

THE  
NEW RAMBLER

Journal of The Johnson Society of London

JANUARY, 1962

## THE NEW RAMBLER

### JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

#### Committee:

Chairman: H.A.Morgan, Esq., 30, Lambolle Road, London, N.W.3.  
Treasurer: J.H.Leicester, Esq., M.A., Broadmead, Eynesford Road,  
Farningham, Kent.  
Secretary: A.G.Dowdeswell, Esq., 92, St. Paul's Road, London, N.1.  
T.S.Blakeney, Esq., E.Bonner, Esq., Mrs. A.G. Dowdeswell,  
Dr. F.W.M.Draper, F.S.A., Rev. F.N.Doubleday, T.D.Fitzgerald, Esq.,  
Victor Halstead, Esq., Frederick Nixon, Esq., Mrs. Waterhouse.  
Editor: Rev. F. N. Doubleday, M.R.C.S., Hartland, Moores Road,  
Dorking, Surrey.

#### C O N T E N T S

JANUARY, 1962.

	<u>Page</u>
Commemorative Address by D.M. Low, M.A., F.R.S.L.	2
Dr. Johnson and his Doctors by Sir Russell Brain, Bart., D.M., Oxon., Past President of the Royal College of Physicians Rede Lecturer in the University of Cambridge.	4
Edmund Malone by F.N.D.	12
Trinity College, Dublin, in the age of Johnson by the Reverend A.R. Winnett, B.A., B.D., Ph.D. Canon of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Spirit, Guildford, Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Guildford.	13
No Apology for Colley Cibber by Malcolm Morley, Esq.	25
Reviews	30, 31, 32

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS<sup>1</sup>.

by

D. M. LOW, M.A., F.R.S.L.

The grave-stone around which we are standing today with its reticent inscription has remained unchanged since it was placed here some time after the interment of Dr. Johnson's remains on December 20th. 1784. We know that although a large concourse of people attended the funeral the ceremony was conducted in the simplest manner and without music. And so we who are present here today on the anniversary of Johnson's death, with our own simple ceremony, may claim to be the descendants in spirit of those who stood here one hundred and seventy seven years ago. Among the mourners on that day there must have been, among the more intimate of them, many thoughts of the long months of suffering which had preceded the end. It is a sad story of what Johnson himself described as "a debilitation of the whole frame". Yet his frequent letters in which this topic recurs fully justified Boswell's assertion that there was in him an animated and lofty spirit... and that all who saw him beheld and acknowledged not only his courage but his unabated intellectual interests. Johnson himself had declared, "I will be conquered, I will not capitulate." In this temper he fought for life until he knew the struggle was lost. We today, like those friends of long ago, may well recall this unbeaten spirit and think first of the man rather than of the writer.

It would not, however, be right to dwell overmuch on those last days of decline. Johnson himself had said that "it matters not how a man dies but how he lives." This is true; and the fortitude of those last days is but the corollary of the tone of his whole life. With so complex a character as was Johnson's it would be unwise to include too much in a brief compass. May we this morning dwell on two aspects of him which are overlaid by the popular conception, true enough as it is, of Johnson as a dominant figure who talked for victory, often at great expense of other men's feelings. Even those who knew little of Johnson know the formula; "Sir" said Dr. Johnson, and then the devastating remark followed. Such explosive moments have been and always will be the delight of generations. They do not lead far by themselves to an understanding of the inner personality. Two constant elements in Johnson's character are on the one hand his warmth and tenderness - a word often used by him - tenderness of heart and on the other hand

---

(1) Delivered in Westminster Abbey on Wednesday, December 13th. 1961.

unsparing honesty of mind. They were not easy elements to harmonise. The sharp and eager perceptions of the intellect could tear through the enveloping fabric of kindness. He was so inflexibly impelled to find the honest answer to things and to explode disingenuous ones. But if the vigour of his retorts often hurt his hearers, few men were more ready to make amends and he was distressed to learn that people thought him rude. His letters must be read to appreciate the affection for his friends that shines through them, and exasperating as were the strange inmates of his household he cared for them patiently through the years. Nor should we forget that in that tough age when the reforming spirit was hardly abroad Johnson went quietly to the rescue of individual suffering among London's outcasts. We do not know - he did not intend us to know - how often he did this in those dark and heartless streets. But once more we can discern the interplay of his kindness and his honesty of mind. His sayings and actions show that his compassion was infinite. Yet he neither condoned sin nor patronised sinners. His was charity in the truest sense. When this much has been said of the man we must not forget that he was a great man of letters. Had he not been so we should not be commemorating him here. In Johnson the man and the writer afford each other mutual value in a way that is not so very common in literature. He was a poet; he was a scholar; (not for nothing does he lie here by Shakespeare's monument); he was a masterly writer of English prose. Therefore it is in memory of such noble and lovable qualities that I now on behalf of the Johnson Society of London lay this wreath upon Samuel Johnson's grave.

---

The mathematicians are well acquainted with the difference between pure science, which has to do only with ideas, and the application of its laws to the use of life, in which they are constrained to submit to the imperfection of matter and the influence of accidents. Thus, in moral discussions, it is to be remembered that many impediments obstruct our practice, which very easily give way to theory. The speculatist is only in danger of erroneous reasoning; but the man involved in life, has his own passions, and those of others, to encounter, and is embarrassed with a thousand inconveniences, which confound him with a variety of impulse, and either perplex or obstruct his way. He is forced to act without deliberation, and obliged to chuse before he can examine; he is surprised by sudden alterations of the state of things, and changes his measures according to superficial appearances; he is lead by others, either because he is indolent, or because he is timorous; he is sometimes afraid to know what is right, and sometimes finds friends or enemies diligent to deceive him.

