed 'tis a sad thing that such a paper should have met with discouragement from wise and learned and good people too. Many are the disputes it has cost me, and not once did I come off triumphant.' Mrs. Carter replied:—'Many a battle have I too fought for him in the country, but with little success.' Murphy says:—'Of this excellent production the number sold on each day did not amount to five hundred; of course the bookseller, who paid the author four guineas a week, did not carry on a successful trade.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 59.

² Richardson wrote to Cave on Aug. 9, 1750, after forty-one numbers had appeared:—'I hope the world tastes them; for its own sake I hope the world tastes them. The author I can only guess at. There is but one man, I think, that could write them.' *Rich. Corres.* i. 165, Cave replied:—'Mr. Johnson is the *Great Rambler*, being, as you observe, the only man who can furnish two such papers in a week, be-

The

The Student, or Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany, in which Mr. Bonnell Thornton and Mr. Colman were the principal writers, describes it as 'a work that exceeds anything of the kind ever published in this kingdom, some of the *Spectators* excepted—if indeed they may be excepted.' And afterwards, 'May the publick favours crown his merits, and may not the English, under the auspicious reign of GEORGE the Second, neglect a man, who, had he lived in the first century, would have been one of the greatest favourites of Augustus.' This flattery of the monarch had no effect. It is too well known, that the second George never was an Augustus to learning or genius¹.

Johnson told me, with an amiable fondness, a little pleasing circumstance relative to this work. Mrs. Johnson, in whose judgement and taste he had great confidence, said to him, after a few numbers of *The Rambler* had come out, 'I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to this².' Distant praise, from whatever quarter, is not so delightful as that of a wife whom a man loves and esteems. Her approbation may be said to 'come home to his bosom;' and being so near, its effect is most sensible and permanent.

Mr. James Elphinston³, who has since published various sides his other great business.' He mentioned the recommendation it received from high quarters, and continued:—'Notwithstanding, whether the price of two-pence, or the unfavourable season of their first publication hinders the demand, no boast can be made of it.' Johnson had not wished his name to be known. Cave says that 'Mr. Garrick and others, who knew the author's powers and style from the first, unadvisedly asserting their suspicions, overturned the scheme of secrecy.' *Ib.* pp. 168–170.

¹ Horace Walpole, while justifying George II. against 'bookish men who have censured his neglect of literature,' says:—'In truth! I believe King George would have preferred a guinea to a composition as perfect as *Alexander's Feast*.' *Reign of George III*, iii. 304.

² 'Dr. Johnson said to an acquaintance of mine, "My other works are wine and water; but my *Rambler* is pure wine." Rogers's *Table Talk*, p. 10.

³ See *post*, April 5, 1772; April 19, 1773; and April 9, 1778.

works,

works, and who was ever esteemed by Johnson as a worthy man, happened to be in Scotland while *The Rambler* was coming out in single papers at London. With a laudable zeal at once for the improvement of his countrymen, and the reputation of his friend, he suggested and took the charge of an edition of those Essays at Edinburgh, which followed progressively the London publication¹.

The following letter written at this time, though not dated, will show how much pleased Johnson was with this publication, and what kindness and regard he had for Mr. Elphinston.

‘TO MR. JAMES ELPHINSTON.

[*No date.*]

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I cannot but confess the failures of my correspondence, but hope the same regard which you express for me on every other occasion, will incline you to forgive me. I am often, very often, ill; and, when I am well, am obliged to work: and, indeed, have never much used myself to punctuality. You are, however, not to make unkind inferences, when I forbear to reply to your kindness; for be assured, I never receive a letter from you without great pleasure, and a very warm sense of your generosity and friendship, which I heartily blame myself for not cultivating with more care. In this, as in many other cases, I go wrong, in opposition to conviction; for I think scarce any temporal good equally to be desired with the regard and familiarity of worthy men. I hope we shall be some time nearer to each other, and have a more ready way of pouring out our hearts.

‘I am glad that you still find encouragement to proceed in your publication, and shall beg the favour of six more volumes to add to my former six, when you can, with any convenience, send them me. Please to present a set, in my name, to Mr. Ruddiman², of

¹ It was executed in the printing-office of Sands, Murray, and Cochran, with uncommon elegance, upon writing-paper, of a duodecimo size, and with the greatest correctness; and Mr. Elphinston enriched it with translations of the mottos. When completed, it made eight handsome volumes. It is, unquestionably, the most accurate and beautiful edition of this work; and there being but a small impression, it is now become scarce, and sells at a very high price. BOSWELL.

² Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, the learned grammarian of Scotland, well whom,

whom, I hear, that his learning is not his highest excellence. I have transcribed the mottos, and returned them, I hope not too late, of which I think many very happily performed. Mr. Cave has put the last in the magazine¹, in which I think he did well. I beg of you to write soon, and to write often, and to write long letters, which I hope in time to repay you; but you must be a patient creditor. I have, however, this of gratitude, that I think of you with regard, when I do not, perhaps, give the proofs which I ought, of being, Sir,

‘Your most obliged and
‘Most humble servant,
‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

This year he wrote to the same gentleman another letter, upon a mournful occasion.

‘TO MR. JAMES ELPHINSTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

September 25, 1750.

‘You have, as I find by every kind of evidence, lost an excellent mother; and I hope you will not think me incapable of partaking of your grief. I have a mother, now eighty-two years of age, whom, therefore, I must soon lose², unless it please GOD that she rather should mourn for me. I read the letters in which you relate your mother’s death to Mrs. Strahan³, and think I do myself honour, when I tell you that I read them with tears; but tears are neither to *you* nor to *me* of any further use, when once the tribute of nature has been paid. The business of life summons us away from useless grief, and calls us to the exercise of those virtues of which we are lamenting our deprivation. The greatest benefit

known for his various excellent works, and for his accurate editions of several authours. He was also a man of a most worthy private character. His zeal for the Royal House of Stuart did not render him less estimable in Dr. Johnson’s eye. BOSWELL.

¹ In the *Gent. Mag.* for Sept. 1750, and for Oct. 1752, translations of many of the mottoes were given; but in each number there are *several* of Elphinston’s. Johnson seems to speak of only one.

² Writing to Miss Porter on July 12, 1749, he said:—‘I was afraid your letter had brought me ill news of my mother, whose death is one of the few calamities on which I think with terror.’ Croker’s *Boswell*, p. 62.

³ Mr. Strahan was Elphinston’s brother-in-law. *Post*, April 9, 1778.
which

which one friend can confer upon another, is to guard, and excite, and elevate his virtues. This your mother will still perform, if you diligently preserve the memory of her life, and of her death: a life, so far as I can learn, useful, wise, and innocent; and a death resigned, peaceful, and holy. I cannot forbear to mention, that neither reason nor revelation denies you to hope, that you may increase her happiness by obeying her precepts; and that she may, in her present state, look with pleasure upon every act of virtue to which her instructions or example have contributed. Whether this be more than a pleasing dream, or a just opinion of separate spirits, is, indeed, of no great importance to us, when we consider ourselves as acting under the eye of GOD: yet, surely, there is something pleasing in the belief, that our separation from those whom we love is merely corporeal; and it may be a great incitement to virtuous friendship, if it can be made probable, that that union that has received the divine approbation shall continue to eternity.

‘There is one expedient by which you may, in some degree, continue her presence. If you write down minutely what you remember of her from your earliest years, you will read it with great pleasure, and receive from it many hints of soothing recollection, when time shall remove her yet farther from you, and your grief shall be matured to veneration. To this, however painful for the present, I cannot but advise you, as to a source of comfort and satisfaction in the time to come; for all comfort and all satisfaction is sincerely wished you by, dear Sir,

‘Your most obliged, most obedient,

‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

The Rambler has increased in fame as in age. Soon after its first folio edition was concluded, it was published in six duodecimo volumes¹; and its authour lived to see ten numerous editions² of it in London, beside those of Ireland and Scotland³.

¹ In the *Gent. Mag.* for January 1752, in the list of books published is:—‘A correct and beautiful edition of the *Rambler* in 4 volumes, in 12mo. Price 12s.’ *The Rambler* was not concluded till the following March. The remaining two volumes were published in July. *Gent. Mag.* xxii. 338.

² According to Hawkins (*Life*, p. 269) each edition consisted of 1250 copies.

³ See *post*, July 20, 1763.

I profess myself to have ever entertained a profound veneration for the astonishing force and vivacity of mind which *The Rambler* exhibits. That Johnson had penetration enough to see, and seeing would not disguise the general misery of man in this state of being, may have given rise to the superficial notion of his being too stern a philosopher. But men of reflection will be sensible that he has given a true representation of human existence, and that he has, at the same time, with a generous benevolence displayed every consolation which our state affords us; not only those arising from the hopes of futurity, but such as may be attained in the immediate progress through life. He has not depressed the soul to despondency and indifference. He has everywhere inculcated study, labor, and exertion. Nay, he has shewn, in a very odious light, a man whose practice is to go about darkening the views of others by perpetual complaints of evil, and awakening those considerations of danger and distress, which are, for the most part, lulled into a quiet oblivion. This he has done very strongly in his character of Suspicious¹, from which Goldsmith took that of Croaker, in his comedy of *The Good-Natured Man*², as Johnson told me he acknowledged to him, and which is, indeed, very obvious³.

¹ No. 55 [59]. BOSWELL.

² Miss Burney records in her *Diary* that one day at Streatham, while she and Mrs. Thrale 'were reading this *Rambler*, Dr. Johnson came in. We told him what we were about. "Ah, madam!" cried he, "Goldsmith was not scrupulous; but he would have been a great man had he known the real value of his own internal resources." *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 83. See *post*, beginning of 1768.

³ It is possible that Mrs. Hardcastle's drive in *She Stoops to Conquer* was suggested by *The Rambler*, No. 34. In it a young gentleman describes a lady's terror on a coach journey. 'Our whole conversation passed in dangers, and cares, and fears, and consolations, and stories of ladies dragged in the mire, forced to spend all the night on a heath, drowned in rivers, or burnt with lightning . . . We had now a new scene of terror, every man we saw was a robber, and we were ordered sometimes to drive hard, lest a traveller whom we saw behind should overtake us; and sometimes to stop, lest we should come up to him

To point out the numerous subjects which *The Rambler* treats, with a dignity and perspicuity which are there united in a manner which we shall in vain look for any where else, would take up too large a portion of my book, and would, I trust, be superfluous, considering how universally those volumes are now disseminated. Even the most condensed and brilliant sentences which they contain, and which have very properly been selected under the name of *Beauties*¹, are of considerable bulk. But I may shortly observe, that *The Rambler* furnishes such an assemblage of discourses on practical religion and moral duty, of critical investigations, and allegorical and oriental tales, that no mind can be thought very deficient that has, by constant study and meditation, assimilated to itself all that may be found there. No. 7, written in Passion-week on abstraction and self-examination², and No. 110, on penitence and the placability of the Divine Nature, cannot be too often read. No. 54, on the effect which the death of a friend should have upon us, though rather too dispiriting, may be occasionally very medicinal to the mind. Every one must suppose the writer to have been deeply impressed by a real scene; but he told me that was not the case; which shews how well his fancy could conduct him

who was passing before us. She alarmed many an honest man by begging him to spare her life as he passed by the coach.'

¹ Dr. Johnson was gratified by seeing this selection, and wrote to Mr. Kearsley, bookseller in Fleet-Street, the following note:—

'Mr. Johnson sends compliments to Mr. Kearsley, and begs the favour of seeing him as soon as he can. Mr. Kearsley is desired to bring with him the last edition of what he has honoured with the name of BEAUTIES. May 20, 1782.' BOSWELL. The correspondence, *post*, May 15, 1782, shews that Johnson sent for this book, not because he was gratified, but because he was accused, on the strength of one of the *Beauties*, of recommending suicide. On that day, being in the country, he wrote: 'I never saw the book but by casual inspection, and considered myself as utterly disengaged from its consequences.' He adds:—'I hope some time in the next week to have all rectified.' The letter of May 20 shews that on his return to town he lost little time, if any, in sending for Kearsley.

² See *post*, April 12, 1781.



DR. JOHNSON.

From a miniature worn in a bracelet by Mrs. Johnson.

to the 'house of mourning!.' Some of these more solemn papers, I doubt not, particularly attracted the notice of Dr. Young, the authour of *The Night Thoughts*, of whom my estimation is such, as to reckon his applause an honour even to Johnson. I have seen some volumes of Dr. Young's copy of *The Rambler*, in which he has marked the passages which he thought particularly excellent by folding down a corner of the page; and such as he rated in a super-eminent degree, are marked by double folds. I am sorry that some of the volumes are lost. Johnson was pleased when told of the minute attention with which Young had signified his approbation of his Essays.

I will venture to say, that in no writings whatever can be found *more bark and steel for the mind*, if I may use the expression; more that can brace and invigorate every manly and noble sentiment. No. 32 on patience, even under extreme misery, is wonderfully lofty, and as much above the rant of stoicism, as the Sun of Revelation is brighter than the twilight of Pagan philosophy. I never read the following sentence without feeling my frame thrill: 'I think there is some reason for questioning whether the body and mind are not so proportioned, that the one can bear all which can be inflicted on the other; whether virtue cannot stand its ground as long as life, and whether a soul well principled, will not be sooner separated than subdued¹.'

Though instruction be the predominant purpose of *The Rambler*, yet it is enlivened with a considerable portion of amusement. Nothing can be more erroneous than the notion which some persons have entertained, that Johnson was then a retired authour, ignorant of the world; and, of consequence, that he wrote only from his imagination when he described characters and manners. He said to me, that

¹ Ecclesiastes vii. 4.

² In the original '*separated sooner than subdued.*' Johnson acted up to what he said. When he was close on his end, 'all who saw him beheld and acknowledged the *invictum animum Catonis* . . . Talking of his illness he said:—"I will be conquered; I will not capitulate."' See *post*, Oct. 1784.

before he wrote that work, he had been 'running about the world,' as he expressed it, more than almost any body; and I have heard him relate, with much satisfaction, that several of the characters in *The Rambler* were drawn so naturally, that when it first circulated in numbers, a club in one of the towns in Essex imagined themselves to be severally exhibited in it, and were much incensed against a person who, they suspected, had thus made them objects of publick notice; nor were they quieted till authentick assurance was given them, that *The Rambler* was written by a person who had never heard of any one of them¹. Some of the characters are believed to have been actually drawn from the life, particularly that of Prospero from Garrick², who never entirely

¹ In the *Spectator*, No. 568, Addison tells of a village in which 'there arose a current report that somebody had written a book against the 'squire and the whole parish.' The book was *The Whole Duty of Man*.

² 'The character of Prospero was, beyond all question, occasioned by Garrick's ostentatious display of furniture and Dresden china.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 144. If Garrick was aimed at, it is surprising that the severity of the satire did not bring to an end, not only all friendship, but even any acquaintance between the two men. The writer describes how he and Prospero had set out in the world together, and how for a long time they had assisted each other, till his friend had been lately raised to wealth by a lucky project. 'I felt at his sudden shoot of success an honest and disinterested joy.' Prospero reproached him with his neglect to visit him at his new house. When however he went to see him, he found that his friend's impatience 'arose not from any desire to communicate his happiness, but to enjoy his superiority.' He was kept waiting at the door, and when at length he was shewn up stairs, he found the staircase carefully secured by mats from the pollution of his feet. Prospero led him into a back room, where he told him he always breakfasted when he had not great company. After the visitor had endured one act of insolence after another, he says:—'I left him without any intention of seeing him again, unless some misfortune should restore his understanding.' *Rambler*, No. 200. See *post*, May 15, 1776, where Johnson, speaking of the charge of meanness brought against Garrick, said, 'he might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player.'

forgave

forgave its pointed satire¹. For instances of fertility of fancy, and accurate description of real life, I appeal to No. 19, a man who wanders from one profession to another, with most plausible reasons for every change. No. 34, female fastidiousness and timorous refinement. No. 82, a Virtuoso who has collected curiosities. No. 88², petty modes of entertaining a company, and conciliating kindness. No. 182, fortune-hunting. No. 194-195, a tutor's account of the follies of his pupil. No. 197-198, legacy-hunting. He has given a specimen of his nice observation of the mere external appearances of life, in the following passage in No. 179, against affectation, that frequent and most disgusting quality: 'He that stands to contemplate the crowds that fill the streets of a populous city, will see many passengers whose air and motion it will be difficult to behold without contempt and laughter; but if he examine what are the appearances that thus powerfully excite his risibility, he will find among them neither poverty nor disease, nor any involuntary or painful defect. The disposition to derision and insult, is awakened by the softness of foppery, the swell of insolence, the liveliness of levity, or

¹ In C. C. Greville's *Journal* (ii. 316) we have an instance how stories about Johnson grew. He writes:—'Lord Holland told some stories of Johnson and Garrick which he had heard from Kemble . . . When Garrick was in the zenith of his popularity, and grown rich, and lived with the great, and while Johnson was yet obscure, the Doctor used to drink tea with him, and he would say, "Davy, I do not envy you your money nor your fine acquaintance, but I envy you your power of drinking such tea as this." "Yes," said Garrick, "it is very good tea, but it is not my best, nor that which I give to my Lord this and Sir somebody t'other."' There can be little doubt that the whole story is founded on the following passage in the character of Prospero: 'Breakfast was at last set, and, as I was not willing to indulge the peevishness that began to seize me, I commended the tea. Prospero then told me that another time I should taste his finest sort, but that he had only a very small quantity remaining, and reserved it for those whom he thought himself obliged to treat with particular respect.' See *post*, April 10, 1778, where Johnson maintained that Garrick bore his good-fortune with modesty.

² No. 98.

the solemnity of grandeur; by the sprightly trip, the stately stalk, the formal strut, and the lofty mien; by gestures intended to catch the eye, and by looks elaborately formed as evidences of importance.¹

Every page of *The Rambler* shews a mind teeming with classical allusion and poetical imagery: illustrations from other writers are, upon all occasions, so ready, and mingle so easily in his periods, that the whole appears of one uniform vivid texture.

The style of this work has been censured by some shallow criticks as involved and turgid, and abounding with antiquated and hard words. So ill-founded is the first part of this objection, that I will challenge all who may honour this book with a perusal, to point out any English writer whose language conveys his meaning with equal force and perspicuity. It must, indeed, be allowed, that the structure of his sentences is expanded, and often has somewhat of the inversion of Latin; and that he delighted to express familiar thoughts in philosophical language; being in this the reverse of Socrates, who, it was said, reduced philosophy to the simplicity of common life. But let us attend to what he himself says in his concluding paper: 'When common words were less pleasing to the ear, or less distinct in their signification, I have familiarised the terms of philosophy, by applying them to popular ideas.' And, as to the second part of this objection, upon a late careful revision of the work, I can with confidence say, that it is amazing how few of those words, for which it has been unjustly characterised, are actually to be found in it; I am sure, not the proportion of one to each paper. This idle charge has been echoed from one babbler to another, who have confounded Johnson's Essays with

¹ Yet his style did not escape the harmless shafts of pleasant humour; for the ingenious Bonnell Thornton published a mock Rambler in the *Drury-lane Journal*. BOSWELL. Murphy (*Life*, p. 157), criticising the above quotation from Johnson, says:—'He forgot the observation of Dryden: "If too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed, not to assist the natives, but to conquer them."'

Johnson's *Dictionary*; and because he thought it right in a Lexicon of our language to collect many words which had fallen into disuse, but were supported by great authorities, it has been imagined that all of these have been interwoven into his own compositions. That some of them have been adopted by him unnecessarily, may, perhaps, be allowed; but, in general they are evidently an advantage, for without them his stately ideas would be confined and cramped. 'He that thinks with more extent than another, will want words of larger meaning'. He once told me, that he had formed his style upon that of Sir William Temple², and upon Chambers's Proposal for his *Dictionary*³. He certainly was

¹ *Idler*, No. 70. BOSWELL. In the same number Johnson writes:— 'Few faults of style, whether real or imaginary, excite the malignity of a more numerous class of readers than the use of hard words . . . But words are hard only to those who do not understand them; and the critic ought always to inquire, whether he is incommoded by the fault of the writer or by his own. Every author does not write for every reader.' See *post*, Sept. 19, 1777, where Johnson says:— 'If Robertson's style be faulty he owes it to me; that is, having too many words, and those too big ones.'

² The following passages in Temple's writings shew that a likeness may be discovered between his style and Johnson's:— 'There may be firmness and constancy of courage from tradition as well as of belief: nor, methinks, should any man know how to be a coward, that is brought up with the opinion, that all of his nation or city have ever been valiant.' Temple's *Works*, i. 167. 'This is a disease too refined for this country and people, who are well, when they are not ill, and pleased, when they are not troubled; are content, because they think little of it; and seek their happiness in the common cases and commodities of life, or the increase of riches; not amusing themselves with the more speculative contrivances of passion, or refinements of pleasure.' *Ib.* p. 170. 'They send abroad the best of their own butter into all parts, and buy the cheapest out of Ireland, or the north of England, for their own use. In short they furnish infinite luxury which they never practise, and traffic in pleasures which they never taste.' *Ib.* p. 195. See *post*, April 9, 1778, where Johnson says:— 'Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose.'

³ Dean Stanley calls Ephraim Chambers 'the Father of Cyclopædias.' *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, p. 299, note. The epitaph which Chambers wrote for himself the Dean gives as:— 'Multis per-
mistaken ;

mistaken; or if he imagined at first that he was imitating Temple he was very unsuccessful; for nothing can be more unlike than the simplicity of Temple, and the richness of Johnson. Their styles differ as plain cloth and brocade. Temple, indeed, seems equally erroneous in supposing that he himself had formed his style upon Sandys's *View of the State of Religion in the Western parts of the World*.

The style of Johnson was, undoubtedly, much formed upon that of the great writers in the last century, Hooker, Bacon, Sanderson, Hakewell, and others; those 'GIANTS', as they were well characterised by A GREAT PERSONAGE², whose

vulgatus, paucis notus, qui vitam inter lucem et umbram, nec eruditus nec *idioticis* literis deditus, transegit.' In the *Gen. Mag.* for 1740, p. 262, the last line is given, no doubt correctly, as:—'Nec eruditus nec *idiota*, literis deditus.' The second edition of Chambers's *Cyclopædia* was published in 1738. There is no copy of his Proposal in the British Museum or Bodleian. The resemblance between his style and Johnson's is not great. The following passage is the most Johnsonian that I could find:—'None of my predecessors can blame me for the use I have made of them; since it is their own avowed practice. It is a kind of privilege attached to the office of lexicographer; if not by any formal grant, yet by connivance at least. I have already assumed the bee for my device, and who ever brought an action of trover or trespass against that avowed free-booter? 'Tis vain to pretend anything of property in things of this nature. To offer our thoughts to the public, and yet pretend a right reserved therein to oneself, if it be not absurd, yet it is sordid. The words we speak, nay the breath we emit, is not more vague and common than our thoughts, when divulged in print.' Chambers's Preface, p. xxiii.

¹ 'There were giants in the earth in those days.' *Gen.* vi. 4.

² A GREAT PERSONAGE first appears in the second edition. In the first edition we merely find 'by one whose authority,' &c. Boswell in his *Hebrides*, Aug. 28, 1773, speaks of George III. as 'a Great Personage.' In his *Letter to the People of Scotland* (p. 90) he thus introduces an anecdote about the King and Paoli:—'I have one other circumstance to communicate; but it is of the highest value. I communicate it with a mixture of awe and fondness.—That Great Personage, who is allowed by all to have the best *memory* of any man *born a Briton*,' &c. In the *Probationary Odes for the Laureateship*, published a few months after Boswell's *Letter*, a 'Great Personage' is ludicrously introduced; pp. xxx. 63.

authority,

authority, were I to name him, would stamp a reverence on the opinion.

We may, with the utmost propriety, apply to his learned style that passage of Horace, a part of which he has taken as the motto to his *Dictionary*¹:

*'Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti;
Audebit quæcumque parùm splendoris habebunt
Et sine pondere erunt, et honore indigna ferentur,
Verba movere loco, quamvis invita recedant,
Et versentur adhuc intra penetralia Vestæ.
Obscurata diu populo bonus eruet, atque
Proferet in lucem speciosa vocabula rerum,
Quæ præcis memorata Catonibus atque Cethegîs,
Nunc situs informis premit et deserta vetustas:
Adsciscet nova, quæ genitor produxerit usus:
Vehemens, et liquidus, puroque simillimus amni,
Fundet opes Latiumque beabit divite linguâ².'*

To so great a master of thinking, to one of such vast and various knowledge as Johnson, might have been allowed a

¹ The first nine lines form the motto.

² Horat. *Epist.* Lib. ii. *Epist.* ii. [l. 110]. BOSWELL.

'But how severely with themselves proceed
The men, who write such verse as we can read!
Their own strict judges, not a word they spare
That wants or force, or light, or weight, or care,
Howe'er unwillingly it quits its place,
Nay, though at court, perhaps, it may find grace:
Such they'll degrade; and sometimes, in its stead,
In downright charity revive the dead;
Mark where a bold expressive phrase appears,
Bright through the rubbish of some hundred years;
Command old words that long have slept to wake,
Words that wise Bacon or brave Rawleigh spake;
Or bid the new be English, ages hence,
(For use will father what's begot by sense;)
Pour the full tide of eloquence along,
Serenely pure, and yet divinely strong,
Rich with the treasures of each foreign tongue.'

Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, ii. 2. 157.

liberal indulgence of that licence which Horace claims in another place:

‘—————*Si fortè necesse est*
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,
Fingere cinctulis non exaudita Cethegis
Continget, dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter:
Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem si
Græco fonte cadant, parce detorta. Quid autem
Cæcilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum
Virgilio Varioque? Ego cur, acquirere pauca
Si possum, invideor; cum lingua Catonis et Enni
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
Nomina protulerit? Licuit semperque licbit
Signatum præsentè notâ producere nomen¹.’

Yet Johnson assured me, that he had not taken upon him to add more than four or five words to the English language, of his own formation²; and he was very much offended at the general licence, by no means ‘modestly taken’ in his time, not only to coin new words, but to use many words in senses quite different from their established meaning, and those frequently very fantastical³.

Sir Thomas Brown⁴, whose life Johnson wrote, was

¹ Horat. *De Arte Poetica*. [l. 48.] BOSWELL.

² See Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Aug. 29, 1773, where Boswell says that up to that date he had twice heard Johnson coin words, *peregrinity* and *depeditation*.

³ ‘The words which our authors have introduced by their knowledge of foreign languages, or ignorance of their own, by vanity or wantonness, by compliance with fashion or lust of innovation, I have registered as they occurred, though commonly only to censure them, and warn others against the folly of naturalizing useless foreigners to the injury of the natives. . . . Our language for almost a century has, by the concurrence of many causes, been gradually departing from its original Teutonick character, and deviating towards a Gallick structure and phraseology, from which it ought to be our endeavour to recall it, by making our ancient volumes the groundwork of style. . . . From the authors which rose in the time of Elizabeth a speech might be formed adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance.’ Johnson’s *Works*, v. pp. 31, 39. See *post*, May 12, 1778.

⁴ If Johnson sometimes indulged his *Brownism* (see *post*, beginning remarkably

remarkably fond of Anglo-Latian diction; and to his example we are to ascribe Johnson's sometimes indulging himself in this kind of phraseology¹. Johnson's comprehension of mind was the mould for his language. Had his conceptions been narrower, his expression would have been easier. His sentences have a dignified march; and, it is certain, that his example has given a general elevation to the language of his country, for many of our best writers have approached very near to him; and, from the influence which he has had upon our composition, scarcely any thing is written now that is not better expressed than was usual before he appeared to lead the national taste.

This circumstance, the truth of which must strike every critical reader, has been so happily enforced by Mr. Courtenay, in his *Moral and Literary Character of Dr. Johnson*, that I cannot prevail on myself to withhold it, notwithstanding his, perhaps, too great partiality for one of his friends:

of 1756), yet he saw much to censure in Browne's style. 'His style is, indeed, a tissue of many languages; a mixture of heterogeneous words, brought together from distant regions, with terms originally appropriated to one art, and drawn by violence into the service of another. He must however be confessed to have augmented our philosophical diction. . . . His innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 500. 'It is remarkable that the pomp of diction, which has been objected to Johnson, was first assumed in the *Rambler*. His *Dictionary* was going on at the same time, and in the course of that work, as he grew familiar with technical and scholastic words, he thought that the bulk of his readers were equally learned; or at least would admire the splendour and dignity of the style.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 156.

¹ The observation of his having imitated Sir Thomas Brown has been made by many people; and lately it has been insisted on, and illustrated by a variety of quotations from Brown, in one of the popular Essays written by the Reverend Mr. Knox [the Essay is No. xxii. of *Winter Evenings*, Knox's *Works*, ii. 397], master of Tunbridge school, whom I have set down in my list [*post*, under Dec. 6, 1784] of those who have sometimes not unsuccessfully imitated Dr. Johnson's style. BOSWELL.

'By nature's gifts ordain'd mankind to rule,
 He, like a Titian, form'd his brilliant school;
 And taught congenial spirits to excel,
 While from his lips impressive wisdom fell.
 Our boasted GOLDSMITH felt the sovereign sway;
 From him deriv'd the sweet, yet nervous lay.
 To Fame's proud cliff he bade our Raphael rise;
 Hence REYNOLDS' pen with REYNOLDS' pencil vies.
 With Johnson's flame melodious BURNEY glows,
 While the grand strain in smoother cadence flows.
 And you, MALONE, to critick learning dear,
 Correct and elegant, refin'd though clear,
 By studying him, acquir'd that classick taste,
 Which high in Shakspeare's fane thy statue plac'd.
 Near Johnson STEEVENS stands, on scenick ground,
 Acute, laborious, fertile, and profound.
 Ingenious HAWKESWORTH to this school we owe,
 And scarce the pupil from the tutor know.
 Here early parts accomplish'd JONES sublimes,
 And science blends with Asia's lofty rhymes:
 Harmonious JONES! who in his splendid strains
 Sings Camdeo's sports, on Agra's flowery plains:
 In Hindu fictions while we fondly trace
 Love and the Muses, deck'd with Attick grace.
 Amid these names can BOSWELL be forgot,
 Scarce by North Britons now esteem'd a Scot?¹
 Who to the sage devoted from his youth,
 Imbib'd from him the sacred love of truth;

¹ The following observation in Mr. Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* [p. 9] may sufficiently account for that Gentleman's being 'now scarcely esteem'd a Scot' by many of his countrymen:—'If he [Dr. Johnson] was particularly prejudiced against the Scots, it was because they were more in his way; because he thought their success in England rather exceeded the due proportion of their real merit; and because he could not but see in them that nationality which, I believe, no liberal-minded Scotchman will deny.' Mr. Boswell, indeed, is so free from national prejudices, that he might with equal propriety have been described as—

'Scarce by *South* Britons now esteem'd a Scot.'

COURTENAY. BOSWELL.

The keen research, the exercise of mind,
 And that best art, the art to know mankind.—
 Nor was his energy confin'd alone
 To friends around his philosophick throne;
Its influence wide improv'd our letter'd isle,
And lucid vigour marked the general style:
 As Nile's proud waves, swoln from their oozy bed,
 First o'er the neighbouring meads majestick spread;
 Till gathering force, they more and more expand,
 And with new virtue fertilise the land.'

Johnson's language, however, must be allowed to be too masculine for the delicate gentleness of female writing. His ladies, therefore, seem strangely formal, even to ridicule; and are well denominated by the names which he has given them, as Misella¹, Zozima, Properantia, Rhodoclia.

It has of late been the fashion to compare the style of Addison and Johnson, and to depreciate, I think very unjustly, the style of Addison as nerveless and feeble², because it has not the strength and energy of that of Johnson. Their prose may be balanced like the poetry of Dryden and Pope.

¹ Malone says that 'Baretti used sometimes to walk with Johnson through the streets at night, and occasionally entered into conversation with the unfortunate women who frequent them, for the sake of hearing their stories. It was from a history of one of these, which a girl told under a tree in the King's Bench Walk in the Temple to Baretti and Johnson, that he formed the story of Misella in the *Rambler* [Nos. 170 and 171].' Prior's *Malone*, p. 161. 'Of one [of these women] who was very handsome he asked, for what she thought God had given her so much beauty. She answered:—"To please gentlemen."' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 321. See also *post*, under Dec. 2, 1784.

² Hawkins (*Life*, p. 270) had said that 'the characteristics of Addison's style are feebleness and inanity.' He was thus happily ridiculed by Porson:—"Soon after the publication of Sir John's book, a parcel of Eton boys, not having the fear of God before their eyes, etc., instead of playing truant, robbing orchards, annoying poultry, or performing any other part of their school exercise, fell foul in print (see the *Microcosm*, No. 36) upon his Worship's censure of Addison's *middling* style. . . . But what can you expect, as Lord Kames justly observes, from a school where boys are taught to rob on the highway?' Porson, *Tracts*, p. 339.

Both are excellent, though in different ways. Addison writes with the ease of a gentleman. His readers fancy that a wise and accomplished companion is talking to them; so that he insinuates his sentiments and taste into their minds by an imperceptible influence. Johnson writes like a teacher. He dictates to his readers as if from an academical chair. They attend with awe and admiration; and his precepts are impressed upon them by his commanding eloquence. Addison's style, like a light wine, pleases everybody from the first. Johnson's, like a liquor of more body, seems too strong at first, but, by degrees, is highly relished; and such is the melody of his periods, so much do they captivate the ear, and seize upon the attention, that there is scarcely any writer, however inconsiderable, who does not aim, in some degree, at the same species of excellence. But let us not ungratefully undervalue that beautiful style, which has pleasingly conveyed to us much instruction and entertainment. Though comparatively weak, opposed to Johnson's Herculean vigour, let us not call it positively feeble. Let us remember the character of his style, as given by Johnson himself: 'What he attempted, he performed; he is *never feeble*, and he did not wish to be energetick; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy².

¹ *Works*, vii. 473.

² When Johnson shewed me a proof-sheet of the character of Addison, in which he so highly extols his style, I could not help observing, that it had not been his own model, as no two styles could differ more from each other.—'Sir, Addison had his style, and I have mine.'—When I ventured to ask him, whether the difference did not consist in this, that Addison's style was full of idioms, colloquial phrases, and proverbs; and his own more strictly grammatical, and free from such phraseology and modes of speech as can never be literally translated or understood by foreigners; he allowed the discrimination to be just.—Let any one who doubts it, try to translate one of Addison's *Spectators* into Latin, French, or Italian; and though so easy, familiar, and elegant, to an Englishman, as to give the intellect no trouble; yet he
Whoever

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 Addison¹.

Though *The Rambler* was not concluded till the year 1752, I shall, under this year, say all that I have to observe upon it. Some of the translations of the mottos by himself are admirably done. He acknowledges to have received 'elegant translations' of many of them from Mr. James Elphinston; and some are very happily translated by a Mr. F. Lewis², of whom I never heard more, except that

would find the transfusion into another language extremely difficult, if not impossible. But a *Rambler*, *Adventurer*, or *Idler*, of Johnson, would fall into any classical or European language, as easily as if it had been originally conceived in it. BURNEY. Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 125) recounts how Johnson recommended Addison's works as a model for imitation to Mr. Woodhouse, a poetical shoemaker. "'Give nights and days, Sir, (said he) to the study of Addison, if you mean either to be a good writer, or, what is more worth, an honest man.'" When I saw something like the same expression in his criticism on that author, I put him in mind of his past injunctions to the young poet, to which he replied, "That he wished the shoemaker might have remembered them as well.'" Yet he says in his *Life of Pope* (*Works*, viii. 284), 'He that has once studiously formed a style rarely writes afterwards with complete ease.'

¹ I shall probably, in another work, maintain the merit of Addison's poetry, which has been very unjustly depreciated. BOSWELL. He proposed also to publish an edition of Johnson's poems (*ante*, p. 19), an account of his own travels (*post*, April 17, 1778), a collection, with notes, of old tenures and charters of Scotland (*post*, Oct. 27, 1779), and a History of James IV. of Scotland, 'the patron,' as he said, 'of my family' (Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 23, 1773).

² Lewis thus happily translates the lines in *Martial*,—

'Diligat illa senem quondam: sed et ipsa marito,
Tunc quoque cum fuerit, non videatur, anus.
'Wrinkled with age, may mutual love and truth
To their dim eyes recall the bloom of youth.'

Rambler, No. 167.

Some of Johnson's own translations are happy, as:—

'Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem—
Aut, gelidas hibernus aquas quum fuderit auster,
Securum somnos, imbre juvante, sequi!

Johnson

Johnson thus described him to Mr. Malone: 'Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society.' The concluding paper of his *Rambler* is at once dignified and pathetick. I cannot, however, but wish that he had not ended it with an unnecessary Greek verse, translated also into an English couplet¹. It is too much like the conceit of those dramatick poets, who used to conclude each act with a rhyme; and the expression in the first line of his couplet, '*Celestial powers,*' though proper in Pagan poetry, is ill suited to Christianity, with 'a conformity²' to which he consoles himself. How much better would it have been, to have ended with the prose sentence 'I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue, and confidence to truth³.'

His friend, Dr. Birch, being now engaged in preparing an edition of Raleigh's smaller pieces, Dr. Johnson wrote the following letter to that gentleman:

'TO DR. BIRCH.

'SIR, Gough-square, May 12, 1750.
'Knowing that you are now preparing to favour the publick

'How sweet in sleep to pass the careless hours,
Lull'd by the beating winds and dashing show'rs.'

Ib. No. 117.

Ἀπῶν ἐκ μακάρων ἀντάξιος εἶη ἀμοιβή.

'Celestial powers! that piety regard,

From you my labours wait their last reward.'

A modification of the Greek line is engraved on the scroll in Johnson's monument in St. Paul's (*post*, Dec. 1784).

² 'The essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity. . . . I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no blame or praise of man shall diminish or augment.' *Rambler*, No. 208.

³ I have little doubt that this attack on the concluding verse is an indirect blow at Hawkins, who had quoted the whole passage, and had clearly thought it the more 'awful' on account of the couplet. See Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 291.

with

with a new edition of Raleigh's¹ miscellaneous pieces, I have taken the liberty to send you a Manuscript, which fell by chance within my notice. I perceive no proofs of forgery in my examination of it; and the owner tells me, that *he*² has heard, the handwriting is Sir Walter's. If you should find reason to conclude it genuine, it will be a kindness to the owner, a blind person³, to recommend it to the booksellers. I am, Sir,

‘Your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

His just abhorrence of Milton's political notions was ever strong. But this did not prevent his warm admiration of Milton's great poetical merit, to which he has done illustrious justice, beyond all who have written upon the subject. And this year he not only wrote a Prologue, which was spoken by Mr. Garrick before the acting of *Comus* at Drury-lane theatre, for the benefit of Milton's grand-daughter, but took a very zealous interest in the success of the charity⁴. On the day preceding the performance, he published the following letter in the *General Advertiser*, addressed to the printer of that paper:

‘SIR,

‘That a certain degree of reputation is acquired merely by approving the works of genius, and testifying a regard to the

¹ In the original *Raleigh's*.

² The italics are Boswell's.

³ Mrs. Williams is probably the person meant. BOSWELL.

⁴ ‘In 1750, April 5, *Comus* was played for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only £130, though Dr. Newton brought a large contribution; and £20 were given by Tonson, a man who is to be praised as often as he is named. . . . This was the greatest benefaction that *Paradise Lost* ever procured the author's descendants; and to this he who has now attempted to relate his life had the honour of contributing a Prologue.’ Johnson's *Works*, vii. 118. In the *Gent. Mag.* (xx. 152) we read that, as on ‘April 4, the night first appointed, many inconvenient circumstances happened to disappoint the hopes of success, the managers generously quitted the profits of another night, in which the theatre was expected to be fuller. Mr. Samuel Johnson's prologue was afterwards printed for Mrs. Foster's benefit.’

memory

memory of authours, is a truth too evident to be denied; and therefore to ensure a participation of fame with a celebrated poet, many who would, perhaps, have contributed to starve him when alive, have heaped expensive pageants upon his grave¹.

'It must, indeed, be confessed, that this method of becoming known to posterity with honour, is peculiar to the great, or at least to the wealthy; but an opportunity now offers for almost every individual to secure the praise of paying a just regard to the illustrious dead, united with the pleasure of doing good to the living. To assist industrious indigence, struggling with distress and debilitated by age, is a display of virtue, and an acquisition of happiness and honour.

'Whoever, then, would be thought capable of pleasure in reading the works of our incomparable Milton, and not so destitute of gratitude as to refuse to lay out a trifle in rational and elegant entertainment, for the benefit of his living remains, for the exercise of their own virtue, the increase of their reputation, and the pleasing consciousness of doing good, should appear at Drury-lane theatre to-morrow, April 5, when *Comus* will be performed for the benefit of Mrs. Elizabeth Foster, grand-daughter to the author, and the only surviving branch of his family.

'N.B. There will be a new prologue on the occasion, written

¹ Johnson is thinking of Pope's lines—

'But still the great have kindness in reserve,
He helped to bury whom he helped to starve.'

Prologue to the *Satires*, l. 247.

In the *Life of Milton* he writes:—'In our time a monument has been erected in Westminster Abbey *To the author of Paradise Lost* by Mr. Benson, who has in the inscription bestowed more words upon himself than upon Milton.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 112. Pope has a hit at Benson in the *Dunciad*, iii. 325:—

'On poets' tombs see Benson's titles writ!'

Moore, describing Sheridan's funeral, says:—'It was well remarked by a French Journal, in contrasting the penury of Sheridan's latter years with the splendour of his funeral, that "France is the place for a man of letters to live in, and England the place for him to die in."' Moore himself wrote:—

'How proud they can press to the funeral array
Of him whom they shunned in his sickness and sorrow—
How bailiffs may seize his last blanket to-day,
Whose pall shall be held up by Nobles to-morrow.'

Moore's *Sheridan*, ii. 460-2.

by

by the author of *Irene*¹, and spoken by Mr. Garrick; and, by particular desire, there will be added to the *Masque* a dramattick satire, called *Lethe*, in which Mr. Garrick will perform.²

1751: ÆTAT. 42.]—IN 1751² we are to consider him as carrying on both his *Dictionary* and *Rambler*. But he also wrote *The Life of Cheyne*^{3,*} in the miscellany called *The Student*; and the Reverend Dr. Douglas having, with uncommon acuteness, clearly detected a gross forgery and imposition upon the publick by William Lauder, a Scotch schoolmaster, who had, with equal impudence and ingenuity, represented Milton as a plagiary from certain modern Latin poets, Johnson, who had been so far imposed upon as to furnish a Preface and Postscript to his work, now dictated a letter for Lauder, addressed to Dr. Douglas, acknowledging his fraud in terms of suitable contrition⁴.

¹ Johnson's *Works*, i. 115.

² Among the advertisements in the *Gent. Mag.* for February of this year is the following:—'An elegy wrote in a country churchyard, 6d.'

³ See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 17, 1773.

⁴ Lest there should be any person, at any future period, absurd enough to suspect that Johnson was a partaker in Lauder's fraud, or had any knowledge of it, when he assisted him with his masterly pen, it is proper here to quote the words of Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, at the time when he detected the imposition. 'It is to be hoped, nay it is *expected*, that the elegant and nervous writer, whose judicious sentiments and inimitable style point out the author of Lauder's Preface and Postscript, will no longer allow one to *plume himself with his feathers*, who appeareth so little to deserve [his] assistance: an assistance which I am persuaded would never have been communicated, had there been the least suspicion of those facts which I have been the instrument of conveying to the world in these sheets.' *Milton no Plagiary*, 2nd edit. p. 78. And his Lordship has been pleased now to authorise me to say, in the strongest manner, that there is no ground whatever for any unfavourable reflection against Dr. Johnson, who expressed the strongest indignation against Lauder. BOSWELL. To this letter Lauder had the impudence to add a shameless postscript and some 'testimonies' concerning himself. Though on the face of it it is evident that this postscript is not by Johnson, yet it is included in his works (v. 283). The letter was dated Dec. 20, 1750. In the *Gent. Mag.* for the next month (xxi. 47) there is

This

This extraordinary attempt of Lauder was no sudden effort. He had brooded over it for many years: and to this hour it is uncertain what his principal motive was, unless it were a vain notion of his superiority, in being able, by whatever means, to deceive mankind. To effect this, he produced certain passages from Grotius, Masenius, and others, which had a faint resemblance to some parts of the *Paradise Lost*. In these he interpolated some fragments of Hog's Latin translation of that poem, alledging that the mass thus fabricated was the archetype from which Milton copied¹. These fabrications he published from time to time in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; and, exulting in his fancied success, he in 1750 ventured to collect them into a pamphlet, entitled *An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost*. To this pamphlet Johnson wrote a Preface², in full persuasion of Lauder's honesty, and

the following paragraph:—'Mr. Lauder confesses here and exhibits all his forgeries; for which he assigns one motive in the book, and after asking pardon assigns another in the postscript; he also takes an opportunity to publish several letters and testimonials to his former character.' Goldsmith in *Retaliation* has a hit at Lauder:—

'Here Douglas retires from his toils to relax,
The scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks.
New Lauders and Bowers the Tweed shall cross over,
No countryman living their tricks to discover.'

Dr. Douglas was afterwards Bishop of Salisbury (*ante*, p. 147). See *post*, June 25, 1763, for the part he took in exposing the Cock Lane Ghost imposture.

¹ Scott writing to Southey in 1810 said:—'A witty rogue the other day, who sent me a letter signed Detector, proved me guilty of stealing a passage from one of Vida's Latin poems, which I had never seen or heard of.' The passage alleged to be stolen ends with,—

'When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!'

which in Vida *ad Erancn. El.* ii. v. 21, ran,—

'Cum dolor atque supercilio gravis imminet angor,
Fungeris angelico sola ministerio.'

'It is almost needless to add,' says Mr. Lockhart, 'there are no such lines.' *Life of Scott*, iii. 294.

² The greater part of this Preface was given in the *Gent. Mag.* for August 1747 (xvii. 404).

a Postscript

a Postscript recommending, in the most persuasive terms¹, a subscription for the relief of a grand-daughter of Milton, of whom he thus speaks :

'It is yet in the power of a great people to reward the poet whose name they boast, and from their alliance to whose genius, they claim some kind of superiority to every other nation of the earth ; that poet, whose works may possibly be read when every other monument of British greatness shall be obliterated ; to reward him, not with pictures or with medals, which, if he sees, he sees with contempt, but with tokens of gratitude, which he, perhaps, may even now consider as not unworthy the regard of an immortal spirit.'

Surely this is inconsistent with 'enmity towards Milton,' which Sir John Hawkins² imputes to Johnson upon this occasion, adding,

'I could all along observe that Johnson seemed to approve not only of the design, but of the argument ; and seemed to exult in a persuasion, that the reputation of Milton was likely to suffer by this discovery. That he was not privy to the imposture, I am well persuaded ; but that he wished well to the argument, may be inferred from the Preface, which indubitably was written by Johnson.'

Is it possible for any man of clear judgement to suppose that Johnson, who so nobly praised the poetical excellence of Milton in a Postscript to this very 'discovery,' as he then supposed it, could, at the same time, exult in a persuasion that the great poet's reputation was likely to suffer by it?

¹ 'Persuasive' is scarcely a fit description for this noble outburst of indignation on the part of one who knew all the miseries of poverty. After quoting Dr. Newton's account of the distress to which Milton's grand-daughter had been reduced, he says:—'That this relation is true cannot be questioned : but surely the honour of letters, the dignity of sacred poetry, the spirit of the English nation, and the glory of human nature require—that it should be true no longer. . . . In an age, which amidst all its vices and all its follies has not become infamous for want of charity, it may be surely allowed to hope, that the living remains of Milton will be no longer suffered to languish in distress.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 270.

² Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 275.

This is an inconsistency of which Johnson was incapable; nor can any thing more be fairly inferred from the Preface, than that Johnson, who was alike distinguished for ardent curiosity and love of truth, was pleased with an investigation by which both were gratified. That he was actuated by these motives, and certainly by no unworthy desire to depreciate our great epick poet, is evident from his own words; for, after mentioning the general zeal of men of genius and literature 'to advance the honour, and distinguish the beauties of *Paradise Lost*,' he says,

'Among the inquiries to which this ardour of criticism has naturally given occasion, none is more obscure in itself, or more worthy of rational curiosity, than a retrospect¹ of the progress of this mighty genius in the construction of his work; a view of the fabrick gradually rising, perhaps, from small beginnings, till its foundation rests in the centre, and its turrets sparkle in the skies; to trace back the structure through all its varieties, to the simplicity of its first plan; to find what was first projected, whence the scheme was taken, how it was improved, by what assistance it was executed, and from what stores the materials were collected; whether its founder dug them from the quarries of Nature, or demolished other buildings to embellish his own.'

Is this the language of one who wished to blast the laurels of Milton?²

Though Johnson's circumstances were at this time far from being easy, his humane and charitable disposition was constantly exerting itself. Mrs. Anna Williams, daughter of a very ingenious Welsh physician, and a woman of more

¹ In the original *retrospection*. Johnson's *Works*, v. 268.

² In this same year Johnson thus ends a severe criticism on *Samson Agonistes*:—"The everlasting verdure of Milton's laurels has nothing to fear from the blasts of malignity; nor can my attempt produce any other effect than to strengthen their shoots by lopping their luxuriance." *The Rambler*, No. 140. 'Mr. Nichols shewed Johnson in 1780 a book called *Remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton*, in which the affair of Lauder was renewed with virulence. He read the libellous passage with attention, and instantly wrote on the margin:—"In the business of Lauder I was deceived; partly by thinking the man too frantic to be fraudulent." Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 66.

than ordinary talents and literature, having come to London in hopes of being cured of a cataract in both her eyes, which afterwards ended in total blindness, was kindly received as a constant visitor at his house while Mrs. Johnson lived; and after her death, having come under his roof in order to have an operation upon her eyes performed with more comfort to her than in lodgings, she had an apartment from him during the rest of her life, at all times when he had a house¹.

¹ 'Johnson turned his house,' writes Lord Macaulay, 'into a place of refuge for a crowd of wretched old creatures who could find no other asylum; nor could all their peevishness and ingratitude weary out his benevolence.' (*Essays*, i. 390). In his *Biography of Johnson* (p. 388) he says that Mrs. Williams's 'chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty.' No doubt in Johnson's letters to Mrs. Thrale are found amusing accounts of the discord of the inmates of his house. But it is abundantly clear that in Mrs. Williams's company he had for years found pleasure. A few months after her death he wrote to Mrs. Thrale: 'You have more than once wondered at my complaint of solitude, when you hear that I am crowded with visits. *Inopem me copia fecit*. Visitors are no proper companions in the chamber of sickness. . . . The amusements and consolations of languor and depression are conferred by familiar and domestic companions. . . . Such society I had with Levett and Williams' (*Piozzi Letters*, ii. 341). To Mrs. Montagu he wrote:—'Thirty years and more she had been my companion, and her death has left me very desolate' (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 739). Boswell says that 'her departure left a blank in his house' (*post*, Aug. 1783). 'By her death,' writes Murphy, 'he was left in a state of destitution, with nobody but his black servant to soothe his anxious moments' (Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 122). Hawkins (*Life*, p. 558) says that 'she had not only cheered him in his solitude, and helped him to pass with comfort those hours which otherwise would have been irksome to him, but had relieved him from domestic cares, regulated and watched over the expenses of his house, etc.' 'She had,' as Boswell says (*post*, Aug. 1783), 'valuable qualities.' 'Had she had,' wrote Johnson, 'good humour and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all that knew her' (*Piozzi Letters*, ii. 311). To Langton he wrote:—'I have lost a companion to whom I have had recourse for domestic amusement for thirty years, and whose variety of knowledge never was exhausted' (*post*, Sept. 29, 1783). 'Her acquisitions,' he wrote to Dr. Burney, 'were many and her curiosity universal; so that she partook of every conversation' (*post*,

1752: ÆTAT. 43.]—IN 1752 he was almost entirely occupied with his *Dictionary*. The last paper of his *Rambler* was published March 2¹, this year; after which, there was a

Sept. 1783). Murphy (*Life*, p. 72) says:—‘She possessed uncommon talents, and, though blind, had an alacrity of mind that made her conversation agreeable, and even desirable.’ According to Hawkins (*Life*, 322–4) ‘she had acquired a knowledge of French and Italian, and had made great improvements in literature. She was a woman of an enlightened understanding. Johnson in many exigencies found her an able counsellor, and seldom shewed his wisdom more than when he hearkened to her advice.’ Perhaps Johnson had her in his thoughts when, writing of Pope’s last years and Martha Blount, he said:—‘Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other’s mind; their conversation therefore was endearing, for when they met there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions.’ (Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 304). Miss Mulso (Mrs. Chapone) writing to Mrs. Carter in 1753, says:—‘I was charmed with Mr. Johnson’s behaviour to Mrs. Williams, which was like that of a fond father to his daughter. She shewed very good sense, with a great deal of modesty and humility; and so much patience and cheerfulness under her misfortune that it doubled my concern for her’ (*Mrs. Chapone’s Life*, p. 73). Miss Talbot wrote to Mrs. Carter in 1756:—‘My mother the other day fell in love with your friend, Mrs. Williams, whom we met at Mr. Richardson’s [where Miss Mulso also had met her], and is particularly charmed with the sweetness of her voice’ (Talbot and Carter, *Corresp.* ii. 221). Miss Talbot was a niece of Lord Chancellor Talbot. Hannah More wrote in 1774:—‘Mrs. Williams is engaging in her manners; her conversation lively and entertaining’ (*More’s Memoirs*, i. 49). Boswell, however, more than once complains that she was ‘peevish’ (*post*, Oct. 26, 1769 and April 7, 1776). At a time when she was very ill, and had gone into the country to try if she could improve her health, Johnson wrote:—‘Age, and sickness, and pride have made her so peevish, that I was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her by a secret stipulation of half-a-crown a week over her wages’ (*post*, July 22, 1777). Malone, in a note on August 2, 1763, says that he thinks she had of her own ‘about £35 or £40 a year.’ This was in her latter days; Johnson had prevailed on Garrick to give her a benefit and Mrs. Montagu to give her a pension. She used, he adds, to help in the house-work.

¹ March 14. See *ante*, p. 235, note 3. He had grown weary of his work. In the last *Rambler* but one he wrote:—‘When once our labour has begun, the comfort that enables us to endure it is the
cessation

cessation for some time of any exertion of his talents as an essayist. But, in the same year, Dr. Hawkesworth, who was his warm admirer, and a studious imitator of his style¹, and then lived in great intimacy with him, began a periodical paper, entitled *The Adventurer*, in connection with other gentlemen, one of whom was Johnson's much-loved friend, Dr. Bathurst; and, without doubt, they received many valuable hints from his conversation, most of his friends having been so assisted in the course of their works.

That there should be a suspension of his literary labours during a part of the year 1752, will not seem strange, when it is considered that soon after closing his *Rambler*, he suffered a loss which, there can be no doubt, affected him with the deepest distress². For on the 17th of March, O.S., his

prospect of its end. . . . He that is himself weary will soon weary the public. Let him therefore lay down his employment, whatever it be, who can no longer exert his former activity or attention; let him not endeavour to struggle with censure, or obstinately infest the stage, till a general hiss commands him to depart.'

¹ How successful an imitator Hawkesworth was is shewn by the following passage in the Carter and Talbot *Corresp.*, ii. 109:—'I discern Mr. Johnson through all the papers that are not marked A, as evidently as if I saw him through the keyhole with the pen in his hand.'

² In *The Rambler* for Feb. 25 of this year (No. 203) he wrote in the following melancholy strain:—'Every period of life is obliged to borrow its happiness from the time to come. In youth we have nothing past to entertain us, and in age we derive little from retrospect but hopeless sorrow. Yet the future likewise has its limits which the imagination dreads to approach, but which we see to be not far distant. The loss of our friends and companions impresses hourly upon us the necessity of our own departure; we know that the schemes of man are quickly at an end, that we must soon lie down in the grave with the forgotten multitudes of former ages, and yield our place to others, who, like us, shall be driven a while by hope or fear about the surface of the earth, and then like us be lost in the shades of death.' In *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 12-15, in a service that he used on May 6, 'as preparatory to my return to life to-morrow,' he prays:—'Enable me to begin and perfect that reformation which I promised her, and to persevere in that resolution which she implored Thee to continue, in
wife

wife died. Why Sir John Hawkins should unwarrantably take upon him even to *suppose* that Johnson's fondness for her was *dissembled* (meaning simulated or assumed,) and to assert, that if it was not the case, 'it was a lesson he had learned by rote,' I cannot conceive; unless it proceeded from a want of similar feelings in his own breast. To argue from her being much older than Johnson, or any other circumstances, that he could not really love her, is absurd; for love is not a subject of reasoning, but of feeling, and therefore there are no common principles upon which one can persuade another concerning it. Every man feels for himself, and knows how he is affected by particular qualities in the person he admires, the impressions of which are too minute and delicate to be substantiated in language.

The following very solemn and affecting prayer was found after Dr. Johnson's decease, by his servant, Mr. Francis Barber, who delivered it to my worthy friend the Reverend Mr. Strahan², Vicar of Islington, who at my earnest request has obligingly favoured me with a copy of it, which he and I compared with the original. I present it to the world as an undoubted proof of a circumstance in the character of my illustrious friend, which though some whose hard minds I never shall envy, may attack as superstitious, will I am sure endear him more to numbers of good men³. I have an

the purposes which I recorded in Thy sight when she lay dead before me.' See *post*, Jan. 20, 1780. The author of *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Johnson*, 1785, says, p. 113, that on the death of his wife, 'to walk the streets of London was for many a lonesome night Johnson's constant substitute for sleep.'

¹ 'I have often been inclined to think that, if this fondness of Johnson for his wife was not dissembled, it was a lesson that he had learned by rote, and that, when he practised it, he knew not where to stop till he became ridiculous.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 313.

² The son of William Strahan, M.P., 'Johnson's old and constant friend, Printer to His Majesty' (*post*, under April 20, 1781). He attended Johnson on his death-bed, and published the volume called *Prayers and Meditations*.

³ Southey in his *Life of Wesley*, i. 359, writes:—'The universal attention which has been paid to dreams in all ages proves that the super-additional,

additional, and that a personal motive for presenting it, because it sanctions what I myself have always maintained and am fond to indulge.

'April 26, 1752, being after 12 at Night of the 25th.

'O Lord! Governour of heaven and earth, in whose hands are embodied and departed Spirits, if thou hast ordained the Souls of the Dead to minister to the Living, and appointed my departed Wife to have care of me, grant that I may enjoy the good effects of her attention and ministration, whether exercised by appearance, impulses, dreams¹ or in any other manner agreeable to thy Government. Forgive my presumption, enlighten my ignorance, and however meaner agents are employed, grant me the blessed influences of thy holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

What actually followed upon this most interesting piece of devotion by Johnson, we are not informed; but I, whom it has pleased GOD to afflict in a similar manner to that which occasioned it, have certain experience of benignant communication by dreams².

That his love for his wife was of the most ardent kind, and, during the long period of fifty years, was unimpaired by the lapse of time, is evident from various passages in the series of his *Prayers and Meditations*, published by the Reverend Mr. Strahan, as well as from other memorials, two of which I select, as strongly marking the tenderness and sensibility of his mind.

'March 28, 1753. I kept this day³ as the anniversary of my

stitution is natural; and I have heard too many well-attested facts (facts to which belief could not be refused upon any known laws of evidence) not to believe that impressions are sometimes made in this manner, and forewarnings communicated, which cannot be explained by material philosophy or mere metaphysics.'

¹ Warburton in his *Divine Legation*, i. 284, quotes the 'famous sepulchral inscription of the Roman widow.' 'Ita peto vos Manes sanctissimi commendatum habeatis meum conjugem et velitis huic indulgentissimi esse horis nocturnis ut eum videam,' etc.

² Mrs. Boswell died in June 1789. Johnson's prayer with Boswell's comments on it was first inserted in the *Additions* to the second edition.

³ Mrs. Johnson died on March 17, O. S., or March 28, N. S. The

Tetty's death¹, with prayer and tears in the morning. In the evening I prayed for her conditionally, if it were lawful.'

'April 23, 1753. I know not whether I do not too much indulge in vain longings of affection; but I hope they intenerate my heart, and that when I die like my 'Tetty, this affection will be acknowledged in a happy interview, and that in the mean time I am incited by it to piety. I will, however, not deviate too much from common and received methods of devotion.'

Her wedding-ring, when she became his wife, was, after her death, preserved by him, as long as he lived, with an affectionate care, in a little round wooden box, in the inside of

change of style was made in September 1752. He might have kept either the 17th, or the 28th as the anniversary. In like manner, though he was born on Sept. 7, after the change he kept the 18th as his birth-day. See *post*, beginning of 1753, where he writes, 'Jan. 1, N. S., which I shall use for the future.'

¹ In *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 22, he recorded: 'The melancholy of this day hung long upon me.' P. 53: 'April 22, 1764, Thought on Tetty, dear, poor Tetty, with my eyes full.' P. 91: 'March 28, 1770. This is the day on which, in 1752, I was deprived of poor, dear Tetty. . . . When I recollect the time in which we lived together, my grief for her departure is not abated; and I have less pleasure in any good that befalls me because she does not partake it.' P. 170: 'April 20, 1778. Poor Tetty, whatever were our faults and failings, we loved each other. I did not forget thee yesterday [Easter Sunday]. Coudest thou have lived!—' P. 210: 'March 28, 1782. This is the day on which, in 1752, dear Tetty died. I have now uttered a prayer of repentance and contrition; perhaps Tetty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is now praying for me. God help me.' In a letter to Mrs. Thrale on the occasion of the death of her son (dated March 30, 1776) he thus refers to the loss of his wife:—'I know that a whole system of hopes, and designs, and expectations is swept away at once, and nothing left but bottomless vacuity. What you feel I have felt, and hope that your disquiet will be shorter than mine.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 310. In a letter to Mr. Elphinston, who had just lost his wife, written on July 27, 1778, he repeats the same thought:—'A loss such as yours lacerates the mind, and breaks the whole system of purposes and hopes. It leaves a dismal vacuity in life, which affords nothing on which the affections can fix, or to which endeavour may be directed. All this I have known.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 66, note. See also *post*, his letter to Mr. Warton of Dec. 21, 1754, and to Dr. Lawrence of Jan. 20, 1780.

which

which he pasted a slip of paper, thus inscribed by him in fair characters, as follows :

‘*Eheu!*
Eliz. Johnson,
Nupta Jul. 9^o 1736,
Mortua, cheu!
Mart. 17^o 1752¹.

After his death, Mr. Francis Barber, his faithful servant and residuary legatee, offered this memorial of tenderness to Mrs. Lucy Porter, Mrs. Johnson’s daughter; but she having declined to accept of it, he had it enamelled as a mourning ring for his old master, and presented it to his wife, Mrs. Barber, who now has it.

The state of mind in which a man must be upon the death of a woman whom he sincerely loves, had been in his contemplation many years before. In his *Irene*, we find the following fervent and tender speech of Demetrius, addressed to his Aspasia :

‘From those bright regions of eternal day,
Where now thou shin’st amongst thy fellow saints,
Array’d in purer light, look down on me!
In pleasing visions and delusive dreams,
O! sooth my soul, and teach me how to lose thee?’

I have, indeed, been told by Mrs. Desmoulins, who, before her marriage, lived for some time with Mrs. Johnson at Hampstead², that she indulged herself in country air and nice living, at an unsuitable expense³, while her husband was drudging in the smoke of London, and that she by no means treated him

¹ In the usual monthly list of deaths in the *Gent. Mag.* her name is not given. Johnson did not, I suppose, rank among ‘eminent persons.’

² *Irene*, Act i. sc. 1.

³ See *post*, Nov. 16, 1784, note.

⁴ The Anderdon MSS. contain an importunate letter, dated July 3, 1751, from one Mitchell, a tradesman in Chandos-street, pressing Johnson to pay £2, due by his wife ever since August, 1749, and threatening legal proceedings to enforce payment. This letter Mr. Boswell had endorsed, ‘Proof of Dr. Johnson’s wretched circumstances in 1751.’

with that complacency which is the most engaging quality in a wife. But all this is perfectly compatible with his fondness for her, especially when it is remembered that he had a high opinion of her understanding, and that the impressions which her beauty, real or imaginary, had originally made upon his fancy, being continued by habit, had not been effaced, though she herself was doubtless much altered for the worse. The dreadful shock of separation took place in the night; and he immediately dispatched a letter to his friend, the Reverend Dr. Taylor, which, as Taylor told me, expressed grief in the strongest manner he had ever read; so that it is much to be regretted it has not been preserved¹. The letter was brought to Dr. Taylor, at his house in the Cloisters, Westminster, about three in the morning; and as it signified an earnest desire to see him, he got up, and went to Johnson as soon as he was dressed, and found him in tears and in extreme agitation. After being a little while together, Johnson requested him to join with him in prayer. He then prayed extempore, as did Dr. Taylor; and thus, by means of that piety which was ever his primary object, his troubled mind was, in some degree, soothed and composed.

The next day he wrote as follows:

‘TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Let me have your company and instruction. Do not live away from me. My distress is great.

‘Pray desire Mrs. Taylor to inform me what mourning I should buy for my mother and Miss Porter, and bring a note in writing with you.

‘Remember me in your prayers, for vain is the help of man.

‘I am, dear Sir, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘March 18, 1752.’

¹ In the *Gent. Mag.* for February 1794, (p. 100,) was printed a letter pretending to be that written by Johnson on the death of his wife. But it is merely a transcript of the 41st number of *The Idler*. A fictitious date (March 17, 1751, O. S.) was added by some person previous to this paper being sent to the publisher of that miscellany, to give a colour to this deception. MALONE.

That his sufferings upon the death of his wife were severe, beyond what are commonly endured, I have no doubt, from the information of many who were then about him, to none of whom I give more credit than to Mr. Francis Barber, his faithful negro servant¹, who came into his family about a fortnight after the dismal event. These sufferings were aggravated by the melancholy inherent in his constitution; and although he probably was not oftener in the wrong than she was, in the little disagreements which sometimes troubled his married state², during which, he owned to me, that the gloomy irritability of his existence was more painful

¹ Francis Barber was born in Jamaica, and was brought to England in 1750 by Colonel Bathurst, father of Johnson's very intimate friend, Dr. Bathurst. He was sent, for some time, to the Reverend Mr. Jackson's school, at Barton, in Yorkshire. The Colonel by his will left him his freedom, and Dr. Bathurst was willing that he should enter into Johnson's service, in which he continued from 1752 till Johnson's death, with the exception of two intervals; in one of which, upon some difference with his master, he went and served an apothecary in Cheapside, but still visited Dr. Johnson occasionally; in another, he took a fancy to go to sea. Part of the time, indeed, he was, by the kindness of his master, at a school in Northamptonshire, that he might have the advantage of some learning. So early and so lasting a connection was there between Dr. Johnson and this humble friend. BOSWELL. 'I believe that Francis was scarcely as much the object of Mr. Johnson's personal kindness as the representative of Dr. Bathurst, for whose sake he would have loved anybody or anything.' Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 212.

² 'I asked him,' writes Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* pp. 146-150), 'if he ever disputed with his wife. "Perpetually," said he; "my wife had a particular reverence for cleanliness, and desired the praise of neatness in her dress and furniture, as many ladies do, till they become troublesome to their best friends, slaves to their own besoms, and only sigh for the hour of sweeping their husbands out of the house as dirt and useless lumber. A clean floor is so comfortable, she would say sometimes by way of twitting; till at last I told her that I thought we had had talk enough about the floor, we would now have a touch at the ceiling." I asked him if he ever huffed his wife about his dinner. "So often," replied he, "that at last she called to me and said, Nay, hold, Mr. Johnson, and do not make a farce of thanking God for a dinner which in a few minutes you will protest not eatable."'

to

to him than ever, he might very naturally, after her death, be tenderly disposed to charge himself with slight omissions and offences, the sense of which would give him much uneasiness¹. Accordingly we find, about a year after her decease, that he thus addressed the Supreme Being: ‘O LORD, who givest the grace of repentance, and hearest the prayers of the penitent, grant that by true contrition I may obtain forgiveness of all the sins committed, and of all duties neglected in my union with the wife whom thou hast taken from me; for the neglect of joint devotion, patient exhortation, and mild instruction².’ The kindness of his heart, notwithstanding the impetuosity of his temper, is well known to his friends; and I cannot trace the smallest foundation for the following dark and uncharitable assertion by Sir John Hawkins: ‘The apparition of his departed wife was altogether of the terrifick kind, and hardly afforded him a hope that she was in a state of happiness³.’ That he, in conformity with the opinion of many of the most able, learned, and pious Christians in all ages, supposed that there was a middle state after death, previous to the time at which departed souls are finally received to eternal felicity, appears, I think, unquestionably from his devotions⁴: ‘And, O LORD, so far as it may be lawful in me⁵, I commend to thy fatherly goodness *the soul*

¹ ‘When a friend is carried to his grave, we at once find excuses for every weakness, and palliations of every fault; we recollect a thousand endearments, which before glided off our minds without impression, a thousand favours unrepaid, a thousand duties unperformed; and wish, vainly wish, for his return, not so much that we may receive, as that we may bestow happiness, and recompense that kindness which before we never understood.’ *Rambler*, No. 54.

² *Pr. and Med.* p. 19. BOSWELL.

³ Hawkins’s *Life of Johnson*, p. 316. BOSWELL.

⁴ See *post*, Oct. 26, 1769, where the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, or ‘a middle state,’ as Johnson calls it is discussed, and Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Oct. 25, 1773.

⁵ In the original, ‘lawful *for me*.’ Much the same prayer Johnson made for his mother. *Pr. and Med.* p. 38. On Easter Day, 1764, he records:—‘After sermon I recommended Tetty in a prayer by herself; and my father, mother, brother, and Bathurst in another. I did it only

of

of my departed wife; beseeching thee to *grant* her whatever is best in her *present state*, and *finally to receive her to eternal happiness*!.' But this state has not been looked upon with horror, but only as less gracious.

He deposited the remains of Mrs. Johnson in the church of Bromley, in Kent², to which he was probably led by the residence of his friend Hawkesworth at that place. The funeral sermon which he composed for her, which was never preached, but having been given to Dr. Taylor, has been published since his death³, is a performance of uncommon excellence, and full of rational and pious comfort to such as are depressed by that severe affliction which Johnson felt when he wrote it. When it is considered that it was written in such an agitation of mind, and in the short interval between her death and burial, it cannot be read without wonder⁴.

once, so far as it might be lawful for me.' *Ib.* p. 54. On the death of Mr. Thrale he wrote, 'May God that delighteth in mercy *have had mercy on thee*.' *Ib.* p. 191; and later on, 'for Henry Thrale, so far as is lawful, I humbly implore thy mercy in his present state.' *Ib.* p. 197.

¹ *Pr. and Med.* p. 20. BOSWELL.

² Shortly before his death (see *post*, July 12, 1784) Johnson had a stone placed over her grave with the following inscription:—

Hic conduntur reliquiae
ELIZABETHAE
Antiqua Jarvisiorum gente,
Peatlingae, apud Leicestrienses, ortae;
Formosae, cultae, ingeniosae, piae;
Uxoris, primis nuptiis, Henrici Porter,
Secundis Samuelis Johnson:
Qui multum amatam, diuque defletam
Hoc lapide contexit.
Obiit Londini Mense Mart.
A.D. MD CC LIII.

As Mrs. Johnson died in 1752, the date is wrong.

³ See *post*, Sept. 21, 1777.

⁴ He described her as a woman 'whom none, who were capable of distinguishing either moral or intellectual excellence, could know without esteem or tenderness. She was extensively charitable in her judgements and opinions, grateful for every kindness that she received, and willing to impart assistance of every kind to all whom her little

From

From Mr. Francis Barber I have had the following authentic and artless account of the situation in which he found him recently after his wife's death:

He was in great affliction. Mrs. Williams was then living in his house, which was in Gough-square. He was busy with the Dictionary. Mr. Shiels, and some others of the gentlemen who had formerly written for him, used to come about him. He had then little for himself, but frequently sent money to Mr. Shiels when in distress¹. The friends who visited him at that time, were chiefly Dr. Bathurst², and Mr. Diamond, an apothecary in Cork-street,

power enabled her to benefit. She passed through many months of langour, weakness, and decay without a single murmur of impatience, and often expressed her adoration of that mercy which granted her so long time for recollection and penitence.' Johnson's *Works*, ix. 523.

¹ See *ante*, p. 216.

² Dr. Bathurst, though a Physician of no inconsiderable merit, had not the good fortune to get much practice in London. He was, therefore willing to accept of employment abroad, and, to the regret of all who knew him, fell a sacrifice to the destructive climate, in the expedition against the Havannah. Mr. Langton recollects the following passage in a letter from Dr. Johnson to Mr. Beauclerk: 'The Havannah is taken;—a conquest too dearly obtained; for, Bathurst died before it. "*Vix Priamus tanti totaque Troja fuit.*"' BOSWELL.

The quotation is from Ovid, *Heroides*, i. 4. Johnson (*post*, Dec. 21, 1762) wrote to Baretti, 'Bathurst went physician to the army, and died at the Havannah.' Mr. Harwood in his *History of Lichfield*, p. 451, gives two letters from Bathurst to Johnson dated 1757. In the postscript to one he says:—'I know you will call me a lazy dog, and in truth I deserve it; but I am afraid I shall never mend. I have indeed long known that I can love my friends without being able to tell them so. . . . Adieu my dearest friend.' He calls Johnson 'the best of friends, to whom I stand indebted for all the little virtue and knowledge that I have.' 'Nothing,' he continues, 'I think, but absolute want can force me to continue where I am.' Jamaica he calls 'this execrable region.' Hawkins (*Life*, p. 235) says that 'Bathurst, before leaving England, confessed to Johnson that in the course of ten years' exercise of his faculty he had never opened his hand to more than one guinea.' Johnson perhaps had Bathurst in mind when, many years later, he wrote:—'A physician in a great city seems to be the mere plaything of fortune; his degree of reputation is for the most part totally casual; they that employ him know not his excellence;

Burlington-gardens,

Burlington-gardens, with whom he and Mrs. Williams generally dined every Sunday. There was a talk of his going to Iceland with him, which would probably have happened had he lived. There were also Mr. Cave, Dr. Hawkesworth, Mr. Ryland¹, merchant on Tower Hill, Mrs. Masters, the poetess², who lived with Mr. Cave, Mrs. Carter, and sometimes Mrs. Macaulay³, also Mrs. Gardiner, wife of a tallow-chandler on Snow-hill, not in the learned way, but a worthy good woman⁴; Mr. (now Sir Joshua) Reynolds⁵; Mr. Millar, Mr. Dodsley, Mr. Bouquet, Mr. Payne of Paternoster-row, booksellers; Mr. Strahan, the printer; the Earl of Orrery⁶, Lord Southwell⁷, Mr. Garrick.'

Many are, no doubt, omitted in this catalogue of his friends, and, in particular, his humble friend, Mr. Robert Levet, an obscure practiser in physick amongst the lower people, his fees being sometimes very small sums, sometimes whatever provisions his patients could afford him; but of such extensive

they that reject him know not his deficiency. By any acute observer, who had looked on the transactions of the medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the *Fortune of Physicians.*' *Works*, viii. 471.

¹ Mr. Ryland was one of the members of the old club in Ivy Lane who met to dine in 1783. Mr. Payne was another, (*post*, end of 1783).

² Johnson revised her volumes: *post*, under Nov. 19, 1783.

³ Catherine Sawbridge, sister of Mrs. [? Mr.] Alderman Sawbridge, was born in 1733; but it was not till 1760 that she was married to Dr. Macaulay, a physician; so that Barber's account was incorrect either in date or name. CROKER. For Alderman Sawbridge see *post*, May 17, 1778, note.

⁴ See *post*, under Nov. 19, 1783. Johnson bequeathed to her a book to keep as a token of remembrance (*post*, Dec. 9, 1784). I find her name in the year 1765 in the list of subscribers to the edition of Swift's *Works*, in 17 vols., so that perhaps she was more 'in the learned way' than Barber thought.

⁵ Reynolds did not return to England from Italy till the October of this year, seven months after Mrs. Johnson's death. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 87. He writes of his 'thirty years' intimacy with Dr. Johnson.' He must have known him therefore at least as early as 1754. *Ib.* ii. 454.

⁶ See *ante*, p. 214.

⁷ 'Lord Southwell,' said Johnson, 'was the most *qualified* man I ever saw.' *Post*, March 23, 1783.

practice

practice in that way, that Mrs. Williams has told me, his walk was from Houndsditch to Marybone. It appears from Johnson's diary that their acquaintance commenced about the year 1746; and such was Johnson's predilection for him, and fanciful estimation of his moderate abilities, that I have heard him say he should not be satisfied, though attended by all the College of Physicians, unless he had Mr. Levet with him. Ever since I was acquainted with Dr. Johnson, and many years before, as I have been assured by those who knew him earlier, Mr. Levet had an apartment in his house, or his chambers, and waited upon him every morning, through the whole course of his late and tedious breakfast. He was of a strange grotesque appearance, stiff and formal in his manner, and seldom said a word while any company was present¹.

¹ The account given of Levet in *Gent. Mag.* vi. 101, shews that he was a man out of the common run. He would not otherwise have attracted the notice of the French surgeons. The writer says:—'Mr. Levet, though an Englishman by birth, became early in life a waiter at a coffee-house in Paris. The surgeons who frequented it, finding him of an inquisitive turn and attentive to their conversation, made a purse for him, and gave him some instructions in their art. They afterwards furnished him with the means of other knowledge, by procuring him free admission to such lectures in pharmacy and anatomy as were read by the ablest professors of that period.' When he lived with Johnson, 'much of the day was employed in attendance on his patients, who were chiefly of the lowest rank of tradesmen. The remainder of his hours he dedicated to Hunter's lectures, and to as many different opportunities of improvement as he could meet with on the same gratuitous conditions.' 'All his medical knowledge,' said Johnson, 'and it is not inconsiderable, was obtained through the ear. Though he buys books, he seldom looks into them, or discovers any power by which he can be supposed to judge of an author's merit.' 'Dr. Johnson has frequently observed that Levet was indebted to him for nothing more than house-room, his share in a penny-loaf at breakfast, and now and then a dinner on a Sunday. His character was rendered valuable by repeated proof of honesty, tenderness, and gratitude to his benefactor, as well as by an unwearied diligence in his profession. His single failing was an occasional departure from sobriety. Johnson would observe, "he was perhaps the only man who ever became intoxicated through motives of prudence. He reflected that, if

The circle of his friends, indeed, at this time was extensive and various, far beyond what has been generally imagined. To trace his acquaintance with each particular person, if it could be done, would be a task, of which the labour would not be repaid by the advantage. But exceptions are to be made; one of which must be a friend so eminent as Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was truly his *dulce decus*¹, and with whom he maintained an uninterrupted intimacy to the last hour of his life. When Johnson lived in Castle-street, Cavendish-square, he used frequently to visit two ladies who

he refused the gin or brandy offered him by some of his patients, he could have been no gainer by their cure, as they might have had nothing else to bestow on him. This habit of taking a fee, in whatever shape it was exhibited, could not be put off by advice. He would swallow what he did not like, nay what he knew would injure him, rather than go home with an idea that his skill had been exerted without recompense. Though he took all that was offered him, he demanded nothing from the poor." The writer adds that 'Johnson never wished him to be regarded as an inferior, or treated him like a dependent.' Mrs. Piozzi says:—'When Johnson raised contributions for some distressed author, or wit in want, he often made us all more than amends by diverting descriptions of the lives they were then passing in corners unseen by anybody but himself, and that odd old surgeon whom he kept in his house to tend the out-pensioners, and of whom he said most truly and sublimely, that

"In misery's darkest caverns known," etc.

Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 118.

'Levet, madam, is a brutal fellow, but I have a good regard for him; for his brutality is in his manners, not in his mind.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 115. 'Whoever called in on Johnson at about midday found him and Levet at breakfast, Johnson, in deshabelle, as just risen from bed, and Levet filling out tea for himself and his patron alternately, no conversation passing between them. All that visited him at these hours were welcome. A night's rest and breakfast seldom failed to refresh and fit him for discourse, and whoever withdrew went too soon.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 435.

How much he valued his poor friend he showed at his death, *post*, Jan. 20, 1782.

¹ 'O et praesidium et dulce decus meum.'

'My joy, my guard, and sweetest good.'

CREECH. Horace, *Odes*, i. 1. 2.

lived

lived opposite to him, Miss Cotterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell. Reynolds used also to visit there, and thus they met¹. Mr. Reynolds, as I have observed above², had, from the first reading of his *Life of Savage*, conceived a very high admiration of Johnson's powers of writing. His conversation no less delighted him; and he cultivated his acquaintance with the laudable zeal of one who was ambitious of general improvement³. Sir Joshua, indeed, was lucky enough at their

¹ It was in 1738 that Johnson was living in Castle Street. At the time of Reynolds's arrival in London in 1752 he had been living for some years in Gough Square. Boswell, I suppose, only means to say that Johnson's acquaintance with the Cotterells was formed when he lived in their neighbourhood. Northcote (*Life of Reynolds*, i. 69) says that the Cotterells lived 'opposite to Reynolds's,' but his account seems based on a misunderstanding of Boswell.