The Rambler No. 14.



## DR. JOHNSON AND HIS DOCTORS

by

Sir Russell Brain Bart., D.M., Oxon.  
Past President of the Royal College of Physicians.  
Rede Lecturer in the University of Cambridge.

Dr. Johnson had many and varied associations with medicine. His intellectual appetite was insatiable, and his curiosity extended to both science and medicine. He is now known to have written eighteen medical biographies. He himself acknowledged his biographies of Boerhaave, Sydenham and Sir Thomas Browne, and Boswell claimed for him the life of Morin. Lives of the English Poets contains the biographies of Drs. Cowley, Garth, Blackmore and Akenside. He contributed ten lives to volume 1 of Dr. James's medicinal dictionary. All the biographies except Browne's and those in The Lives were written between 1739 and 1743, a period when Johnson aged 30 to 34 years was just beginning his literary career in London. He thus shared a background of knowledge of at least the history of medicine with the doctors of his acquaintance, indeed it is not unlikely that he often knew more about it than they did. However, I am concerned this afternoon more particularly with those doctors with whom he was brought into intimate personal contact.

He was brought into the world by George Hector, a "man midwife" practising in Lichfield. George Hector's nephew, Edmund, was a schoolfellow of Johnson. He became a surgeon at Birmingham and was Johnson's lifelong friend. He gave many particulars of Johnson's early life recorded by Hawkins and Boswell. Another doctor who was associated with Johnson from his earliest days, was Samuel Swinfen who practised medicine at Lichfield and lodged in Michael Johnson's house in the market place there. He was godfather to Johnson who was thus his namesake. Boswell does not say why Johnson went to Pembroke College at Oxford, but since Dr. Swinfen, his godfather, had been educated there that may well have been the reason. When Johnson was twenty and on vacation from Oxford he had a severe attack of what Boswell calls "horrible hypochondria with perpetual irritation, fretfulness and impatience and with a dejection, gloom and despair which made existence misery". He consulted Dr. Swinfen and put into his hands a statement of his case written in Latin. Dr. Swinfen was so much struck with the extraordinary acuteness, research and eloquence of this paper that he showed it to several people. When Johnson discovered this he was so much offended that

he never completely forgave Swinfen. Both Hawkins and Murphy suggest that Swinfen took a serious view of Johnson's case and Murphy says that Johnson "received an answer to his letter importing that the symptoms indicated a future privation of reason". This may well have played a part in establishing Johnson's lifelong fear of insanity. In spite of his quarrel with Dr. Swinfen, however, Johnson befriended his daughter Mrs. Desmoulins, taking her into his house in Bolt Court and making her an allowance he could ill afford. She was present when Johnson died, and Johnson left a bequest of £200 to her son.

Two doctors played an intimate part in the middle period of Johnson's life, Robert Levett and Thomas Lawrence. Hawkins describes the origin of Johnson's association with Levett as follows. Speaking of Johnson he says: "He had, early in his life, been a dabbler in physic, and laboured under some secret bodily infirmities that gave him occasion once to say to me, that he knew not what it was to be totally free from pain. He now drew into a closer intimacy with him a man, with whom he had been acquainted from the year 1746, one of the lowest practitioners in the art of healing that ever sought a livelihood by it: him he consulted in all that related to his health, and made so necessary to him as hardly to be able to live without him. The name of this person was Robert Levett." From what we know of Johnson's physical health, and the fears and anxieties with which he was afflicted, it is not surprising that he should have welcomed a personal physician. Precisely when Levett joined Johnson's household is uncertain, but it was in the early 1760s. Levett (1704-1782) was born near Hull, where he lived with his parents until he was about twenty. He learned some Latin, but his parents being unable to provide a career for him he went to live as a shopman with a woollen draper at Hull where he learned from a neighbour something of the practice of medicine. After two years he came to London and then visited France and Italy in order to gain some more experience in medicine, and is said to have attended hospitals in Paris. After five years abroad he started in practice in Northumberland Court near Charing Cross. Levett had breakfast with Johnson, and then went out to attend his patients, devoting his spare time to Hunter's lectures and other opportunities for keeping up his knowledge. Hawkins had a poor opinion of Levett's capacity for he says: "Johnson, whose credulity in some instances was as great as his incredulity in others, conceived of him as of a skilful medical professor, and thought himself happy in having so near his person one who was to him not solely a physician, a surgeon, or an apothecary, but all." We may, however, perhaps infer that there was something exceptional about a man who at the age of sixty

devoted the spare time from his practice to attending the classes of one of the outstanding medical teachers of the day. Johnson said of him that, "his external appearance and behaviour were such that he disgusted the rich and terrified the poor". The Gentleman's Magazine says: "His person was middle-sized and thin; his visage swarthy, adust and corrugated. His conversation, except on professional subjects, barren. When in deshabille, he might have been mistaken for an alchemist, whose complexion had been hurt by the fumes of the crucible, and whose clothes had suffered from the sparks of the furnace." In spite of these drawbacks "Levett's 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 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 or admonition of any kind. 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. "Had (said Johnson) all his patients maliciously combined to reward him with meat and strong liquor instead of money, he would either have burst, like the dragon in the Apocrypha, through repletion, or been scorched up, like Portia, by swallowing fire." But let not from hence an imputation of rapaciousness be fixed upon him. Though he took all that was offered him, he demanded nothing from the poor, nor was known in any instance to have enforced a payment of even what was justly his due." In Johnson's own words:

"Yet still he fills affection's eye,  
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;  
Nor, letter'd Arrogance, deny  
Thy praise to merit unrefined."