² *Ante*, p. 191.

³ 'We are both of Dr. Johnson's school,' wrote Reynolds to some friend. 'For my own part, I acknowledge the highest obligations to him. He may be said to have formed my mind, and to have brushed from it a great deal of rubbish. Those very persons whom he has brought to think rightly will occasionally criticise the opinions of their master when he nods. But we should always recollect that it is he himself who taught us and enabled us to do it.' Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 461. Burke, writing to Malone, said:—'You state very properly how much Reynolds owed to the writings and conversation of Johnson; and nothing shews more the greatness of Sir Joshua's parts than his taking advantage of both, and making some application of them to his profession, when Johnson neither understood nor desired to understand anything of painting.' *Ib.* p. 638. Reynolds, there can be little question, is thinking of Johnson in the following passage in his *Seventh Discourse*:—'What partial and desultory reading cannot afford may be supplied by the conversation of learned and ingenious men, which is the best of all substitutes for those who have not the means or opportunities of deep study. There are many such men in this age: and they will be pleased with communicating their ideas to artists, when they see them curious and docile, if they are treated with that respect and deference which is so justly their due. Into such society young artists, if they make it the point of their ambition, will by degrees be admitted. There, without formal teaching, they will insensibly come to feel and reason like those they live with, and find a rational and systematic taste imperceptibly formed in their minds, which they will know how to reduce to a standard, by apply-
very

very first meeting to make a remark, which was so much above the common-place style of conversation, that Johnson at once perceived that Reynolds had the habit of thinking for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations; upon which Reynolds observed, 'You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from a burthen of gratitude'. They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion, as too selfish, but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the *mind*, the fair view of human nature, which it exhibited, like some of the reflections of Rochefaucault. The consequence was that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him.

Sir Joshua told me a pleasant characteristic anecdote of Johnson about the time of their first acquaintance. When they were one evening together at the Miss Cotterells', the then Duchess of Argyle and another lady of high rank came in. Johnson thinking that the Miss Cotterells were too much engrossed by them, and that he and his friend were neglected, as low company of whom they were somewhat ashamed, grew angry; and resolving to shock their supposed pride, by making their great visitors

ing general truth to their own purposes, better perhaps than those to whom they owed [owed] the original sentiment.' Reynolds's *Works*, edit. 1824, i. 149. 'Another thing remarkable to shew how little Sir Joshua crouched to the great is, that he never gave them their proper titles. I never heard the words "your lordship" or "your ladyship" come from his mouth; nor did he ever say "Sir" in speaking to any one but Dr. Johnson; and when he did not hear distinctly what the latter said (which often happened) he would then say "Sir?" that he might repeat it.' Northcote's *Conversations*, p. 289. Gibbon called Johnson 'Reynolds's oracle.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 149. See also *post*, under Dec. 29, 1778.

¹ The thought may have been suggested to Reynolds by Johnson's writings. In *The Rambler*, No. 87, he had said:—'There are minds so impatient of inferiority, that their gratitude is a species of revenge, and they return benefits, not because recompense is a pleasure, but because obligation is a pain.' In No. 166, he says:—'To be obliged is to be in some respect inferior to another.'

imagine

imagine that his friend and he were low indeed, he addressed himself in a loud tone to Mr. Reynolds, saying, 'How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we were to *work as hard* as we could?'—as if they had been common mechanicks¹.

His acquaintance with Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in Lincolnshire, another much valued friend, commenced soon after the conclusion of his *Rambler*; which that gentleman, then a youth, had read with so much admiration, that he came to London chiefly with the view of endeavouring to be introduced to its authour². By a fortunate chance he happened to take lodgings in a house where Mr. Levet frequently visited; and having mentioned his wish to his landlady, she introduced him to Mr. Levet, who readily obtained Johnson's permission to bring Mr. Langton to him³; as, indeed, Johnson, during the whole course of his life, had no shyness, real or affected, but was easy of access to all who were properly recommended, and even wished

¹ Northcote tells the following story on the authority of Miss Reynolds. It is to be noticed, however, that in her *Recollections* (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 832) the story is told somewhat differently. Johnson, Reynolds and Miss Reynolds one day called on the Miss Cotterells. 'Johnson was the last of the three that came in; when the maid, seeing this uncouth and dirty figure of a man, and not conceiving he could be one of the company, laid hold of his coat, just as he was going up-stairs, and pulled him back, saying, "You fellow, what is your business here? I suppose you intended to rob the house." This most unlucky accident threw him into such a fit of shame and anger that he roared out like a bull, "What have I done? What have I done?"' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 73.

² Johnson writing to Langton on January 9, 1759, describes him as 'towering in the confidence of twenty-one.' The conclusion of *The Rambler* was in March 1752, when Langton must have been only fourteen or just fifteen at most; Johnson's first letter to him dated May 6, 1755, shews that at that time their acquaintance had been but short. Langton's subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles in the Register of the University of Oxford was on July 7, 1757. Johnson's first letter to him at Oxford is dated June 28, 1757.

³ See *post*, March 20, 1782.

to see numbers at his *levee*¹, as his morning circle of company might, with strict propriety, be called. Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprised when the sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress, or manner. From perusing his writings, he fancied he should see a decent, well-drest, in short, a remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bedchamber, about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible, and his religious and political notions so congenial with those in which Langton had been educated, that he conceived for him that veneration and attachment which he ever preserved. Johnson was not the less ready to love Mr. Langton, for his being of a very ancient family; for I have heard him say, with pleasure, ‘Langton, Sir, has a grant of free warren from Henry the Second; and Cardinal Stephen Langton, in King John’s reign, was of this family².’

Mr. Langton afterwards went to pursue his studies at Trinity College, Oxford, where he formed an acquaintance with his fellow student, Mr. Topham Beauclerk³; who,

¹ ‘My friend Maltby and I,’ said Samuel Rogers, ‘when we were very young men, had a strong desire to see Dr. Johnson; and we determined to call upon him, and introduce ourselves. We accordingly proceeded to his house in Bolt Court; and I had my hand on the knocker when our courage failed us, and we retreated. Many years afterwards I mentioned this circumstance to Boswell, who said, “What a pity that you did not go boldly in! he would have received you with all kindness.”’ Rogers’s *Table Talk*, p. 9. For Johnson’s levee see *post*, 1770, in Dr. Maxwell’s *Collectanea*.

² ‘George Langton,’ writes Mr. Best in his *Memorials* (p. 66), ‘shewed me his pedigree with the names and arms of the families with which his own had intermarried. It was engrossed on a piece of parchment about ten inches broad, and twelve to fifteen feet long. “It leaves off at the reign of Queen Elizabeth,” said he.’

³ Topham Beauclerk was the only son of Lord Sidney Beauclerk, fifth son of the first Duke of St. Alban’s. He was therefore the great-grandson of Charles II. and Nell Gwynne. He was born in Dec. 1739.

though

though their opinions and modes of life were so different, that it seemed utterly improbable that they should at all agree, had so ardent a love of literature, so acute an understanding, such elegance of manners, and so well discerned the excellent qualities of Mr. Langton, a gentleman eminent not only for worth and learning, but for an inexhaustible fund of entertaining conversation¹, that they became intimate friends.

Johnson, soon after their acquaintance began, passed a considerable time at Oxford². He at first thought it strange that Langton should associate so much with one who had the character of being loose, both in his principles and practice; but, by degrees, he himself was fascinated. Mr. Beauclerk's being of the St. Alban's family, and having, in some particulars, a resemblance to Charles the Second, contributed, in Johnson's imagination, to throw a lustre upon his other qualities³; and, in a short time, the moral, pious Johnson,

In my *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and his Critics* I have put together such facts as I could find about Langton and Beauclerk.

¹ Mr. Best describes Langton as 'a very tall, meagre, long-visaged man, much resembling a stork standing on one leg near the shore in Raphael's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. His manners were, in the highest degree, polished; his conversation mild, equable and always pleasing.' Best's *Memorials*, p. 62. Miss Hawkins writes:—'If I were called on to name the person with whom Johnson might have been seen to the fairest advantage, I should certainly name Mr. Langton.' Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, i. 144. Mrs. Piozzi wrote in 1817:—'I remember when to have Langton at a man's house stamped him at once a literary character.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 203.

² In the summer of 1759. See *post*, under April 15, 1758, and 1759.

³ Lord Charlemont said that 'Beauclerk possessed an exquisite taste, various accomplishments, and the most perfect good breeding. He was eccentric, often querulous, entertaining a contempt for the generality of the world, which the politeness of his manners could not always conceal; but to those whom he liked most generous and friendly. Devoted at one time to pleasure, at another to literature, sometimes absorbed in play, sometimes in books, he was altogether one of the most accomplished, and when in good humour and surrounded by those who suited his fancy, one of the most agreeable and

and the gay, dissipated Beauclerk, were companions. 'What a coalition! (said Garrick, when he heard of this;) I shall have my old friend to bail out of the Round-house!' But I can bear testimony that it was a very agreeable association. Beauclerk was too polite, and valued learning and wit too much, to offend Johnson by sallies of infidelity or licentiousness; and Johnson delighted in the good qualities of Beauclerk, and hoped to correct the evil. Innumerable were the scenes in which Johnson was amused by these young men. Beauclerk could take more liberty with him, than any body with whom I ever saw him; but, on the other hand, Beauclerk was not spared by his respectable companion, when reproof was proper. Beauclerk had such a propensity to satire, that at one time Johnson said to him, 'You never open your mouth but with intention to give pain; and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention.' At another time applying to him, with a slight alteration, a line of Pope, he said,

'Thy love of folly, and thy scorn of fools—²

Every thing thou dost shews the one, and every thing thou say'st the other.' At another time he said to him, 'Thy

men that could possibly exist.' Lord Charlemont's *Life*, i. 210. Hawkins writes (*Life*, p. 422) that 'over all his behaviour there beamed such a sunshine of cheerfulness and good-humour as communicated itself to all around him.' Mrs. Piozzi said of him:—'Topham Beauclerk (wicked and profligate as he wished to be accounted) was yet a man of very strict veracity. Oh Lord! how I did hate that horrid Beauclerk.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 348. Rogers (*Table-Talk*, p. 40) said that 'Beauclerk was a strangely absent person.' He once went to dress for a dinner-party in his own house. 'He forgot all about his guests; thought that it was bed-time, and got into bed. His servant, coming to tell him that his guests were waiting for him, found him fast asleep.'

¹ It was to the Round-house that Captain Booth was first taken in Fielding's *Amelia*, Book i, chap. 2.

² 'Blends, in exception to all general rules,
Your taste of follies with our scorn of fools.'

Pope, *Moral Essays*, ii. 275.

body is all vice, and thy mind all virtue.' Beauclerk not seeming to relish the compliment, Johnson said, 'Nay, Sir, Alexander the Great, marching in triumph into Babylon, could not have desired to have had more said to him.'

Johnson was some time with Beauclerk at his house at Windsor, where he was entertained with experiments in natural philosophy¹. One Sunday, when the weather was very fine, Beauclerk enticed him, insensibly, to saunter about all the morning. They went into a church-yard, in the time of divine service, and Johnson laid himself down at his ease upon one of the tomb-stones. 'Now, Sir, (said Beauclerk) you are like Hogarth's Idle Apprentice.' When Johnson got his pension, Beauclerk said to him, in the humorous phrase of Falstaff, 'I hope you'll now purge and live cleanly like a gentleman².'

One night when Beauclerk and Langton had supped at a tavern in London, and sat till about three in the morning, it came into their heads to go and knock up Johnson, and see if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble. They rapped violently at the door of his chambers in the Temple, till at last he appeared in his shirt, with his little black wig on the top of his head, instead of a nightcap, and a poker in his hand, imagining, probably, that some ruffians were coming to attack him. When he discovered who they were, and was told their errand, he smiled, and with great good humour agreed to their proposal: 'What, is it you, you dogs! I'll have a frisk with you.' He was soon drest, and they sallied forth together into Covent-

¹ In the college which *The Club* was to set up at St. Andrew's, Beauclerk was to have the chair of natural philosophy. Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 25, 1773. Goldsmith, writing to Langton in 1771, says: —'Mr. Beauclerk is now going directly forward to become a second Boyle; deep in chymistry and physics.' Forster's *Goldsmith*, ii. 283. Boswell described to Temple, in 1775, Beauclerk's villa at Muswell Hill, with its 'observatory, laboratory for chymical experiments.' Boswell's *Letters*, p. 194.

² 'I'll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly as a nobleman should do.' 1 Henry IV. Act v. sc. 4.

Garden, where the greengrocers and fruiterers were beginning to arrange their hampers, just come in from the country. Johnson made some attempts to help them; but the honest gardeners stared so at his figure and manner, and odd interference, that he soon saw his services were not relished. They then repaired to one of the neighbouring taverns, and made a bowl of that liquor called *Bishop*¹, which Johnson had always liked; while in joyous contempt of sleep, from which he had been roused, he repeated the festive lines,

‘Short, O short then be thy reign,
And give us to the world again²!’

They did not stay long, but walked down to the Thames, took a boat, and rowed to Billingsgate. Beauclerk and Johnson were so well pleased with their amusement, that they resolved to persevere in dissipation for the rest of the day: but Langton deserted them, being engaged to breakfast with some young Ladies. Johnson scolded him for ‘leaving his social friends, to go and sit with a set of wretched *un-idea’d* girls.’ Garrick being told of this ramble, said to him smartly, ‘I heard of your frolick t’other night. You’ll be in the Chronicle.’ Upon which Johnson afterwards observed, ‘*He* durst not do such a thing. His *wife* would not *let* him!’

1753: ÆTAT. 44.]—He entered upon this year 1753 with his usual piety, as appears from the following prayer, which

¹ ‘*Bishop*. A cant word for a mixture of wine, oranges, and sugar.’ Johnson’s *Dictionary*.

² Mr. Langton has recollected, or Dr. Johnson repeated, the passage wrong. The lines are in Lord Lansdowne’s Drinking Song to Sleep, and run thus:—

‘Short, very short be then thy reign,
For I’m in haste to laugh and drink again.’

BOSWELL.

Lord Lansdowne was the Granville of Pope’s couplet—

‘But why then publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write.’

Prologue to the Satires, l. 135.

I transcribed

I transcribed from that part of his diary which he burnt a few days before his death¹ :

‘Jan. 1, 1753, N. S. which I shall use for the future.

‘Almighty GOD, who hast continued my life to this day, grant that, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may improve the time which thou shalt grant me, to my eternal salvation. Make me to remember, to thy glory, thy judgements and thy mercies. Make me so to consider the loss of my wife, whom thou hast taken from me, that it may dispose me, by thy grace, to lead the residue of my life in thy fear. Grant this, O LORD, for JESUS CHRIST’S sake. Amen.’

He now relieved the drudgery of his *Dictionary*, and the melancholy of his grief, by taking an active part in the composition of *The Adventurer*, in which he began to write April 10², marking his essays with the signature T³, by which most of his papers in that collection are distinguished: those, however, which have that signature and also that of *Mysargyrus*, were not written by him, but, as I suppose, by Dr. Bathurst. Indeed Johnson’s energy of thought and richness of language, are still more decisive marks than any signature. As a proof of this, my readers, I imagine, will not doubt that Number 39, on sleep, is his; for it not only

¹ Boswell in his *Hebrides* (Aug. 18, 1773) says that Johnson, on starting from Edinburgh, left behind in an open drawer in Boswell’s house ‘one volume of a pretty full and curious Diary of his life, of which I have a few fragments.’ He also states (*post*, under Dec. 9, 1784):—‘I owned to him, that having accidentally seen them [two quarto volumes of his *Life*] I had read a great deal in them.’ It would seem that he had also transcribed a portion.

² This is inconsistent with what immediately follows, for No. 39 on Sleep was published on March 20.

³ Hawkesworth in the last number of *The Adventurer* says that he had help at first from A.; ‘but this resource soon failing, I was obliged to carry on the publication alone, except some casual supplies, till I obtained from the gentlemen who have distinguished their papers by T and Z, such assistance as I most wished.’ In a note he says that the papers signed Z are by the Rev. Mr. Warton. The papers signed A are written in a light style. In Southey’s *Cowper*, i. 47, it is said that Bonnell Thornton wrote them.

has the general texture and colour of his style, but the authours with whom he was peculiarly conversant are readily introduced in it in cursory allusion. The translation of a passage in Statius¹ quoted in that paper, and marked C. B. has been erroneously ascribed to Dr. Bathurst, whose Christian name was Richard. How much this amiable man actually contributed to *The Adventurer*, cannot be known. Let me add, that Hawkesworth's imitations of Johnson are sometimes so happy, that it is extremely difficult to distinguish them, with certainty, from the compositions of his great archetype. Hawkesworth was his closest imitator, a circumstance of which that writer would once have been proud to be told; though, when he had become elated by having risen into some degree of consequence, he, in a conversation with me, had the provoking effrontery to say he was not sensible of it².

Johnson was truly zealous for the success of *The Adventurer*; and very soon after his engaging in it, he wrote the following letter:

‘TO THE REVEREND DR. JOSEPH WARTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I ought to have written to you before now, but I ought to do many things which I do not; nor can I, indeed, claim any merit from this letter; for being desired by the authours and proprietor of *The Adventurer* to look out for another hand, my thoughts necessarily fixed upon you, whose fund of literature will enable you to assist them, with very little interruption of your studies.

‘They desire you to engage to furnish one paper a month, at two

¹ Boswell had read the passage carelessly. Statius is mentioned, but the writer goes on to quote *Cowley*, whose Latin lines C. B. has translated. Johnson's *Works*, iv. 10.

² Malone says that ‘Johnson was fond of him, but latterly owned that Hawkesworth—who had set out a modest, humble man—was one of the many whom success in the world had spoiled. He was latterly, as Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, an affected insincere man, and a great coxcomb in his dress. He had no literature whatever.’ Prior's *Malone*, p. 441. See *post*, April 11 and May 7, 1773, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 3.

guineas a paper, which you may very readily perform. We have considered that a paper should consist of pieces of imagination, pictures of life, and disquisitions of literature. The part which depends on the imagination is very well supplied, as you will find when you read the paper; for descriptions of life, there is now a treaty almost made with an authour and an authouress; and the province of criticism and literature they are very desirous to assign to the commentator on Virgil.

‘I hope this proposal will not be rejected, and that the next post will bring us your compliance. I speak as one of the fraternity, though I have no part in the paper, beyond now and then a motto; but two of the writers are my particular friends, and I hope the pleasure of seeing a third united to them, will not be denied to, dear Sir,

‘Your most obedient,

‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘March 8, 1753.’

The consequence of this letter was, Dr. Warton’s enriching the collection with several admirable essays.

Johnson’s saying ‘I have no part in the paper beyond now and then a motto,’ may seem inconsistent with his being the authour of the papers marked T. But he had, at this time, written only one number¹; and besides, even at any after period, he might have used the same expression, considering it as a point of honour not to own them; for Mrs. Williams told me that, ‘as he had *given* those Essays to Dr. Bathurst, who sold them at two guineas each, he never would

¹ Johnson’s statement to Warton is definite and is borne out by internal evidence, if internal evidence can be needful when he had once made a definite statement. The papers signed *Misargyrus*, the first of which appeared on March 3, are all below his style. They were not, I feel sure, written by him, and are improperly given in the Oxford edition of his works. I do not find in them even any traces of his hand. The paper on Sleep, No. 39, is, I am almost sure, partly his, but I believe it is not wholly. In the frequency of quotations in the first part of it I see another, and probably a younger author. The passage on the ‘low drudgery of digesting dictionaries’ is almost certainly his. Dr. Bathurst, perhaps, wrote the Essay, and Johnson corrected it. Whether it was Johnson’s or not, it was published after the letter to Dr. Warton was written.

own them; nay, he used to say he did not *write* them: but the fact was, that he *dictated* them, while Bathurst wrote.' I read to him Mrs. Williams's account; he smiled, and said nothing¹.

I am not quite satisfied with the casuistry by which the productions of one person are thus passed upon the world for the productions of another. I allow that not only knowledge, but powers and qualities of mind may be communicated; but the actual effect of individual exertion never can be transferred, with truth, to any other than its own original cause. One person's child may be made the child of another person by adoption, as among the Romans, or by the ancient Jewish mode of a wife having children born to her upon her knees, by her handmaid. But these were children in a different sense from that of nature. It was clearly understood that they were not of the blood of their nominal parents. So in literary children, an authour may give the profits and fame of his composition to another man, but cannot make that other the real authour. A Highland gentleman, a younger branch of a family, once consulted me if he could not validly purchase the Chieftainship of his family, from the Chief who was willing to sell it. I told him it was impossible for him to acquire, by purchase, a right to be a different person from what he really was; for that the right of Chieftainship attached to the blood of primogeniture, and, therefore, was incapable of being transferred. I added, that though Esau sold his birth-right, or the advantages belonging to it, he still remained the first-born of his parents; and that whatever agreement a Chief might make with any of the clan, the Herald's Office could not admit of the metamorphosis, or with any decency attest that the younger was the elder; but I did not convince the worthy gentleman.

Johnson's papers in *The Adventurer* are very similar to those of *The Rambler*; but being rather more varied in their

¹ See *post*, April 25, 1778, for an instance where Johnson's silence did not imply assent.

subjects,

subjects, and being mixed with essays by other writers, upon topicks more generally attractive than even the most elegant ethical discourses, the sale of the work, at first, was more extensive. Without meaning, however, to depreciate *The Adventurer*, I must observe that as the value of *The Rambler* came, in the progress of time, to be better known, it grew upon the publick estimation, and that its sale has far exceeded that of any other periodical papers since the reign of Queen Anne.

In one of the books of his diary I find the following entry :

‘Apr. 3, 1753. I began the second vol. of my Dictionary, room being left in the first for Preface, Grammar, and History, none of them yet begun.

‘O God, who hast hitherto supported me, enable me to proceed in this labour, and in the whole task of my present state; that when I shall render up, at the last day, an account of the talent committed to me, I may receive pardon, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST. Amen.’

He this year favoured Mrs. Lennox¹ with a Dedication* to the Earl of Orrery, of her *Shakspeare Illustrated*.

1754: ÆTAT. 45.]—IN 1754 I can trace nothing published by him, except his numbers of *The Adventurer*, and ‘The Life of Edward Cave,’* in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for February. In biography there can be no question that he excelled, beyond all who have attempted that species of

¹ ‘One evening at the Club Johnson proposed to us the celebrating the birth of Mrs. Lennox’s first literary child, as he called her book, [*The Life of Harriet Stuart*, a novel, published Dec. 1750] by a whole night spent in festivity. Our supper was elegant, and Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple-pie should make a part of it, and this he would have stuck with bay-leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs. Lennox was an authoress, and had written verses; and further, he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not till he had invoked the Muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he encircled her brows. About five Johnson’s face shone with meridian splendour, though his drink had been only lemonade.’ Hawkins’s *Johnson*, p. 286. See *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton’s *Collection*, and May 15, 1784.

composition;

composition; upon which, indeed, he set the highest value. To the minute selection of characteristic circumstances, for which the ancients were remarkable, he added a philosophical research, and the most perspicuous and energetick language. Cave was certainly a man of estimable qualities, and was eminently diligent and successful in his own business¹, which, doubtless, entitled him to respect. But he was peculiarly fortunate in being recorded by Johnson, who, of the narrow life of a printer and publisher, without any digressions or adventitious circumstances, has made an interesting and agreeable narrative².

The *Dictionary*, we may believe, afforded Johnson full occupation this year. As it approached to its conclusion, he probably worked with redoubled vigour, as seamen increase their exertion and alacrity when they have a near prospect of their haven.

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the *Plan* of his *Dictionary*, had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances³, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his Lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would

¹ In a document in the possession of one of Cave's collateral descendants, which I have seen, dated May 3, 1754, and headed, 'Present state of the late Mr. Edward Cave's effects,' I found entered 'Magazine, £3,000. *Daily Advertiser*, £900.' The total value of the effects was £8,708.

² Johnson records of his friend that 'one of the last acts of reason which he exerted was fondly to press the hand that is now writing this little narrative.' *Works*, vi. 433.

³ See Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 189.

return.

return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttelton, who told me, he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield, by saying, that ‘Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the back-stairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes.’ It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me, that there was not the least foundation for it. He told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his Lordship’s continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him¹. When the *Dictionary* was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him², attempted, in a courtly manner, to sooth, and insinuate

¹ Lord Chesterfield writing to his son in 1751 (*Letters*, iii. 136) said:—‘People in high life are hardened to the wants and distresses of mankind, as surgeons are to their bodily pains; they see and hear of them all day long, and even of so many simulated ones, that they do not know which are real, and which are not. Other sentiments are therefore to be applied to than those of mere justice and humanity; their favour must be captivated by the *suaviter in modo*; their love of ease disturbed by unwearied importunity; or their fears wrought upon by a decent intimation of implacable, cool resentment: this is the true *fortiter in re*.’ He was himself to experience an instance of the true *fortiter in re*.

² If Lord Chesterfield had read the last number of *The Rambler* (published in March 1752) he could scarcely have flattered himself with these expectations. Johnson, after saying that he would not endeavour to overbear the censures of criticism by the influence of a patron, added:—‘The supplications of an author never yet reprieved him a moment from oblivion; and, though greatness has sometimes sheltered guilt, it can afford no protection to ignorance or dulness. Having hitherto attempted only the propagation of truth, I will not at last violate it by the confession of terrors which I do not feel; having laboured to maintain the dignity of virtue, I will not now degrade it by the meanness of dedication.’

himself

himself with the Sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in *The World*¹, in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted². Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified.

His Lordship says,

‘I think the publick in general, and the republick of letters in particular, are greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson, for having undertaken, and executed, so great and desirable a work. Perfection is not to be expected from man; but if we are to judge by the

¹ On Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 1754. *The World*, by Adam Fitz-Adam, Jan. 1753 to Dec. 1765. The editor was Edward Moore. Among the contributors were the Earls of Chesterfield and Corke, Horace Walpole, R. O. Cambridge, and Soame Jenyns. See *post*, July 1, 1763.

² With these papers as a whole Johnson would have been highly offended. The anonymous writer hopes that his readers will not suspect him ‘of being a hired and interested puff of this work.’ ‘I most solemnly protest,’ he goes on to say, ‘that neither Mr. Johnson, nor any booksellers have ever offered me the usual compliment of a pair of gloves or a bottle of wine.’ It is a pretty piece of irony for a wealthy nobleman solemnly to protest that he has not been bribed by a poor author, whom seven years before he had repulsed from his door. But Chesterfield did worse than this. By way of recommending a work of so much learning and so much labour he tells a foolish story of an assignation that had failed ‘between a fine gentleman and a fine lady.’ The letter that had passed between them had been badly spelt, and they had gone to different houses. ‘Such examples,’ he wrote, ‘really make one tremble; and will, I am convinced, determine my fair fellow-subjects and their adherents to adopt and scrupulously conform to Mr. Johnson’s rules of true orthography.’ Johnson, in the last year of his life, at a time of great weakness and depression, defended the roughness of his manner. ‘I have done more good as I am. Obscenity and impiety have always been repressed in my company (*post*, June 11, 1784).

various

various works of Johnson¹ already published, we have good reason to believe, that he will bring this as near to perfection as any man could do. The *Plan* of it, which he published some years ago, seems to me to be a proof of it. Nothing can be more rationally imagined, or more accurately and elegantly expressed. I therefore recommend the previous perusal of it to all those who intend to buy the *Dictionary*, and who, I suppose, are all those who can afford it.'

* * * * *

'It must be owned, that our language is, at present, in a state of anarchy, and hitherto, perhaps, it may not have been the worse for it. During our free and open trade, many words and expressions have been imported, adopted, and naturalized from other languages, which have greatly enriched our own. Let it still preserve what real strength and beauty it may have borrowed from others; but let it not, like the Tarpeian maid, be overwhelmed and crushed by unnecessary ornaments². The time for discrimination seems to be now come. Toleration, adoption, and naturalization have run their lengths. Good order and authority are now necessary. But where shall we find them, and, at the same time, the obedience due to them? We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of confusion, and chuse a dictator. Upon this principle, I give my vote for Mr. Johnson to fill that great and arduous post. And I hereby declare, that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship. Nay more, I will not only obey him, like an old Roman, as my dictator, but, like a modern Roman, I will implicitly believe in him as my Pope, and hold him to be infallible while in the chair, but no longer. More than this he cannot well require; for, I presume, that obedience can never be expected, when there is neither terrour to enforce, nor interest to invite it.'

* * * * *

'But a Grammar, a Dictionary, and a History of our Language through its several stages, were still wanting at home, and importunately called for from abroad. Mr. Johnson's labours will now, I dare say³, very fully supply that want, and greatly contribute to

¹ In the original 'Mr. Johnson.'

² In the original 'unnecessary foreign ornaments.'

³ In the original, 'will now, and, I dare say.'

the farther spreading of our language in other countries. Learners were discouraged, by finding no standard to resort to; and, consequently, thought it incapable of any. They will now be undeceived and encouraged.'

This courtly device failed of its effect'. Johnson, who thought that 'all was false and hollow',¹ despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should, for a moment, imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, 'Sir, after making great professions², he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might shew him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him⁴.'

¹ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 191) says that Chesterfield, further to appease Johnson, sent to him Sir Thomas Robinson (see *post*, July 19, 1763), who was 'to apologise for his lordship's treatment of him, and to make him tenders of his future friendship and patronage. Sir Thomas, whose talent was flattery, was profuse in his commendations of Johnson and his writings, and declared that, were his circumstances other than they were, himself would settle £500 a year on him. 'And who are you,' asked Johnson, 'that talk thus liberally?' 'I am,' said the other, 'Sir Thomas Robinson, a Yorkshire baronet.' 'Sir,' replied Johnson, 'if the first peer of the realm were to make me such an offer, I would shew him the way down stairs.'

² *Paradise Lost*, ii. 112.

³ Johnson, perhaps, was thinking of his interviews with Chesterfield, when in his *Rambler* on 'The Mischiefs of following a Patron' (No. 163) he wrote:—'If you, Mr. Rambler, have ever ventured your philosophy within the attraction of greatness, you know the force of such language, introduced with a smile of gracious tenderness, and impressed at the conclusion with an air of solemn sincerity.'

⁴ Johnson said to Garrick:—'I have sailed a long and painful voyage round the world of the English language; and does he now send out two cock-boats to tow me into harbour?' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 74. This metaphor may perhaps have been suggested to Johnson by Warburton. 'I now begin to see land, after having wandered, ac-

This is that celebrated letter of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified. I for many years solicited Johnson to favour me with a copy of it¹, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity. He delayed from time to time to give it me²; till at last in 1781, when we were on a visit at Mr. Dilly's, at Southill in Bedfordshire, he was pleased to dictate it to me from memory³. He afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretti, with its title and corrections, in his own handwriting. This he gave to Mr. Langton; adding that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy. By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript⁴ of what the world has so eagerly desired to see.

ording to Mr. Warburton's phrase, in this vast sea of words.' *Post*, Feb. 1, 1755.

¹ See *post*, Nov. 22, 1779, and April 8, 1780. Sir Henry Ellis says that 'address' in Johnson's own copy of his letter to Lord Chesterfield is spelt twice with one *d*. Croker's *Corres.* ii. 44. In the series of Letters by Johnson given in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v, Johnson writes *persuit* (p. 325); 'I cannot butt' (p. 342); 'to retain council' (p. 343); *harrassed* (p. 423); *imbecillity* (p. 482). In a letter to Nichols quoted by me, *post*, beginning of 1783, he writes *ihness*. He commonly, perhaps always, spelt *Boswell Boswel*, and Nichols's name in one series of letters he spelt Nichols, Nichol, and Nicol. *Post*, beginning of 1781, note.

² Dr. Johnson appeared to have had a remarkable delicacy with respect to the circulation of this letter; for Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, informs me that, having many years ago pressed him to be allowed to read it to the second Lord Hardwicke, who was very desirous to hear it (promising at the same time, that no copy of it should be taken), Johnson seemed much pleased that it had attracted the attention of a nobleman of such a respectable character; but after pausing some time, declined to comply with the request, saying, with a smile, 'No, Sir; I have hurt the dog too much already;' or words to that purpose. BOSWELL.

³ See *post*, June 4, 1781.

⁴ In 1790, the year before the *Life of Johnson* came out, Boswell published this letter in a separate sheet of four quarto pages under

'To

‘TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

‘MY LORD,

‘February 7, 1755.

‘I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the publick, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

‘When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*¹;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

‘Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance², one word of

the following title:—*The celebrated Letter from Samuel Johnson, LL.D., to Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield; Now first published with Notes, by James Boswell, Esq., London. Printed by Henry Baldwin: for Charles Dilly in the Poultry, MDCCXC. Price Half-a-Guinea. Entered in the Hall-Book of the Company of Stationers.* It belongs to the same impression as *The Life of Johnson*.

¹ ‘Je chante le vainqueur des vainqueurs de la terre.’ Boileau, *L'Art poétique*, iii. 272.

² The following note is subjoined by Mr. Langton:—‘Dr. Johnson, when he gave me this copy of his letter, desired that I would annex to it his information to me, that whereas it is said in the letter that “no assistance has been received,” he did once receive from Lord Chesterfield the sum of ten pounds; but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find place in a letter of the kind that this was.’ BOSWELL. ‘This surely is an unsatisfactory excuse,’ writes Mr. Croker. He read Johnson’s encouragement,

encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

'The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

'Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it'; till I am known,

letter carelessly, as the rest of his note shews. Johnson says, that during the seven years that had passed since he was repulsed from Chesterfield's door he had pushed on his work without one act of assistance. These ten pounds, we may feel sure, had been received before the seven years began to run. No doubt they had been given in 1747 as an acknowledgment of the compliment paid to Chesterfield in the *Plan*. He had at first been misled by Chesterfield's one act of kindness, but he had long had his eyes opened. Like the shepherd in Virgil (*Eclogues*, viii. 43) he could say:—'*Nunc scio quid sit Amor.*'

¹ In this passage Dr. Johnson evidently alludes to the loss of his wife. We find the same tender recollection recurring to his mind upon innumerable occasions: and, perhaps no man ever more forcibly felt the truth of the sentiment so elegantly expressed by my friend Mr. Malone, in his Prologue to Mr. Jephson's tragedy of *JULIA* [*Julia or the Italian Lover* was acted for the first time on April 17, 1787. *Gent. Mag.* 1787, p. 354]:—

'Vain — wealth, and fame, and fortune's fostering care,
If no fond breast the splendid blessings share;
And, each day's bustling pageantry once past,
There, only there, our bliss is found at last.' BOSWELL.

Three years earlier, when his wife was dying, he had written in one of the last *Ramblers* (No. 203):—'It is necessary to the completion of every good, that it be timely obtained; for whatever comes at the close of life will come too late to give much delight . . . What we acquire by bravery or science, by mental or corporal diligence, comes at last when we cannot communicate, and therefore cannot enjoy it.' Chesterfield himself was in no happy state. Less than a month before he received Johnson's letter he wrote (*Works*, iii. 308):—'For these six months past, it seems as if all the complaints that ever attacked heads had joined to overpower mine. Continual noises, headache, giddiness, and impenetrable deafness; I could not stoop to
and

and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Publick should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

'Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning¹, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

'My Lord,
'Your Lordship's most humble,
'Most obedient servant,
'SAM. JOHNSON².'

'While this was the talk of the town, (says Dr. Adams, in a letter to me) I happened to visit Dr. Warburton, who finding that I was acquainted with Johnson, desired me earnestly to carry his compliments to him, and to tell him, that he honoured him for his manly behaviour in rejecting these condescensions of Lord Chesterfield, and for resenting the treatment he had received from him, with a proper spirit. Johnson was visibly pleased with this compliment, for he had

write; and even reading, the only resource of the deaf, was painful to me.' He wrote to his son a year earlier (*Letters*, iv. 43), 'Reading, which was always a pleasure to me in the time even of my greatest dissipation, is now become my only refuge; and I fear I indulge it too much at the expense of my eyes. But what can I do? I must do something. I cannot bear absolute idleness; my ears grow every day more useless to me, my eyes consequently more necessary. I will not hoard them like a miser, but will rather risk the loss than not enjoy the use of them.'

¹ 'The *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 51.

² Upon comparing this copy with that which Dr. Johnson dictated to me from recollection, the variations are found to be so slight, that this must be added to the many other proofs which he gave of the wonderful extent and accuracy of his memory. To gratify the curious in composition, I have deposited both the copies in the British Museum. BOSWELL.

always a high opinion of Warburton¹. Indeed, the force of mind which appeared in this letter, was congenial with that which Warburton himself amply possessed².

There is a curious minute circumstance which struck me, in comparing the various editions of Johnson's imitations of Juvenal. In the tenth Satire, one of the couplets upon the vanity of wishes even for literary distinction stood thus:

'Yet think³ what ills the scholar's life assail,
Pride⁴, envy, want, the *garret*, and the jail.'

But after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the

¹ Soon after Edwards's *Canons of Criticism* came out, Johnson was dining at Tonson the Bookseller's, with Hayman the Painter and some more company. Hayman related to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the conversation having turned upon Edwards's book, the gentlemen praised it much, and Johnson allowed its merit. But when they went farther, and appeared to put that authour upon a level with Warburton, 'Nay, (said Johnson,) he has given him some smart hits to be sure; but there is no proportion between the two men; they must not be named together. A fly, Sir, may sting a stately horse and make him wince; but one is but an insect, and the other is a horse still.' BOSWELL. Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare* (*Works*, v. 141) wrote:—'Dr. Warburton's chief assailants are the authors of *The Canons of Criticism*, and of *The Revision of Shakespeare's Text*. . . . The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter and returns for more; the other bites like a viper. . . . When I think on one with his confederates, I remember the danger of Coriolanus, who was afraid that "girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle;" when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth*:

"A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd."

Let me, however, do them justice. One is a wit and one a scholar.'

² To Johnson might be applied what he himself said of Dryden:—'He appears to have known in its whole extent the dignity of his character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances.' *Works*, vii. 291.

³ In the original *Yet mark*.

⁴ In the original *Toil*.

word *garret* from the *sad* group, and in all the subsequent editions the line stands

'Pride¹, envy, want, the *Patron*², and the jail.'

That Lord Chesterfield must have been mortified by the lofty contempt, and polite, yet keen satire with which Johnson exhibited him to himself in this letter, it is impossible to doubt. He, however, with that glossy duplicity which was his constant study, affected to be quite unconcerned. Dr. Adams mentioned to Mr. Robert Dodsley that he was sorry Johnson had written his letter to Lord Chesterfield. Dodsley, with the true feelings of trade, said 'he was very sorry too; for that he had a property in the *Dictionary*, to which his Lordship's patronage might have been of consequence.' He then told Dr. Adams, that Lord Chesterfield had shewn him the letter. 'I should have imagined (replied Dr. Adams) that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it.' 'Poh! (said Dodsley) do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, Sir. It lay upon his table, where any body might see it. He read it to me; said, "this man has great powers," pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed.' This air of indifference, which imposed upon the worthy Dodsley, was certainly nothing but a specimen of that dissimulation which Lord Chesterfield inculcated as one of the most essential lessons for the conduct of life³. His Lordship endeavoured to justify

¹ In the original *Toil*.

² In his *Dictionary* he defined *patron* as 'commonly a wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery.' This definition disappears in the *Abridgement*, but remains in the fourth edition.

³ Chesterfield, when he read Johnson's letter to Dodsley, was acting up to the advice that he had given his own son six years earlier (*Letters*, ii. 172):—'When things of this kind [bons mots] happen to be said of you, the most prudent way is to seem not to suppose that they are meant at you, but to dissemble and conceal whatever degree of anger you may feel inwardly; and, should they be so plain, that you cannot be supposed ignorant of their meaning, to join in the laugh of the company against yourself; acknowledge the hit to be a fair one, and the jest a good one, and play off the whole thing in seeming good
himself

himself to Dodsley from the charges brought against him by Johnson; but we may judge of the flimsiness of his defence, from his having excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying that 'he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived;' as if there could have been the smallest difficulty to inform himself of that circumstance, by inquiring in the literary circle with which his Lordship was well acquainted, and was, indeed, himself one of its ornaments.

Dr. Adams expostulated with Johnson, and suggested, that his not being admitted when he called on him, was, probably, not to be imputed to Lord Chesterfield; for his Lordship had declared to Dodsley, that 'he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome;' and, in confirmation of this, he insisted on Lord Chesterfield's general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men. 'Sir, (said Johnson) that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing¹.' 'No, (said Dr. Adams) there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two.' 'But mine, (replied Johnson, instantly) was *defensive* pride.' This, as Dr. Adams well observed, was one of those happy turns for which he was so remarkably ready.

Johnson having now explicitly avowed his opinion of Lord Chesterfield, did not refrain from expressing himself concerning that nobleman with pointed freedom: 'This man (said he) I thought had been a Lord among wits; but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords²!' And when his *Letters* to his

humour; but by no means reply in the same way; which only shows that you are hurt, and publishes the victory which you might have concealed.'

¹ See *post*, March 23, 1783, where Johnson said that 'Lord Chesterfield was dignified, but he was insolent;' and June 27, 1784, where he said that 'his manner was exquisitely elegant.'

² 'Whate'er of mongrel no one class admits,
A wit with dunces, and a dunce with wits.'

Pope's *Dunciad*, iv. 90.

natural

natural son were published, he observed, that 'they teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master!'

The character of 'a respectable Hottentot,' in Lord Chesterfield's letters², has been generally understood to be meant for Johnson, and I have no doubt that it was. But I remember when the *Literary Property* of those letters was contested in the Court of Session in Scotland, and Mr. Henry Dundas³,

'A true choice spirit we admit;
With wits a fool, with fools a wit.'

Churchill's *Duellist*, Book iii.

'The solemn fop, significant and budge;
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge.'

Cowper's *Poems, Conversation*, l. 299.

According to Rebecca Warner (*Original Letters*, p. 204), Johnson telling Joseph Fowke about his refusal to dedicate his *Dictionary* to Chesterfield, said:—'Sir, I found I must have gilded a rotten post.'

¹ That collection of letters cannot be vindicated from the serious charge of encouraging, in some passages, one of the vices most destructive to the good order and comfort of society, which his Lordship represents as mere fashionable gallantry; and, in others, of inculcating the base practice of dissimulation, and recommending, with disproportionate anxiety, a perpetual attention to external elegance of manners. But it must, at the same time, be allowed, that they contain many good precepts of conduct, and much genuine information upon life and manners, very happily expressed; and that there was considerable merit in paying so much attention to the improvement of one who was dependent upon his Lordship's protection; it has, probably, been exceeded in no instance by the most exemplary parent; and though I can by no means approve of confounding the distinction between lawful and illicit offspring, which is, in effect, insulting the civil establishment of our country, to look no higher; I cannot help thinking it laudable to be kindly attentive to those, of whose existence we have, in any way, been the cause. Mr. Stanhope's character has been unjustly represented as diametrically opposite to what Lord Chesterfield wished him to be. He has been called dull, gross, and awkward: but I knew him at Dresden, when he was Envoy to that court; and though he could not boast of the *graces*, he was, in truth, a sensible, civil, well-behaved man. BOSWELL. See *post*, March 28, 1775, under April 29, 1776, and June 27, 1784.

² Chesterfield's *Letters*, iii. 129.

³ Now one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State. BOSWELL. Afterwards Viscount Melville.

one of the counsel for the proprietors, read this character as an exhibition of Johnson, Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, one of the Judges, maintained, with some warmth, that it was not intended as a portrait of Johnson, but of a late noble Lord, distinguished for abstruse science¹. I have heard Johnson himself talk of the character, and say that it was meant for George Lord Lyttelton, in which I could by no means agree; for his Lordship had nothing of that violence which is a conspicuous feature in the composition. Finding that my illustrious friend could bear to have it supposed that it might be meant for him, I said, laughingly, that there was one trait which unquestionably did not belong to him; 'he throws his meat anywhere but down his throat.' 'Sir, (said he,) Lord Chesterfield never saw me eat in his life².'

¹ Probably George, second Earl of Macclesfield, who was, in 1752, elected President of the Royal Society. CROKER. Horace Walpole (*Letters*, ii. 321) mentions him as 'engaged to a party for finding out the longitude.'

² In another work (*Dr. Johnson: His Friends and his Critics*, p. 214), I have shewn that Lord Chesterfield's 'Respectable Hottentot' was not Johnson. From the beginning of 1748 to the end of 1754 Chesterfield had no dealings of any kind with Johnson. At no time had there been the slightest intimacy between the great nobleman and the poor author. Chesterfield had never seen Johnson eat. The letter in which the character is drawn opens with the epigram:

Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare,
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te.

Chesterfield goes on to show 'how it is possible not to love anybody, and yet not to know the reason why. . . . How often,' he says, 'have I, in the course of my life, found myself in this situation with regard to many of my acquaintance whom I have honoured and respected, without being able to love.' He then instances the case of the man whom he describes as a respectable Hottentot. It is clear that he is writing of a man whom he knows well and who has some claim upon his affection. Twice he says that it is impossible to love him. The date of this letter is Feb. 28, 1751, more than three years after Johnson had for the last time waited in Chesterfield's outward rooms. Moreover the same man is described in three other letters (Sept. 22, 1749; Nov. 1749; and May 27, 1753), and described as one with whom Chesterfield lived on terms of intimacy. In the two former of these letters

On

On the 6th of March came out Lord Bolingbroke's works, published by Mr. David Mallet¹. The wild and pernicious ravings, under the name of *Philosophy*, which were thus ushered into the world, gave great offence to all well-principled men. Johnson, hearing of their tendency², which nobody disputed,

he is called Mr. L. Lyttelton did not become Sir George Lyttelton till Sept. 14, 1751. He was raised to the peerage in 1757. Horace Walpole (*Reign of George III*, i. 256) says of him :—' His ignorance of mankind, want of judgment, with strange absence and awkwardness, involved him in mistakes and ridicule.' Had Chesterfield's letter been published when it was written, no one in all likelihood would have so much as dreamt that Johnson was aimed at. But it did not come before the world till twenty-three years later, when Johnson's quarrel with Chesterfield was known to every one, when Johnson himself was at the very head of the literary world, and when his peculiarities had become a matter of general interest.

¹ About four years after this time Gibbon, on his return to England, became intimate with Mr. and Mrs. Mallet. He thus wrote of them :—' The most useful friends of my father were the Mallets; they received me with civility and kindness at first on his account, and afterwards on my own; and (if I may use Lord Chesterfield's words) I was soon *domesticated* in their house. Mr. Mallet, a name among the English poets, is praised by an unforgiving enemy for the ease and elegance of his conversation, and his wife was not destitute of wit or learning.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 115. The 'unforgiving enemy' was Johnson, who wrote (*Works*, viii. 468) :—' His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.' Johnson once said :—' I have seldom met with a man whose colloquial ability exceeded that of Mallet.' Johnson's *Works*, 1787, xi. 214. See *post*, March 27, 1772, and April 28, 1783; and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Sept. 10, 1773.

² Johnson had never read Bolingbroke's *Philosophy*. 'I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety,' he said (*post*, under March 1, 1758). In the memorable sentence that he, notwithstanding, pronounced upon the author, he exposed himself to the retort which he had recorded in his *Life of Boerhaave* (*Works*, vi. 277). 'As Boerhaave was sitting in a common boat, there arose a conversation among the passengers upon the impious and pernicious doctrine of Spinoza, which, as they all agreed, tends to the utter overthrow of all religion. Boerhaave sat and attended silently to this discourse for some time, till one of the company . . . instead of confuting the positions of Spinoza by argument began to give a loose to contumelious language and virulent

was

was roused with a just indignation, and pronounced this memorable sentence upon the noble authour and his editor. 'Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward!': a scoundrel, for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman, to draw the trigger after his death!¹ Garrick, who I can attest from my own knowledge, had his mind seasoned with pious reverence, and sincerely disapproved of the infidel writings of several, whom, in the course of his almost universal gay intercourse with men of eminence, he treated with external civility, distinguished himself upon this occasion. Mr. Pelham having died on the very day on which Lord Bolingbroke's

invectives, which Boerhaave was so little pleased with, that at last he could not forbear asking him, whether he had ever read the author he declaimed against.'

¹ Lord Shelburne said that 'Bolingbroke was both a political and personal coward.' Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 29.

² It was in the summer of this year that Murphy became acquainted with Johnson. (See *post*, 1760.) 'The first striking sentence that he heard from him was in a few days after the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works. Mr. Garrick asked him, "if he had seen them." "Yes, I have seen them." "What do you think of them?" "Think of them!" He made a long pause, and then replied: "Think of them! a scoundrel and a coward! A scoundrel who spent his life in charging a gun against Christianity; and a coward, who was afraid of hearing the report of his own gun; but left half-a-crown to a hungry Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death!" His mind, at this time strained and over laboured by constant exertion, called for an interval of repose and indolence. But indolence was the time of danger; it was then that his spirits, not employed abroad, turned with inward hostility against himself.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 79, and Piozzi's *Anec.* p. 235. Adam Smith, perhaps, had this saying of Johnson's in mind, when in 1776 he refused the request of the dying Hume to edit after his death his *Dialogues on Natural Religion*. Hume wrote back:—'I think your scruples groundless. Was Mallet anywise hurt by his publication of Lord Bolingbroke? He received an office afterwards from the present King and Lord Bute, the most prudish man in the world.' Smith did not yield. J. H. Burton's *Hume*, ii. 491.

works

works came out, he wrote an elegant Ode on his death, beginning

‘Let others hail the rising sun,
I bow to that whose course is run;’

in which is the following stanza :

‘The same sad morn, to Church and State
(So for our sins ’twas fix’d by fate,)
A double stroke was given;
Black as the whirlwinds of the North,
St. John’s fell genius issued forth,
And Pelham fled to heaven¹.’

Johnson this year found an interval of leisure to make an excursion to Oxford, for the purpose of consulting the libraries there. Of this, and of many interesting circumstances concerning him, during a part of his life when he conversed but little with the world, I am enabled to give a particular account, by the liberal communications of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Warton², who obligingly furnished me with several of our common friend’s letters, which he illustrated with notes. These I shall insert in their proper places.

¹ According to Horace Walpole (*Letters*, ii. 374), Pelham died of a surfeit. As Johnson says (*Works*, viii. 310):—‘The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.’ Fielding in *The Voyage to Lisbon* (*Works*, x. 201) records:—‘I was at the worst on that memorable day when the public lost Mr. Pelham. From that day I began slowly, as it were, to draw my feet out of the grave.’ “‘I shall now have no more peace,” the King said with a sigh; being told of his Minister’s death.’ Walpole’s *George II*, i. 378.

² Thomas Warton, the younger brother of Dr. Warton, was a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. He was Poetry Professor from 1758 to 1768. Mant’s *Warton*, i. xliv. In 1785 he was made Poet Laureate. *Ib.* lxxxiii. Mr. Mant, telling of an estrangement between Johnson and the Wartons, says that he had heard ‘on unquestionable authority that Johnson had lamented, with tears in his eyes, that the Wartons had not called on him for the last four years; and that he has been known to declare that Tom Warton was the only man of genius whom he knew without a heart.’ *Ib.* xxxix.

‘TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

‘SIR,

‘It is but an ill return for the book with which you were pleased to favour me¹, to have delayed my thanks for it till now. I am too apt to be negligent; but I can never deliberately shew my disrespect to a man of your character: and I now pay you a very honest acknowledgement, for the advancement of the literature of our native country. You have shewn to all, who shall hereafter attempt the study of our ancient authours, the way to success; by directing them to the perusal of the books which those authours had read. Of this method, Hughes² and men much greater than Hughes, seem never to have thought. The reason why the authours, which are yet read, of the sixteenth century, are so little understood, is, that they are read alone; and no help is borrowed from those who lived with them, or before them. Some part of this ignorance I hope to remove by my book³, which now draws towards its end; but which I cannot finish to my mind, without visiting the libraries at Oxford, which I, therefore, hope to see in a fortnight⁴. I know not how long I shall stay, or where I shall lodge: but shall be sure to look for you at my arrival, and we shall easily settle the rest. I am, dear Sir,

‘Your most obedient, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London] July 16, 1754.’

Of his conversation while at Oxford at this time, Mr. Warton preserved and communicated to me the following memorial, which, though not written with all the care and attention which that learned and elegant writer bestowed on those compositions which he intended for the publick eye, is so happily expressed in an easy style, that I should injure it by any alteration:

¹ ‘Observations on Spenser’s Fairy Queen, the first edition of which was now just published.’ WARTON.

² ‘Hughes published an edition of Spenser.’ WARTON. See Johnson’s *Works*, vii. 476.

³ ‘His Dictionary.’ WARTON.

⁴ ‘He came to Oxford within a fortnight, and stayed about five weeks. He lodged at a house called Kettel-hall, near Trinity College. But during this visit at Oxford, he collected nothing in the libraries for his Dictionary.’ WARTON.

‘When

'When Johnson came to Oxford in 1754¹, the long vacation was beginning, and most people were leaving the place. This was the first time of his being there, after quitting the University. The next morning after his arrival, he wished to see his old College, *Pembroke*. I went with him. He was highly pleased to find all the College-servants² which he had left there still remaining, particularly a very old butler³; and expressed great satisfaction at being recognised by them, and conversed with them familiarly. He waited on the master, Dr. Radcliffe, who received him very coldly. Johnson at least expected, that the master would order a copy of his Dictionary, now near publication: but the master did not choose to talk on the subject, never asked Johnson to dine, nor even to visit him, while he stayed at Oxford. After we had left the lodgings, Johnson said to me, "*There* lives a man, who lives by the revenues of literature, and will not move a finger to support it. If I come to live at Oxford, I shall take up my abode at Trinity." We then called on the Reverend Mr. Meeke, one of the fellows, and of Johnson's standing. Here was a most cordial greeting on both sides. On leaving him, Johnson said, "I used to think

¹ Pitt this year described, in the House of Commons, a visit that he had paid to Oxford the summer before. He and his friends 'were at the window of the Angel Inn; a lady was desired to sing *God save great George our King*. The chorus was re-echoed by a set of young lads drinking at a college over the way [Queen's], but with additions of rank treason.' Walpole's *George II*, i. 413.

² A Fellow of Pembroke College, of Johnson's time, described the college servants as in 'the state of servitude the most miserable that can be conceived amongst so many masters.' He says that 'the kicks and cuffs and bruises they submit to entitle them, when those who were displeased relent,' to the compensation that is afforded by draughts of ale. 'There is not a college servant, but if he have learnt to suffer, and to be officious, and be inclined to tipple, may forget his cares in a gallon or two of ale every day of his life.' *Dr. Johnson: His Friends, &c.*, p. 45.

³ It was against the Butler that Johnson, in his college days, had written an epigram:—

'Quid mirum Maro quod digne canit arma virumque,
 Quid quod putidulum nostra Camoena sonat?
 Limosum nobis Promus dat callidus haustum;
 Virgilio vires uva Falerna dedit.
 Carmina vis nostri scribant meliora Poetae?
 Ingenium jubeas purior haustus alat.'

Meeke

Meeke had excellent parts, when we were boys together at the College: but, alas!

‘Lost in a convent’s solitary gloom!’

I remember, at the classical lecture in the Hall, I could not bear Meeke’s superiority, and I tried to sit as far from him as I could, that I might not hear him construe.”

‘As we were leaving the College, he said, “Here I translated Pope’s Messiah. Which do you think is the best line in it?—My own favourite is,

‘*Vallis aromatics fundit Saronica nubes.*’”

I told him, I thought it a very sonorous hexameter. I did not tell him, it was not in the Virgilian style³. He much regretted that his *first* tutor⁴ was dead; for whom he seemed to retain the greatest regard. He said, “I once had been a whole morning sliding in Christ-Church Meadow, and missed his lecture in logick. After dinner, he sent for me to his room. I expected a sharp rebuke for my idleness, and went with a beating heart. When we were seated, he told me he had sent for me to drink a glass of wine with him, and to tell me, he was *not* angry with me for missing his lecture. This was, in fact, a most severe reprimand. Some more of the boys were then sent for, and we spent a very pleasant afternoon.” Besides Mr. Meeke, there was only one other Fellow of Pembroke now resident: from both of whom Johnson received the greatest civilities during this visit, and they pressed him very much to have a room in the College.

‘In the course of this visit (1754,) Johnson and I walked, three

¹ Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, l. 38.

² Johnson or Warton misquoted the line. It stands:—
‘Mittit aromatics vallis Saronica nubes.’

Husbands’s *Miscellany*, p. 112.

³ De Quincey (*Works*, xiii. 162), after saying that Johnson did not understand Latin ‘with the elaborate and circumstantial accuracy required for the editing critically of a Latin classic,’ continues:—‘But if he had less than that, he also had more: he *possessed* that language in a way that no extent of mere critical knowledge could confer. He wrote it genially, not as one translating into it painfully from English, but as one using it for his original organ of thinking. And in Latin verse he expressed himself at times with the energy and freedom of a Roman.’

⁴ Mr. Jorden. See *ante*, p. 68.

or four times, to Ellsfield, a village beautifully situated about three miles from Oxford, to see Mr. Wise, Radclivian librarian, with whom Johnson was much pleased. At this place, Mr. Wise had fitted up a house and gardens, in a singular manner, but with great taste. Here was an excellent library; particularly, a valuable collection of books in Northern literature, with which Johnson was often very busy. One day Mr. Wise read to us a dissertation which he was preparing for the press, intitled, "A History and Chronology of the fabulous Ages." Some old divinities of Thrace, related to the Titans, and called the CABIRI, made a very important part of the theory of this piece; and in conversation afterwards, Mr. Wise talked much of his CABIRI. As we returned to Oxford in the evening, I out-walked Johnson, and he cried out *Sufflamina*, a Latin word which came from his mouth with peculiar grace, and was as much as to say, *Put on your drag chain*. Before we got home, I again walked too fast for him; and he now cried out, "Why, you walk as if you were pursued by all the CABIRI in a body." In an evening, we frequently took long walks from Oxford into the country, returning to supper. Once, in our way home, we viewed the ruins of the abbies of Oseney and Rewley, near Oxford. After at least half an hour's silence, Johnson said, "I viewed them with indignation!" We had then a long conversation on Gothick buildings; and in talking of the form of old halls, he said, "In these halls, the fire place was anciently always in the middle of the room², till the Whigs removed it on one side."—About this time there had been an execution of two or three criminals at Oxford on a Monday. Soon afterwards, one day at dinner, I was saying that Mr. Swinton the chaplain of the gaol, and also a frequent preacher before the University, a learned man, but often thoughtless and absent, preached the condemnation-sermon on repentance, before the convicts, on the preceding day, Sunday; and that in the close he told his audience, that he should give them the remainder

¹ Boswell (*Hebrides*, Aug. 19, 1773) says that Johnson looked at the ruins at St. Andrew's 'with a strong indignation. I happened to ask where John Knox was buried. Dr. Johnson burst out, "I hope in the highway. I have been looking at his reformations."'

² In Erasmus Philipps's *Diary* it is recorded that in Pembroke College early in every November 'was kept a great Gaudy [feast], when the Master dined in public, and the juniors (by an ancient custom they were obliged to observe) went round the fire in the hall.' *Notes & Queries*, 2nd S. x. 443.

of what he had to say on the subject, the next Lord's Day. Upon which, one of our company, a Doctor of Divinity, and a plain matter-of-fact man, by way of offering an apology for Mr. Swinton, gravely remarked, that he had probably preached the same sermon before the University: "Yes, Sir, (says Johnson) but the University were not to be hanged the next morning."

'I forgot to observe before, that when he left Mr. Meeke, (as I have told above) he added, "About the same time of life, Meeke was left behind at Oxford to feed on a Fellowship, and I went to London to get my living: now, Sir, see the difference of our literary characters!"'

The following letter was written by Dr. Johnson to Mr. Chambers, of Lincoln College, afterwards Sir Robert Chambers, one of the judges in India¹:

'TO MR. CHAMBERS OF LINCOLN COLLEGE.

'DEAR SIR,

'The commission which I delayed to trouble you with at your departure, I am now obliged to send you; and beg that you will be so kind as to carry it to Mr. Warton, of Trinity, to whom I should have written immediately, but that I know not if he be yet come back to Oxford.

'In the Catalogue of MSS. of Gr. Brit. see vol. I. pag. 18. MSS. Bodl. MARTYRIUM XV. *martyrum sub Fuliano, auctore Theophylacto.*

'It is desired that Mr. Warton will inquire, and send word, what will be the cost of transcribing this manuscript.

'VOL. II. pag. 32. Num. 1022. 58. COLL. NOV.—*Commentaria in Acta Apostol.—Comment. in Septem Epistolas Catholicas.*

'He is desired to tell what is the age of each of these manuscripts: and what it will cost to have a transcript of the two first pages of each.

'If Mr. Warton be not in Oxford, you may try if you can get it done by any body else; or stay till he comes, according to your own convenience. It is for an Italian *litterato*.

'The answer is to be directed to his Excellency Mr. Zon, Venetian Resident, Soho-Square.

¹ Communicated by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Warton, who had the original. BOSWELL. In the imaginary college which was to be opened by *The Club* at St. Andrew's, Chambers was to be the professor of the law of England. See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 25, 1773; also *post*, July 5, 1773 and March 30, 1774.

'I hope,

'I hope, dear Sir, that you do not regret the change of London for Oxford. Mr. Baretti is well, and Miss Williams¹; and we shall all be glad to hear from you, whenever you shall be so kind as to write to, Sir,

'Your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Nov. 21, 1754.'

The degree of Master of Arts, which, it has been observed², could not be obtained for him at an early period of his life, was now considered as an honour of considerable importance, in order to grace the title-page of his *Dictionary*; and his character in the literary world being by this time deservedly high, his friends thought that, if proper exertions were made, the University of Oxford would pay him the compliment³.

¹ 'I presume she was a relation of Mr. Zachariah Williams, who died in his eighty-third year, July 12, 1755. When Dr. Johnson was with me at Oxford, in 1755, he gave to the Bodleian Library a thin quarto of twenty-one pages, a work in Italian, with an English translation on the opposite page. The English title-page is this: "An Account of an Attempt to ascertain the Longitude at Sea, by an exact Variation of the Magnetical Needle, &c. By Zachariah Williams. London, printed for Dodsley, 1755." The English translation, from the strongest internal marks, is unquestionably the work of Johnson. In a blank leaf, Johnson has written the age, and time of death, of the authour Z. Williams, as I have said above. On another blank leaf, is pasted a paragraph from a newspaper, of the death and character of Williams, which is plainly written by Johnson. He was very anxious about placing this book in the Bodleian; and, for fear of any omission or mistake, he entered, in the great Catalogue, the title-page of it with his own hand.' WARTON.—BOSWELL.

In this statement there is a slight mistake. The English account, which was written by Johnson, was the *original*; the Italian was a *translation*, done by Baretti. See *post*, end of 1755. MALONE. Johnson has twice entered in his own hand that 'Zachariah Williams, died July 12, 1755, in his eighty-third year,' and also on the title-page that he was 82.

² See *ante*, p. 154.

³ The compliment was, as it were, a mutual one. Mr. Wise urged Thomas Warton to get the degree conferred before the *Dictionary* was published. 'It is in truth,' he wrote, 'doing ourselves more honour than him, to have such a work done by an Oxford hand, and so able a one too, and will show that we have not lost all regard for good

'To

‘TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I am extremely obliged to you and to Mr. Wise, for the uncommon care which you have taken of my interest¹: if you can accomplish your kind design, I shall certainly take me a little habitation among you.

‘The books which I promised to Mr. Wise², I have not been able to procure: but I shall send him a *Finnick Dictionary*, the only copy, perhaps, in England, which was presented me by a learned Swede: but I keep it back, that it may make a set of my own books³ of the new edition, with which I shall accompany it, more welcome. You will assure him of my gratitude.

‘Poor dear Collins⁴!—Would a letter give him any pleasure? I have a mind to write.

letters, as has been too often imputed to us by our enemies.’ Wooll’s *Warton*, p. 228.

¹ ‘In procuring him the degree of Master of Arts by diploma at Oxford.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² ‘Lately fellow of Trinity College, and at this time Radclivian librarian, at Oxford. He was a man of very considerable learning, and eminently skilled in Roman and Anglo-Saxon antiquities. He died in 1767.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

³ No doubt *The Rambler*.

⁴ ‘Collins (the poet) was at this time at Oxford, on a visit to Mr. Warton; but labouring under the most deplorable languor of body, and dejection of mind.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL. Johnson, writing to Dr. Warton on March 8, 1754, thus speaks of Collins:—‘I knew him a few years ago full of hopes, and full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention. This busy and forcible mind is now under the government of those who lately would not have been able to comprehend the least and most narrow of its designs.’ Wooll’s *Warton*, i. 219. Again, on Dec. 24, 1754:—‘Poor dear Collins! Let me know whether you think it would give him pleasure if I should write to him. I have often been near his state, and therefore have it in great commiseration.’ *Ib.* p. 229. Again, on April 15, 1756:—‘That man is no common loss. The moralists all talk of the uncertainty of fortune, and the transitoriness of beauty: but it is yet more dreadful to consider that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change, that understanding may make its appearance and depart, that it may blaze and expire.’ *Ib.* p. 239. See *post*, beginning of 1763.

‘I am

‘I am glad of your hindrance in your Spenserian design¹, yet I would not have it delayed. Three hours a day stolen from sleep and amusement will produce it. Let a Servitour² transcribe the quotations, and interleave them with references, to save time. This will shorten the work, and lessen the fatigue.

‘Can I do any thing to promoting the diploma? I would not be wanting to co-operate with your kindness; of which, whatever be the effect, I shall be, dear Sir,

‘Your most obliged, &c.

‘[London,] Nov. 28, 1754.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘DEAR SIR,

TO THE SAME.

‘I am extremely sensible of the favour done me, both by Mr. Wise and yourself. The book³ cannot, I think, be printed in less than six weeks, nor probably so soon; and I will keep back the title-page, for such an insertion as you seem to promise me. Be pleased to let me know what money I shall send you, for bearing the expence of the affair; and I will take care that you may have it ready at your hand.

‘I had lately the favour of a letter from your brother, with some account of poor Collins, for whom I am much concerned. I have a notion, that by very great temperance, or more properly abstinence, he may yet recover⁴.

‘There is an old English and Latin book of poems by Barclay, called “The Ship of Fools;” at the end of which are a number of *Eglogues*: so he writes it, from *Egloga*⁵, which are probably the

¹ ‘Of publishing a volume of observations on the best of Spenser’s works. It was hindered by my taking pupils in this College.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² ‘Young students of the lowest rank at Oxford are so called.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL. See Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Aug. 28, 1773.

³ ‘His Dictionary.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

⁴ Johnson says (*Works*, viii. 403) that when Collins began to feel the approaches of his dreadful malady ‘with the usual weakness of men so diseased he eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce.’

⁵ ‘Petrarch, finding nothing in the word *eclogue* of rural meaning, supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own pastorals *æglogues*, by which he meant to express the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by subsequent writers.’ Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 390.

first in our language. If you cannot find the book I will get Mr. Dodsley to send it you.

‘I shall be extremely glad to hear from you again, to know, if the affair proceeds’. I have mentioned it to none of my friends for fear of being laughed at for my disappointment.

‘You know poor Mr. Dodsley has lost his wife; I believe he is much affected. I hope he will not suffer so much as I yet suffer for the loss of mine.

Οἴμοι. τι δ’ οἴμοι; Θνήτα γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν².

I have ever since seemed to myself broken off from mankind; a kind of solitary wanderer in the wild of life, without any direction, or fixed point of view: a gloomy gazer on a world to which I have little relation. Yet I would endeavour, by the help of you and your brother, to supply the want of closer union, by friendship: and hope to have long the pleasure of being, dear Sir,

‘Most affectionately your’s,

‘[London,] Dec. 21, 1754.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

1755: ÆTAT. 46.]—In 1755 we behold him to great advantage; his degree of Master of Arts conferred upon him, his *Dictionary* published, his correspondence animated, his benevolence exercised.

‘TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I wrote to you some weeks ago, but believe did not direct accurately, and therefore know not whether you had my letter. I would, likewise, write to your brother, but know not where to find him. I now begin to see land, after having wandered, according to Mr. Warburton’s phrase, in this vast sea of words. What reception I shall meet with on the shore, I know not; whether the sound of bells, and acclamations of the people, which Ariosto talks of in his last *Canto*³, or a general murmur of dislike, I know not:

¹ ‘Of the degree at Oxford.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² This verse is from the long-lost *Bellerophon*, a tragedy by Euripides. It is preserved by Suidas. CHARLES BURNEY. ‘Alas! but wherefore alas? Man is born to sorrow.’

³

‘Sento venir per allegrezza un tuono
Que fremer l’aria, e rimbombar fa l’onde:
Odo di squille,’ &c.

Orlando Furioso, c. xlvi. s. 2.

whether

whether I shall find upon the coast a Calypso that will court, or a Polypheme that will resist. But if Polypheme comes, have at his eye. I hope, however, the criticks will let me be at peace; for though I do not much fear their skill and strength, I am a little afraid of myself, and would not willingly feel so much ill-will in my bosom as literary quarrels are apt to excite.

‘Mr. Baretti is about a work for which he is in great want of *Crescimbeni*, which you may have again when you please.

‘There is nothing considerable done or doing among us here. We are not, perhaps, as innocent as villagers, but most of us seem to be as idle. I hope, however, you are busy; and should be glad to know what you are doing.

‘I am, dearest Sir,

‘Your humble servant,

‘[London,] Feb. 4, 1755.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I received your letter this day, with great sense of the favour that has been done me¹; for which I return my most sincere thanks: and entreat you to pay to Mr. Wise such returns as I ought to make for so much kindness so little deserved.

‘I sent Mr. Wise the *Lexicon*, and afterwards wrote to him; but know not whether he had either the book or letter. Be so good as to contrive to enquire.

‘But why does my dear Mr. Warton tell me nothing of himself? Where hangs the new volume²? Can I help? Let not the past labour be lost, for want of a little more: but snatch what time you can from the Hall, and the pupils³, and the coffee-house, and the parks⁴, and complete your design. I am, dear Sir, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London,] Feb. 4, 1755.’

¹ ‘His degree had now past, according to the usual form, the suffrages of the heads of Colleges; but was not yet finally granted by the University. It was carried without a single dissentient voice.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² ‘On Spenser.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

³ Lord Eldon wrote of him:—‘Poor Tom Warton! He was a tutor at Trinity; at the beginning of every term he used to send to his pupils to know whether they would *wish* to attend lecture that term.’ Twiss’s *Eldon*, iii. 302.

⁴ The fields north of Oxford.

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I had a letter last week from Mr. Wise, but have yet heard nothing from you, nor know in what state my affair stands’; of which I beg you to inform me, if you can, to-morrow, by the return of the post.

‘Mr. Wise sends me word, that he has not had the *Finnick Lexicon* yet, which I sent some time ago; and if he has it not, you must enquire after it. However, do not let your letter stay for that.

‘Your brother, who is a better correspondent than you, and not much better, sends me word, that your pupils keep you in College: but do they keep you from writing too? Let them, at least, give you time to write to, dear Sir,

‘Your most affectionate, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London,] Feb. 13, 1755.’

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Dr. King² was with me a few minutes before your letter; this, however, is the first instance in which your kind intentions to me have ever been frustrated³. I have now the full effect of your care

¹ ‘Of the degree.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² ‘Principal of St. Mary Hall at Oxford. He brought with him the diploma from Oxford.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL. Dr. King (*Anec.* p. 196) says that he was one of the Jacobites who were presented to the Pretender when, in September 1750, he paid a stealthy visit to England. The Pretender in 1783 told Sir Horace Mann that he was in London in that very month and year and had met fifty of his friends, among whom was the Earl of Westmoreland, the future Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Mahon’s *England*, iv. 11. Hume places the visit in 1753. Burton’s *Hume*, ii. 462. See also in Boswell’s *Hebrides*, the account of the Young Pretender. In 1754, writes Lord Shelburne, ‘Dr. King in his speech upon opening the Radcliffe Library at Oxford, before a full theatre introduced three times the word *Redeat*, pausing each time for a considerable space, during which the most unbounded applause shook the theatre, which was filled with a vast body of peers, members of parliament, and men of property. Soon after the rebellion [of 1745], speaking of the Duke of Cumberland, he described him as a man, *qui timet omnia præter Deum*. I presented this same Dr. King to George III. in 1760.’ Fitzmaurice’s *Shelburne*, i. 35.

³ ‘I suppose Johnson means that my *kind intention* of being the and

and benevolence ; and am far from thinking it a slight honour, or a small advantage ; since it will put the enjoyment of your conversation more frequently in the power of, dear Sir,

‘Your most obliged and affectionate

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘P.S. I have enclosed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor¹, which you will read ; and, if you like it, seal and give him.

‘[London,] Feb. 1755.’

As the Publick will doubtless be pleased to see the whole progress of this well-earned academical honour, I shall insert the Chancellor of Oxford's letter to the University², the diploma, and Johnson's letter of thanks to the Vice-Chancellor.

‘*To the Reverend Dr. HUDDSFORD, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford ; to be communicated to the Heads of Houses, and proposed in Convocation.*

‘MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND GENTLEMEN,

‘Mr. Samuel Johnson, who was formerly of Pembroke College, having very eminently distinguished himself by the publication of a series of essays, excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality is every where maintained by the strongest powers of argument and language ; and who shortly intends to publish a *Dictionary of the English Tongue*, formed on a new plan, and executed with the greatest labour and judgement ; I persuade myself that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in convocation to confer on him the degree of Master of Arts by diploma, to which I readily give my consent : and am,

‘Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and Gentlemen,

‘Your affectionate friend and servant,

‘Grosvenor-street, Feb. 4, 1755.’

‘ARRAN³.’

first to give him the good news of the degree being granted was *frustrated*, because Dr. King brought it before my intelligence arrived.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

¹ ‘Dr. Huddesford, President of Trinity College.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² Extracted from the Convocation-Register, Oxford. BOSWELL.

³ The Earl of Arran, ‘the last male of the illustrious House of Or-
Term.

Term. S^{ci}.
Hilarii.
1755.

‘DIPLOMA MAGISTRI JOHNSON.

‘*CANCELLARIUS, Magistri et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis omnibus ad quos hoc presens scriptum pervenerit, salutem in Domino sempiternam.*

‘*Cum cum in finem gradus academici à majoribus nostris instituti fuerint, ut viri ingenio et doctrinâ præstantes titulis quoque præter cæteros insignirentur; cumque vir doctissimus Samuel Johnson è Collegio Pembrochiensi, scriptis suis popularium mores informantibus dudum literato orbi innotuerit; quin et linguæ patriæ tum ornandæ tum stabilindæ (Lexicon scilicet Anglicanum summo studio, summo à se judicio congestum propediem editurus) etiam nunc utilissimam impendat operam; Nos igitur Cancellarius, Magistri, et Scholares antedicti, nè virum de literis humanioribus optimè meritum diutius inhonoratum prætereamus, in solenni Convocatione Doctorum, Magistrorum, Regentium, et non Regentium, decimo die Mensis Februarii Anno Domini Millesimo Septingentesimo Quinquagesimo quinto habitâ, præfatum virum Samuelem Johnson (conspirantibus omnium suffragiis) Magistrum in Artibus renunciavimus et constituimus; eumque, virtute præsentis diplomatis, singulis juribus privilegiis et honoribus ad istum gradum quâquâ pertinentibus frui et gaudere jussimus.*

mond,’ was the third Chancellor in succession that that family had given to the University. The first of the three, the famous Duke of Ormond, had, on his death in 1688, been succeeded by his grandson, the young Duke. Macaulay’s *England*, iii. 159. He, on his impeachment and flight from England in 1715, was succeeded by his brother, the Earl of Arran. Richardson, writing in 1754 (*Corres.* ii. 198), said of the University, ‘Forty years ago it chose a Chancellor in despite of the present reigning family, whose whole merit was that he was the brother of a perjured, yet weak, rebel.’ On Arran’s death in 1758, the Earl of Westmoreland, ‘old dull Westmoreland’ as Walpole calls him (*Letters*, i. 290), was elected. It was at his installation that Johnson clapped his hands till they were sore at Dr. King’s speech (*post*, 1759). ‘I hear,’ wrote Walpole of what he calls *the coronation at Oxford*, ‘my Lord Westmoreland’s own retinue was all be-James’d with true-blue ribands.’ *Letters*, iii. 237. It is remarkable that this nobleman, who in early life was a Whig, had commanded ‘the body of troops which George I. had been obliged to send to Oxford, to teach the University the only kind of passive obedience which they did not approve.’ Walpole’s *George II*, iii. 167.

‘In

'In cujus rei testimonium sigillum Universitatis Oxoniensis præsentibus apponi fecimus.

'Datum in Domo nostræ Convocationis die 20^o Mensis Feb. Anno Dom. prædicto.

'Diploma supra scriptum per Registrarium lectum erat, et ex decreto venerabilis Domûs communi Universitatis sigillo munitum'.

DOM. DOCTORI HUDDESFORD, OXONIENSIS ACADEMIÆ VICE-CANCELLARIO.

'INGRATUS planè et tibi et mihi videar, nisi quanto me gaudio affecerint, quos nuper mihi honores (te credo auctore) decrevit Senatus Academicus, literarum, quo tamen nihil levius, officio, significem: ingratus etiam, nisi comitatem, quâ vir eximius¹ mihi vestri testimonium amoris in manus tradidit, agnoscam et laudem. Si quid est undè rei tam gratæ accedat gratia, hoc ipso magis mihi placet, quod eo tempore in ordines Academicos denuo cooptatus sim, quo tuam imminuere auctoritatem, famamque Oxonii ledere², omnibus modis conantur homines vafri, nec tamen acuti: quibus ego, prout viro umbratico licuit, semper restiti, semper restiturus. Qui enim, inter has rerum procellas, vel Tibi vel Academiæ defuerit, illum virtuti et literis, sibi que et posteris, defuturum existimo.

'S. JOHNSON.'

'TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

'DEAR SIR,

'After I received my diploma, I wrote you a letter of thanks, with a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, and sent another to Mr. Wise: but have heard from nobody since, and begin to think myself

¹ The original is in my possession. BOSWELL.

² We may conceive what a high gratification it must have been to Johnson to receive his diploma from the hands of the great Dr. KING, whose principles were so congenial with his own. BOSWELL.

³ Johnson here alludes, I believe, to the charge of disloyalty brought against the University at the time of the famous contested election for Oxfordshire in 1754. A copy of treasonable verses was found, it was said, near the market-place in Oxford, and the grand jury made a presentment thereon. 'We must add,' they concluded, 'that it is the highest aggravation of this crime to have a libel of a nature so false and scandalous, published in a famous University, &c.' *Genl. Mag.* xxiv. 339. A reward of £200 was offered in the *London Gazette* for the detection of the writer or publisher. *Ib.* p. 377.

forgotten.

forgotten. It is true, I sent you a double letter¹, and you may fear an expensive correspondent; but I would have taken it kindly, if you had returned it treble: and what is a double letter to a *petty king*, that having *fellowship and fines*, can sleep without a *Modus in his head*²?

‘Dear Mr. Warton, let me hear from you, and tell me something, I care not what, so I hear it but from you. Something I will tell you:—I hope to see my *Dictionary* bound and lettered, next week;—*vastâ mole superbus*. And I have a great mind to come to Oxford at Easter; but you will not invite me. Shall I come uninvited, or stay here where nobody perhaps would miss me if I went? A hard choice! But such is the world to, dear Sir,

‘Yours, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London] March 20, 1755.

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Though not to write, when a man can write so well, is an offence sufficiently heinous, yet I shall pass it by. I am very glad that the Vice-Chancellor was pleased with my note. I shall impatiently expect you at London, that we may consider what to do next. I intend in the winter to open a *Bibliothèque*, and remember, that you are to subscribe a sheet a year; let us try, likewise, if we

¹ A single letter was a single piece of paper; a second piece of paper, however small, or any inclosure constituted a double letter; it was not the habit to prepay the postage. The charge for a single letter to Oxford at this time was three-pence, which was gradually increased till in 1812 it was eight-pence. *Penny Cyclo.* xviii. 455.

² ‘The words in Italicks are allusions to passages in Mr. Warton’s poem, called *The Progress of Discontent*, now lately published.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

‘And now intent on new designs,
Sighs for a fellowship—and fines.
* * * * *
These fellowships are pretty things,
We live indeed like petty kings.
* * * * *
And ev’ry night I went to bed,
Without a Modus in my head.’

Warton’s *Poems*, ii. 192.

For *modus* and *fines* see *post*, April 25, 1778.

cannot

cannot persuade your brother to subscribe another. My book is now coming *in luminis oras*¹. What will be its fate I know not, nor think much, because thinking is to no purpose. It must stand the censure of the *great vulgar and the small*²; of those that understand it, and that understand it not. But in all this, I suffer not alone: every writer has the same difficulties, and, perhaps, every writer talks of them more than he thinks.