There could hardly be a greater contrast to Robert Levett than Thomas Lawrence, (1711-1783) who was also Johnson's physician and intimate friend. Lawrence was born in 1711 into a family of some distinction. His grandfather, another Dr. Thomas Lawrence, was physician to Queen Anne and physician general to the army. His grandson entered Trinity College, Oxford, as a commoner and there decided to take up medicine. After being a student at St. Thomas's Hospital he took the degree of Bachelor of Medicine in 1736 and Doctor of Medicine in 1740 at Oxford. He lectured there in anatomy from 1745 to 1750 and also in London, but when Hunter arrived from

Scotland he was so successful as a teacher that he displaced Lawrence who gave up lecturing and confined himself to practice. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1744 and after holding various other offices he became President in 1767, which office he held for seven years. He published a number of medical books and there are seventeen volumes of his manuscripts in the College, of which seven comprise a course of lectures dictated by him and taken down by a Mr. Clark. These are in English, but most of his publications were in Latin and in some ways the most interesting of them is the *De Natura Animalium* because we have the manuscript of Johnson's corrections of Lawrence's Latin in this volume. His medical publications are naturally technical, but he had a philosophical interest in the nature of the mind and its link with the body. He was interested in the physiology of vision and hearing and was something of a psychologist.

Lawrence was introduced to Johnson by Buthurst and the first reference to him in Johnson's letters occurs on December 30th. 1755, written to Miss Boothby, who was ill at the time. The next day Johnson wrote again offering her the prescription on the basis of what Dr. Lawrence had told him about her case. This prescription which began "take an ounce of dried orange peel finely powdered" solved the problem which was later to puzzle Boswell who saw Johnson put into his pocket the oranges from which he had squeezed the juice and asked him what he did with them. Johnson refused to tell him.

In 1775 Boswell wrote from Edinburgh to Johnson to ask his advice with regard to a case in which he was appearing in which a Dr. Memis, a physician at Aberdeen, was bringing an action for damages against the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on the ground that he had been described as a doctor of medicine instead of a physician. Johnson consulted Lawrence on the point. By 1777 Johnson's health was deteriorating and we find him being treated by Dr. Lawrence, a Chirurgeon and by Levett. In January, 1780, Lawrence lost his wife, and two days later Johnson wrote him one of his finest letters in which he says that he knows from his own experience what the loss of a wife means. By this time Lawrence was growing deaf, as Johnson pointed out in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, who two years later wrote to Fanny Burney an account of a meeting she had had with Lawrence when she found him with Johnson. "I put my nose into the old man's wig (Dr. Lawrence's) and shouted: but got none but melancholy answers - so melancholy that I was forced to crack jokes for fear of crying." In her *Anecdotes* Mrs. Thrale gives a more detailed account of what may have been the same occasion. She had taken Johnson to see Lawrence in Essex Street. "The physician," she wrote, "was however, in some respects, more to be pitied than



the patient: Johnson was panting under an asthma and dropsy; but Lawrence had been brought home that very morning struck with the palsy, for which he had, two hours before we came, strove to awaken himself by blisters: They were both deaf, and scarce able to speak besides; one from difficulty of breathing, the other from paralytic debility. To give and receive medical counsel therefore, they fairly sate down on each side of the table in the Doctor's gloomy apartment, adorned with skeletons, preserved monsters, etc., and agreed to write Latin billets to each other: such a scene did I never see." Lawrence moved to Canterbury a few months later and died there the next year. A memorial tablet with a portrait in relief was placed in Canterbury Cathedral by his surviving children. Material from various sources enables us to form a fairly clear picture of Lawrence's personality. He was an excellent Latinist, and though he submitted his Latin for Johnson's correction, there is some evidence that Johnson, on one occasion at least, returned the compliment. He was interested in natural phenomena apart from medicine and made a communication to the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society "on the effects of lightning in Essex Street on 18th. June 1764". But, says Hawkins, "in his endeavours to attain to eminence it was his misfortune to fail: he was above those arts by which popularity is acquired, and had besides some personal defects and habits which stood in his way; a vacuity of countenance very unfavourable to an opinion of his learning or sagacity, and certain convulsive motions of the head and features that gave pain to the beholders and drew off attention to all that he said. It will hardly be believed, how much such particulars as these obstruct the progress of one who is to make his way in a profession: a stammering, or a bad articulation, spoil an orator, and a disgusting appearance hurts a physician." We can often learn a good deal about a man from his hobbies and Hawkins tells us that Lawrence delighted in naval architecture and enjoyed making models of ships. He was also a lover of music and was able to play his part in concert on the violoncello until hindered by deafness. "He had a younger brother named Charles, a solicitor of great practice, who also played on the violoncello... About the year 1740, I was used to meet both the brothers at a tavern in Gracechurch Street, where was a private concert, at which none but such as could join in it were admitted."

Johnson lived only a year after Lawrence's death. Deprived of the advice of his old friend he had to rely in his last illness on others.

One of the most distinguished of Johnson's older medical contemporaries was Richard Mead (1673-1754) of whom Johnson made

the well known remark that he "lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man." Mead's father was a nonconformist minister in Stepney of whom Munk in his roll of the Royal College of Physicians writes: "He availed himself of every possible opportunity to advance his son, and some curious anecdotes are recorded of his efforts in this direction, even from the pulpit." Hawkins, however, says: "I have heard it said that, when he began to practise, he was a frequenter of the meeting at Stepney, where his father preached, and that when he was sent for out of the Assembly, his father would in his prayer insert a petition in behalf of the sick person." Mead was not only a distinguished physician - he was elected President of the Royal College of Physicians, but refused to accept office - he was a patron of the fine arts and of the study of antiquities. His library contained over 6,500 books and his collection of statues, coins, gems, prints and drawings was regarded at the time as unrivalled among private collectors. Another President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Lucas Pepys, (1742-1830) who held that office from 1804 to 1811, was one of Johnson's doctors, and also attended Mr. Thrale. Pepys, who had a large London practice, was one of the physicians consulted about the insanity of George III. He attended Johnson on one occasion when he was staying at Mrs. Thrale's and, says Boswell, "I perceived he was but an unruly patient for Sir Lucas Pepys, who visited him, while I was with him said, 'if you were tractable, Sir, I should prescribe for you.'" In a letter to Dr. John Taylor, written the day following the night in which he had his stroke, Johnson said that he had given up being bled on Pepys's recommendation. Sir Richard Jebb (1729-1787) was another of Johnson's doctors who attended him at Streatham. At least one distinguished surgeon attended Johnson, Percival Pott (1714-1788) who was on the staff of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and who is remembered in Pott's fracture and other disorders to which his name has become attached. He attended Johnson when he had a swelling of his leg in 1783 and in his absence his place was taken by Mr. Cruikshank. Johnson's tractability as a patient can hardly have been increased by his belief that where doctors were concerned there was safety in numbers. He rarely seems to have been satisfied with the opinions of those who were on the spot, but sent statements of his case by post to others, who often lived a long way away, and were expected to make suggestions about treatment without having seen their patient. Thus while Mr. Pott and Mr. Cruikshank were treating the sarcocoele he was corresponding with a Dr. Mudge of Plymouth, and during his last illness he persuaded Boswell to consult the Scottish doctors.

Among his physicians in the latter part of his life two were outstanding, Heberden and Brocklesby. Richard Brocklesby, (1722-

1797) who might perhaps be described as Johnson's physician in ordinary, was of Irish origin on his father's side. He obtained the highest office short of President in the Royal College of Physicians and was appointed physician to the Army and served for some time in Germany during the seven years war. In October, 1760, he was appointed physician to the hospitals for the British forces, and once more proceeded to the seat of war, but returned to England some time before the peace of 1763 and settled in practice in Norfolk Street, Strand. He was physician and intimate friend of some of the most distinguished men of his day, among whom were Wilkes and Edmund Burke as well as Johnson. He was a member of the Essex Head Club. He offered Johnson an annuity to enable him to live in a milder climate and also accommodation in his own house in Norfolk Street when Johnson's dwelling in Bolt Court was considered injurious to his health. Having bequeathed in his will a legacy of £1,000 to Edmund Burke he gave it to him during his life time because he thought he needed it, and it was Brocklesby who raised a subscription for the support of Captain Coram, the founder of the Foundling Hospital who having devoted his energies and resources to that Institution had himself fallen on evil days. Brocklesby made no notable contribution to medicine, but his three known publications illustrate the breadth of his interests. In 1746 he wrote an essay concerning the mortality among horned cattle, in 1764 on economical and medical observations from 1758 to 1763 tending to the improvement of military hospitals, and, finally, a dissertation on the music of the ancients. It is from Brocklesby that we learn a good deal about Johnson's last days.

As Boswell points out, Johnson's fear of death was life-long. It was natural, therefore, that Dr. Brocklesby should have felt some hesitation when Johnson asked him to tell him plainly whether he could recover. "The doctor having first asked him if he could bear the whole truth, which way soever it might lead, and being answered that he could, declared that, in his opinion, he could not recover without a miracle. "Then, (said Johnson,) I will take no more physick, not even my opiates; for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded." In this resolution he persevered, and, at the same time, used only the weakest kinds of sustenance. Being pressed by Mr. Windham to take somewhat more generous nourishment, lest too low a diet should have the very effect which he dreaded, by debilitating his mind, he said, "I will take anything but inebriating sustenance."

Two other physicians who attended Johnson in his last illness were William Butter and Richard Warren. Butter (1726-1805) was a native of the Orkney Islands and educated at Edinburgh. He was in

practice at Derby and Johnson seems to have met him in the course of his visits to Ashbourne. Boswell records a visit with Johnson to Butter's house at Derby. It was on their way to visit Dr. Butter that "Johnson strongly expressed his love of driving fast in a post-chaise. "If (said he) I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation." Mrs. Butter, Boswell mentions, was the daughter of his cousin Sir John Douglas. Butter subsequently moved to London and so came to attend Johnson on his deathbed. Richard Warren, (1731-1797) who was an East Anglian, held numerous offices at the Royal College of Physicians and was on the staff of the Middlesex Hospital and St. George's Hospital. He also was a physician to George III. When he attended Johnson in his last illness his distinguished patient said to him: "You have come in at the eleventh hour, but you shall be paid the same with your fellow labourers. Frank, put into Dr. Warren's coach a copy of the English Poets." Boswell says: "Then Dr. Warren, in the usual style, hoped that he was better; his answer was, "no, Sir; you cannot conceive with what acceleration I advance towards death." Soon afterwards Warren was elected a member of the Literary Club.