‘You will be pleased to make my compliments to all my friends: and be so kind, at every idle hour, as to remember, dear Sir,

‘Your, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London,] March 25, 1755.’

Dr. Adams told me, that this scheme of a *Bibliothèque* was a serious one: for upon his visiting him one day, he found his parlour floor covered with parcels of foreign and English literary journals, and he told Dr. Adams he meant to undertake a Review. ‘How, Sir, (said Dr. Adams,) can you think of doing it alone? All branches of knowledge must be considered in it. Do you know Mathematicks? Do you know Natural History?’ Johnson answered, ‘Why, Sir, I must do as well as I can. My chief purpose is to give my countrymen a view of what is doing in literature upon the continent; and I shall have, in a good measure, the choice of my subject, for I shall select such books as I best understand.’ Dr. Adams suggested, that as Dr. Maty had just then finished his *Bibliothèque Britannique*³, which was a well-executed work, giving foreigners an account of British publications, he might, with great advantage, assume him as an assistant. ‘*He*, (said Johnson) the little black dog! I’d throw him into the Thames.’ The scheme, however, was dropped.

¹ Lucretius, i. 23.

² ‘Hence ye prophane; I hate ye all,
Both the Great Vulgar and the Small.’

Cowley’s *Imit. of Horace*, Odes, iii. 1.

³ *Journal Britannique*. It was to Maty that Gibbon submitted the manuscript of his first work. Gibbon’s *Misc. Works*, i. 123.

⁴ Maty, as Prof. de Morgan pointed out, had in the autumn of 1755 been guilty of ‘wilful suppression of the circumstances of Johnson’s attack on Lord Chesterfield.’ In an article in his *Journal* he regrets

In one of his little memorandum-books I find the following hints for his intended *Review or Literary Journal*:

'*The Annals of Literature, foreign as well as domestick.* Imitate Le Clerk—Bayle—Barbeyrac. Infelicity of Journals in England. Works of the learned. We cannot take in all. Sometimes copy from foreign Journalists. Always tell.'

'TO DR. BIRCH.

'March 29, 1755.

'SIR,

'I have sent some parts of my *Dictionary*, such as were at hand, for your inspection. The favour which I beg is, that if you do not like them, you will say nothing. I am, Sir,

'Your most affectionate humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'TO MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

'Norfolk-street, April 23, 1755.

'SIR,

'The part of your *Dictionary* which you have favoured me with the sight of has given me such an idea of the whole, that I most sincerely congratulate the publick upon the acquisition of a work long wanted, and now executed with an industry, accuracy, and judgement, equal to the importance of the subject. You might, perhaps, have chosen one in which your genius would have appeared to more advantage; but you could not have fixed upon any other in which your labours would have done such substantial service to the present age and to posterity. I am glad that your health has supported the application necessary to the performance of so vast a task; and can undertake to promise you as one (though perhaps the only) reward of it, the approbation and thanks of every well-wisher to the honour of the English language. I am, with the greatest regard,

'Sir,

'Your most faithful and

'Most affectionate humble servant,

'THO. BIRCH.'

the absence from the *Dictionary of the Plan*. 'Elle eût épargné à l'auteur la composition d'une nouvelle préface, qui ne contient qu'en partie les mêmes choses, et qu'on est tenté de regarder comme destinée à faire perdre de vue quelques-unes des obligations que M. Johnson avait contractées, et le Mécène qu'il avait choisi.' *Notes and Queries*, 2nd S. iv. 341.

Mr.

Mr. Charles Burney, who has since distinguished himself so much in the science of Musick, and obtained a Doctor's degree from the University of Oxford, had been driven from the capital by bad health, and was now residing at Lynne Regis, in Norfolk'. He had been so much delighted with Johnson's *Rambler* and the *Plan* of his *Dictionary*, that when the great work was announced in the news-papers as nearly finished, he wrote to Dr. Johnson, begging to be informed when and in what manner his *Dictionary* would be published; intreating, if it should be by subscription, or he should have any books at his own disposal, to be favoured with six copies for himself and friends.

In answer to this application, Dr. Johnson wrote the following letter, of which (to use Dr. Burney's own words) 'if it be remembered that it was written to an obscure young man, who at this time had not much distinguished himself even in his own profession, but whose name could never have reached the authour of *The Rambler*, the politeness and urbanity may be opposed to some of the stories which have been lately circulated of Dr. Johnson's natural rudeness and ferocity.'

'TO MR. BURNEY, IN LYNNE REGIS, NORFOLK.

'SIR,

'If you imagine that by delaying my answer I intended to shew any neglect of the notice with which you have favoured me, you will neither think justly of yourself nor of me. Your civilities were offered with too much elegance not to engage attention; and I have too much pleasure in pleasing men like you, not to feel very sensibly the distinction which you have bestowed upon me.

'Few consequences of my endeavours to please or to benefit mankind have delighted me more than your friendship thus voluntarily offered, which now I have it I hope to keep, because I hope to continue to deserve it.

'I have no *Dictionaries* to dispose of for myself, but shall be glad to have you direct your friends to Mr. Dodsley, because it was by his recommendation that I was employed in the work.

¹ He left London in 1751 and returned to it in 1760. *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, i. 85, 133.

'When

‘When you have leisure to think again upon me, let me be favoured with another letter; and another yet, when you have looked into my *Dictionary*. If you find faults, I shall endeavour to mend them; if you find none, I shall think you blinded by kind partiality; but to have made you partial in his favour, will very much gratify the ambition of, Sir,

‘Your most obliged

‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Gough-square, Fleet-street,
‘April 8, 1755.’

Mr. Andrew Millar, bookseller in the Strand, took the principal charge of conducting the publication of Johnson’s *Dictionary*; and as the patience of the proprietors was repeatedly tried and almost exhausted, by their expecting that the work would be completed within the time which Johnson had sanguinely supposed, the learned authour was often goaded to dispatch, more especially as he had received all the copy-money, by different drafts, a considerable time before he had finished his task¹. When the messenger who carried the last sheet to Millar returned, Johnson asked him, ‘Well, what did he say?’—‘Sir, (answered the messenger) he said, thank GOD I have done with him.’ ‘I am glad (replied Johnson, with a smile) that he thanks GOD for any thing².’ It is remarkable that those with whom Johnson chiefly contracted for his literary labours were Scotchmen, Mr. Millar and Mr. Strahan. Millar, though himself no great judge of literature, had good sense enough to have for his friends very able men to give him their opinion and advice in the purchase of copyright; the consequence of which was his acquiring a very large fortune, with great liberality³. Johnson said of him, ‘I respect

¹ See *ante*, p. 211, note 4.

² Sir John Hawkins, p. 341, inserts two notes as having passed formally between Andrew Millar and Johnson, to the above effect. I am assured this was not the case. In the way of incidental remark it was a pleasant play of raillery. To have deliberately written notes in such terms would have been morose. BOSWELL.

³ ‘Talking one day of the patronage the great sometimes affect to
Millar,

Millar, Sir; he has raised the price of literature.' The same praise may be justly given to Panckoucke, the eminent bookseller of Paris. Mr. Strahan's liberality, judgement, and success, are well known.

'TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON NEAR SPILSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE.

'SIR,

'It has been long observed, that men do not suspect faults which they do not commit; your own elegance of manners, and punctuality of complaisance, did not suffer you to impute to me that negligence of which I was guilty, and which I have not since atoned. I received both your letters, and received them with pleasure proportionate to the esteem which so short an acquaintance strongly impressed, and which I hope to confirm by nearer knowledge, though I am afraid that gratification will be for a time withheld.

'I have, indeed, published my Book¹, of which I beg to know your father's judgement, and yours; and I have now staid long

give to literature and literary men, "Andrew Millar," says Johnson, "is the Maecenas of the age.'" Johnson's *Works* (1787), xi. 200. Horace Walpole, writing on May 18, 1749 (*Letters*, ii. 163), says:—'Millar the bookseller has done very generously by Fielding; finding *Tom Jones*, for which he had given him six hundred pounds, sell so greatly, he has since given him another hundred.' Hume writing on July 6, 1759, says:—'Poor Andrew Millar is declared bankrupt; his debts amount to above £40,000, and it is said his creditors will not get above three shillings in the pound. All the world allows him to have been diligent and industrious; but his misfortunes are ascribed to the extravagance of his wife, a very ordinary case in this city.' J. H. Burton's *Hume*, ii. 64. He must soon have recovered his position, for Dr. A. Carlyle (*Auto.* p. 434) met Millar at Harrogate in 1763. In the inn were several baronets, and great squires, members of parliament, who paid Millar civility for the use of his two newspapers which came to him by every post. 'Yet when he appeared in the morning, in his well-worn suit of clothes, they could not help calling him Peter Pamphlet; for the generous patron of Scotch authors, with his city wife and her niece, were sufficiently ridiculous when they came into good company.' Mr. Croker (*Boswell*, p. 630) says that Millar was the bookseller described by Johnson, *post*, April 24, 1779, as 'habitually and equably drunk.' He is, I think, mistaken.

¹ His *Dictionary*. BOSWELL.

enough

enough to watch its progress into the world. It has, you see, no patrons, and, I think, has yet had no opponents, except the criticks of the coffee-house, whose outcries are soon dispersed into the air, and are thought on no more: from this, therefore, I am at liberty, and think of taking the opportunity of this interval to make an excursion; and why not then into Lincolnshire? or, to mention a stronger attraction, why not to dear Mr. Langton? I will give the true reason, which I know you will approve:—I have a mother more than eighty years old, who has counted the days to the publication of my book, in hopes of seeing me; and to her, if I can disengage myself here, I resolve to go.

‘As I know, dear Sir, that to delay my visit for a reason like this, will not deprive me of your esteem, I beg it may not lessen your kindness. I have very seldom received an offer of friendship which I so earnestly desire to cultivate and mature. I shall rejoice to hear from you, till I can see you, and will see you as soon as I can; for when the duty that calls me to Lichfield is discharged, my inclination will carry me to Langton. I shall delight to hear the ocean roar, or see the stars twinkle, in the company of men to whom Nature does not spread her volumes or utter her voice in vain.

‘Do not, dear Sir, make the slowness of this letter a precedent for delay, or imagine that I approved the incivility that I have committed; for I have known you enough to love you, and sincerely to wish a further knowledge; and I assure you, once more, that to live in a house that contains such a father and such a son, will be accounted a very uncommon degree of pleasure, by, dear Sir, your most obliged and

‘Most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘May 6, 1755.’

‘TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I am grieved that you should think me capable of neglecting your letters; and beg you will never admit any such suspicion again. I purpose to come down next week, if you shall be there; or any other week, that shall be more agreeable to you. Therefore let me know. I can stay this visit but a week, but intend to make preparations for a longer stay next time; being resolved not to lose sight of the University. How goes Apollonius¹? Don’t let him

¹ ‘A translation of Apollonius Rhodius was now intended by Mr. Warton.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

be forgotten. Some things of this kind must be done, to keep us up. Pay my compliments to Mr. Wise, and all my other friends. I think to come to Kettel-Hall¹.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your most affectionate, &c.

‘[London,] May 13, 1755.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘It is strange how many things will happen to intercept every pleasure, though it [be] only that of two friends meeting together. I have promised myself every day to inform you when you might expect me at Oxford, and have not been able to fix a time. The time, however, is, I think, at last come; and I promise myself to repose in Kettel-Hall, one of the first nights of the next week. I am afraid my stay with you cannot be long; but what is the inference? We must endeavour to make it cheerful. I wish your brother could meet us, that we might go and drink tea with Mr. Wise in a body. I hope he will be at Oxford, or at his nest of British and Saxon antiquities².’ I shall expect to see *Spenser* finished, and many other things begun. Dodsley is gone to visit the Dutch. The *Dictionary* sells well³. The rest of the world goes on as it did. Dear Sir,

‘Your most affectionate, &c.

‘[London,] June 10, 1755.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘To talk of coming to you, and not yet to come, has an air of trifling which I would not willingly have among you; and which, I believe, you will not willingly impute to me, when I have told you, that since my promise, two of our partners⁴ are dead, and that I

¹ Kettel Hall is an ancient tenement built about the year 1615 by Dr. Ralph Kettel, President of Trinity College, for the accommodation of commoners of that Society. It adjoins the College; and was a few years ago converted into a private house. MALONE.

² ‘At Ellsfield, a village three miles from Oxford.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

³ It was published on April 15, 1755, in two vols. folio, price £4 10s. bound. Johnson’s *Works*, v. 51.

⁴ ‘Booksellers concerned in his *Dictionary*.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

was solicited to suspend my excursion till we could recover from our confusion.

‘I have not laid aside my purpose; for every day makes me more impatient of staying from you. But death, you know, hears not supplications, nor pays any regard to the convenience of mortals. I hope now to see you next week; but next week is but another name for to-morrow, which has been noted for promising and deceiving.

‘I am, &c.

‘[London,] June 24, 1755.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I told you, that among the manuscripts are some things of Sir Thomas More. I beg you to pass an hour in looking on them, and procure a transcript of the ten or twenty first lines of each, to be compared with what I have; that I may know whether they are yet published. The manuscripts are these:

‘Catalogue of Bodl. MS. pag. 122. F. 3. Sir Thomas More.

‘1. Fall of angels. 2. Creation and fall of mankind. 3. Determination of the Trinity for the rescue of mankind. 4. Five lectures of our Saviour’s passion. 5. Of the institution of the sacrament, three lectures. 6. How to receive the blessed body of our Lord sacramentally. 7. Neomenia, the new moon. 8. *De tristitia, tedio, pavore, et oratione Christi, ante captionem ejus.*

‘Catalogue, pag. 154. Life of Sir Thomas More. *Qu. Whether Roper’s?* Pag. 363. *De resignatione Magni Sigilli in manus Regis per D. Thomam Morum.* Pag. 364. *Mori Defensio Moric.*

‘If you procure the young gentleman in the library to write out what you think fit to be written, I will send to Mr. Prince the bookseller to pay him what you shall think proper.

‘Be pleased to make my compliments to Mr. Wise, and all my friends.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your affectionate, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London] Aug. 7, 1755.’

‘June 12, Mr. Paul Knapton, bookseller. June 18, Thos. Longman, Esq., bookseller.’ *Gent. Mag.* xxv. 284. The ‘Esq.’ perhaps is a sign that even so early as 1755 the Longmans ranked higher than most of their brethren.

The

The *Dictionary*, with a *Grammar and History of the English Language*, being now at length published, in two volumes folio, the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work atchieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies. Vast as his powers were, I cannot but think that his imagination deceived him, when he supposed that by constant application he might have performed the task in three years. Let the Preface be attentively perused, in which is given, in a clear, strong, and glowing style, a comprehensive, yet particular view of what he had done; and it will be evident, that the time he employed upon it was comparatively short. I am unwilling to swell my book with long quotations from what is in every body's hands, and I believe there are few prose compositions in the English language that are read with more delight, or are more impressed upon the memory, than that preliminary discourse. One of its excellencies has always struck me with peculiar admiration: I mean the perspicuity with which he has expressed abstract scientifick notions. As an instance of this, I shall quote the following sentence: 'When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their own¹ nature collateral?' We have here an example of what has been often said, and I believe with justice, that there is for every thought a certain nice adaptation of words which none other could equal, and which, when a man has been so fortunate as to hit, he has attained, in that particular case, the perfection of language.

The extensive reading which was absolutely necessary for the accumulation of authorities, and which alone may account for Johnson's retentive mind being enriched with a very large and various store of knowledge and imagery, must have occupied several years. The Preface furnishes an eminent instance of a double talent, of which Johnson was fully conscious. Sir Joshua Reynolds heard him say,

¹ *Own* not in the original. Johnson's *Works*, v. 36.

‘There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction to any literary work, stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner; the other is a conclusion, shewing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the authour promised to himself and to the publick.’

How should puny scribblers be abashed and disappointed, when they find him displaying a perfect theory of lexicographical excellence, yet at the same time candidly and modestly allowing that he ‘had not satisfied his own expectations’¹. Here was a fair occasion for the exercise of Johnson’s modesty, when he was called upon to compare his own arduous performance, not with those of other individuals, (in which case his inflexible regard to truth would have been violated, had he affected diffidence,) but with speculative perfection²; as he, who can outstrip all his competitors in the race, may yet be sensible of his deficiency when he runs against time. Well might he say, that ‘the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned³,’ for he told me, that the only aid which he received was a paper containing twenty etymologies, sent to him by a person then unknown, who he was afterwards informed was Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester⁴. The etymologies,

¹ ‘I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations.’ Johnson’s *Works*, p. 41.

² In the *Plan of an English Dictionary* (*ib.* p. 16) Johnson, writing of ‘the word *perfection*,’ says:—‘Though in its philosophical and exact sense it can be of little use among human beings, it is often so much degraded from its original signification, that the academicians have inserted in their work, *the perfection of a language*, and, with a little more licentiousness, might have prevailed on themselves to have added *the perfection of a Dictionary*.’ In the Preface to the fourth edition he writes:—‘He that undertakes to compile a Dictionary undertakes that, which if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform.’ *Ib.* p. 52.

³ *Ib.* p. 51.

⁴ See *post*, under May 19, 1777.

though they exhibit learning and judgement, are not, I think, entitled to the first praise amongst the various parts of this immense work. The definitions have always appeared to me such astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and precision of language, as indicate a genius of the highest rank¹. This it is which marks the superiour excellence of Johnson's *Dictionary* over others equally or even more voluminous, and must have made it a work of much greater mental labour than mere Lexicons, or *Word-books*, as the Dutch call them. They, who will make the experiment of trying how they can define a few words of whatever nature, will soon be satisfied of the unquestionable justice of this observation, which I can assure my readers is founded upon much study, and upon communication with more minds than my own.

A few of his definitions must be admitted to be erroneous. Thus, *Windward* and *Lccward*², though directly of opposite meaning, are defined identically the same way; as to which inconsiderable specks it is enough to observe, that his Preface announces that he was aware there might be many such in so immense a work³; nor was he at all disconcerted

¹ See *ante*, p. 216, note 1.

² He defines both *towards the wind*. The definitions remain unchanged in the fourth edition, the last corrected by Johnson, and also in the third edition of the abridgment, though this abridgment was made by him. *Pastern* also remains unaltered in this latter edition. In the fourth edition he corrected it. 'The drawback of his character,' wrote Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'is entertaining prejudices on very slight foundations; giving an opinion, perhaps, first at random, but from its being contradicted he thinks himself obliged always to support it, or, if he cannot support, still not to acquiesce. Of this I remember an instance of a defect or forgetfulness in his *Dictionary*. I asked him how he came not to correct it in the second edition. "No," says he, "they made so much of it that I would not flatter them by altering it."' Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 461.

³ In his Preface (*Works*, v. 50) he anticipated errors and laughter. 'A few wild blunders and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt.' In a letter written
when

when an instance was pointed out to him: A lady once asked him how he came to define *Pastern* the *knce* of a horse: instead of making an elaborate defence, as she expected, he at once answered, 'Ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance'.¹ His definition of *Network*² has been often quoted with sportive malignity³, as obscuring a thing in itself very plain. But to these frivolous censures no other answer is necessary than that with which we are furnished by his own Preface.

'To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found. For as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit of definition'. Sometimes easier words are changed into harder; as, *burial*, into *sepulture* or *interment*; *dry*⁴, into *desicative*; *dryness*, into *siccity* or *aridity*; *fit*, into *paroxism*; for the *casiest* word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy.'

His introducing his own opinions, and even prejudices, under general definitions of words, while at the same time the original meaning of the words is not explained, as his *Tory*⁵,

nearly thirty years later he said:—'Dictionaries are like watches, the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 406.

¹ See *post*, under July 20. 1762.

² 'Network. Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.' Reticulated is defined 'Made of network; formed with interstitial vacuities.'

³ 'That part of my work on which I expect malignity most frequently to fasten is the *Explanation*. . . Such is the fate of hapless lexicography, that not only darkness, but light, impedes and distresses it; things may be not only too little, but too much known, to be happily illustrated.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 34.

⁴ In the original 'to admit a definition.' *Ib.*

⁵ In the original, '*drier*.' *Ib.* 38.

⁶ 'Tory. (A cant term derived, I suppose, from an Irish word signifying a savage.) One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the Church of England: opposed to a *whig*.'

*Whig*¹, *Pension*², *Oats*³, *Excise*⁴, and a few more, cannot be fully defended, and must be placed to the account of

¹ 'Whig. The name of a faction.' Lord Marchmont (*post*, May 12, 1778) said that 'Johnson was the first that brought Whig and Tory into a dictionary.' In this he was mistaken. In the fourth edition of Dr. Adam Littleton's *Linguae Latinae Liber Dictionarius*, published in 1703, *Whig* is translated *Homo fanaticus, factiosus*; *Whiggism*, *Enthusiasmus, Perduellio*; *Tory*, *bog-trotter or Irish robber, Prædo Hibernicus*; *Tory* opposed to *whig*, *Regiarum partium assertor*. These definitions are not in the first edition, published in 1678. *A pensioner* or *bride* [*bribed*] *person* is rendered *Mercenarius*.

² 'Pension. An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.' *Pensioner* is defined as 'One who is supported by an allowance paid at the will of another; a dependant.' These definitions remain in the fourth edition, corrected by Johnson in 1773.

³ 'Oats. A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.' See *post*, March 23, 1776, and March 21, 1783. 'Did you ever hear,' wrote Sir Walter Scott, 'of Lord Elibank's reply when Johnson's famous definition of oats was pointed out first to him. "Very true, and where will you find such *men* and such *horses*?"' Croker's *Corres.* ii. 35.

⁴ He thus defines *Excise*: 'A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom *Excise* is paid.' The Commissioners of *Excise* being offended by this severe reflection, consulted Mr. Murray, then Attorney General, to know whether redress could be legally obtained. I wished to have procured for my readers a copy of the opinion which he gave, and which may now be justly considered as history; but the mysterious secrecy of office, it seems, would not permit it. I am, however, informed, by very good authority, that its import was, that the passage might be considered as actionable; but that it would be more prudent in the board not to prosecute. Johnson never made the smallest alteration in this passage. We find he still retained his early prejudice against *Excise*; for in *The Idler*, No. 65, there is the following very extraordinary paragraph: 'The authenticity of *Clarendon's* history, though printed with the sanction of one of the first Universities of the world, had not an unexpected manuscript been happily discovered, would, with the help of factious credulity, have been brought into question by the two lowest of all human beings, a Scribbler for a party, and a Commissioner of *Excise*.'—The capricious

capricious and humorous indulgence¹. Talking to me upon this subject when we were at Ashbourne in 1777, he mentioned a still stronger instance of the predominance of his private feelings in the composition of this work, than any now to be found in it. 'You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word

persons to whom he alludes were Mr. John Oldmixon and George Duckett, Esq. BOSWELL. Mr. Croker obtained a copy of the case.

'Case for the opinion of Mr. Attorney-General.

'Mr. Samuel Johnson has lately published "A Dictionary of the English Language," in which are the following words:—

"EXCISE, n. s. A hateful tax levied upon commodities and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid."

'The author's definition being observed by the Commissioners of Excise, they desire the favour of your opinion. "Qu. Whether it will not be considered as a libel, and if so, whether it is not proper to proceed against the author, printers, and publishers thereof, or any and which of them, by information, or how otherwise?"

'I am of opinion that it is a libel. But under all the circumstances, I should think it better to give him an opportunity of altering his definition; and, in case he do not, to threaten him with an information.

'29th Nov. 1755.

W. Murray.'

In one of the Parl. Debates of 1742 Johnson makes Pitt say that 'it is probable that we shall detect bribery descending through a long subordination of wretches combined against the public happiness, from the prime minister surrounded by peers and officers of state to the exciseman dictating politics amidst a company of mechanics whom he debauches at the public expense, and lists in the service of his master with the taxes which he gathers.' *Parl. Hist.* xii. 570. See *ante*, p. 43, note 1.

¹ He defined *Favourite* as 'One chosen as a companion by a superior; a mean wretch, whose whole business is by any means to please;' and *Revolution* as 'change in the state of a government or country. It is used among us κατ' ἐξοχήν for the change produced by the admission of King William and Queen Mary.' For these definitions Wilkes attacked him in *The North Briton*, No. xii. In the fourth edition Johnson gives a second definition of *patriot*:—'It is sometimes used for a factious disturber of the government.' *Premier* and *prime minister* are not defined. *Post*, April 14, 1775. See also *ante*, p. 307, note 2, for the definition of *patron*; and *post*, April 28, 1783 for that of *alias*.

Rengado,

Renegado, after telling that it meant "one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter," I added, *Sometimes we say a GOWER*¹. Thus it went to the press; but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out.'

Let it, however, be remembered, that this indulgence does not display itself only in sarcasm towards others, but sometimes in playful allusion to the notions commonly entertained of his own laborious task. Thus: '*Grub-street*, the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, *dictionaries*, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called *Grub-street*².'—*Lexicographer*, a writer of dictionaries, a *harmless drudge*³.'

¹ 'There have been great contests in the Privy Council about the trial of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford [on a charge of Jacobitism]: Lord Gower pressed it extremely. He asked the Attorney-General his opinion, who told him the evidence did not appear strong enough. Lord Gower said:—"Mr. Attorney, you seem to be very lukewarm for your party." He replied:—"My Lord, I never was lukewarm for my party, nor ever was but of one party."' Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 140. Mr. Croker assumes that Johnson here 'attempted a pun, and wrote the name (as pronounced) *Go'er*.' Johnson was very little likely to pun, for 'he had a great contempt for that species of wit.' *Post*, April 30, 1773.

² Boswell omits the salutation which follows this definition:

Χαίρ' ἰθάκη μετ' ἄεθλα, μετ' ἄλγεα πικρὰ
'Ἀσπασίως τέον οὐδας ἰκάνομαι.

'Dr. Johnson,' says Miss Burney, 'inquired if I had ever yet visited *Grub-street*, but was obliged to restrain his anger when I answered "No;" because he had never paid his respects to it himself. "However," says he, "you and I, Burney, will go together; we have a very good right to go, so we'll visit the mansions of our progenitors, and take up our own freedom together."' *Misc. D'Arbly's Diary*, i. 415.

³ Lord Bolingbroke had said (*Works*, iii. 317):—"I approve the devotion of a studious man at Christ Church, who was overheard in his oratory entering into a detail with God, and acknowledging the divine goodness in furnishing the world with makers of dictionaries. These men court fame, as well as their betters, by such means as God has given them to acquire it. They deserve encouragement while they continue to compile, and neither affect wit, nor presume to reason.' Johnson himself in *The Adventurer*, No. 39, had in 1753 described a

At

At the time when he was concluding his very eloquent Preface, Johnson's mind appears to have been in such a state of depression¹, that we cannot contemplate without wonder the vigorous and splendid thoughts which so highly distinguish that performance. 'I (says he) may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which if I could obtain in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave; and success and mis-carriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise².' That this indifference was rather a temporary than an habitual feeling, appears, I think, from his letters to Mr. Warton³; and however he may have been affected for

class of men who 'employed their minds in such operations as required neither celerity nor strength, in the low drudgery of collating copies, comparing authorities, digesting dictionaries,' &c. Lord Monboddo, in his *Origin of Language*, v. 273, says that 'J. C. Scaliger called the makers of dictionaries *les portefaix de la république des lettres*.'

¹ Great though his depression was, yet he could say with truth in his Preface:—'Despondency has never so far prevailed as to depress me to negligenc^e.' *Works*, v. 43.

² *Ib.* p. 51. 'In the preface the author described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could read that passage without tears.' Macaulay's *Misc. Writings*, p. 382. It is in *A Letter to John Dunning, Esq.* (p. 56) that Horne Tooke, or rather Horne, wrote:—'I could never read his preface without shedding a tear.' See *post*, May 13, 1778. On Oct. 10, 1779, Boswell told Johnson, that he had been 'agreeably mistaken' in saying:—'What would it avail me in this gloom of solitude?'

³ It appears even by many a passage in the Preface—one of the proudest pieces of writing in our language. 'The chief glory,' he writes, 'of every people arises from its authors: whether I shall add anything by my own writings to the reputation of English literature must be left to time.' 'I deliver,' he says, 'my book to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. . . . In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared the

the moment, certain it is that the honours which his great work procured him, both at home and abroad, were very grateful to him'. His friend the Earl of Corke and Orrery, being at Florence, presented it to the *Accademia della Crusca*. That Academy sent Johnson their *Vocabulario*, and the French Academy sent him their *Dictionnaire*, which Mr. Langton had the pleasure to convey to him².

It must undoubtedly seem strange, that the conclusion of his Preface should be expressed in terms so desponding, when it is considered that the authour was then only in his forty-sixth year. But we must ascribe its gloom to that miserable dejection of spirits to which he was constitutionally subject, and which was aggravated by the death of his

out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.' *Works*, v. pp. 49-51. Thomas Warton wrote to his brother:—'I fear his preface will disgust by the expressions of his consciousness of superiority, and of his contempt of patronage.' *Wool's Warton*, p. 231.

¹ That praise was slow in coming is shown by his letter to Mr. Burney, written two years and eight months after the publication of the *Dictionary*. 'Your praise,' he wrote, 'was welcome, not only because I believe it was sincere, but because praise has been very scarce. . . . Yours is the only letter of good-will that I have received; though, indeed, I am promised something of that sort from Sweden.' *Post*, Dec. 24, 1757.

² In the *Edinburgh Review* (No. 1, 1755)—a periodical which only lasted two years—there is a review by Adam Smith of Johnson's *Dictionary*. Smith admits the 'very extraordinary merit' of the author. 'The plan,' however, 'is not sufficiently grammatical.' To explain what he intends, he inserts 'an article or two from Mr. Johnson, and opposes to them the same articles, digested in the manner which we would have wished him to have followed.' He takes the words *but* and *humour*. One part of his definition of humour is curious—'something which comes upon a man by fits, which he can neither command nor restrain, and which is not perfectly consistent with true politeness.' This essay has not, I believe, been reprinted.

wife

wife two years before¹. I have heard it ingeniously observed by a lady of rank and elegance, that 'his melancholy was then at its meridian².' It pleased GOD to grant him almost thirty years of life after this time; and once, when he was in a placid frame of mind, he was obliged to own to me that he had enjoyed happier days, and had many more friends, since that gloomy hour than before³.

¹ She died in March 1752; the *Dictionary* was published in April 1755.

² In the Preface he writes (*Works*, v. 49):—'Much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me.' In his fine Latin poem *Ἰωῶθι σεαυτόν* 'he has left,' says Mr. Murphy (*Life*, p. 82), 'a picture of himself drawn, with as much truth, and as firm a hand, as can be seen in the portraits of Hogarth or Sir Joshua Reynolds.' He wrote it after revising and enlarging his *Dictionary*, and he sadly asks himself what is left for him to do.

Me, pensi immunis cum jam mihi reddor, inertis
 Desidiæ sors dura manet, graviorque labore
 Tristis et atra quies, et tardæ tædia vitæ.
 Nascuntur curis curæ, vexatque dolorum
 Importuna cohors, vacuæ mala somnia mentis.
 Nunc clamosa juvant nocturnæ gaudia mensæ,
 Nunc loca sola placent; frustra te, somne, recumbens,
 Alme voco, impatiens noctis, metuensque diei.
 Omnia percurro trepidus, circum omnia lustro,
 Si qua usquam pateat melioris semita vitæ,
 Nec quid agam invenio. . . .
 Quid faciam? tenebrisne pigram damnare senectam
 Restat? an accingar studiis gravioribus audax?
 Aut, hoc si nimium est, tandem nova lexica poscam?

Johnson's *Works*, i. 164.

³ A few weeks before his wife's death he wrote in *The Rambler* (No. 196):—'The miseries of life would be increased beyond all human power of endurance, if we were to enter the world with the same opinions as we carry from it.' He would, I think, scarcely have expressed himself so strongly towards his end. Though, as Dr. Maxwell records, in his *Collectanea* (*post*, 1770), 'he often used to quote with great pathos those fine lines of Virgil:—

"Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
 Prima fugit, &c."

It

It is a sad saying, that 'most of those whom he wished to please had sunk into the grave;' and his case at forty-five was singularly unhappy, unless the circle of his friends was very narrow. I have often thought, that as longevity is generally desired, and I believe, generally expected, it would be wise to be continually adding to the number of our friends, that the loss of some may be supplied by others. Friendship, 'the wine of life,' should like a well-stocked cellar, be thus continually renewed; and it is consolatory to think, that although we can seldom add what will equal the generous *first-growths* of our youth, yet friendship becomes insensibly old in much less time than is commonly imagined, and not many years are required to make it very mellow and pleasant. *Warmth* will, no doubt, make a considerable difference. Men of affectionate temper and bright fancy will coalesce a great deal sooner than those who are cold and dull.

The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate was, at a subsequent period of his life, the opinion of Johnson himself. He said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship *in constant repair*.'

The celebrated Mr. Wilkes, whose notions and habits of life were very opposite to his, but who was ever eminent for literature and vivacity, sallied forth with a little *Jeu d'Esprit* upon the following passage in his Grammar of the English Tongue, prefixed to the *Dictionary*: '*H* seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable.' In an Essay printed in *The Publick Advertiser*, this lively writer enumerated many instances in opposition to this remark; for example, 'The authour of this observation must be a man of a quick *apprehension*, and of a most *comprehensive* genius.' The position is undoubtedly expressed with too much latitude.

yet he owned, and the pages of Boswell amply testify, that it was in the latter period of his life that he had his happiest days.

¹ *Macbeth*, Act ii. sc. 3.

This light sally, we may suppose, made no great impression on our Lexicographer; for we find that he did not alter the passage till many years afterwards¹.

He had the pleasure of being treated in a very different manner by his old pupil Mr. Garrick, in the following complimentary Epigram²:

‘*On* JOHNSON’S DICTIONARY.

‘Talk of war with a Briton, he’ll boldly advance,
That one English soldier will beat ten of France;
Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men:
In the deep mines of science though Frenchmen may toil,
Can their strength be compar’d to Locke, Newton, and Boyle?
Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their pow’rs,
Their verse-men and prose-men, then match them with ours!
First Shakspeare and Milton³, like gods in the fight,
Have put their whole drama and epick to flight;
In satires, epistles, and odes, would they cope,
Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
And Johnson, well arm’d like a hero of yore,
Has beat forty French⁴, and will beat forty more!’

Johnson this year gave at once a proof of his benevolence, quickness of apprehension, and admirable art of composition, in the assistance which he gave to Mr. Zachariah Williams, father of the blind lady whom he had humanely received under his roof. Mr. Williams had followed the profession of physic in Wales; but having a very strong propensity to

¹ In the third edition, published in 1773, he left out the words *perhaps never*, and added the following paragraph:—

‘It sometimes begins middle or final syllables in words compounded, as *block-head*, or derived from the Latin, as *compre-headed*.’ BOSWELL. In the *Abridgment*, which was published some years earlier, after *never* is added ‘except in compounded words.’

² It was published in the *Gent. Mag.* for April 1755 (xxv. 190), just below the advertisement of the *Dictionary*.

³ In the original, ‘Milton and Shakspeare.’

⁴ The number of the French Academy employed in settling their language. BOSWELL.

the study of natural philosophy, had made many ingenious advances towards a discovery of the longitude, and repaired to London in hopes of obtaining the great parliamentary reward¹. He failed of success; but Johnson having made himself master of his principles and experiments, wrote for him a pamphlet, published in quarto, with the following title: *An Account of an Attempt to ascertain the Longitude at Sea, by an exact Theory of the Variation of the Magnetical Needle; with a Table of the Variations at the most remarkable Cities in Europe, from the year 1660 to 1680.*† To diffuse it more extensively, it was accompanied with an Italian translation on the opposite page, which it is supposed was the work of Signor Baretti², an Italian of considerable

¹ The maximum reward offered by a bill passed in 1714 was £20,000 for a method that determined the longitude at sea to half a degree of a great circle, or thirty geographical miles. For less accuracy smaller rewards were offered. *Ann. Reg.* viii. 114. In 1765 John Harrison received £7,500 for his chronometer; he had previously been paid £2,500; *ib.* 128. In this Act of Parliament 'the legislature never contemplated the invention of a *method*, but only of the means of making existing methods accurate.' *Penny Cyclo.* xiv. 139. An old sea-faring man wrote to Swift that he had found out the longitude. The Dean replied 'that he never knew but two projectors, one of whom ruined himself and his family, and the other hanged himself; and desired him to desist lest one or other might happen to him.' Swift's *Works* (1803), xvii. 157. In *She Stoops to Conquer* (Act i. sc. 2), when Tony ends his directions to the travellers by telling them,— 'coming to the farmer's barn you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill;' Marlow exclaims: 'Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude.'

² Joseph Baretti, a native of Piedmont, came to England in 1750 (see Preface to his *Account of Italy*, p. ix). He died in May, 1789. In his *Journey from London to Genoa* (ii. 276), he says that his father was one of the two architects of the King of Sardinia. Shortly after his death a writer in the *Gent. Mag.* (lix. 469, 570), who was believed to be Vincent, Dean of Westminster, thus wrote of him:—'Though his severity had created him enemies, his talents, conversation, and integrity had conciliated the regard of many valuable friends and acquaintances. His manners were apparently rough, but not unso-
literature

literature, who having come to England a few years before, had been employed in the capacity both of a language-master and an authour, and formed an intimacy with Dr. Johnson. This pamphlet Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library¹. On a blank leaf of it is pasted a paragraph cut out of a news-paper, containing an account of the death and character of Williams, plainly written by Johnson².

In July this year he had formed some scheme of mental improvement, the particular purpose of which does not appear. But we find in his *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 25, a prayer entitled 'On the Study of Philosophy, as an Instrument of living;' and after it follows a note, 'This study was not pursued.'

On the 13th of the same month he wrote in his *Journal* the following scheme of life for Sunday:

'Having lived' (as he with tenderness of conscience expresses himself) 'not without an habitual reverence for the Sabbath, yet without that attention to its religious duties which Christianity requires;

cial. His integrity was in every period of his distresses constant and unimpeached. His wants he never made known but in the last extremity. He and Johnson had been friends in distress. One evening, when they had agreed to go to the tavern, a foreigner in the streets, by a specious tale of distress, emptied the Doctor's purse of the last half-guinea it contained. When the reckoning came, what was his surprise upon his recollecting that his purse was totally exhausted. Baretti had fortunately enough to answer the demand, and has often declared that it was impossible for him not to reverence a man, who could give away all that he was worth, without recollecting his own distress.' See *post*, Oct. 20, 1769.

¹ See note by Mr. Warton, *ante*, p. 319. BOSWELL.

² 'On Saturday the 12th, about twelve at night, died Mr. Zachariah Williams, in his eighty-third year, after an illness of eight months, in full possession of his mental faculties. He has been long known to philosophers and seamen for his skill in magnetism, and his proposal to ascertain the longitude by a peculiar system of the variation of the compass. He was a man of industry indefatigable, of conversation inoffensive, patient of adversity and disease, eminently sober, temperate, and pious; and worthy to have ended life with better fortune.' BOSWELL.

'1. To rise early, and in order to it, to go to sleep early on Saturday.

'2. To use some extraordinary devotion in the morning.

'3. To examine the tenour of my life, and particularly the last week; and to mark my advances in religion, or recession from it.

'4. To read the Scripture methodically with such helps as are at hand.

'5. To go to church twice.

'6. To read books of Divinity, either speculative or practical.

'7. To instruct my family.

'8. To wear off by meditation any worldly soil contracted in the week.'

1756: ÆTAT. 47.]—IN 1756 Johnson found that the great fame of his *Dictionary* had not set him above the necessity of 'making provision for the day that was passing over him¹.'

¹ Johnson's *Works*, v. 49. Malone, in a note on this passage, says:—'Johnson appears to have been in this year in great pecuniary distress, having been arrested for debt; on which occasion Richardson became his surety.' He refers to the following letter in the *Richardson Corres.* v. 285:—

'TO MR. RICHARDSON.

'DEAR SIR,

'Tuesday, Feb. 19, 1756.

'I return you my sincerest thanks for the favour which you were pleased to do me two nights ago. Be pleased to accept of this little book, which is all that I have published this winter. The inflammation is come again into my eye, so that I can write very little. I am, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON.'

The 'little book' is not (as Mr. Croker suggests) Williams's *Longitude*, for it was published in Jan. 1755 (*Gent. Mag.* xxv. 47); but the *Abridgment of the Dictionary*, which was advertised in the *Gent. Mag.* for Jan. 1756. Murphy says (*Life*, p. 86), that he has before him a letter in Johnson's handwriting, which shows the distress of the man who had written *The Rambler*, and finished the great work of his *Dictionary*. It is directed to Mr. Richardson, and is as follows:—

'SIR,—I am obliged to entreat your assistance. I am now under an arrest for five pounds eighteen shillings. Mr. Strahan, from whom I should have received the necessary help in this case, is not at home, and I am afraid of not finding Mr. Millar. If you will be so good as to send me this sum, I will very gratefully repay you, and add it to all former obligations. I am, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

'SAMUEL JOHNSON.'

'Gough-Square, 16 March.'

No royal or noble patron extended a munificent hand to give independence to the man who had conferred stability on the language of his country. We may feel indignant that there should have been such unworthy neglect; but we must, at the same time, congratulate ourselves, when we consider, that to this very neglect, operating to rouse the natural indolence of his constitution, we owe many valuable productions, which otherwise, perhaps, might never have appeared.

He had spent, during the progress of the work, the money for which he had contracted to write his *Dictionary*. We have seen that the reward of his labour was only fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds; and when the expence of amanuenses and paper, and other articles are deducted, his clear profit was very inconsiderable. I once said to him, 'I am sorry, Sir, you did not get more for your *Dictionary*.' His answer was, 'I am sorry, too. But it was very well. The booksellers are generous, liberal-minded men!.' He,

In the margin of this letter there is a memorandum in these words:—'March 16, 1756. Sent six guineas. Witness, Wm. Richardson.' In the *European Mag.*, vii. 54, there is the following anecdote recorded, for which Steevens most likely was the authority:—'I remember writing to Richardson' said Johnson, 'from a spunging-house; and was so sure of my deliverance through his kindness and liberality, that before his reply was brought I knew I could afford to joke with the rascal who had me in custody, and did so over a pint of adulterated wine, for which at that instant I had no money to pay.' It is very likely that this anecdote has no other foundation than Johnson's second letter to Richardson, which is dated, not from a spunging-house, but from his own residence. What kind of fate awaited a man who was thrown into prison for debt is shown by the following passage in Wesley's *Journal* (ii. 267), dated Feb. 3, 1753:—'I visited one in the Marshalsea prison, a nursery of all manner of wickedness. O shame to man, that there should be such a place, such a picture of hell upon earth!' A few days later he writes:—'I visited as many more as I could. I found some in their cells under ground; others in their garrets, half starved both with cold and hunger, added to weakness and pain.'

¹ In a Debate on the Copy-right Bill on May 16, 1774, Governor Johnstone said:—'It had been urged that Dr. Johnson had received an after gratification from the booksellers who employed him to com-
upon

upon all occasions, did ample justice to their character in this respect¹. He considered them as the patrons of literature; and, indeed, although they have eventually been considerable gainers by his *Dictionary*, it is to them that we owe its having been undertaken and carried through at the risk of great expence, for they were not absolutely sure of being indemnified.

On the first day of this year we find from his private devotions, that he had then recovered from sickness²; and in February that his eye was restored to its use³. The pious gratitude with which he acknowledges mercies upon every occasion is very edifying; as is the humble submission which he breathes, when it is the will of his heavenly Father to try him with afflictions. As such dispositions become the state

pile his *Dictionary*. He had in his hand a letter from Dr. Johnson, which he read, in which the doctor denied the assertion, but declared that his employers fulfilled their bargain with him, and that he was satisfied.' *Parl. Hist.* xvii. 1105.

¹ He more than once attacked them. Thus in *An Appeal to the Public*, which he wrote for the *Gent. Mag.* in 1739 (*Works*, v. 348), he said:—'Nothing is more criminal in the opinion of many of them, than for an author to enjoy more advantage from his own works than they are disposed to allow him. This is a principle so well established among them, that we can produce some who threatened printers with their highest displeasure, for their having dared to print books for those that wrote them.' In the *Life of Savage* (*ib.* viii. 132), written in 1744, he writes of the 'avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress that genius by which they are supported.' In the *Life of Dryden* (*ib.* vii. 299), written in 1779, he speaks of an improvement. 'The general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed.'

² *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 40 [25]. BOSWELL. Johnson wrote to Miss Boothby on Dec. 30, 1755:—'If I turn my thoughts upon myself, what do I perceive but a poor helpless being, reduced by a blast of wind to weakness and misery? . . . Mr. Fitzherbert sent to-day to offer me some wine; the people about me say I ought to accept it. I shall therefore be obliged to him if he will send me a bottle.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 393.

³ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 27. BOSWELL.

of man here, and are the true effects of religious discipline, we cannot but venerate in Johnson one of the most exercised minds that our holy religion hath ever formed. If there be any thoughtless enough to suppose such exercise the weakness of a great understanding, let them look up to Johnson and be convinced that what he so earnestly practised must have a rational foundation.

His works this year were, an abstract or epitome, in octavo, of his folio *Dictionary*, and a few essays in a monthly publication, entitled, *The Universal Visiter*. Christopher Smart, with whose unhappy vacillation of mind he sincerely sympathised, was one of the stated undertakers of this miscellany; and it was to assist him that Johnson sometimes employed his pen¹. All the essays marked with two *asterisks* have been ascribed to him; but I am confident, from internal evidence, that of these, neither 'The Life of Chaucer,' 'Reflections on the State of Portugal,' nor an 'Essay on Architecture,' were written by him. I am equally confident, upon the same evidence, that he wrote 'Further Thoughts on Agriculture';² † being the sequel of a very inferior essay on the same subject, and which, though carried on as if by the same hand, is both in thinking and expression so far above it, and so strikingly peculiar, as to leave no doubt of its true parent; and that he also wrote 'A Dissertation on the State of

¹ See *post*, April 6, 1775. Kit Smart, once a Fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, ended his life in the King's Bench Prison; 'where he had owed to a small subscription, of which Dr. Burney was at the head, a miserable pittance beyond the prison allowance. In his latest letter to Dr. Burney, he passionately pleaded for a fellow-sufferer, "whom I myself," he impressively adds, "have already assisted according to my willing poverty." In another letter to the same friend he said:—"I bless God for your good nature, which please to take for a receipt.'" *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, i. 205, 280.

² In this Essay Johnson writes (*Works*, v. 315):—"I think there is room to question whether a great part of mankind has yet been informed that life is sustained by the fruits of the earth. I was once, indeed, provoked to ask a lady of great eminence for genius, "Whether she knew of what bread is made.""

Literature and Authours', † and 'A Dissertation on the Epitaphs written by Pope.' † The last of these, indeed, he afterwards added to his *Idler*². Why the essays truly written by him are marked in the same manner with some which he did not write, I cannot explain; but with deference to those who have ascribed to him the three essays which I have rejected, they want all the characteristical marks of Johnsonian composition.

He engaged also to superintend and contribute largely to another monthly publication, entitled *The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review*;^{*} the first number of which came out in May this year³. What were his emoluments from this

¹ In *The Universal Visiter* this Essay is entitled, 'Reflections on the Present State of Literature;' and in Johnson's *Works*, v. 355, 'A Project for the Employment of Authors.' The whole world, he says, is turning author. Their number is so large that employment must be found for them. 'There are some reasons for which they may seem particularly qualified for a military life. They are used to suffer want of every kind; they are accustomed to obey the word of command from their patrons and their booksellers; they have always passed a life of hazard and adventure, uncertain what may be their state on the next day. . . . There are some whom long depression under supercilious patrons has so humbled and crushed, that they will never have steadiness to keep their ranks. But for these men there may be found fifes and drums, and they will be well enough pleased to inflame others to battle, if they are not obliged to fight themselves.'

² He added it also to his *Life of Pope*.

³ 'This employment,' wrote Murphy (*Life*, p. 88), 'engrossed but little of Johnson's time. He resigned himself to indolence, took no exercise, rose about two, and then received the visits of his friends. Authors long since forgotten waited on him as their oracle, and he gave responses in the chair of criticism. He listened to the complaints, the schemes, and the hopes and fears of a crowd of inferior writers, "who," he said, in the words of Roger Ascham, "lived, men knew not how, and died obscure, men marked not when." He believed, that he could give a better history of Grub Street than any man living. His house was filled with a succession of visitors till four or five in the evening. During the whole time he presided at his tea-table.' In *The Rambler*, No. 145, Johnson takes the part of these inferior writers:—'a race of beings equally obscure and equally indigent, who, because their usefulness is less obvious to vulgar apprehensions, undertaking,

undertaking, and what other writers were employed in it, I have not discovered. He continued to write in it, with intermissions, till the fifteenth number; and I think that he never gave better proofs of the force, acuteness, and vivacity of his mind, than in this miscellany, whether we consider his original essays, or his reviews of the works of others. The 'Preliminary Address'† to the Publick is a proof how this great man could embellish, with the graces of superiour composition, even so trite a thing as the plan of a magazine.

His original essays are, 'An Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain';† 'Remarks on the Militia Bill';† 'Observations on his Britannick Majesty's Treaties with the Empress of Russia and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel';† 'Observations on the Present State of Affairs';† and

live unrewarded and die unpitied, and who have been long exposed to insult without a defender, and to censure without an apologist.'

¹ In this essay (*Works*, vi. 129) Johnson describes Canada as a 'region of desolate sterility,' 'a cold, uncomfortable, uninviting region, from which nothing but furs and fish were to be had.'

² The bill of 1756 that he considers passed through the Commons but was rejected by the Lords. It is curious as showing the comparative population of the different counties. Devonshire was to furnish 3200 men—twice as many as Lancashire. Essex, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk were each to furnish 1920 men; Lancashire, Surrey, Sussex, and Wiltshire 1600; Durham and Bedfordshire 800. From the three Ridings of Yorkshire 4800 were to be raised. The men were to be exercised every Sunday before and after service. *The Literary Magazine*, p. 48.

³ In this paper are found the forcible words, 'The desperate remedy of desperate distress,' which have been used since by orators. *Ib.* p. 121.

⁴ Johnson considers here the war in America between the English and French, and shows a strong feeling for the natives who had been wronged by both nations. 'Such is the contest that no honest man can heartily wish success to either party. . . . The American dispute between the French and us is only the quarrel of two robbers for the spoils of a passenger.' The French had this in their favour, that they had treated the natives better than we. 'The favour of the Indians which they enjoy with very few exceptions among all the nations of the northern continent we ought to consider with other thoughts; this favour we might have enjoyed, if we had been careful to deserve it.' *Works*, vi. 114, 122.

'Memoirs

'Memoirs of Frederick III, King of Prussia'.[†] In all these he displays extensive political knowledge and sagacity, expressed with uncommon energy and perspicuity, without any of those words which he sometimes took a pleasure in adopting in imitation of Sir Thomas Browne; of whose *Christian Morals* he this year gave an edition, with his 'Life'* prefixed to it, which is one of Johnson's best biographical performances. In one instance only in these essays has he indulged his *Brownism*². Dr. Robertson, the historian, mentioned it to me, as having at once convinced him that Johnson was the authour of the 'Memoirs of the King of Prussia.' Speaking of the pride which the old King, the father of his hero, took in being master of the tallest regiment in Europe, he says, 'To review this *towering* regiment was his daily pleasure; and to perpetuate it was so much his care, that when he met a tall woman he immediately commanded one of his *Titanian* retinue to marry her, that they might *propagate procerity*³.' For this Anglo-Latian word *procerity*, Johnson had, however, the authority of Addison⁴.

His reviews are of the following books: 'Birch's History of the Royal Society;'[†] 'Murphy's Gray's Inn Journal;'[†] 'Warton's Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, Vol. I.'[†] 'Hampton's Translation of Polybius;'[†] 'Blackwell's Memoirs of the Court of Augustus;'[†] 'Russel's Natural History of Aleppo';[†] 'Sir Isaac Newton's Arguments in Proof of a

¹ These Memoirs end with the year 1745. Johnson had intended to continue them, for he writes:—'We shall here suspend our narrative.' *Works*, vi. 474.

² See *ante*, p. 256.

³ The sentence continues:—'and produce heirs to the father's habiliments.' *Works*, vi. 436. Another instance may be adduced of his *Brownism* in the following line:—'The war continued in an equilibration by alternate losses and advantages.' *Ib.* 473.

⁴ In a letter from the Secretary of the Tall Club in *The Guardian*, No. 108. 'If the fair sex look upon us with an eye of favour, we shall make some attempts to lengthen out the human figure, and restore it to its ancient procerity.'

⁵ See *post*, March 23, 1783.

Deity;† ‘Borlase’s History of the Isles of Scilly;’† ‘Home’s Experiments on Bleaching;’† ‘Browne’s Christian Morals;’† ‘Hales on Distilling Sea-Water, Ventilators in Ships, and curing an ill Taste in Milk;’† ‘Lucas’s Essay on Waters;’† ‘Keith’s Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops;’† ‘Browne’s History of Jamaica;’† ‘Philosophical Transactions, Vol. XLIX.’† ‘Mrs. Lennox’s Translation of Sully’s Memoirs;’* ‘Miscellanies by Elizabeth Harrison;’† ‘Evans’s Map and Account of the Middle Colonies in America;’† ‘Letter on the Case of Admiral Byng;’* ‘Appeal to the People concerning Admiral Byng;’* ‘Hanway’s Eight Days Journey, and Essay on Tea;’* ‘The Cadet, a Military Treatise;’† ‘Some further Particulars in Relation to the Case of Admiral Byng, by a Gentleman of Oxford;’* ‘The Conduct of the Ministry relating to the present War impartially examined;’† ‘A free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.’* All these, from internal evidence, were written by Johnson; some of them I know he avowed, and have marked them with an *asterisk* accordingly².

¹ ‘As power is the constant and unavoidable consequence of learning, there is no reason to doubt that the time is approaching when the Americans shall in their turn have some influence on the affairs of mankind, for literature apparently gains ground among them. A library is established in Carolina and some great electrical discoveries were made at Philadelphia. . . . The fear that the American colonies will break off their dependence on England I have always thought chimerical and vain. . . . They must be dependent, and if they forsake us, or be forsaken by us, must fall into the hands of France.’ *Literary Magazine*, pp. 293, 299.

² Johnson, I have no doubt, wrote the *Review of A True Account of Lisbon since the Earthquake*, in which it is stated that the destruction was grossly exaggerated. After quoting the writer at length, he concludes:—‘Such then is the actual, real situation of *that place which once was* Lisbon, and has been since gazetically and pamphletically quite destroyed, consumed, annihilated! Now, upon comparing this simple narration of things and facts with the false and absurd accounts which have rather insulted and imposed upon us than informed us, who but must see the enormous disproportion? . . . Exaggeration and the absurdities ever faithfully attached to it are inseparable attributes of the ignorant, the empty, and the affected. Hence those elo-

Mr.

Mr. Thomas Davies indeed, ascribed to him the Review of Mr. Burke's 'Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful;' and Sir John Hawkins, with equal discernment, has inserted it in his collection of Johnson's works: whereas it has no resemblance to Johnson's composition, and is well known to have been written by Mr. Murphy, who has acknowledged it to me and many others.

It is worthy of remark, in justice to Johnson's political character, which has been misrepresented as abjectly submissive to power, that his 'Observations on the Present State of Affairs' glow with as animated a spirit of constitutional liberty as can be found anywhere. Thus he begins:

'The time is now come, in which every Englishman expects to be informed of the national affairs; and in which he has a right to have that expectation gratified. For, whatever may be urged by Ministers, or those whom vanity or interest make the followers of ministers, concerning the necessity of confidence in our governours, and the presumption of prying with profane eyes into the recesses of policy, it is evident that this reverence can be claimed only by counsels yet unexecuted, and projects suspended in deliberation. But when a design has ended in miscarriage or success, when every eye and every ear is witness to general discontent, or general satisfaction, it is then a proper time to disentangle confusion and illustrate obscurity; to shew by what causes every event was produced, and in what effects it is likely to terminate; to lay down with distinct particularity what rumour always huddles in general exclamation, or perplexes by indigested¹ narratives; to shew whence happiness or calamity is derived, and whence it may be expected; and honestly to lay before the people what inquiry can gather of the past, and conjecture can estimate of the future².'

quent tropes so familiar in every conversation, *monstrously pretty, vastly little*; . . . hence your *eminent shoe-maker, farriers, and undertakers*. . . . It is to the same muddy source we owe the many falsehoods and absurdities we have been pestered with concerning Lisbon. Thence your extravagantly sublime figures: *Lisbon is no more; can be seen no more*, etc., . . . with all the other prodigal effusions of bombast beyond the stretch of time or temper to enumerate.' *Ib.* p. 22. See *post*, under March 30, 1778.

¹ In the original *undigested*.

² Johnson's *Works*, vi. 113.

Here

Here we have it assumed as an incontrovertible principle, that in this country the people are the superintendants of the conduct and measures of those by whom government is administered; of the beneficial effect of which the present reign afforded an illustrious example, when addresses from all parts of the kingdom controuled an audacious attempt to introduce a new power subversive of the crown¹.

A still stronger proof of his patriotick spirit appears in his review of an 'Essay on Waters, by Dr. Lucas;' of whom, after describing him as a man well known to the world for his daring defiance of power, when he thought it exerted on the side of wrong, he thus speaks:

'The Irish ministers drove him from his native country by a proclamation, in which they charged him with crimes of which they never intended to be called to the proof, and oppressed by methods equally irresistible by guilt and innocence.

'Let the man thus driven into exile, for having been the friend of his country, be received in every other place as a confessor of liberty; and let the tools of power be taught in time, that they may rob, but cannot impoverish².'

Some of his reviews in this *Magazine* are very short accounts of the pieces noticed, and I mention them only that Dr. Johnson's opinion of the works may be known; but many of them are examples of elaborate criticism, in the

¹ In the spring of 1784, after the king had taken advantage of Fox's India Bill to dismiss the Coalition Ministry. See *post*, March 28, 1784.

² In Ireland there was no act to limit the duration of parliament. One parliament sat through the whole reign of George II.—thirty-three years. Dr. Lucas, a Dublin physician, in attacking other grievances, attacked also this. In 1749 he would have been elected member for Dublin, had he not, on a charge of seditious writings, been committed by the House of Commons to prison. He was to be confined, he was told, 'in the common hall of the prison among the felons.' He fled to England, which was all that the government wanted, and he practised as a physician in London. In 1761 he was restored to the liberties of the City of Dublin and was also elected one of its members. Hardy's *Lord Charlemont*, i. 249, 299; and *Gent. Mag.*, xx. 58 and xxxi. 236.

most masterly style. In his review of the 'Memoirs of the Court of Augustus,' he has the resolution to think and speak from his own mind, regardless of the cant transmitted from age to age, in praise of the ancient Romans'. Thus,

'I know not why any one but a school-boy in his declamation should whine over the Common-wealth of Rome, which grew great only by the misery of the rest of mankind. The Romans, like others, as soon as they grew rich, grew corrupt; and in their corruption sold the lives and freedoms of themselves, and of one another².'

Again,

'A people, who, while they were poor, robbed mankind; and as soon as they became rich, robbed one another³.'

In his review of the *Miscellanies* in prose and verse, published by Elizabeth Harrison, but written by many hands, he gives an eminent proof at once of his orthodoxy and candour:

'The authours of the essays in prose seem generally to have imitated, or tried to imitate, the copiousness and luxuriance of Mrs. *Rowe*⁴. This, however, is not all their praise; they have laboured to add to her brightness of imagery, her purity of sentiments. The poets have had Dr. *Watts* before their eyes; a writer, who, if he stood not in the first class of genius, compensated that defect by a ready application of his powers to the promotion of piety. The attempt to employ the ornaments of romance in the decoration of religion, was, I think, first made by Mr. *Boyle's Martyrdom of Theodora*; but *Boyle's* philosophical studies did not allow him time for the cultivation of style; and the completion of the great design was reserved for Mrs. *Rowe*. Dr. *Watts* was one of the first who taught the Dissenters to write and speak like other men, by shewing

¹ Boswell himself falls into this 'cant.' See *post*, Sept. 23, 1777.

² Johnson's *Works*, vi. 11.

³ *Ib.* p. 13. He vigorously attacks the style in which these 'Memoirs' are written. 'Sometimes,' he writes, 'the reader is suddenly ravished with a sonorous sentence, of which, when the noise is past, the meaning does not long remain.' *Ib.* p. 15.

⁴ The author of *Friendship in Death*.

them

them that elegance might consist with piety¹. They would have both done honour to a better society², for they had that charity which might well make their failings be forgotten, and with which the whole Christian world might wish for communion. They were pure from all the heresies of an age, to which every opinion is become a favourite that the universal church has hitherto detested!

'This praise, the general interest of mankind requires to be given to writers who please and do not corrupt, who instruct and do not weary. But to them all human eulogies are vain, whom I believe applauded by angels, and numbered with the just³.'

His defence of tea against Mr. Jonas Hanway's violent attack upon that elegant and popular beverage⁴, shews how

¹ In the *Lives of the Poets* (*Works*, viii. 383) Johnson writes:—'Dr. Watts was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style. He showed them that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction.'

² 'Such he [Dr. Watts] was as every Christian Church would rejoice to have adopted.' *Ib.* p. 380. See also *post*, July 7, 1777, and May 19, 1778.

³ Johnson's *Works*, vi. 79.

⁴ Mr. Hanway would have had the support of Johnson's father, who, as his son writes, 'considered tea as very expensive, and discouraged my mother from keeping company with the neighbours, and from paying visits or receiving them. She lived to say, many years after, that if the time were to pass again, she would not comply with such un-social injunctions.' *Account of Johnson's Early Life*, p. 18. The Methodists, ten years earlier than Hanway, had declared war on tea. 'After talking largely with both the men and women Leaders,' writes Wesley, 'we agreed it would prevent great expense, as well of health as of time and of money, if the poorer people of our society could be persuaded to leave off drinking of tea.' Wesley's *Journal*, i. 526. Pepys, writing in 1660, says: 'I did send for a cup of tee, (a China drink) of which I never had drank before.' Pepys' *Diary*, i. 137. Horace Walpole (*Letters*, i. 224) writing in 1743 says:—'They have talked of a new duty on tea, to be paid by every housekeeper for all the persons in their families; but it will scarce be proposed. Tea is so universal, that it would make a greater clamour than a duty on wine.' In October 1734 tea was sold in London at the following prices:—

very

very well a man of genius can write upon the slightest subject, when he writes, as the Italians say, *con amore*: I suppose no person ever enjoyed with more relish the infusion of that fragrant leaf than Johnson¹. The quantities which he drank of it at all hours were so great, that his nerves must have been uncommonly strong, not to have been extremely relaxed by such an intemperate use of it². He assured me, that he never felt the least inconvenience from it; which is a proof that the fault of his constitution was rather a too great tension of fibres, than the contrary. Mr. Hanway wrote an angry answer to Johnson's review of his *Essay on Tea*, and Johnson, after a full and deliberate pause, made a reply to it; the only instance, I believe, in the whole course of his

| | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------|
| Ordinary Bohea | 9s. | per lb. |
| Fine " | 10s. to 12s. | " |
| Pekoe | 15s. | " |
| Hyson | 20s. to 25s. | " |

Gent. Mag. iv. 575.

¹ Yet in his reply to Mr. Hanway he said (*Works*, vi. 33):—'I allowed tea to be a barren superfluity, neither medicinal nor nutritious, that neither supplied strength nor cheerfulness, neither relieved weariness, nor exhilarated sorrow.' Cumberland writes (*Memoirs*, i. 357):—'I remember when Sir Joshua Reynolds at my house reminded Dr. Johnson that he had drank eleven cups, he replied:—"Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine, why should you number up my cups of tea?" And then laughing in perfect good humour he added:—"Sir, I should have released the lady from any further trouble, if it had not been for your remark; but you have reminded me that I want one of the dozen, and I must request Mrs. Cumberland to round up my number."'

² In this Review Johnson describes himself as 'a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for twenty years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 21. That 'he never felt the least inconvenience from it' may well be doubted. His nights were almost always bad. In 1774 he recorded:—'I could not drink this day either coffee or tea after dinner. I know not when I missed before.' The next day he recorded:—'Last night my sleep was remarkably quiet. I know not whether by fatigue in walking, or by forbearance of tea.' *Diary of a Journey into North Wales*, Aug. 4.

life,

life, when he condescended to oppose any thing that was written against him¹. I suppose when he thought of any of his little antagonists, he was ever justly aware of the high sentiment of Ajax in *Ovid*:

‘*Iste tulit pretium jam nunc certaminis hujus,
Qui, cum victus erit, mecum certasse feretur*’².

But, indeed, the good Mr. Hanway laid himself so open to ridicule, that Johnson’s animadversions upon his attack were chiefly to make sport³.

The generosity with which he pleads the cause of Admiral Byng is highly to the honour of his heart and spirit. Though *Voltaire* affects to be witty upon the fate of that unfortunate officer, observing that he was shot ‘*pour encourager les autres*’⁴, the nation has long been satisfied that his life was sacrificed to the political fervour of the times. In the vault belonging to the Torrington family, in the church of Southill⁵, in Bedfordshire, there is the following Epitaph upon his monument, which I have transcribed:

¹ See *post*, May 1768.

² ‘Losing, he wins, because his name will be
Ennobled by defeat who durst contend with me.’

DRYDEN, *Ovid*, *Meta*. xiii. 19.

³ In Hanway’s *Essay* Johnson found much to praise. Hanway often went to the root when he dealt with the evils of life. Thus he writes:—‘The introducing new habits of life is the most substantial charity.’ But he thus mingles sense and nonsense:—‘Though tea and gin have spread their baneful influence over this island and his Majesty’s other dominions, yet you may be well assured that the Governors of the Foundling Hospital will exert their utmost skill and vigilance to prevent the children under their care from being poisoned, or enervated, by one or the other.’ Johnson’s *Works*; vi. 26, 28.

⁴ ‘Et pourquoi tuer cet amiral? C’est, lui dit-on, parce qu’il n’a pas fait tuer assez de monde; il a livré un combat à un amiral français, et on a trouvé qu’il n’était pas assez près de lui. Mais, dit *Candide*, l’amiral français était aussi loin de l’amiral anglais que celui-ci l’était de l’autre. Cela est incontestable, lui répliquait-on; mais dans ce pays-ci il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres.’ *Candide*, ch. xxiii.

⁵ See *post*, June 3, 1781, when Boswell went to this church.

'TO THE PERPETUAL DISGRACE
 OF PUBLIC JUSTICE,
 THE HONOURABLE JOHN BYNG, ESQ.
 ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE,
 FELL A MARTYR TO POLITICAL
 PERSECUTION,
 MARCH 14, IN THE YEAR, 1757 ;
 WHEN BRAVERY AND LOYALTY
 WERE INSUFFICIENT SECURITIES
 FOR THE LIFE AND HONOUR OF
 A NAVAL OFFICER.'

Johnson's most exquisite critical essay in the *Literary Magazine*, and indeed any where, is his review¹ of Soame Jenyns's *Inquiry into the Origin of Evil*. Jenyns was possessed of lively talents, and a style eminently pure and easy, and could very happily play with a light subject, either in prose or verse; but when he speculated on that most difficult and excruciating question, the Origin of Evil, he 'ventured far beyond his depth²,' and, accordingly, was exposed by Johnson, both with acute argument and brilliant wit. I remember when the late Mr. Bicknell's humorous performance, entitled *The Musical Travels of Joel Collyer*³, in which a slight attempt is made to ridicule Johnson, was ascribed to Soame Jenyns, 'Ha! (said Johnson) I thought I had given *him* enough of it.'

His triumph over Jenyns is thus described by my friend Mr. Courtenay in his *Poetical Review of the literary and moral Character of Dr. Johnson*; a performance of such

¹ Johnson reprinted this Review in a small volume by itself. See Johnson's *Works*, vi. 47, note.

² 'I have ventured,
 Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
 This many summers in a sea of glory,
 But far beyond my depth.'

Henry VIII. Act iii. sc. 2.

³ *Musical Travels through England*, by Joel Collier [not Collyer], Organist, 1774. This book was written in ridicule of Dr. Burney's *Travels*, who, says his daughter, 'was much hurt on its first appearance.' Dr. Burney's *Memoirs*, i. 259.

merit, that had I not been honoured with a very kind and partial notice in it¹, I should echo the sentiments of men of the first taste loudly in its praise :

'When specious sophists with presumption scan
The source of evil hidden still from man ;
Revive Arabian tales, and vainly hope
To rival St. John, and his scholar Pope :
Though metaphysicks spread the gloom of night,
By reason's star he guides our aching sight ;
The bounds of knowledge marks, and points the way
To pathless wastes, where wilder'd sages stray ;
Where, like a farthing link-boy, Jenyns stands,
And the dim torch drops from his feeble hands².'

¹ See *ante*, p. 258.

² Some time after Dr. Johnson's death there appeared in the newspapers and magazines an illiberal and petulant attack upon him, in the form of an Epitaph, under the name of Mr. Soame Jenyns, very unworthy of that gentleman, who had quietly submitted to the critical lash while Johnson lived. It assumed, as characteristicks of him, all the vulgar circumstances of abuse which had circulated amongst the ignorant. It was an unbecoming indulgence of puny resentment, at a time when he himself was at a very advanced age, and had a near prospect of descending to the grave. I was truly sorry for it ; for he was then become an avowed, and (as my Lord Bishop of London, who had a serious conversation with him on the subject, assures me) a sincere Christian. He could not expect that Johnson's numerous friends would patiently bear to have the memory of their master stigmatized by no mean pen, but that, at least, one would be found to retort. Accordingly, this unjust and sarcastick Epitaph was met in the same publick field by an answer, in terms by no means soft, and such as wanton provocation only could justify :

EPITAPH,

'*Prepared for a creature not quite dead yet.*
'HERE lies a little ugly nauseous elf,
Who judging only from its wretched self,
Feebly attempted, petulant and vain,
The "Origin of Evil" to explain.
A mighty Genius at this elf displeas'd,
With a strong critick grasp the urchin squeez'd.
For thirty years its coward spleen it kept.
Till in the dust the mighty Genius slept ;

This

This year Mr. William Payne, brother of the respectable Bookseller¹ of that name, published *An Introduction to the Game of Draughts*, to which Johnson contributed a Dedication to the Earl of Rochford,* and a Preface,* both of which are admirably adapted to the treatise to which they are prefixed. Johnson, I believe, did not play at draughts after leaving College², by which he suffered; for it would have afforded him an innocent soothing relief from the melancholy which distressed him so often. I have heard him regret that he had not learnt to play at cards³; and the game of draughts we know is peculiarly calculated to fix the attention without straining it. There is a composure and gravity in draughts which insensibly tranquillises the mind; and, accordingly, the Dutch are fond of it, as they are of smoaking, of the sedative influence of which, though he himself never smoaked, he had a high opinion⁴. Besides, there is in draughts some exercise of the faculties; and, accordingly, Johnson wishing to dignify the subject in his Dedication with what is most estimable in it, observes,

‘Triflers may find or make any thing a trifle; but since it is the great characteristick of a wise man to see events in their courses, to obviate consequences, and ascertain contingencies, your Lordship will think nothing a trifle by which the mind is inured to caution, foresight, and circumspection⁵.’

Then stunk and fretted in expiring snuff,
And blink'd at JOHNSON with its last poor puff.’

BOSWELL.

The epitaph is very likely Boswell's own. For Jenyns's conversion see *post*, April 12 and 15, 1778.

¹ Mr. John Payne, afterwards chief accountant of the Bank, one of the four surviving members of the Ivy Lane Club who dined together in 1783. See Hawkins's *Johnson*, pp. 220, 563; and *post*, December 1783.

² See *post*, under March 19, 1776.

³ ‘He said, “I am sorry I have not learnt to play at cards. It is very useful in life; it generates kindness and consolidates society.”’ Boswell's *Hebrides*, Nov. 21, 1773.

⁴ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3d edit. p. 48. [Aug. 19.] BOSWELL.

⁵ Johnson's *Works*, v. 435.

As

As one of the little occasional advantages which he did not disdain to take by his pen, as a man whose profession was literature, he this year accepted of a guinea¹ from Mr. Robert Dodsley, for writing the introduction to *The London Chronicle*, an evening news-paper; and even in so slight a performance exhibited peculiar talents. This *Chronicle* still subsists, and from what I observed, when I was abroad, has a more extensive circulation upon the Continent than any of the English newspapers. It was constantly read by Johnson himself²; and it is but just to observe, that it has all along been distinguished for good sense, accuracy, moderation, and delicacy.

Another instance of the same nature has been communicated to me by the Reverend Dr. Thomas Campbell, who has done himself considerable credit by his own writings³.

‘Sitting with Dr. Johnson one morning alone, he asked me if I had known Dr. Madden, who was authour of the premium-scheme in Ireland⁴. On my answering in the affirmative, and also that I had for some years lived in his neighbourhood, &c., he begged of me that when I returned to Ireland, I would endeavour to procure for him a poem of Dr. Madden’s called *Boulter’s Monument*. The reason (said he) why I wish for it, is this: when Dr. Madden came to London, he submitted that work to my castigation; and I remember I blotted a great many lines, and might have blotted many more, without making the poem worse. However, the Doctor was very thankful, and very generous, for he gave me ten guineas, *which was to me at that time a great sum*⁵.’

¹ He was paid at the rate of a little over twopence a line. For this Introduction see *Works*, v. 206.

² See *post*, Oct. 26, 1769.

³ See *post*, April 5, 1775.

⁴ In 1740 he set apart the yearly sum of £100 to be distributed, by way of premium, to the authors of the best inventions, &c., in Ireland Chalmers’s *Biog. Dict.*

⁵ *Boulter’s Monument. A Panegyric Poem, sacred to the memory of that great and excellent prelate and patriot, the Most Reverend Dr. Hugh Boulter; Late Lord-Archbishop of Ardmagh, and Primate of All Ireland.* Dublin, 1745. Such lines as the following might well have been blotted, but of them the poem is chiefly formed:—

He this year resumed his scheme of giving an edition of *Shakspeare* with notes'. He issued Proposals of considerable length²,* in which he shewed that he perfectly well knew what a variety of research such an undertaking required; but his indolence prevented him from pursuing it with that diligence which alone can collect those scattered facts that genius, however acute, penetrating, and luminous, cannot discover by its own force. It is remarkable, that at this time his fancied activity was for the moment so vigorous, that he promised his work should be published before Christmas, 1757³. Yet nine years elapsed before it saw the light'. His throes in bringing it forth had been severe and

'My peaceful song in lays instructive paints
The first of mitred peers and Britain's saints.' p. 2.

'Ha! mark! what gleam is that which paints the air?
The blue serene expands! Is Boulter there?' p. 88.

The poet addresses Boulter's successor Hoadley, who he says,

'Shall equal him; while, like Elisha, you
Enjoy his spirit, and his mantle too.' p. 89.

A note to *mantle* says 'Alluding to the metropolitan pallium.'

Boulter is the bishop in Pope's lines, (*Prologue to the Satires*, l. 99):—

'Does not one table Bavius still admit?
Still to one bishop Philips seem a wit?'

Pattison's *Pope's Satires*, p. 107.

In the *Life of Addison*, Johnson mentioning Dr. Madden adds:—'a name which Ireland ought to honour.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 455.

¹ See *ante*, p. 202. Hawkins writes (*Life*, p. 363):—'I congratulated him on his being now engaged in a work that suited his genius. His answer was:—"I look upon this as I did upon the *Dictionary*; it is all work, and my inducement to it is not love or desire of fame, but the want of money, which is the only motive to writing that I know of."'

² They have been reprinted by Mr. Malone, in the Preface to his edition of *Shakspeare*. BOSWELL.

³ At Christmas, 1757, he said that he should publish about March, 1758 (*post*, Dec. 24, 1757). When March came he said that he should publish before summer (*post*, March 1, 1758).

⁴ In what Johnson says of Pope's slow progress in translating the *Iliad*, he had very likely his own case in view. 'Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multi-

remittent; and at last we may almost conclude that the Cæsarian operation was performed by the knife of Churchill, whose upbraiding satire, I dare say, made Johnson's friends urge him to despatch¹.

‘He for subscribers bates his hook,
And takes your cash; but where's the book?
No matter where; wise fear, you know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what, to serve our private ends,
Forbids the cheating of our friends?’²

About this period he was offered a living of considerable value in Lincolnshire, if he were inclined to enter into holy orders. It was a rectory in the gift of Mr. Langton, the father of his much valued friend. But he did not accept of it; partly I believe from a conscientious motive, being persuaded that his temper and habits rendered him unfit for

farious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.’ Johnson's *Works*, viii. 255. In Prior's *Goldsmith* (i. 238) we have the following extracts from letters written by Dr. Grainger (*post*, March 21, 1776) to Dr. Percy:—‘June 27, 1758. I have several times called on Johnson to pay him part of your subscription [for his edition of *Shakespeare*]. I say, part, because he never thinks of working if he has a couple of guineas in his pocket; but if you notwithstanding order me, the whole shall be given him at once.’ ‘July 20, 1758. As to his *Shakespeare*, *movet sed non promovet*. I shall feed him occasionally with guineas.’

¹ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 440) says that ‘Reynolds and some other of his friends, who were more concerned for his reputation than himself seemed to be, contrived to entangle him by a wager, or some other pecuniary engagement, to perform his task by a certain time.’ Just as Johnson was oppressed by the engagement that he had made to edit *Shakespeare*, so was Cowper by his engagement to edit *Milton*. ‘The consciousness that there is so much to do and nothing done is a burthen I am not able to bear. *Milton* especially is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost, as goaded with such continual reproaches for neglecting him.’ Southey's *Cowper*, vii. 163.

² From *The Ghost*, Bk. iii. l. 801. Boswell makes two slight errors in quoting: ‘Your cash’ should be ‘their cash;’ and ‘you know’ should be ‘we know.’

that

that assiduous and familiar instruction of the vulgar and ignorant which he held to be an essential duty in a clergyman¹; and partly because his love of a London life was so strong, that he would have thought himself an exile in any other place, particularly if residing in the country². Whoever would wish to see his thoughts upon that subject displayed in their full force, may peruse *The Adventurer*, Number 126³.

1757: ÆTAT. 48.]—IN 1757 it does not appear that he published any thing, except some of those articles in *The Literary Magazine*, which have been mentioned. That magazine, after Johnson ceased to write in it, gradually declined, though the popular epithet of *Antigallican*⁴ was added to it; and in July 1758 it expired. He probably prepared a part of his *Shakspeare* this year, and he dictated a speech on the subject of an Address to the Throne, after the expedition to Rochfort, which was delivered by one of his friends, I know not in what publick meeting⁵. It is printed

¹ See *post*, April 17, 1778.

² Mrs. Thrale writing to him in 1777, says:—'You would rather be sick in London than well in the country.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 394. Yet Johnson, when he could afford to travel, spent far more time in the country than is commonly thought. Moreover a great part of each summer from 1766 to 1782 inclusive he spent at Streatham.

³ The motto to this number

—'Steriles nec legit arenas,

Ut caneret paucis, mersitque hoc pulvere verum.'

(Lucan).

Johnson has thus translated:—

'Canst thou believe the vast eternal mind
Was e'er to Syrts and Libyan sands confin'd?
That he would choose this waste, this barren ground,
To teach the thin inhabitants around,
And leave his truth in wilds and deserts drown'd?'

⁴ It was added to the January number of 1758, but it was dropped in the following numbers.

⁵ According to the note in the *Gent. Mag.* the speech was delivered 'at a certain respectable talking society.' The chairman of the meeting is addressed as Mr. President. The speech is vigorously written and is, I have no doubt, by Johnson. 'It is fit,' the speaker says, 'that

in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for October 1785 as his, and bears sufficient marks of authenticity.

By the favour of Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker, of the Treasury, Dublin, I have obtained a copy of the following letter from Johnson to the venerable authour of *Dissertations on the History of Ireland*.

‘TO CHARLES O’CONNOR, ESQ’.

‘SIR,

‘I have lately, by the favour of Mr. Faulkner², seen your account of Ireland, and cannot forbear to solicit a prosecution of your design. Sir William Temple complains that Ireland is less known than any other country, as to its ancient state³. The natives have had little leisure, and little encouragement for enquiry; and strangers, not knowing the language, have had no ability.

‘I have long wished that the Irish literature were cultivated⁴. Ireland is known by tradition to have been once the seat of piety and learning⁵; and surely it would be very acceptable to all those

those whom for the future we shall employ and pay may know they are the servants of a people that *expect duty for their money*. It is said an address expresses some distrust of the king, or may tend to disturb his quiet. An English king, Mr. President, has no great right to quiet when his people are in misery.’

¹ See *post*, May 19, 1777.

² See *post*, March 21, 1772.

³ ‘I have often observed with wonder, that we should know less of Ireland than any other country in Europe.’ Temple’s *Works*, iii. 82.

⁴ The celebrated orator, Mr. Flood, has shewn himself to be of Dr. Johnson’s opinion; having by his will bequeathed his estate, after the death of his wife Lady Frances, to the University of Dublin; ‘desiring that immediately after the said estate shall come into their possession, they shall appoint two professors, one for the study of the native Erse or Irish language, and the other for the study of Irish antiquities and Irish history, and for the study of any other European language illustrative of, or auxiliary to, the study of Irish antiquities or Irish history; and that they shall give yearly two liberal premiums for two compositions, one in verse, and the other in prose, in the Irish language.’ BOSWELL.

⁵ Dr. T. Campbell records in his *Diary of a Visit to England* (p. 62),
who

who are curious either in the original of nations, or the affinities of languages, to be further informed of the revolution of a people so ancient, and once so illustrious.

‘What relation there is between the Welch and Irish language, or between the language of Ireland and that of Biscay, deserves enquiry. Of these provincial and unextended tongues, it seldom happens that more than one are understood by any one man; and, therefore, it seldom happens that a fair comparison can be made. I hope you will continue to cultivate this kind of learning, which has too long lain neglected, and which, if it be suffered to remain in oblivion for another century, may, perhaps, never be retrieved. As I wish well to all useful undertakings, I would not forbear to let you know how much you deserve in my opinion, from all lovers of study, and how much pleasure your work has given to, Sir,

‘Your most obliged,

‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘London, April 9, 1757.’

‘TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Dr. Marsili’ of Padua, a learned gentleman, and good Latin poet, has a mind to see Oxford. I have given him a letter to Dr. Huddesford², and shall be glad if you will introduce him, and shew him any thing in Oxford.

‘I am printing my new edition of *Shakspeare*.

‘I long to see you all, but cannot conveniently come yet. You might write to me now and then, if you were good for any thing.

that at the dinner at Messieurs Dilly’s (*post*, April 5, 1775) he ‘ventured to say that the first professors of Oxford, Paris, &c., were Irish. “Sir,” says Johnson, “I believe there is something in what you say, and I am content with it, since they are not Scotch.”’

¹ On Mr. Thrale’s attack of apoplexy in 1779, Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—‘I remember Dr. Marsigli, an Italian physician, whose seizure was more violent than Mr. Thrale’s, for he fell down helpless, but his case was not considered as of much danger, and he went safe home, and is now a professor at Padua.’ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 48.

² ‘Now, or late, Vice-Chancellor.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL. He was Vice-Chancellor when Johnson’s degree was conferred (*ante*, p. 327), but his term of office had now come to an end.

But

But *honores mutant mores*. Professors forget their friends¹. I shall certainly complain to Miss Jones². I am,

‘Your, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London,] June 21, 1757.’

‘Please to make my compliments to Mr. Wise.’

Mr. Burney having enclosed to him an extract from the review of his *Dictionary* in the *Bibliothèque des Savans*³, and a list of subscribers to his *Shakspeare*, which Mr. Burney had procured in Norfolk, he wrote the following answer :

‘TO MR. BURNEY, IN LYNNE, NORFOLK.

‘SIR,

‘That I may shew myself sensible of your favours, and not commit the same fault a second time, I make haste to answer the letter which I received this morning. The truth is, the other likewise was received, and I wrote an answer ; but being desirous to transmit you some proposals and receipts, I waited till I could find a convenient conveyance, and day was passed after day, till other things drovè it from my thoughts ; yet not so, but that I remember with great pleasure your commendation of my *Dictionary*. Your praise was welcome, not only because I believe it was sincere, but because praise has been very scarce. A man of your candour will be surprisèd when I tell you, that among all my acquaintance there were only two, who upon the publication of my book did not endeavour to depress me with threats of censure from the publick, or with objections learned from those who had learned them from my own Preface. Your’s is the only letter of goodwill that I have

¹ ‘Mr. Warton was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in the preceding year.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² ‘Miss Jones lived at Oxford, and was often of our parties. She was a very ingenious poetess, and published a volume of poems ; and, on the whole, was a most sensible, agreeable, and amiable woman. She was a sister to the Reverend River Jones, Chanter of Christ Church Cathedral at Oxford, and Johnson used to call her the *Chantress*. I have heard him often address her in this passage from *Il Penseroso* :

“Thee, Chantress, oft the woods among
I woo,” etc.

She died unmarried.’ WARTON.

³ Tom. iii. p. 482. BOSWELL.

received; though, indeed, I am promised something of that sort from Sweden.

'How my new edition¹ will be received I know not; the subscription has not been very successful. I shall publish about March.

'If you can direct me how to send proposals, I should wish that they were in such hands.

'I remember, Sir, in some of the first letters with which you favoured me, you mentioned your lady. May I enquire after her? In return for the favours which you have shewn me, it is not much to tell you, that I wish you and her all that can conduce to your happiness. I am, Sir,

• Your most obliged,

• And most humble servant,

• SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Gough-square, Dec. 24, 1757.'

In 1758 we find him, it should seem, in as easy and pleasant a state of existence, as constitutional unhappiness ever permitted him to enjoy.

'TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE².

'DEAREST SIR,

'I must indeed have slept very fast, not to have been awakened by your letter. None of your suspicions are true; I am not much richer than when you left me; and, what is worse, my omission of an answer to your first letter, will prove that I am not much wiser. But I go on as I formerly did, designing to be some time or other both rich and wise; and yet cultivate neither mind nor fortune. Do you take notice of my example, and learn the danger of delay. When I was as you are now, towering in the confidence of twenty-one, little did I suspect that I should be at forty-nine, what I now am.

'But you do not seem to need my admonition. You are busy in acquiring and in communicating knowledge, and while you are

¹ Of *Shakspeare*. BOSWELL.

² This letter is misdated. It was written in Jan. 1759, and not in 1758. Johnson says that he is forty-nine. In Jan. 1758 he was forty-eight. He mentions the performance of *Clione*, which was at the end of 1758; and he says that 'Murphy is to have his *Orphan of China* acted next month.' It was acted in the spring of 1759.

studying,

studying, enjoy the end of study, by making others wiser and happier. I was much pleased with the tale that you told me of being tutour to your sisters. I, who have no sisters nor brothers, look with some degree of innocent envy on those who may be said to be born to friends; and cannot see, without wonder, how rarely that native union is afterwards regarded. It sometimes, indeed, happens, that some supervenient cause of discord may overpower this original amity; but it seems to me more frequently thrown away with levity, or lost by negligence, than destroyed by injury or violence. We tell the ladies that good wives make good husbands; I believe it is a more certain position that good brothers make good sisters.

'I am satisfied with your stay at home, as Juvenal with his friend's retirement to Cumæ: I know that your absence is best, though it be not best for me.

*'Quamvis digressu veteris confusus amici,
Laudo tamen vacuis quod sedem figere Cumis
Destinct, atque unum civem donare Sibylle!'*

'Langton is a good Cumæ, but who must be Sibylla? Mrs. Langton is as wise as Sibyl, and as good; and will live, if my wishes can prolong life, till she shall in time be as old. But she differs in this, that she has not scattered her precepts in the wind, at least not those which she bestowed upon you.

'The two Wartons just looked into the town, and were taken to see *Cleone*, where, David² says, they were starved for want of company to keep them warm. David and Doddy³ have had a new

¹ *Juvenal*, Sat. iii. 1.

'Though grief and fondness in my breast rebel,
When injured Thales bids the town farewell,
Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice commend,
I praise the hermit, but regret the friend;
Resolved at length from vice and London far
To breathe in distant fields a purer air,
And fixed on Cambria's solitary shore
Give to St. David one true Briton more.'

Johnson's *London*, l. 1.

² Mr. Garrick. BOSWELL.

³ Mr. Dodsley, the Authour of *Cleone*. BOSWELL. Garrick, according to Davies, had rejected Dodsley's *Cleone*, 'and had termed it a cruel, bloody, and unnatural play.' Davies's *Garrick*, i. 223. Johnson himself said of it:—'I am afraid there is more blood than brains.' quarrel,

quarrel, and, I think, cannot conveniently quarrel any more. *Cleone* was well acted by all the characters, but Bellamy¹ left nothing to

Post, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*. The night it was brought out at Covent Garden, Garrick appeared for the first time as Marplot in the *Busy Body* at Drury Lane. The next morning he wrote to congratulate Dodsley on his success, and asked him at the same time to let him know how he could support his interest without absolutely giving up his own. To this Dodsley returned a cold reply. Garrick wrote back as follows:—

‘Master Robert Dodsley,

‘When I first read your peevish answer to my well-meant proposal to you, I was much disturbed at it—but when I considered, that some minds cannot bear the smallest portion of success, I most sincerely pitied you; and when I found in the same letter, that you were graciously pleased to dismiss me from your acquaintance, I could not but confess so apparent an obligation, and am with due acknowledgements,

‘Master Robert Dodsley,

‘Your most obliged

‘David Garrick.’

Garrick *Corres.* i. 80 (where the letters that passed are wrongly dated 1757). Mrs. Bellamy in her *Life* (iii. 109) says that on the evening of the performance she was provoked by something that Dodsley said, ‘which,’ she continues, ‘made me answer that good man with a petulance which afterwards gave me uneasiness. I told him that I had a reputation to lose as an actress; but, as for his piece, Mr. Garrick had anticipated the damnation of it publicly, the preceding evening, at the Bedford Coffee-house, where he had declared that it could not pass muster, as it was the very worst piece ever exhibited.’ Shenstone (*Works*, iii. 288) writing five weeks after the play was brought out, says:—‘Dodsley is now going to print his fourth edition. He sold 2000 of his first edition the very first day he published it.’ The price was eighteen-pence.

¹ Mrs. Bellamy (*Life*, iii. 108) says that Johnson was present at the last rehearsal. ‘When I came to repeat, “Thou shalt not murder,” Dr. Johnson caught me by the arm, and that somewhat too briskly, saying, at the same time, “It is a commandment, and must be spoken, Thou shalt *not* murder.” As I had not then the honour of knowing personally that great genius, I was not a little displeased at his enforcing his instructions with so much vehemence.’ The next night she heard, she says, amidst the general applause, ‘the same voice which had instructed me in the commandment, exclaim aloud from the pit, “I will write a copy of verses upon her myself.” I knew that my success was insured.’ See *post*, May 11, 1783.

be desired. I went the first night, and supported it, as well as I might; for Doddy, you know, is my patron¹, and I would not desert him. The play was very well received. Doddy, after the danger was over, went every night to the stage-side, and cried at the distress of poor Cleone².

'I have left off housekeeping³, and therefore made presents of the game which you were pleased to send me. The pheasant I gave to Mr. Richardson⁴, the bustard to Dr. Lawrence, and the pot I placed with Miss Williams, to be eaten by myself. She desires that her compliments and good wishes may be accepted by the family; and I make the same request for myself.

'Mr. Reynolds has within these few days raised his price to twenty guineas a head⁵, and Miss is much employed in miniatures⁶. I know not any body [else] whose prosperity has increased since you left them.

'Murphy is to have his *Orphan of China* acted next month; and is therefore, I suppose, happy⁷. I wish I could tell you of any

¹ Dodsley had published his *London* and his *Vanity of Human Wishes* (*ante*, pp. 144, 223, 224, note), and had had a large share in the *Dictionary*, (*ante*, p. 211).

² It is to this that Churchill refers in the following lines:—

'Let them [the Muses] with Glover o'er Medea doze;
Let them with Dodsley wail Cleone's woes,
Whilst he, fine feeling creature, all in tears,
Melts as they melt, and weeps with weeping Peers.'

The Journey. Poems, ii. 328.

³ See *post*, p. 405, note 3

⁴ Mr. Samuel Richardson, authour of *Clarissa*. BOSWELL.

⁵ In 1753 when in Devonshire he charged five guineas a head (Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 89); shortly afterwards, when he removed to London, twelve guineas (*ib.* p. 101); in 1764, thirty guineas; for a whole length 150 guineas (*ib.* p. 224). Northcote writes that 'he sometimes has lamented the being interrupted in his work by idle visitors, saying, "those persons do not consider that my time is worth to me five guineas an hour."' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 83.

⁶ 'Miss Reynolds at first amused herself by painting miniature portraits, and in that part of the art was particularly successful. In her attempts at oil-painting, however, she did not succeed, which made Reynolds say jestingly, that her pictures in that way made other people laugh and him cry; and as he did not approve of her painting in oil, she generally did it by stealth.' *Ib.* ii. 160.

⁷ Murphy was far from happy. The play was not produced till
great

great good to which I was approaching, but at present my prospects do not much delight me ; however, I am always pleased when I find that you, dear Sir, remember,

‘Your affectionate, humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Jan. 9, 1758.’

‘TO MR. BURNEY, AT LYNNE, NORFOLK.

‘SIR,

‘Your kindness is so great, and my claim to any particular regard from you so little, that I am at a loss how to express my sense of your favours¹; but I am, indeed, much pleased to be thus distinguished by you.

‘I am ashamed to tell you that my *Shakspeare* will not be out so soon as I promised my subscribers ; but I did not promise them more than I promised myself. It will, however, be published before summer.

‘I have sent you a bundle of proposals, which, I think, do not profess more than I have hitherto performed. I have printed many of the plays, and have hitherto left very few passages unexplained ; where I am quite at a loss, I confess my ignorance, which is seldom done by commentators².

‘I have, likewise, enclosed twelve receipts ; not that I mean to impose upon you the trouble of pushing them, with more importunity than may seem proper, but that you may rather have more than fewer than you shall want. The proposals you will disseminate as there shall be an opportunity. I once printed them at length in the *Chronicle*, and some of my friends (I believe Mr. Murphy, who formerly wrote the *Gray's-Inn Journal*) introduced them with a splendid encomium.

‘Since the *Life of Browne*, I have been a little engaged, from time to time, in the *Literary Magazine*, but not very lately. I have

April ; by the date of Johnson's letter, he had not by any means reached the end of what he calls ‘the first, and indeed, the last, disagreeable controversy that he ever had with Mr. Garrick.’ Murphy's *Garrick*, p. 213.

¹ This letter was an answer to one in which was enclosed a draft for the payment of some subscriptions to his *Shakspeare*. BOSWELL.

² In the Preface he says :—(*Works*, v. 152) ‘I have not passed over with affected superiority what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance.’

not the collection by me, and therefore cannot draw out a catalogue of my own parts, but will do it, and send it. Do not buy them, for I will gather all those that have anything of mine in them, and send them to Mrs. Burney, as a small token of gratitude for the regard which she is pleased to bestow upon me.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your most obliged

‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘London, March 8, 1758.’

Dr. Burney has kindly favoured me with the following memorandum, which I take the liberty to insert in his own genuine easy style. I love to exhibit sketches of my illustrious friend by various eminent hands.

‘Soon after this, Mr. Burney, during a visit to the capital, had an interview with him in Gough-square, where he dined and drank tea with him, and was introduced to the acquaintance of Mrs. Williams. After dinner, Mr. Johnson proposed to Mr. Burney to go up with him into his garret, which being accepted, he there found about five or six Greek folios, a deal writing-desk, and a chair and a half. Johnson giving to his guest the entire seat, tottered himself on one with only three legs and one arm¹. Here he

¹ Northcote gives the following account of this same garret in describing how Reynolds introduced Roubiliac to Johnson. ‘Johnson received him with much civility, and took them up into a garret, which he considered as his library; where, besides his books, all covered with dust, there was an old crazy deal table, and a still worse and older elbow chair, having only three legs. In this chair Johnson seated himself, after having, with considerable dexterity and evident practice, first drawn it up against the wall, which served to support it on that side on which the leg was deficient.’ Northcote’s *Reynolds*, i. 75. Miss Reynolds improves on the account. She says that ‘before Johnson had the pension he literally dressed like a beggar; and, from what I have been told, he as literally lived as such; at least as to common conveniences in his apartments, wanting even a chair to sit on, particularly in his study, where a gentleman who frequently visited him, whilst writing his *Idlers*, constantly found him at his desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Dr. Johnson never forgot its defect, but would either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure against some support, taking no
gave

gave Mr. Burney Mrs. Williams's history, and shewed him some volumes of his *Shakspeare* already printed, to prove that he was in earnest. Upon Mr. Burney's opening the first volume, at the *Merchant of Venice*, he observed to him, that he seemed to be more severe on Warburton than Theobald. "O poor Tib! (said Johnson) he was ready knocked down to my hands; Warburton stands between me and him." "But, Sir, (said Mr. Burney,) you'll have Warburton upon your bones, won't you?" "No, Sir; he'll not come out: he'll only growl in his den." "But you think, Sir, that Warburton is a superiour critick to Theobald?" "O, Sir, he'd make two-and-fifty Theobalds, cut into slices! The worst of Warburton is, that he has a rage for saying something, when there's nothing to be said." Mr. Burney then asked him whether he had seen the letter which Warburton had written in answer to a pamphlet addressed "To the most impudent Man alive²." He answered in the negative. Mr. Burney told him it was supposed to be written by Mallet. The controversy now raged between the friends

notice of its imperfection to his visitor. It was remarkable in Johnson, that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 832. There can be little question that she is describing the same room—a room in a house in which Miss Williams was lodged, and most likely Mr. Levet, and in which Mr. Burney dined; and in which certainly there must have been chairs. Yet Mr. Carlyle, misled by her account, says:—'In his apartments, at one time, there were unfortunately no chairs.' Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, ed. 1872, iv. 127.

¹ In his *Life of Pope* (*Works*, viii. 272) Johnson calls Theobald 'a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers.' In the Preface to *Shakspeare* he admits that 'what little he did was commonly right.' *Ib.* v. 137. The Editors of the *Cambridge Shakspeare* on the other hand say:—'Theobald, as an Editor, is incomparably superior to his predecessors, and to his immediate successor Warburton, although the latter had the advantage of working on his materials. Many most brilliant emendations are due to him.' On Johnson's statement that 'Warburton would make two-and-fifty Theobalds, cut into slices,' they write:—'From this judgment, whether they be compared as critics or editors, we emphatically dissent.' *Cambridge Shakspeare*, i., xxxi., xxxiv., note. Among Theobald's 'brilliant emendations' are 'a babble of green fields' (*Henry V*, ii. 3), and 'lackeying the varying tide.' (*Antony and Cleopatra*, i. 4).

² 'A familiar epistle [by Lord Bolingbroke] to the most impudent man living, 1749.' *Brit. Mus. Catal.*

of

of Pope and Bolingbroke; and Warburton and Mallet were the leaders of the several parties¹. Mr. Burney asked him then if he had seen Warburton's book against Bolingbroke's *Philosophy*²? "No, Sir, I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety, and therefore am not interested about its confutation."³

On the fifteenth of April he began a new periodical paper, entitled *The Idler*^{3,*} which came out every Saturday in a weekly news-paper, called *The Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette*, published by Newbery⁴. These essays were continued till April 5, 1760. Of one hundred and three, their total number, twelve were contributed by his friends; of which, Numbers 33, 93, and 96, were written by Mr. Thomas Warton; No. 67 by Mr. Langton; and Nos. 76, 79, and 82,

¹ Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependence on the prince [of Wales], found his way to Bolingbroke, a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorised number of the pamphlet called *The Patriot King*, Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet (1749) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to refuse the office; and was rewarded not long after with the legacy of Lord Bolingbroke's works.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 467. See *ante*, p. 311, and Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 159.

² *A View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy in Four Letters to a Friend*, 1754-5.

³ A paper under this name had been started seven years earlier. See *Carter and Talbot Corres.* ii. 33.

⁴ In the two years in which Johnson wrote for this paper it saw many changes. The first *Idler* appeared in No. 2 of the *Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette*, which was published not by Newbery, but by J. Payne. On April 29, this paper took the title of *Payne's Universal Chronicle*, etc. On Jan. 6, 1759, it resumed the old title and was published by R. Stevens. On Jan. 5, 1760, the title was changed to *The Universal Chronicle and Westminster Journal*, and it was published by W. Faden and R. Stevens. On March 15, 1760, it was published by R. Stevens alone. The paper consisted of eight pages. *The Idler*, which varied in length, came first, and was printed in larger characters, much like a leading article. The changes in title and ownership seem to show that in spite of Johnson's contributions it was not a successful publication.

by Sir Joshua Reynolds; the concluding words of No. 82, 'and pollute his canvas with deformity,' being added by Johnson, as Sir Joshua informed me¹.

The Idler is evidently the work of the same mind which produced *The Rambler*, but has less body and more spirit. It has more variety of real life, and greater facility of language. He describes the miseries of idleness, with the lively sensations of one who has felt them²; and in his private memorandums while engaged in it, we find 'This year I hope to learn diligence³.' Many of these excellent essays were written as hastily as an ordinary letter. Mr. Langton remembers Johnson, when on a visit at Oxford⁴, asking him one evening how long it was till the post went out; and on being told about half an hour, he exclaimed, 'then we shall do very well.' He upon this instantly sat down and finished an *Idler*, which it was necessary should be in London the next day. Mr. Langton having signified a wish to read it, 'Sir, (said he) you shall not do more than I have done myself.' He then folded it up and sent it off.

Yet there are in *The Idler* several papers which shew as much profundity of thought, and labour of language, as any of this great man's writings. No. 14, 'Robbery of Time;' No. 24, 'Thinking;' No. 41, 'Death of a Friend⁵;' No. 43,

¹ 'Those papers may be considered as a kind of syllabus of all Reynolds's future discourses, and certainly occasioned him some thinking in their composition. I have heard him say, that Johnson required them from him on a sudden emergency, and on that account, he sat up the whole night to complete them in time; and by it he was so much disordered, that it produced a vertigo in his head.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 89. Reynolds must have spoken of only one paper; as the three, appearing as they did on Sept. 29, Oct. 20, and Nov. 10, could not have been required at one time.

² 'To be idle and to be poor have always been reproaches, and therefore every man endeavours with his utmost care to hide his poverty from others, and his idleness from himself.' *The Idler*, No. 17.

³ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 30 [36]. BOSWELL.

⁴ In July 1759.

⁵ This number was published a few days after his mother's death. It is in the form of a letter, which is thus introduced:—'The follow-

'Flight

'Flight of Time;' No. 51, 'Domestick greatness unattainable;' No. 52, 'Self-denial;' No. 58, 'Actual, how short of fancied, excellence'; No. 89, 'Physical evil moral good'; and his concluding paper on 'The horror of the last'; will prove this assertion. I know not why a motto, the usual trapping of periodical papers, is prefixed to very few of the *Idlers*, as I have heard Johnson commend the custom: and he never could be at a loss for one, his memory being stored with innumerable passages of the classicks⁴. In this series of essays he exhibits admirable instances of grave humour, of which he had an uncommon share. Nor on some occasions has he repressed that power of sophistry which he possessed in so eminent a degree. In No. 11, he treats with the utmost contempt the opinion that our mental faculties depend, in some degree, upon the weather; an opinion, which they who have never experienced its truth

ing letter relates to an affliction perhaps not necessary to be imparted to the publick; but I could not persuade myself to suppress it, because I think I know the sentiments to be sincere, and I feel no disposition to provide for this day any other entertainment.'

¹ In the table of contents the title of No. 58 is, 'Expectations of pleasure frustrated.' In the original edition of *The Idler* no titles are given. In this paper he shews that 'nothing is more hopeless than a scheme of merriment.'

² In this paper he begins by considering, 'why the only thinking being of this globe is doomed to think merely to be wretched, and to pass his time from youth to age in fearing or in suffering calamities.' He ends by asserting that 'of what virtue there is, misery produces far the greater part.'

³ 'There are few things,' he writes, 'not purely evil, of which we can say, without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last*. . . . The secret horror of the last is inseparable from a thinking being, whose life is limited, and to whom death is dreadful.'

⁴ 'I asked him one day, why the *Idlers* were published without mottoes. He replied, that it was forborne the better to conceal himself, and escape discovery. "But let us think of some now," said he, "for the next edition. We can fit the two volumes in two hours, can't we?" Accordingly he recollected, and I wrote down these following [nine mottoes], till some friend coming in, in about five minutes, put an end to our further progress on the subject.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 388.

are

are not to be envied, and of which he himself could not but be sensible, as the effects of weather upon him were very visible. Yet thus he declaims:—

‘Surely, nothing is more reproachful to a being endowed with reason, than to resign its powers to the influence of the air, and live in dependence on the weather and the wind for the only blessings which nature has put into our power, tranquillity and benevolence. This distinction of seasons is produced only by imagination operating on luxury. To temperance, every day is bright; and every hour is propitious to diligence. He that shall resolutely excite his faculties, or exert his virtues, will soon make himself superiour to the seasons; and may set at defiance the morning mist and the evening damp, the blasts of the east, and the clouds of the south¹.’

¹ See *post*, July 14 and 26, 1763, April 14, 1775, and Aug. 2, 1784, note, for instances in which Johnson ridicules the notion that weather and seasons have any necessary effect on man; also April 17, 1778. In the *Life of Milton* (*Works*, vii. 102), he writes:—‘This dependence of the soul upon the seasons, those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may, I suppose, justly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris*. The author that thinks himself weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore, that he is only idle or exhausted. But while this notion has possession of the head, it produces the inability which it supposes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *possunt quia posse videntur*.’ Boswell records, in his *Hebrides* (Aug. 16, 1773), that when ‘somebody talked of happy moments for composition,’ Johnson said:—‘Nay, a man may write at any time, if he will set himself *doggedly* to it.’ Reynolds, who avowed how much he had learnt from Johnson (*ante*, p. 284), says much the same in his *Seventh Discourse*: ‘But when, in plain prose, we gravely talk of courting the Muse in shady bowers; waiting the call and inspiration of Genius . . . of attending to times and seasons when the imagination shoots with the greatest vigour, whether at the summer solstice or the vernal equinox . . . when we talk such language or entertain such sentiments as these, we generally rest contented with mere words, or at best entertain notions not only groundless but pernicious.’ Reynolds’s *Works*, i. 150. On the other hand, in 1773 Johnson recorded:—‘Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low-Dutch language.’ *Post*, under May 9, 1773. In *The Rambler*, No. 80, he says:—‘To the men of study and imagination the

Alas! it is too certain, that where the frame has delicate fibres, and there is a fine sensibility, such influences of the air are irresistible. He might as well have bid defiance to the ague, the palsy, and all other bodily disorders. Such boasting of the mind is false elevation.

‘I think the Romans call it Stoicism!’

But in this number of his *Idler* his spirits seem to run riot; for in the wantonness of his disquisition he forgets, for a moment, even the reverence for that which he held in high respect²; and describes ‘the attendant on a *Court*,’ as one ‘whose business is to watch the looks of a being, weak and foolish as himself.’

winter is generally the chief time of labour. Gloom and silence produce composure of mind and concentration of ideas.’ In a letter to Mrs. Thrale, written in 1775, he says:—‘Most men have their bright and their cloudy days, at least they have days when they put their powers into act, and days when they suffer them to repose.’ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 265. In 1781 he wrote:—‘I thought myself above assistance or obstruction from the seasons; but find the autumnal blast sharp and nipping, and the fading world an uncomfortable prospect.’ *Ib.* ii. 220. Again, in the last year of his life he wrote:—‘The weather, you know, has not been balmy. I am now reduced to think, and am at least content to talk, of the weather. Pride must have a fall.’ *Post*, Aug. 2, 1784.

¹ Addison’s *Cato*, act i. sc. 4.

² Johnson, reviewing the Duchess of Marlborough’s attack on Queen Mary, says (*Works*, vi. 8):—‘This is a character so different from all those that have been hitherto given of this celebrated princess, that the reader stands in suspense, till he considers that . . . it has hitherto had this great advantage, that it has only been compared with those of kings.’

³ Johnson had explained how it comes to pass that Englishmen talk so commonly of the weather. He continues:—‘Such is the reason of our practice; and who shall treat it with contempt? Surely not the attendant on a court, whose business is to watch the looks of a being weak and foolish as himself, and whose vanity is to recount the names of men, who might drop into nothing, and leave no vacuity. . . . The weather is a nobler and more interesting subject; it is the present state of the skies and of the earth, on which plenty and famine are

His unqualified ridicule of rhetorical gesture or action is not, surely, a test of truth; yet we cannot help admiring how well it is adapted to produce the effect which he wished. 'Neither the judges of our laws, nor the representatives of our people, would be much affected by laboured gesticulation, or believe any man the more because he rolled his eyes, or puffed his cheeks, or spread abroad his arms, or stamped the ground, or thumped his breast; or turned his eyes sometimes to the ceiling, and sometimes to the floor!'

A casual coincidence with other writers, or an adoption of a sentiment or image which has been found in the writings of another, and afterwards appears in the mind as one's own, is not unfrequent. The richness of Johnson's fancy, which could supply his page abundantly on all occasions, and the strength of his memory, which at once detected the real owner of any thought, made him less liable to the imputation of plagiarism than, perhaps, any of our writers². In *The Idler*, however, there is a paper³, in which conversation is assimilated to a bowl of punch, where there is the same train of comparison as in a poem by Blacklock, in his collection published in 1756⁴, in which a parallel is ingeniously drawn between human life and that liquor. It ends,—

suspended, on which millions depend for the necessaries of life.' 'Garrick complained that when he went to read before the court, not a look or a murmur testified approbation; there was a profound stillness—every one only watched to see what the king thought.' Hazlitt's *Conversations of Northcote*, p. 262.

¹ *The Idler*, No. 90. See *post*, April 3, 1773, where he declaims against action in public speaking.

² He now and then repeats himself. Thus, in *The Idler*, No. 37, he moralises on the story, how Socrates, passing through the fair at Athens, cried out:—'How many things are here which I do not need!' though he had already moralised on it in *The Adventurer*, Nos. 67, 119.

³ No. 34.

⁴ *Poems on Several Occasions*, by Thomas Blacklock, p. 179. See *post*, Aug. 5, 1763, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 17, 1773.

'Say,

‘Say, then, physicians of each kind,
Who cure the body or the mind,
What harm in drinking can there be,
Since punch and life so well agree?’

To *The Idler*, when collected in volumes¹, he added, beside the ‘Essay on Epitaphs’ and the ‘Dissertation on those of Pope²,’ an Essay on the ‘Bravery of the English common Soldiers.’ He, however, omitted one of the original papers, which in the folio copy is No. 22³.

¹ ‘Among the papers of Newbery, in the possession of Mr. Murray, is the account rendered on the collection of *The Idler* into two small volumes, when the arrangement seems to have been that Johnson should receive two-thirds of the profits.

| <i>The Idler.</i> | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----|----|----------------------------|----------|----|----|
| ‘DR. | £ | s. | d. | ‘CR. | £ | s. | d. |
| Paid for Advertising, | 20 | 0 | 6 | 1,500 Sets at 16l. per 100 | 240 | 0 | 0 |
| Printing two vols., 1,500 | 41 | 13 | 0 | Dr. Johnson two-thirds | 84 | 2 | 4 |
| Paper. | 52 | 3 | 0 | Mr. Newbery one-third | 42 | 1 | 2 |
| | £113 16 6 | | | | £126 3 6 | | |
| Profit on the edition | 126 | 3 | 6 | | | | |
| | £240 0 0 | | | | | | |

Forster’s *Goldsmith*, i. 204.

If this account is correctly printed, the sale must have been slow. The first edition (2 vols. 5s.) was published in Oct. 1761, (*Gent. Mag.* xxxi. 479). Johnson is called Dr. in the account; but he was not made an LL.D. till July 1765. Prior, in his *Life of Goldsmith* (i. 459), publishes an account between Goldsmith and Newbery in which the first entry is:—

‘1761. Oct. 14, 1 set of

The Idler £0 5 0.’

Johnson, as Newbery’s papers show, a year later bought a copy of Goldsmith’s *Life of Nash*; *ib.* p. 405.

² See *ante*, p. 355.

³ This paper may be found in Stockdale’s supplemental volume of Johnson’s *Miscellaneous Pieces*. BOSWELL. Stockdale’s supplemental volumes—for there are two—are vols. xii. and xiii. of what is known as ‘Hawkins’s edition.’ In this paper (*Works*, iv. 450) he represents in a fable two vultures speculating on that mischievous being, man, ‘who is the only beast who kills that which he does not devour,’ who at times is seen to move in herds, while ‘there is in every herd one

‘TO

TO THE REVEREND MR. THOMAS WARTON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Your notes upon my poet were very acceptable. I beg that you will be so kind as to continue your searches. It will be reputable to my work and suitable to your professorship, to have something of yours in the notes. As you have given no directions about your name, I shall therefore put it. I wish your brother would take the same trouble. A commentary must arise from the fortuitous discoveries of many men in devious walks of literature. Some of your remarks are on plays already printed: but I purpose to add an Appendix of Notes, so that nothing comes too late.

‘You give yourself too much uneasiness, dear Sir, about the loss of the papers¹. The loss is nothing, if nobody has found them; nor even then, perhaps, if the numbers be known. You are not the only friend that has had the same mischance. You may repair your want out of a stock, which is deposited with Mr. Allen, of Magdalen-Hall; or out of a parcel which I have just sent to Mr. Chambers² for the use of any body that will be so kind as to want them. Mr. Langtons are well; and Miss Roberts³, whom I have at last brought to speak, upon the information which you gave me, that she had something to say.

‘I am, &c.

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘[London] April 14, 1758.’

‘TO THE SAME.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘You will receive this by Mr. Baretti, a gentleman particularly intitled to the notice and kindness of the Professor of poesy. He has time but for a short stay, and will be glad to have it filled up with as much as he can hear and see.

‘In recommending another to your favour, I ought not to omit thanks for the kindness which you have shewn to myself. Have you any more notes on Shakspeare? I shall be glad of them.

‘I see your pupil sometimes⁴: his mind is as exalted as his

that gives directions to the rest, and seems to be more eminently delighted with a wide carnage.’

¹ ‘Receipts for *Shakspeare*.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

² ‘Then of Lincoln College. Now Sir Robert Chambers, one of the Judges in India.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

³ Old Mr. Langton’s niece. See *post*, July 14, 1763.

⁴ ‘Mr. Langton.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

stature.

stature¹. I am half afraid of him ; but he is no less amiable than formidable. He will, if the forwardness of his spring be not blasted, be a credit to you, and to the University. He brings some of my plays² with him, which he has my permission to shew you, on condition you will hide them from every body else.

‘I am, dear Sir, &c.

‘[London,] June 1, 1758.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Though I might have expected to hear from you, upon your entrance into a new state of life at a new place, yet recollecting, (not without some degree of shame,) that I owe you a letter upon an old account, I think it my part to write first. This, indeed, I do not only from complaisance but from interest ; for living on in the old way, I am very glad of a correspondent so capable as yourself, to diversify the hours. You have, at present, too many novelties about you to need any help from me to drive along your time.

‘I know not any thing more pleasant, or more instructive, than to compare experience with expectation, or to register from time to time the difference between idea and reality. It is by this kind of observation that we grow daily less liable to be disappointed³.

¹ Boswell records :—‘Lady Di Beauclerk told me that Langton had never been to see her since she came to Richmond, his head was so full of the militia and Greek. “Why,” said I, “Madam, he is of such a length, he is awkward and not easily moved.” “But,” said she, “if he had laid himself at his length, his feet had been in London, and his head might have been here *codem die*.”’ *Boswelliana*, p. 297.

² ‘Part of the impression of the *Shakespeare*, which Dr. Johnson conducted alone, and published by subscription. This edition came out in 1765.’ WARTON.—BOSWELL.

³ Stockdale records (*Memoirs*, ii. 191), that after he had entered on his charge as domestic tutor to Lord Craven’s son, he called on Johnson, who asked him how he liked his place. On his hesitating to answer, he said :—“You must expect insolence.” He added that in his youth he had entertained great expectations from a powerful family. “At length,” he said, “I found that their promises, and consequently my expectations, vanished into air. . . . But, Sir, they would have treated me much worse, if they had known that the motives from which I paid my court to them were purely selfish, and what opinion I had formed of them.” He added, that since he knew mankind, he

You,

You, who are very capable of anticipating futurity, and raising phantoms before your own eyes, must often have imagined to yourself an academical life, and have conceived what would be the manners, the views, and the conversation, of men devoted to letters; how they would choose their companions, how they would direct their studies, and how they would regulate their lives. Let me know what you expected, and what you have found. At least record it to yourself before custom has reconciled you to the scenes before you, and the disparity of your discoveries to your hopes has vanished from your mind. It is a rule never to be forgotten, that whatever strikes strongly, should be described while the first impression remains fresh upon the mind.

‘I love, dear Sir, to think on you, and therefore, should willingly write more to you, but that the post will not now give me leave to do more than send my compliments to Mr. Warton, and tell you that I am, dear Sir, most affectionately,

‘Your very humble servant,

‘June 28, 1757¹.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I should be sorry to think that what engrosses the attention of my friend, should have no part of mine. Your mind is now full of the fate of Dury²; but his fate is past, and nothing remains but

had not, on any occasion, been the sport of such delusion; and that he had never been disappointed by anybody but himself.’

¹ This, and some of the other letters to Langton, were not received by Boswell till the first volume of the second edition had been carried through the press. He gave them as a supplement to the second volume. The date of this letter was there wrongly given as June 27, 1758. In the third edition it was corrected. Nevertheless the letter was misplaced as if the wrong date were the right one. Langton, as I have shewn (*ante*, p. 286), subscribed the articles at Oxford on July 7, 1757. He must have come into residence, as Johnson did (*ante*, p. 67), some little while before this subscription.

² Major-General Alexander Dury, of the first regiment of foot-guards, who fell in the gallant discharge of his duty, near St. Cas, in the well-known unfortunate expedition against France, in 1758. His lady and Mr. Langton’s mother were sisters. He left an only son, Lieutenant-Colonel Dury, who has a company in the same regiment.

to try what reflection will suggest to mitigate the terrors of a violent death, which is more formidable at the first glance, than on a nearer and more steady view. A violent death is never very painful; the only danger is lest it should be unprovided. But if a man can be supposed to make no provision for death in war, what can be the state that would have awakened him to the care of futurity? When would that man have prepared himself to die, who went to seek death without preparation? What then can be the reason why we lament more him that dies of a wound, than him that dies of a fever? A man that languishes with disease, ends his life with more pain, but with less virtue; he leaves no example to his friends, nor bequeaths any honour to his descendants. The only reason why we lament a soldier's death, is, that we think he might have lived longer; yet this cause of grief is common to many other kinds of death which are not so passionately bewailed. The truth is, that every death is violent which is the effect of accident; every death, which is not gradually brought on by the miseries of age, or when life is extinguished for any other reason than that it is burnt out. He that dies before sixty, of a cold or consumption, dies, in reality, by a violent death; yet his death is borne with patience only because the cause of his untimely end is silent and invisible. Let us endeavour to see things as they are, and then enquire whether we ought to complain. Whether to see life as it is, will give us much consolation, I know not; but the consolation which is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable; that which may be derived from error must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive. I am, dear, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Sept 21, 1758.’

1759: ÆTAT. 50.]—IN 1759, in the month of January, his mother died at the great age of ninety, an event which deeply affected him¹; not that ‘his mind had acquired no firmness by the contemplation of mortality²’; but that his

BOSWELL. The expedition had been sent against St. Malo early in September. Failing in the attempt, the land forces retreated to St. Cas, where, while embarking, they were attacked by the French. About 400 of our soldiers were made prisoners, and 600 killed and wounded. *Ann. Reg.* i. 68.

¹ See *post*, 1770, in Dr. Maxwell's *Collectanea*.

² Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, p. 365. BOSWELL. ‘In the beginning reverential

reverential affection for her was not abated by years, as indeed he retained all his tender feelings even to the latest period of his life¹. I have been told that he regretted much his not having gone to visit his mother for several years, previous to her death². But he was constantly engaged in

of the year 1759 an event happened for which it might be imagined he was well prepared, the death of his mother, who had attained the age of ninety; but he, whose mind had acquired no firmness by the contemplation of mortality, was as little able to sustain the shock, as he would have been had this loss befallen him in his nonage.'

¹ We may apply to Johnson in his behaviour to his mother what he said of Pope in his behaviour to his parents:—'Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has among its soothing and quiet comforts few things better to give than such a son.' Johnson's *Works*, viii, 281. In *The Idler* of January 27, 1759 (No. 41), Johnson shews his grief for his loss. 'The last year, the last day must come. It has come, and is past. The life which made my own life pleasant is at an end, and the gates of death are shut upon my prospects. . . . Such is the condition of our present existence that life must one time lose its associations, and every inhabitant of the earth must walk downward to the grave alone and unregarded, without any partner of his joy or grief, without any interested witness of his misfortunes or success. Misfortune, indeed, he may yet feel; for where is the bottom of the misery of man? But what is success to him that has none to enjoy it? Happiness is not found in self-contemplation; it is perceived only when it is reflected from another.' In *Rasselas* (ch. xlv.) he makes a sage say with a sigh:—'Praise is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband.' He here says once more what he had already said in his *Letter to Lord Chesterfield* (*ante*, p. 303), and in the *Preface to the Dictionary* (*ante*, p. 344).

² Writing to his Birmingham friend, Mr. Hector, on Oct. 7, 1756, he said:—'I have been thinking every month of coming down into the country, but every month has brought its hinderances. From that kind of melancholy indisposition which I had when we lived together at Birmingham I have never been free, but have always had it operating against my health and my life with more or less violence; I hope however to see all my friends, all that are remaining, in no very long time.' *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. iii, 301. No doubt his constant poverty and the need that he was under of making 'provision for the day that was passing over him' had had much to do in keeping him literary

literary labours which confined him to London; and though he had not the comfort of seeing his aged parent, he contributed liberally to her support¹.

Soon after this event, he wrote his *Rasselas*², *Prince of Abyssinia*;^{*} concerning the publication of which Sir John

from a journey to Lichfield. A passage in one of his letters shews that fourteen years later the stage-coach took twenty-six hours in going from London to Lichfield. (*Piozzi Letters*, i. 55.) The return journey was very uncertain; for 'our carriages,' he wrote, 'are only such as pass through the place sometimes full and sometimes vacant.' A traveller had to watch for a place (*ib.* p. 51). As measured by time London was, in 1772, one hour farther from Lichfield than it now is from Marseilles. It is strange, when we consider the long separation between Johnson and his mother, that in *Rasselas*, written just after her death, he makes Imlac say:—'There is such communication [in Europe] between distant places, that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another.' *Rasselas*, chap. xi. His step-daughter, Miss Porter, though for many years she was well off, had never been to London. *Post*, March 23, 1776. Nay, according to Horace Walpole (*Memoirs of the Reign of George III*, iv. 327), 'George III. had never seen the sea, nor ever been thirty miles from London at the age of thirty-four.'

¹ For the letters written at this time by Johnson to his mother and Miss Porter, see Appendix B.

² *Rasselas* was published in two volumes, duodecimo, and was sold for five shillings. It was reviewed in the *Gent. Mag.* for April, and was no doubt published in that month. In a letter to Miss Porter dated March 23, 1759 (See Appendix), Johnson says:—'I am going to publish a little story-book, which I will send you when it is out.' I may here remark that the *Gent. Mag.* was published at the end of the month, or even later. Thus the number for April 1759, contains news as late as April 30. The name *Rasselas* Johnson got from Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*. On p. 102 of that book he mentions 'Rassela Christos, Lieutenant-General to Sultan Segued.' On p. 262 he explains the meaning of the first part of the word:—'There is now a Generalissimo established under the title of *Ras*, or *Chief*.' The title still exists. Colonel Gordon mentions *Ras Arya* and *Ras Aloula*. The Rev. W. West, in his *Introduction to Rasselas*, p. xxxi. (Sampson Low and Co.), says:—'The word *Ras*, which is common to the Amharic, Arabic, and Hebrew tongues, signifies a *head*, and hence a prince, chief, or captain. . . . Sela Christos means either "Picture of Christ," or "For the sake of Christ."'

Hawkins

for outwork you upon such subjects
have it spread to Mr. Johnson, but have
it, with some of the names mentioned.
in my name, but report it to be known

I am
Dear Sir

Your most humble servant

as if you

John Johnson

Jan 20. 1759

Hawkins guesses vaguely and idly¹, instead of having taken the trouble to inform himself with authentick precision. Not to trouble my readers with a repetition of the Knight's reveries, I have to mention, that the late Mr. Strahan the printer told me, that Johnson wrote it, that with the profits he might defray the expence of his mother's funeral, and pay some little debts which she had left. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he composed it in the evenings of one week, sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over². Mr. Strahan, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Dodsley purchased it for a hundred pounds³, but afterwards paid him twenty-five pounds more, when it came to a second edition.

Considering the large sums which have been received for compilations, and works requiring not much more genius than compilations⁴, we cannot but wonder at the very low price which he was content to receive for this admirable performance; which, though he had written nothing else, would have rendered his name immortal in the world of literature. None of his writings has been so extensively diffused over Europe; for it has been translated into most, if not all, of the modern languages⁵. This Tale, with all the charms of oriental imagery, and all the force and beauty of which the English language is capable, leads us through the most important scenes of human life, and shews us that this stage of

¹ Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 367.

² See *post*, June 2, 1781. Finding it then accidentally in a chaise with Mr. Boswell, he read it eagerly. This was doubtless long after his declaration to Sir Joshua Reynolds. MALONE.

³ Baretti told Malone that 'Johnson insisted on part of the money being paid immediately, and accordingly received £70. Any other person with the degree of reputation he then possessed would have got £400 for that work, but he never understood the art of making the most of his productions.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 160. Some of the other circumstances there related by Baretti are not correct.

⁴ Hawkesworth received £6000 for his revision of Cook's *Voyages*; *post*, May 7, 1773.

⁵ See *post*, March 4, 1773.

our being is full of 'vanity and vexation of spirit!' To those who look no further than the present life, or who maintain that human nature has not fallen from the state in which it was created, the instruction of this sublime story will be of no avail. But they who think justly, and feel with strong sensibility, will listen with eagerness and admiration to its truth and wisdom. Voltaire's *Candide*, written to refute the system of Optimism, which it has accomplished with brilliant success, is wonderfully similar in its plan and conduct to Johnson's *Rasselas*; insomuch, that I have heard Johnson say², that if they had not been published so closely one after the other that there was not time for imitation, it would have been in vain to deny that the scheme of that which came latest was taken from the other. Though the proposition illustrated by both these works was the same, namely, that in our present state there is more evil than good, the intention of the writers was very different. Voltaire, I am afraid, meant only by wanton profaneness to obtain a sportive victory over religion, and to discredit the belief of a superintending Providence: Johnson meant, by shewing the unsatisfactory nature of things temporal, to direct the hopes of man to things eternal. *Rasselas*, as was observed to me by a very accomplished lady, may be considered as a more enlarged and more deeply philosophical discourse in prose, upon the interesting truth, which in his *Vanity of Human Wishes* he had so successfully enforced in verse.

The fund of thinking which this work contains is such, that almost every sentence of it may furnish a subject of long

¹ *Ecclesiastes*, i. 14.

² See *post*, May 16, 1778. It should seem that *Candide* was published in the latter half of February 1759. Grimm in his letter of March 1, speaks of its having just appeared. 'M. de Voltaire vient de nous égayer par un petit roman.' He does not mention it in his previous letter of Feb. 15. Grimm, *Corres. Lit.* (edit. 1829), ii. 296. Johnson's letter to Miss Porter, quoted in the Appendix, shows that *Rasselas* was written before March 23; how much earlier cannot be known. *Candide* is in the May list of books in the *Gent. Mag.* (pp. 233-5), price 2s. 6d., and with it two translations, each price 1s. 6d.

meditation.

meditation. I am not satisfied if a year passes without my having read it through; and at every perusal, my admiration of the mind which produced it is so highly raised, that I can scarcely believe that I had the honour of enjoying the intimacy of such a man.

I restrain myself from quoting passages from this excellent work, or even referring to them, because I should not know what to select, or rather, what to omit. I shall, however, transcribe one, as it shews how well he could state the arguments of those who believe in the appearance of departed spirits; a doctrine which it is a mistake to suppose that he himself ever positively held¹:

‘If all your fear be of apparitions, (said the Prince,) I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more.’

‘That the dead are seen no more, (said Imlac,) I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails² as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears.’

Notwithstanding my high admiration of *Rasselas*, I will not maintain that the ‘morbid melancholy³’ in Johnson’s constitution may not, perhaps, have made life appear to him more insipid and unhappy than it generally is; for I am sure that he had less enjoyment from it than I have. Yet, whatever additional shade his own particular sensations may have thrown on his representation of life, attentive observation

¹ See *post*, June 13, 1763.

² In the original,—‘which, perhaps, prevails.’ *Rasselas*, ch. xxxi.

³ This is the second time that Boswell puts ‘morbid melancholy’ in quotation marks (*ante*, p. 72). Perhaps he refers to a passage in Hawkins’s *Johnson* (p. 287), where the author speaks of Johnson’s melancholy as ‘this morbid affection, as he was used to call it.’

and

and close inquiry have convinced me, that there is too much of reality in the gloomy picture. The truth, however, is, that we judge of the happiness and misery of life differently at different times, according to the state of our changeable frame. I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France, '*Ma foi, Monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule.*' This have I learnt from a pretty hard course of experience, and would, from sincere benevolence, impress upon all who honour this book with a perusal, that until a steady conviction is obtained, that the present life is an imperfect state, and only a passage to a better, if we comply with the divine scheme of progressive improvement; and also that it is a part of the mysterious plan of Providence, that intellectual beings must 'be made perfect through suffering'; there will be a continual recurrence of disappointment and uneasiness. But if we walk with hope in 'the mid-day sun' of revelation, our temper and disposition will be such, that the comforts and enjoyments in our way will be relished, while we patiently support the inconveniences and pains. After much speculation and various reasonings, I acknowledge myself convinced of the truth of Voltaire's conclusion, '*Après tout c'est un monde passable*'.² But we must not think too deeply;

'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise³,

is, in many respects, more than poetically just. Let us cultivate, under the command of good principles, '*la théorie des sensations agréables*;' and, as Mr. Burke once admirably counselled a grave and anxious gentleman, 'live pleasant⁴.'

¹ 'Perfect through sufferings.' *Hebrews*, ii. 10.

² Perhaps the reference is to the conclusion of *Le Monde comme il va*:—'*Il résolut . . . de laisser aller le monde comme il va; car, dit-il, si tout n'est pas bien, tout est passable.*'

³ Gray, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*.

⁴ Johnson writing to Mrs. Thrale said:—'*Vivite lacti* is one of the great rules of health.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 55. 'It was the motto of a bishop very eminent for his piety and good works in King Charles the Second's reign, *Inservi Deo et lactare*—"Serve God and be cheerful."' Addison's *Freeholder*, No. 45.

The effect of *Rasselas*, and of Johnson's other moral tales, is thus beautifully illustrated by Mr. Courtenay :

'Impressive truth, in splendid fiction drest,
Checks the vain wish, and calms the troubled breast :
O'er the dark mind a light celestial throws,
'And sooths the angry passions to repose :
As oil effus'd illumines and smooths the deep,
When round the bark the swelling surges sweep'.¹

It will be recollected, that during all this year he carried on his *Idler*², and, no doubt, was proceeding, though slowly,

¹ Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson. BOSWELL.

² This paper was in such high estimation before it was collected into volumes, that it was seized on with avidity by various publishers of news-papers and magazines, to enrich their publications. Johnson, to put a stop to this unfair proceeding, wrote for the *Universal Chronicle* the following advertisement; in which there is, perhaps, more pomp of words than the occasion demanded :

'London, January 5, 1759. ADVERTISEMENT. The proprietors of the paper intitled *The Idler*, having found that those essays are inserted in the news-papers and magazines with so little regard to justice or decency, that the *Universal Chronicle*, in which they first appear, is not always mentioned, think it necessary to declare to the publishers of those collections, that however patiently they have hitherto endured these injuries, made yet more injurious by contempt, they have now determined to endure them no longer. They have already seen essays, for which a very large price is paid, transferred, with the most shameless rapacity, into the weekly or monthly compilations, and their right, at least for the present, alienated from them, before they could themselves be said to enjoy it. But they would not willingly be thought to want tenderness, even for men by whom no tenderness hath been shewn. The past is without remedy, and shall be without resentment. But those who have been thus busy with their sickles in the fields of their neighbours, are henceforward to take notice, that the time of impunity is at an end. Whoever shall, without our leave, lay the hand of rapine upon our papers, is to expect that we shall vindicate our due, by the means which justice prescribes, and which are warranted by the immemorial prescriptions of honourable trade. We shall lay hold, in our turn, on their copies, degrade them from the pomp of wide margin and diffuse typography, contract them into a narrow space, and sell them at an humble price; yet not with a view of growing rich by confiscations, for we think not much

in his edition of *Shakspeare*. He, however, from that liberality which never failed, when called upon to assist other labourers in literature, found time to translate for Mrs. Lennox's English version of Brumoy, 'A Dissertation on the Greek Comedy,'† and 'The General Conclusion of the book.'†

An inquiry into the state of foreign countries was an object that seems at all times to have interested Johnson. Hence Mr. Newbery found no great difficulty in persuading him to write the Introduction* to a collection of voyages and travels published by him under the title of *The World Displayed*; the first volume of which appeared this year, and the remaining volumes in subsequent years.

I would ascribe to this year¹ the following letter to a son of one of his early friends at Lichfield, Mr. Joseph Simpson, Barrister, and authour of a tract entitled *Reflections on the Study of the Law*.

better of money got by punishment than by crimes. We shall, therefore, when our losses are repaid, give what profit shall remain to the *Magdalens*; for we know not who can be more properly taxed for the support of penitent prostitutes, than prostitutes in whom there yet appears neither penitence nor shame.' BOSWELL.

¹ I think that this letter belongs to a later date, probably to 1765 or 1766. As we learn, *post*, April 10, 1776, Simpson was a barrister 'who fell into a dissipated course of life.' On July 2, 1765, Johnson records that he repaid him ten guineas which he had borrowed in the lifetime of Mrs. Johnson (his wife). He also lent him ten guineas more. If it was in 1759 that Simpson was troubled by small debts, it is most unlikely that Johnson let six years more pass without repaying him a loan which even then was at least of seven years' standing. Moreover, in this letter Johnson writes:—'I have been invited, or have invited myself, to several parts of the kingdom.' The only visits, it seems, that he paid between 1754–1762 were to Oxford in 1759 and to Lichfield in the winter of 1761–2. After 1762, when his pension gave him means, he travelled frequently. Besides all this, he says of his step-daughter:—'I will not incommode my dear Lucy by coming to Lichfield, while her present lodging is of any use to her.' Miss Porter seems to have lived in his house till she had built one for herself. Though his letter to her of Jan. 10, 1764 (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 163), shews that it was then building, yet she had not left his house on Jan. 14, 1766 (*ib.* p. 173).

'TO JOSEPH SIMPSON, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,

'Your father's inexorability not only grieves but amazes me¹: he is your father; he was always accounted a wise man; nor do I remember anything to the disadvantage of his good-nature; but in his refusal to assist you there is neither good-nature, fatherhood, nor wisdom. It is the practice of good-nature to overlook faults which have already, by the consequences, punished the delinquent. It is natural for a father to think more favourably than others of his children; and it is always wise to give assistance while a little help will prevent the necessity of a greater.

'If you married imprudently, you miscarried at your own hazard, at an age when you had a right of choice. It would be hard if the man might not choose his own wife, who has a right to plead before the Judges of his country.

'If your imprudence has ended in difficulties and inconveniences, you are yourself to support them; and, with the help of a little better health, you would support them and conquer them. Surely, that want which accident and sickness produces, is to be supported in every region of humanity, though there were neither friends nor fathers in the world. You have certainly from your father the highest claim of charity, though none of right; and therefore I would counsel you to omit no decent nor manly degree of importunity. Your debts in the whole are not large, and of the whole but a small part is troublesome. Small debts are like small shot;

¹ In the *Rambler*, No. 148, entitled 'The cruelty of parental tyranny,' Johnson, after noticing the oppression inflicted by the perversion of legal authority, says:—'Equally dangerous and equally detestable are the cruelties often exercised in private families, under the venerable sanction of parental authority.' He continues:—'Even though no consideration should be paid to the great law of social beings, by which every individual is commanded to consult the happiness of others, yet the harsh parent is less to be vindicated than any other criminal, because he less provides for the happiness of himself.' See also *post*, March 29, 1779. A passage in one of Boswell's *Letters to Temple* (p. 111) may also be quoted here:—'The time was when such a letter from my father as the one I enclose would have depressed; but I am now firm, and, as my revered friend, Mr. Samuel Johnson, used to say, *I feel the privileges of an independent human being*; however, it is hard that I cannot have the pious satisfaction of being well with my father.'

they are rattling on every side, and can scarcely be escaped without a wound: great debts are like cannon; of loud noise, but little danger. You must, therefore, be enabled to discharge petty debts, that you may have leisure, with security, to struggle with the rest. Neither the great nor little debts disgrace you. I am sure you have my esteem for the courage with which you contracted them, and the spirit with which you endure them. I wish my esteem could be of more use. I have been invited, or have invited myself, to several parts of the kingdom; and will not incommode my dear Lucy by coming to Lichfield, while her present lodging is of any use to her. I hope, in a few days, to be at leisure, and to make visits. Whither I shall fly is matter of no importance. A man unconnected is at home every where; unless he may be said to be at home no where. I am sorry, dear Sir, that where you have parents, a man of your merits should not have an home. I wish I could give it you. I am, my dear Sir,

‘Affectionately yours,
‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

He now refreshed himself by an excursion to Oxford, of which the following short characteristical notice, in his own words, is preserved:—

‘* * *¹ is now making tea for me. I have been in my gown ever since I came here². It was, at my first coming, quite new and handsome. I have swum thrice, which I had disused for many years. I have proposed to Vansittart³, climbing over the wall, but he has refused me. And I have clapped my hands till they are sore, at Dr. King’s speech⁴.’

¹ Perhaps ‘Van,’ for Vansittart.

² Lord Stowell informs me that Johnson prided himself in being, during his visits to Oxford, accurately academic in all points: and he wore his gown almost *ostentatiously*. CROKER.

³ Dr. Robert Vansittart, of the ancient and respectable family of that name in Berkshire. He was eminent for learning and worth, and much esteemed by Dr. Johnson. BOSWELL. Johnson perhaps proposed climbing over the wall on the day on which ‘University College witnessed him drink three bottles of port without being the worse for it.’ *Post*, April 7, 1778.

⁴ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, April, 1785. BOSWELL. The speech was made on July 7, 1759, the last day of ‘the solemnity of the installment’ of the Earl of Westmoreland as Chancellor of the University.

His

His negro servant, Francis Barber, having left him, and been some time at sea, not pressed as has been supposed, but with his own consent, it appears from a letter to John Wilkes, Esq., from Dr. Smollet, that his master kindly interested himself in procuring his release from a state of life of which Johnson always expressed the utmost abhorrence. He said, 'No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned¹.' And at another time, 'A man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company².' The letter was as follows:—

'Chelsea, March 16, 1759.

'DEAR SIR,

'I am again your petitioner, in behalf of that great CHAM³ of literature, Samuel Johnson. His black servant, whose name is

On the 3rd 'the ceremony began with a grand procession of noblemen, doctors, &c., in their proper habits, which passed through St. Mary's, and was there joined by the Masters of Arts in their proper habits; and from thence proceeded to the great gate of the Sheldonian Theatre, in which the most numerous and brilliant assembly of persons of quality and distinction was seated, that had ever been seen there on any occasion.' *Gent. Mag.* xxix. 342. Would that we had some description of Johnson, as, in his new and handsome gown, he joined the procession among the Masters! See *ante*, p. 326.

¹ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3d edit. p. 126 [Aug. 31]. BOSWELL. The chance of death from disease would seem also to have been greater on the ship than in a jail. In *The Idler* (No. 38) Johnson estimates that one in four of the prisoners dies every year. In his Review of Hanway's *Essay on Tea* (*Works*, vi. 31) he states that he is told that 'of the five or six hundred seamen sent to China, sometimes half, commonly a third part, perish in the voyage.' See *post*, April 10, 1778.

² *Ibid.* p. 251 [Sept. 23]. BOSWELL.

³ In my first edition this word was printed *Chum*, as it appears in one of Mr. Wilkes's *Miscellanies*, and I animadverted on Dr. Smollet's ignorance; for which let me propitiate the *manes* of that ingenious and benevolent gentleman. CHUM was certainly a mistaken reading for *Cham*, the title of the Sovereign of Tartary, which is well applied to Johnson, the Monarch of Literature; and was an epithet familiar to Smollet. See *Roderick Random*, chap. 56. For this correction I

Francis

Francis Barber, has been pressed on board the Stag Frigate, Captain Angel, and our lexicographer is in great distress. He says the boy is a sickly lad, of a delicate frame, and particularly subject to a malady in his throat, which renders him very unfit for his Majesty's service. You know what manner of animosity the said Johnson has against you¹; and I dare say you desire no other opportunity of resenting it than that of laying him under an obligation. He was humble enough to desire my assistance on this occasion, though he and I were never cater-cousins; and I gave him to understand that I would make application to my friend Mr. Wilkes, who, perhaps, by his interest with Dr. Hay and Mr. Elliot, might be able to procure the discharge of his lacquey. It would be superfluous to say more on the subject, which I leave to your own consideration; but I cannot let slip this opportunity of declaring that I am, with the most inviolable esteem and attachment, dear Sir,

‘Your affectionate, obliged, humble servant,

‘T. SMOLLET.’

Mr. Wilkes, who upon all occasions has acted, as a private gentleman, with most polite liberality, applied to his friend Sir George Hay, then one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty; and Francis Barber was discharged, as he has

am indebted to Lord Palmerston, whose talents and literary acquirements accord well with his respectable pedigree of TEMPLE. BOSWELL.

After the publication of the second edition of this work, the authour was furnished by Mr. Abercrombie, of Philadelphia, with the copy of a letter written by Dr. John Armstrong, the poet, to Dr. Smollet at Leghorne, containing the following paragraph:—‘As to the K. Bench patriot, it is hard to say from what motive he published a letter of yours asking some trifling favour of him in behalf of somebody, for whom the great CHAM of literature, Mr. Johnson, had interested himself.’ MALONE. In the first edition Boswell had said:—‘Had Dr. Smollet been bred at an English University, he would have known that a *chum* is a student who lives with another in a chamber common to them both. A *chum of literature* is nonsense.’

¹ In a note to that piece of bad book-making, Almon's *Memoirs of Wilkes* (i. 47), this allusion is thus explained:—‘A pleasantry of Mr. Wilkes on that passage in Johnson's *Grammar of the English Tongue*, prefixed to the *Dictionary*—“*H* seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable.”’ For this ‘pleasantry’ see *ante*, p. 347.

told

told me, without any wish of his own. He found his old master in Chambers in the Inner Temple¹, and returned to his service.

What particular new scheme of life Johnson had in view this year, I have not discovered; but that he meditated one of some sort, is clear from his private devotions, in which we find², ‘the change of outward things which I am now to make;’ and, ‘Grant me the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that the course which I am now beginning may proceed according to thy laws, and end in the enjoyment of thy favour.’ But he did not, in fact, make any external or visible change³.

¹ Mr. Croker says that he was not discharged till June 1760. Had he been discharged at once he would have found Johnson moving from Gough Square to Staple Inn; for in a letter to Miss Porter, dated March 23, 1759, given in the Appendix, Johnson said:—‘I have this day moved my things, and you are now to direct to me at Staple Inn.’

² *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 30 [39] and 40. BOSWELL.

³ ‘I have left off housekeeping’ wrote Johnson to Langton on Jan. 9, 1759. Murphy (*Life*, p. 90), writing of the beginning of the year 1759, says:—‘Johnson now found it necessary to retrench his expenses. He gave up his house in Gough Square. Mrs. Williams went into lodgings [see *post*, July 1, 1763]. He retired to Gray’s-Inn, [he had first moved to Staple Inn], and soon removed to chambers in the Inner Temple-lane, where he lived in poverty, total idleness, and the pride of literature, *Magni stat nominis umbra*. Mr. Fitzherbert used to say that he paid a morning visit to Johnson, intending from his chambers to send a letter into the city; but, to his great surprise, he found an authour by profession without pen, ink, or paper.’ (It was Mr. Fitzherbert, who sent Johnson some wine. See *ante*, p. 353, note 2. See also *post*, Sept. 15, 1777). The following documents confirm Murphy’s statement of Johnson’s poverty at this time:

‘May 19, 1759.

‘I promise to pay to Mr. Newbery the sum of forty-two pounds, nineteen shillings, and ten pence on demand, value received. £42 19 10.

‘Sam. Johnson.’

‘I promise to pay to Mr. Newbery the sum of thirty pounds upon demand. £30 0 0.

‘Sam. Johnson.’

In 1751 he had thrice borrowed money of Newbery, but the total amount of the loans was only four guineas. Prior’s *Goldsmith*, i. 340. With Johnson’s want of pen, ink, and paper we may compare the ac-

At

At this time, there being a competition among the architects of London to be employed in the building of Blackfriars-bridge, a question was very warmly agitated whether semicircular or elliptical arches were preferable. In the design offered by Mr. Mylne the elliptical form was adopted, and therefore it was the great object of his rivals to attack it. Johnson's regard for his friend Mr. Gwyn induced him to engage in this controversy against Mr. Mylne¹; and after being

count that he gives of Savage's destitution (*Works*, viii. 111) :—' Nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the streets allowed him; there he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop, beg for a few moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down what he had composed upon paper which he had picked up by accident.' Hawkins (*Life*, p. 383) says that Johnson's chambers were two doors down the Inner Temple Lane. 'I have been told,' he continues, 'by his neighbour at the corner, that during the time he dwelt there, more inquiries were made at his shop for Mr. Johnson, than for all the inhabitants put together of both the Inner and Middle Temple.' In a court opening out of Fleet Street, Goldsmith at this very time was still more miserably lodged. In the beginning of March 1759, Percy found him 'employed in writing his *Enquiry into Polite Learning* in a wretched dirty room, in which there was but one chair, and when he from civility offered it to his visitant, himself was obliged to sit in the window.' *Goldsmith's Misc. Works*, i. 61.

¹ Sir John Hawkins (*Life*, p. 373) has given a long detail of it, in that manner vulgarly, but significantly, called *rigmarole*; in which, amidst an ostentatious exhibition of arts and artists, he talks of 'proportions of a column being taken from that of the human figure, and adjusted by Nature—masculine and feminine—in a man, *sesquioctave* of the head, and in a woman *sesquinonal*;' nor has he failed to introduce a jargon of musical terms, which do not seem much to correspond with the subject, but serve to make up the heterogeneous mass. To follow the Knight through all this, would be an useless fatigue to myself, and not a little disgusting to my readers. I shall, therefore, only make a few remarks upon his statement.—He seems to exult in having detected Johnson in procuring 'from a person eminently skilled in Mathematicks and the principles of architecture, answers to a string of questions drawn up by himself, touching the comparative strength of semicircular and elliptical arches.' Now I cannot conceive how Johnson could have acted more wisely. Sir John complains that the

at

at considerable pains to study the subject, he wrote three several letters in the *Gazetteer*, in opposition to his plan.

opinion of that excellent mathematician, Mr. Thomas Simpson, did not preponderate in favour of the semicircular arch. But he should have known, that however eminent Mr. Simpson was in the higher parts of abstract mathematical science, he was little versed in mixed and practical mechanicks. Mr. Muller, of Woolwich Academy, the scholastick father of all the great engineers which this country has employed for forty years, decided the question by declaring clearly in favour of the elliptical arch.

It is ungraciously suggested, that Johnson's motive for opposing Mr. Mylne's scheme may have been his prejudice against him as a native of North Britain; when, in truth, as has been stated, he gave the aid of his able pen to a friend, who was one of the candidates; and so far was he from having any illiberal antipathy to Mr. Mylne, that he afterwards lived with that gentleman upon very agreeable terms of acquaintance, and dined with him at his house. Sir John Hawkins, indeed, gives full vent to his own prejudice in abusing Blackfriars-bridge, calling it 'an edifice, in which beauty and symmetry are in vain sought for; by which the citizens of London have perpetuated their own disgrace, and subjected a whole nation to the reproach of foreigners.' Whoever has contemplated, *placido lumine* [Horace, *Odes*, iv. 3. 2], this stately, elegant, and airy structure, which has so fine an effect, especially on approaching the capital on that quarter, must wonder at such unjust and ill-tempered censure; and I appeal to all foreigners of good taste, whether this bridge be not one of the most distinguished ornaments of London. As to the stability of the fabrick, it is certain that the City of London took every precaution to have the best Portland stone for it; but as this is to be found in the quarries belonging to the publick, under the direction of the Lords of the Treasury, it so happened that parliamentary interest, which is often the bane of fair pursuits, thwarted their endeavours. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, it is well known that not only has Blackfriars-bridge never sunk either in its foundation or in its arches, which were so much the subject of contest, but any injuries which it has suffered from the effects of severe frosts have been already, in some measure, repaired with sounder stone, and every necessary renewal can be completed at a moderate expence. BOSWELL. Horace Walpole mentions an ineffectual application made by the City to Parliament in 1764 'for more money for their new bridge at Blackfriars,' when Dr. Hay, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, 'abused the Common Council, whose late behaviour, he said, entitled them to no

If

If it should be remarked that this was a controversy which lay quite out of Johnson's way, let it be remembered, that after all, his employing his powers of reasoning and eloquence upon a subject which he had studied on the moment, is not more strange than what we often observe in lawyers, who, as *Quicquid agunt homines*¹ is the matter of law-suits, are sometimes obliged to pick up a temporary knowledge of an art or science, of which they understood nothing till their brief was delivered, and appear to be much masters of it. In like manner, members of the legislature frequently introduce and expatiate upon subjects of which they have informed themselves for the occasion.

1760: ÆTAT. 51.]—IN 1760 he wrote *An Address of the Painters to George III. on his Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms*,† which no monarch ever ascended with more sincere congratulations from his people. Two generations of foreign princes had prepared their minds to rejoice in having again a King, who gloried in being 'born a Briton².' He also wrote for Mr. Baretti the Dedication† of his *Italian and English Dictionary* to the Marquis of Abreu, then Envoy-Extraordinary from Spain at the Court of Great Britain.

favour.' Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George III*, i. 390. The late behaviour was the part taken by the City in Wilkes's case. It was the same love of liberty no doubt that lost the City the Portland stone. Smollett goes out of the way to praise his brother-Scot, Mr. Mylne, in *Humphry Clinker*—'a party novel written,' says Horace Walpole, 'to vindicate the Scots' (*Reign of George III*, iv. 328). In the letter dated May 29, he makes Mr. Bramble say:—'The bridge at Blackfriars is a noble monument of taste and public spirit—I wonder how they stumbled upon a work of such magnificence and utility.'

¹ Juvenal, *Sat.* i. 85.

² 'Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton.'—George III's first speech to his Parliament. It appears from the *Hardwicke Papers*, writes the editor of the *Parl. Hist.* (xv. 982), that after the draft of the Speech had been settled by the cabinet, these words and those that came next were added in the King's own hand. Wilkes in his *Dedication of Mortimer* (see *post*, May 15, 1776) asserted that 'these endearing words, "Born, &c.."' were permitted to be seen in the royal orthography of Britain for Briton.' Almon's *Works*, i. 84.

Johnson was now either very idle, or very busy with his *Shakspeare*; for I can find no other publick composition by him except an Introduction to the proceedings of the Committee for cloathing the French Prisoners¹;* one of the many

¹ In this *Introduction* (*Works*, vi. 148) Johnson answers objections that had been raised against the relief. 'We know that for the prisoners of war there is no legal provision; we see their distress and are certain of its cause; we know that they are poor and naked, and poor and naked without a crime. . . . The opponents of this charity must allow it to be good, and will not easily prove it not to be the best. That charity is best of which the consequences are most extensive; the relief of enemies has a tendency to unite mankind in fraternal affection.' The Committee for which Johnson's paper was written began its work in Dec. 1759. In the previous October Wesley records in his *Journal* (ii. 461):—'I walked up to Knowle, a mile from Bristol, to see the French prisoners. Above eleven hundred of them, we were informed, were confined in that little place, without anything to lie on but a little dirty straw, or anything to cover them but a few foul thin rags, either by day or night, so that they died like rotten sheep. I was much affected, and preached in the evening on *Exodus* xxiii. 9.' Money was at once contributed, and clothing bought. 'It was not long before contributions were set on foot in various parts of the Kingdom.' On Oct. 24 of the following year he records:—'I visited the French prisoners at Knowle, and found many of them almost naked again.' *Ib.* iii. 23. 'The prisoners,' wrote Hume (*Private Corres.* p. 55), 'received food from the public, but it was thought that their own friends would supply them with clothes, which, however, was found after some time to be neglected. The cry arose that the brave and gallant men, though enemies, were perishing with cold in prison; a subscription was set on foot; great sums were given by all ranks of people; and, notwithstanding the national foolish prejudices against the French, a remarkable zeal everywhere appeared for this charity. I am afraid that M. Rousseau could not have produced many parallel instances among his heroes, the Greeks; and still fewer among the Romans.' Baretti, in his *Journey from London to Genoa* (i. 62, 66), after telling how on all foreigners, even on a Turk wearing a turban, 'the pretty appellation of *French dog* was liberally bestowed by the London rabble,' continues:—'I have seen the populace of England contribute as many shillings as they could spare towards the maintenance of the French prisoners; and I have heard an universal shout of joy when their parliament voted £100,000 to the Portuguese on hearing of the tremendous earthquake.'

proofs

proofs that he was ever awake to the calls of humanity; and an account which he gave in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of Mr. Tytler's acute and able vindication of Mary Queen of Scots.* The generosity of Johnson's feelings shines forth in the following sentence:—

'It has now been fashionable, for near half a century, to defame and vilify the house of Stuart, and to exalt and magnify the reign of Elizabeth. The Stuarts have found few apologists, for the dead cannot pay for praise; and who will, without reward, oppose the tide of popularity? Yet there remains still among us, not wholly extinguished, a zeal for truth, a desire of establishing right in opposition to fashion!'

In this year I have not discovered a single private letter written by him to any of his friends. It should seem, however, that he had at this period a floating intention of writing a history of the recent and wonderful successes of the British arms in all quarters of the globe; for among his resolutions or memorandums, September 18, there is, 'Send for books for Hist. of War².' How much it is to be regretted

¹ Johnson's *Works*, vi. 81. See Boswell's *Hebriides*, Aug. 16, 1773, where Johnson describes Mary as 'such a Queen as every man of any gallantry of spirit would have sacrificed his life for.' 'There are,' wrote Hume, 'three events in our history which may be regarded as touch-stones of party-men. An English Whig who asserts the reality of the popish plot, an Irish Catholic who denies the massacre in 1641, and a Scotch Jacobite who maintains the innocence of Queen Mary, must be considered as men beyond the reach of argument or reason, and must be left to their prejudices.' *History of England*, ed. 1802, v. 504.

² *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 42. BOSWELL. The following is his entry on this day:—

'1760, Sept. 18.

Resolved D[eo] j[uvante]

To combat notions of obligation.

To apply to study.

To reclaim imagination.

To consult the resolves on Tetty's coffin. [In a prayer made less than a month after his wife's death he mentions 'the purposes which I recorded in thy sight, when she lay dead before me.' *Ib.* p. 12.]

that

that this intention was not fulfilled. His majestick expression would have carried down to the latest posterity the glorious achievements of his country with the same fervent glow which they produced on the mind at the time. He would have been under no temptation to deviate in any degree from truth, which he held very sacred, or to take a licence, which a learned divine told me he once seemed, in a conversation, jocularly to allow to historians.

‘There are (said he) inexcusable lies, and consecrated lies. For instance, we are told that on the arrival of the news of the unfortunate battle of Fontenoy, every heart beat, and every eye was in tears. Now we know that no man eat his dinner the worse¹, but there *should* have been all this concern; and to say there *was*, (smiling) may be reckoned a consecrated lie.’

This year Mr. Murphy, having thought himself ill-treated by the Reverend Dr. Francklin, who was one of the writers of *The Critical Review*, published an indignant vindication in *A Poetical Epistle to Samuel Johnson, A.M.* in which he compliments Johnson in a just and elegant manner:

‘Transcendant Genius! whose prolifick vein
 Ne'er knew the frigid poet's toil and pain;
 To whom APOLLO opens all his store,
 And every Muse presents her sacred lore;
 Say, pow'rful JOHNSON, whence thy verse is fraught
 With so much grace, such energy of thought;

To rise early.

To study religion.

To go to church.

To drink less strong liquors.

To keep a journal.

To oppose laziness, by doing what is to be done to-morrow.

Rise as early as I can.

Send for books for Hist. of War.

Put books in order.

Scheme of life.’

¹ See *post*, Oct. 19, 1769, and May 15, 1783, for Johnson's measure of emotion by eating.

Whether thy JUVENAL instructs the age
 In chaster numbers, and new-points his rage ;
 Or fair IRENE sees, alas! too late
 Her innocence exchang'd for guilty state ;
 Whate'er you write, in every golden line
 Sublimity and elegance combine ;
 Thy nervous phrase impresses every soul,
 While harmony gives rapture to the whole.'

Again, towards the conclusion :

'Thou then, my friend, who see'st the dang'rous strife
 In which some demon bids me plunge my life,
 To the Aonian fount direct my feet,
 Say where the Nine thy lonely musings meet?
 Where warbles to thy ear the sacred throng,
 Thy moral sense, thy dignity of song?
 Tell, for you can, by what unerring art
 You wake to finer feelings every heart ;
 In each bright page some truth important give,
 And bid to future times thy RAMBLER live!'

I take this opportunity to relate the manner in which an acquaintance first commenced between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Murphy. During the publication of *The Gray's-Inn Journal*, a periodical paper which was successfully carried on by Mr. Murphy alone, when a very young man, he happened to be in the country with Mr. Foote; and having mentioned that he was obliged to go to London in order to get ready for the press one of the numbers of that *Journal*, Foote said to him, 'You need not go on that account. Here is a French magazine, in which you will find a very pretty oriental tale; translate that, and send it to your printer.' Mr. Murphy having read the tale, was highly pleased with it, and followed Foote's advice. When he returned to town, this tale was pointed out to him in *The Rambler*, from whence it had been translated into the French magazine. Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnson,

¹ Mr. Croker points out that Murphy's *Epistle* was an imitation of Boileau's *Épître à Molière*.

to explain this curious incident. His talents, literature, and gentleman-like manners, were soon perceived by Johnson, and a friendship was formed which was never broken¹.

‘TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘You that travel about the world, have more materials for letters, than I who stay at home ; and should, therefore, write with frequency equal to your opportunities. I should be glad to have all England surveyed by you, if you would impart your observations

¹ The paper mentioned in the text is No. 38 of the second series of the *Gray's-Inn Journal*, published on June 15, 1754; which is a translation from the French version of Johnson's *Rambler*, No. 190. MALONE. Mrs. Piozzi relates how Murphy ‘used to tell before Johnson of the first time they met. He found our friend all covered with soot, like a chimney-sweeper, in a little room, with an intolerable heat and strange smell, as if he had been acting Lungs in the *Alchymist*, making æther. “Come, come,” says Dr. Johnson, “dear Mur. the story is black enough now; and it was a very happy day for me that brought you first to my house, and a very happy mistake about the *Ramblers*.” Piozzi's *Anc.* p. 235. Murphy quotes her account, Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 79. See also *post*, 1770, where Dr. Maxwell records in his *Collectanea* how Johnson ‘very much loved Arthur Murphy.’ Miss Burney thus describes him:—‘He is tall and well-made, has a very gentleman-like appearance, and a quietness of manner upon his first address that to me is very pleasing. His face looks sensible, and his deportment is perfectly easy and polite.’ A few days later she records:—‘Mr. Murphy was the life of the party; he was in good spirits, and extremely entertaining; he told a million of stories admirably well.’ *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 195, 210. Rogers, who knew Murphy well, says that ‘towards the close of his life, till he received a pension of £200 from the King, he was in great pecuniary difficulties. He had eaten himself out of every tavern from the other side of Temple-Bar to the west end of the town.’ He owed Rogers a large sum of money, which he never repaid. ‘He assigned over to me the whole of his works; and I soon found that he had already disposed of them to a bookseller. One thing,’ Rogers continues, ‘ought to be remembered to his honour; an actress with whom he had lived bequeathed to him all her property, but he gave up every farthing of it to her relations.’ He was pensioned in 1803, and he died in 1805. Rogers's *Table-Talk*, p. 106.

in narratives as agreeable as your last. Knowledge is always to be wished to those who can communicate it well. While you have been riding and running, and seeing the tombs of the learned, and the camps of the valiant, I have only staid at home, and intended to do great things, which I have not done. Beau¹ went away to Cheshire, and has not yet found his way back. Chambers passed the vacation at Oxford.

¹ I am very sincerely solicitous for the preservation or curing of Mr. Langton's sight, and am glad that the chirurgeon at Coventry gives him so much hope. Mr. Sharpe is of opinion that the tedious maturation of the cataract is a vulgar error, and that it may be removed as soon as it is formed. This notion deserves to be considered; I doubt whether it be universally true; but if it be true in some cases, and those cases can be distinguished, it may save a long and uncomfortable delay.

² Of dear Mrs. Langton you give me no account; which is the less friendly, as you know how highly I think of her, and how much I interest myself in her health. I suppose you told her of my opinion, and likewise suppose it was not followed; however, I still believe it to be right.