Probably the most distinguished of all Johnson's doctors was William Heberden. (1710-1801). He was almost his exact contemporary, being born in 1710, but he outlived him by many years, since he lived to be ninety-one, and so survived into the nineteenth century. Heberden was a Londoner, educated at a grammar school in Southwark and St. John's College, Cambridge, of which he was elected a Fellow at the age of twenty. He practised medicine for some years in Cambridge and later settled in London. His clinical observations have given him a permanent place in the history of medicine. He seems to have attended Johnson first after his stroke and when Johnson in his last illness was asked what physician he had sent for he replied "Dr. Heberden, ultimus Romanorum, the last of the learned physicians." McMichael, the author of the Gold Headed Cane, writes of Heberden as follows. "Though rendered eminent by his skill as a physician, he conferred a more valuable and permanent lustre on his profession by the worth and excellence of his private character. From his early youth Dr. Heberden had entertained a deep sense of religion, a consummate love of virtue, an ardent thirst after knowledge, and an earnest desire to promote the welfare and happiness of all mankind. By these qualities, accompanied with great sweetness of manners, he acquired the love and esteem of all good men, in a degree which perhaps very few have experienced; and after passing an active life with the uniform



testimony of a good conscience, he became a distinguished example of its influence, in the cheerfulness and serenity of his latest age." McMichael relates the following anecdote. "After the death of Dr. Conyers Middleton ... his widow called upon Dr. Heberden with an M.S. treatise of her great husband, about the publication of which she was desirous of consulting him. The religion of Dr. Middleton had always been justly suspected, and it was quite certain that his philosophy had never taught him candour. Dr. Heberden having perused the M.S., which was on the inefficacy of prayer, told the lady that though the work might be deemed worthy of the learning of her departed husband, its tendency was by no means creditable to his principles, and would be injurious to his memory; but as the matter pressed, he would ascertain what a publisher might be disposed to give for the copyright. This he accordingly did; and having found that £150 might be procured, he himself paid the widow £200 and confined the M.S. to the flames." How Johnson would have approved! So from birth to death we have traced Johnson's association with the medical profession. He was attended by the most distinguished doctors of his time, and the less eminent, who would perhaps otherwise have been forgotten, share his fame.

---

#### EDMUND MALONE

Edmund Malone, 1741-1812, was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, who inherited a fortune early in life and from then on lived in London as a critic of English Literature. A critic is usually less well known than an original writer. Malone, however, did distinguished work as an editor of Shakespeare's plays, and by his care in exposing the forgeries of Chatterton and of Ireland Boswell observed that Malone's love of justice was equal to his accuracy. Malone was one of Boswell's executors and, in this capacity, joined with Sir William Forbes in preserving those valuable journals kept by Boswell and only published in the last few years. His life "Edward Malone and the History of English Scholarship" has been written by Mr. James M. Osborn, A.M. Columbia, B. Litt. Oxon., who is Adviser on 18th century manuscripts to Yale University. Among other published writings Mr. Osborn is also the author of "John Dryden and Restoration Literature", and "Joseph Spence and the Pope Circle". Through his initiative the London County Council have agreed to place a memorial tablet on the house, 40 Langham St., London, W.1., where Malone lived for many years. This tablet will be unveiled by Mr. Osborn at 12 noon, on Saturday, March 17th., in the presence of a distinguished company. As the Johnson Society will be meeting at 3 p.m. on that day we hope that many of our members will attend the unveiling on that morning. Mr. Osborne will be returning to England again in 1963 when he has promised to read a paper on Malone to the Johnson Society.

F.N.D.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, IN THE AGE OF JOHNSON

by

The Reverend A.R. Winnett, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.  
Canon of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Spirit, Guildford,  
Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Guildford.

Professor Constantia Maxwell in her History of Trinity College Dublin 1591-1892 observes in reference to Johnson that "an instructive book might be written on the great Doctor's connection with Ireland and his Irish friends".<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention in this lecture to supply that lacuna in our literature, but rather to deal with some of the links between Johnson and the seat of learning which was the first to confer on him the title by which he became commonly known, for it was from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1765 that Johnson received by diploma the degree of Doctor of Laws. Johnson's residence at his own University of Oxford was a brief one, for in the words of Boswell, "the res angusta domi" prevented him from having the advantage of a complete academical education".<sup>2</sup> He was at Oxford for little more than a year, though his name was entered on the books of Pembroke for three. In 1739 Johnson was offered the Mastership of the school at Appleby in Leicestershire provided that he could obtain the degree of Master of Arts. As there was reason to suppose that Oxford would be unwilling to consider conferring the degree on Johnson, Lord Gower, on the recommendation of Pope, made application to a friend of Swift that the degree might be bestowed by Dublin.

As the Appleby School statutes required that the Master should have taken the degree of M.A. in one of the English universities of Oxford or Cambridge, it is doubtful whether the Dublin degree would have qualified Johnson for the post, unless on the strength of it Oxford or Cambridge conferred their M.A. ad eundem. The year 1765 was a notable one in Johnson's life, for in the course of it there took place the publication of his Shakespeare, his introduction to the Thrales and the bestowal of his Doctor's degree by Dublin. The diploma, dated 23rd. July, and signed by the Provost and Senior Fellows, made reference to the "outstanding elegance and usefulness

- (1) opus cit. 165.
- (2) Boswell, Life of Samuel Johnson I. 77. All references to Boswell are to the Birkbeck Hill - Powell edition.
- (3) Boswell I p.533.

of his writings." Boswell justly observes concerning this distinction that it "did much honour to the judgment and liberal spirit" of the College.<sup>4</sup> Of the names appended to the diploma Johnson had personal knowledge of only two, those of Dr. Andrews, the Provost, and Thomas Leland, Senior Fellow and historian, and to them he wrote in grateful acknowledgement of the honour. In his letter to Leland Johnson says, "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 you concurrence with Dr. Andrews in recommending me to the learned society."<sup>5</sup> The tribute paid by Dublin was ten years later accorded to Johnson by Oxford, which in 1775 conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law by diploma. Earlier, in 1755, on the eve of the publication of his Dictionary, Oxford had made him Master of Arts.