³ Let me hear from you again, wherever you are, or whatever you are doing; whether you wander or sit still, plant trees or make *Rusticks*², play with your sisters or muse alone; and in return I will tell you the success of Sheridan³, who at this instant is playing *Cato*, and has already played *Richard* twice. He had more company the second than the first night, and will make, I believe, a good figure in the whole, though his faults seem to be very many; some of natural deficiency, and some of laborious affectation. He has, I think, no power of assuming either that dignity or elegance which some men, who have little of either in common life, can exhibit on the stage. His voice when strained is displeasing, and when low is not always heard. He seems to think too much on the audience, and turns his face too often to the galleries⁴.

¹ Topham Beauclerk, Esq. BOSWELL.

² Essays with that title, written about this time by Mr. Langton, but not published. BOSWELL.

³ Thomas Sheridan, born 1721, died 1788. He was the son of Swift's friend, and the father of R. B. Sheridan (who was born in 1751), and the great-great-grandfather of the present Earl of Dufferin.

⁴ Sheridan was acting in Garrick's Company, generally on the nights
 ' However,

‘However, I wish him well; and among other reasons, because I like his wife’.

‘Make haste to write to, dear Sir,

‘Your most affectionate servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Oct. 18, 1760.’

1761: ÆTAT. 52.]—IN 1761 Johnson appears to have done little. He was still, no doubt, proceeding in his edition of *Shakspeare*; but what advances he made in it cannot be ascertained. He certainly was at this time not active; for in his scrupulous examination of himself on Easter eve, he laments, in his too rigorous mode of censuring his own conduct, that his life, since the communion of the preceding Easter, had been ‘dissipated and useless’.² He, however, contributed this year the Preface* to Rolt’s *Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, in which he displays such a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the subject, as might lead the reader to think that its authour had devoted all his life to it. I asked him whether he knew much of Rolt, and of his work. ‘Sir, (said he) I never saw the man, and never read the book. The booksellers wanted a Preface to a *Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*. I knew very well what such a Dictionary should be, and wrote a Preface accordingly.’ Rolt, who wrote a great deal for the booksellers, was, as Johnson told me, a singular character³. Though not in the least acquainted with him, he used to say, ‘I am just come from Sam. Johnson.’ This was a sufficient specimen of his vanity and impudence. But he gave a more eminent proof

on which Garrick did not appear. Davies’s *Garrick*, i. 259. Johnson criticises his reading. *post*, April 18, 1783.

¹ Mrs. Sheridan was authour of *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph*, a novel of great merit, and of some other pieces.—See her character, *post*, beginning of 1763. BOSWELL.

² *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 44. BOSWELL. ‘1761. Easter Eve. Since the communion of last Easter I have led a life so dissipated and useless, and my terrours and perplexities have so much increased, that I am under great depression and discouragement.’

³ See *post*, April 6, 1775.

of it in our sister kingdom, as Dr. Johnson informed me. When Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* first came out, he did not put his name to the poem. Rolt went over to Dublin, published an edition of it, and put his own name to it. Upon the fame of this he lived for several months, being entertained at the best tables as the ingenious Mr. Rolt¹. His conversation indeed, did not discover much of the fire of a poet; but it was recollected, that both Addison and Thomson were equally dull till excited by wine. Akenside having been informed of this imposition, vindicated his right by publishing the poem with its real author's name. Several instances of such literary fraud have been detected. The Reverend Dr. Campbell, of St. Andrew's, wrote *An Enquiry into the original of Moral Virtue*, the manuscript of which he sent to Mr. Innes, a clergyman in England, who was his countryman and acquaintance. Innes published it with his own name to it; and before the imposition was discovered, obtained considerable promotion, as a reward of his merit². The celebrated Dr. Hugh Blair,

¹ I have had inquiry made in Ireland as to this story, but do not find it recollected there. I give it on the authority of Dr. Johnson, to which may be added that of the *Biographical Dictionary*, and *Biographia Dramatica*; in both of which it has stood many years. Mr. Malone observes, that the truth probably is, not that an edition was published with Rolt's name in the title-page, but, that the poem being then anonymous, Rolt acquiesced in its being attributed to him in conversation. BOSWELL.

² I have both the books. Innes was the clergyman who brought Psalmanazar to England, and was an accomplice in his extraordinary fiction. BOSWELL. It was in 1728 that Innes, who was a Doctor of Divinity and Preacher-Assistant at St. Margaret's, Westminster, published this book. In his impudent Dedication to Lord Chancellor King he says that 'were matters once brought to the melancholy pass that mankind should become proselytes to such impious delusions' as Mandeville taught, 'punishments must be annexed to virtue and rewards to vice.' It was not till 1730 that Dr. Campbell 'laid open this imposture.' Preface, p. xxxi. Though he was Professor of Ecclesiastical History in St. Andrew's, yet he had not, it should seem, heard of the fraud till then: so remote was Scotland from London in
and

and his cousin Mr. George Bannatine, when students in divinity, wrote a poem, entitled, *The Resurrection*, copies of which were handed about in manuscript. They were, at length, very much surprised to see a pompous edition of it in folio, dedicated to the Princess Dowager of Wales, by a Dr. Douglas, as his own. Some years ago a little novel, entitled *The Man of Feeling*, was assumed by Mr. Eccles, a young Irish clergyman, who was afterwards drowned near Bath¹. He had been at the pains to transcribe the whole book, with blottings, interlineations, and corrections, that it might be shewn to several people as an original. It was, in truth, the production of Mr. Henry Mackenzie, an Attorney in the Exchequer at Edinburgh, who is the authour of several other ingenious pieces; but the belief with regard to Mr. Eccles became so general, that it was thought necessary for Messieurs Strahan and Cadell to publish an advertisement in the newspapers, contradicting the report, and mentioning that they purchased the copy-right of Mr. Mackenzie². I can conceive this kind of fraud to be very easily practised with successful effrontery. The *Filiation* of a literary performance is difficult of proof; seldom is there any witness present at its birth. A man, either in confidence or by improper means, obtains possession of a copy of it in

those days. It was not till 1733 that he published his own edition. For Psalmanazar, see *post*, April 18, 1778.

¹ 'Died, the Rev. Mr. Eccles, at Bath. In attempting to save a boy, whom he saw sinking in the Avon, he, together with the youth, were both drowned.' *Gent. Mag.* Aug. 15, 1777. And in the magazine for the next month are some verses on this event, with an epitaph, of which the first line is,

'Beneath this stone the "*Man of Feeling*" lies.' CROKER.

² 'Harry Mackenzie,' wrote Scott in 1814, 'never put his name in a title-page till the last edition of his works.' Lockhart's *Scott*, iv. 178. He wrote also *The Man of the World*, which Johnson 'looked at, but thought there was nothing in it.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 2, 1773. Scott, however, called it 'a very pathetic tale.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 359. Burns, writing of his twenty-third year, says:—'*Tristram Shandy* and the *Man of Feeling* were my bosom favourites.' Currie's *Life of Burns*, ed. 1846, p. 21.

manuscript, and boldly publishes it as his own. The true authour, in many cases, may not be able to make his title clear. Johnson, indeed, from the peculiar features of his literary offspring, might bid defiance to any attempt to appropriate them to others.

‘But Shakspeare’s magick could not copied be,
Within that circle none durst walk but he!’

He this year lent his friendly assistance to correct and improve a pamphlet written by Mr. Gwyn, the architect, entitled, *Thoughts on the Coronation of George III.**

Johnson had now for some years admitted Mr. Baretti to his intimacy; nor did their friendship cease upon their being separated by Baretti’s revisiting his native country, as appears from Johnson’s letters to him.

‘To Mr. JOSEPH BARETTI, AT MILAN?.

‘You reproach me very often with parsimony of writing: but you may discover by the extent of my paper, that I design to recompence rarity by length. A short letter to a distant friend is, in my opinion, an insult like that of a slight bow or cursory salutation;—a proof of unwillingness to do much, even where there is a necessity of doing something. Yet it must be remembered, that he who continues the same course of life in the same place, will have little to tell. One week and one year are very like one another. The silent changes made by time are not always perceived; and if they are not perceived, cannot be recounted. I have risen and lain down, talked and mused, while you have roved over a considerable part of Europe³; yet I have not envied my Baretti any of his pleasures, though, perhaps, I have envied others

¹ From the Prologue to Dryden’s adaptation of *The Tempest*.

² The originals of Dr. Johnson’s three letters to Mr. Baretti, which are among the very best he ever wrote, were communicated to the proprietors of that instructive and elegant monthly miscellany, *The European Magazine*, in which they first appeared. BOSWELL.

³ Baretti left London for Lisbon on Aug. 14, 1760. He went through Portugal, Spain, and France to Antibes, whence he went by sea to Genoa, where he arrived on Nov. 18. In 1770 he published a lively account of his travels under the title of *A Journey from London to Genoa*.

his company: and I am glad to have other nations made acquainted with the character of the English, by a traveller who has so nicely inspected our manners, and so successfully studied our literature. I received your kind letter from Falmouth, in which you gave me notice of your departure for Lisbon, and another from Lisbon, in which you told me, that you were to leave Portugal in a few days. To either of these how could any answer be returned? I have had a third from Turin, complaining that I have not answered the former. Your English style still continues in its purity and vigour. With vigour your genius will supply it; but its purity must be continued by close attention. To use two languages familiarly, and without contaminating one by the other, is very difficult: and to use more than two is hardly to be hoped'. The praises which some have received for their multiplicity of languages, may be sufficient to excite industry, but can hardly generate confidence.

'I know not whether I can heartily rejoice at the kind reception which you have found, or at the popularity to which you are exalted. I am willing that your merit should be distinguished; but cannot wish that your affections may be gained. I would have you happy wherever you are: yet I would have you wish to return to England. If ever you visit us again, you will find the kindness of your friends undiminished. To tell you how many enquiries are made after you, would be tedious, or if not tedious, would be vain; because you may be told in a very few words, that all who knew you wish you well; and that all that you embraced at your departure, will caress you at your return: therefore do not let Italian academicians nor Italian ladies drive us from your thoughts. You may find among us what you will leave behind,

¹ Malone says of Baretti that 'he was certainly a man of extraordinary talents, and perhaps no one ever made himself so completely master of a foreign language as he did of English.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 392. Mrs. Piozzi gives the following 'instance of his skill in our low street language. Walking in a field near Chelsea he met a fellow, who, suspecting him from dress and manner to be a foreigner, said sneeringly, "Come, Sir, will you show me the way to France?" "No, Sir," says Baretti instantly, "but I will show you the way to Tyburn."' He travelled with her in France. 'Oh how he would court the maids at the inns abroad, abuse the men perhaps, and that with a facility not to be exceeded, as they all confessed, by any of the natives. But so he could in Spain, I find.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 347.

soft

soft smiles and easy sonnets. Yet I shall not wonder if all our invitations should be rejected; for there is a pleasure in being considerable at home, which is not easily resisted.

‘By conducting Mr. Southwell¹ to Venice, you fulfilled, I know, the original contract: yet I would wish you not wholly to lose him from your notice, but to recommend him to such acquaintance as may best secure him from suffering by his own follies, and to take such general care both of his safety and his interest as may come within your power. His relations will thank you for any such gratuitous attention: at least they will not blame you for any evil that may happen, whether they thank you or not for any good.

‘You know that we have a new King and a new Parliament. Of the new Parliament Fitzherbert² is a member. We were so weary of our old King, that we are much pleased with his successor; of whom we are so much inclined to hope great things, that most of us begin already to believe them. The young man is hitherto blameless; but it would be unreasonable to expect much from the immaturity of juvenile years, and the ignorance of princely education. He has been long in the hands of the Scots, and has already favoured them more than the English will contentedly endure. But, perhaps, he scarcely knows whom he has distinguished, or whom he has disgusted.

‘The Artists have instituted a yearly Exhibition³ of pictures and statues, in imitation, as I am told, of foreign academies. This year was the second Exhibition. They please themselves much

¹ Johnson was intimate with Lord Southwell, *ante*, p. 281. It seems unlikely that Baretto merely conducted Mr. Southwell from Turin to Venice; yet there is not a line in his *Journey* to show that any Englishman accompanied him from London to Turin.

² See *ante*, p. 405, note 3.

³ The first of these annual exhibitions was opened on April 21, 1760, at the Room of the Society of Arts, in the Strand. ‘As a consequence of their success, grew the incorporation of a Society of Artists in 1765, by secession from which finally was constituted the Royal Academy [in Dec. 1768].’ Taylor’s *Reynolds*, i. 179. For the third exhibition Johnson wrote the Preface to the Catalogue. In this, speaking for the Committee of the Artists, he says:—‘The purpose of this Exhibition is not to enrich the artist, but to advance the art; the eminent are not flattered with preference, nor the obscure insulted with contempt; whoever hopes to deserve public favour is here invited to display his merit.’ Northcote’s *Reynolds*, i. 101.

with

with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English School will rise in reputation. Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands, which he deserves, among other excellencies, by retaining his kindness for Baretti. This Exhibition has filled the heads of the Artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious, since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles¹ to rid us of our time, of that time which never can return.

¹ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 318) says that Johnson told him 'that in his whole life he was never capable of discerning the least resemblance of any kind between a picture and the subject it was intended to represent.' This, however, must have been an exaggeration on the part either of Hawkins or Johnson. His general ignorance of art is shown by Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 98):—'Sir Joshua Reynolds mentioned some picture as excellent. "It has often grieved me, Sir," said Mr. Johnson, "to see so much mind as the science of painting requires, laid out upon such perishable materials: why do not you oftener make use of copper? I could wish your superiority in the art you profess to be preserved in stuff more durable than canvas." Sir Joshua urged the difficulty of procuring a plate large enough for historical subjects. "What foppish obstacles are these!" exclaims on a sudden Dr. Johnson. "Here is Thrale has a thousand tun of copper; you may paint it all round if you will, I suppose; it will serve him to brew in afterwards. Will it not, Sir?" to my husband who sat by. Indeed his utter scorn of painting was such, that I have heard him say, that he should sit very quietly in a room hung round with the works of the greatest masters, and never feel the slightest disposition to turn them, if their backs were outermost, unless it might be for the sake of telling Sir Joshua that he *had* turned them.' Such a remark of Johnson's must not, however, be taken too strictly. He often spoke at random, often with exaggeration. 'There is in many minds a kind of vanity exerted to the disadvantage of themselves.' This reflection of his is the opening sentence to the number of *The Idler* (No. 45) in which he thus writes about portrait-painting:—'Genius is chiefly exerted in historical pictures; and the art of the painter of portraits is often lost in the obscurity of his subject. But it is in painting as in life; what is greatest is not always best. I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and to goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in reviving tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead.' It is recorded in Johnson's *Works*, (1787) xi. 208, that 'Johnson, talking with some persons about

'I know

‘I know my Baretti will not be satisfied with a letter in which I give him no account of myself: yet what account shall I give him? I have not, since the day of our separation, suffered or done any thing considerable. The only change in my way of life is, that I have frequented the theatre more than in former seasons. But I have gone thither only to escape from myself. We have had many new farces, and the comedy called *The Jealous Wife*’, which, though not written with much genius, was yet so well adapted to the stage, and so well exhibited by the actors, that it was crowded for near twenty nights. I am digressing from myself to the play-house; but a barren plan must be filled with episodes. Of myself I have nothing to say, but that I have hitherto lived without the concurrence of my own judgment; yet I continue to flatter myself, that, when you return, you will find me mended. I do not wonder that, where the monastick life is permitted, every order finds votaries, and every monastery inhabitants. Men will submit to any rule, by which they may be exempted from the tyranny of caprice and of chance. They are glad to supply by external authority their own want of constancy and resolution, and court the government of others, when long experience has convinced them of their own inability to govern themselves². If I

allegorical painting said, “I had rather see the portrait of a dog that I know than all the allegorical paintings they can show me in the world.”’ He bought prints of Burke, Dyer, and Goldsmith—‘Good impressions’ he said to hang in a little room that he was fitting up with prints. Croker’s *Boswell*, p. 639. Among his effects that were sold after his death were ‘sixty-one portraits framed and glazed,’ *post*, under Dec. 9, 1784. When he was at Paris, and saw the picture-gallery at the Palais Royal, he entered in his Diary:—‘I thought the pictures of Raphael fine;’ *post*, Oct. 16, 1775. The philosopher Hume was more insensible even than Johnson. Dr. J. H. Burton says:—‘It does not appear from any incident in his life, or allusions in his letters, which I can remember, that he had ever really admired a picture or a statue.’ *Life of Hume*, ii. 134.

¹ By Colman. ‘There is nothing else new,’ wrote Horace Walpole on March 7, 1761 (*Letters*, iii. 382), ‘but a very indifferent play, called *The Jealous Wife*, so well acted as to have succeeded greatly.’

² In Chap. 47 of *Rasselas* Johnson had lately considered monastic life. Imlac says of the monks:—‘Their time is regularly distributed, one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactiv-

were

were to visit Italy, my curiosity would be more attracted by convents than by palaces: though I am afraid that I should find expectation in both places equally disappointed, and life in both places supported with impatience and quitted with reluctance. That it must be so soon quitted, is a powerful remedy against impatience; but what shall free us from reluctance? Those who have endeavoured to teach us to die well, have taught few to die willingly: yet I cannot but hope that a good life might end at last in a contented death.

‘You see to what a train of thought I am drawn by the mention of myself. Let me now turn my attention upon you. I hope you take care to keep an exact journal, and to register all occurrences and observations¹; for your friends here expect such a book of travels as has not been often seen. You have given us good specimens in your letters from Lisbon. I wish you had staid longer in Spain², for no country is less known to the rest of Europe; but the quickness of your discernment must make amends for the celerity of your motions. He that knows which way to direct his view, sees much in a little time.

‘Write to me very often, and I will not neglect to write to you: and I may, perhaps, in time, get something to write: at least, you will know by my letters, whatever else they may have or want, that I continue to be

‘Your most affectionate friend,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘London, June 10, 1761³.’

ity. . . . He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives in a monastery. But perhaps every one is not able to stem the temptations of publick life; and, if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat.’ See also *post*, March 15, 1776, and Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Aug. 19, 1773.

¹ Baretti, in the preface to his *Journey* (p. vi.), says that the method of the book was due to Dr. Johnson. ‘It was he that exhorted me to write daily, and with all possible minuteness; it was he that pointed out the topics which would most interest and most delight in a future publication.’

² He advised Boswell to go to Spain. *Post*, June 25 and July 26, 1763.

³ Dr. Percy records that ‘the first visit Goldsmith ever received from Johnson was on May 31, 1761, [ten days before this letter was written] when he gave an invitation to him, and much other company, many of them literary men, to a supper in his lodgings in Wine Office

1762: ÆTAT. 53.]—In 1762 he wrote for the Reverend Dr. Kennedy, Rector of Bradley in Derbyshire, in a strain of very courtly elegance, a Dedication to the King* of that gentleman's work, entitled, *A Complete System of Astronomical Chronology, unfolding the Scriptures*. He had certainly looked at this work before it was printed; for the concluding paragraph is undoubtedly of his composition, of which let my readers judge:

‘Thus have I endeavoured to free Religion and History from the darkness of a disputed and uncertain chronology; from difficulties which have hitherto appeared insuperable, and darkness which no luminary of learning has hitherto been able to dissipate. I have established the truth of the Mosaical account, by evidence which no transcription can corrupt, no negligence can lose, and no interest can pervert. I have shewn that the universe bears witness to the inspiration of its historian, by the revolution of its orbs and the succession of its seasons; *that the stars in their courses fight against*¹ incredulity, that the works of GOD give hourly confirmation to the *law*, the *prophets*, and the *gospel*, of which *one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another*²; and that the validity of the sacred writings can never be denied, while the moon shall increase and wane, and the sun shall know his going down³.’

He this year wrote also the Dedication† to the Earl of Middlesex of Mrs. Lennox's *Female Quixote*⁴, and the Preface to the *Catalogue of the Artists' Exhibition*.†

Court, Fleet Street. Percy being intimate with Johnson, was desired to call upon him and take him with him. As they went together the former was much struck with the studied neatness of Johnson's dress. He had on a new suit of clothes, a new wig nicely powdered, and everything about him so perfectly dissimilar from his usual appearance that his companion could not help inquiring the cause of this singular transformation. “Why, Sir,” said Johnson, “I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great sloven, justifies his disregard of cleanliness and decency by quoting my practice, and I am desirous this night to show him a better example.” Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, i. 62.

¹ *Judges*, v. 20.

² *Psalms*, xix. 2.

³ *Psalms*, civ. 19.

⁴ Boswell is ten years out in his date. This work was published in 1752. The review of it in the *Gent. Mag.* for that year, p. 146, was, I believe, by Johnson.

The following letter, which, on account of its intrinsick merit, it would have been unjust both to Johnson and the publick to have with-held, was obtained for me by the solicitation of my friend Mr. Seward :

‘TO DR. STAUNTON, (NOW SIR GEORGE STAUNTON, BARONET¹).

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I make haste to answer your kind letter, in hope of hearing again from you before you leave us. I cannot but regret that a man of your qualifications should find it necessary to seek an establishment in Guadaloupe, which if a peace should restore to the French², I shall think it some alleviation of the loss, that it must restore likewise Dr. Staunton to the English.

‘It is a melancholy consideration, that so much of our time is necessarily to be spent upon the care of living, and that we can seldom obtain ease in one respect but by resigning it in another ; yet I suppose we are by this dispensation not less happy in the whole, than if the spontaneous bounty of Nature poured all that we want into our hands. A few, if they were thus left to themselves, would, perhaps, spend their time in laudable pursuits ; but the greater part would prey upon the quiet of each other, or, in the want of other objects, would prey upon themselves.

‘This, however, is our condition, which we must improve and solace as we can : and though we cannot choose always our place of residence, we may in every place find rational amusements, and possess in every place the comforts of piety and a pure conscience.

‘In America there is little to be observed except natural curiosities. The new world must have many vegetables and animals with which philosophers are but little acquainted. I hope you will furnish yourself with some books of natural history, and some glasses and other instruments of observation. Trust as little as you can to report ; examine all you can by your own senses. I do not doubt but you will be able to add much to knowledge, and, perhaps, to medicine. Wild nations trust to simples ; and, perhaps, the Peruvian bark is not the only specifick which those extensive regions may afford us.

‘Wherever you are, and whatever be your fortune, be certain,

¹ He accompanied Lord Macartney on his embassy to China in 1792. In 1797 he published his *Account of the Embassy*.

² It was taken in 1759, and restored to France in 1763. *Penny Cyclo.* xi. 463.

dear

dear Sir, that you carry with you my kind wishes ; and that whether you return hither, or stay in the other hemisphere¹, to hear that you are happy will give pleasure to, Sir,

‘Your most affectionate humble servant,

‘June 1, 1762.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

A lady having at this time solicited him to obtain the Archbishop of Canterbury’s patronage to have her son sent to the University, one of those solicitations which are too frequent, where people, anxious for a particular object, do not consider propriety, or the opportunity which the persons whom they solicit have to assist them, he wrote to her the following answer, with a copy of which I am favoured by the Reverend Dr. Farmer², Master of Emanuel College, Cambridge.

‘MADAM,

‘I hope you will believe that my delay in answering your letter could proceed only from my unwillingness to destroy any hope that you had formed. Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords³: but, like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain ; and expectations improperly indulged, must end in disappointment. If it be asked, what is the improper expectation which it is dangerous to indulge, experience will quickly answer, that it is such expectation as is dictated not by reason, but by desire ; expectation raised, not by the common occurrences of life, but by the wants of the expectant ; an expectation that

¹ W. S. Landor (*Works*, ed. 1876, v. 99) says:—‘Extraordinary as were Johnson’s intellectual powers, he knew about as much of poetry as of geography. In one of his letters he talks of Guadaloupe as being in another hemisphere. Speaking of that island, his very words are these: “Whether you return hither or stay in another hemisphere.”’ Guadaloupe, being in the West Indies, is in another hemisphere.

² See *post*, April 12, 1776.

³ ‘It is necessary to hope, though hope should always be deluded ; for hope itself is happiness, and its frustrations, however frequent, are less dreadful than its extinction.’ *The Idler*, No. 58. See also *post*, under March 30, 1783, where he ranks the situation of the Prince of Wales as the happiest in the kingdom, partly on account of the enjoyment of hope.

requires

requires the common course of things to be changed, and the general rules of action to be broken.

‘When you made your request to me, you should have considered, Madam, what you were asking. You ask me to solicit a great man, to whom I never spoke, for a young person whom I had never seen, upon a supposition which I had no means of knowing to be true. There is no reason why, amongst all the great, I should chuse to supplicate the Archbishop, nor why, among all the possible objects of his bounty, the Archbishop should chuse your son. I know, Madam, how unwillingly conviction is admitted, when interest opposes it; but surely, Madam, you must allow, that there is no reason why that should be done by me, which every other man may do with equal reason, and which, indeed, no man can do properly, without some very particular relation both to the Archbishop and to you. If I could help you in this exigence by any proper means, it would give me pleasure; but this proposal is so very remote from all usual methods, that I cannot comply with it, but at the risk of such answer and suspicions as I believe you do not wish me to undergo.

‘I have seen your son this morning; he seems a pretty youth, and will, perhaps, find some better friend than I can procure him; but, though he should at last miss the University, he may still be wise, useful, and happy. I am, Madam,

‘Your most humble servant,

‘June 8, 1762.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘TO MR. JOSEPH BARETTI, AT MILAN.

‘London, July 20, 1762’.

‘SIR,

‘However justly you may accuse me for want of punctuality in correspondence, I am not so far lost in negligence as to omit the opportunity of writing to you, which Mr. Beauclerk’s passage through Milan affords me.

‘I suppose you received the *Idlers*, and I intend that you shall soon receive *Shakspeare*, that you may explain his works to the ladies of Italy, and tell them the story of the editor, among the other strange narratives with which your long residence in this unknown region has supplied you.

¹ Though Johnson wrote this same day to Lord Bute to thank him for his pension, he makes no mention to Baretti of this accession to his fortune.

‘As

‘As you have now been long away, I suppose your curiosity may pant for some news of your old friends. Miss Williams and I live much as we did. Miss Cotterel¹ still continues to cling to Mrs. Porter, and Charlotte² is now big of the fourth child. Mr. Reynolds gets six thousands a year³. Levet is lately married, not without much suspicion that he has been wretchedly cheated in his match⁴. Mr. Chambers is gone this day, for the first time, the circuit with the Judges. Mr. Richardson is dead of an apoplexy⁵, and his second daughter has married a merchant.

‘My vanity, or my kindness, makes me flatter myself, that you would rather hear of me than of those whom I have mentioned; but of myself I have very little which I care to tell. Last winter I went down to my native town⁶, where I found the streets much

¹ See *ante*, p. 284. Mrs. Porter, the actress, lived some time with Mrs. Cotterel and her eldest daughter. CROKER.

² Miss Charlotte Cotterel, married to Dean Lewis. See *post*, Dec. 21, 1762.

³ Reynolds's note-book shows that this year he had close on 150 sitters. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 218.

⁴ ‘He married a woman of the town, who had persuaded him (notwithstanding their place of congress was a small coalshed in Fetter Lane) that she was nearly related to a man of fortune, but was injuriously kept by him out of large possessions. She regarded him as a physician already in considerable practice. He had not been married four months, before a writ was taken out against him for debts incurred by his wife. He was secreted; and his friend then procured him a protection from a foreign minister. In a short time afterwards she ran away from him, and was tried (providentially in his opinion) for picking pockets at the Old Bailey. Her husband was with difficulty prevented from attending the Court, in the hope she would be hanged. She pleaded her own cause and was acquitted. A separation between them took place.’ *Gent. Mag.* lv. 101.

⁵ Richardson had died more than a year earlier,—on July 4, 1761. That Johnson should think it needful at the date of his letter to inform Baretti of the death of so famous a writer shows how slight was the communication between London and Milan. Nay, he repeats the news in his letter of Dec. 21, 1762.

⁶ On Dec. 8, 1765, he wrote to Hector:—‘A few years ago I just saluted Birmingham, but had no time to see any friend, for I came in after midnight with a friend, and went away in the morning.’ *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. iii. 321. He passed through Birmingham, I conjecture, on his visit to Lichfield.

narrower and shorter than I thought I had left them, inhabited by a new race of people, to whom I was very little known. My play-fellows were grown old, and forced me to suspect that I was no longer young. My only remaining friend has changed his principles, and was become the tool of the predominant faction. My daughter-in-law, from whom I expected most, and whom I met with sincere benevolence, has lost the beauty and gaiety of youth, without having gained much of the wisdom of age¹. I wandered about for five days², and took the first convenient opportunity of returning to a place, where, if there is not much happiness, there is, at least, such a diversity of good and evil, that slight vexations do not fix upon the heart³.

‘I think in a few weeks to try another excursion⁴; though to what end? Let me know, my Baretti, what has been the result of your return to your own country: whether time has made any alteration for the better, and whether, when the first raptures of salutation were over, you did not find your thoughts confessed their disappointment.

‘Moral sentences appear ostentatious and tumid, when they have no greater occasions than the journey of a wit to his own town: yet such pleasures and such pains make up the general mass of life; and as nothing is little to him that feels it with great sensibility, a mind able to see common incidents in their real state, is disposed by very common incidents to very serious contemplations. Let us trust that a time will come, when the present moment shall

¹ Writing to Mrs. Thrale from Lichfield on July 20, 1767, he says:— ‘Miss Lucy [Porter, his step-daughter, not his daughter-in-law, as he calls her above] is more kind and civil than I expected, and has raised my esteem by many excellencies very noble and resplendent, though a little discoloured by hoary virginity. Everything else recalls to my remembrance years, in which I proposed what I am afraid I have not done, and promised myself pleasure which I have not found.’ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 4.

² In his *Journey into Wales* (Aug. 24, 1774), he describes how Mrs. Thrale visited one of the scenes of her youth. ‘She remembered the rooms, and wandered over them with recollection of her childhood. This species of pleasure is always melancholy. The walk was cut down and the pond was dry. Nothing was better.’

³ This is a very just account of the relief which London affords to melancholy minds. BOSWELL.

⁴ To Devonshire.

be no longer irksome; when we shall not borrow all our happiness from hope, which at last is to end in disappointment.

‘I beg that you will shew Mr. Beauclerk all the civilities which you have in your power; for he has always been kind to me.

‘I have lately seen Mr. Stratico, Professor of Padua, who has told me of your quarrel with an Abbot of the Celestine order; but had not the particulars very ready in his memory. When you write to Mr. Marsili¹, let him know that I remember him with kindness.

‘May you, my Baretti, be very happy at Milan², or some other place nearer to, Sir,

‘Your most affectionate humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

The accession of George the Third to the throne of these kingdoms, opened a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit, who had been honoured with no mark of royal favour in the preceding reign. His present Majesty’s education in this country, as well as his taste and beneficence, prompted him to be the patron of science and the arts; and early this year Johnson, having been represented to him as a very learned and good man, without any certain provision, his Majesty was pleased to grant him a pension of three hundred pounds a year³. The Earl of Bute, who was then

¹ See *ante*, p. 373.

² Dr. T. Campbell (*Diary of a visit to England*, p. 32) recorded on March 16, 1775, that ‘Baretti said that now he could not live out of London. He had returned a few years ago to his own country, but he could not enjoy it; and he was obliged to return to London to those connections he had been making for near thirty years past.’ Baretti had come to England in 1750 (*ante*, p. 349), so that thirty years is an exaggeration.

³ How great a sum this must have been in Johnson’s eyes is shown by a passage in his *Life of Savage* (*Works*, viii. 125). Savage, he says, was received into Lord Tyrconnel’s family and allowed a pension of £200 a year. ‘His presence,’ Johnson writes, ‘was sufficient to make any place of publick entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius when it is invested with the glitter of affluence!’ In the last summer of his life, speaking of the chance of his pension being doubled, he said that with six hundred a year ‘a man would have the consciousness that he should pass the remainder of his life *in splendour*, how long soever

Prime Minister, had the honour to announce this instance of his Sovereign's bounty, concerning which, many and various stories, all equally erroneous, have been propagated: maliciously representing it as a political bribe to Johnson, to desert his avowed principles, and become the tool of a government which he held to be founded in usurpation. I have taken care to have it in my power to refute them from the most authentick information. Lord Bute told me, that Mr. Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, was the person who first mentioned this subject to him¹. Lord Loughborough told

it might be.' *Post*, June 30, 1784. David Hume writing in 1751, says:—'I have £50 a year, a £100 worth of books, great store of linens and fine clothes, and near £100 in my pocket; along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabating love of study. In these circumstances I must esteem myself one of the happy and fortunate.' J. H. Burton's *Hume*, i. 342. Goldsmith, in his *Present State of Polite Learning* (chap. vii.), makes the following observation on pensions granted in France to authors:—'The French nobility have certainly a most pleasing way of satisfying the vanity of an author without indulging his avarice. A man of literary merit is sure of being caressed by the great, though seldom enriched. His pension from the crown just supplies half a competence, and the sale of his labours makes some small addition to his circumstances; thus the author leads a life of splendid poverty, and seldom becomes wealthy or indolent enough to discontinue an exertion of those abilities by which he rose.' Whether Johnson's pension led to his writing less than he would otherwise have done may be questioned. It is true that in the next seventeen years he did little more than finish his edition of *Shakespeare*, and write his *Journey to the Western Islands* and two or three political pamphlets. But since he wrote the last number of *The Idler* in the spring of 1760 he had done very little. His mind, which, to use Murphy's words (*Life*, p. 80), had been 'strained and over-laboured by constant exertion,' had not recovered its tone. It is likely, that without the pension he would not have lived to write the second greatest of his works—the *Lives of the Poets*.

¹ Mr. Forster (*Life of Goldsmith*, i. 281) says:—'Bute's pensions to his Scottish crew showing meaner than ever in Churchill's daring verse, it occurred to the shrewd and wary Wedderburne to advise, for a set off, that Samuel Johnson should be pensioned.' *The Prophecy of Famine* in which Churchill's attack was made on the pensioned

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me, that the pension was granted to Johnson solely as the reward of his literary merit, without any stipulation whatever, or even tacit understanding that he should write for administration. His Lordship added, that he was confident the political tracts which Johnson afterwards did write, as they were entirely consonant with his own opinions, would have been written by him though no pension had been granted to him¹.

Mr. Thomas Sheridan and Mr. Murphy, who then lived a good deal both with him and Mr. Wedderburne, told me, that they previously talked with Johnson upon this matter,

Scots was published in Jan. 1763, nearly half a year after Johnson's pension was conferred.

¹ For his *Falkland's Islands* 'materials were furnished to him by the ministry' (*post*, 1771). 'The *Patriot* was called for,' he writes, 'by my political friends' (*post*, Nov. 26, 1774). 'That *Taxation no Tyranny* was written at the desire of those who were then in power, I have no doubt,' writes Boswell (*post*, under March 21, 1775). 'Johnson complained to a friend that, his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by administration to write political pamphlets' (*ib.*). Are these statements inconsistent with what Lord Loughborough said, and with Boswell's assertion (*ib.*) that 'Johnson neither asked nor received from government any reward whatsoever for his political labours?' I think not. I think that, had Johnson unpensioned been asked by the Ministry to write these pamphlets, he would have written them. He would have been pleased by the compliment, and for pay would have trusted to the sale. Speaking of the first two of these pamphlets—the third had not yet appeared—he said, 'Except what I had from the booksellers, I did not get a farthing by them' (*post*, March 21, 1772). They had not cost him much labour. *The False Alarm* was written between eight o'clock of one night and twelve o'clock of the next. It went through three editions in less than two months (*post*, 1770). *The Patriot* was written on a Saturday (*post*, Nov. 26, 1774). At all events Johnson had received his pension for more than seven years before he did any work for the Ministry. In Croft's *Life of Young*, which Johnson adopted (*Works*, viii. 422), the following passage was perhaps intended to be a defence of Johnson as a writer for the Ministry:—'Yet who shall say with certainty that Young was a pensioner? In all modern periods of this country, have not the writers on one side been regularly called hirelings, and on the other patriots?'

and

and that it was perfectly understood by all parties that the pension was merely honorary. Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, that Johnson called on him after his Majesty's intention had been notified to him, and said he wished to consult his friends as to the propriety of his accepting this mark of the royal favour, after the definitions which he had given in his *Dictionary* of *pension* and *pensioners*¹. He said he would not have Sir Joshua's answer till next day, when he would call again, and desired he might think of it. Sir Joshua answered that he was clear to give his opinion then, that there could be no objection to his receiving from the King a reward for literary merit; and that certainly the definitions in his *Dictionary* were not applicable to him. Johnson, it should seem, was satisfied, for he did not call again till he had accepted the pension, and had waited on Lord Bute to thank him. He then told Sir Joshua that Lord Bute said to him expressly, 'It is not given you for anything you are to do, but for what you have done.' His Lordship, he said, behaved in the handsomest manner. He repeated the words twice, that he might be sure Johnson heard them, and thus set his mind perfectly at ease. This nobleman, who has been so virulently abused, acted with great honour in this instance, and displayed a mind truly liberal. A minister of a more narrow and selfish disposition would have availed himself of such an opportunity to fix an implied obligation on a man of Johnson's powerful talents to give him his support.

Mr. Murphy and the late Mr. Sheridan severally contended for the distinction of having been the first who mentioned to Mr. Wedderburne that Johnson ought to have a pension. When I spoke of this to Lord Loughborough, wishing to know if he recollected the prime mover in the business, he said, 'All his friends assisted:' and when I told him that Mr. Sheridan strenuously asserted his claim to it, his Lordship said, 'He rang the bell.' And it is but just to add, that Mr. Sheridan told me, that when he communicated to Dr.

¹ See *ante*, p. 341.

Johnson that a pension was to be granted him, he replied in a fervour of gratitude, 'The English language does not afford me terms adequate to my feelings on this occasion. I must have recourse to the French. I am *pénétré* with his Majesty's goodness.' When I repeated this to Dr. Johnson, he did not contradict it¹.

His definitions of *pension* and *pensioner*, partly founded on the satirical verses of Pope², which he quotes, may be generally true; and yet every body must allow, that there may be,

¹ Murphy's account is nearly as follows (*Life*, p. 92):—'Lord Loughborough was well acquainted with Johnson; but having heard much of his independent spirit, and of the downfall of Osborne the bookseller (*ante*, p. 178), he did not know but his benevolence might be rewarded with a folio on his head. He desired me to undertake the task. I went to the chambers in the Inner Temple Lane, which, in fact, were the abode of wretchedness. By slow and studied approaches the message was disclosed. Johnson made a long pause; he asked if it was seriously intended. He fell into a profound meditation, and his own definition of a pensioner occurred to him. He desired to meet next day, and dine at the Mitre Tavern. At that meeting he gave up all his scruples. On the following day Lord Loughborough conducted him to the Earl of Bute. The conversation that passed was in the evening related to me by Dr. Johnson. He expressed his sense of his Majesty's bounty, and thought himself the more highly honoured, as the favour was not bestowed on him for having dipped his pen in faction. "No, Sir," said Lord Bute, "it is not offered to you for having dipped your pen in faction, nor with a design that you ever should." The reviewer of Hawkins's *Johnson* in the *Monthly Review*, lxxvi. 375, who was, no doubt, Murphy, adds a little circumstance:—'On the next day Mr. Murphy was in the Temple Lane soon after nine; he got Johnson up and dressed in due time; and saw him set off at eleven.' Malone's note on what Lord Bute said to Johnson is as follows:—'This was said by Lord Bute, as Dr. Burney was informed by Johnson himself, in answer to a question which he put, previously to his acceptance of the intended bounty: "Pray, my Lord, what am I expected to do for this pension?"'

² 'In Britain's senate he a seat obtains

And one more pensioner St. Stephen gains.'

Moral Essays, iii. 392.

Johnson left the definition of *pension* and *pensioner* unchanged in the fourth edition of the *Dictionary*, corrected by him in 1773.

and

and have been, instances of pensions given and received upon liberal and honourable terms. Thus, then, it is clear, that there was nothing inconsistent or humiliating in Johnson's accepting of a pension so unconditionally and so honourably offered to him.

But I shall not detain my readers longer by any words of my own, on a subject on which I am happily enabled, by the favour of the Earl of Bute, to present them with what Johnson himself wrote; his lordship having been pleased to communicate to me a copy of the following letter to his late father¹, which does great honour both to the writer, and to the noble person to whom it is addressed:

‘TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF BUTE.

‘MY LORD,

‘When the bills² were yesterday delivered to me by Mr. Wedderburne, I was informed by him of the future favours which his

¹ He died on March 10, 1792. This paragraph and the letter are not in the first two editions.

² ‘The Treasury, Home Office, Exchequer of Receipt and Audit Office Records have been searched for a warrant granting a pension to Dr. Johnson without success. In 1782, by Act of Parliament all pensions on the Civil List Establishment were from that time to be paid at the Exchequer. In the Exchequer Order Book, Michaelmas 1782, No. 46, p. 74, the following memorandum occurs:—“Memdum. 3 Dec. 1782. There was issued to the following persons (By order 6th of Nov. 1782) the sums set against their names respectively, etc.:—

Persons names: Johnson Sam^l, LL.D.

Pensions p. ann. £300. Due to 5 July 1782, two quarters, £150.”’

This pension was paid at the Exchequer from that time to the quarter ending 10 Oct. 1784. ‘It is clear that the pension was payable quarterly [for confirmation of this, see *post*, Nov. 3, 1762, and July 16, 1765] and at the old quarter days, July 5, Oct. 10, Jan. 5, April 5, though payment was sometimes delayed. [Once he was paid half-yearly; see *post*, under March 20, 1771]. The expression “bills” was a general term at the time for notes, cheques, and warrants, and no doubt covered some kind of Treasury warrant.’ The above information I owe to the kindness of my friend Mr. Leonard H. Courtney, M.P., late Financial Secretary to the Treasury. The ‘future favours’ are the future payments. His pension was not for life, and depended therefore entirely on the king’s pleasure (see *post*, under March 21,

Majesty

Majesty has, by your Lordship's recommendation, been induced to intend for me.

'Bounty always receives part of its value from the manner in which it is bestowed; your Lordship's kindness includes every circumstance that can gratify delicacy, or enforce obligation. You have conferred your favours on a man who has neither alliance nor interest, who has not merited them by services, nor courted them by officiousness; you have spared him the shame of solicitation, and the anxiety of suspense.

'What has been thus elegantly given, will, I hope, not be reproachfully enjoyed; I shall endeavour to give your Lordship the only recompense which generosity desires,—the gratification of finding that your benefits are not improperly bestowed. I am, my Lord,

'Your Lordship's most obliged,
'Most obedient, and most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'July 20, 1762.'

This year his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds paid a visit of some weeks to his native country, Devonshire, in which he was accompanied by Johnson, who was much pleased with this jaunt, and declared he had derived from it a great accession of new ideas¹. He was entertained at the seats of

1775). The following letter in the *Grenville Papers*, ii. 68, seems to show that Johnson thought the pension due on the *new* quarter-day:—

'DR. JOHNSON TO MR. GRENVILLE. 'July 2, 1763.

'SIR,

'Be pleased to pay to the bearer seventy-five pounds, being the quarterly payment of a pension granted by his Majesty, and due on the 24th day of June last, to Sir,

'Your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

¹ They left London on Aug. 16 and returned to it on Sept. 26. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 214. Northcote records of this visit:—'I remember when Mr. Reynolds was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 116. In like manner Reynolds, when a youth, had in a great crowd touched the hand of Pope. *Ib.* p. 19. Pope, when a boy of eleven, 'persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house several

several noblemen and gentlemen in the West of England¹; but the greatest part of the time was passed at Plymouth, where the magnificence of the navy, the ship-building and all its circumstances, afforded him a grand subject of contemplation. The Commissioner of the Dock-yard paid him the compliment of ordering the yacht to convey him and his friend to the Eddystone, to which they accordingly sailed. But the weather was so tempestuous that they could not land².

Reynolds and he were at this time the guests of Dr. Mudge³, the celebrated surgeon, and now physician of that

which Dryden frequented.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 236. Who touched old Northcote's hand? Has the apostolic succession been continued?—Since writing these lines I have read with pleasure the following passage in Mr. Ruskin's *Praeterita*, chapter i. p. 16:—'When at three-and-a-half I was taken to have my portrait painted by Mr. Northcote, I had not been ten minutes alone with him before I asked him why there were holes in his carpet.' Dryden, Pope, Reynolds, Northcote, Ruskin, so runs the chain of genius, with only one weak link in it.

¹ At one of these seats Dr. Amyat, Physician in London, told me he happened to meet him. In order to amuse him till dinner should be ready, he was taken out to walk in the garden. The master of the house, thinking it proper to introduce something scientifick into the conversation, addressed him thus: 'Are you a botanist, Dr. Johnson?' 'No, Sir, (answered Johnson,) I am not a botanist; and, (alluding, no doubt, to his near sightedness) should I wish to become a botanist, I must first turn myself into a reptile.' BOSWELL.

² Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* 285) says:—'The roughness of the language used on board a man of war, where he passed a week on a visit to Captain Knight, disgusted him terribly. He asked an officer what some place was called, and received for answer that it was where the loplolly man kept his loplolly; a reply he considered as disrespectful, gross and ignorant.' Mr. Croker says that Captain Knight of the *Belleisle* lay for a couple of months in 1762 in Plymouth Sound. Croker's *Boswell*, p. 480. It seems unlikely that Johnson passed a whole week on ship-board. *Loptolly*, or *Loblolly*, is explained in *Roderick Random*, chap. xxvii. Roderick, when acting as the surgeon's assistant on a man of war, 'suffered,' he says, 'from the rude insults of the sailors and petty officers, among whom I was known by the name of *Loblolly Boy*.'

³ He was the father of Colonel William Mudge, distinguished by his trigonometrical survey of England and Wales. WRIGHT.

place,

place, not more distinguished for quickness of parts and variety of knowledge, than loved and esteemed for his amiable manners; and here Johnson formed an acquaintance with Dr. Mudge's father, that very eminent divine, the Reverend Zachariah Mudge¹, Prebendary of Exeter, who was idolised in the west, both for his excellence as a preacher and the uniform perfect propriety of his private conduct. He preached a sermon purposely that Johnson might hear him; and we shall see afterwards that Johnson honoured his memory by drawing his character². While Johnson was at Plymouth, he saw a great many of its inhabitants, and was not sparing of his very entertaining conversation. It was here that he made that frank and truly original confession, that 'ignorance, pure ignorance,' was the cause of a wrong definition in his *Dictionary* of the word *pastern*³, to the no small surprise of the Lady who put the question to him; who having the most profound reverence for his character, so as almost to suppose him endowed with infallibility, expected to hear an explanation (of what, to be sure, seemed strange to a common reader,) drawn from some deep-learned source with which she was unacquainted.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom I was obliged for my information concerning this excursion, mentions a very characteristic anecdote of Johnson while at Plymouth. Having observed that in consequence of the Dock-yard a new town⁴ had arisen about two miles off as a rival to the old; and knowing from his sagacity, and just observation of human nature, that it is certain if a man hates at all, he will hate his next neighbour; he concluded that this new and rising town could not but excite the envy and jealousy of the old, in

¹ 'I have myself heard Reynolds declare, that the elder Mr. Mudge was, in his opinion, the wisest man he had ever met with in his life. He has always told me that he owed his first disposition to generalise, and to view things in the abstract, to him.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 112, 118.

² See *post*, under March 20, 1781.

³ See *ante*, p. 340. BOSWELL.

⁴ The present Devonport.

which

which conjecture he was very soon confirmed; he therefore set himself resolutely on the side of the old town, the *established* town, in which his lot was cast, considering it as a kind of duty to *stand by* it. He accordingly entered warmly into its interests, and upon every occasion talked of the *dockers*, as the inhabitants of the new town were called, as upstarts and aliens. Plymouth is very plentifully supplied with water by a river brought into it from a great distance, which is so abundant that it runs to waste in the town. The Dock, or New-town, being totally destitute of water, petitioned Plymouth that a small portion of the conduit might be permitted to go to them, and this was now under consideration. Johnson, affecting to entertain the passions of the place, was violent in opposition; and, half-laughing at himself for his pretended zeal where he had no concern, exclaimed, 'No, no! I am against the *dockers*; I am a Plymouth-man. Rogues! let them die of thirst. They shall not have a drop!'

¹ A friend of mine once heard him, during this visit, exclaim with the utmost vehemence 'I *hate* a Docker.' BLAKEWAY. Northcote (*Life of Reynolds*, i. 118) says that Reynolds took Johnson to dine at a house where 'he devoured so large a quantity of new honey and of clouted cream, besides drinking large potations of new cyder, that the entertainer found himself much embarrassed between his anxious regard for the Doctor's health and his fear of breaking through the rules of politeness, by giving him a hint on the subject. The strength of Johnson's constitution, however, saved him from any unpleasant consequences.' 'Sir Joshua informed a friend that he had never seen Dr. Johnson intoxicated by hard drinking but once, and that happened at the time that they were together in Devonshire, when one night after supper Johnson drank three bottles of wine, which affected his speech so much that he was unable to articulate a hard word, which occurred in the course of his conversation. He attempted it three times but failed; yet at last accomplished it, and then said, "Well, Sir Joshua, I think it is now time to go to bed."' *Ib.* ii. 161. One part of this story however is wanting in accuracy, and therefore all may be untrue. Reynolds at this time was not knighted. Johnson said (*post*, April 7, 1778): 'I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this.' See however *post*, April 24, Lord

Lord Macartney obligingly favoured me with a copy of the following letter, in his own hand-writing, from the original, which was found, by the present Earl of Bute, among his father's papers.

‘TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF BUTE.

‘MY LORD,

‘That generosity, by which I was recommended to the favour of his Majesty, will not be offended at a solicitation necessary to make that favour permanent and effectual.

‘The pension appointed to be paid me at Michaelmas I have not received, and know not where or from whom I am to ask it. I beg, therefore, that your Lordship will be pleased to supply Mr. Wedderburne with such directions as may be necessary, which, I believe, his friendship will make him think it no trouble to convey to me.

‘To interrupt your Lordship, at a time like this, with such petty difficulties, is improper and unseasonable; but your knowledge of the world has long since taught you, that every man's affairs, however little, are important to himself. Every man hopes that he shall escape neglect; and, with reason, may every man, whose vices do not preclude his claim, expect favour from that beneficence which has been extended to,

‘My Lord,

‘Your Lordship's

‘Most obliged

‘And

‘Most humble servant,

‘Temple Lane,

‘Nov. 3, 1762.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘TO MR. JOSEPH BARETTI, AT MILAN.

‘SIR,

‘London, Dec. 21, 1762.

‘You are not to suppose, with all your conviction of my idleness, that I have passed all this time without writing to my Baretti. I gave a letter to Mr. Beauclerk, who, in my opinion, and in his own, was hastening to Naples for the recovery of his health¹; but

1779, where he said:—‘I used to slink home when I had drunk too much;’ also *ante*, p. 120, and *post*, April 28, 1783.

¹ George Selwyn wrote:—‘Topham Beauclerk is arrived. I hear he lost £10,000 to a thief at Venice, which thief, in the course of the
he

he has stopped at Paris, and I know not when he will proceed. Langton is with him.

‘I will not trouble you with speculations about peace and war. The good or ill success of battles and embassies extends itself to a very small part of domestick life: we all have good and evil, which we feel more sensibly than our petty part of publick miscarriage or prosperity¹. I am sorry for your disappointment, with which you seem more touched than I should expect a man of your resolution and experience to have been, did I not know that general truths are seldom applied to particular occasions; and that the fallacy of our self-love extends itself as wide as our interest or affections. Every man believes that mistresses are unfaithful, and patrons capricious; but he excepts his own mistress, and his own patron. We have all learned that greatness is negligent and contemptuous, and that in Courts life is often languished away in ungratified expectation; but he that approaches greatness, or glitters in a Court, imagines that destiny has at last exempted him from the common lot.

‘Do not let such evils overwhelm you as thousands have suffered, and thousands have surmounted; but turn your thoughts with vigour to some other plan of life, and keep always in your mind, that, with due submission to Providence, a man of genius has been seldom ruined but by himself². Your Patron’s weakness or insensibility will finally do you little hurt, if he is not assisted by your own passions. Of your love I know not the propriety, nor can estimate the power; but in love, as in every other passion, of which hope is the essence, we ought always to remember the uncertainty of events. There is, indeed, nothing that so much seduces reason from vigilance, as the thought of passing life with an amiable woman; and if all would happen that a lover fancies, I know not what other terrestrial happiness would deserve pursuit. But love and marriage are different states. Those who are to suffer the evils together, and to suffer often for the sake of one another, soon lose that tenderness of look, and that benevolence of mind,

year, will be at Cashiobury.’ (The reference to this quotation I have mislaid.)

¹ Two years later he repeated this thought in the lines that he added to Goldsmith’s *Traveller*. *Post*, under Feb. 1766.

² We may compare with this what ‘old Bentley’ said:—‘Depend upon it, no man was ever written down but by himself.’ Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Oct. 1, 1773.

which

which arose from the participation of unmingled pleasure and successive amusement. A woman, we are sure, will not be always fair; we are not sure she will always be virtuous: and man cannot retain through life that respect and assiduity by which he pleases for a day or for a month. I do not, however, pretend to have discovered that life has any thing more to be desired than a prudent and virtuous marriage; therefore know not what counsel to give you.

‘If you can quit your imagination of love and greatness, and leave your hopes of preferment and bridal raptures to try once more the fortune of literature and industry, the way through France is now open¹. We flatter ourselves that we shall cultivate, with great diligence, the arts of peace; and every man will be welcome among us who can teach us any thing we do not know². For your part, you will find all your old friends willing to receive you.

‘Reynolds still continues to increase in reputation and in riches. Miss Williams, who very much loves you, goes on in the old way. Miss Cotterel is still with Mrs. Porter. Miss Charlotte is married to Dean Lewis, and has three children. Mr. Levet has married a street-walker³. But the gazette of my narration must now arrive to tell you, that Bathurst went physician to the army, and died at the Havannah⁴.

‘I know not whether I have not sent you word that Huggins⁵ and Richardson⁶ are both dead. When we see our enemies and friends gliding away before us, let us not forget that we are subject to the general law of mortality, and shall soon be where our doom will be fixed for ever.

‘I pray GOD to bless you, and am, Sir,

‘Your most affectionate humble servant,

‘Write soon.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

¹ The preliminaries of peace between England and France had been signed on Nov. 3 of this year. *Ann. Reg.* v. 246.

² Of Baretti's *Travels through Spain, &c.*, Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—‘That Baretti's book would please you all I made no doubt. I know not whether the world has ever seen such *Travels* before. Those whose lot it is to ramble can seldom write, and those who know how to write very seldom ramble.’ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 32.

³ See *ante*, p. 428.

⁴ See *ante*, p. 280, note 2.

⁵ Huggins had quarrelled with Johnson and Baretti (Croker's *Boswell*, 129, note). See also *post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*.

⁶ See *ante*, p. 428.

1763: ÆTAT. 54.]—IN 1763 he furnished to *The Poetical Calendar*, published by Fawkes and Woty, a character of Collins*, which he afterwards ingrafted into his entire life of that admirable poet¹, in the collection of lives which he wrote for the body of English poetry, formed and published by the booksellers of London. His account of the melancholy depression with which Collins was severely afflicted, and which brought him to his grave, is, I think, one of the most tender and interesting passages in the whole series of his writings². He also favoured Mr. Hoole with the Dedication of his translation of *Tasso to the Queen*,* which is so happily conceived and elegantly expressed, that I cannot but point it out to the peculiar notice of my readers³.

¹ Cowper, writing in 1784 about Collins, says:—'Of whom I did not know that he existed till I found him there'—in the *Lives of the Poets*, that is to say. Southey's *Cowper*, v. 11.

² To this passage Johnson, nearly twenty years later, added the following (*Works*, viii. 403):—'Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.'

³ 'MADAM,

To approach the high and the illustrious has been in all ages the privilege of Poets; and though translators cannot justly claim the same honour, yet they naturally follow their authours as attendants; and I hope that in return for having enabled TASSO to diffuse his fame through the British dominions, I may be introduced by him to the presence of YOUR MAJESTY.

TASSO has a peculiar claim to YOUR MAJESTY'S favour, as follower and panegyrist of the House of *Este*, which has one common ancestor with the House of HANOVER; and in reviewing his life it is not easy to forbear a wish that he had lived in a happier time, when he might, among the descendants of that illustrious family, have found a more liberal and potent patronage.

I cannot but observe, MADAM, how unequally reward is proportioned to merit, when I reflect that the happiness which was withheld from TASSO is reserved for me; and that the poem which once hardly procured to its authour the countenance of the Princess of Ferrara, has attracted to its translator the favourable notice of a BRITISH QUEEN.

Had this been the fate of TASSO, he would have been able to have

This

This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty¹, I had for

celebrated the condescension of YOUR MAJESTY in nobler language, but could not have felt it with more ardent gratitude, than

MADAM,

Your MAJESTY'S

Most faithful and devoted servant.'

—BOSWELL.

¹ Young though Boswell was, he had already tried his hand at more than one kind of writing. In 1761 he had published anonymously an *Elegy on the Death of an Amiable Young Lady*, with an *Epistle from Menalcas to Lycidas*. (Edinburgh, Donaldson.) The *Elegy* is full of such errors as 'Thou liv'd,' 'Thou led,' but is recommended by a puffing preface and three letters—one of which is signed J— B—. About the same time he brought out a piece that was even more impudent. It was *An Ode to Tragedy*. By a gentleman of Scotland. (Edinburgh, Donaldson, 1761. Price sixpence.) In the 'Dedication to James Boswell, Esq.,' he says:—'I have no intention to pay you compliments—To entertain agreeable notions of one's own character is a great incentive to act with propriety and spirit. But I should be sorry to contribute in any degree to your acquiring an excess of self-sufficiency . . . I own indeed that when . . . to display my extensive erudition, I have quoted Greek, Latin, and French sentences one after another with astonishing celerity; or have got into my *Old-hock humour* and fallen a-raving about princes and lords, knights and geniuses, ladies of quality and harpsichords; you, with a peculiar comic smile, have gently reminded me of the *importance of a man to himself*, and slyly left the room with the witty Dean lying open at—P.P. *clerk of this parish* [Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xxiii. 142]. I, Sir, who enjoy the pleasure of your intimate acquaintance, know that many of your hours of retirement are devoted to thought.' The *Ode* is serious. He describes himself as having

'A soul by nature formed to feel
Grief sharper than the tyrant's steel,
And bosom big with swelling thought
From ancient lore's remembrance brought.'

In the winter of 1761–2 he had helped as a contributor and part-editor in bringing out a *Collection of Original Poems*. (*Boswell and Erskine's Letters*, p. 27.) His next publication, also anonymous, was *The Cub*

several

several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their authour, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration¹, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes², had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called³; and during my first visit to London,

at Newmarket, written, as the Preface says, 'in the Newmarket Coffee Room, in which the author, being elected a member of the Jockey Club, had the happiness of passing several sprightly good-humoured evenings.' It is very poor stuff. In the winter of 1762-3 he joined in writing the *Critical Strictures*, mentioned *post*, June 25, 1763. Just about the time that he first met Johnson he and his friend the Hon. Andrew Erskine had published in their own names a very impudent little volume of the correspondence that had passed between them. Of this I published an edition with notes in 1879, together with Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to Corsica*. (Messrs. Thos. De La Rue & Co.)

¹ Boswell, in 1768, in the preface to the third edition of his *Corsica* described 'the warmth of affection and the dignity of veneration' with which he never ceased to think of Mr. Johnson.

² In the *Garrick Corres.* (ii. 83) there is a confused letter from this unfortunate man, asking Garrick for the loan of five guineas. He had a scheme for delivering dramatic lectures at Eton and Oxford; 'but,' he added, 'my externals have so unfavourable an appearance that I cannot produce myself with any comfort or hope of success.' Garrick sent him five guineas. He had been a Major in the army, an actor, and dramatic author. 'For the last seven years of his life he struggled under sickness, and want to a degree of uncommon misery.' *Gent. Mag.* for 1784, p. 959.

³ As great men of antiquity such as Scipio *Africanus* had an epithet added to their names, in consequence of some celebrated action, so my illustrious friend was often called DICTIONARY JOHNSON, from that wonderful atchievement of genius and labour, his *Dictionary of the English Language*; the merit of which I contemplate with more and more admiration. BOSWELL. In like manner we have 'Hermes Harris,' 'Pliny Melmoth,' 'Demosthenes Taylor,' 'Persian Jones,' which

which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet¹, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honour of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, 'Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead.'

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Publick Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, 'What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine.' Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when

'Abyssinian Bruce,' 'Microscope Baker,' 'Leonidas Glover,' 'Hesiod Cooke,' and 'Corsica Boswell.'

¹ See *ante*, p. 144. He introduced Boswell to Davies, who was 'the immediate introducer.' *Post*, under June 18, 1783, note.

he

he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753¹. And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Besides, Johnson should have recollected that Mr. Sheridan taught pronunciation to Mr. Alexander Wedderburne², whose sister was married to Sir Harry Erskine³, an intimate friend of Lord Bute, who was the favourite of the King; and surely the most outrageous Whig will not maintain, that, whatever ought to be the principle in the disposal of *offices*, a *pension* ought never to be granted from any bias of court connection. Mr. Macklin⁴, indeed, shared with Mr. Sheridan the honour of instructing Mr. Wedderburne; and though it was too late in life for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburne's instructors, and his own unabating endeavours, that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of the 'native wood-note wild⁵,' as to mark his country;

¹ On March 2, 1754 (not 1753), the audience called for a repetition of some lines which they applied against the government. 'Diggs, the actor, refused by order of Sheridan, the manager, to repeat them; Sheridan would not even appear on the stage to justify the prohibition. In an instant the audience demolished the inside of the house, and reduced it to a shell.' Walpole's *Reign of George II*, i. 389, and *Gent. Mag.* xxiv. 141. Sheridan's friend, Mr. S. Whyte, says (*Miscellanea Nova*, p. 16):—'In the year 1762 Sheridan's scheme for an *English Dictionary* was published. That memorable year he was nominated for a pension.' He quotes (p. 111) a letter from Mrs. Sheridan, dated Nov. 29, 1762, in which she says:—'I suppose you must have heard that the King has granted him a pension of 200*l.* a year, merely as an encouragement to his undertaking.'

² See *post*, March 28, 1776.

³ Horace Walpole describes Lord Bute as 'a man that had passed his life in solitude, and was too haughty to admit to his familiarity but half a dozen silly authors and flatterers. Sir Henry Erskine, a military poet, Home, a tragedy-writing parson,' &c. *Mem. of the Reign of George III*, i. 37.

⁴ See *post*, March 28, 1776.

⁵ 'Native wood-notes wild.' Milton's *L'Allegro*, l. 134.

which,

which, if any Scotchman should affect to forget, I should heartily despise him. Notwithstanding the difficulties which are to be encountered by those who have not had the advantage of an English education, he by degrees formed a mode of speaking to which Englishmen do not deny the praise of elegance. Hence his distinguished oratory, which he exerted in his own country as an advocate in the Court of Session, and a ruling elder of the *Kirk*, has had its fame and ample reward, in much higher spheres. When I look back on this noble person at Edinburgh, in situations so unworthy of his brilliant powers, and behold LORD LOUGHBOROUGH at London, the change seems almost like one of the metamorphoses in *Ovid*; and as his two preceptors, by refining his utterance, gave currency to his talents, we may say in the words of that poet, '*Nam vos mutastis*'¹.

I have dwelt the longer upon this remarkable instance of successful parts and assiduity; because it affords animating encouragement to other gentlemen of North-Britain to try their fortunes in the southern part of the Island, where they may hope to gratify their utmost ambition; and now that we are one people by the Union, it would surely be illiberal to maintain, that they have not an equal title with the natives of any other part of his Majesty's dominions.

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added, 'However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man.' Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would

¹ 'In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora. Di cœptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
Adspirate meis.'

'Of bodies changed to various forms I sing:—
Ye Gods from whence these miracles did spring
Inspire, &c.'—DRYDEN, *Ov. Met.* i. 1.

See *post* under March 30, 1783, for Lord Loughborough.

be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there¹. I have no sympathick feeling with such persevering resentment. It is painful when there is a breach between those who have lived together socially and cordially; and I wonder that there is not, in all such cases, a mutual wish that it should be healed. I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man². That could not sooth his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe Sheridan in *The Life of Swift*³, which he afterwards

¹ See *post*, May 17, 1783, and June 24, 1784. Sheridan was not of a forgiving nature. For some years he would not speak to his famous son: yet he went with his daughters to the theatre to see one of his pieces performed. 'The son took up his station by one of the side scenes, opposite to the box where they sat, and there continued, unobserved, to look at them during the greater part of the night. On his return home he burst into tears, and owned how deeply it had gone to his heart, "to think that *there* sat his father and his sisters before him, and yet that he alone was not permitted to go near them."' Moore's *Sheridan*, i. 167.

² As Johnson himself said:—'Men hate more steadily than they love; and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying many things to please him.' *Post*, Sept. 15, 1777.

³ P. 447. BOSWELL. 'There is another writer, at present of gigantic fame in these days of little men, who has pretended to scratch out a life of Swift, but so miserably executed as only to reflect back on himself that disgrace which he meant to throw upon the character of the Dean.' *The Life of Doctor Swift*, Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, ii. 200. There is a passage in the *Lives of the Poets* (*Works*, viii. 43) in which Johnson might be supposed playfully to have anticipated this attack. He is giving an account of Blackmore's imaginary *Literary Club of Lay Monks*, of which the hero was 'one Mr. Johnson.' 'The rest of the *Lay Monks*,' he writes, 'seem to be but feeble mortals, in comparison with the gigantick Johnson.' See also *post*, Oct. 16, 1769. Horace Walpole (*Letters*, v. 458) spoke no less scornfully than Sheridan of Johnson and his contemporaries. On April 27, 1773, after saying that he should like to be intimate with Anstey (the author of the *New*

published, attempting, in the writhings of his resentment, to depreciate Johnson, by characterising him as 'A writer of gigantick fame in these days of little men;' that very Johnson whom he once so highly admired and venerated.

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan' was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph*, contains an excellent moral while it inculcates a future state of retribution²;

Bath Guide), or with the author of the *Heroic Epistle*, he continues:— 'I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith; though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, till he changed it for words, and sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope and lived with Gray.'

¹ Johnson is thus mentioned by Mrs. Sheridan in a letter dated, Blois, Nov. 16, 1743, according to the *Garrick Corres.* i. 17, but the date is wrongly given, as the Sheridans went to Blois in 1764: 'I have heard Johnson decry some of the prettiest pieces of writing we have in English; yet Johnson is an honourable man—that is to say, he is a good critic, and in other respects a man of enormous talents.'

² My position has been very well illustrated by Mr. Belsham of Bedford, in his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*. 'The fashionable doctrine (says he) both of moralists and criticks in these times is, that virtue and happiness are constant concomitants; and it is regarded as a kind of dramattick impiety to maintain that virtue should not be rewarded, nor vice punished in the last scene of the last act of every tragedy. This conduct in our modern poets is, however, in my opinion, extremely injudicious; for, it labours in vain to inculcate a doctrine in theory, which every one knows to be false in fact, *viz.* that virtue in real life is always productive of happiness; and vice of misery. Thus Congreve concludes the Tragedy of *The Mourning Bride* with the following foolish couplet:—

and

and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of 'heaven's mercy.' Johnson paid her this high compliment upon it: 'I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much'.

'For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.'

'When a man eminently virtuous, a Brutus, a Cato, or a Socrates, finally sinks under the pressure of accumulated misfortune, we are not only led to entertain a more indignant hatred of vice than if he rose from his distress, but we are inevitably induced to cherish the sublime idea that a day of future retribution will arrive when he shall receive not merely poetical, but real and substantial justice.' *Essays Philosophical, Historical, and Literary*, London, 1791, vol. II. 8vo. p. 317.

This is well reasoned and well expressed. I wish, indeed, that the ingenious authour had not thought it necessary to introduce any *instance* of 'a man eminently virtuous;' as he would then have avoided mentioning such a ruffian as Brutus under that description. Mr. Belsham discovers in his *Essays* so much reading and thinking, and good composition, that I regret his not having been fortunate enough to be educated a member of our excellent national establishment. Had he not been nursed in nonconformity, he probably would not have been tainted with those heresies (as I sincerely, and on no slight investigation, think them) both in religion and politicks, which, while I read, I am sure, with candour, I cannot read without offence. BOSWELL. Boswell's 'position has been illustrated' with far greater force by Johnson. 'It has been the boast of some swelling moralists, that every man's fortune was in his own power, that prudence supplied the place of all other divinities, and that happiness is the unfailing consequence of virtue. But surely the quiver of Omnipotence is stored with arrows against which the shield of human virtue, however adamantine it has been boasted, is held up in vain; we do not always suffer by our crimes; we are not always protected by our innocence.' *The Adventurer*, No. 120. See also *Rasselas*, chap. 27.

¹ 'Charles Fox said that Mrs. Sheridan's *Sydney Biddulph* was the best of all modern novels. By the by [R. B.] Sheridan used to declare that *he* had never read it.' Rogers's *Table-Talk*, p. 90. The editor says, in a note on this passage:—'The incident in *The School for Scandal* of Sir Oliver's presenting himself to his relations in disguise is manifestly taken by Sheridan from his mother's novel.'

Mr.

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden¹, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education². Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances³ have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty⁴),

¹ No. 8.—The very place where I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the illustrious subject of this work, deserves to be particularly marked. I never pass by it without feeling reverence and regret.
BOSWELL.

² Johnson said:—'Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman.' *Post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*. The spiteful Steevens thus wrote about Davies:—'His concern ought to be with the outside of books; but Dr. Johnson, Dr. Percy, and some others have made such a coxcomb of him, that he is now hardy enough to open volumes, turn over their leaves, and give his opinions of their contents. Did I ever tell you an anecdote of him? About ten years ago I wanted the Oxford *Homer*, and called at Davies's to ask for it, as I had seen one thrown about his shop. Will you believe me, when I assure you he told me "he had but one, and that he kept for *his own reading*?"' *Garrick Corres.* i. 608.

³ Johnson, writing to Beattie, *post*, Aug. 21, 1780, says:—'Mr. Davies has got great success as an author, generated by the corruption of a bookseller.' His principal works are *Memoirs of Garrick*, 1780, and *Dramatic Miscellanies*, 1784.

⁴ Churchill, in the *Rosciad*, thus celebrated his wife and mocked his recitation:—

'With him came mighty Davies. On my life
That Davies hath a very pretty wife:—
Statesman all over!—In plots famous grown!—
He mouths a sentence, as curs mouth a bone.'

Churchill's *Poems*, i. 16.

See *post*, under April 20, 1764, and March 20, 1778. Charles Lamb in a note to his *Essay on the Tragedies of Shakespeare* says of Davies, that he 'is recorded to have recited the *Paradise Lost* better than any
though

though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them, as with any family which he used to visit¹. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop²; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us, —he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, 'Look, my Lord, it comes.' I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an

man in England in his day (though I cannot help thinking there must be some mistake in this tradition).' Lamb's *Works*, ed. 1840, p. 517.

¹ See Johnson's letter to Davies, *post*, June 18, 1783.

² Mr. Murphy, in his *Essay on the Life and Genius of Dr. Johnson*, [p. 106], has given an account of this meeting considerably different from mine, I am persuaded without any consciousness of error. His memory, at the end of near thirty years, has undoubtedly deceived him, and he supposes himself to have been present at a scene, which he has probably heard inaccurately described by others. In my note *taken on the very day*, in which I am confident I marked every thing material that passed, no mention is made of this gentleman; and I am sure, that I should not have omitted one so well known in the literary world. It may easily be imagined that this, my first interview with Dr. Johnson, with all its circumstances, made a strong impression on my mind, and would be registered with peculiar attention. BOSWELL.
engraving

engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, 'Don't tell where I come from.'—'From Scotland,' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it!' I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to sooth and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expence of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression 'come from Scotland,' which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, 'That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: 'What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings.' Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, 'O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you.' 'Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done; and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject.' Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil². I now felt myself much mortified,

¹ See *post*, April 8, 1775.

² That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I and



SAMUEL JOHNSON.

After the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1756.



and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

‘People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an authour is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.

‘In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do every thing for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men’s attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind.’

‘Sir, this book (*The Elements of Criticism*’, which he had taken up,) is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical.’

once mentioned to him, ‘It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it.’ JOHNSON, (smiling) ‘Why, Sir, that is true.’ BOSWELL. See *post*, May 15, 1776, and April 17, 1778.

¹ By Henry Home, Lord Kames, 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1762. See *post*, Oct. 16, 1769. ‘Johnson laughed much at Lord Kames’s opinion that war was a good thing occasionally, as so much valour and virtue were exhibited in it. “A fire,” says Johnson, “might as well be thought a good thing; there is the bravery and address of the firemen employed in extinguishing it; there is much humanity exerted in saving the lives and properties of the poor sufferers; yet after all this, who can say a fire is a good thing?”’ Johnson’s *Works*, (1787) xi. 209.

Speaking

Speaking of one who with more than ordinary boldness attacked publick measures and the royal family, he said,

'I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked!'

'The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tadium vitæ*. When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country*, he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling.'

'Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory. Ridicule has gone down before him, and, I doubt, Derrick is his enemy².'

¹ No. 45 of the *North Briton* had been published on April 23. Wilkes was arrested under a general warrant on April 30. On May 6 he was discharged from custody by the Court of Common Pleas, before which he had been brought by a writ of *Habeas Corpus*. A few days later he was served with a subpoena upon an information exhibited against him by the Attorney-General in the Court of King's Bench. He did not enter an appearance, holding, as he said, the serving him with the subpoena as a violation of the privilege of parliament. *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1360.

² Mr. Sheridan was then reading lectures upon Oratory at Bath, where Derrick was Master of the Ceremonies; or, as the phrase is, KING. BOSWELL. Dr. Parr, who knew Sheridan well, describes him 'as a wrong-headed, whimsical man.' 'I remember,' he continues, 'hearing one of his daughters, in the house where I lodged, triumphantly repeat Dryden's *Ode upon St. Cecilia's Day*, according to the instruction given to her by her father. Take a sample:—

"None but the brave

None but the *brave*

None *but* the brave deserve the fair."

Naughty Richard [R. B. Sheridan], like Gallio, seemed to care nought for these things.' Moore's *Sheridan*, i. 9, 11. Sheridan writing from Dublin on Dec. 7, 1771, says:—'Never was party violence carried to such a height as in this session; the House [the Irish House of Parliament] seldom breaking up till eleven or twelve at night. From these contests the desire of improving in the article of elocution is become very general. There are no less than five persons of rank and fortune now waiting my leisure to become my pupils.' *Ib.* p. 60. See *post*, July 28, 1763.

'Derrick

'Derrick may do very well, as long as he can outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over.'

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, 'Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from.'

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, 'Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well.'

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his Chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton¹, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd², with whom I had passed the morning,

¹ Bonnell Thornton. See *post*, July 1, 1763.

² Lloyd was one of a remarkable group of Westminster boys. He was a school-fellow not only of Churchill, the elder Colman, and Cumberland, but also of Cowper and Warren Hastings. Bonnell Thornton was a few years their senior. Not many weeks after this meeting with Boswell, Lloyd was in the Fleet prison. Churchill in *Independence* (*Poems*, ii. 310) thus addresses the Patrons of the age:—

'Hence, ye vain boasters, to the Fleet repair
And ask, with blushes ask, if Lloyd is there.'

Of the four men who thus 'enlivened' Boswell, two were dead before the end of the following year. Churchill went first. When Lloyd heard of his death, "'I shall follow poor Charles,'" was all he said, as he went to the bed from which he never rose again.' Thornton lived

I boldly

I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair¹, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having 'found the Giant in his den:' an expression, which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce². At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of *Ossian*³, was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, 'Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children'⁴. Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a *Dissertation*, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topick, and said, 'I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to

three or four years longer. Forster's *Essays*, ii. 217, 270, 289. See also his *Life of Goldsmith*, i. 264, for an account how 'Lloyd invited Goldsmith to sup with some friends of Grub Street, and left him to pay the reckoning.' Thornton, Lloyd, Colman, Cowper, and Joseph Hill, to whom Cowper's famous *Epistle* was addressed, had at one time been members of the Nonsense Club. Southey's *Cowper*, i. 37.

¹ The author of the well-known sermons, see *post*, under Dec. 21, 1776.

² See *post*, under Dec. 9, 1784.

³ See *post*, Feb. 7, 1775, under Dec. 24, 1783, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Nov. 10, 1773.

⁴ 'Sir,' he said to Reynolds, 'a man might write such stuff for ever, if he would *abandon* his mind to it;' *post*, under March 30, 1783.

talk of a book when the authour is concealed behind the doorⁱ.'

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of cloaths looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, 'Nay, don't go.' 'Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you.' He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, 'Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me.' I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day:—

'Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question.'

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a mad-house, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney:—BURNAY. 'How does poor Smart do, Sir; is he likely to recover?' JOHNSON. 'It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it.' BURNAY. 'Perhaps, Sir, that may be from want of exercise.' JOHNSON. 'No, Sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for

ⁱ 'Or behind the screen' some one might have added, *ante*, i. 188.

exercise to walk to the ale-house; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him¹; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it.—Johnson continued. 'Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labour²; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it.'

'The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please GOD, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, "Verily they have their reward³."

'The Christian religion has very strong evidences⁴. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, reasoning *à priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius,—Dr. Pearson,—and Dr. Clarke⁵.'

¹ Wesley was told that a whole waggon-load of Methodists had been lately brought before a Justice of the Peace. When he asked what they were charged with, one replied, 'Why they pretended to be better than other people, and besides they prayed from morning to night.' Wesley's *Journal*, i. 361. See also *post*, 1780, near the end of Mr. Langton's *Collection*.

² 'The progress which the understanding makes through a book has,' he said, 'more pain than pleasure in it;' *post*, May 1, 1783.

³ *Matthew*, vi. 16.

⁴ Boswell, it is clear, in the early days of his acquaintance with Johnson often led the talk to this subject. See *post*, June 25, July 14, 21, and 28, 1763.

⁵ See *post*, April 7, 1778.

Talking of Garrick, he said, 'He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation.'

When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning¹. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents². He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

I did not visit him again till Monday, June 13, at which time I recollect no part of his conversation, except that when I told him I had been to see Johnson ride upon three horses³,

¹ He finished his day, 'however late it might be,' by taking tea at Miss Williams's lodgings; *post*, July 1, 1763.

² See *post*, under Feb. 15, 1766, Feb. 1767, March 20, 1776, and Boswell's *Hebriides*, Sept. 20, 1773, where Johnson says:—'I have been trying to cure my laziness all my life, and could not do it.' It was this kind of life that caused so much of the remorse which is seen in his *Prayers and Meditations*.

³ Horace Walpole writing on June 12, 1759 (*Letters*, iii. 231), says:—'A war that reaches from Muscovy to Alsace, and from Madras to California, don't produce an article half so long as Mr. Johnson's riding three horses at once.' I have a curious copper-plate 'showing he

he said, 'Such a man, Sir, should be encouraged; for his performances shew the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shews what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although perhaps he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue.'

He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered, that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. 'Poh, poh! (said he, with a complacent smile,) never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you.'

I had learnt that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre tavern in Fleet-street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there soon, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards I met him near Temple-bar, about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. 'Sir, (said he) it is too late; they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night with all my heart.'

A revolution of some importance in my plan of life had just taken place; for instead of procuring a commission in the foot-guards, which was my own inclination¹, I had, in

Johnson standing on one, or two, and leading a third horse in full speed.' It bears the date of November 1758. See *post*, April 3, 1778.

¹ In the impudent *Correspondence* (pp. 63, 65) which Boswell and Andrew Erskine published this year, Boswell shows why he wished to enter the Guards. 'My fondness for the Guards,' he writes, 'must appear very strange to you, who have a rooted antipathy at the glare of scarlet. But I must inform you, that there is a city called London, for which I have as violent an affection as the most romantic lover ever had for his mistress. . . . I am thinking of the brilliant scenes of happiness, which I shall enjoy as an officer of the guards. How I shall be acquainted with all the grandeur of a court, and all the elegance of dress and diversions; become a favourite of ministers of state, compliance

compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the law; and was soon to set out for Utrecht, to hear the lectures of an excellent Civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels. Though very desirous of obtaining Dr. Johnson's advice and instructions on the mode of pursuing my studies, I was at this time so occupied, shall I call it? or so dissipated, by the amusements of London, that our next meeting was not till Saturday, June 25, when happening to dine at Clifton's eating-house, in Butcher-row¹, I was surprized to perceive Johnson come in and take his seat at another table. The mode of dining, or rather being fed, at such houses in London, is well known to many to be particularly unsocial, as there is no Ordinary, or united company, but each person has his own mess, and is under no obligation to hold any intercourse with any one. A liberal and full-minded man, however, who loves to talk, will break through this churlish and unsocial restraint. Johnson and an Irish gentleman got into a dispute concerning the cause of some part of mankind being black. 'Why, Sir, (said Johnson,) it has been accounted for in three ways: either by supposing that they are the posterity of Ham, who was cursed; or that

and the adoration of ladies of quality, beauty, and fortune! How many parties of pleasure shall I have in town! How many fine jaunts to the noble seats of dukes, lords, and members of parliament in the country! I am thinking of the perfect knowledge which I shall acquire of men and manners, of the intimacies which I shall have the honour to form with the learned and ingenious in every science, and of the many amusing literary anecdotes which I shall pick up,' etc. Boswell, in his *Hebrides* (Aug. 18, 1773), says of himself:—'His inclination was to be a soldier; but his father, a respectable Judge, had pressed him into the profession of the law.'

A row of tenements in the Strand, between Wych Street and Temple Bar, and 'so called from the butchers' shambles on the south side.' (*Strype*, B. iv. p. 118.) Butcher Row was pulled down in 1813, and the present Pickett Street erected in its stead. P. CUNNINGHAM. In *Humphry Clinker*, in the letter of June 10, one of the poor authors is described as having been 'reduced to a woollen night-cap and living upon sheep's-trotters, up three pair of stairs backward in Butcher Row.'

GOD at first created two kinds of men, one black and another white; or that by the heat of the sun the skin is scorched, and so acquires a sooty hue. This matter has been much canvassed among naturalists, but has never been brought to any certain issue.' What the Irishman said is totally obliterated from my mind; but I remember that he became very warm and intemperate in his expressions; upon which Johnson rose, and quietly walked away. When he retired, his antagonist took his revenge, as he thought, by saying, 'He has a most ungainly figure, and an affectation of pomposity, unworthy of a man of genius.'

Johnson had not observed that I was in the room. I followed him, however, and he agreed to meet me in the evening at the Mitre. I called on him, and we went thither at nine. We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of the MITRE,—the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON,—the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced. I find in my journal the following minute of our conversation, which, though it will give but a very faint notion of what passed, is in some degree a valuable record; and it will be curious in this view, as shewing how habitual to his mind were some opinions which appear in his works.

'Colley Cibber¹, Sir, was by no means a blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too much, he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his birth-day *Odes* should

¹ Cibber was poet-laureate from 1730 to 1757. Horace Walpole describes him as 'that good humoured and honest veteran, so unworthily aspersed by Pope, whose *Memoirs*, with one or two of his comedies, will secure his fame, in spite of all the abuse of his contemporaries.' His successor Whitehead, Walpole calls 'a man of a placid genius.' *Reign of George II*, iii. 81. See *ante*, pp. 172, 213, and *post*, Oct. 19, 1769, May 15, 1776, and Sept. 21, 1777.

be bad: but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit. I remember the following couplet in allusion to the King and himself:

“Perch’d on the eagle’s soaring wing,
The lowly linnet loves to sing.”

Sir, he had heard something of the fabulous tale of the wren sitting upon the eagle’s wing, and he had applied it to a linnet. Cibber’s familiar style, however, was better than that which Whitehead has assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable¹. Whitehead is but a little man to inscribe verses to players.’

I did not presume to controvert this censure, which was tinctured with his prejudice against players²; but I could not help thinking that a dramattick poet might with propriety

¹ The following quotations show the difference of style in the two poets:—

COLLEY CIBBER.

‘When her pride, fierce in arms,
Would to Europe give law;
At her cost let her come,
To our cheer of huzza!

Not lightning with thunder more terrible darts,
Than the burst of huzza from our bold *British* hearts.’

Gent. Mag. xxv. 515.

WM. WHITEHEAD.

‘Ye guardian powers, to whose command,
At Nature’s birth, th’ Almighty mind
The delegated task assign’d
To watch o’er Albion’s favour’d land,
What time your hosts with choral lay,
Emerging from its kindred deep,
Applausive hail’d each verdant steep,
And white rock, glitt’ring to the new-born day!’

Ib. xxix. 32.

² See *ante*, p. 193.

pay a compliment to an eminent performer, as Whitehead has very happily done in his verses to Mr. Garrick¹.

'Sir, I do not think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime². His *Elegy in a Church-yard* has a happy selection of images, but I don't like what are called his great things. His *Ode* which begins

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless King,
Confusion on thy banners wait!"

has been celebrated for its abruptness, and plunging into the subject all at once³. But such arts as these have no merit, unless when they are original. We admire them only once; and this abruptness has nothing new in it. We have had it often before. Nay, we have it in the old song of Johnny Armstrong⁴:

¹ 'Whitehead was for some while Garrick's "reader" of new plays for Drury-lane.' Forster's *Goldsmith*, ii. 41. See *post*, April 25, 1778, note. The verses to Garrick are given in Chalmers's *English Poets*, xvii. 222.

² 'In 1757 Gray published *The Progress of Poetry* and *The Bard*, two compositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement. Some that tried them confessed their inability to understand them. . . . Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect; and in a short time many were content to be shown beauties which they could not see.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 478. See *post*, March 28, and April 2, 1775, and 1780 in Mr. Langton's *Collection*. Goldsmith, no doubt, attacked Gray among 'the misguided innovators,' of whom he said in his *Life of Parnell*:—'They have adopted a language of their own, and call upon mankind for admiration. All those who do not understand them are silent, and those who make out their meaning are willing to praise to show they understand.' Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, iv. 22.

³ Johnson, perhaps, refers to the anonymous critic quoted by Mason in his notes on this *Ode*, who says:—'This abrupt execration plunges the reader into that sudden fearful perplexity which is designed to predominate through the whole.' Mason's *Gray*, ed. 1807, i. 96.

⁴ 'Of the first stanza [of *The Bard*] the abrupt beginning has been
"Is

“Is there ever a man in all Scotland
From the highest estate to the lowest degree, &c.”

And then, Sir,

“Yes, there is a man in Westmoreland,
And Johnny Armstrong they do him call.”

There, now, you plunge at once into the subject. You have no previous narration to lead you to it. The two next lines in that *Ode* are, I think, very good :

“Though fann’d by conquest’s crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state¹.”

Here let it be observed, that although his opinion of Gray’s poetry was widely different from mine, and I believe from that of most men of taste², by whom it is with justice highly admired, there is certainly much absurdity in the clamour which has been raised, as if he had been culpably injurious

celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*. Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 485.

¹ My friend Mr. Malone, in his valuable comments on Shakspeare, has traced in that great poet the *disjecta membra* of these lines. BOSWELL. Gray, in the edition of *The Bard* of the year 1768, in a note on these lines had quoted from *King John*, act v. sc. 1 :—‘Mocking the air with colours idly spread.’ Gosse’s *Gray*, i. 41. But Malone quotes also from *Macbeth*, act i. sc. 2 :—

‘Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.’

‘Out of these passages,’ he said, ‘Mr. Gray seems to have framed the first stanza of his celebrated *Ode*.’ Malone’s *Shakspeare*, xv. 344.

² Cradock records (*Memoirs*, i. 230) that Goldsmith said to him :—‘You are so attached to Hurd, Gray, and Mason, that you think nothing good can proceed but out of that formal school;—now, I’ll mend Gray’s *Elegy* by leaving out an idle word in every line.

“The curfew tolls the knell of day,
The lowing herd winds o’er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his way,
And——”

Enough, enough, I have no ear for more.’

to

to the merit of that bard, and had been actuated by envy. Alas! ye little short-sighted criticks, could JOHNSON be envious of the talents of any of his contemporaries? That his opinion on this subject was what in private and in publick he uniformly expressed, regardless of what others might think, we may wonder, and perhaps regret; but it is shallow and unjust to charge him with expressing what he did not think.

Finding him in a placid humour, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived in the ardour of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands;—I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention¹.

I acknowledged, that though educated very strictly in the principles of religion, I had for some time been misled into a certain degree of infidelity; but that I was come now to a better way of thinking, and was fully satisfied of the truth of the Christian revelation, though I was not clear as to every point considered to be orthodox. Being at all times a curious examiner of the human mind, and pleased with an undisguised display of what had passed in it, he called to me with warmth, 'Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you.' He then began to descant upon the force of testimony, and the little we could know of final causes; so that the objections of, why was it so? or why was it not so? ought not to disturb us: adding, that he himself had at one period been guilty of a temporary neglect of religion, but that it was not the result of argument, but mere absence of thought².

After having given credit to reports of his bigotry, I was

¹ So, less than two years later, Boswell opened his mind to Paoli. 'My time passed here in the most agreeable manner. I enjoyed a sort of luxury of noble sentiment. Paoli became more affable with me. I made myself known to him.' Boswell's *Corsica*, p. 167.

² See *ante*, p. 78.

agreeably surprized when he expressed the following very liberal sentiment, which has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves: 'For my part, Sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious.'

We talked of belief in ghosts. He said, 'Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice cry "Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished;" my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should, in that case, be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me.'

Here it is proper, once for all, to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question, whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain and treat with silent contempt so foolish a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet as I find it has gained ground, it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed,

1 See *post*, Sept. 22, 1777.

he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages¹. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it. Churchill, in his poem entitled *The Ghost*, availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of 'POMPOSO²,' representing him as one of the believers of the story of a Ghost in Cock-lane, which, in the year 1762, had gained very general credit in London³. Many of my readers, I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprise them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority, that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated⁴; and in this research he was assisted by the

¹ See *post*, March 30, 1778, where in speaking of the appearance of spirits after death he says:—'All argument is against it; but all belief is for it.' See also *ante*, p. 397, and *post*, April 15, 1778, under May 4, 1779, April 15, 1781, and June 12, 1784.

² The caricature begins:—

'Pomposo, insolent and loud,
Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,
Whose very name inspires an awe,
Whose ev'ry word is Sense and Law.'

Churchill's *Poems*, i. 216.

³ The chief impostor, a man of the name of Parsons, had, it should seem, set his daughter to play the part of the ghost in order to pay out a grudge against a man who had sued him for a debt. The ghost was made to accuse this man of poisoning his sister-in-law, and to declare that she should only be at ease in her mind if he were hanged. 'When Parsons stood on the Pillory at the end of Cock Lane, instead of being pelted, he had money given him.' *Genl. Mag.* xxxii. 43, 82, and xxxiii. 144.

⁴ Horace Walpole, writing on Feb. 2, 1762 (*Letters*, iii. 481), says:—'I could send you volumes on the Ghost, and I believe, if I were to stay a little, I might send its *life*, dedicated to my Lord Dartmouth, by the Ordinary of Newgate, its two great patrons. A drunken par-

Reverend

Reverend Dr. Douglas¹, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures; who informs me, that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and *Gentleman's Magazine*, and undeceived the world².

ish clerk set it on foot out of revenge, the Methodists have adopted it, and the whole town of London think of nothing else. . . . I went to hear it, for it is not an *apparition*, but an *audition*, . . . the Duke of York, Lady Northumberland, Lady Mary Coke, Lord Hertford, and I, all in one Hackney-coach: it rained torrents; yet the lane was full of mob, and the house so full we could not get in.' See *post*, April 10, 1778.

¹ Described by Goldsmith in *Retaliation* as 'The scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks.' See *ante*, p. 265.

² The account was as follows:—'On the night of the 1st of February [1762] many gentlemen eminent for their rank and character were, by the invitation of the Reverend Mr. Aldrich, of Clerkenwell, assembled at his house, for the examination of the noises supposed to be made by a departed spirit, for the detection of some enormous crime.

'About ten at night the gentlemen met in the chamber in which the girl, supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, had, with proper caution, been put to bed by several ladies. They sat rather more than an hour, and hearing nothing, went down stairs, when they interrogated the father of the girl, who denied, in the strongest terms, any knowledge or belief of fraud.

'The supposed spirit had before publicly promised, by an affirmative knock, that it would attend one of the gentlemen into the vault under the Church of St. John, Clerkenwell, where the body is deposited, and give a token of her presence there, by a knock upon her coffin; it was therefore determined to make this trial of the existence or veracity of the supposed spirit.

'While they were enquiring and deliberating, they were summoned into the girl's chamber by some ladies who were near her bed, and who had heard knocks and scratches. When the gentlemen entered, the girl declared that she felt the spirit like a mouse upon her back, and was required to hold her hands out of bed. From that time, though the spirit was very solemnly required to manifest its existence by appearance, by impression on the hand or body of any present, by scratches, knocks, or any other agency, no evidence of any preternatural power was exhibited.

Our

Our conversation proceeded. 'Sir, (said he) I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society¹. There is a reciprocal pleasure in governing and being governed.'

'The spirit was then very seriously advertised that the person to whom the promise was made of striking the coffin, was then about to visit the vault, and that the performance of the promise was then claimed. The company at one o'clock went into the church, and the gentleman to whom the promise was made, went with another into the vault. The spirit was solemnly required to perform its promise, but nothing more than silence ensued: the person supposed to be accused by the spirit, then went down with several others, but no effect was perceived. Upon their return they examined the girl, but could draw no confession from her. Between two and three she desired and was permitted to go home with her father.

'It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no agency of any higher cause.' BOSWELL. *Gent. Mag.* xxxii. 81. The following MS. letter is in the British Museum:—

'REVD. SIR,

The appointment for the examination stands as it did when I saw you last, viz., between 8 and 9 this evening. Mr. Johnson was applied to by a friend of mine soon after you left him, and promised to be with us. Should be glad, if convenient, you'd show him the way hither. Mrs. Oakes, of Dr. Macauley's recommendation, I should be glad to have here on the occasion; and think it would do honour to the list of examiners to have Dr. Macauley with us.

I am, Dear Sir,
your most obedient servant,

STE. ALDRICH.

If Dr. Macauley can conveniently attend, should be glad you'd acquaint Lord Dartmouth with it, who seemed to be at loss to recommend a gentleman of the faculty at his end of the town.

St. John's Square. Monday noon.

To the Revd. Dr. Douglas.'

Endorsed 'Mr. Aldrich, Feb. 1762, about the Cock Lane ghost.—Examination at his house.'

¹ Boswell was with Paoli when news came that a Corsican under sentence of death 'had consented to accept of his life, upon condition of becoming hangman. This made a great noise among the Corsicans, who were enraged at the creature, and said their nation was now disgraced. Paoli did not think so. He said to me:—"I am glad of

Dr.

‘Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an authour, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right.’

I mentioned Mallet’s tragedy of *Elvira*¹, which had been acted the preceding winter at Drury-lane, and that the Honourable Andrew Erskine², Mr. Dempster³, and myself, had joined in writing a pamphlet, entitled, *Critical Strictures*, against it⁴. That the mildness of Dempster’s disposition had, however, relented; and he had candidly said, ‘We have hardly a right to abuse this tragedy: for bad as it is, how vain should either of us be to write one not near so good.’ JOHNSON. ‘Why no, Sir; this is not just reasoning. You *may* abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables.’

When I talked to him of the paternal estate to which I was heir, he said, ‘Sir, let me tell you, that to be a Scotch

this. It will be of service. It will contribute to form us to a just subordination. As we must have Corsican tailours, and Corsican shoemakers, we must also have a Corsican hangman.”’ Boswell’s *Corsica*, p. 201. See *post*, July 20 and 21, 1763, April 13, 1773, and March 28, 1775.

¹ ‘Mallet’s Dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten.’ Johnson’s *Works*, viii. 468.

² See *ante*, p. 445, note.

³ ‘A man had heard that Dempster was very clever, and therefore expected that he could say nothing but good things. Being brought acquainted, Mr. Dempster said to him with much politeness, “I hope, Sir, your lady and family are well.” “Ay, ay, man,” said he, “pray where is the great wit in that speech?”’ *Boswelliana*, p. 307. Mr. Dempster is mentioned by Burns in *The Author’s Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons*:— ‘Dempster, a true-blue Scot I’se warran.’ In 1769 he was elected member for the Forfar Boroughs. *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 453.

⁴ *The Critical Review*, in which Mallet himself sometimes wrote, characterised this pamphlet as ‘the crude efforts of envy, petulance and self-conceit.’ There being thus three epithets, we, the three authours, had a humorous contention how each should be appropriated. BOSWELL.

landlord,

landlord, where you have a number of families dependent upon you, and attached to you, is, perhaps, as high a situation as humanity can arrive at. A merchant upon the 'Change of London, with a hundred thousand pounds, is nothing; an English Duke, with an immense fortune, is nothing; he has no tenants who consider themselves as under his patriarchal care, and who will follow him to the field upon an emergency.'

His notion of the dignity of a Scotch landlord had been formed upon what he had heard of the Highland Chiefs; for it is long since a lowland landlord has been so curtailed in his feudal authority, that he has little more influence over his tenants than an English landlord; and of late years most of the Highland Chiefs have destroyed, by means too well known, the princely power which they once enjoyed¹.

He proceeded: 'Your going abroad, Sir, and breaking off idle habits, may be of great importance to you. I would go where there are courts and learned men. There is a good deal of Spain that has not been perambulated. I would have you go thither². A man of inferiour talents to yours may furnish us with useful observations upon that country.' His supposing me, at that period of life, capable of writing an account of my travels that would deserve to be read, elated me not a little.

I appeal to every impartial reader whether this faithful detail of his frankness, complacency, and kindness to a young man, a stranger and a Scotchman, does not refute the unjust opinion of the harshness of his general demeanour. His occasional reproofs of folly, impudence, or impiety, and even the sudden sallies of his constitutional irritability of temper, which have been preserved for the poignancy of their wit, have produced that opinion among those who have not considered that such instances, though collected by Mrs. Piozzi

¹ Johnson (*Works*, ix. 86) talks of the chiefs 'gradually degenerating from patriarchal rulers to rapacious landlords.' In Boswell's *Hebrides*, the subject is often examined.

² See *ante*, i. 423.

into a small volume, and read over in a few hours, were, in fact, scattered through a long series of years; years, in which his time was chiefly spent in instructing and delighting mankind by his writings and conversation, in acts of piety to GOD, and good-will to men¹.

I complained to him that I had not yet acquired much knowledge, and asked his advice as to my studies². He said, 'Don't talk of study now. I will give you a plan; but it will require some time to consider of it.' 'It is very good in you (I replied,) to allow me to be with you thus. Had it been foretold to me some years ago that I should pass an evening with the authour of *The Rambler*, how should I have exulted!' What I then expressed, was sincerely from the heart. He was satisfied that it was, and cordially answered, 'Sir, I am glad we have met. I hope we shall pass many evenings and mornings too, together.' We finished a couple of bottles of port, and sat till between one and two in the morning.

He wrote this year in the *Critical Review* the account of 'Telemachus, a Mask,' by the Reverend George Graham, of Eton College³. The subject of this beautiful poem was particularly interesting to Johnson, who had much experience of 'the conflict of opposite principles,' which he describes as 'The contention between pleasure and virtue, a struggle

¹ 'Dr. Burney spoke with great warmth of affection of Dr. Johnson; said he was the kindest creature in the world when he thought he was loved and respected by others. He would play the fool among friends, but he required deference. It was necessary to ask questions and make no assertion. If you said two and two make four, he would say, "How will you prove that, Sir?" Dr. Burney seemed amiably sensitive to every unfavourable remark on his old friend.' H. C. Robinson's *Diary*, iii. 485.

² See *post*, April 24, 1777, note, and Oct. 10, 1779, where he consults Johnson about the study of Greek. He formed wishes, scarcely plans of study, but never studied.

³ See *post*, Feb. 18, 1777. It was Graham who so insulted Goldsmith by saying:—'Tis not you I mean, Dr. *Minor*; 'tis Dr. *Major* there.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 24, 1773.

which

which will always be continued while the present system of nature shall subsist: nor can history or poetry exhibit more than pleasure triumphing over virtue, and virtue subjugating pleasure.'

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavour to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity¹. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that 'though he made no great figure in mathematicks², which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them.' He afterwards studied physick at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent; and I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot³, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe⁴. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a news-paper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he

¹ See *post*, Sept. 19, 1777.

² Of Mathematics Goldsmith wrote:—'This seems a science to which the meanest intellects are equal.' See *post*, March 15, 1776, note.

³ In his *Present State of Polite Learning*, ch. 13 (*Misc. Works*, i. 266), Goldsmith writes:—'A man who is whirled through Europe in a post-chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the grand tour on foot, will form very different conclusions. *Haud inexpertus loquor.*' The last three words are omitted in the second edition.

⁴ George Primrose in the *Vicar of Wakefield* (ch. 20), after describing these disputations, says:—'In this manner I fought my way towards England.'

studiously

studiously copied the manner of Johnson¹, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name², though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the authour of *An Enquiry into the present State of polite Learning in Europe*³, and of *The Citizen of the World*⁴, a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. '*Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit*'⁵. His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation⁶; but, in truth, this has been greatly

¹ Dr. Warton wrote to his brother on Jan. 22, 1766:—'Of all solemn coxcombs Goldsmith is the first; yet sensible—but affects to use Johnson's hard words in conversation.' Woolf's *Warton*, p. 312.

² It was long believed that the author of one of Goldsmith's early works was Lord Lyttelton. "Whenever I write anything," said Goldsmith, "I think the public *make a point* to know nothing about it." So the present book was issued as a *History of England in a series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*. The persuasion at last became general that the author was Lord Lyttelton, and the name of that grave good lord is occasionally still seen affixed to it on the book-stalls.' Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 301. *The Traveller* was the first of his works to which he put his name. It was published in 1764. *Ib.* p. 364.

³ Published in 1759.

⁴ Published in 1760-1.

⁵ See his Epitaph in Westminster Abbey, written by Dr. Johnson.
BOSWELL.

'Qui nullum fere scribendi genus Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.'

Post, under June 22, 1776.

⁶ In allusion to this, Mr. Horace Walpole, who admired his writings, said he was 'an inspired idiot;' and Garrick described him as one

'——— for shortness call'd Noll,

Who wrote like an angel, and talk'd like poor Poll.'

exaggerated.

exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting

Sir Joshua Reynolds mentioned to me that he frequently heard Goldsmith talk warmly of the pleasure of being liked, and observe how hard it would be if literary excellence should preclude a man from that satisfaction, which he perceived it often did, from the envy which attended it; and therefore Sir Joshua was convinced that he was intentionally more absurd, in order to lessen himself in social intercourse, trusting that his character would be sufficiently supported by his works. If it indeed was his intention to appear absurd in company, he was often very successful. But with due deference to Sir Joshua's ingenuity, I think the conjecture too refined. BOSWELL.

Horace Walpole's saying of the 'inspired ideot' is recorded in Davies's *Garrick*, ii. 151. Walpole, in his *Letters*, describes Goldsmith as 'a changeling that has had bright gleams of parts,' (v. 458); 'a fool, the more wearing for having some sense,' (vi. 29); 'a poor soul that had sometimes parts, though never common sense,' (*ib.* p. 73); and 'an idiot, with once or twice a fit of parts,' (*ib.* p. 379). Garrick's lines—

'Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll,'

are his imaginary epitaph on Goldsmith, which, with the others, gave rise to *Retaliation*. Forster's *Goldsmith*, ii. 405.

¹ Rousseau accounting for the habit he has 'de balbutier promptement des paroles sans idées,' continues, 'je crois que voilà de quoi faire assez comprendre comment n'étant pas un sot, j'ai cependant souvent passé pour l'être, même chez des gens en état de bien juger. . . . Le parti que j'ai pris d'écrire et de me cacher est précisément celui qui me convenait. Moi présent on n'aurait jamais su ce que je valois, on ne l'aurait pas soupçonné même.' *Les Confessions*, Livre iii. See *post*, April 27, 1773, where Boswell admits that 'Goldsmith was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself:' and April 30, 1773, where Reynolds says of him: 'There is no man whose company is more liked.'

the

the easy gentleman¹. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible². When accompanying two beautiful young ladies³ with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him⁴; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini*⁵ in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a

¹ Northcote, a few weeks before his death, said to Mr. Prior:—‘When Goldsmith entered a room, Sir, people who did not know him became for a moment silent from awe of his literary reputation; when he came out again, they were riding upon his back.’ Prior’s *Goldsmith*, i. 440. According to Dr. Percy:—‘His face was marked with strong lines of thinking. His first appearance was not captivating; but when he grew easy and cheerful in company, he relaxed into such a display of good humour as soon removed every unfavourable impression.’ Goldsmith’s *Misc. Works*, i. 117.

² ‘Dr. Goldsmith told me, he himself envied Shakespeare.’ Walpole’s *Letters*, vi. 379. Boswell, later on (*post*, May 9, 1773), says:—‘In my opinion Goldsmith had not more of it [an envious disposition] than other people have, but only talked of it freely.’ See also *post*, April 12, 1778. According to Northcote, ‘Sir Joshua said that Goldsmith considered public notoriety or fame as one great parcel, to the whole of which he laid claim, and whoever partook of any part of it, whether dancer, singer, slight of hand man, or tumbler, deprived him of his right.’ Northcote’s *Reynolds*, i. 248. See *post*, April 7, 1778, where Johnson said that ‘Goldsmith was not an agreeable companion, for he talked always for fame:’ and April 9, 1778.

³ Miss Hornecks, one of whom is now married to Henry Bunbury, Esq., and the other to Colonel Gwyn. BOSWELL.

⁴ ‘Standing at the window of their hotel [in Lisle] to see a company of soldiers in the Square, the beauty of the sisters Horneck drew such marked admiration, that Goldsmith, heightening his drollery with that air of solemnity so generally a point in his humour and so often more solemnly misinterpreted, turned off from the window with the remark that elsewhere *he* too could have his admirers. The Jessamy Bride, Mrs. Gwyn, was asked about the occurrence not many years ago; remembered it as a playful jest; and said how shocked she had subsequently been “to see it adduced in print as a proof of his envious disposition.”’ Forster’s *Goldsmith*, ii. 217.

⁵ Puppets.

pike,

pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, 'Pshaw! I can do it better myself.'

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort², so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinised; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham³, a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield*. But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds⁴. 'And, Sir,

¹ He went home with Mr. Burke to supper; and broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets. BOSWELL. Mr. Hoole was one day in a coach with Johnson, when 'Johnson, who delighted in rapidity of pace, and had been speaking of Goldsmith, put his head out of one of the windows to see they were going right, and rubbing his hands with an air of satisfaction exclaimed:—"This man drives fast and well; were Goldsmith here now he would tell us he could do better."' Prior's *Goldsmith*, ii. 127.

² See *post*, April 9, 1773; also April 9, 1778, where Johnson says, 'Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject.'

³ I am willing to hope that there may have been some mistake as to this anecdote, though I had it from a Dignitary of the Church. Dr. Isaac Goldsmith, his near relation, was Dean of Cloyne, in 1747. BOSWELL. This note first appears in the second edition.

⁴ Mr. Welsh, in *A Bookseller of the Last Century*, p. 58, quotes the following entry from an account-book of B. Collins of Salisbury, the printer of the first edition of the *Vicar*:—'*Vicar of Wakefield*, 2 vols. 12mo., ½rd. B. Collins, Salisbury, bought of Dr. Goldsmith, the author, October 28, 1762, £21.' Goldsmith, it should seem from this, as Collins's third share was worth twenty guineas, was paid not sixty pounds, but sixty guineas. Collins shared in many of the ventures of
(said

(said he,) a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after *The Traveller* had appeared¹. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money².

Mrs. Piozzi³ and Sir John Hawkins⁴ have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:—'I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of

Newbery, Goldsmith's publisher. Mr. Welsh says (*ib.* p. 61) that Collins's accounts show 'that the first three editions resulted in a loss.' If this was so, the booksellers must have been great bunglers, for the book ran through three editions in six or seven months. Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 425.

¹ *The Traveller* (price one shilling and sixpence) was published in December 1764, and *The Vicar of Wakefield* in March 1766. In August 1765 the fourth edition of *The Traveller* appeared, and the ninth in the year Goldsmith died. He received for it £21. Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 364, 374, 409. See *ante*, p. 224, note 1.

² "'Miss Burney," said Mrs. Thrale [to Dr. Johnson], "is fond of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and so am I. Don't you like it, Sir?" "No, madam, it is very faulty; there is nothing of real life in it, and very little of nature. It is a mere fanciful performance.'" *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 83. 'There are a hundred faults in this Thing,' said Goldsmith in the preface, 'and a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity.' See *post*, April 25, 1778.

³ *Anecdotes of Johnson*, p. 119. BOSWELL.

⁴ *Life of Johnson*, p. 420. BOSWELL.

Madeira and a glass before him'. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.'

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped together at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of

¹ In his imprudence he was like Savage, of whom Johnson says (*Works*, viii. 161):—'To supply him with money was a hopeless attempt; for no sooner did he see himself master of a sum sufficient to set him free from care for a day, than he became profuse and luxurious.' When Savage was 'lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, his friends sent him every Monday a guinea, which he commonly spent before the next morning, and trusted, after his usual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.' *Ib.* p. 170.

² It may not be improper to annex here Mrs. Piozzi's account of this transaction, in her own words, as a specimen of the extreme inaccuracy with which all her anecdotes of Dr. Johnson are related, or rather discoloured and distorted:—'I have forgotten the year, but it could scarcely, I think, be later than 1765 or 1766 that he was called abruptly from our house after dinner, and returning in about three hours, said he had been with an enraged authour, whose landlady pressed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beset him without; that he was drinking himself drunk with Madeira, to drown care, and fretting over a novel, which, when finished, was to be his whole fortune, but he could not get it done for distraction, nor could he step out of doors to offer it for sale. Mr. Johnson, therefore, sent away the bottle, and went to the bookseller, recommending the performance, and desiring some immediate relief; which when he brought back to the writer, he called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch, and pass their time in merriment.' *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson*, p. 119. BOSWELL. The whole transaction took place in 1762, as is shown, *ante*, p. 480, note 4; Johnson did not know the Thrales till 1764.

the

the Johnsonian school¹. Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height; for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great Master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation, such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, 'He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson;' and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, 'He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson.'

Goldsmith attempted this evening to maintain, I suppose from an affectation of paradox, 'that knowledge was not desirable on its own account, for it often was a source of unhappiness.' JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, that knowledge may in some cases produce unhappiness, I allow. But, upon the whole, knowledge, *per se*, is certainly an object which every man would wish to attain, although, perhaps, he may not take the trouble necessary for attaining it².'

Dr. John Campbell³, the celebrated political and biographical writer, being mentioned, Johnson said, 'Campbell is a man of much knowledge, and has a good share of imagination. His *Hermippus Redivivus*⁴ is very entertaining, as an account of the Hermetick philosophy, and as furnishing a curious history of the extravagancies of the human mind. If it were merely imaginary it would be nothing at all. Campbell is not always rigidly careful of truth in his conversation; but I do not believe there is any thing of this

¹ Through Goldsmith Boswell became acquainted with Reynolds. In his *Letter to the People of Scotland* (p. 99), he says:—'I exhort you, my friends and countrymen, in the words of my departed *Goldsmith*, who gave me many *noctes Atticæ*, and gave me a jewel of the finest water—the acquaintance of Sir Joshua Reynolds.'

² See *post*, July 30, 1763.

³ See *post*, March 20, 1776, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 17, 1773.

⁴ See *post*, March 15, 1776.

carelessness in his books¹. Campbell is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years²; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat³. This shews that he has good principles⁴. I used to go pretty often to Campbell's on a Sunday evening⁵ till I began to consider that the shoals of

¹ 'Dr. Campbell was an entertaining story-teller, which [*sic*] sometimes he rather embellished; so that the writer of this once heard Dr. Johnson say:—"Campbell will lie, but he never lies on paper."' *Gent. Mag.* for 1785, p. 969.

² I am inclined to think that he was misinformed as to this circumstance. I own I am jealous for my worthy friend Dr. John Campbell. For though Milton could without remorse absent himself from public worship [Johnson's *Works*, vii. 115] I cannot. On the contrary, I have the same habitual impressions upon my mind, with those of a truly venerable Judge, who said to Mr. Langton, 'Friend Langton, I have not been at church on Sunday, I do not feel myself easy.' Dr. Campbell was a sincerely religious man. Lord Macartney, who is eminent for his variety of knowledge, and attention to men of talents, and knew him well, told me, that when he called on him in a morning, he found him reading a chapter in the Greek New Testament, which he informed his Lordship was his constant practice. The quantity of Dr. Campbell's composition is almost incredible, and his labours brought him large profits. Dr. Joseph Warton told me that Johnson said of him, 'He is the richest authour that ever grazed the common of literature.' BOSWELL.

³ See *post*, April 7, 1778. Campbell complied with one of the *Monita Pædagogica* of Erasmus. 'Si quem præteribis natu grandem, magistratum, sacerdotem, doctorem . . . memento aperire caput. . . . Itidem facito quum præteribis ædem sacram.' Erasmus's *Colloquies*, ed. 1867, i. 36.

⁴ Reynolds said of Johnson:—"He was not easily imposed upon by professions to honesty and candour; but he appeared to have little suspicion of hypocrisy in religion." Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 459. Boswell, in one of his penitent letters, wrote to Temple on July 21, 1790:—"I am even almost inclined to think with you, that my great oracle Johnson did allow too much credit to good principles, without good practice." *Letters of Boswell*, p. 327.

⁵ Campbell lived in 'the large new-built house at the north-west-corner of Queen Square, Bloomsbury, whither, particularly on a Sunday evening, great numbers of persons of the first eminence for science and literature resorted for the enjoyment of conversation.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 210.

Scotchmen who flocked about him might probably say, when anything of mine was well done, "Ay, ay, he has learnt this of CAWMELL!"'

He talked very contemptuously of Churchill's poetry, observing, that 'it had a temporary currency, only from its audacity of abuse, and being filled with living names, and that it would sink into oblivion.' I ventured to hint that he was not quite a fair judge, as Churchill had attacked him violently. JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, I am a very fair judge. He did not attack me violently till he found I did not like his poetry'; and his attack on me shall not prevent me from continuing to say what I think of him, from an apprehension that it may be ascribed to resentment. No, Sir, I called the fellow a blockhead² at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now, than I once had; for he has shewn more fertility than I expected³. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, Sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few.'

¹ Churchill, in his first poem, *The Rosciad* (*Poems*, i. 4), mentions Johnson without any disrespect among those who were thought of as judge.

'For Johnson some, but Johnson, it was feared,

Would be too grave; and Sterne too gay appeared.'

In *The Author* (*ib.* ii. 36), if I mistake not, he grossly alludes to the convulsive disorder to which Johnson was subject. Attacking the pensioners he says—the italics are his own:—

'Others, *half-falsied* only, mutes become,

And what makes Smollett write makes Johnson dumb.'

² See *post*, April 6, 1772, where Johnson called Fielding a blockhead.

³ Churchill published his first poem, *The Rosciad*, in March or April 1761 (*Gent. Mag.* xxxi. 190); *The Apology* in May or June (*ib.* p. 286); *Night* in Jan. 1762 (*ib.* xxxii. 47); The First and Second Parts of *The Ghost* in March (*ib.* p. 147); The Third Part in the autumn (*ib.* p. 449); *The Prophecy of Famine* in Jan. 1763 (*ib.* xxxiii. 47), and *The Epistle to Hogarth* in this month of July (*ib.* p. 363). He wrote the fourth part of *The Ghost*, and nine more poems, and died on Nov. 4, 1764, aged thirty-two or thirty-three.

In this depreciation of Churchill's poetry I could not agree with him¹. It is very true that the greatest part of it is upon the topicks of the day, on which account, as it brought him great fame and profit at the time², it must proportionally slide out of the publick attention as other occasional objects succeed. But Churchill had extraordinary vigour both of thought and expression. His portraits of the players will ever be valuable to the true lovers of the drama; and his strong caricatures of several eminent men of his age, will not be forgotten by the curious. Let me add, that there are in his works many passages which are of a general nature³; and his *Prophecy of Famine* is a poem of no ordinary merit. It is, indeed, falsely injurious to Scotland, but therefore may be allowed a greater share of invention.

Bonnell Thornton had just published a burlesque *Ode on St. Cecilia's day, adapted to the ancient British musick, viz. the salt-box, the jew's-harp, the marrow-bones and cleaver, the*

¹ 'Cowper had a higher opinion of Churchill than of any other contemporary writer. "It is a great thing," he said, "to be indeed a poet, and does not happen to more than one man in a century; but Churchill, the great Churchill, deserved that name." He made him, more than any other writer, his model.' Southey's *Cowper*, i. 87, 8.

² Mr. Forster says that 'Churchill asked five guineas for the manuscript of *The Rosciad* (according to Southey, but Mr. Tooke says he asked twenty pounds).' Finding no purchaser he brought the poem out at his own risk. Mr. Forster continues:—'The pulpit had starved him on forty pounds a year; the public had given him a thousand pounds in two months.' Forster's *Essays*, ii. 226, 240. As *The Rosciad* was sold at one shilling a copy, it seems incredible that such a gain could have been made, even with the profits of *The Apology* included. 'Blotting and correcting was so much Churchill's abhorrence that I have heard from his publisher he once energetically expressed himself, that it was like cutting away one's own flesh.' D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, ed. 1834, iii. 129. D'Israeli 'had heard that after a successful work he usually precipitated the publication of another, relying on its crudeness being passed over by the public curiosity excited by its better brother. He called this getting double pay, for thus he secured the sale of a hurried work.'

³ In the opening lines of *Gotham*, Bk. iii, there is a passage of great beauty and tenderness.

humstrum or hurdy-gurdy, &c. Johnson praised its humour, and seemed much diverted with it. He repeated the following passage:—

'In strains more exalted the salt-box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine;
With a rap and a tap while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling rebounds!'

I mentioned the periodical paper called *The Connoisseur*². He said it wanted matter.—No doubt it has not the deep thinking of Johnson's writings. But surely it has just views of the surface of life, and a very sprightly manner. His opinion of *The World* was not much higher than of *The Connoisseur*.

Let me here apologize for the imperfect manner in which I am obliged to exhibit Johnson's conversation at this period. In the early part of my acquaintance with him, I was so wrapt in admiration of his extraordinary colloquial talents, and so little accustomed to his peculiar mode of expression, that I found it extremely difficult to recollect and record his conversation with its genuine vigour and vivacity. In progress of time, when my mind was, as it were, *strongly impregnated with the Johnsonian æther*, I could, with much more facility and exactness, carry in my memory and commit to paper the exuberant variety of his wisdom and wit.

At this time *Miss Williams*, as she was then called, though she did not reside with him in the Temple under his roof, but had lodgings in Bolt-court, Fleet-street³, had so much of

¹ In 1769 I set Thornton's burlesque *Ode*. It was performed at Ranelagh in masks, to a very crowded audience, as I was told; for I then resided in Norfolk. BURNEY. Dr. Burney's note cannot be correct. He came to reside in London in 1760 (*Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, i. 133). The *Ode* is in the list of 'new books, published' in the *Gent. Mag.* for June 1763, and is described as having been performed at Ranelagh.

² *The Connoisseur* was started by Thornton and Colman in 1754. Cowper and Lloyd were contributors. Southey's *Cowper*, i. 46, 49, 65.

³ See *ante*, p. 405, note 3.

his attention, that he every night drank tea with her before he went home, however late it might be, and she always sat up for him. This, it may be fairly conjectured, was not alone a proof of his regard for *her*, but of his own unwillingness to go into solitude, before that unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose. Dr. Goldsmith, being a privileged man, went with him this night, strutting away, and calling to me with an air of superiority, like that of an esoterick over an exoterick disciple of a sage of antiquity, 'I go to Miss Williams.' I confess, I then envied him this mighty privilege, of which he seemed so proud; but it was not long before I obtained the same mark of distinction¹.

On Tuesday the 5th of July, I again visited Johnson. He told me he had looked into the poems of a pretty voluminous writer, Mr. (now Dr.) John Ogilvie, one of the Presbyterian ministers of Scotland, which had lately come out, but could find no thinking in them. BOSWELL. 'Is there not imagination in them, Sir?' JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, there is in them what *was* imagination, but it is no more imagination in *him* than sound is sound in the echo. And his diction too is not his own. We have long ago seen *white-robed innocence*, and *flower-bespangled meads*.'

Talking of London, he observed, 'Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists.'—I have often amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people. They, whose narrow minds are contracted to the consideration of some one particular pursuit, view it only through that medium. A politician thinks of it merely as the seat of government in its different departments; a grazier, as a vast market for cattle; a mercantile man, as a place

¹ See *post*, Aug. 2, 1763, and Oct. 26, 1769.

where a prodigious deal of business is done upon 'Change; a dramattick enthusiast, as the grand scene of theatrical entertainments; a man of pleasure, as an assemblage of taverns, and the great emporium for ladies of easy virtue. But the intellectual man is struck with it, as comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible¹.

On Wednesday, July 6, he was engaged to sup with me at my lodgings in Downing-street, Westminster. But on the preceding night my landlord having behaved very rudely to me and some company who were with me, I had resolved not to remain another night in his house. I was exceedingly uneasy at the awkward appearance I supposed I should make to Johnson and the other gentlemen whom I had invited, not being able to receive them at home, and being obliged to order supper at the Mitre. I went to Johnson in the morning, and talked of it as a serious distress. He laughed, and said, 'Consider, Sir, how insignificant this will appear a twelvemonth hence.'—Were this consideration to be applied to most of the little vexatious incidents of life, by which our quiet is too often disturbed, it would prevent many painful sensations. I have tried it frequently, with good effect. 'There is nothing (continued he) in this mighty misfortune; nay, we shall be better at the Mitre.' I told him that I had been at Sir John Fielding's office, complaining of my landlord, and had been informed, that though I had taken my lodgings for a year, I might, upon proof of his bad behaviour, quit them when I pleased, without being under an obligation to pay rent for any longer time than while I possessed them. The fertility of Johnson's mind could shew itself even upon so small a matter as this. 'Why, Sir, (said he,) I suppose this must be the law, since you have been told so in Bow-street. But, if your landlord could hold you to your bargain, and the lodgings should be yours for a year, you may certainly use them as you think fit. So, Sir, you may quarter two life-guardsmen upon him; or you may send the greatest

¹ See *post*, Sept. 20, 1777, note.

scoundrel you can find into your apartments; or you may say that you want to make some experiments in natural philosophy, and may burn a large quantity of assafœtida in his house.'

I had as my guests this evening at the Mitre tavern, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Eccles, an Irish gentleman, for whose agreeable company I was obliged to Mr. Davies, and the Reverend Mr. John Ogilvie¹, who was desirous of being in company with my illustrious friend, while I, in my turn, was proud to have the honour of shewing one of my countrymen upon what easy terms Johnson permitted me to live with him.

Goldsmith, as usual, endeavoured, with too much eagerness to *shine*², and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, 'the King can do no wrong;' affirming, that 'what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the King might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the King is the head; he is supreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore, it is, Sir, that we hold the King can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may

¹ The northern bard mentioned page 488. When I asked Dr. Johnson's permission to introduce him, he obligingly agreed; adding, however, with a sly pleasantry, 'but he must give us none of his poetry.' It is remarkable that Johnson and Churchill, however much they differed on other points, agreed on this subject. See Churchill's *Journey*.

[Under dark Allegory's flimsy veil

Let Them with Ogilvie spin out a tale

Of rueful length.' Churchill's *Poems*, ii. 329.]

It is, however, but justice to Dr. Ogilvie to observe, that his *Day of Judgement* has no inconsiderable share of merit. BOSWELL.

² 'Johnson said:—"Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to *shine* in conversation."' *Post*, April 27, 1773. See also *post*, May 7, 1773.

not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty¹. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot force a Judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the Judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*' I mark this animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers; because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government².

This generous sentiment, which he uttered with great fervour, struck me exceedingly, and stirred my blood to that pitch of fancied resistance, the possibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which I trust I never shall be forced.

'Great abilities (said he) are not requisite for an Historian; for in historical composition, all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand;

¹ Fifteen years later Lord George Germaine, Secretary of State, asserted in a debate 'that the King "was his own Minister," which Charles Fox took up admirably, lamenting that His Majesty "was his own *unadvised* Minister."' Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, ii. 314.

² 'The general story of mankind will evince that lawful and settled authority is very seldom resisted when it is well employed. . . . Men are easily kept obedient to those who have temporal dominion in their hands, till their veneration is dissipated by such wickedness and folly as can neither be defended nor concealed.' *The Rambler*, No. 50. See *post*, March 31, 1772.

so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and colouring will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary¹.

'Bayle's *Dictionary* is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most².'

Talking of the eminent writers in Queen Anne's reign, he observed, 'I think Dr. Arbuthnot the first man among them³. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humour. Mr. Addison was, to be sure, a great man; his learning was not profound; but his morality, his humour, and his elegance of writing, set him very high.'

Mr. Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for the topick of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying, that there was very rich land round Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physick there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh⁴. Disconcerted

¹ 'It is natural to believe . . . that no writer has a more easy task than the historian. The philosopher has the works of omniscience to examine. . . . The poet trusts to his invention. . . . But the happy historian has no other labour than of gathering what tradition pours down before him, or records treasure for his use.' *The Rambler*, No. 122.

² See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 21, 1773.

³ 'Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a scholar with great brilliancy of wit; a wit, who in the crowd of life retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 296.

⁴ Goldsmith wrote from Edinburgh in 1753:—'Shall I tire you with a description of this unfruitful country, where I must lead you over their hills all brown with heath, or their vallies scarce able to feed a rabbit? Man alone seems to be the only creature who has arrived to the natural size in this poor soil. Every part of the country presents the same dismal landscape.' Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 433.

a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. JOHNSON. 'I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!' This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those, who admire the rude grandeur of Nature, cannot deny it to Caledonia.

On Saturday, July 9, I found Johnson surrounded with a numerous levee, but have not preserved any part of his conversation. On the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some common-place observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned²; adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation. Johnson, who, as we have already seen³, denied that the temperature of the air had any influence on the human frame, answered, with a smile of ridicule, 'Why yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals.' This observation of his aptly enough introduced a good supper; and I soon forgot, in Johnson's company, the influence of a moist atmosphere.

Feeling myself now quite at ease as his companion, though I had all possible reverence for him, I expressed a regret that I could not be so easy with my father⁴, though he was

¹ See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Nov. 10, 1773.

² Johnson would suffer none of his friends to fill up chasms in conversation with remarks on the weather: 'Let us not talk of the weather.' BURNEY.

³ See *ante*, p. 385.

⁴ Boswell wrote to Temple on Sept. 9, 1767:—'How unaccountable is it that my father and I should be so ill together! He is a man of sense and a man of worth; but from some unhappy turn in his dis-

not

not much older than Johnson, and certainly however respectable had not more learning and greater abilities to depress me. I asked him the reason of this. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and I take, in some degree, the colour of the world as it moves along. Your father is a Judge in a remote part of the island, and all his notions are taken from the old world. Besides, Sir, there must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence'.¹ I said, I was afraid my father would force me to be a lawyer. JOHNSON. 'Sir, you need not be afraid of his forcing you to be a laborious practising lawyer; that is not in his power. For as the proverb says, "One man may lead a horse to the water, but twenty cannot make him drink." He may be displeased that you are not what he wishes you to be; but that displeasure will not go far. If he insists only on your having as much law as is necessary for a man of property, and then endeavours to get you into Parliament, he is quite in the right.'

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of

position he is much dissatisfied with a son whom you know. I write to him with warmth, with an honest pride, wishing that he should think of me as I am; but my letters shock him, and every expression in them is interpreted unfavourably. To give you an instance, I send you a letter I had from him a few days ago. How galling is it to the friend of Paoli to be treated so! I have answered him in my own style; I will be myself.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 110. In the following passage in one of his *Hypochondriacks* he certainly describes his father. 'I knew a father who was a violent Whig, and used to attack his son for being a Tory, upbraiding him with being deficient in "noble sentiments of liberty," while at the same time he made this son live under his roof in such bondage, that he was not only afraid to stir from home without leave, like a child, but durst scarcely open his mouth in his father's presence. This was sad living. Yet I would rather see such an excess of awe than a degree of familiarity between father and son by which all reverence is destroyed.' *London Mag.* 1781, p. 253.

¹ Boswell, the day after this talk, wrote:—'I have had a long letter from my father, full of affection and good counsel. Honest man! he is now very happy: it is amazing to think how much he has had at heart, my pursuing the road of civil life.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 25.

rhyme

rhyme over blank verse in English poetry¹. 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 other²; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have HUGGED him.'

Talking of those who denied the truth of Christianity, he said, 'It is always easy to be on the negative side. If a man were now to deny that there is salt upon the table, you could not reduce him to an absurdity. Come, let us try this a little further. I deny that Canada is taken, and I can support my denial by pretty good arguments. The French are a much more numerous people than we; and it is not likely that they would allow us to take it. "But the ministry have assured us, in all the formality of *The Gazette*, that it is taken."—Very true. But the ministry have put us to an enormous expence by the war in America, and it is their interest to persuade us that we have got something for our money.—"But the fact is confirmed by thousands of men who were at the taking of it."—Ay, but these men have still more interest in deceiving us. They don't want that you

¹ Gray, says Nicholls, 'disliked all poetry in blank verse, except Milton.' Gray's *Works*, ed. 1858, v. 36. Goldsmith, in his *Present State of Polite Learning* (ch. xi.), wrote in 1759:—'From a desire in the critic of grafting the spirit of ancient languages upon the English have proceeded of late several disagreeable instances of pedantry. Among the number, I think, we may reckon blank verse. Nothing but the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing; however, we now see it used upon the most trivial occasions.' On the same page he speaks of 'the tuneless flow of our blank verse.' See *post*, 1770, in Dr. Maxwell's *Collectanea* and the beginning of 1781, under *The Life of Milton*, for Johnson's opinion of blank verse.

² 'Johnson told me, that one day in London, when Dr. Adam Smith was boasting of Glasgow, he turned to him and said, "Pray, Sir, have you ever seen Brentford?"' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 29, 1773. See *post*, April 29, 1778.

should

should think the French have beat them, but that they have beat the French. Now suppose you should go over and find that it is really taken, that would only satisfy yourself; for when you come home we will not believe you. We will say, you have been bribed.—Yet, Sir, notwithstanding all these plausible objections, we have no doubt that Canada is really ours. Such is the weight of common testimony. How much stronger are the evidences of the Christian religion!

‘Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in a day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge!’

To a man of vigorous intellect and arduous curiosity like his own, reading without a regular plan may be beneficial; though even such a man must submit to it, if he would attain a full understanding of any of the sciences.

To such a degree of unrestrained frankness had he now accustomed me, that in the course of this evening I talked of the numerous reflections which had been thrown out against him² on account of his having accepted a pension from his

¹ ‘He advised me to read just as inclination prompted me, which alone, he said, would do me any good; for I had better go into company than read a set task. He said, too, that I should prescribe to myself five hours a day, and in these hours gratify whatever literary desires may spring up.’ *Letters of Boswell*, p. 28. The Editor of these *Letters* compares Tranio’s advice:—

‘No profit grows where is no pleasure ta’en:
In brief, Sir, study what you most affect.’

Taming of the Shrew, act i. sc. 1.

‘Johnson used to say that no man read long together with a folio on his table. “Books,” said he, “that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all.”’ Johnson’s *Works* (1787), xi. 197. See also *The Idler*, No. 67, and *post*, April 12, 1776, and under Sept. 22, 1777.

² Wilkes, among others, had attacked him in Aug. 1762 in *The North Briton*, Nos. xi. and xii.

present Majesty. 'Why, Sir, (said he, with a hearty laugh.) it is a mighty foolish noise that they make'. I have accepted of a pension as a reward which has been thought due to my literary merit; and now that I have this pension, I am the same man in every respect that I have ever been²; I retain the same principles. It is true, that I cannot now curse (smiling) the House of Hanover; nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me money to pay for. But, Sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year.'

There was here, most certainly, an affectation of more Jacobitism than he really had; and indeed an intention of admitting, for the moment, in a much greater extent than it really existed, the charge of disaffection imputed to him by the world³, merely for the purpose of shewing how dexterously he could repel an attack, even though he were placed in the most disadvantageous position; for I have heard him declare, that if holding up his right hand would have secured victory at Culloden to Prince Charles's army, he was not sure

¹ When I mentioned the same idle clamour to him several years afterwards, he said, with a smile, 'I wish my pension were twice as large, that they might make twice as much noise.' BOSWELL.

² In one thing at least he was changed. He could now indulge in the full bent, to use his own words (*Works*, viii. 136), 'that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestick engagements.'

³ See *post*, April 13, 1773, Sept. 17 and 19, 1777, March 21, 1783, and June 9, 1784. Lord Shelburne says:—'After the Revolution the Tory and Jacobite parties had become almost identified by their together opposing the Court for so many years, and still more by the persecution which they suffered in common, for it was the policy of Sir Robert Walpole to confound them as much as possible, so as to throw the Jacobite odium upon every man who opposed government.' Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 35. Lord Bolingbroke (*Works*, iii. 28) complains that the writers on the side of the ministry 'frequently throw out that every man is a friend to the Pretender who is not a friend to Walpole.'

he would have held it up; so little confidence had he in the right claimed by the house of Stuart, and so fearful was he of the consequences of another revolution on the throne of Great-Britain; and Mr. Topham Beauclerk assured me, he had heard him say this before he had his pension. At another time he said to Mr. Langton, 'Nothing has ever offered, that has made it worth my while to consider the question fully.' He, however, also said to the same gentleman, talking of King James the Second, 'It was become impossible for him to reign any longer in this country'.¹ He no doubt had an early attachment to the House of Stuart; but his zeal had cooled as his reason strengthened. Indeed I heard him once say, that 'after the death of a violent Whig, with whom he used to contend with great eagerness, he felt his Toryism much abated'.² I suppose he meant Mr. Walmsley³.

Yet there is no doubt that at earlier periods he was wont often to exercise both his pleasantry and ingenuity in talking Jacobitism. My much respected friend, Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, has favoured me with the following admirable instance from his Lordship's own recollection. One day when dining at old Mr. Langton's where Miss Roberts⁴, his niece, was one of the company, Johnson, with his usual complacent attention to the fair sex, took her by the hand and said, 'My dear, I hope you are a Jacobite.' Old Mr. Langton, who, though a high and steady Tory, was attached to the present Royal Family, seemed offended, and asked Johnson, with great warmth, what he could mean by putting such a question to his niece? 'Why, Sir, (said Johnson) I meant no offence to your niece, I meant her a great compliment. A Jacobite, Sir, believes in the divine right of Kings. He that believes in the divine right of Kings

¹ See *post*, April 6, 1775.

² *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 402 [Nov. 10]. BOSWELL.

³ Mr. Walmsley died in 1751 (*ante*, p. 94). Johnson left Lichfield in 1737. Unless Mr. Walmsley after 1737 visited London from time to time, he can scarcely be meant.

⁴ See *ante*, p. 389.

believes in a Divinity. A Jacobite believes in the divine right of Bishops. He that believes in the divine right of Bishops believes in the divine authority of the Christian religion. Therefore, Sir, a Jacobite is neither an Atheist nor a Deist. That cannot be said of a Whig; for *Whiggism is a negation of all principle*¹.

He advised me, when abroad, to be as much as I could with the Professors in the Universities, and with the Clergy; for from their conversation I might expect the best accounts of every thing in whatever country I should be, with the additional advantage of keeping my learning alive.

It will be observed, that when giving me advice as to my travels, Dr. Johnson did not dwell upon cities, and palaces, and pictures, and shows, and Arcadian scenes. He was of Lord Essex's opinion, who advises his kinsman Roger Earl of Rutland, 'rather to go an hundred miles to speak with one wise man, than five miles to see a fair town².'

¹ He used to tell, with great humour, from my relation to him, the following little story of my early years, which was literally true: 'Boswell, in the year 1745, was a fine boy, wore a white cockade, and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles (General Cochran) gave him a shilling on condition that he should pray for King George, which he accordingly did. So you see (says Boswell) that *Whigs of all ages are made the same way*.' BOSWELL. Johnson, in his *Dictionary* under *Whiggism*, gives only one quotation, namely, from Swift: 'I could quote passages from fifty pamphlets, wholly made up of whiggism and atheism.' See *post*, April 28, 1778, where he said: 'I have always said, the first *Whig* was the Devil;' and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 21 and Nov. 8, 1773. To Johnson's sayings might be opposed one of Lord Chatham's in the House of Lords: 'There are some distinctions which are inherent in the nature of things. There is a distinction between right and wrong—between Whig and Tory.' *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 1107.

² *Letter to Rutland on Travel*, 16mo. 1569. BOSWELL. This letter is contained in a little volume entitled, *Profitable Instructions; describing what special observations are to be taken by travellers in all nations, states and countries; pleasant and profitable. By the three much admired, Robert, late Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney, and Secretary Davison. London. Printed for Benjamin Fisher, at the Sign of the Talbot, without Aldersgate.* 1633. (Lowndes gives the date of 1613, but the earliest edition seems to be this of 1633.) The letter from
I described

I described to him an impudent fellow¹ from Scotland, who affected to be a savage, and railed at all established systems. JOHNSON. 'There is nothing surprizing in this, Sir. He wants to make himself conspicuous. He would tumble in a hogstye, as long as you looked at him and called to him to come out. But let him alone, never mind him, and he'll soon give it over.'

I added, that the same person maintained that there was no distinction between virtue and vice. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I see not what honour he can propose to himself from having the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons².'

Sir David Dalrymple, now one of the Judges of Scotland by the title of Lord Hailes, had contributed much to increase my high opinion of Johnson, on account of his writings, long before I attained to a personal acquaintance with him; I, in return, had informed Johnson of Sir David's eminent character for learning and religion³; and Johnson was so much

which Boswell quotes is entitled, *The late E. of E. his advice to the E. of R. in his Travels*. It is dated Greenwich, Jan. 4, 1596. Mr. Spedding (Bacon's *Works*, ix. 4) suggests that 'it may have been (wholly or in part) written by Bacon.'

¹ Boswell (*Boswelliana*, p. 210) says that this 'impudent fellow' was Macpherson.

² Boswell repeated this saying and some others to Paoli. 'I felt an elation of mind to see Paoli delighted with the sayings of Mr. Johnson, and to hear him translate them with Italian energy to the Corsican heroes.' Here Boswell describes the person as 'a certain author.' Boswell's *Corsica*, p. 199.

³ Boswell thus takes him off in his comic poem *The Court of Session Garland*:—

"'This cause,'" cries Hailes, "to judge I can't pretend,
For *justice*, I perceive, wants an *e* at the end."

Mr. R. Chambers, in a note on this, says:—"A story is told of Lord Hailes once making a serious objection to a law-paper, and in consequence to the whole suit, on account of the word *justice* being thus spelt.' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, ii. 161. Burke says that he 'found pleased,

pleased, that at one of our evening meetings he gave him for his toast. I at this time kept up a very frequent correspondence with Sir David; and I read to Dr. Johnson to-night the following passage from the letter which I had last received from him:—

‘It gives me pleasure to think that you have obtained the friendship of Mr. Samuel Johnson. He is one of the best moral writers which England has produced. At the same time, I envy you the free and undisguised converse with such a man. May I beg you to present my best respects to him, and to assure him of the veneration which I entertain for the authour of the *Rambler* and of *Rasselas*? Let me recommend this last work to you; with the *Rambler* you certainly are acquainted. In *Rasselas* you will see a tender-hearted operator, who probes the wound only to heal it. Swift, on the contrary, mangles human nature. He cuts and slashes, as if he took pleasure in the operation, like the tyrant who said, *Ita feri ut se sentiat emori*¹.’

Johnson seemed to be much gratified by this just and well-turned compliment.

He recommended to me to keep a journal of my life, full and unreserved². He said it would be a very good exercise, and would yield me great satisfaction when the particulars were faded from my remembrance. I was uncommonly fortunate in having had a previous coincidence of opinion with him upon this subject, for I had kept such a journal for some

him to be a clever man, and generally knowing.’ Burke’s *Corres.* iii. 301. See *ante*, p. 310, and *post*, May 12, 1774, and Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Aug. 17, 1773.

¹ ‘*Ita feri ut se mori sentiat.*’ Suetonius, *Caligula*, chap. xxx.

² Johnson himself was constantly purposing to keep a journal. On April 11, 1773, he told Boswell ‘that he had twelve or fourteen times attempted to keep a journal of his life.’ *post*, April 11, 1773. The day before he had recorded:—‘I hope from this time to keep a journal.’ *Pr. and Med.* p. 124. Like records follow, as:—‘Sept. 24, 1773. My hope is, for resolution I dare no longer call it, to divide my time regularly, and to keep such a journal of my time, as may give me comfort in reviewing it.’ *Ib.* p. 132. ‘April 6, 1777. My purpose once more is To keep a journal.’ *Ib.* p. 161. ‘Jan. 2, 1781. My hope is To keep a journal.’ *Ib.* p. 188. See also *post*, April 14, 1775, and April 10, 1778.
time;

time¹; and it was no small pleasure to me to have this to tell him, and to receive his approbation. He counselled me to keep it private, and said I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death. From this habit I have been enabled to give the world so many anecdotes, which would otherwise have been lost to posterity. I mentioned that I was afraid I put into my journal too many little incidents. JOHNSON. 'There is nothing, Sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible².'

Next morning Mr. Dempster happened to call on me, and was so much struck even with the imperfect account which I gave him of Dr. Johnson's conversation, that to his honour be it recorded, when I complained that drinking port and sitting up late with him affected my nerves for some time after, he said, 'One had better be palsied at eighteen than not keep company with such a man³.'

On Tuesday, July 18⁴, I found tall Sir Thomas Robinson⁵

¹ Boswell, when he was only eighteen, going with his father to the [Scotch] Northern Circuit, 'kept,' he writes, 'an exact journal.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 8. In the autumn of 1762 he also kept a journal which he sent to Temple to read. *Ib.* p. 19.

² 'It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single crush of overwhelming evil, but from small vexations continually repeated.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 333. 'The main of life is indeed composed of small incidents and petty occurrences.' *Ib.* ii. 322. Dr. Franklin (*Memoirs*, i. 199) says:—'Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen as by little advantages that occur every day.'

³ Boswell wrote the next day:—'We sat till between two and three. He took me by the hand cordially, and said, "My dear Boswell, I love you very much." Now Temple, can I help indulging vanity?' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 27. Fourteen years later Boswell was afraid that he kept Johnson too late up. 'No, Sir,' said he, 'I don't care though I sit all night with you.' *Post*, Sept. 23, 1777. See also *post*, April 7, 1779, where Johnson, speaking of these early days, said to Boswell, 'it was not the wine that made your head ache, but the sense that I put into it.'

⁴ Tuesday was the 19th.

⁵ The elder brother of the first Lord Rokeby, called long Sir sitting

sitting with Johnson. Sir Thomas said, that the King of Prussia valued himself upon three things;—upon being a hero, a musician, and an authour. JOHNSON. ‘Pretty well, Sir, for one man. As to his being an authour, I have not looked at his poetry; but his prose is poor stuff. He writes just as you might suppose Voltaire’s footboy to do, who has been his amanuensis. He has such parts as the valet might have, and about as much of the colouring of the style as might be got by transcribing his works.’ When I was at Ferney, I repeated this to Voltaire, in order to reconcile him somewhat to Johnson, whom he, in affecting the English mode of expression¹, had previously characterised as ‘a superstitious dog;’ but after hearing such a criticism on Frederick the Great, with whom he was then on bad terms, he exclaimed, ‘An honest fellow²!’

Thomas Robinson, on account of his height, and to distinguish him from Sir Thomas Robinson, first Lord Grantham. It was on his request for an epigram that Lord Chesterfield made the distich:—

“Unlike my subject will I make my song,
It shall be witty, and it shan’t be long,”

and to whom he said in his last illness, “Ah, Sir Thomas, it will be sooner over with me than it would be with you, for I am dying by inches.” Lord Chesterfield was very short. CROKER. Southey, writing of Rokeby Hall, which belonged to Robinson, says that ‘Long Sir Thomas found a portrait of Richardson in the house; thinking Mr. Richardson a very unfit personage to be suspended in effigy among lords, ladies, and baronets, he ordered the painter to put on him the star and blue riband, and then christened the picture Sir Robert Walpole.’ Southey’s *Life*, iii. 346. See also *ante*, p. 301 note 1, and *post*, 1770, near the end of Dr. Maxwell’s *Collectanea*.

¹ Pennant, who visited Voltaire in 1765, says that, ‘in his attempt to speak English he satisfied us that he was perfect master of our oaths and curses.’ Pennant’s *Literary Life*, p. 6.

² Johnson (*Works*, vi. 440) had written of Frederick the Great in 1756:—‘His skill in poetry and in the French language has been loudly praised by Voltaire, a judge without exception if his honesty were equal to his knowledge.’ Boswell, in his *Hypochondriacks*, records a conversation that he had with Voltaire on memory:—‘I asked him if he could give me any notion of the situation of our ideas which we have totally forgotten at the time, yet shall afterwards recollect.

But

But I think the criticism much too severe; for the *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg* are written as well as many works of that kind. His poetry, for the style of which he himself makes a frank apology, '*Fargonnant un François barbare,*' though fraught with pernicious ravings of infidelity, has, in many places, great animation, and in some a pathetick tenderness¹.

Upon this contemptuous animadversion on the King of Prussia, I observed to Johnson, 'It would seem then, Sir, that much less parts are necessary to make a King, than to make an Authour; for the King of Prussia is confessedly the greatest King now in Europe, yet you think he makes a very poor figure as an Authour.'

Mr. Levet this day shewed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his Chambers, where Lintot, son of the celebrated bookseller of that name, had formerly his warehouse². I found a number of good books, but very dusty and in great confusion³. The floor was

He paused, meditated a little, and acknowledged his ignorance in the spirit of a philosophical poet by repeating as a very happy allusion a passage in Thomson's *Seasons*—"Aye," said he, "*Where sleep the winds when it is calm?*"' *London Mag.* 1783, p. 157. The passage is in Thomson's *Winter*, l. 116:—

'In what far-distant region of the sky,
Hush'd in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis calm?'

¹ See *post*, ii. 62, note 2.

² Bernard Lintot, the father, published Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Over the sale of the *Odyssey* a quarrel arose between the two men. Johnson's *Works*, viii. 251, 274. Lintot is attacked in the *Dunciad*, i. 40 and ii. 53. He was High-Sheriff for Sussex in 1736—the year of his death. *Gent. Mag.* vi. 110. The son is mentioned in Johnson's *Works*, viii. 282.

³ 'July 19, 1763. I was with Mr. Johnson to-day. I was in his garret up four pair of stairs; it is very airy, commands a view of St. Paul's and many a brick roof. He has many good books, but they are all lying in confusion and dust.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 30. On Good Friday, 1764, Johnson made the following entry:—'I hope to put my rooms in order: Disorder I have found one great cause of idleness.' On his birth-day in the same year he wrote:—'To-morrow I purpose to regulate my room.' *Pr. and Med.* pp. 50, 60.

strewed

strewed with manuscript leaves, in Johnson's own handwriting, which I beheld with a degree of veneration, supposing they perhaps might contain portions of *The Rambler* or of *Rasselas*. I observed an apparatus for chymical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond¹. The place seemed to be very favourable for retirement and meditation. Johnson told me, that he went up thither without mentioning it to his servant, when he wanted to study, secure from interruption; for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. 'A servant's strict regard for truth, (said he) must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for *me*, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for *himself*?' I am, however, satisfied that every servant, of any degree of intelligence, understands saying his master is not at home, not at all as the affirmation of a fact, but as customary words, intimating that his master wishes not to be seen; so that there can be no bad effect from it.

Mr. Temple, now vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall², who had been my intimate friend for many years, had at this time chambers in Farrar's-buildings, at the bottom of Inner Temple-lane, which he kindly lent me upon my quitting my lodgings, he being to return to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I

¹ See *ante*, p. 161, and *post*, under Sept. 9, 1779.

² Afterwards Rector of Mamhead, Devonshire. He is the grandfather of the present Bishop of London. He and Boswell had been fellow-students at the University of Edinburgh, and seemed in youth to have had an equal amount of conceit. 'Recollect,' wrote Boswell, 'how you and I flattered ourselves that we were to be the greatest men of our age.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 159. They began to correspond at least as early as 1758. The last letter was one from Boswell on his death-bed. Johnson thus mentions Temple (*Works*, viii. 480):— 'Gray's character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a letter written to my friend Mr. Boswell by the Revd. Mr. Temple, Rector of St. Gluvias in Cornwall; and am as willing as his warmest well-wisher to believe it true.'

found them particularly convenient for me, as they were so near Dr. Johnson's.

On Wednesday, July 20, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Dempster, and my uncle Dr. Boswell, who happened to be now in London, supped with me at these Chambers. JOHNSON. 'Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and finding it late, have bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist. No, Sir, I wish him to drive on.'

Mr. Alexander Donaldson, bookseller of Edinburgh, had for some time opened a shop in London, and sold his cheap editions of the most popular English books, in defiance of the supposed common-law right of *Literary Property*¹. Johnson, though he concurred in the opinion which was afterwards sanctioned by a judgement of the House of Lords², that there was no such right, was at this time very angry that

¹ Johnson (*Works*, vii. 240) quotes the following by Edmund Smith written some time after 1708:—'It will sound oddly to posterity, that, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under the direction of the most wise, most learned, and most generous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the property of a mechanick should be better secured than that of a scholar! that the poorest manual operations should be more valued than the noblest products of the brain! that it should be felony to rob a cobbler of a pair of shoes, and no crime to deprive the best authour of his whole subsistence! that nothing should make a man a sure title to his own writings but the stupidity of them!' See *post*, May 8, 1773, and Feb. 7, 1774; and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 17 and 20, 1773.

² 'The question arose, after the passing of the first statute respecting literary property in 1710, whether by certain of its provisions this perpetual copyright at common law was extinguished for the future. The question was solemnly argued before the Court of King's Bench, when Lord Mansfield presided, in 1769. The result was a decision in the

the Booksellers of London, for whom he uniformly professed much regard, should suffer from an invasion of what they had ever considered to be secure: and he was loud and violent against Mr. Donaldson. 'He is a fellow who takes advantage of the law to injure his brethren; for, notwithstanding that the statute secures only fourteen years of exclusive right, it has always been understood by *the trade*¹, that he, who buys the copyright of a book from the authour, obtains a perpetual property; and upon that belief, numberless bargains are made to transfer that property after the expiration of the statutory term. Now Donaldson, I say, takes advantage here, of people who have really an equitable title from usage; and if we consider how few of the books, of which they buy the property, succeed so well as to bring profit, we should be of opinion that the term of fourteen years is too short; it should be sixty years.' DEMPSTER. 'Donaldson, Sir, is anxious for the

favour of the common-law right as unaltered by the statute, with the disapproval however of Mr. Justice Yates. In 1774 the same point was brought before the House of Lords, and the decision of the court below reversed by a majority of six judges in eleven, as Lord Mansfield, who adhered to the opinion of the minority, declined to interfere; it being very unusual, from motives of delicacy, for a peer to support his own judgment on appeal to the House of Lords.' *Penny Cyclo.* viii. 1. See *post*, Feb. 7, 1774. Lord Shelburne, on Feb. 27, 1774, humorously describes the scene in the Lords to the Earl of Chatham:—'Lord Mansfield showed himself the merest Captain Bobadil that, I suppose, ever existed in real life. You can, perhaps, imagine to yourself the Bishop of Carlyle, an old metaphysical head of a college, reading a paper, not a speech, out of an old sermon book, with very bad sight, leaning on the table, Lord Mansfield sitting at it, with eyes of fixed melancholy looking at him, knowing that the bishop's were the only eyes in the House who could not meet his; the judges behind him, full of rage at being drawn into so absurd an opinion, and abandoned in it by their chief; the Bishops waking, as your Lordship knows they do, just before they vote, and staring on finding something the matter; while Lord Townshend was close to the bar, getting Mr. Dunning to put up his glass to look at the head of criminal justice.' *Chatham Corres.* iv. 327.

¹ See *post*, April 15, 1778, note.

encouragement of literature. He reduces the price of books, so that poor students may buy them¹. JOHNSON, (laughing) 'Well, Sir, allowing that to be his motive, he is no better than Robin Hood, who robbed the rich in order to give to the poor.'

It is remarkable, that when the great question concerning Literary Property came to be ultimately tried before the supreme tribunal of this country, in consequence of the very spirited exertions of Mr. Donaldson², Dr. Johnson was zealous against a perpetuity; but he thought that the term of the exclusive right of authours should be considerably enlarged. He was then for granting a hundred years.

The conversation now turned upon Mr. David Hume's style. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, his style is not English; the structure of his sentences is French³. Now the French structure

¹ Dr. Franklin (*Memoirs*, iii. 178), complaining of the high prices of English books, describes 'the excessive artifices made use of to puff up a paper of verses into a pamphlet, a pamphlet into an octavo, and an octavo into a quarto with white-lines, exorbitant margins, &c., to such a degree that the selling of paper seems now the object, and printing on it only the pretence.'

² Boswell was on friendly terms with him. He wrote to Erskine on Dec. 2, 1761 :—'I am just now returned from eating a most excellent pig with the most magnificent Donaldson.' *Boswell and Erskine Correspondence*, p. 20.

³ Dr. Carlyle (*Auto.* p. 516) says that Lord Mansfield this year (1769) 'talking of Hume and Robertson's *Historics*, said that though he could point out few or no faults in them, yet, when he was reading their books, he did not think he was reading English.' See *post*, ii. 72, for Hume's Scotticisms. Hume went to France in 1734 when he was 23 years old and stayed there three years. Hume's *Autobiography*, p. vii. He never mastered French *colloquially*. Lord Charlemont, who met him in Turin in 1748, says :—'His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent, and his French was, if possible, still more laughable.' Hardy's *Charlemont*, i. 15. Horace Walpole, who met him in Paris in 1765, writes (*Letters*, iv. 426) :—'Mr. Hume is the only thing in the world that they [the French] believe implicitly; which they must do, for I defy them to understand any language that he speaks.' Gibbon (*Misc. Works*, i. 122) says of Hume's writings :—'Their careless inimitable beauties often forced me to close and

and the English structure may, in the nature of things, be equally good. But if you allow that the English language is established, he is wrong. My name might originally have been Nicholson, as well as Johnson; but were you to call me Nicholson now, you would call me very absurdly.'

Rousseau's treatise on the inequality of mankind¹ was at this time a fashionable topick. It gave rise to an observation by Mr. Dempster, that the advantages of fortune and rank were nothing to a wise man, who ought to value only merit. JOHNSON. 'If man were a savage, living in the woods by himself, this might be true; but in civilized society we all depend upon each other, and our happiness is very much owing to the good opinion of mankind. Now, Sir, in civilized society, external advantages make us more respected. A man with a good coat upon his back meets with a better reception than he who has a bad one². Sir, you may analyse this, and say what is there in it? But that will avail you nothing, for it is a part of a general system. Pound St. Paul's Church into atoms, and consider any single atom; it is, to be sure, good for nothing: but, put all these atoms together, and you have St. Paul's Church. So it is with human felicity, which is made up of many ingredients, each of which may be shewn to be very insignificant. In civilized society, personal merit will not serve you so much as money will. Sir, you may make the experiment. Go

the volume with a mixed sensation of delight and despair.' Dr. Beattie (*Life*, p. 243) wrote on Jan. 5, 1778:—'We who live in Scotland are obliged to study English from books, like a dead language, which we understand, but cannot speak.' He adds:—'I have spent some years in labouring to acquire the art of giving a vernacular cast to the English we write.' Dr. A. Carlyle (*Auto.* p. 222) says:—'Since we began to affect speaking a foreign language, which the English dialect is to us, humour, it must be confessed, is less apparent in conversation.'

¹ *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, 1754.

² 'I have indeed myself observed that my banker ever bows lowest to me when I wear my full-bottomed wig, and writes me Mr. or Esq., accordingly as he sees me dressed.' *Spectator*, No. 150.

into

into the street, and give one man a lecture on morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you most. If you wish only to support nature, Sir William Petty fixes your allowance at three pounds a year¹; but as times are much altered, let us call it six pounds. This sum will fill your belly, shelter you from the weather, and even get you a strong lasting coat, supposing it to be made of good bull's hide. Now, Sir, all beyond this is artificial, and is desired in order to obtain a greater degree of respect from our fellow-creatures. And, Sir, if six hundred pounds a year procure a man more consequence, and, of course, more happiness than six pounds a year, the same proportion will hold as to six thousand, and so on as far as opulence can be carried. Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having the large fortune: for, *ceteris paribus*, he who is rich in a civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used, (and it is a man's own fault if they are not,) must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. Rousseau, and all those who deal in paradoxes, are led away by a childish desire of novelty². When I was a boy, I used always to choose the wrong side of a debate, because most

¹ Mr. Croker, quoting Mr. Wright, says:—'See his *Quantulumcunque* (sic) *concerning Money*.' I have read Petty's *Quantulumcunque*, but do not find the passage in it.

² Johnson told Dr. Burney that Goldsmith said, when he first began to write, he determined to commit to paper nothing but what was *new*; but he afterwards found that what was *new* was false, and from that time was no longer solicitous about novelty. BURNLEY. Mr. Forster (*Life of Goldsmith*, i. 421) says that this note 'is another instance of the many various and doubtful forms in which stories about Johnson and Goldsmith are apt to appear when once we lose sight of the trustworthy Boswell. This is obviously a mere confused recollection of what is correctly told by Boswell [*post*, March 26, 1779].' There is much truth in Mr. Forster's general remark: nevertheless Burney likely enough repeated to the best of his memory what he had himself heard from Johnson.

ingenious

ingenious things, that is to say, most new things, could be said upon it. Sir, there is nothing for which you may not muster up more plausible arguments, than those which are urged against wealth and other external advantages. Why, now, there is stealing; why should it be thought a crime? When we consider by what unjust methods property has been often acquired, and that what was unjustly got it must be unjust to keep, where is the harm in one man's taking the property of another from him? Besides, Sir, when we consider the bad use that many people make of their property, and how much better use the thief may make of it, it may be defended as a very allowable practice. Yet, Sir, the experience of mankind has discovered stealing to be so very bad a thing, that they make no scruple to hang a man for it. When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil, shew it to be evidently a great evil. You never find people labouring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune.—So you hear people talking how miserable a King must be; and yet they all wish to be in his place¹.

It was suggested that Kings must be unhappy, because they are deprived of the 'greatest of all satisfactions, easy and unreserved society. JOHNSON. 'That is an ill-founded notion. Being a King does not exclude a man from such society. Great Kings have always been social. The King of Prussia, the only great King at present, is very social².

¹ 'Their [the ancient moralists'] arguments have been, indeed, so unsuccessful, that I know not whether it can be shewn, that by all the wit and reason which this favourite cause has called forth a single convert was ever made; that even one man has refused to be rich, when to be rich was in his power, from the conviction of the greater happiness of a narrow fortune.' Johnson's *Works*, ii. 278. See *post*, June 3, 1781, and June 3, Sept. 7, and Dec. 7, 1782.

² Johnson (*Works*, vi. 440) shows how much Frederick owed to 'the difficulties of his youth.' 'Kings, without this help from temporary

Charles

Charles the Second, the last King of England who was a man of parts, was social; and our Henrys and Edwards were all social.'

Mr. Dempster having endeavoured to maintain that intrinsic merit *ought* to make the only distinction amongst mankind. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavour to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices, gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure¹.'

I said, I considered distinction of rank to be of so much importance in civilised society, that if I were asked on the same day to dine with the first Duke in England, and with the first man in Britain for genius, I should hesitate which to prefer. JOHNSON. 'To be sure, Sir, if you were to dine only once, and it were never to be known where you dined, you would choose rather to dine with the first man for

infelicity, see the world in a mist, which magnifies everything near them, and bounds their view to a narrow compass, which few are able to extend by the mere force of curiosity.' He next points out what Cromwell 'owed to the private condition in which he first entered the world;' and continues:—'The King of Prussia brought to the throne the knowledge of a private man, without the guilt of usurpation. Of this general acquaintance with the world there may be found some traces in his whole life. His conversation is like that of other men upon common topics, his letters have an air of familiar elegance, and his whole conduct is that of a man who has to do with men.'

¹ See *ante*, p. 472.

genius; but to gain most respect, you should dine with the first Duke in England. For nine people in ten that you meet with, would have a higher opinion of you for having dined with a Duke; and the great genius himself would receive you better, because you had been with the great Duke.'

He took care to guard himself against any possible suspicion that his settled principles of reverence for rank and respect for wealth were at all owing to mean or interested motives; for he asserted his own independence as a literary man. 'No man (said he) who ever lived by literature, has lived more independently than I have done.' He said he had taken longer time than he needed to have done in composing his *Dictionary*. He received our compliments upon that great work with complacency, and told us that the Academy *della Crusca*¹ could scarcely believe that it was done by one man.

Next morning I found him alone, and have preserved the following fragments of his conversation. Of a gentleman² who was mentioned, he said, 'I have not met with any man for a long time who has given me such general displeasure. He is totally unfixed in his principles, and wants to puzzle other people.' I said his principles had been poisoned by a noted infidel writer, but that he was, nevertheless, a benevolent good man. JOHNSON. 'We can have no dependance upon that instinctive, that constitutional goodness which is not founded upon principle. I grant you that such a man may be a very amiable member of society. I can conceive

¹ See *ante*, p. 345.