The College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity adjacent to Dublin was founded in 1591 by Queen Elizabeth, and the purpose of its foundation was set forth in the Charter as "the education", training and instruction of youths and students, so that they might be better assisted in the study of the liberal arts and in the cultivation of virtue and religion."<sup>6</sup> A further purpose was indicated in a letter of the Queen to the Lord-Deputy Fitzwilliam: it was to render it unnecessary for young men from Ireland to attend universities in France, Italy and Spain, "whereby they have become infected with Popery and other ill qualities and so become evil subjects."<sup>7</sup> During the hundred years which followed its foundation the College fulfilled the designs of its royal foundress with notable success, in spite of fluctuations in the number of its students and the periodical dislocation of its life as the result of unsettled political conditions. Under James II and his Viceroy, Tyrconnell, the College passed through a troubled period. Some of the College plate had to be sold to make up its depleted revenues, the Provost and a number of the Fellows crossed to England, and in 1689 the College was garrisoned by the military. The advent of King William brought with it conditions favourable to the growth and development of the College, and this progress was maintained throughout the century that followed. In 1683, the year of Swift's entry into the College, the number of students in residence was said to be 228.

- 
- (4) Boswell I p.489.
  - (5) Boswell I p.518.
  - (6) Maxwell op.cit. p.5.
  - (7) Maxwell pp. 5-6.

In 1704 the number had risen to 472, and in 1731 to 525. In 1792 the number of students was 933.<sup>8</sup> At this period it was customary for the sons of the leading Irish families to receive their education at Trinity; only after the Union were they commonly sent to Oxford and Cambridge. Although politically and economically subject to English interests, Ireland during the eighteenth century enjoyed a large measure of peace and prosperity. Ignorance and poverty still widely prevailed among the peasantry and the Penal Laws bore heavily upon the Roman Catholic majority: we know that Johnson felt deeply concerning the misery and oppression suffered by the great mass of the Irish.<sup>9</sup> But the Protestant gentry who represented the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, now firmly in power, came to feel secure and at home; wealth increased among the mercantile classes, and the cities, and Dublin in particular, saw the erection of new and elegant buildings on a grand scale. These external circumstances naturally favoured the growth of the College in the eighteenth century; a further factor was strong and efficient administration on the part of able and distinguished Provosts. A feature of the first century or more of the College's history was the frequent changes in the Provostship. Between 1592 and 1717 there were no less than nineteen Provosts. The greater part of the eighteenth century, on the other hand, was covered by the reigns of three Provosts, and these were outstanding men.

In 1717 began the Provostship of Richard Baldwin. His early life was somewhat unusual. A Lancastrian by birth, he is said while at school at Sedbergh to have killed another boy with a cricket ball and to have fled to the coast, stowing away in a boat for Dublin. In Dublin he was engaged as servant by a Fellow of the College, who discerning the boy's intellectual gifts had him admitted to the College as a Sizar.<sup>10</sup> Baldwin's first task as

- 
- (8) Maxwell p.130.  
 (9) "He had great compassion for the miseries and distresses of the Irish nation, particularly the Papists; and severely reprobated the barbarous debilitating policy of the British government, which, he said, was the most detestable mode of persecution". Boswell II p.121.  
 (10) Taylor History of the University of Dublin ii 249-250.

Maxwell op.cit. ii 108-9.

opus cit. ii 108-9.



Provost was to restore order and discipline in the College. When he took office considerable slackness prevailed in the conduct both of Fellows and students. By requiring strict adherence to academic discipline, enforced by stern sanctions, Baldwin succeeded in restoring order to the College, though violent outbreaks occurred from time to time, one in 1734 being marked by the killing of the Junior Dean, Edward Ford, who had made himself unpopular with the students.<sup>11</sup> It was in Baldwin's Provostship that the buildings of Trinity College began to assume the form in which they appear today. The great Library Building, the masterpiece of Thomas Burgh, begun in 1712, was completed in 1724 and opened in 1734. A new Dining Hall was built in 1740, the Front Square as it now stands was begun in 1752, and the great West Front, by Keene and Sanderson, the most prominent feature of the College, facing the Parliament House (now the Bank of Ireland) across College Green, was begun in 1755. Large grants towards the erection of these buildings were received from the Crown and the Irish Parliament, in recognition of which the Front Square was named Parliament Square.<sup>12</sup>

Baldwin, on his death in 1758, was succeeded as Provost by Francis Andrews, a Senior Fellow and a layman. He is of special interest to us as the principal signatory of Johnson's diploma. In his early life he had travelled in Italy, where he impressed the scholars of Padua by his classical knowledge and fluency of address in Latin. There was nothing of the cloistered academic about Andrews. He was generous, witty, popular and fond of good company. A contemporary said of him that he "was what his enemies called a bon-vivant and sometimes too unguarded in his private life for a Provost.....yet his behaviour in College was decent and regular, and as a man of integrity and honour his character was unexceptionable."<sup>13</sup> The academic prestige of the College stood high during his Provostship, and it numbered many distinguished scholars among its Fellows. We may briefly notice those whose names appear with that of the Provost on Johnson's diploma. William Clement, the Vice-Provost, besides representing the College in Parliament, was for thirty years Professor of Botany. Thomas Wilson, uniting arts and science, edited a three-volume edition of Plutarch's Lives and held the chair of Natural Philosophy. Thomas Leland, one of

(11) Maxwell opus cit. ii. 110-113.