² That this was Mr. Dempster seems likely from the *Letters of Boswell* (p. 34), where Boswell says:—'I had prodigious satisfaction to find Dempster's sophistry (which he has learnt from Hume and Rousseau) vanquished by the solid sense and vigorous reasoning of Johnson. Dempster,' he continues, 'was as happy as a vanquished argumentator could be.' The character of the 'benevolent good man' suits Dempster (see *post*, under Feb. 7, 1775, where Boswell calls him 'the virtuous and candid Dempster'), while that of the 'noted infidel writer' suits Hume. We find Boswell, Johnson, and Dempster again dining together on May 9, 1772.

him placed in such a situation that he is not much tempted to deviate from what is right; and as every man prefers virtue, when there is not some strong incitement to transgress its precepts, I can conceive him doing nothing wrong. But if such a man stood in need of money, I should not like to trust him; and I should certainly not trust him with young ladies, for *there* there is always temptation. Hume, and other sceptical innovators, are vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expence. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull¹. If I could have allowed myself to gratify my vanity at the expence of truth, what fame might I have acquired. Every thing which Hume has advanced against Christianity had passed through my mind long before he wrote. Always remember this, that after a system is well settled upon positive evidence, a few partial objections ought not to shake it. The human mind is so limited, that it cannot take in all the parts of a subject, so that there may be objections raised against any thing. There are objections against a *plenum*, and objections against a *vacuum*; yet one of them must certainly be true².

I mentioned Hume's argument against the belief of miracles, that it is more probable that the witnesses to the

¹ 'Thou wilt at best but suck a bull,
Or sheer swine, all cry and no wool.'

Hudibras, Part i. Canto 1. l. 851.

Dr. Z. Grey, in his note on these lines, quotes the proverbial saying 'As wise as the Waltham calf that went nine times to suck a bull.' He quotes also from *The Spectator*, No. 138, the passage where the Cynic said of two disputants, 'One of these fellows is milking a ram, and the other holds the pail.'

² The writer of the article *Vacuum* in the *Penny Cyclo.* (xxvi. 76), quoting Johnson's words, adds:—'That is, either all space is full of matter, or there are parts of space which have no matter. The alternative is undeniable, and the inference to which the modern philosophy would give the greatest probability is, that all space is full of matter in the common sense of the word, but really occupied by particles of matter with vacuous interstices.'

truth of them are mistaken, or speak falsely, than that the miracles should be true¹. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, the great difficulty of proving miracles should make us very cautious in believing them. But let us consider; although GOD has made Nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think that he may suspend those laws, in order to establish a system highly advantageous to mankind. Now the Christian religion is a most beneficial system, as it gives us light and certainty where we were before in darkness and doubt. The miracles which prove it are attested by men who had no interest in deceiving us; but who, on the contrary, were told that they should suffer persecution, and did actually lay down their lives in confirmation of the truth of the facts which they asserted. Indeed, for some centuries the heathens did not pretend to deny the miracles; but said they were performed by the aid of evil spirits. This is a circumstance of great weight. Then, Sir, when we take the proofs derived from prophecies which have been so exactly fulfilled, we have most satisfactory evidence. Supposing a miracle possible, as to which, in my opinion, there can be no doubt, we have as strong evidence for the miracles in support of Christianity, as the nature of the thing admits.'

At night Mr. Johnson and I supped in a private room at the Turk's Head coffee-house, in the Strand². 'I encourage this house (said he;) for the mistress of it is a good civil woman, and has not much business.'

'Sir, I love the acquaintance of young people; because, in the first place, I don't like to think myself growing old. In the next place, young acquaintances must last longest, if they do last; and then, Sir, young men have more virtue than old

¹ 'When any one tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened.' Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, Part i. See *post*, Sept. 22, 1777, where Boswell again quotes this passage.

² A coffee-house over against Catherine Street, now the site of a tourists' ticket office. *Athenæum*, No. 3041.

men; they have more generous sentiments in every respect¹. I love the young dogs of this age: they have more wit and humour and knowledge of life than we had; but then the dogs are not so good scholars. Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now². My judgement, to be sure, was not so good; but I had all the facts. I remember very well, when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to me, "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task."

This account of his reading, given by himself in plain words, sufficiently confirms what I have already advanced upon the disputed question as to his application. It reconciles any seeming inconsistency in his way of talking upon it at different times; and shews that idleness and reading hard were with him relative terms, the import of which, as used by him, must be gathered from a comparison with what scholars of different degrees of ardour and assiduity have been known to do. And let it be remembered, that he was now talking spontaneously, and expressing his genuine sentiments; whereas at other times he might be induced from his spirit of contradiction, or more properly from his love of argumentative contest, to speak lightly of his own application

¹ Stockdale records (*Memoirs*, i. 202) that Johnson once said to him:—'Whenever it is the duty of a young and old man to act at the same time with a spirit of independence and generosity; we may always have reason to hope that the young man will ardently perform, and to fear that the old man will desert, his duty.'

² Boswell thus writes of this evening:—'I learn more from him than from any man I ever was with. He told me a very odd thing, that he knew at eighteen as much as he does now; that is to say, his judgement is much stronger, but he had then stored up almost all the facts he has now, and he says that he has led but an idle life; only think, Temple, of that!' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 34. See *ante*, p. 65, and *post*, ii. 41. He told Windham in 1784 'that he read Latin with as much ease when he went to college as at present.' Windham's *Diary*, p. 17.

to study. It is pleasing to consider that the old gentleman's gloomy prophecy as to the irksomeness of books to men of an advanced age, which is too often fulfilled, was so far from being verified in Johnson, that his ardour for literature never failed, and his last writings had more ease and vivacity than any of his earlier productions.

He mentioned to me now, for the first time, that he had been distressed by melancholy, and for that reason had been obliged to fly from study and meditation, to the dissipating variety of life. Against melancholy he recommended constant occupation of mind, a great deal of exercise, moderation in eating and drinking, and especially to shun drinking at night. He said melancholy people were apt to fly to intemperance for relief, but that it sunk them much deeper in misery¹. He observed, that labouring men who work hard, and live sparingly, are seldom or never troubled with low spirits.

He again insisted on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank. 'Sir, I would no more deprive a nobleman of

¹ Johnson in 1739 wrote of 'those distempers and depressions, from which students, not well acquainted with the constitution of the human body, sometimes fly for relief to wine instead of exercise, and purchase temporary ease, by the hazard of the most dreadful consequences.' *Works*, vi. 271. In *The Rambler*, No. 85, he says:—'How much happiness is gained, and how much misery is escaped, by frequent and violent agitation of the body.' Boswell records (*Hebrides*, Sept. 24, 1773):—'Dr. Johnson told us at breakfast, that he rode harder at a fox-chace than anybody.' Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 206) says:—'He certainly rode on Mr. Thrale's old hunter with a good firmness, and, though he would follow the hounds fifty miles an end sometimes, would never own himself either tired or amused. I think no praise ever went so close to his heart, as when Mr. Hamilton called out one day upon Brighthelmstone Downs, "Why Johnson rides as well, for aught I see, as the most illiterate fellow in England."' He wrote to Mrs. Thrale in 1777:—'No season ever was finer. Barley, malt, beer and money. There is the series of ideas. The deep logicians call it a *sorites*. I hope my master will no longer endure the reproach of not keeping me a horse.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 360. See *post*, March 19 and 28, 1776, Sept. 20, 1777, and Nov. 21, 1778.

his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he Sam. Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay¹ in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, "Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us²." I thus, Sir, shewed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?' I mentioned a certain authour who disgusted me by his forwardness, and by shewing no deference to noblemen into whose company he was admitted. JOHNSON. 'Suppose a shoemaker should claim an equality with him, as he does with a Lord; how he would stare. "Why, Sir, do you stare? (says the shoemaker,) I do great service to society. 'Tis true I am paid for doing it; but so are you, Sir: and I am sorry to say it, paid better

¹ This *one* Mrs. Macaulay was the same personage who afterwards made herself so much known as 'the celebrated female historian.' BOSWELL. Hannah More (*Memoirs*, i. 234) tells the following story of Mrs. Macaulay's daughter:—'Desirous from civility to take some notice of her, and finding she was reading *Shakespeare*, I asked her if she was not delighted with many parts of *King John*. "I never read the *Kings*, ma'am," was the truly characteristic reply.' See *post*, April 13, 1773, and May 15, 1776.

² This speech was perhaps suggested to Johnson by the following passage in *The Government of the Tongue* (p. 106)—a book which he quotes in his *Dictionary*:—'Lycurgus once said to one who importuned him to establish a popular parity in the state, "Do thou," says he, "begin it first in thine own family."'

than

than I am, for doing something not so necessary. For mankind could do better without your books, than without my shoes." Thus, Sir, there would be a perpetual struggle for precedence, were there no fixed invariable rules for the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy, as it is allowed to be accidental.'

He said, Dr. Joseph Warton was a very agreeable man, and his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, a very pleasing book. I wondered that he delayed so long to give us the continuation of it¹. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, I suppose he finds himself a little disappointed, in not having been able to persuade the world to be of his opinion as to Pope.'

We have now been favoured with the concluding volume, in which, to use a parliamentary expression, he has *explained*, so as not to appear quite so adverse to the opinion of the world, concerning Pope, as was at first thought²; and we must all agree that his work is a most valuable accession to English literature.

A writer of deserved eminence³ being mentioned, Johnson

¹ The first volume was published in 1756, the second in 1782.

² Warton, to use his own words, 'did not think Pope at the head of his profession. In other words, in that species of poetry wherein Pope excelled, he is superior to all mankind; and I only say that this species of poetry is not the most excellent one of the art.' He disposes the English poets in four classes, placing in the first only Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. 'In the second class should be ranked such as possessed the true poetical genius in a more moderate degree, but who had noble talents for moral, ethical, and panegyric poetry.' In this class, in his concluding volume, he says, 'we may venture to assign Pope a place, just above Dryden. Yet, to bring our minds steadily to make this decision, we must forget, for a moment, the divine *Music Ode of Dryden*; and may, perhaps, then be compelled to confess that though Dryden be the greater genius, yet Pope is the better artist.' Warton's *Essay*, i. i. vii. and ii. 404. See *post*, March 31, 1772.

³ Mr. Croker believes Joseph Warton was meant. His father, however, had been Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and was afterwards Vicar of Basingstroke and Cobham, and Professor of Poetry in his own University, so that the son could scarcely be described as
said,

said, 'Why, Sir, he is a man of good parts, but being originally poor, he has got a love of mean company and low jocularly; a very bad thing, Sir. To laugh is good, as to talk is good. But you ought no more to think it enough if you laugh, than you are to think it enough if you talk. You may laugh in as many ways as you talk; and surely every way of talking that is practised cannot be esteemed.'

I spoke of Sir James Macdonald¹ as a young man of most distinguished merit, who united the highest reputation at Eaton and Oxford, with the patriarchal spirit of a great Highland Chieftain. I mentioned that Sir James had said to me, that he had never seen Mr. Johnson, but he had a

being 'originally poor.' It is, no doubt, after Boswell's fashion to introduce in consecutive paragraphs the same person once by name and once anonymously; but then the 'certain author who disgusted Boswell by his forwardness,' mentioned just before Warton, may be Warton himself.

¹ 'When he arrived at Eton he could not make a verse; that is, he wanted a point indispensable with us to a certain rank in our system. But this wonderful boy, having satisfied the Master [Dr. Barnard] that he was an admirable scholar, and possessed of genius, was at once placed at the head of a form. He acquired the rules of Latin verse; tried his powers; and perceiving that he could not rise above his rivals in Virgil, Ovid, or the lyric of Horace, he took up the *sermoni propiora*, and there overshadowed all competitors. In the following lines he describes the hammer of the auctioneer with a mock sublimity which turns Horace into Virgil:—

'Jam-jamque cadit, celerique recursu

Erigitur, lapsum retrahens, perque aera nutat.'

Nichols's *Lit. Anec.* viii. 547.

Horace Walpole wrote of him in Sept. 1765 (*Letters*, iv. 411):—'He is a very extraordinary young man for variety of learning. He is rather too wise for his age, and too fond of showing it; but when he has seen more of the world, he will choose to know less.' He died at Rome in the following year. Hume, on hearing the news, wrote to Adam Smith:—'Were you and I together, dear Smith, we should shed tears at present for the death of poor Sir James Macdonald. We could not possibly have suffered a greater loss than in that valuable young man.' J. H. Burton's *Hume*, ii. 349. See Boswell's *Heb-rides*, Sept. 5, 1773.

great

great respect for him, though at the same time it was mixed with some degree of terrour¹. JOHNSON. 'Sir, if he were to be acquainted with me, it might lessen both.'

The mention of this gentleman led us to talk of the Western Islands of Scotland, to visit which he expressed a wish that then appeared to me a very romantick fancy, which I little thought would be afterwards realised². He told me, that his father had put Martin's account of those islands into his hands when he was very young, and that he was highly pleased with it; that he was particularly struck with the St. Kilda man's notion that the high church of Glasgow had been hollowed out of a rock³; a circumstance to which old

¹ Boswell says that Macdonald had for Johnson 'a great terrour.' (*Boswelliana*, p. 216.) Northcote (*Life of Reynolds*, i. 329) says:—'It is a fact that a certain nobleman, an intimate friend of Reynolds, had strangely conceived in his mind such a formidable idea of all those persons who had gained great fame as literary characters, that I have heard Sir Joshua say, he verily believed he could no more have prevailed upon this noble person to dine at the same table with Johnson and Goldsmith than with two tigers.' According to Mr. Seward (*Biographiana*, p. 600), Mrs. Cotterell having one day asked Dr. Johnson to introduce her to a celebrated writer, 'Dearest madam,' said he, 'you had better let it alone; the best part of every author is in general to be found in his book, I assure you.' Mr. Seward refers to *The Rambler*, No. 14, where Johnson says that 'there has often been observed a manifest and striking contrariety between the life of an authour and his writings.'

² See *post*, Jan. 19, 1775. In his *Hebrides* (p. 1) Boswell writes:—'When I was at Ferney, in 1764, I mentioned our design to Voltaire. He looked at me as if I had talked of going to the North Pole, and said, "You do not insist on my accompanying you?" "No, Sir." "Then I am very willing you should go."'

³ 'When he went through the streets he desired to have one to lead him by the hand. They asked his opinion of the high church. He answered that it was a large rock, yet there were some in St. Kilda much higher, but that these were the best caves he ever saw; for that was the idea which he conceived of the pillars and arches upon which the church stands.' M. Martin's *Western Isles*, p. 297. Mr. Croker compares the passage in *The Spectator* (No. 50), in which an Indian king is made to say of St. Paul's:—'It was probably at first an huge misshapen rock that grew upon the top of the hill, which the

Mr.

Mr. Johnson had directed his attention. He said he would go to the Hebrides with me, when I returned from my travels, unless some very good companion should offer when I was absent, which he did not think probable; adding, 'There are few people to whom I take so much to as you.' And when I talked of my leaving England, he said with a very affectionate air, 'My dear Boswell, I should be very unhappy at parting, did I think we were not to meet again'.¹ I cannot too often remind my readers, that although such instances of his kindness are doubtless very flattering to me, yet I hope my recording them will be ascribed to a better motive than to vanity; for they afford unquestionable evidence of his tenderness and complacency, which some, while they were forced to acknowledge his great powers, have been so strenuous to deny.

He maintained that a boy at school was the happiest of human beings². I supported a different opinion, from which I have never yet varied, that a man is happier; and I enlarged upon the anxiety and sufferings which are endured at school. JOHNSON. 'Ah! Sir, a boy's being flogged is not so severe as a man's having the hiss of the world against him. Men have a solicitude about fame³; and the greater

natives of the country (after having cut it into a kind of regular figure) bored and hollowed with incredible pains and industry.'

¹ Boswell, writing to Temple the next day, slightly varies these words:—'He said, "My dear Boswell, it would give me great pain to part with you, if I thought we were not to meet again."' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 34.

² Gibbon (*Misc. Works*, i. 43) protests against 'the trite and lavish praise of the happiness of our boyish years, which is echoed with so much affectation in the world. That happiness I have never known, that time I have never regretted. The poet may gaily describe the short hours of recreation; but he forgets the daily tedious labours of the school, which is approached each morning with anxious and reluctant steps.' See *ante*, p. 51, and *post*, under Feb. 27, 1772.

³ About fame Gibbon felt much as Johnson did. 'I am disgusted,' he wrote (*ib.* 272), 'with the affectation of men of letters, who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow, and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight) affords a share

share they have of it, the more afraid they are of losing it.' I silently asked myself, 'Is it possible that the great SAMUEL JOHNSON really entertains any such apprehension, and is not confident that his exalted fame is established upon a foundation never to be shaken?'

He this evening drank a bumper to Sir David Dalrymple¹, 'as a man of worth, a scholar, and a wit.' 'I have (said he) never heard of him except from you; but let him know my opinion of him: for as he does not shew himself much in the world, he should have the praise of the few who hear of him.'

On Tuesday, July 26, I found Mr. Johnson alone. It was a very wet day, and I again complained of the disagreeable effects of such weather. JOHNSON. 'Sir, this is all imagination, which physicians encourage: for man lives in air, as a fish lives in water; so that if the atmosphere press heavy from above, there is an equal resistance from below. To be sure, bad weather is hard upon people who are obliged to be abroad; and men cannot labour so well in the open air in bad weather, as in good: but, Sir, a smith or a taylor, whose work is within doors, will surely do as much in rainy weather, as in fair. Some very delicate frames, indeed, may be affected by wet weather; but not common constitutions².'

We talked of the education of children; and I asked him what he thought was best to teach them first. JOHNSON. 'Sir, it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the meantime your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt them both.'

poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution. My own experience, at least, has taught me a very different lesson; twenty happy years have been animated by the labour of my *History*, and its success has given me a name, a rank, a character, in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled.'

¹ See *ante*, p. 500.

² See *ante*, p. 385.

On Thursday, July 28, we again supped in private at the Turk's Head coffee-house. JOHNSON. 'Swift has a higher reputation than he deserves. His excellence is strong sense; for his humour, though very well, is not remarkably good. I doubt whether *The Tale of a Tub* be his; for he never owned it, and it is much above his usual manner¹.'

'Thompson, I think, had as much of the poet about him as most writers. Every thing appeared to him through the medium of his favourite pursuit. He could not have viewed those two candles burning but with a poetical eye².'

¹ This opinion was given by him more at large at a subsequent period. See *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 32 [Aug. 16]. BOSWELL. 'That Swift was its authour, though it be universally believed, was never owned by himself, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced, and he did not deny it when Archbishop Sharpe and the Duchess of Somerset, by shewing it to the Queen, debarred him from a bishoprick.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 197. See also *post*, March 24, 1775. Stockdale records (*Memoirs*, ii. 61) that Johnson said 'that if Swift was really the author of *The Tale of a Tub*, as the best of his other performances were of a very inferior merit, he should have hanged himself after he had written it.' Scott (*Life of Swift*, ed. 1834, p. 77) says:—'Mrs. Whiteway observed the Dean, in the latter years of his life [in 1735], looking over the *Tale*, when suddenly closing the book he muttered, in an unconscious soliloquy, "Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" She begged it of him, who made some excuse at the moment; but on her birthday he presented her with it inscribed, "From her affectionate cousin." On observing the inscription, she ventured to say, "I wish, Sir, you had said the gift of the author!" The Dean bowed, smiled good-humouredly, and answered, "No, I thank you," in a very significant manner.' There is this to be said of Johnson's incredulity about the *Tale of a Tub*, that the *History of John Bull* and the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, though both by Arbuthnot, were commonly assigned to Swift, and are printed in his *Works*.

² 'Thomson thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on Nature and on Life with the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet;—the eye that distinguishes in everything presented to its view whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 377. See *post*, ii. 72, and April 11, 1776.

'Has

‘Has not ——¹ a great deal of wit, Sir?’ JOHNSON. ‘I do not think so, Sir. He is, indeed, continually attempting wit, but he fails. And I have no more pleasure in hearing a man attempting wit and failing, than in seeing a man trying to leap over a ditch and tumbling into it.’

He laughed heartily, when I mentioned to him a saying of his concerning Mr. Thomas Sheridan, which Foote took a wicked pleasure to circulate. ‘Why, Sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, Sir, is not in Nature.’ ‘So (said he,) I allowed him all his own merit.’

He now added, ‘Sheridan cannot bear me. I bring his declamation to a point. I ask him a plain question, “What do you mean to teach?” Besides, Sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country, by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover, to shew light at Calais².’

Talking of a young man³ who was uneasy from thinking that he was very deficient in learning and knowledge, he said, ‘A man has no reason to complain who holds a middle place, and has many below him; and perhaps he has not six of his years above him;—perhaps not one. Though he may not know any thing perfectly, the general mass of

¹ Burke seems to be meant. See *post*, April 25, 1778, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 15, and Sept. 15, 1773. It is strange however that, while in these three places Boswell mentions Burke's name, he should leave a blank here. In *Boswelliana*, p. 328, Boswell records:—‘Langton said Burke hammered his wit upon an anvil, and the iron was cold. There were no sparks flashing and flying all about.’

² In *Boswelliana* (p. 214) this anecdote is thus given:—‘Boswell was talking to Mr. Samuel Johnson of Mr. Sheridan's enthusiasm for the advancement of eloquence. “Sir,” said Mr. Johnson, “it won't do. He cannot carry through his scheme. He is like a man attempting to stride the English Channel. Sir, the cause bears no proportion to the effect. It is setting up a candle at Whitechapel to give light at Westminster.”’ See also *ante*, p. 446, and *post*, Oct. 16, 1769, April 18 and May 17, 1783.

³ Most likely Boswell himself. See *ante*, p. 475.

knowledge that he has acquired is considerable. Time will do for him all that is wanting.'

The conversation then took a philosophical turn. JOHNSON. 'Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth. A system, built upon the discoveries of a great many minds, is always of more strength, than what is produced by the mere workings of any one mind, which, of itself, can do little. There is not so poor a book in the world that would not be a prodigious effort were it wrought out entirely by a single mind, without the aid of prior investigators. The French writers are superficial¹; because they are not scholars, and so proceed upon the mere power of their own minds; and we see how very little power they have.'

'As to the Christian religion, Sir, besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favour from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth, after a serious consideration of the question. Grotius was an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who certainly had no bias to the side of religion. Sir Isaac Newton set out an infidel², and came to be a very firm believer.'

¹ 'Let a Frenchman talk twice with a minister of state, he desires no more to furnish out a volume.' Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xvi. 197. Lord Chesterfield wrote from Paris in 1741:—'They [the Parisians] despise us, and with reason, for our ill-breeding; on the other hand, we despise them for their want of learning, and we are in the right of it.' *Supplement to Chesterfield's Letters*, p. 49. See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 14, 1773.

² 'Dr. Johnson said that he had been told by an acquaintance of Sir Isaac Newton, that in early life he started as a clamorous infidel.' Seward's *Anecdotes*, ii. 324. In Brewster's *Life of Newton* I find no mention of early infidelity. On the contrary, Newton had been described as one who 'had been a searcher of the Scriptures from his youth' (ii. 314). Brewster says that 'some foreign writers have endeavoured to shew that his theological writings were composed at a late period of life, when his mind was in its dotage.' It was not so, however. *Ib.* p. 315.

He this evening again recommended me to perambulate Spain¹. I said it would amuse him to get a letter from me dated at Salamanca. JOHNSON. 'I love the University of Salamanca; for when the Spaniards were in doubt as to the lawfulness of their conquering America, the University of Salamanca gave it as their opinion that it was not lawful.' He spoke this with great emotion, and with that generous warmth which dictated the lines in his *London*, against Spanish encroachment².

I expressed my opinion of my friend Derrick as but a poor writer. JOHNSON. 'To be sure, Sir, he is; but you are to consider that his being a literary man has got for him all that he has. It has made him King of Bath³. Sir, he has nothing to say for himself but that he is a writer. Had he not been a writer, he must have been sweeping the crossings in the streets, and asking halfpence from every body that past.'

In justice, however, to the memory of Mr. Derrick, who was my first tutor in the ways of London, and shewed me the town in all its variety of departments, both literary and

¹ I fully intended to have followed advice of such weight; but having staid much longer both in Germany and Italy than I proposed to do, and having also visited Corsica, I found that I had exceeded the time allowed me by my father, and hastened to France in my way homewards. BOSWELL. See *ante*, p. 474.

² 'Has heaven reserved, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscovered shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert, yet unclaimed by Spain?'

Johnson looked upon the discovery of America as a misfortune to mankind. In *Taxation no Tyranny* (*Works*, vi. 233) he says that 'no part of the world has yet had reason to rejoice that Columbus found at last reception and employment. In the same year, in a year hitherto disastrous to mankind, by the Portuguese was discovered the passage of the Indies, and by the Spaniards the coast of America.' On March 4, 1773, he wrote (*Croker's Boswell*, p. 248):—'I do not much wish well to discoveries, for I am always afraid they will end in conquest and robbery.' See *ante*, p. 356, note 4, and *post*, March 21, 1775, and under Dec. 24, 1783.

³ See *ante*, p. 456, note 2.

sportive, the particulars of which Dr. Johnson advised me to put in writing, it is proper to mention what Johnson, at a subsequent period, said of him both as a writer and an editor: 'Sir, I have often said, that if Derrick's letters¹ had been written by one of a more established name, they would have been thought very pretty letters².' And, 'I sent Derrick to Dryden's relations to gather materials for his life; and I believe he got all that I myself should have got³.'

Poor Derrick! I remember him with kindness. Yet I cannot withhold from my readers a pleasant humorous sally which could not have hurt him had he been alive, and now is perfectly harmless. In his collection of poems, there is one upon entering the harbour of Dublin, his native city, after a long absence. It begins thus:

'Eblana! much lov'd city, hail!
Where first I saw the light of day.'

And after a solemn reflection on his being 'numbered with forgotten dead,' there is the following stanza:

'Unless my lines protract my fame,
And those, who chance to read them, cry,
I knew him! Derrick was his name,
In yonder tomb his ashes lie.'

Which was thus happily parodied by Mr. John Home, to whom we owe the beautiful and pathetick tragedy of *Douglas*:

'Unless my *deeds* protract my fame,
And he who passes sadly sings,
I knew him! Derrick was his name,
On yonder tree his carcase swings!'

I doubt much whether the amiable and ingenious authour

¹ *Letters written from Leverpoole, Chester, Corke, &c.*, by Samuel Derrick, 1767.

² *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd ed. p. 104 [Aug. 27, 1773]. BOSWELL.

³ *Ibid.* p. 142 [242, Sept. 22, 1773]. BOSWELL. Johnson added:—'but it was nothing.' Derrick, in 1760, published Dryden's *Misc. Works*, with an *Account of his Life*.

of these burlesque lines will recollect them, for they were produced extempore one evening while he and I were walking together in the dining-room at Eglintoune Castle, in 1760, and I have never mentioned them to him since.

Johnson said once to me, 'Sir, I honour Derrick for his presence of mind. One night, when Floyd¹, another poor authour, was wandering about the streets in the night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk²; upon being suddenly waked, Derrick started up, "My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to *my lodgings?*"'

I again begged his advice as to my method of study at Utrecht. 'Come, (said he) let us make a day of it. Let us go down to Greenwich and dine, and talk of it there.' The following Saturday was fixed for this excursion.

As we walked along the Strand to-night, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us, in the usual enticing manner. 'No, no, my girl, (said Johnson) it won't do.' He, however, did not treat her with harshness, and we talked of the wretched life of such women; and agreed, that much more misery than happiness, upon the whole, is produced by illicit commerce between the sexes.

On Saturday, July 30, Dr. Johnson and I took a sculler at the Temple-stairs, and set out for Greenwich. I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education. JOHNSON. 'Most certainly, Sir; for those who know them have a

¹ He published a biographical work, containing an account of eminent writers, in three vols. 8vo. BOSWELL.

² 'Thus the soft gifts of sleep conclude the day,
And stretched on bulks, as usual, poets lay.'

The Dunciad, ii, 420.

In *Humphry Clinker*, in the Letter of June 10, in which is described the dinner given by S— to the poor authors, of one of them it is said:—'The only secret which he ever kept was the place of his lodgings; but it was believed that during the heats of summer he commonly took his repose upon a bulk.' Johnson defines *bulk* as *a part of a building jutting out*.

very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, Sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life, which does not appear to be much connected with it.' 'And yet, (said I) people go through the world very well, and carry on the business of life to good advantage, without learning.' JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, that may be true in cases where learning cannot possibly be of any use; for instance, this boy rows us as well without learning, as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts, who were the first sailors.' He then called to the boy, 'What would you give, my lad, to know about the Argonauts?' 'Sir, (said the boy,) I would give what I have.' Johnson was much pleased with his answer, and we gave him a double fare. Dr. Johnson then turning to me, 'Sir, (said he,) a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge!'

We landed at the Old Swan², and walked to Billingsgate, where we took oars, and moved smoothly along the silver Thames. It was a very fine day. We were entertained with the immense number and variety of ships that were lying at anchor, and with the beautiful country on each side of the river.

I talked of preaching, and of the great success which those called Methodists³ have. JOHNSON. 'Sir, it is owing to their

¹ 'Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure, as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas . . . without knowing why we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget.' *Rasselas*, ch. xi.

² In the days of Old London Bridge, as Mr. Croker points out, even when the tide would have allowed passengers to shoot it, those who were prudent landed above the bridge, and walked to some wharf below it.

³ All who are acquainted with the history of religion, (the most important, surely, that concerns the human mind,) know that the appellation of *Methodists* was first given to a society of students in the University of Oxford, who about the year 1730 were distinguished by an earnest and *methodical* attention to devout exercises. This disposition of mind is not a novelty, or peculiar to any sect, but has been, and still may be found, in many Christians of every denomination.

expressing

expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people, and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a

Johnson himself was, in a dignified manner, a Methodist. In his *Rambler*, No. 110, he mentions with respect 'the whole discipline of regulated piety;' and in his *Prayers and Meditations*, many instances occur of his anxious examination into his spiritual state. That this religious earnestness, and in particular an observation of the influence of the Holy Spirit, has sometimes degenerated into folly, and sometimes been counterfeited for base purposes, cannot be denied. But it is not, therefore, fair to decry it when genuine. The principal argument in reason and good sense against methodism is, that it tends to debase human nature, and prevent the generous exertions of goodness, by an unworthy supposition that GOD will pay no regard to them; although it is positively said in the scriptures that He 'will reward every man according to his works.' [St. Matthew, xvi. 27.] But I am happy to have it [in] my power to do justice to those whom it is the fashion to ridicule, without any knowledge of their tenets; and this I can do by quoting a passage from one of their best apologists, Mr. Milner, who thus expresses their doctrine upon this subject. 'Justified by faith, renewed in his faculties, and constrained by the love of Christ, their believer moves in the sphere of love and gratitude, and all his *duties* flow more or less from this principle. And though *they are accumulating for him in heaven a treasure of bliss proportioned to his faithfulness and activity, and it is by no means inconsistent with his principles to feel the force of this consideration*, yet love itself sweetens every duty to his mind; and he thinks there is no absurdity in his feeling the love of GOD as the grand commanding principle of his life.' *Essays on several religious Subjects, &c.*, by Joseph Milner, A.M., Master of the Grammar School of Kingston-upon-Hull, 1789, p. 11. BOSWELL. Southey (*Life of Wesley*, i. 41), mentioning the names given at Oxford to Wesley and his followers, continues:—'One person with less irreverence and more learning observed, in reference to their methodical manner of life, that a new sect of Methodists was sprung up, alluding to the ancient school of physicians known by that name.' Wesley, in 1744, wrote *The Humble Address to the King of the Societies in derision called Methodists*. *Journal*, i. 437. He often speaks of 'the people called Methodists,' but sometimes he uses the term without any qualification. Mrs. Thrale, in 1780, wrote to Johnson:—'Methodist is considered always a term of reproach, I trust, because I never yet did hear that any one person called himself a Methodist.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 119.

principle

principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations; a practice, for which they will be praised by men of sense¹. To insist against drunkenness as a crime, because it debases reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people: but to tell them that they may die in a fit of drunkenness, and shew them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression. Sir, when your Scotch clergy give up their homely manner, religion will soon decay in that country.' Let this observation, as Johnson meant it, be ever remembered.

I was much pleased to find myself with Johnson at Greenwich, which he celebrates in his *London* as a favourite scene. I had the poem in my pocket, and read the lines aloud with enthusiasm:

'On Thames's banks in silent thought we stood:
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood:
Pleas'd² with the seat which gave ELIZA birth,
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth.'

He remarked that the structure of Greenwich hospital was too magnificent for a place of charity, and that its parts were too much detached to make one great whole.

Buchanan, he said, was a very fine poet; and observed, that he was the first who complimented a lady, by ascribing to her the different perfections of the heathen goddesses³; but that Johnston⁴ improved upon this, by making his lady, at the same time, free from their defects.

¹ Wesley said:—'We should constantly use the most common, little, easy words (so they are pure and proper) which our language affords. When first I talked at Oxford to plain people in the Castle [the prison] or the town, I observed they gaped and stared. This quickly obliged me to alter my style, and adopt the language of those I spoke to; and yet there is a dignity in their simplicity, which is not disagreeable to those of the highest rank.' Southey's *Wesley*, i. 431. See *post*, 1770, in Dr. Maxwell's *Collectanea*, Oct. 12, 1779, Aug. 30, 1780, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, Nov. 10, 1773.

² In the original, *struck*.

³ *Epigram*, Lib. ii. 'In Elizabeth. Angliæ Reg.' MALONE.

⁴ See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 23.

He dwelt upon Buchanan's elegant verses to Mary Queen of Scots, *Nympha Caledoniæ*, &c., and spoke with enthusiasm of the beauty of Latin verse. 'All the modern languages (said he) cannot furnish so melodious a line as

*'Formosam resonare doces Amarillida silvas'*¹

Afterwards he entered upon the business of the day, which was to give me his advice as to a course of study. And here I am to mention with much regret, that my record of what he said is miserably scanty. I recollect with admiration an animating blaze of eloquence, which roused every intellectual power in me to the highest pitch, but must have dazzled me so much, that my memory could not preserve the substance of his discourse²; for the note which I find of it is no more than this:—'He ran over the grand scale of human knowledge; advised me to select some particular branch to excel in, but to acquire a little of every kind.' The defect of my minutes will be fully supplied by a long letter upon the subject which he favoured me with, after I had been some time at Utrecht, and which my readers will have the pleasure to peruse in its proper place.

We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me, I suppose, by way of trying my disposition, 'Is not this very fine?' Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of Nature³, and being more delighted with 'the busy hum of men⁴,' I answered, 'Yes, Sir; but not equal to Fleet-street⁵.' JOHNSON. 'You are right, Sir.'

¹ Virgil, *Eclogues*, i. 5. Johnson, when a boy, turned the line thus:—
'And the wood rings with Amarillis' name.' *Ante*, p. 59.

² Boswell said of Paoli's talk about great men:—'I regret that the fire with which he spoke upon such occasions so dazzled me, that I could not recollect his sayings, so as to write them down when I retired from his presence.' *Corsica*, p. 197.

³ More passages than one in Boswell's *Letters to Temple* shew this absence of relish. Thus in 1775 he writes:—'I perceive some dawnings of taste for the country' (p. 216); and again:—'I will force a taste for natural beauties' (p. 219).

⁴ Milton's *L'Allegro*, l. 118.

⁵ See *post*, April 2, 1775, and April 17, 1778.

I am aware that many of my readers may censure my want of taste. Let me, however, shelter myself under the authority of a very fashionable Baronet¹ in the brilliant world, who, on his attention being called to the fragrance of a May evening in the country, observed, ‘This may be very well; but, for my part, I prefer the smell of a flambeau at the play-house.’

We staid so long at Greenwich, that our sail up the river, in our return to London, was by no means so pleasant as in the morning; for the night air was so cold that it made me shiver. I was the more sensible of it from having sat up all the night before, recollecting and writing in my journal what I thought worthy of preservation; an exertion, which, during the first part of my acquaintance with Johnson, I frequently made. I remember having sat up four nights in one week, without being much incommoded in the day time.

Johnson, whose robust frame was not in the least affected by the cold, scolded me, as if my shivering had been a paltry effeminacy, saying, ‘Why do you shiver?’ Sir William Scott³, of the Commons, told me, that when he complained of a head-ach in the post-chaise, as they were travelling together to Scotland, Johnson treated him in the same manner:

¹ My friend Sir Michael Le Fleming. This gentleman, with all his experience of sprightly and elegant life, inherits, with the beautiful family Domain, no inconsiderable share of that love of literature, which distinguished his venerable grandfather, the Bishop of Carlisle. He one day observed to me, of Dr. Johnson, in a felicity of phrase, ‘There is a blunt dignity about him on every occasion.’ BOSWELL.

² Wordsworth’s lines to the Baronet’s daughter, Lady Fleming, might be applied to the father:—

‘Lives there a man whose sole delights
Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that loathes or slights
What every natural heart enjoys?’

Wordsworth’s *Poems*, iv. 338.

³ Afterwards Lord Stowell. He was a member of Doctors’ Commons, the College of Civilians in London, who practised in the Ecclesiastical Courts and the Court of the Admiralty. See Boswell’s *Heb-rides*, Aug. 14, 1773.

‘At

‘At your age, Sir, I had no head-ach.’ It is not easy to make allowance for sensations in others, which we ourselves have not at the time. We must all have experienced how very differently we are affected by the complaints of our neighbours, when we are well and when we are ill. In full health, we can scarcely believe that they suffer much; so faint is the image of pain upon our imagination: when softened by sickness, we readily sympathize with the sufferings of others.

We concluded the day at the Turk’s Head coffee-house very socially. He was pleased to listen to a particular account which I gave him of my family, and of its hereditary estate, as to the extent and population of which he asked questions, and made calculations; recommending, at the same time, a liberal kindness to the tenantry, as people over whom the proprietor was placed by Providence¹. He took delight in hearing my description of the romantick seat of my ancestors. ‘I must be there, Sir, (said he) and we will live in the old castle; and if there is not a room in it remaining, we will build one.’ I was highly flattered, but could scarcely indulge a hope that Auchinleck would indeed be honoured by his presence, and celebrated by a description, as it afterwards was, in his *Journey to the Western Islands*².

After we had again talked of my setting out for Holland, he said, ‘I must see thee out of England; I will accompany you to Harwich.’ I could not find words to express what I felt upon this unexpected and very great mark of his affectionate regard.

Next day, Sunday, July 31, I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON. ‘Sir, a woman’s preaching is like a dog’s walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprized to find it done at all.’

¹ He repeated this advice on the death of Boswell’s father, *post*, Sept. 7, 1782.

² Johnson (*Works*, ix. 159) describes ‘the sullen dignity of the old castle.’ See also Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Nov. 4, 1773.

On Tuesday, August 2, (the day of my departure from London having been fixed for the 5th,) Dr. Johnson did me the honour to pass a part of the morning with me at my Chambers. He said, that 'he always felt an inclination to do nothing.' I observed, that it was strange to think that the most indolent man in Britain had written the most laborious work, *The English Dictionary*.

I mentioned an imprudent publication¹, by a certain friend of his, at an early period of life, and asked him if he thought it would hurt him. JOHNSON. 'No, Sir; not much. It may, perhaps, be mentioned at an election.'

I had now made good my title to be a privileged man², and was carried by him in the evening to drink tea with Miss Williams, whom, though under the misfortune of having lost her sight, I found to be agreeable in conversation; for she had a variety of literature, and expressed herself well; but her peculiar value was the intimacy in which she had long lived with Johnson, by which she was well acquainted with his habits, and knew how to lead him on to talk.

After tea he carried me to what he called his walk, which was a long narrow paved court in the neighbourhood, overshadowed by some trees. There we sauntered a considerable time; and I complained to him that my love of London and his company was such, that I shrunk almost from the thought of going away, even to travel, which is generally so much desired by young men³. He roused me by manly and spirited conversation. He advised me, when settled in any place abroad, to study with an eagerness after knowledge, and to apply to Greek an hour every day; and when I was moving about, to read diligently the great book of mankind.

¹ Probably Burke's *Vindication of Natural Society*, published in 1756 when Burke was twenty-six.

² See *ante*, p. 488.

³ Boswell wrote to Temple on July 28, 1763:—'My departure fills me with a kind of gloom that quite overshadows my mind. I could almost weep to think of leaving dear London, and the calm retirement of the Inner Temple. This is very effeminate and very young, but I cannot help it.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 46.

On Wednesday, August 3, we had our last social evening at the Turk's Head coffee-house, before my setting out for foreign parts. I had the misfortune, before we parted, to irritate him unintentionally. I mentioned to him how common it was in the world to tell absurd stories of him, and to ascribe to him very strange sayings. JOHNSON. 'What do they make me say, Sir?' BOSWELL. 'Why, Sir, as an instance very strange indeed, (laughing heartily as I spoke,) David Hume told me, you said that you would stand before a battery of cannon, to restore the Convocation to its full powers.' Little did I apprehend that he had actually said this: but I was soon convinced of my error; for, with a determined look, he thundered out 'And would I not, Sir? Shall the Presbyterian *Kirk* of Scotland have its General Assembly, and the Church of England be denied its Convocation?' He was walking up and down the room while I told him the anecdote; but when he uttered this explosion of high-church zeal, he had come close to my chair, and his eyes flashed with indignation'. I bowed to the storm, and diverted the force of it, by leading him to expatiate on the influence which religion derived from maintaining the church with great external respectability.

I must not omit to mention that he this year wrote *The Life of Ascham*†, and the Dedication to the Earl of Shaftesbury†, prefixed to the edition of that writer's English works, published by Mr. Bennet².

¹ Mrs. Piozzi says (*Ancc.* p. 297) that 'Johnson's eyes were so wild, so piercing, and at times so fierce, that fear was, I believe, the first emotion in the hearts of all his beholders.'

² Johnson was, in fact, the editor of this work, as appears from a letter of Mr. T. Davies to the Rev. Edm. Bettesworth:—'Reverend Sir, —I take the liberty to send you Roger Ascham's works in English. Though Mr. Bennet's name is in the title, the editor was in reality Mr. Johnson, the author of *The Rambler*, who wrote the life of the author, and added several notes. Mr. Johnson gave it to Mr. Bennet, for his advantage, &c.—CROKER. Very likely Davies exaggerated Johnson's share in the book. Bennet's edition was published, not in 1763, but in 1761.

On Friday, August 5, we set out early in the morning in the Harwich stage coach. A fat elderly gentlewoman, and a young Dutchman, seemed the most inclined among us to conversation. At the inn where we dined, the gentlewoman said that she had done her best to educate her children; and particularly, that she had never suffered them to be a moment idle. JOHNSON. 'I wish, madam, you would educate me too; for I have been an idle fellow all my life.' 'I am sure, Sir, (said she) you have not been idle.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Madam, it is very true; and that gentleman there (pointing to me,) has been idle. He was idle at Edinburgh. His father sent him to Glasgow, where he continued to be idle. He then came to London, where he has been very idle; and now he is going to Utrecht, where he will be as idle as ever.' I asked him privately how he could expose me so. JOHNSON. 'Poh, poh! (said he) they knew nothing about you, and will think of it no more.' In the afternoon the gentlewoman talked violently against the Roman Catholics, and of the horrors of the Inquisition. To the utter astonishment of all the passengers but myself, who knew that he could talk upon any side of a question, he defended the Inquisition, and maintained, that 'false doctrine should be checked on its first appearance; that the civil power should unite with the church in punishing those who dared to attack the established religion, and that such only were punished by the Inquisition'.¹ He had in his pocket '*Pomponius Mela de situ Orbis*,' in which he read occasionally, and seemed very intent upon ancient

¹ Lord Sheffield describes the change in Gibbon's opinions caused by the Reign of Terror:—'He became a warm and zealous advocate for every sort of old establishment. I recollect in a circle where French affairs were the topic and some Portuguese present, he, seemingly with seriousness, argued in favour of the Inquisition at Lisbon, and said he would not, at the present moment, give up even that old establishment.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 328. One of Gibbon's correspondents told him in 1792, that the *Wealth of Nations* had been condemned by the Inquisition on account of 'the lowness of its style and the looseness of the morals which it inculcates.' *Ib.* ii. 479. See also *post*, May 7, 1773.

geography. Though by no means niggardly, his attention to what was generally right was so minute, that having observed at one of the stages that I ostentatiously gave a shilling to the coachman, when the custom was for each passenger to give only six-pence, he took me aside and scolded me, saying that what I had done would make the coachman dissatisfied with all the rest of the passengers, who gave him no more than his due. This was a just reprimand; for in whatever way a man may indulge his generosity or his vanity in spending his money, for the sake of others he ought not to raise the price of any article for which there is a constant demand.

He talked of Mr. Blacklock's poetry, so far as it was descriptive of visible objects; and observed, that 'as its authour had the misfortune to be blind, we may be absolutely sure that such passages are combinations of what he has remembered of the works of other writers who could see. That foolish fellow, Spence, has laboured to explain philosophically how Blacklock may have done, by means of his own faculties, what it is impossible he should do.' The solution, as I have given it, is plain. Suppose, I know a man to be so lame that he is absolutely incapable to move himself, and I find him in a different room from that in which I left him; shall I puzzle myself with idle conjectures, that, perhaps, his nerves have by some unknown change all at once become effective?

¹ Johnson wrote on Aug. 17, 1773:—'This morning I saw at breakfast Dr. Blacklock, the blind poet, who does not remember to have seen light, and is read to by a poor scholar in Latin, Greek, and French. He was originally a poor scholar himself. I looked on him with reverence.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 110. See also Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 17, 1773. Spence published an *Account of Blacklock*, in which he meanly omitted any mention of Hume's great generosity to the blind poet. J. H. Burton's *Hume*, i. 392. Hume asked Blacklock whether he connected colour and sound. 'He answered, that as he met so often with the terms expressing colours, he had formed some false associations, but that they were of the intellectual kind. The illumination of the sun, for instance, he supposed to resemble the presence of a friend.' *Ib.* p. 389.

No, Sir; it is clear how he got into a different room: he was *carried*.'

Having stopped a night at Colchester¹, Johnson talked of that town with veneration, for having stood a siege for Charles the First. The Dutchman alone now remained with us. He spoke English tolerably well; and thinking to recommend himself to us by expatiating on the superiority of the criminal jurisprudence of this country over that of Holland, he inveighed against the barbarity of putting an accused person to the torture, in order to force a confession². But Johnson was as ready for this, as for the Inquisition. 'Why, Sir, you do not, I find, understand the law of your own country. The torture of Holland is considered as a favour

¹ They left London early and yet they travelled only 51 miles that day. The whole distance to Harwich is 71 miles. Paterson's *Itinerary*, i. 323.

² Mackintosh (*Life*, ii. 162) writing of the time of William III, says that 'torture was legal in Scotland, and familiar in every country of Europe but England. Was there a single writer at that time who had objected to torture? I think not.' In the *Gent. Mag.* for 1742 (p. 660) it is stated that 'the King of Prussia has forbid the use of torture in his dominions.' In 1747 (p. 298) we read that Dr. Blackwell, an English physician, had been put to the torture in Sweden. Montesquieu in the *Esprit des Lois*, vi. 17, published in 1748, writing of 'la question ou torture contre les criminels,' says:—'Nous voyons aujourd'hui une nation très-bien policée [la nation anglaise] la rejeter sans inconvénient. Elle n'est donc pas nécessaire par sa nature.' Boswell in 1765 found that Paoli tortured a criminal with fire. *Corsica*, p. 158. Voltaire, in 1777, after telling how innocent men had been put to death with torture in the reign of Lewis XIV, continues—'Mais un roi a-t-il le temps de songer à ces menus détails d'horreurs au milieu de ses fêtes, de ses conquêtes, et de ses maîtresses? Daignez vous en occuper, ô Louis XVI, vous qui n'avez aucune de ces distractions!' Voltaire's *Works*, xxvi. 332. Johnson, two years before Voltaire thus wrote, had been shown *la chambre de question*—the torture-chamber—in Paris. *Post*, Oct. 17, 1775. It was not till the Revolution that torture was abolished in France. One of the Scotch judges in 1793, at the trial of Messrs. Palmer and Muir for sedition (*post*, June 3, 1781, note), 'asserted that now the torture was banished, there was no adequate punishment for sedition.' *Parl. Hist.* xxx. 1569.

to an accused person; for no man is put to the torture there, unless there is as much evidence against him as would amount to conviction in England. An accused person among you, therefore, has one chance more to escape punishment, than those who are tried among us.'

At supper this night he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. 'Some people (said he,) have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else¹.' He now appeared to me *Jean Bull philosophe*, and he was, for the moment, not only serious but vehement. Yet I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates; and the 206th number of his *Rambler* is a masterly essay against gulosity². His practice, indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this

¹ 'A cheerful and good heart will have a care of his meat and drink.' *Ecclesiasticus*, xxx. 25.

'Verecundari neminem apud mensam decet,
Nam ibi de divinis atque humanis cernitur.'

Trinummus, act 2, sc. 4.

Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 149) records that 'Johnson often said, "that wherever the dinner is ill got, there is poverty, or there is avarice, or there is stupidity; in short, the family is somehow grossly wrong; for," continued he, "a man seldom thinks with more earnestness of anything than he does of his dinner; and if he cannot get that well dressed, he should be suspected of inaccuracy in other things.'" Yet he 'used to say that a man who rode out for an appetite consulted but little the dignity of human nature.' Johnson's *Works* (1787), xi. 204.

² This essay is more against the practices of the parasite than gulosity. It is entitled *The art of living at the cost of others*. Johnson wrote to one of Mrs. Thrale's children:—'Gluttony is, I think, less common among women than among men. Women commonly eat more sparingly, and are less curious in the choice of meat; but if once you find a woman gluttonous, expect from her very little virtue. Her mind is enslaved to the lowest and grossest temptation.' *Piozzi Letters*. ii. 298.

subject;

subject ; for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table, he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment ; his looks seemed rivetted to his plate ; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite¹, which was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible². To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting ; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned, that Johnson, though he could be rigidly *abstemious*, was not a *temperate* man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately³. He told me, that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once⁴. They who beheld with wonder how much he eat upon all occasions when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily

¹ Hawkins (*Life*, p. 355) mentions 'the greediness with which he ate, his total inattention to those among whom he was seated, and his profound silence at the moment of refection.'

² Cumberland (*Memoirs*, i. 357) says:—'He fed heartily, but not voraciously, and was extremely courteous in his commendations of any dish that pleased his palate.'

³ Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale on July 10, 1780:—'Last week I saw flesh but twice and I think fish once ; the rest was pease. You are afraid, you say, lest I extenuate myself too fast, and are an enemy to violence ; but did you never hear nor read, dear Madam, that every man has his *genius*, and that the great rule by which all excellence is attained and all success procured, is to follow *genius* ; and have you not observed in all our conversations that my *genius* is always in extremes ; that I am very noisy or very silent ; very gloomy or very merry ; very sour or very kind ? And would you have me cross my *genius* when it leads me sometimes to voracity and sometimes to abstinence ?' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 166.

⁴ 'This,' he told Boswell, 'was no intentional fasting, but happened just in the course of a literary life.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 4, 1773. See *post*, April 17, 1778.

conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he eat, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked'. I remember, when he was in Scotland, his praising '*Gordon's palates*,' (a dish of palates at the Honourable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have done honour to more important subjects. 'As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish*, it was a wretched attempt'. He about the same time was so much displeas'd with the performances of a nobleman's French cook, that he exclaimed with vehemence, 'I'd throw such a rascal into the river;' and he then proceeded to alarm a lady at whose house he was to sup³, by the following manifesto of his skill: 'I, Madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery, than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook; whereas, Madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge⁴.' When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleas'd if something better than a plain dinner was not prepar'd for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, 'This was a good

¹ In the last year of his life, when he knew that his appetite was diseas'd, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—'I have now an inclination to luxury which even your table did not excite; *for till now my talk was more about the dishes than my thoughts*. I remember you commended me for seeming pleas'd with my dinners when you had reduced your table; I am able to tell you with great veracity, that I never knew when the reduction began, nor should have known that it was made, had not you told me. *I now think and consult to-day what I shall eat to-morrow. This disease will, I hope, be cured.*' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 362.

² Johnson's visit to Gordon and Maclaurin are just mention'd in Boswell's *Hebrides*, under Nov. 11, 1773.

³ The only nobleman with whom he dined 'about the same time' was Lord Elibank. After dining with him, 'he supped,' says Boswell, 'with my wife and myself.' *Ib.*

⁴ See *post*, April 15, 1778.

dinner enough, to be sure; but it was not a dinner to *ask* a man to.' On the other hand, he was wont to express, with great glee, his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind. One day when we had dined with his neighbour and landlord in Bolt-court, Mr. Allen, the printer, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste in every thing, he pronounced this eulogy: 'Sir, we could not have had a better dinner had there been a *Synod of Cooks*!'

While we were left by ourselves after the Dutchman had gone to bed, Dr. Johnson talked of that studied behaviour which many have recommended and practised. He disapproved of it; and said, 'I never considered whether I should be a grave man, or a merry man, but just let inclination, for the time, have its course².'

He flattered me with some hopes that he would, in the course of the following summer, come over to Holland, and accompany me in a tour through the Netherlands.

I teized him with fanciful apprehensions of unhappiness. A moth having fluttered round the candle, and burnt itself, he laid hold of this little incident to admonish me; saying, with a sly look, and in a solemn but quiet tone, 'That creature was its own tormentor, and I believe its name was BOSWELL.'

Next day we got to Harwich to dinner; and my passage

¹ Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 102) says, 'Johnson's own notions about eating were nothing less than delicate; a leg of pork boiled till it dropped from the bone, a veal-pie with plums and sugar, or the outside cut of a salt buttock of beef were his favourite dainties.' Cradock saw Burke at a tavern dinner send Johnson a very small piece of a pie, the crust of which was made with bad butter. 'Johnson soon returned his plate for more. Burke exclaimed:—"I am glad that you are able so well to relish this pie." Johnson, not at all pleased that what he ate should ever be noticed, retorted:—"There is a time of life, Sir, when a man requires the repairs of a table."' Cradock's *Memoirs*, i. 229. A passage in Baretti's *Italy*, ii. 316, seems to show that English eating in general was not delicate. 'I once heard a Frenchman swear,' he writes, 'that he hated the English, "parce qu'ils versent du beurre fondu sur leur veau rôti."'

² 'He had an abhorrence of affectation,' said Mr. Langton. *Post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*.

in the packet-boat to Helvoetsluys being secured, and my baggage put on board, we dined at our inn by ourselves. I happened to say it would be terrible if he should not find a speedy opportunity of returning to London, and be confined to so dull a place. JOHNSON. 'Don't, Sir, accustom yourself to use big words for little matters'. It would *not* be *terrible*, though I *were* to be detained some time here.' The practice of using words of disproportionate magnitude, is, no doubt, too frequent everywhere; but, I think, most remarkable among the French, of which, all who have travelled in France must have been struck with innumerable instances.

We went and looked at the church, and having gone into it and walked up to the altar, Johnson, whose piety was constant and fervent, sent me to my knees, saying, 'Now that you are going to leave your native country, recommend yourself to the protection of your CREATOR and REDEEMER.'

After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it *thus*'². This was a stout exemplification of the *first truths* of *Pere Bouffier*³, or the *original principles* of Reid and of Beattie; without admitting which, we can no more argue in metaphysicks, than we can argue in mathematicks without axioms. To me it is not conceivable how Berkeley can be answered by pure

¹ At college he would not let his companions say *prodigious*. *Post*, April 17, 1778.

² See *post*, Sept. 19, 1777, and 1780 in Mr. Langton's *Collection*. Dugald Stewart quotes a saying of Turgot:—'He who had never doubted of the existence of matter might be assured he had no turn for metaphysical disquisitions.' *Life of Reid*, p. 416.

³ Claude Buffier, born 1661, died 1737. Author of *Traité des premières vérités et de la source de nos jugemens*.

reasoning; but I know that the nice and difficult task was to have been undertaken by one of the most luminous minds of the present age, had not politicks 'turned him from calm philosophy aside'. What an admirable display of subtilty, united with brilliance, might his contending with Berkeley have afforded us²! How must we, when we reflect on the loss of such an intellectual feast, regret that he should be characterised as the man,

'Who born for the universe narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind³?'

My revered friend walked down with me to the beach, where we embraced and parted with tenderness, and engaged to correspond by letters. I said, 'I hope, Sir, you will not forget me in my absence.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, it is more likely you should forget me, than that I should forget you.' As the vessel put out to sea, I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestick frame in his usual manner: and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared⁴.

¹ 'Not when a gilt buffet's reflected pride
Turns you from sound philosophy aside.'

Pope's *Satires*, ii. 5.

² Mackintosh (*Life*, i. 71) said that 'Burke's treatise on the *Sublime and Beautiful* is rather a proof that his mind was not formed for pure philosophy; and if we may believe Boswell that it was once the intention of Mr. Burke to have written against Berkeley, we may be assured that he would not have been successful in answering that great speculator; or, to speak more correctly, that he could not have discovered the true nature of the questions in dispute, and thus have afforded the only answer consistent with the limits of the human faculties.'

³ Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

⁴ I have the following autograph letter written by Johnson to Dr. Taylor three weeks after Boswell's departure.

'DEAR SIR,

'Having with some impatience reckoned upon hearing from you these two last posts, and been disappointed, I can form to myself no reason for the omission but your perturbation of mind, or disorder of body arising from it, and therefore I once more advise removal from Ashbourne as the proper remedy both for the cause and the effect.

Utrecht

Utrecht seeming at first very dull to me, after the animated scenes of London, my spirits were grievously affected; and I wrote to Johnson a plaintive and desponding letter, to which he paid no regard. Afterwards, when I had acquired a firmer tone of mind, I wrote him a second letter, expressing much anxiety to hear from him. At length I received the following epistle, which was of important service to me, and, I trust, will be so to many others.

‘À M. M. BOSWELL, À LA COUR DE L'EMPEREUR, UTRECHT.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘You are not to think yourself forgotten, or criminally neglected, that you have had yet no letter from me. I love to see my friends, to hear from them, to talk to them, and to talk of them; but it is not without a considerable effort of resolution that I prevail upon myself to write. I would not, however, gratify my own

‘You perhaps ask, whither should I go? any whither where your case is not known, and where your presence will cause neither looks nor whispers. Where you are the necessary subject of common talk, you will not safely be at rest.

‘If you cannot conveniently write to me yourself let somebody write for you to

‘Dear Sir,

‘Your most affectionate,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘August 25, 1763.

‘To the Reverend Dr. Taylor
in Ashbourne,
Derbyshire.’

Five other letters on the same subject are given in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. pp. 324, 342, 382. Taylor and his wife ‘never lived very well together’ (p. 325), and at last she left him. On May 22nd of the next year Johnson congratulated Taylor ‘upon the happy end of so vexatious an affair, the happiest[sic] that could be next to reformation and reconcilment’ (p. 382). Taylor did not follow the advice to leave Ashbourne; for on Sept. 3 Johnson wrote to him:—‘You seem to be so well pleased to be where you are, that I shall not now press your removal; but do not believe that every one who rails at your wife wishes well to you. A small country town is not the place in which one would chuse to quarrel with a wife; every human being in such places is a spy.’ *Ib.* p. 343.

indolence

indolence by the omission of any important duty, or any office of real kindness.

‘To tell you that I am or am not well, that I have or have not been in the country, that I drank your health in the room in which we sat last together, and that your acquaintance continue to speak of you with their former kindness, topicks with which those letters are commonly filled which are written only for the sake of writing, I seldom shall think worth communicating; but if I can have it in my power to calm any harassing disquiet, to excite any virtuous desire, to rectify any important opinion, or fortify any generous resolution, you need not doubt but I shall at least wish to prefer the pleasure of gratifying a friend much less esteemed than yourself, before the gloomy calm of idle vacancy. Whether I shall easily arrive at an exact punctuality of correspondence, I cannot tell. I shall, at present, expect that you will receive this in return for two which I have had from you. The first, indeed, gave me an account so hopeless of the state of your mind, that it hardly admitted or deserved an answer; by the second I was much better pleased: and the pleasure will still be increased by such a narrative of the progress of your studies, as may evince the continuance of an equal and rational application of your mind to some useful enquiry.

‘You will, perhaps, wish to ask, what study I would recommend. I shall not speak of theology, because it ought not to be considered as a question whether you shall endeavour to know the will of GOD.

‘I shall, therefore, consider only such studies as we are at liberty to pursue or to neglect; and of these I know not how you will make a better choice, than by studying the civil law, as your father advises, and the ancient languages, as you had determined for yourself; at least resolve, while you remain in any settled residence, to spend a certain number of hours every day amongst your books. The dissipation of thought, of which you complain, is nothing more than the vacillation of a mind suspended between different motives, and changing its direction as any motive gains or loses strength. If you can but kindle in your mind any strong desire, if you can but keep predominant any wish for some particular excellence or attainment, the gusts of imagination will break away, without any effect upon your conduct, and commonly without any traces left upon the memory.

‘There lurks, perhaps, in every human heart a desire of distinction, which inclines every man first to hope, and then to believe,
that

that Nature has given him something peculiar to himself. This vanity makes one mind nurse aversion, and another actuate desires, till they rise by art much above their original state of power; and as affectation, in time, improves to habit, they at last tyrannise over him who at first encouraged them only for show. Every desire is a viper in the bosom, who, while he was chill, was harmless; but when warmth gave him strength, exerted it in poison. You know a gentleman, who, when first he set his foot in the gay world, as he prepared himself to whirl in the vortex of pleasure, imagined a total indifference and universal negligence to be the most agreeable concomitants of youth, and the strongest indication of an airy temper and a quick apprehension. Vacant to every object, and sensible of every impulse, he thought that all appearance of diligence would deduct something from the reputation of genius; and hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness, and all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments which mortals of the common fabric obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life awhile, was made weary of it by his sense and his virtue: he then wished to return to his studies; and finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected, still willing to retain his claim to some extraordinary prerogatives, resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable decree of destiny, and concluded that Nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment.

‘Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive, be banished henceforward from your thoughts for ever. Resolve, and keep your resolution; choose, and pursue your choice. If you spend this day in study, you will find yourself still more able to study to-morrow; not that you are to expect that you shall at once obtain a complete victory. Depravity is not very easily overcome. Resolution will sometimes relax, and diligence will sometimes be interrupted; but let no accidental surprise or deviation, whether short or long, dispose you to despondency. Consider these failings as incident to all mankind. Begin again where you left off, and endeavour to avoid the seducements that prevailed over you before.

‘This, my dear Boswell, is advice which, perhaps, has been often given you, and given you without effect. But this advice, if you will not take from others, you must take from your own reflections, if you purpose to do the duties of the station to which the bounty of Providence has called you.

‘Lct

‘Let me have a long letter from you as soon as you can. I hope you continue your journal, and enrich it with many observations upon the country in which you reside. It will be a favour if you can get me any books in the Frisick language, and can enquire how the poor are maintained in the Seven Provinces. I am, dear Sir,

‘Your most affectionate servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘London, Dec. 8, 1763.’

I am sorry to observe, that neither in my own minutes, nor in my letters to Johnson, which have been preserved by him, can I find any information how the poor are maintained in the Seven Provinces. But I shall extract from one of my letters what I learnt concerning the other subject of his curiosity.

‘I have made all possible enquiry with respect to the Frisick language, and find that it has been less cultivated than any other of the northern dialects; a certain proof of which is their deficiency of books. Of the old Frisick there are no remains, except some ancient laws preserved by *Schotanus* in his *Beschryvinge van die Heerlykheid van Friesland*; and his *Historia Frisica*. I have not yet been able to find these books. Professor Trotz, who formerly was of the University of Vranynken in Friesland, and is at present preparing an edition of all the Frisick laws, gave me this information. Of the modern Frisick, or what is spoken by the boors at this day, I have procured a specimen. It is *Gisbert Fapix's Rymelrie*, which is the only book that they have. It is amazing, that they have no translation of the bible, no treatises of devotion, nor even any of the ballads and story-books which are so agreeable to country people. You shall have *Fapix* by the first convenient opportunity. I doubt not to pick up *Schotanus*. Mynheer Trotz has promised me his assistance.’

1764: ÆTAT. 55.]—Early in 1764 Johnson paid a visit to the Langton family, at their seat of Langton, in Lincolnshire, where he passed some time, much to his satisfaction¹. His

¹ According to Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 210) he was accompanied by his black servant Frank. ‘I must have you know, ladies,’ said he, ‘that Frank has carried the empire of Cupid further than most men. When I was in Lincolnshire so many years ago he attended me thither; and when we returned home together, I found that a female friend

friend Bennet Langton, it will not be doubted, did every thing in his power to make the place agreeable to so illustrious a guest; and the elder Mr. Langton and his lady, being fully capable of understanding his value, were not wanting in attention. He, however, told me, that old Mr. Langton, though a man of considerable learning, had so little allowance to make for his occasional 'laxity of talk', that because in the course of discussion he sometimes mentioned what might be said in favour of the peculiar tenets of the Romish church, he went to his grave believing him to be of that communion².

Johnson, during his stay at Langton, had the advantage of a good library, and saw several gentlemen of the neighbourhood. I have obtained from Mr. Langton the following particulars of this period.

He was now fully convinced that he could not have been satisfied with a country living³; for, talking of a respectable clergyman in Lincolnshire, he observed, 'This man, Sir, fills up the duties of his life well. I approve of him, but could not imitate him.'

To a lady who endeavoured to vindicate herself from blame for neglecting social attention to worthy neighbours, by saying, 'I would go to them if it would do them any good,' he said, 'What good, Madam, do you expect to have in your power to do them? It is shewing them respect, and that is doing them good.'

So socially accommodating was he, that once when Mr. Langton and he were driving together in a coach, and Mr.

haymaker had followed him to London for love.' If this story is generally true, it bears the mark of Mrs. Piozzi's usual inaccuracy. The visit was paid early in the year, and was over in February; what hay-makers were there at that season?

¹ Boswell by his quotation marks refers, I think, to his *Hebrides*, Oct. 24, 1773, where Johnson says:—'Nobody, at times, talks more laxly than I do.' See also *post*, ii. 83.

² See *post*, April 26, 1776, for old Mr. Langton's slowness of understanding.

³ See *ante*, i. 370, 371.

Langton complained of being sick, he insisted that they should go out and sit on the back of it in the open air, which they did. And being sensible how strange the appearance must be, observed, that a countryman whom they saw in a field, would probably be thinking, 'If these two madmen should come down, what would become of me?'

Soon after his return to London, which was in February, was founded that CLUB which existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of THE LITERARY CLUB². Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first proposer of it³, to which Johnson acceded, and the original members were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Edmund Burke, Dr. Nugent⁴, Mr. Beauclerk,

¹ Mr. Best (*Memorials*, p. 65) thus writes of a visit to Langton:—'We walked to the top of a very steep hill behind the house. Mr. Langton said, "Poor dear Dr. Johnson, when he came to this spot, turned back to look down the hill, and said he was determined to take a roll down. When we understood what he meant to do, we endeavoured to dissuade him; but he was resolute, saying, he had not had a roll for a long time; and taking out of his lesser pockets whatever might be in them, and laying himself parallel with the edge of the hill, he actually descended, turning himself over and over till he came to the bottom." This story was told with such gravity, and with an air of such affectionate remembrance of a departed friend, that it was impossible to suppose this extraordinary freak an invention of Mr. Langton.' It must have been in the winter that he had this roll.

² Boswell himself so calls it in a letter to Temple written three or four months after Garrick's death. *Letters of Boswell*, p. 242. See also Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 25, 1773.

³ Malone says:—'Reynolds was the original founder of our Literary Club about the year 1762, the first thought of which he started to Dr. Johnson at his own fireside.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 434. Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 122) says:—'Johnson called Reynolds their Romulus, or said somebody else of the company called him so, which was more likely.' According to Hawkins (*Life*, p. 425) the Club was founded in the winter of 1763, i. e. 1763-4.

⁴ Dr. Nugent, a physician, was Burke's father-in-law. Macaulay (*Essays*, i. 407) says:—'As we close Boswell's book, the club-room is before us, and the table on which stands the omelet for Nugent, and the lemons for Johnson.' It was from Mrs. Piozzi that Macaulay learnt of the omelet. Nugent was a Roman Catholic, and it was on

Mr.

Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Chamier¹, and Sir John Hawkins². They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard-street, Soho, one evening in every week, at seven, and generally continued their conversation till a pretty late hour³. This club

Friday that the Club before long came to meet. We may assume that he would not on that day eat meat. 'I fancy,' Mrs. Piozzi writes (*Anec.* p. 122), 'Dr. Nugent ordered an omelet sometimes on a Friday or Saturday night; for I remember Mr. Johnson felt very painful sensations at the sight of that dish soon after his death, and cried:—"Ah my poor dear friend! I shall never eat omelet with *thee* again!" quite in an agony.' Dr. Nugent, in the imaginary college at St. Andrews, was to be the professor of physic. Boswell's *Hebrides*, Aug. 25, 1773.

¹ Mr. Andrew Chamier was of Huguenot descent, and had been a stock-broker. He was a man of liberal education. 'He acquired such a fortune as enabled him, though young, to quit business, and become, what indeed he seemed by nature intended for, a gentleman.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 422. In 1764 he was Secretary in the War Office. In 1775 he was appointed Under Secretary of State. Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 310. He was to be the professor of commercial politics in the imaginary college. Johnson passed one of his birthdays at his house; *post*, under Sept. 9, 1779, note.

² 'It was Johnson's intention,' writes Hawkins (*Life*, p. 423), 'that their number should not exceed nine.' Nine was the number of the Ivy Lane Club (*ante*, p. 220). Johnson, I suppose, looked upon nine as the most *clubable* number. 'It was intended,' says Dr. Percy, 'that if only two of these chanced to meet for the evening, they should be able to entertain each other.' Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, i. 70. Hawkins adds that 'Mr. Dyer (*post*, 1780, in Mr. Langton's *Collection*), a member of the Ivy Lane Club, who for some years had been abroad, made his appearance among us, and was cordially received.' According to Dr. Percy, by 1768 not only had Hawkins formally withdrawn, but Beauclerk had forsaken the club for more fashionable ones. 'Upon this the Club agreed to increase their number to twelve; every new member was to be elected by ballot, and one black ball was sufficient for exclusion. Mr. Beauclerk then desired to be restored to the Society, and the following new members were introduced on Monday, Feb. 15, 1768: Sir R. Chambers, Dr. Percy and Mr. Colman.' Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, i. 72. In the list in Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1844, ii. 326, the election of Percy and Chambers is placed in 1765.

³ Boswell wrote on April 4, 1775:—'I dine, Friday, at the Turk's Head, Gerrard-street, with our Club, Sir Joshua Reynolds, etc., who now dine once a month, and sup every Friday.' *Letters of Boswell*,

has

has been gradually increased to its present number, thirty-five¹. After about ten years, instead of supping weekly, it was resolved to dine together once a fortnight during the meeting of Parliament. Their original tavern having been converted into a private house, they moved first to Prince's in Sackville-street, then to Le Telier's in Dover-street, and now meet at Parsloe's, St. James's-street². Between the time of its formation, and the time at which this work is passing through the press, (June 1792,)³ the following persons, now dead, were members of it: Mr. Dunning, (afterwards Lord Ashburton,) Mr. Samuel Dyer, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Shipley Bishop of St. Asaph, Mr. Vesey, Mr. Thomas Warton and Dr. Adam Smith. The present members are,—Mr. Burke, Mr. Langton, Lord Charlemont, Sir Robert Chambers, Dr. Percy Bishop of Dromore, Dr. Barnard Bishop of Killaloe, Dr. Marlay Bishop of Clonfert, Mr. Fox, Dr. George Fordyce, Sir William Scott, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Charles Bunbury, Mr. Windham of Norfolk, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Gibbon, Sir William Jones, Mr. Colman, Mr. Steevens, Dr. Burney, Dr. Joseph Warton, Mr. Malone, Lord Ossory, Lord Spencer,

p. 186. In 1766, Monday was the night of meeting. *Post*, May 10, 1766. In Dec. 1772 the night was changed to Friday. Goldsmith's *Misc. Works*, i. 72. Hawkins says (*Life*, pp. 424, 5) :—'We seldom got together till nine; preparing supper took up till ten; and by the time that the table was cleared, it was near eleven. Our evening toast was the motto of Padre Paolo, *Esto perpetua*.' *Esto perpetua* was not Padre Paolo's motto, but his dying prayer. 'As his end evidently approached, the brethren of the convent came to pronounce the last prayers, with which he could only join in his thoughts, being able to pronounce no more than these words, "*Esto perpetua*," mayst thou last for ever; which was understood to be a prayer for the prosperity of his country.' Johnson's *Works*, vi. 269.

¹ See *post*, March 14, 1777.

² 'After 1783 it removed to Prince's, in Sackville-street, and on his house being soon afterwards shut up, it removed to Baxter's, which subsequently became Thomas's, in Dover-street. In January 1792 it removed to Parsloe's, in St. James's-street; and on February 26, 1799, to the Thatched-house in the same street.' Forster's *Goldsmith*, i. 311.

³ The second edition is here spoken of. MALONE.

Lord Lucan, Lord Palmerston, Lord Eliot, Lord Macartney, Mr. Richard Burke junior, Sir William Hamilton, Dr. Warren, Mr. Courtenay, Dr. Hinchcliffe Bishop of Peterborough, the Duke of Leeds, Dr. Douglas Bishop of Salisbury, and the writer of this account.

Sir John Hawkins¹ represents himself as a '*seceder*' from this society, and assigns as the reason of his '*withdrawing*' himself from it, that its late hours were inconsistent with his domestick arrangements. In this he is not accurate; for the fact was, that he one evening attacked Mr. Burke, in so rude a manner, that all the company testified their displeasure; and at their next meeting his reception was such, that he never came again².

He is equally inaccurate with respect to Mr. Garrick, of whom he says, 'he trusted that the least intimation of a desire to come among us, would procure him a ready admission; but in this he was mistaken. Johnson consulted me upon it; and when I could find no objection to receiving him, exclaimed,—“He will disturb us by his buffoonery;”—and afterwards so managed matters that he was never formally proposed, and, by consequence, never admitted³.'

¹ *Life of Johnson*, p. 425. BOSWELL.

² From Sir Joshua Reynolds. BOSWELL. The Knight having refused to pay his portion of the reckoning for supper, because he usually eat no supper at home, Johnson observed, 'Sir John, Sir, is a very *unclubable* man.' BURNEY. Hawkins (*Life*, p. 231) says that 'Mr. Dyer had contracted a fatal intimacy with some persons of desperate fortunes, who were dealers in India stock, at a time when the affairs of the company were in a state of fluctuation.' Malone, commenting on this passage, says that 'under these words Mr. Burke is darkly alluded to, together with his cousin.' He adds that the character given of Dyer by Hawkins 'is discoloured by the malignant prejudices of that shallow writer, who, having quarrelled with Mr. Burke, carried his enmity even to Mr. Burke's friends.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 419. See also *ante*, p. 31. Hawkins (*Life*, p. 420) said of Goldsmith:—'As he wrote for the booksellers, we at the Club looked on him as a mere literary drudge, equal to the task of compiling and translating, but little capable of original, and still less of poetical composition.'

³ *Life of Johnson*, p. 425. BOSWELL. Hawkins is 'equally inaccurate

In justice both to Mr. Garrick and Dr. Johnson, I think it necessary to rectify this mis-statement. The truth is, that not very long after the institution of our club, Sir Joshua Reynolds was speaking of it to Garrick. 'I like it much, (said he,) I think I shall be of you.' When Sir Joshua mentioned this to Dr. Johnson, he was much displeas'd with the actor's conceit. '*He'll be of us,* (said Johnson) how does he know we will *permit* him? The first Duke in England has no right to hold such language.' However, when Garrick was regularly proposed some time afterwards, Johnson, though he had taken a momentary offence at his arrogance, warmly and kindly supported him, and he was accordingly elected, was a most agreeable member, and continued to attend our meetings to the time of his death.

Mrs. Piozzi¹ has also given a similar misrepresentation of Johnson's treatment of Garrick in this particular, as if he had used these contemptuous expressions: 'If Garrick *does* apply, I'll black-ball him. Surely, one ought to sit in a society like ours,

"Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or player²."

I am happy to be enabled by such unquestionable authority as that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, as well as from my own knowledge, to vindicate at once the heart of Johnson and the social merit of Garrick³.

rate' in saying 'that Johnson was so constant at our meetings as never to absent himself.' (*Ib.* p. 424.) See *post*, Johnson's letter to Langton of March 9, 1766, where he says:—'Dyer is constant at the Club; Hawkins is remiss; I am not over diligent.'

¹ *Letters to and from Dr. Johnson.* Vol. ii. p. 278 [387]. BOSWELL. The passage is as follows:—"If he *does* apply," says our Doctor to Mr. Thrale, "I'll black-ball him." "Who, Sir? Mr. Garrick, your friend, your companion,—black-ball him!" "Why, Sir, I love my little David dearly, better than all or any of his flatterers do, but surely one ought, &c."

² Pope's *Moral Essays*, iii. 242.

³ Malone says that it was from him that Boswell had his account of Garrick's election, and that he had it from Reynolds. He adds that 'Johnson warmly supported Garrick, being in reality a very

In

In this year, except what he may have done in revising *Shakspeare*, we do not find that he laboured much in literature. He wrote a review of Grainger's *Sugar Cane, a Poem*, in the *London Chronicle*. He told me, that Dr. Percy wrote the greatest part of this review; but, I imagine, he did not recollect it distinctly, for it appears to be mostly, if not altogether, his own'. He also wrote in *The*

tender affectionate man. He was merely offended at the actor's conceit.' He continues:—'On the former part of this story it probably was that Hawkins grounded his account that Garrick never was of the Club, and that Johnson said he never ought to be of it. And thus it is that this stupid biographer, and the more flippant and malicious Mrs. Piozzi have miscoloured and misrepresented almost every anecdote that they have pretended to tell of Dr. Johnson.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 392. Whatever was the slight cast upon Garrick, he was nevertheless the sixth new member elected. Four, as I have shown, were added by 1768. The next elections were in 1773 (Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1844, ii. 326), when five were added, of whom Garrick was the second, and Boswell the fifth. In 1774 five more were elected, among whom were Fox and Gibbon. Hannah More (*Memoirs*, i. 249) says that 'upon Garrick's death, when numberless applications were made to succeed him [in the Club], Johnson was deaf to them all. He said, "No, there never could be found any successor worthy of such a man;" and he insisted upon it there should be a year's widowhood in the club, before they thought of a new election.'

Grainger wrote to Percy on April 6, 1764:—'Sam. Johnson says he will review it in *The Critical*.' In August 1765, he wrote:—'I am perfectly satisfied with the reception the *Sugar Cane* has met with, and am greatly obliged to you and Mr. Johnson for the generous care you took of it in my absence.' Prior's *Goldsmith*, i. 238. He was absent in the West Indies. He died on Dec. 16, 1766. *Ib.* p. 241. The review of the *Sugar Cane* in the *Critical Review* (p. 270) is certainly by Johnson. The following passage is curious:—'The last book begins with a striking invocation to the genius of Africa, and goes on to give proper instructions for the buying and choice of negroes. . . . The poet talks of this ungenerous commerce without the least appearance of detestation; but proceeds to direct these purchasers of their fellow-creatures with the same indifference that a groom would give instructions for choosing a horse.

'Clear roll their ample eye; their tongue be red;

Broad swell their chest; their shoulders wide expand;

Critical

Critical Review, an account† of Goldsmith's excellent poem, *The Traveller*¹.

The ease and independence to which he had at last attained by royal munificence, increased his natural indolence. In his *Meditations* he thus accuses himself:—

‘GOOD FRIDAY, April 20, 1764.—I have made no reformation; I have lived totally useless, more sensual in thought, and more addicted to wine and meat².’

And next morning he thus feelingly complains:—

‘My indolence, since my last reception of the sacrament, has sunk into grosser sluggishness, and my dissipation spread into wilder negligence. My thoughts have been clouded with sensuality; and, except that from the beginning of this year I have, in some measure, forborne excess of strong drink, my appetites have predominated over my reason. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year; and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me, without leaving any impression.’

He then solemnly says,

‘This is not the life to which heaven is promised³;’

and he earnestly resolves an amendment.

It was his custom to observe certain days with a pious abstraction; viz. New-year's-day, the day of his wife's death, Good Friday, Easter-day, and his own birth-day. He this year says⁴:—‘I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving;

Not prominent their belly; clean and strong
Their thighs and legs in just proportion rise.’

See also *post*, March 21, 1776.

¹ Johnson thus ends his brief review:—‘Such is the poem on which we now congratulate the public as on a production to which, since the death of Pope, it will not be easy to find anything equal.’ *Critical Review*, p. 462.

² *Pr. and Med.* p. 50. BOSWELL. He adds:—

‘I hope

To put my rooms in order.

Disorder I have found one great cause of idleness.’

³ *Ib.* p. 51. BOSWELL.

⁴ It was on his birth-day that he said this. He wrote on the same
having,

having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O GOD, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake. Amen¹.'

Such a tenderness of conscience, such a fervent desire of improvement, will rarely be found. It is, surely, not decent in those who are hardened in indifference to spiritual improvement, to treat this pious anxiety of Johnson with contempt.

About this time he was afflicted with a very severe return of the hypochondriack disorder, which was ever lurking about him. He was so ill, as, notwithstanding his remarkable love of company, to be entirely averse to society, the most fatal symptom of that malady. Dr. Adams told me, that as an old friend he was admitted to visit him, and that he found him in a deplorable state, sighing, groaning, talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room. He then used this emphatical expression of the misery which he felt: 'I would consent to have a limb amputated to recover my spirits².'

Talking to himself was, indeed, one of his singularities ever since I knew him. I was certain that he was frequently uttering pious ejaculations; for fragments of the Lord's Prayer have been distinctly overheard³. His friend Mr. Thomas Davies, of whom Churchill says,

day:—'I have outlived many friends. I have felt many sorrows. I have made few improvements.'

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 58. BOSWELL. In his *Vision of Theodore* (*Works*, ix. 174) he describes the state of mind which he has recorded in his *Meditations*:—'There were others whose crime it was rather to neglect Reason than to disobey her; and who retreated from the heat and tumult of the way, not to the bowers of Intemperance, but to the maze of Indolence. They had this peculiarity in their condition, that they were always in sight of the road of Reason, always wishing for her presence, and always resolving to return to-morrow.'

² See Appendix F.

³ It used to be imagined at Mr. Thrale's. when Johnson retired to a
'That

‘That Davies hath a very pretty wife’,¹ when Dr. Johnson muttered ‘lead us not into temptation,’ used with waggish and gallant humour to whisper Mrs. Davies, ‘You, my dear, are the cause of this.’

He had another particularity, of which none of his friends ever ventured to ask an explanation². It appeared to me some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early, and

window or corner of the room, by perceiving his lips in motion, and hearing a murmur without audible articulation, that he was praying: but this was not *always* the case, for I was once, perhaps unperceived by him, writing at a table, so near the place of his retreat, that I heard him repeating some lines in an ode of Horace, over and over again, as if by iteration, to exercise the organs of speech, and fix the ode in his memory:

Audiet cives acuisse ferrum

Quo graves Persæ melius perirent,

Audiet pugnas. . . .

Odes, i. 2. 21.

[‘Our sons shall hear, shall hear to latest times,
Of Roman arms with civil gore imbrued,
Which better had the Persian foe subdued.’

Francis.]

It was during the American War. BURNEY. Boswell in his *Hebrides* (Oct. 12, 1773) records, ‘Dr. Johnson is often uttering pious ejaculations, when he appears to be talking to himself; for sometimes his voice grows stronger, and parts of the Lord’s Prayer are heard.’ In the same passage he describes other ‘particularities,’ and adds in a note:—‘It is remarkable that Dr. Johnson should have read this account of some of his own peculiar habits, without saying anything on the subject, which I hoped he would have done.’ See *post*, Dec. 1784, note.

¹ Churchill’s *Poems*, i. 16. See *ante*, p. 452.

² ‘It is in vain to try to find a meaning in every one of his particularities, which, I suppose, are mere habits contracted by chance; of which every man has some that are more or less remarkable.’ Boswell’s *Hebrides*, Oct. 12, 1773. ‘The love of symmetry and order, which is natural to the mind of man, betrays him sometimes into very whimsical fancies. “This noble principle,” says a French author, “loves to amuse itself on the most trifling occasions. You may see a profound philosopher,” says he, “walk for an hour together in his chamber, and industriously treading at every step upon every other board in the flooring.”’ *The Spectator*, No. 632.

from

from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so as that either his right or his left foot, (I am not certain which,) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture: for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion¹. A strange instance of something of this nature, even when on horseback, happened when he was in the isle of Sky². Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed him to go a good way about, rather than cross a particular alley in Leicester-fields; but this Sir Joshua imputed to his having had some disagreeable recollection associated with it.

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly

¹ Mr. S. Whyte (*Miscellanea Nova*, p. 49) tells how from old Mr. Sheridan's house in Bedford-street, opposite Henrietta-street, with an opera-glass he watched Johnson approaching. 'I perceived him at a good distance working along with a peculiar solemnity of deportment, and an awkward sort of measured step. Upon every post as he passed along, he deliberately laid his hand; but missing one of them, when he had got at some distance, he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, and immediately returning carefully performed the accustomed ceremony, and resumed his former course, not omitting one till he gained the crossing. This, Mr. Sheridan assured me, was his constant practice.'

² *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 316. BOSWELL. 'The day that we left Talisker, he bade us ride on. He then turned the head of his horse back towards Talisker, stopped for some time; then wheeled round to the same direction with ours, and then came briskly after us.' Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 12, 1773.

held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too*: all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used to blow out his breath like a Whale. This I supposed was a relief to his lungs; and seemed in him to be a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had made the arguments of his opponent fly like chaff before the wind.

I am fully aware how very obvious an occasion I here give for the sneering jocularly of such as have no relish of an exact likeness; which to render complete, he who draws it must not disdain the slightest strokes. But if witlings should be inclined to attack this account, let them have the candour to quote what I have offered in my defence.

He was for some time in the summer at Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire, on a visit to the Reverend Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore. Whatever dissatisfaction he felt at what he considered as a slow progress in intellectual improvement, we find that his heart was tender, and his affections warm, as appears from the following very kind letter:

‘TO JOSHUA REYNOLDS, ESQ., IN LEICESTER-FIELDS, LONDON.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I did not hear of your sickness till I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escaped that part of your pain, which every man must feel, to whom you are known as you are known to me.

‘Having had no particular account of your disorder, I know not
in

in what state it has left you. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, or my own interest as by preserving you, in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call a friend.

‘Pray let me hear of you from yourself, or from dear Miss Reynolds¹. Make my compliments to Mr. Mudge. I am, dear Sir,

‘Your most affectionate

‘And most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘At the Rev. Mr. Percy’s, at Easton
Maudit, Northamptonshire, (by
Castle Ashby,) Aug. 19, 1764.’

1765: ÆTAT. 56.]—EARLY in the year 1765 he paid a short visit to the University of Cambridge, with his friend Mr. Beauclerk. There is a lively picturesque account of his behaviour on this visit, in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* for March 1785, being an extract of a letter from the late Dr. John Sharp. The two following sentences are very characteristic:—

¹ Sir Joshua’s sister, for whom Johnson had a particular affection, and to whom he wrote many letters which I have seen, and which I am sorry her too nice delicacy will not permit to be published. BOSWELL. ‘Whilst the company at Mr. Thrale’s were speculating upon a microscope for the mind, Johnson exclaimed:—“I never saw one that would bear it, except that of my dear Miss Reynolds, and hers is very near to purity itself.”’ Northcote’s *Reynolds*, i. 80. Once, says Northcote, there was a coolness between her and her brother. She wished to set forth to him her grievances in a letter. Not finding it easy to write, she consulted Johnson, ‘who offered to write a letter himself, which when copied should pass as her own.’ This he did. It began:—‘I am well aware that complaints are always odious, but complain I must.’ Such a letter as this she saw would not pass with Sir Joshua as her own, and so she could not use it. *Ib.* p. 203. Of Johnson’s letters to her Malone published one, and Mr. Croker several more. Mme. D’Arblay, in the character she draws of her (*Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, i. 332), says that ‘Dr. Johnson tried in vain to cure her of living in an habitual perplexity of mind and irresolution of conduct, which to herself was restlessly tormenting, and to all around her was teasingly wearisome.’

‘He

‘He drank his large potations of tea with me, interrupted by many an indignant contradiction, and many a noble sentiment.’ — ‘Several persons got into his company the last evening at Trinity, where, about twelve, he began to be very great; stripped poor Mrs. Macaulay to the very skin, then gave her for his toast, and drank her in two bumpers¹.’

The strictness of his self-examination and scrupulous Christian humility appear in his pious meditation on Easter-day this year.

‘I purpose again to partake of the blessed sacrament; yet when I consider how vainly I have hitherto resolved at this annual commemoration of my Saviour’s death, to regulate my life by his laws, I am almost afraid to renew my resolutions.’

The concluding words are very remarkable, and shew that he laboured under a severe depression of spirits.

‘Since the last Easter I have reformed no evil habit, my time has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. *My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me.* Good Lord deliver me²!’

No man was more gratefully sensible of any kindness done to him than Johnson. There is a little circumstance in his diary this year, which shews him in a very amiable light.

‘July 2.—I paid Mr. Simpson ten guineas, which he had formerly lent me in my necessity, and for which Tetty expressed her gratitude.’

‘July 8.—I lent Mr. Simpson ten guineas more³.’

Here he had a pleasing opportunity of doing the same kindness to an old friend, which he had formerly received from him. Indeed his liberality as to money was very remarkable. The next article in his diary is,

‘July 16.—I received seventy-five pounds⁴. Lent Mr. Davis twenty-five.’

Trinity College, Dublin, at this time surprised Johnson with a spontaneous compliment of the highest academical

¹ See Appendix C.

² *Pr. and Med.* p. 61. BOSWELL.

³ See *ante*, p. 400.

⁴ His quarter’s pension. See *ante*, p. 435.

honours,

honours, by creating him Doctor of Laws¹. The diploma, which is in my possession, is as follows :

'OMNIBUS ad quos presentes literæ pervenerint, salutem. Nos Præpositus et Socii seniores Collegii sacrosanctæ et individuæ Trinitatis Reginae Elizabethæ juxta Dublin, testamur, Samueli Johnson, Armigerò², ob egregiam scriptorum elegantiam et utilitatem, gratiam concessam fuisse pro gradu Doctoratus in utroque Jure, octavo die

¹ Mr. Croker, misunderstanding a passage in Hawkins, writes:—'Hawkins says that he disliked to be called Doctor, as reminding him that he had been a schoolmaster.' What Hawkins really says (*Life*, p. 446) is this:—'His attachment to Oxford prevented Johnson from receiving this honour as it was intended, and he never assumed the title which it conferred. He was as little pleased to be called Doctor in consequence of it, as he was with the title of *Domine*, which a friend of his once incautiously addressed him by. He thought it alluded to his having been a schoolmaster.' It is clear that 'it' in the last line refers only to the title of *Domine*. Murphy (*Life*, p. 98) says that Johnson never assumed the title of Doctor, till Oxford conferred on him the degree. Boswell states (*post*, March 31, 1775, note):—'It is remarkable that he never, so far as I know, assumed his title of *Doctor*, but called himself *Mr. Johnson*.' In this, as I show there, Boswell seems to be not perfectly accurate. I do not believe Hawkins's assertion that Johnson 'was little pleased to be called Doctor in consequence of his Dublin degree.' In Boswell's *Hebrides*, most of which was read by him before he received his Oxford degree, he is commonly styled Doctor. Boswell says in a note on Aug. 15, 1773:—'It was some time before I could bring myself to call him Doctor.' Had Johnson disliked the title it would have been known to Boswell. Mrs. Thrale, it is true, in her letters to him, after he had received both his degrees, commonly speaks of him as Mr. Johnson. We may assume that he valued his Oxford degree of M.A. more highly than the Dublin degree of LL.D.; for in the third edition of the *Abridgment of his Dictionary*, published in 1766, he is styled Samuel Johnson, A.M. In his *Lives of the Poets* he calls himself simply Samuel Johnson. He had by that time risen above degrees. In his *Journey to the Hebrides* (*Works*, ix. 14), after stating that 'An English or Irish doctorate cannot be obtained by a very young man,' he continues:—'It is reasonable to suppose . . . that he who is by age qualified to be a doctor, has in so much time gained learning sufficient not to disgrace the title, or wit sufficient not to desire it.'

² Trinity College made him, it should seem, *Armiger* at the same time that it made him Doctor of Laws.

Julii,

Julii, Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo sexagesimo-quinto. In cujus rei testimonium singulorum manus et sigillum quo in hisce utimur apposuimus; vicesimo tertio die Julii, Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo sexagesimo-quinto.

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 'GUL. CLEMENT. | FRAN. ANDREWS. | R. MURRAY. |
| 'THO. WILSON. | <i>Præps.</i> | ROBT ^{us} LAW. |
| 'THO. LELAND. | | MICH. KEARNEY.' |

This unsolicited mark of distinction, conferred on so great a literary character, did much honour to the judgement and liberal spirit of that learned body. Johnson acknowledged the favour in a letter to Dr. Leland, one of their number; but I have not been able to obtain a copy of it¹.

He appears this year to have been seized with a temporary fit of ambition, for he had thoughts both of studying law and of engaging in politics. His 'Prayer before the Study of Law' is truly admirable:—

'Sept. 26, 1765.

'Almighty GOD, the giver of wisdom, without whose help resolutions are vain, without whose blessing study is ineffectual; enable me, if it be thy will, to attain such knowledge as may qualify me to direct the doubtful, and instruct the ignorant; to prevent wrongs and terminate contentions; and grant that I may use that knowledge which I shall attain, to thy glory and my own salvation, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake. Amen².'

His prayer in the view of becoming a politician is entitled, 'Engaging in POLITICKS with H———n,' no doubt his friend, the Right Honourable William Gerard Hamilton³, for whom, during a long acquaintance, he had a great esteem, and to whose conversation he once paid this high compliment: 'I am very unwilling to be left alone, Sir, and therefore I go with my company down the first pair of stairs, in some hopes that they may, perhaps, return again. I go with you, Sir, as far as the street-door.' In what particular

¹ See Appendix D for this letter.

² *Pr. and Med.* p. 66. BOSWELL.

³ *Single-speech* Hamilton, as he was commonly called, though in the House of Commons he had spoken more than once. For above thirty sessions together, however, he held his tongue. Prior's *Burke*, p. 67.

department he intended to engage does not appear, nor can Mr. Hamilton explain¹. His prayer is in general terms:—

‘Enlighten my understanding with knowledge of right, and govern my will by thy laws, that no deceit may mislead me, nor temptation corrupt me; that I may always endeavour to do good, and hinder evil.’

There is nothing upon the subject in his diary.

This year² was distinguished by his being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and Member of Parliament for the borough of Southwark. Foreigners are not a little amazed when they hear of brewers, distillers, and men in similar departments of trade, held forth as persons of considerable consequence. In this great commercial country it is natural that a situation which produces much wealth should be considered as very respectable; and, no doubt, honest industry is entitled to esteem. But, perhaps, the too rapid advance of men of low extraction tends to lessen the value of that distinction by birth and gentility, which has ever been found beneficial to the grand scheme of subordination. Johnson used to give this account of the rise of Mr. Thrale's father: ‘He worked at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery, which afterwards was his own. The proprietor of it had an only daughter, who was married to a nobleman. It was not fit that a peer should continue the business. On the old man's death, therefore, the brewery was to be sold. To find a purchaser for so large a property was a difficult matter; and, after some time, it was suggested, that it would be advisable to treat with Thrale, a sensible, active, honest man, who had been employed in the house, and to transfer the whole to him for thirty thousand pounds, security being taken upon the property. This was accordingly settled. In eleven years Thrale paid the purchase-money³. He acquired

¹ See Appendix E for an explanation.

² *Pr. and Med.* p. 67. BOSWELL.

³ See Appendix F.

⁴ Mr. Blakeway, in a note on this passage, says:—‘The predecessor
a large

a large fortune, and lived to be Member of Parliament for Southwark. But what was most remarkable was the liberality with which he used his riches. He gave his son and daughters the best education. The esteem which his good conduct procured him from the nobleman who had married his master's daughter, made him be treated with much attention; and his son, both at school and at the University of Oxford, associated with young men of the first rank. His allowance from his father, after he left college, was splendid; no less than a thousand a year. This, in a man who had risen as old Thrale did, was a very extraordinary instance of generosity. He used to say, "If this young dog does not find so much after I am gone as he expects, let him remember that he has had a great deal in my own time."

The son, though in affluent circumstances, had good sense enough to carry on his father's trade, which was of such extent, that I remember he once told me, he would not quit it for an annuity of ten thousand a year; 'Not (said he,) that I get ten thousand a year by it, but it is an estate to a family.' Having left daughters only, the property was sold for the immense sum of one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds¹; a magnificent proof of what may be done by fair trade in no long period of time.

of old Thrale was Edmund Halsey, Esq.; the nobleman who married his daughter was Lord Cobham. The family of Thrale was of some consideration in St. Albans; in the Abbey-church is a handsome monument to the memory of Mr. John Thrale, late of London, merchant, who died in 1704.' He describes the arms on the monument. Mr. Hayward, in *Mrs. Piozzi's Autobiography*, i. 9, quotes her marginal note on this page in Boswell. She says that Edmund Halsey, son of a miller at St. Albans, married the only daughter of his master, old Child, of the Anchor Brewhouse, Southwark, and succeeded to the business upon Child's death. 'He sent for one of his sister's sons to London (my Mr. Thrale's father); said he would make a man of him, and did so; but made him work very hard, and treated him very roughly.' He left him nothing at his death, and Thrale bought the brewery of Lord and Lady Cobham.

¹ See *post*, under April 4, 1781, and June 16, 1781.

There

There may be some who think that a new system of gentility¹ might be established, upon principles totally different from what have hitherto prevailed. Our present heraldry, it may be said, is suited to the barbarous times in which it had its origin. It is chiefly founded upon ferocious merit, upon military excellence. Why, in civilised times, we may be asked, should there not be rank and honours, upon principles, which, independent of long custom, are certainly not less worthy, and which, when once allowed to be connected with elevation and precedency, would obtain the same dignity in our imagination? Why should not the knowledge, the skill, the expertness, the assiduity, and the spirited hazards of trade and commerce, when crowned with success, be entitled to give those flattering distinctions by which mankind are so universally captivated?

Such are the specious, but false arguments for a proposition which always will find numerous advocates, in a nation where men are every day starting up from obscurity to wealth. To refute them is needless. The general sense of mankind cries out, with irresistible force, '*Un gentilhomme est toujours gentilhomme*.'

¹ Mrs. Burney informs me that she heard Dr. Johnson say, 'An English Merchant is a new species of Gentleman.' He perhaps, had in his mind the following ingenious passage in *The Conscious Lovers*, act iv. scene ii., where Mr. Sealand thus addresses Sir John Bevil:—'Give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honourable, and almost as useful as you landed-folks, that have always thought yourselves so much above us; for your trading forsooth is extended no farther than a load of hay, or a fat ox.—You are pleasant people indeed! because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore, I warrant your industry is dishonourable.' BOSWELL.

The Conscious Lovers is by Steele. 'I never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read,' said Parson Adams, 'but *Cato* and *The Conscious Lovers*; and I must own, in the latter there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon.' *Joseph Andrews*, Book III. chap. xi.

² In the first number of *The Hypochondriack* Boswell writes:—'It is a saying in feudal treatises, *Semel Baro semper Baro*, "Once a baron Mr.

Mr. Thrale had married Miss Hesther Lynch Salusbury, of good Welsh extraction¹, a lady of lively talents, improved by education. That Johnson's introduction into Mr. Thrale's family, which contributed so much to the happiness of his life, was owing to her desire for his conversation, is very probable and a general supposition: but it is not the truth. Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Mr. Thrale², having spoken very highly of Dr. Johnson, he was requested to make them acquainted³. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception, both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house were more and more frequent, till at last he became one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him, both in their house in Southwark, and in their villa at Streatham⁴.

always a baron." *London Mag.* 1777, p. 493. He seems at times to mark his sense of Mr. Thrale's inferiority by speaking of him as Thrale and his house as Thrale's. See *post*, April 5 and 12, 1776, April 7, 1778, and under March 30, 1783. He never, I believe, is thus familiar in the case of Beauclerk, Burke, Langton, and Reynolds.

¹ For her extraction see Hayward's *Mrs. Piozzi*, i. 238.

² Miss Burney records in May 1779, how one day at Streatham 'Mr. Murphy met with a very joyful reception; and Mr. Thrale, for the first time in his life, said he was "a good fellow;" for he makes it a sort of rule to salute him with the title of "scoundrel," or "rascal." They are very old friends; and I question if Mr. Thrale loves any man so well.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 210.

³ From the *Garrick Corres.* i. 116, it seems that Murphy introduced Garrick to the Thrales. He wrote to him on May 13, 1760:—'You stand engaged to Mr. Thrale for Wednesday se'ennight. You need not apprehend drinking; it is a very easy house.'

⁴ Murphy (*Life*, p. 98) says that Johnson's introduction to the Thrales 'contributed more than anything else to exempt him from the solitudes of life.' He continues that 'he looks back to the share he had in that business with self congratulation, since he knows the tenderness which from that time soothed Johnson's cares at Streatham, and prolonged a valuable life.' Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale from Lichfield on July 20, 1767:—'I have found nothing that withdraws my affections from the friends whom I left behind, or which

Johnson

Johnson had a very sincere esteem for Mr. Thrale, as a man of excellent principles, a good scholar, well skilled in trade, of a sound understanding, and of manners such as presented the character of a plain independent English 'Squire'. As this family will frequently be mentioned in the course of the following pages, and as a false notion has prevailed that Mr. Thrale was inferiour, and in some degree insignificant, compared with Mrs. Thrale, it may be proper to give a true state of the case from the authority of Johnson himself in his own words.

'I know no man, (said he,) who is more master of his wife and family than Thrale. If he but holds up a finger, he is obeyed. It is a great mistake to suppose that she is above him in literary attainments². She is more flippant; but he

makes me less desirous of reposing at that place which your kindness and Mr. Thrale's allows me to call my *home*.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 4. From Mull, on Oct. 15, 1773, he wrote:—'Having for many weeks had no letter, my longings are very great to be informed how all things are at home, as you and mistress allow me to call it.' *Ib.* p. 166. Miss Burney in 1778 wrote that 'though Dr. Johnson lives almost wholly at Streatham, he always keeps his apartments in town.' *Mme. D'Arbly's Diary*, i. 58. Johnson (*Works*, viii. 381) tells how, in the house of Sir Thomas Abney, 'Dr. Watts, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, was treated for thirty-six years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate.' He continues:—'A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial.' It was such a coalition which he formed with the Thrales—a coalition in which, though the benefits which he received were great, yet those which he conferred were still greater.

¹ On this Mrs. Piozzi notes:—'No, no! Mr. Thrale's manners presented the character of a gay man of the town; like Millamant, in Congreve's comedy, he abhorred the country and everything in it.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 10. Mrs. Millamant, in *The Way of the World*, act iv. sc. iv., says:—'I loathe the country and everything that relates to it.'

² It is but justice to Mr. Thrale to say, that a more ingenuous frame of mind no man possessed. His education at Oxford gave him the habits of a gentleman; his amiable temper recommended his conver-
has

has ten times her learning: he is a regular scholar; but her learning is that of a school-boy in one of the lower forms.' My readers may naturally wish for some representation of the figures of this couple. Mr. Thrale was tall, well proportioned, and stately. As for *Madam*, or *my Mistress*¹, by which epithets Johnson used to mention Mrs. Thrale, she was short, plump, and brisk². She has herself given us a lively view of the idea which Johnson had of her person, on her appearing before him in a dark-coloured gown; 'You little creatures should never wear those sort of clothes, however; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?' Mr. Thrale gave his wife a liberal indulgence, both in the choice of their company, and in the mode of

sation, and the goodness of his heart made him a sincere friend.' Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 99. Johnson wrote of him to Mrs. Thrale:— 'He must keep well, for he is the pillar of the house; and you must get well, or the house will hardly be worth propping.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 340. See *post*, April 18, 1778. Mme. D'Arblay (*Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 104) gives one reason for Thrale's fondness for Johnson's society. 'Though entirely a man of peace, and a gentleman in his character, he had a singular amusement in hearing, instigating, and provoking a war of words, alternating triumph and overthrow, between clever and ambitious colloquial combatants, where there was nothing that could inflict disgrace upon defeat.'

¹ In like manner he called Mr. Thrale *Master* or *My master*. 'I hope Master's walk will be finished when I come back.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 355. 'My master may plant and dig till his pond is an ocean.' *Ib.* p. 357. See *post*, July 9, 1777.

² Miss Burney thus described her in 1776:— 'She is extremely lively and chatty; and showed none of the supercilious or pedantic airs so scoffingly attributed to women of learning or celebrity; on the contrary, she is full of sport, remarkably gay, and excessively agreeable. I liked her in everything except her entrance into the room, which was rather florid and flourishing, as who should say, "It is I!—No less a person than Mrs. Thrale!" However, all that ostentation wore out in the course of the visit, which lasted the whole morning; and you could not have helped liking her, she is so very entertaining—though not simple enough, I believe, for quite winning your heart.' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 88.

³ *Mrs. Piozzi's Anecdotes*, p. 279. BOSWELL.

entertaining

entertaining them. He understood and valued Johnson, without remission, from their first acquaintance to the day of his death. Mrs. Thrale was enchanted with Johnson's conversation, for its own sake, and had also a very allowable vanity in appearing to be honoured with the attention of so celebrated a man.

Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnson than this connection¹. He had at Mr. Thrale's all the comforts and even luxuries of life; his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits lessened² by association with an agreeable and well-ordered family. He was treated with the utmost respect, and even affection. The vivacity of Mrs. Thrale's literary talk roused him to cheerfulness and exertion, even when they were alone. But this was not often the case; for he found here a constant succession of what gave him the highest enjoyment: the society of the learned, the witty, and the eminent in every way, who were assembled in numerous companies³, called forth his wonderful powers, and gratified him with admiration, to which no man could be insensible.

¹ Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale on Oct. 13, 1777:—'I cannot but think on your kindness and my master's. Life has upon the whole fallen short, very short, of my early expectation; but the acquisition of such a friendship, at an age when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the general course of things gives man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight; I am not very apt to be delighted.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 7. Johnson's friends suffered from this connection. See *post*, March 20, 1778, where it is said that 'at Streatham he was in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends.'

² Yet one year he recorded:—'March 3, I have never, I thank God, since new year's day deviated from the practice of rising. In this practice I persisted till I went to Mr. Thrale's sometime before Midsummer; the irregularity of that family broke my habit of rising. I was there till after Michaelmas.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 458, note. Hawkins places this in 1765; but Johnson states (*Pr. and Med.* p. 71), 'I returned from Streatham, Oct. 1, —66, having lived there more than three months.'

³ Boswell wrote to Temple in 1775:—'I am at present in a *tourbillon* of conversations; but how come you to throw in the Thrales

In the October of this year¹ he at length gave to the world his edition of *Shakspeare*², which, if it had no other merit but that of producing his Preface³, in which the excellencies and defects of that immortal bard are displayed with a masterly hand, the nation would have had no reason to complain. A blind indiscriminate admiration of Shakspeare had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners⁴. Johnson, by

among the Reynoldses and the Beauclerks? Mr. Thrale is a worthy, sensible man, and has the wits much about his house; but he is not one himself. Perhaps you mean Mrs. Thrale.' *Letters of Boswell*, p. 192. Murphy (*Life*, p. 141) says:—'It was late in life before Johnson had the habit of mixing, otherwise than occasionally, with polite company. At Mr. Thrale's he saw a constant succession of well-accomplished visitors. In that society he began to wear off the rugged points of his own character. The time was then expected when he was to cease being what George Garrick, brother to the celebrated actor, called him the first time he heard him converse, "A TREMENDOUS COMPANION."'

¹ Johnson wrote to Dr. Warton on Oct. 9:—'Mrs. Warton uses me hardly in supposing that I could forget so much kindness and civility as she showed me at Winchester.' Wooll's *Warton*, p. 309. Malone on this remarks:—'It appears that Johnson spent some time with that gentleman at Winchester in this year.' I believe that Johnson is speaking of the year 1762, when, on his way to Devonshire, he passed two nights in that town. See Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 214.

² It was in 1745 that he published his *Observations on Macbeth*, as a specimen of his projected edition (*ante*, p. 202). In 1756 he issued *Proposals* undertaking that his work should be published before Christmas, 1757 (p. 369). On June 21, 1757, he writes:—'I am printing my new edition of *Shakspeare*' (p. 373). On Dec. 24 of the same year he says, 'I shall publish about March' (p. 375). On March 8, 1758, he writes:—'It will be published before summer. . . . I have printed many of the plays' (p. 379). In June of the same year Langton took some of the plays to Oxford (p. 390). Churchill's *Ghost* (Parts 1 and 2) was published in the spring of 1762 (p. 370). On July 20, 1762, Johnson wrote to Baretti, 'I intend that you shall soon receive *Shakspeare*' (p. 427). In October 1765 it was published.

³ According to Mr. Seward (*Anec.* ii. 464), 'Adam Smith styled it the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country.'

⁴ George III. at all events, did not share in this blind admiration. candidly

candidly admitting the faults of his poet, had the more credit in bestowing on him deserved and indisputable praise; and doubtless none of all his panegyrists have done him half so much honour. Their praise was, like that of a counsel, upon his own side of the cause: Johnson's was like the grave, well-considered, and impartial opinion of the judge, which falls from his lips with weight, and is received with reverence. What he did as a commentator has no small share of merit, though his researches were not so ample, and his investigations so acute as they might have been, which we now certainly know from the labours of other able and ingenious critics who have followed him¹. He has enriched his edition with a concise account of each play, and of its characteristick excellence. Many of his notes have illustrated obscurities in the text, and placed passages eminent for beauty in a more conspicuous light; and he has in general exhibited such a mode of annotation, as may be beneficial to all subsequent editors².

'Was there ever,' cried he, 'such stuff as great part of Shakspeare? Only one must not say so. But what think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What? What?' 'Yes, indeed, I think so, Sir, though mixed with such excellencies that—' 'O!' cried he, laughing good-humouredly, 'I know it is not to be said! but it's true. Only it's Shakspeare, and nobody dare abuse him.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 398.

¹ That Johnson did not slur his work, as has been often said, we have the best of all evidence—his own word. 'I have, indeed,' he writes (*Works*, v. 152), 'disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure which I have not attempted to illustrate.'

² Steevens wrote to Garrick:—'To say the truth, the errors of Warburton and Johnson are often more meritorious than such corrections of them as the obscure industry of Mr. Farmer and myself can furnish. Disdaining crutches, they have sometimes had a fall; but it is my duty to remember, that I, for my part, could not have kept on my legs at all without them.' *Garrick Corres.* ii. 130. 'Johnson's preface and notes are distinguished by clearness of thought and diction, and by masterly common sense.' *Cambridge Shakspeare*, i. xxxvi.

His

His *Shakspeare* was virulently attacked by Mr. William Kenrick, who obtained the degree of LL.D. from a Scotch University, and wrote for the booksellers in a great variety of branches. Though he certainly was not without considerable merit, he wrote with so little regard to decency and principles, and decorum¹, and in so hasty a manner, that his reputation was neither extensive nor lasting. I remember one evening, when some of his works were mentioned, Dr. Goldsmith said, he had never heard of them; upon which Dr. Johnson observed, 'Sir, he is one of the many who have made themselves *publick*, without making themselves *known*'².

A young student of Oxford, of the name of Barclay, wrote an answer to Kenrick's review of Johnson's *Shakspeare*. Johnson was at first angry that Kenrick's attack should have the credit of an answer. But afterwards, considering the young man's good intention, he kindly noticed him, and probably would have done more, had not the young man died³.

In his Preface to *Shakspeare*, Johnson treated Voltaire very contemptuously, observing, upon some of his remarks, 'These are the petty criticisms of petty wits'. Voltaire, in revenge,

¹ Kenrick later on was the gross libeller of Goldsmith, and the far grosser libeller of Garrick. 'When proceedings were commenced against him in the Court of King's Bench [for the libel on Garrick], he made at once the most abject submission and retractation.' Prior's *Goldsmith*, i. 294. In the *Garrick Corres.* (ii. 341) is a letter addressed to Kenrick, in which Garrick says:—'I could have honoured you by giving the satisfaction of a gentleman, *if you could* (as Shakespeare says) *have screwed your courage to the sticking place*, to have taken it.' It is endorsed:—'This was not sent to the scoundrel Dr. Kenrick. . . . It was judged best not to answer any more of Dr. Kenrick's notes, he had behaved so unworthily.'

² Ephraim Chambers, in the epitaph that he made for himself (*ante*, p. 253, note 3), had described himself as *multis pervulgatus paucis notus.* *Gent. Mag.* x. 262.

³ See Boswell's *Hebrides*, Oct. 1, 1773.

⁴ Johnson had joined Voltaire with Dennis and Rymer. 'Dennis and Rymer think Shakespeare's Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is made

made an attack upon Johnson, in one of his numerous literary sallies, which I remember to have read; but there being no general index to his voluminous works, have searched in vain, and therefore cannot quote it¹.

offended that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire, perhaps, thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident. . . . His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer, not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty *minds*; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.' Johnson's *Works*, v. 109. Johnson had previously attacked Voltaire, in his *Memoirs of Frederick the Great*. (*Ante*, i. 503, note 2.) In these *Memoirs* he writes:—'Voltaire has asserted that a large sum was raised for her [the Queen of Hungary's] succour by voluntary subscriptions of the English ladies. It is the great failing of a strong imagination to catch greedily at wonders. He was misinformed, and was perhaps unwilling to learn, by a second enquiry, a truth less splendid and amusing.' *Ib.* vi. 455. See *post*, Oct. 27, 1779.

¹ 'Voltaire replied in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. (*Works*, xxxiii. 566.) 'J'ai jeté les yeux sur une édition de Shakespeare, donnée par le sieur Samuel Johnson. J'y ai vu qu'on y traite de *petits esprits* les étrangers qui sont étonnés que dans les pièces de ce grand Shakespeare un sénateur romain fasse le bouffon; et qu'un roi paraisse sur le théâtre en ivrogne. Je ne veux point soupçonner le sieur Johnson d'être un mauvais plaisant, et d'aimer trop le vin; mais je trouve un peu extraordinaire qu'il compte la bouffonnerie et l'ivrognerie parmi les beautés du théâtre tragique; la raison qu'il en donne n'est pas moins singulière. Le poète, dit-il, *dédaigne ces distinctions accidentelles de conditions et de pays, comme un peintre qui, content d'avoir peint la figure, néglige la draperie*. La comparaison serait plus juste, s'il parlait d'un peintre qui, dans un sujet noble, introduirait des grotesques ridicules, peindrait dans la bataille d'Arbelles Alexandre-Grand monté sur un âne, et la femme de Darius buvant avec des goujats dans un cabaret.' Johnson, perhaps, had this attack in mind

Voltaire was an antagonist with whom I thought Johnson should not disdain to contend. I pressed him to answer. He said, he perhaps might; but he never did.

Mr. Burney having occasion to write to Johnson for some receipts for subscriptions to his *Shakspeare*, which Johnson had omitted to deliver when the money was paid¹, he availed himself of that opportunity of thanking Johnson for the great pleasure which he had received from the perusal of his Preface to *Shakspeare*; which, although it excited much clamour against him at first, is now justly ranked among the most excellent of his writings. To this letter Johnson returned the following answer:—

‘TO CHARLES BURNEY, ESQ., IN POLAND-STREET.

‘SIR,

‘I am sorry that your kindness to me has brought upon you so much trouble, though you have taken care to abate that sorrow, by the pleasure which I receive from your approbation. I defend my criticism in the same manner with you. We must confess the faults of our favourite, to gain credit to our praise of his excellencies. He that claims, either in himself or for another, the honours of perfection, will surely injure the reputation which he designs to assist.

‘Be pleased to make my compliments to your family.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your most obliged

‘And most humble servant,

‘Oct. 16, 1765.’

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

From one of his journals I transcribed what follows:

‘At church, Oct. —65.

‘To avoid all singularity²; *Bonaventura*³.

when, in his *Life of Pope* (*Works*, viii. 275), he thus wrote of Voltaire:—‘He had been entertained by Pope at his table, when he talked with so much grossness, that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered by a trick that he was a spy for the court, and never considered him as a man worthy of confidence.’

¹ See *post*, under May 8, 1781.

² See *post*, ii. 85.

³ He was probably proposing to himself the model of this excellent person, who for his piety was named *the Scraphic Doctor*. BOSWELL.

‘To come in before service, and compose my mind by meditation, or by reading some portions of scriptures. *Tetty.*

‘If I can hear the sermon, to attend it, unless attention be more troublesome than useful.

‘To consider the act of prayer as a reposal of myself upon GOD, and a resignation of all into his holy hand.’

APPENDIX A.

JOHNSON'S DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT.

(Pages 136 and 174.)

THE publication of the 'Debates' in the *Gentleman's Magazine* began in July 1732. The names of the speakers were not printed in full; Sir Robert Walpole was disguised—if a disguise it can be called—as Sir R—t W—le, and Mr. Pelham as Mr. P—lh—m. Otherwise the report was open and avowed. During the first few years, however, it often happened that no attempt was made to preserve the individuality of the members. Thus in a debate on the number of seamen (*Gent. Mag.* v. 507), the speeches of the 'eight chief speakers' were so combined as to form but three. First come 'the arguments made use of for 30,000 men;' next 'an answer to the following effect;' and lastly, 'a reply that was in substance as follows.' Each of these three speeches is in the first person, though each is formed of the arguments of two members at least, perhaps of many. In the report of a two days' debate in 1737, in which there were fourteen chief speakers, the substance of thirteen of the speeches was given in three (*ib.* vii. 746, 775). In July 1736 (*ib.* vi. 363) we find the beginning of a great change. 'To satisfy the impatience of his readers,' the publisher promises 'to give them occasionally some entire speeches.' He prints one which likely enough had been sent to him by the member who had spoken it, and adds that he shall be 'grateful for any authentic intelligence in matters of such importance and *tenderness* as the speeches in Parliament' (*ib.* p. 365). Cave, in his examination before the House of Lords on April 30, 1747, on a charge of having printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* an account of the trial of Lord Lovat, owned that 'he had had speeches sent him by the members themselves, and had had assistance from some members who have taken notes of other members' speeches' (*Parl. Hist.* xiv. 60).

It

It was chiefly in the numbers of the *Magazine* for the latter half of each year that the publication took place. The parliamentary recess was the busy time for reporters and printers. It was commonly believed that the resolution on the Journals of the House of Commons against publishing any of its proceedings was only in force while parliament was sitting. But on April 13, 1738, it was unanimously resolved 'that it is an high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of this House to give any account of the debates, as well during the recéss as the sitting of parliament' (*Parl. Hist.* x. 812). It was admitted that this privilege expired at the end of every parliament. When the dissolution had come every one might publish what he pleased. With the House of Lords it was far otherwise, for 'it is a Court of Record, and as such its rights and privileges never die. It may punish a printer for printing any part of its proceedings for thirty or forty years back' (*ib.* p. 807). Mr. Winnington, when speaking to this resolution of April 13, said that if they did not put a speedy stop to this practice of reporting 'they will have every word that is spoken here by *gentlemen* misrepresented by *fellows* who thrust themselves into our gallery' (*ib.* p. 806). Walpole complained 'that he had been made to speak the very reverse of what he meant. He had read debates wherein all the wit, the learning, and the argument had been thrown into one side, and on the other nothing but what was low, mean, and ridiculous' (*ib.* p. 809). Later on, Johnson in his reports 'saved appearances tolerably well; but took care that the WHIG Dogs should not have the best of it' (Murphy's *Johnson*, p. 45).

It was but a few days after he became a contributor to the *Magazine* that this resolution was passed. Parliament rose on May 20, and in the June number the reports of the debates of the Senate of Lilliput began. To his fertile mind was very likely due this humorous expedient by which the resolution of the House was mocked. That he wrote the introduction in which is narrated the voyage of Captain Gulliver's grandson to Lilliputia can scarcely be doubted. It bears all the marks of his early style. The Lords become Hurgoes, and the Commons Clinabs, Walpole becomes Walelop, Pulteney Pulnub, and Pitt Ptit; otherwise the report is much as it had been. At the end of the volume for 1739 was given a key to all the names. The *London Magazine* had boldly taken the lead. In the May number, which was published at the close of the month, and therefore after parliament had risen, began the

the report of the proceedings and debates of a political and learned club of young noblemen and gentlemen, who hoped one day to enter parliament, and who therefore, the better to qualify themselves for their high position, only debated questions that were there discussed. To the speakers were given the names of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Thus we find the Hon. Marcus Cato and the Right Hon. M. Tullius Cicero. By the key that was published in 1742 Cicero was seen to be Walpole, and Cato, Pulteney. What risks the publishers and writers ran was very soon shown. In December 1740 the ministers proposed to lay an embargo on various articles of food. As the members entered the House a printed paper was handed to each, entitled *Considerations upon the Embargo*. Adam Smith had just gone up as a young student to the University of Oxford. There are 'considerations' suggested in this paper which the great authority of the author of the *Wealth of Nations* has not yet made pass current as truths. The paper contained, moreover, charges of jobbery against 'great men,' though no one was named. It was at once voted a malicious and scandalous libel, and the author, William Cooley, a scrivener, was committed to Newgate. With him was sent the printer of the *Daily Post*, in which part of the *Considerations* had been published. After seven weeks' imprisonment in the depth of winter in that miserable den, 'without sufficient sustenance to support life,' Cooley was discharged on paying his fees. He was in knowledge more than a hundred years before his time, and had been made to suffer accordingly. The printer would have been discharged also, but the fees were more than he could pay. Two months later he petitioned for mercy. The fees by that time were £121. His petition was not received, and he was kept in prison till the close of the session (*Parl. Hist.* xi. 867-894).

Such were the risks run by Cave and Johnson and their fellow-workers. That no prosecution followed was due perhaps to that dread of ridicule which has often tempered the severity of the law. 'The Hurgolen Branard, who in the former session was Pretor of Mildendo,' might well have been unwilling to prove that he was Sir John Barnard, late Lord Mayor of London.

Johnson, it should seem, revised some of the earliest *Debates*. In a letter to Cave which cannot have been written later than September 1738, he mentions the alterations that he had made (*ante*, p. 136). The more they were written by him, the less authentic did

did they become, for he was not one of those ‘fellows who thrust themselves into the gallery of the House.’ His employer, Cave, if we can trust his own evidence, had been in the habit of going there and taking notes with a pencil (*Parl. Hist.* xiv. 60). But Johnson, Hawkins says (*Life*, p. 122), ‘never was within the walls of either House.’ According to Murphy (*Life*, p. 44), he had been inside the House of Commons once. Be this as it may, in the end the *Debates* were composed by him alone (*ante*, p. 137). From that time they must no longer be looked upon as authentic records, in spite of the assertions of the Editor of the *Parl. Hist.* (xi. Preface). Johnson told Boswell (*ante*, p. 137) ‘that sometimes he had nothing more communicated to him than the names of the several speakers, and the part which they had taken in the debate;’ sometimes ‘he had scanty notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both Houses of Parliament.’ Often, his *Debates* were written ‘from no materials at all—the mere coinage of his own imagination’ (*post*, under Dec. 9, 1784).

‘He never wrote any part of his works with equal velocity. Three columns of the *Magazine* in an hour was no uncommon effort, which was faster than most persons could have transcribed that quantity’ (*ib.*). According to Hawkins (*Life*, p. 99), ‘His practice was to shut himself up in a room assigned to him at St. John’s Gate, to which he would not suffer any one to approach, except the compositor or Cave’s boy for matter, which, as fast as he composed it, he tumbled out at the door.’

From Murphy we get the following curious story:—

‘That Johnson was the author of the debates during that period [Nov. 1740 to Feb. 1743] was not generally known; but the secret transpired several years afterwards, and was avowed by himself on the following occasion:—Mr. Wedderburne (now Lord Loughborough), Dr. Johnson, Dr. Francis (the translator of *Horace*), the present writer, and others dined with the late Mr. Foote. An important debate towards the end of Sir Robert Walpole’s administration being mentioned, Dr. Francis observed, “that Mr. Pitt’s speech on that occasion was the best he had ever read.” He added, “that he had employed eight years of his life in the study of Demosthenes, and finished a translation of that celebrated orator, with all the decorations of style and language within the reach of his capacity; but he had met with nothing equal to the speech above mentioned.” Many of the company remembered the debate; and some passages were cited with the approbation and applause of all present. During the ardour of conversation, Johnson remained silent. As soon as the warmth of praise subsided, he opened with

with these words:—"That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter Street." The company was struck with astonishment. After staring at each other in silent amaze, Dr. Francis asked how that speech could be written by him? "Sir," said Johnson, "I wrote it in Exeter Street. I never had been in the gallery of the House of Commons but once. Cave had interest with the door-keepers. He, and the persons employed under him, gained admittance: they brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the arguments advanced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form which they now have in the Parliamentary Debates." To this discovery Dr. Francis made answer:—"Then, sir, you have exceeded Demosthenes himself, for to say that you have exceeded Francis's *Demosthenes*, would be saying nothing." The rest of the company bestowed lavish encomiums on Johnson: one, in particular, praised his impartiality; observing, that he dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties. "That is not quite true," said Johnson; "I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care that the WHIG DOGS should not have the best of it." Murphy's *Life of Johnson*, p. 343.

Murphy, we must not forget, wrote from memory, for there is no reason to think that he kept notes. That his memory cannot altogether be trusted has been shown by Boswell (*ante*, p. 391, note 4). This dinner with Foote must have taken place at least nineteen years before this account was published, for so many years had Dr. Francis been dead. At the time when Johnson was living in Exeter-street he was not engaged on the magazine. Nevertheless the main facts may be true enough. Johnson himself told Boswell (*post*, May 13, 1778) that in Lord Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works* (ii. 319) there were two speeches ascribed to Chesterfield which he had himself entirely written. Horace Walpole (*Letters*, i. 147) complained that the published report of his own first speech 'did not contain one sentence of the true one.' Johnson, in his preface to the *Literary Magazine* of 1756, seems to confess what he had done, unless, indeed, he was altogether making himself the mere mouth-piece of the publisher. He says:—"We shall not attempt to give any regular series of debates, or to amuse our readers with senatorial rhetorick. The speeches inserted in other papers have been long known to be fictitious, and produced sometimes by men who never heard the debate, nor had any authentick information. We have no design to impose thus grossly on our readers." (*Works*, v. 363.)

The secret that Johnson wrote these *Debates* was indeed well kept. He seems to be aimed at in a question that was put to Cave in his examination before the House of Lords in 1747. 'Being asked "if he ever had any person whom he kept in pay to make speeches for him," he said, "he never had."' (*Parl. Hist.* xiv. 60.) Herein he lied in order, no doubt, to screen Johnson. Forty-four years later Horace Walpole wrote (*Letters*, ix. 319), 'I never knew Johnson write the speeches in the *Gentleman's Magazine* till he died.' Johnson told Boswell 'that as soon as he found that they were thought genuine he determined that he would write no more of them, "for he would not be accessory to the propagation of falsehood."' (*Ante*, p. 175.) One of his *Debates* was translated into French, German, and Spanish (*Gent. Mag.* xiii. 59), and, no doubt, was accepted abroad as authentic. When he learnt this his conscience might well have received a shock. That it did receive a shock seems almost capable of proof. It was in the number of the *Magazine* for February 1743—at the beginning of March, that is to say—that the fact of these foreign translations was made known. The last *Debate* that Johnson wrote was for the 22nd day of February in that year. In 1740, 1741, and 1742, he had worked steadily at his *Debates*. The beginning of 1743 found him no less busy. His task suddenly came to an end. Among foreign nations his speeches were read as the very words of English statesmen. To the propagation of such a falsehood as this he would no longer be accessory. Fifteen years later Smollett quoted them as if they were genuine (*History of England*, iii. 73). Here, however, Johnson's conscience was void of offence; for 'he had cautioned him not to rely on them, for that they were not authentic.' (Hawkins, *Life*, p. 129.)

That they should generally have passed current shews how unacquainted people at that time were with real debating. Even if we had not Johnson's own statement, both from external and internal evidence we could have known that they were for the most part 'the mere coinage of his imagination.' They do not read like speeches that had ever been spoken. 'None of them,' Mr. Flood said, 'were at all like real debates' (*post*, under March 30, 1771). They are commonly formed of general statements which suit any one speaker just as well as any other. The scantier were the notes that were given him by those who had heard the debate, the more he had to draw on his imagination. But his was an imagination
which

which supplied him with what was general much more readily than with what was particular. Had De Foe been the composer he would have scattered over each speech the most ingenious and probable matters of detail, but De Foe and Johnson were wide as the poles asunder. Neither had Johnson any dramatic power. His parliamentary speakers have scarcely more variety than the characters in *Irene*. Unless he had been a constant frequenter of the galleries of the two Houses, he could not have acquired any knowledge of the style and the peculiarities of the different members. Nay, even of their modes of thinking and their sentiments he could have gained but the most general notions. Of debating he knew nothing. It was the set speeches in *Lizy* and the old historians that he took as his models. In his orations there is very little of 'the tart reply;' there is, indeed, scarcely any examination of an adversary's arguments. So general are the speeches that the order in which they are given might very often without inconvenience be changed. They are like a series of leading articles on both sides of the question, but all written by one man. Johnson is constantly shifting his character, and, like Falstaff and the Prince, playing first his own part and then his opponent's. It is wonderful how well he preserves his impartiality, though he does 'take care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it.'

He not only took the greatest liberties in his reports, but he often took them openly. Thus an army bill was debated in committee on Dec. 10, 1740, and again the following day on the report in the full House. 'As in these two debates,' he writes, 'the arguments were the same, Mr. Gulliver has thrown them into one to prevent unnecessary repetitions.' (*Gent. Mag.* Dec. 1742, p. 676.) In each House during the winter of 1742-3 there was a debate on taking the Hanoverian troops into pay. The debate in the Lords was spread over five numbers of the *Magazine* in the following summer and autumn. It was not till the spring of 1744 that the turn of the Commons came, and then they were treated somewhat scurvily. 'This debate,' says the reporter, who was Johnson, 'we thought it necessary to contract by the omission of those arguments which were fully discussed in the House of Hurgoes, and of those speakers who produced them, lest we should disgust our readers by tedious repetitions.' (*Ib.* xiv. 125.) Many of these debates have been reported somewhat briefly by Bishop (afterwards Archbishop) Secker. To follow his account requires an accurate knowledge

knowledge of the times, whereas Johnson's rhetoric for the most part is easily understood even by one very ignorant of the history of the first two Georges. Much of it might have been spoken on almost any occasion, for or against almost any minister. It is true that we here and there find such a correspondence between the two reports as shews that Johnson, as he has himself told us, was at times furnished with some information. But, on the other hand, we can no less clearly see that he was often drawing solely on his imagination. Frequently there is but the slightest agreement between the reports given by the two men of the same speeches. Of this a good instance is afforded by Lord Carteret's speech of Feb. 13, 1741. According to Johnson 'the Hurgo Quadrert began in this manner':—

'As the motion which I am about to make is of the highest importance and of the most extensive consequences; as it cannot but meet with all the opposition which the prejudices of some and the interest of others can raise against it; as it must have the whole force of ministerial influence to encounter without any assistance but from justice and reason, I hope to be excused by your Lordships for spending some time in endeavouring to shew that it wants no other support; that it is not founded upon doubtful suspicions but upon uncontestable facts,' and so on for eight more lines. (*Gent. Mag.* xi. 339.)

The Bishop's note begins as follows:—

'CARTERET. I am glad to see the House so full. The honour of the nation is at stake. And the oldest man hath not known such circumstances as we are in. When storms rise you must see what pilots you have, and take methods to make the nation easy. I shall (1) go through the foreign transactions of several years; (2) The domestic; (3) Prove that what I am about to propose is a parliamentary method.' (*Parl. Hist.* xi. 1047.)

Still more striking is the difference in the two reports of a speech by Lord Talbot on May 25, 1742. According to the *Gent. Mag.* xii. 519, 'the Hurgo Toblat spoke to this effect':—

'So high is my veneration for this great assembly that it is never without the utmost efforts of resolution that I can prevail upon myself to give my sentiments upon any question that is the subject of debate, however strong may be my conviction, or however ardent my zeal.'

The Bishop makes him say:—

'I rise up only to give time to others to consider how they will carry on the debate.' (*Parl. Hist.* xii. 646.)

On Feb. 13, 1741, the same Lord, being called to order for saying that there were Lords who were influenced by a place, exclaimed, according to the Bishop, "By the eternal G—d, I will defend my cause everywhere—" But Lords calling to order, he recollected himself and made an excuse.' (*Parl. Hist.* xi. 1063.) In the *Gent. Mag.* xi. 419, 'the Hurgo Toblat resumed:—"My Lords, whether anything has escaped from me that deserves such severe animadversions your Lordships must decide."'

Once at least in Johnson's reports a speech is given to the wrong member. In the debate on the Gin Bill on Feb. 22, 1743 (*Gent. Mag.* xiii. 696), though the Bishop's notes show that he did not speak, yet a long speech is put into his mouth. It was the Earl of Sandwich who had spoken at this turn of the debate. The editor of the *Parl. Hist.* (xii. 1398), without even notifying the change, coolly transfers the speech from the 'decent' Secker¹, who was afterwards Primate, to the grossly licentious Earl. A transference such as this is, however, but of little moment. For the most part the speeches would be scarcely less lifelike, if all on one side were assigned to some nameless Whig, and all on the other side to some nameless Tory. It is nevertheless true that here and there are to be found passages which no doubt really fell from the speaker in whose mouth they are put. They mention some fact or contain some allusion which could not otherwise have been known by Johnson. Even if we had not Cave's word for it, we might have inferred that now and then a member was himself his own reporter. Thus in the *Gent. Mag.* for February 1744 (p. 68) we find a speech by Sir John St. Aubyn that had appeared eight months earlier in the very same words in the *London Magazine*. That Johnson copied a rival publication is most unlikely—impossible, I might say. St. Aubyn, I conjecture, sent a copy of his speech to both editors. In the *Gent. Mag.* for April 1743 (p. 184), a speech by Lord Percival on Dec. 10, 1742, is reported apparently at full length. The debate itself was not published till the spring of 1744, when the reader is referred for this speech to the back number in which it had already been inserted. (*Ib.* xiv. 123).

The *London Magazine* generally gave the earlier report; it was, however, twitted by its rival with its inaccuracy. In one debate,

¹ 'E'en in a bishop I can spy desert,
Secker is decent, Rundel has a heart.'

Pope, *Epil. Sat.* 11. 70.

it was said, 'it had introduced instead of twenty speakers but six, and those in a very confused manner. It had attributed to Cæcilius words remembered by the whole audience to be spoken by M. Agrippa.' (*Gent. Mag.* xii. 512.) The report of the debate of Feb. 13, 1741, in the *London Magazine* fills more than twenty-two columns of the *Parl. Hist.* (xi. 1130) with a speech by Lord Bathurst. That he did speak is shewn by Secker (*ib.* p. 1062). No mention of him is made, however, in the report in the *Gent. Mag.* (xi. 339). But, on the other hand, it reports eleven speakers, while the *London Magazine* gives but five. Secker shows that there were nineteen. Though the *London Magazine* was generally earlier in publishing the debates, it does not therefore follow that Johnson had seen their reports when he wrote his. His may have been kept back by Cave's timidity for some months even after they had been set up in type. In the staleness of the debate there was some safeguard against a parliamentary prosecution.

Mr. Croker maintains (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 44) that Johnson wrote the *Debates* from the time (June 1738) that they assumed the *Lilliputian* title till 1744. In this he is certainly wrong. Even if we had not Johnson's own statement, from the style of the earlier *Debates* we could have seen that they were not written by him. No doubt we come across numerous traces of his work; but this we should have expected. Boswell tells us that Guthrie's reports were sent to Johnson for revision (*ante*, p. 136). Nay, even a whole speech now and then may be from his hand. It is very likely that he wrote, for instance, the *Debate* on buttons and button-holes (*Gent. Mag.* viii. 627) and the *Debate* on the registration of seamen (*ib.* xi. 1). But it is absurd to attribute to him passages such as the following, which in certain numbers are plentiful enough long after June 1738. 'There never was any measure pursued more consistent with, and more consequential of, the sense of this House' (*ib.* ix. 340). 'It gave us a handle of making such reprisals upon the Iberians as this Crown found the sweets of' (*ib.* x. 281). 'That was the only expression that the least shadow of fault was found with' (*ib.* xi. 292).

'Johnson told me himself,' says Boswell (*ante*, p. 174), 'that he was the sole composer of the *Debates* for those three years only (1741-2-3). He was not, however, precisely exact in his statement, which he mentioned from hasty recollection; for it is sufficiently evident that his composition of them began November 19,

1740, and ended February 23 [22], 1742-3.' Some difficulty is caused in following Boswell's statement by the length of time that often elapsed between the debate itself and its publication. The speeches that were spoken between Nov. 19, or, more strictly speaking, Nov. 25, 1740, and Feb. 22, 1743, were in their publication spread through the *Magazine* from July 1741 to March 1744. On Feb. 13, 1741, Lord Carteret in the House of Lords, and Mr. Sandys, 'the Motion-maker', in the House of Commons, moved an address to the King for the removal of Sir Robert Walpole. Johnson's report of the debate in the Lords was published in the *Magazine* for the next July and August. The year went round. Walpole's ministry was overthrown, and Walpole himself was banished to the House of Lords. A second year went by. At length, in three of the spring numbers of 1743, the debate on Sandys's motion was reported. It had been published in the *London Magazine* eleven months earlier.

Cave, if he was tardy, nevertheless was careful that his columns should not want variety. Thus in the number for July 1743, we have the middle part of the debate in the Lords on Feb. 1, 1743, the end of the debate in the Commons on March 9, 1742, and the beginning of another in the Commons on the following March 23. From the number for July 1741 to the number for March 1744 Johnson, as I have already said, was the sole composer of the *Debates*. The irregularity with which they were given at first sight seems strange; but in it a certain method can be discovered. The proceedings of a House of Commons that had come to an end might, as I have shown, be freely published. There had been a dissolution after the session which closed in April 1741. The publication of the *Debates* of the old parliament could at once begin, and could go on freely from month to month all the year round. But they would not last for ever. In 1742, in the autumn recess, the time when experience had shewn that the resolution of the House could be broken with the least danger, the *Debates* of the new parliament were published. They were continued even in the short session before Christmas. But the spring of 1743 saw a cautious return to the reports of the old parliament. The session closed on April 21, and in the May number the comparatively fresh *Debates* began again. In one case the report was not six months after date. In the beginning of 1744 this publication

¹ So Smollett calls him in his *History of England*, iii. 16.

went on even in the session, but it was confined to the proceedings of the previous winter.

The following table shews the order in which Johnson's *Debates* were published :—

| <i>Gentleman's Magazine.</i> | | <i>Debate or part of debate of</i> |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| July, 1741 | { Parliament was dissolved } on April 25, 1741. | Feb. 13, 1741 |
| Aug. " | | Feb. 13, " |
| Sept. " | | { Jan. 27, " Mar. 2, " |
| Oct. " | | Mar. 2, " |
| Nov. " | | Mar. 2, " |
| Dec. " | { The new Parliament met } on Dec. 1. | Dec. 9, 1740 |
| Supplement to 1741 | | { Dec. 2, " Dec. 12, " |
| Jan. 1742 | | { Feb. 3, 1741 Feb. 27, " |
| Feb. " | | { Jan. 26, " April 13, " |
| Mar. " | | { Feb. 24, " April 13, " |
| April " | | { Jan. 27, " Feb. 24, " |
| May " | | Nov. 25, 1740 |
| June " | | { Nov. 25, " April 8, 1741 |
| July " | { The Session ended on July } 15. | { April 8, " Dec. 1, " Dec. 4, " |
| Aug. " | | Dec. 4, " |
| Sept. " | | { Dec. 4, " Dec. 8, " |
| Oct. " | | { Dec. 8, " May 25, 1742 |
| Nov. " | { The Session opened on } Nov. 16. | May 25, " |
| Dec. " | | { May 25, " June 1, " |
| Supplement to 1742 | | { Dec. 10, 1740 June 1, 1742 |
| Jan. 1743 | | Dec. 10, 1740 |
| Feb. " | | Feb. 13, 1741 |
| Mar. " | | Feb. 13, " |
| April " | The Session ended on April 21 | Feb. 13, " |

Gentleman's

| <i>Gentleman's Magazine.</i> | <i>Debate or part of debate of</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| May 1743 | } Mar. 9, 1742 } Nov. 16, .. |
| June | } Mar. 9, .. } Feb. 1, 1743 |
| July | } Mar. 9, 1742 } Mar. 23, .. } Feb. 1, 1743 |
| Aug. | Feb. 1, .. |
| Sept. | Feb. 1, .. |
| Oct. | Feb. 1, .. |
| Nov. | Feb. 22, .. |
| Dec. .. The Session opened on Dec. 1 | Feb. 22, .. |
| Supplement to 1743 | Feb. 22, .. |
| Jan. 1744 | Feb. 22, .. |
| Feb. | } Dec. 10, 1742 } Feb. 22, 1743 |
| Mar. | Dec. 10, 1742 |

During the rest of 1744 the debates were given in the old form, and in a style that is a close imitation of Johnson's. Most likely they were composed by Hawkesworth (*ante*, p. 293). In 1745 they were fewer in number, and in 1746 the reports of the Senate of Lilliputia with its Hurgoes and Clinabs passed away for ever. They had begun, to quote the words of the Preface to the *Magazine* for 1747, at a time when 'a determined spirit of opposition in the national assemblies communicated itself to almost every individual, multiplied and invigorated periodical papers, and rendered politics the chief, if not the only object, of curiosity.' They are a monument to the greatness of Walpole, and to the genius of Johnson. Had that statesman not been overthrown, the people would have called for these reports even though Johnson had refused to write them. Had Johnson still remained the reporter, even though Walpole no longer swayed the Senate of the Lilliputians, the speeches of that tumultuous body would still have been read. For though they are not debates, yet they have a vast vigour and a great fund of wisdom of their own.

APPENDIX B.

JOHNSON'S LETTERS TO HIS MOTHER AND MISS PORTER IN 1759.

(Page 394.)

Malone published seven of the following letters in the fourth edition, and Mr. Croker the rest.

‘TO MRS. JOHNSON IN LICHFIELD.

‘HONOURED MADAM,

‘The account which Miss [Porter] gives me of your health pierces my heart. God comfort and preserve you and save you, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

‘I would have Miss read to you from time to time the Passion of our Saviour, and sometimes the sentences in the Communion Service, beginning “*Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*”

‘I have just now read a physical book, which inclines me to think that a strong infusion of the bark would do you good. Do, dear mother, try it.

‘Pray, send me your blessing, and forgive all that I have done amiss to you. And whatever you would have done, and what debts you would have paid first, or any thing else that you would direct, let Miss put it down; I shall endeavour to obey you.

‘I have got twelve guineas¹ to send you, but unhappily am at a loss how to send it to-night. If I cannot send it to-night, it will come by the next post.

‘Pray, do not omit any thing mentioned in this letter: God bless you for ever and ever.

‘I am your dutiful son,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Jan. 13, 1758².’

‘TO MISS PORTER, AT MRS. JOHNSON’S, IN LICHFIELD.

‘MY DEAR MISS,

‘I think myself obliged to you beyond all expression of gratitude for your care of my dear mother. God grant it may not be without

¹ Six of these twelve guineas Johnson appears to have borrowed from Mr. Allen, the printer. See Hawkins’s *Life of Johnson*, p. 366 n. MALONE.

² Written by mistake for 1759. On the *outside* of the letter of the 13th was written by another hand—‘Pray acknowledge the receipt of this by return of post, without fail.’ MALONE.

SUCCESS.

success. Tell Kitty¹ that I shall never forget her tenderness for her mistress. Whatever you can do, continue to do. My heart is very full.

'I hope you received twelve guineas on Monday. I found a way of sending them by means of the postmaster, after I had written my letter, and hope they came safe. I will send you more in a few days. God bless you all.

'I am, my dear,

'Your most obliged

'And most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Jan. 16, 1759.

'Over the leaf is a letter to my mother.'

'DEAR HONOURED MOTHER,

'Your weakness afflicts me beyond what I am willing to communicate to you. I do not think you unfit to face death, but I know not how to bear the thought of losing you. Endeavour to do all you [can] for yourself. Eat as much as you can.

'I pray often for you; do you pray for me. I have nothing to add to my last letter.

'I am, dear, dear mother,

'Your dutiful son,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Jan. 16, 1759.'

'TO MRS. JOHNSON, IN LICHFIELD.

'DEAR HONOURED MOTHER,

'I fear you are too ill for long letters; therefore I will only tell you, you have from me all the regard that can possibly subsist in the heart. I pray God to bless you for evermore, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

'Let Miss write to me every post, however short.

'I am, dear mother,

'Your dutiful son,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Jan. 18, 1759.'

'TO MISS PORTER, AT MRS. JOHNSON'S, IN LICHFIELD.

'DEAR MISS,

'I will, if it be possible, come down to you. God grant I may yet [find] my dear mother breathing and sensible. Do not tell her, lest I disappoint her. If I miss to write next post, I am on the road.

'I am, my dearest Miss,

'Your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Jan. 20, 1759.'

¹ Catherine Chambers, Mrs. Johnson's maid-servant. She died in October, 1767. MALONE. See *post*, ii. 49.

On the other side.

‘DEAR HONOURED MOTHER¹,

‘Neither your condition nor your character make it fit for me to say much. You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and all that I have omitted to do well. God grant you his Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit. Amen.

‘I am, dear, dear mother,

‘Your dutiful son,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Jan. 20, 1759.’

‘TO MISS PORTER IN LICHFIELD.

‘You will conceive my sorrow for the loss of my mother, of the best mother. If she were to live again surely I should behave better to her. But she is happy, and what is past is nothing to her; and for me, since I cannot repair my faults to her, I hope repentance will efface them. I return you and all those that have been good to her my sincerest thanks, and pray God to repay you all with infinite advantage. Write to me, and comfort me, dear child. I shall be glad likewise, if Kitty will write to me. I shall send a bill of twenty pounds in a few days, which I thought to have brought to my mother; but God suffered it not. I have not power or composure to say much more. God bless you, and bless us all.

‘I am, dear Miss,

‘Your affectionate humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

‘Jan. 23, 1759².’

‘TO MISS PORTER.

(The beginning is torn and lost.)

‘You will forgive me if I am not yet so composed as to give any directions about any thing. But you are wiser and better than I, and I shall be pleased with all that you shall do. It is not of any use for me now to come down; nor can I bear the place. If you want any

¹ This letter was written on the second leaf of the preceding, addressed to Miss Porter. MALONE.

² Mrs. Johnson probably died on the 20th or 21st January, and was buried on the day this letter was written. MALONE. On the day on which his mother was buried Johnson composed a prayer, as being ‘now about to return to the common comforts and business of the world.’ *Pr. and Med.* p. 38. After his wife’s death he had allowed forty days to pass before his ‘return to life.’ See *ante*, p. 271, note 2.

directions,

directions, Mr. Howard¹ will advise you. The twenty pounds I could not get a bill for to-night, but will send it on Saturday.

'I am, my dear, your affectionate servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Jan. 25, 1759.'

'TO MISS PORTER.

'DEAR MISS,

'I have no reason to forbear writing, but that it makes my heart heavy, and I had nothing particular to say which might not be delayed to the next post; but had no thoughts of ceasing to correspond with my dear Lucy, the only person now left in the world with whom I think myself connected. There needed not my dear mother's desire, for every heart must lean to somebody, and I have nobody but you; in whom I put all my little affairs with too much confidence to desire you to keep receipts, as you prudently proposed.

'If you and Kitty will keep the house, I think I shall like it best. Kitty may carry on the trade for herself, keeping her own stock apart, and laying aside any money that she receives for any of the goods which her good mistress has left behind her. I do not see, if this scheme be followed, any need of appraising the books. My mother's debts, dear mother, I suppose I may pay with little difficulty; and the little trade may go silently forward. I fancy Kitty can do nothing better; and I shall not want to put her out of a house, where she has lived so long, and with so much virtue. I am very sorry that she is ill, and earnestly hope that she will soon recover; let her know that I have the highest value for her, and would do any thing for her advantage. Let her think of this proposal. I do not see any likelier method by which she may pass the remaining part of her life in quietness and competence.

'You must have what part of the house you please, while you are inclined to stay in it; but I flatter myself with the hope that you and I shall some time pass our days together. I am very solitary and comfortless, but will not invite you to come hither till I can hope of making you live here so as not to dislike your situation. Pray, my dearest, write to me as often as you can.

'I am, dear Madam,

'Your affectionate humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Feb. 6, 1759.'

'TO MISS PORTER.

'DEAR MADAM,

'I thought your last letter long in coming; and did not require or expect such an inventory of little things as you have sent me. I could have taken your word for a matter of much greater value. I

¹ See *ante*, p. 94.

am glad that Kitty is better; let her be paid first, as my dear, dear mother ordered, and then let me know at once the sum necessary to discharge her other debts, and I will find it you very soon.

'I beg, my dear, that you would act for me without the least scruple, for I can repose myself very confidently upon your prudence, and hope we shall never have reason to love each other less. I shall take it very kindly if you make it a rule to write to me once at least every week, for I am now very desolate, and am loth to be universally forgotten.

'I am, dear sweet,

'Your affectionate servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'March 1, 1758[9].'

'TO MISS PORTER.

'DEAR MADAM,

'I beg your pardon for having so long omitted to write. One thing or other has put me off. I have this day moved my things and you are now to direct to me at Staple Inn, London. I hope, my dear, you are well, and Kitty mends. I wish her success in her trade. I am going to publish a little story book [*Rasselas*], which I will send you when it is out. Write to me, my dearest girl, for I am always glad to hear from you.

'I am, my dear, your humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'March 23, 1759.'

'TO MISS PORTER.

'DEAR MADAM,

'I am almost ashamed to tell you that all your letters came safe, and that I have been always very well, but hindered, I hardly know how, from writing. I sent, last week, some of my works, one for you, one for your aunt Hunter, who was with my poor dear mother when she died, one for Mr. Howard, and one for Kitty.

'I beg you, my dear, to write often to me, and tell me how you like my little book.

'I am, dear love, your affectionate humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'May 10, 1759.'

APPENDIX C.

JOHNSON AT CAMBRIDGE.

(Page 563.)

The following is the full extract of Dr. Sharp's letter giving an account of Johnson's visit to Cambridge in 1765 :—

'Camb. Mar. 1, 1765.

'As to Johnson, you will be surprised to hear that I have had him in the chair in which I am now writing. He has ascended my aërial citadel. He came down on a Saturday evening, with a Mr. Beauclerk, who has a friend at Trinity. Caliban, you may be sure, was not roused from his lair before next day noon, and his breakfast probably kept him till night. I saw nothing of him, nor was he heard of by any one, till Monday afternoon, when I was sent for home to two gentlemen unknown. In conversation I made a strange *faux pas* about Burnaby Greene's poem, in which Johnson is drawn at full length¹. He drank his large potations of tea with me, interrupted by many an indignant contradiction, and many a noble sentiment. He had on a better wig than usual, but, one whose curls were not, like Sir Cloudesly's², formed for 'eternal buckle³.' Our conversation was chiefly on books, you may be sure. He was much pleased with a small *Milton* of mine, published in the author's lifetime, and with the Greek epigram on his own effigy, of its being the picture, not of him, but of a bad painter⁴. There are many manuscript stanzas, for aught I know, in Milton's own handwriting, and several interlined hints and fragments. We were puzzled about one of the sonnets, which

¹ Burnaby Greene had just published *The Laurcat*, a poem, in which Johnson is abused. It is in the February list of books in the *Genl. Mag.* for 1765.

² Sir Cloudesly Shovel's monument is thus mentioned by Addison in *The Spectator*, No. 26 :—'It has very often given me great offence; instead of the brave rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state.'

³ 'That live-long wig, which Gorgon's self might own,
Eternal buckle takes in Parian stone.'

Pope's *Moral Essays*, iii. 295.

⁴ Milton's Epigram is in his *Sylvarum Liber*, and is entitled *In Effigiei ejus Sculptorem*.

we thought was not to be found in Newton's edition¹, and differed from all the printed ones. But Johnson cried, "No, no!" repeated the whole sonnet instantly, *memoriter*, and shewed it us in Newton's book. After which he learnedly harangued on sonnet-writing, and its different numbers. He tells me he will come hither again quickly, and is promised "an habitation in Emanuel College²." He went back to town next morning; but as it began to be known that he was in the university, several persons got into his company the last evening at Trinity, where, about twelve, he began to be very great; stripped poor Mrs. Macaulay to the very skin, then gave her for his toast, and drank her in two bumpers.' (*Gent. Mag.* for 1785, p. 173.)

APPENDIX D.

JOHNSON'S LETTER TO DR. LELAND.

(Page 566.)

'TO THE REV. DR. LELAND.

'SIR,

'Among the names subscribed to the degree which I have had the honour of receiving from the university of Dublin, I find none of which I have any personal knowledge but those of Dr. Andrews and yourself.

'Men can be estimated by those who know them not, only as they are represented by those who know them; and therefore I flatter myself that I owe much of the pleasure which this distinction gives me to your concurrence with Dr. Andrews in recommending me to the learned society.

'Having desired the Provost to return my general thanks to the University, I beg that you, sir, will accept my particular and immediate acknowledgements.

'I am, Sir,

'Your most obedient and most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

'Johnson's-court, Fleet-street,
London, Oct. 17, 1765.'

¹ Johnson's acquaintance, Bishop Newton (*post*, June 3, 1784), published an edition of *Milton*.

² It was no doubt by the Master of Emanuel College, his friend Dr. Farmer (*ante*, p. 426), that Johnson was promised 'an habitation' there.

APPENDIX E.

JOHNSON'S 'ENGAGING IN POLITICKS WITH H——N.

(Page 566.)

In a little volume entitled *Parliamentary Logick*, by the Right Hon. W. G. Hamilton, published in 1808, twelve years after the author's death, is included *Considerations on Corn*, by Dr. Johnson (*Works*, v. 321). It was written, says Hamilton's editor, in November 1766. A dearth had caused riots. 'Those who want the supports of life,' Johnson wrote, 'will seize them wherever they can be found.' (*Ib.* p. 322.) He supported in this tract the bounty for exporting corn. If more than a year after he had engaged in politics with Mr. Hamilton nothing had been produced but this short tract, the engagement was not of much importance. But there was, I suspect, much more in it. Indeed, the editor says (*Preface*, p. ix.) that 'Johnson had entered into some engagement with Mr. Hamilton, occasionally to furnish him with his sentiments on the great political topicks that should be considered in Parliament.' Mr. Croker draws attention to a passage in Johnson's letter to Miss Porter of Jan. 14, 1766 (Croker's *Boswell*, p. 173), in which he says: 'I cannot well come [to Lichfield] during the session of parliament.' In the spring of this same year Burke had broken with Hamilton, in whose service he had been. 'The occasion of our difference,' he wrote, 'was not any act whatsoever on my part; it was entirely upon his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving to me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity' (*Burke's Corres.* i. 77). It seems to me highly probable that Hamilton, in consequence of his having just lost, as I have shewn, Burke's services, sought Johnson's aid. He had taken Burke 'as a companion in his studies.' (*Ib.* p. 48.) 'Six of the best years of my life,' wrote Burke, 'he took me from every pursuit of literary reputation or of improvement of my fortune. In that time he made his own fortune (a very great one.)' (*Ib.* p. 67.) Burke had been recommended to Hamilton by Dr. Warton. On losing him Hamilton, on Feb. 12, 1765, wrote to
Warton,

Warton, giving a false account of his separation with Burke, and asking him to recommend some one to fill his place—some one ‘who, in addition to a taste and an understanding of ancient authors, and what generally passes under the name of scholarship, has likewise a share of modern knowledge, and has applied himself in some degree to the study of the law.’ By way of payment he offers at once ‘an income, which would neither be insufficient for him as a man of letters, or disreputable to him as a gentleman,’ and hereafter ‘a situation’—a post, that is to say, under government. (Wool’s *Warton*, i. 299.) Warton recommended Chambers. Chambers does not seem to have accepted the post, for we find him staying on at Oxford (*post*, ii. 28, 52). Johnson had all the knowledge that Hamilton required, except that of law. It is this very study that we find him at this very time entering upon. All this shows that for some time and to some extent an engagement was formed between him and Hamilton. Boswell, writing to Malone on Feb. 25, 1791, while *The Life of Johnson* was going through the press, says:—

‘I shall have more cancels. That *nervous* mortal W. G. H. is not satisfied with my report of some particulars *which I wrote down from his own mouth*, and is so much agitated that Courtenay has persuaded me to allow a *new edition* of them by H. himself to be made at H.’s expense.’

(Croker’s *Boswell*, p. 829). This would seem to show that there was something that Hamilton wished to conceal. Horace Walpole (*Memoirs of the Reign of George III*, iii. 402) does not give him a character for truthfulness. He writes on one occasion:—‘Hamilton denied it, but his truth was not renowned.’ Miss Burney, who met Hamilton fourteen years after this, thus describes him:—‘This Mr. Hamilton is extremely tall and handsome; has an air of haughty and fashionable superiority; is intelligent, dry, sarcastic, and clever. I should have received much pleasure from his conversational powers, had I not previously been prejudiced against him, by hearing that he is infinitely artful, double, and crafty.’ (*Mme. D’Arblay’s Diary*, i. 293.)

APPENDIX F.

JOHNSON'S FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE THRALES
AND HIS SERIOUS ILLNESS.

(Page 567.)

Johnson (*Pr. and Med.* p. 191) writes :—' My first knowledge of Thrale was in 1765.' In a letter to Mrs. Thrale, he says :—' You were but five-and-twenty when I knew you first.' (*Piozzi Letters*, i. 284.) As she was born on Jan. $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁴, 1741, this would place their introduction in 1766. In another letter, written on July 8, 1784, he talks of her 'kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched.' (*Ib.* ii. 376.) Perhaps, however, he here spoke in round numbers. Mrs. Piozzi (*Anec.* p. 125) says they first met in 1764. Mr. Thrale, she writes, sought an excuse for inviting him. 'The celebrity of Mr. Woodhouse (*post.* ii. 146), a shoemaker, whose verses were at that time the subject of common discourse, soon afforded a "pretence."' There is a notice of Woodhouse in the *Gent. Mag.* for June 1764 (p. 289). Johnson, she says, dined with them every Thursday through the winter of 1764-5, and in the autumn of 1765 followed them to Brighton. In the *Piozzi Letters* (i. 1) there is a letter of his, dated Aug. 13, 1765, in which he speaks of his intention to join them there.

'From that time,' she writes, 'his visits grew more frequent till, in the year 1766, his health, which he had always complained of, grew so exceedingly bad, that he could not stir out of his room in the court he inhabited for many *weeks* together, I think *months*. Mr. Thrale's attentions and my own now became so acceptable to him, that he often lamented to us the horrible condition of his mind, which, he said, was nearly distracted: and though he charged *us* to make him odd solemn promises of secrecy on so strange a subject, yet when we waited on him one morning, and heard him, in the most pathetic terms, beg the prayers of Dr. Delap [the Rector of Lewes] who had left him as we came in, I felt excessively affected with grief, and well remember my husband involuntarily lifted up one hand to shut his mouth, from provocation at hearing a man so widely proclaim what he could at last persuade no one to believe; and what, if true, would have been so unfit to reveal. Mr. Thrale went away soon after, leaving me with him, and bidding me prevail on him to quit his close habitation in the court, and come with us to Streatham, where I undertook

undertook the care of his health, and had the honour and happiness of contributing to its restoration.'

It is not possible to reconcile the contradiction in dates between Johnson and Mrs. Piozzi, nor is it easy to fix the time of this illness. That before February 1766, he had had an illness so serious as to lead him altogether to abstain from wine is beyond a doubt. Boswell, on his return to England in that month, heard it from his own lips (*post*, ii. 9). That this illness must have attacked him after March 1, 1765, when he visited Cambridge, is also clear; for at that time he was still drinking wine (*ante*, Appendix C). That he was unusually depressed in the spring of this year is shewn by his entry at Easter (*ante*, p. 564). From his visit to Dr. Percy in the summer of 1764 (*ante*, p. 562) to the autumn of 1765, we have very little information about him. For more than two years he did not write to Boswell (*post*, ii. 1). Dr. Adams (*ante*, p. 559) describes the same kind of attack as Mrs. Piozzi. Its date is not given. Boswell, after quoting an entry made on Johnson's birthday, Sept. 18, 1764, says 'about this time he was afflicted' with the illness Dr. Adams describes. From Mrs. Piozzi, from Johnson's account to Boswell, and from Dr. Adams we learn of a serious illness. Was there more than one? If there was only one, then Boswell is wrong in placing it before March 1, 1765, when Johnson was still a wine-drinker, and Mrs. Piozzi is wrong in placing it after February 1766, when he had become an abstainer. Johnson certainly stayed at Streatham from before Midsummer to October in 1766 (*post*, ii. 28, and *Pr. and Med.* p. 71), and this fact lends support to Mrs. Piozzi's statement. But, on the other hand, his meetings with Boswell in February of that year, and his letters to Langton of March 9 and May 10 (*post*, ii. 18, 19), shew a not unhappy frame of mind. Boswell, in his *Hebrides* (Oct. 16, 1773), speaks of Johnson's illness in 1766. If it was in 1766 that he was ill, it must have been after May 10 and before Midsummer-day, and this period is almost too brief for Mrs. Piozzi's account. It is a curious coincidence that Cowper was introduced to the Unwins in the same year in which Johnson, according to his own account, had his first knowledge of the Thrales. (Southey's *Cowper*, i. 171.)





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