(12) Stubbs. History of the University of Dublin. Ch. IX.  
Maxwell. opus cit. ii. 166.

(13) Stubbs, quoting Duigenan Lachrymae Acedemicae.  
opus cit. 1.213.

the most outstanding scholars of the day, edited and translated Demosthenes, wrote a life of Philip of Macedon and brought out a History of Ireland. Richard Murray wrote a standard treatise on Logic and held the chair of Mathematics for thirty-one years. He later became Provost. Robert Law, the youngest of the Senior Fellows was assistant to Leland, who was Professor of Oratory. Michael Kearney was Professor of History: he is the "K" who contributed notes to the fourth edition of Malone's Boswell.<sup>14</sup> The Provostship of Andrews was marked by the establishment of new professorships. From the revenues of the Erasmus Smith estates, of which Andrews was a governor, chairs of Mathematics, Hebrew and Modern History were established in 1762. In the previous year a Regius Professorship of Greek had been established as well as a chair of Feudal and English Law. A particular interest attaches to the Professorship of Music, founded in 1764 in that its first holder was the Earl of Mornington, father of the Duke of Wellington.<sup>15</sup> Mornington in D and in E flat will be familiar to all church musicians.

Under Andrews the building of the West Front and Parliament Square was carried to completion, but the chief architectural monument is the Provost's House, situated on the southern side of the West Front. This was built in 1759 by John Smyth, on the model, it is said, of a house earlier designed for General Wade in Upper Burlington Street, London, by the Earl of Cork and Burlington.<sup>16</sup>

Andrews died at Shrewsbury in 1774 on his way back from Italy. His will contained a bequest for the endowment of a Professorship of Astronomy and the erection of an observatory at Dunsink. His successor in the Provostship was John Hely-Hutchinson, a barrister, Sergeant-at-Law and M.P. for Cork. His appointment marked the beginning of a stormy period in the internal politics of the College, for Hely-Hutchinson was ambitious, high-handed and a lover of power. The bitterest opponent of Hely-Hutchinson was one of the Junior Fellows, Dr. Patrick Duigenan, a man of narrow outlook, uncouth and of a quarrelsome disposition, whom Maurice Craig terms "an Orange boor." In spite of these internal disputes the College continued to make progress under Hely-Hutchinson's rule. The links between the College and the larger worlds of politics and society were strengthened, leading to an increase in the number of students until, as previously mentioned, it reached the figure of

---

(14) Stubbs. opus cit. ii. 224-6.

(15) Maxwell. opus cit. 1.120.

(16) Maxwell. 1.118.

933 in 1792. The financial position of the College was improved by the revaluation of its estates and by the making of new agreements with the tenants. To Hely-Hutchinson's credit must be placed the encouragement of the study of modern languages, for in 1778, with the aid of a grant from the Government, two Professorships, of French and German, and of Italian and Spanish, were established.<sup>17</sup> Building, too, was continued. The Provost's House was enlarged by the addition of a library on the north side, and the erection of the present Chapel was begun, but the chief architectural monument of Hely-Hutchinson's provostship is the Theatre or Examination Hall on the south side of Parliament Square, completed in 1791 to the designs of Sir William Chambers, the architect of Somerset House in London. The Examination Hall, with its noble portico of four Corinthian columns, is reckoned one of his finest works. Indicative of Hely-Hutchinson's far-sighted and enlightened outlook was his advocacy of Catholic Emancipation and the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities in the matter of University education. He declared, "I would have them (Roman Catholics) go into examinations, and make no distinction between them and the Protestants but such as merit might claim..... The present laws are disgraceful and therefore should be abolished. The Roman Catholics should receive the best education in the established university."<sup>18</sup> Although Roman Catholics were not debarred from admission to the College, the form of the graduation oath made it impossible for them to take degrees. In 1793, shortly before the end of Hely-Hutchinson's Provostship, this disability was removed, though it was not until well on in the next century that tests were abolished for Scholarships and Fellowships.

The curriculum of study in Trinity College during the greater part of the eighteenth century was that laid down by the Laudian Statutes and was based on the mediaeval pattern of the trivium and quadrivium. The course covered a wide range of subjects and was taken in its entirety by all candidates. Not until the nineteenth century were the specialised Honours courses established. The subjects studied included Logic, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Physics, Metaphysics, Rhetoric and Ethics. Lectures were given on the Greek authors, but Latin texts were read by each student with his College tutor. Themes or essays in Latin had to be regularly written, and candidates for degrees had to engage in public disputations defending

(17) Maxwell. opus cit. i.124.

(18) Maxwell. opus cit. i.128.

or refuting a thesis. Four years of study were required for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and a further three years for the degree of Master.<sup>19</sup> Logic was treated as a basic subject, and was studied mainly in the Institutae Logicae of Burgersdicius, published at Leyden in 1634 - the "cold logic of Burgersdicius", as Goldsmith describes it. On the completion of their course it was the custom of undergraduates to hold a mock funeral procession to Molesworth's Fields where their copies of Burgersdicius were solemnly burned. In spite of the limitations imposed by the Laudian Statutes the Dublin course did not remain entirely static. The experimental science of Boyle and the Newtonian physics were taught in the College, while Locke's Essay was on the curriculum within two years after its publication. In 1761 the Board was given freedom by Royal Statute to vary the courses to meet the needs of the times, but no substantial modifications were made until the far-reaching changes of the following century. A comparison between Trinity College and the English universities in the eighteenth century would be almost wholly in the former's favour. Dublin beyond all question fulfilled its responsibilities as a University with great seriousness. Whereas numbers at the English universities declined in the eighteenth century, those at Trinity, as we have seen, rose in a remarkable degree. The Fellows of the College, far from luxuriating in idleness, worked hard both in teaching and in administration. Examinations were taken seriously. Prizes were awarded to those who answered best at the quarterly examinations, while the Fellowship examination assumed the character of an academic Marathon. When the proposal was made to found a second university in Ireland it was objected that the resulting emulation would be undesirable, as Trinity students were already in danger of injuring their health through overwork.

How numerous were Johnson's links with Trinity College is evident from Boswell, in whose pages alumni of Trinity make frequent appearance. Trinity men figure in Johnson's writings and conversation as well as in the circle of his friends and acquaintances. William Congreve, the dramatist, the subject of one of Johnson's Lives of the Poets, and the comparison of whom with Shakespeare is among the most often quoted passages of Boswell,<sup>20</sup> was educated at Trinity. "His learning", wrote Macaulay, "does great honour to his instructors. From his writings it appears not only that he was well acquainted with Latin literature, but that his knowledge of the Greek poets was such as was not in his time common, even in

---

(19) Maxwell. opus cit. ii. 148-9.

Stubbs. opus cit. ii. 197-209.

(20) Boswell. ii. 85-87.



a college."<sup>21</sup> Another dramatist, George Farquhar, author of The Beaux' Stratagem,<sup>22</sup> described by Johnson as "a man whose writings have considerable merit", was a Sizar of Trinity, but left without taking a degree. Thomas Parnell, poet, Archdeacon of Clogher, and a Doctor of Divinity of Trinity, was the subject of a Latin epitaph by Johnson<sup>23</sup> as well as of one of the Lives of the Poets. Concerning Samuel Johnson and Jonathan Swift a whole study might be written. "It appears to me that Johnson had a certain degree of prejudice against that extraordinary man", remarks Boswell, and this is borne out by the references in Boswell as well as by what Johnson wrote of Swift in the Lives of the Poets. But Boswell dismisses as insufficiently grounded Sheridan's charge that Johnson's attitude to Swift was determined by the latter's supposed inactivity in the matter of the Master's degree which was sought from Dublin,<sup>24</sup> and Bishop Percy advanced the highly improbable explanation that Johnson's prejudice against Swift was derived from Dr. Madden, who never forgave Swift for refusing to contribute to his fund for founding prizes in Trinity. On the other side must be set Johnson's judgment of Swift as recorded by William Maxwell: "Swift was a man of great parts and the instrument of much good to his country". Although Swift holds a place among the highest in the roll of Trinity's sons, his career there was academically undistinguished and he was awarded his Bachelor's degree only by special favour. Trinity's most original contribution to philosophical thought is represented by George Berkeley, of whom Johnson spoke as "a profound scholar and a man of fine imagination." Johnson's failure to understand the Berkeleyan doctrine of the non-existence of matter save as an idea in a human or in the divine mind is shown by his attempt to refute it by forcibly striking his foot against a stone: on which incident Professor Jessop aptly observes, "He kicked the stone but missed the point."

Mention has already been made of Thomas Sheridan. A Trinity graduate and father of the dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, he took early to the stage, playing both in Dublin and at Drury Lane,<sup>25</sup> and later became manager of the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin. Afterwards he settled in London as a teacher of elocution. Readers of Boswell will recall Sheridan's resentment against Johnson on account of the latter's remark when hearing that Sheridan had been

- 
- (21) Macaulay T.B. "Essay on Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.
  - (22) Boswell IV p.7.
  - (23) Boswell IV p.54.
  - (24) Boswell IV p.61.
  - (25) Constantia Maxwell Dublin under the Georges (revised edition)  
pp. 222-3.

granted a pension, "What, have they given him a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine" and Sheridan's subsequent description of Johnson as "a writer of gigantic fame in these days of little men." "A name which Ireland ought to honour" was Johnson's judgment on Dr. Samuel Madden, commonly known as "Premium Madden" on account of his scheme for premiums or prizes to be given to the best answerers in the quarterly examinations at Trinity. Madden, a wealthy clergyman residing in Co. Fermanagh, was one of the founders in 1731 of the Royal Dublin Society, whose object was the improvement of the arts and agriculture. Johnson quotes a remark of Madden's that "in an orchard there should be enough to eat, enough to lay up, enough to be stolen and enough to rot on the ground."<sup>26</sup> Madden submitted to Johnson's criticism his memorial poem on Archbishop Boulter. Johnson dealt somewhat severely with the poem, but Madden, he tells us, "was very thankful and very generous, for he gave me ten guineas, which was to me at that time (about 1743) a very great sum". There are two Trinity men to whom we are indebted for their contribution to our knowledge of Johnson. Dr. William Maxwell, whose long life extended from 1732 to 1818, was a native of Co. Monaghan and a Pensioner, and later Scholar, of the College. On coming to England he was appointed Assistant-Precacher of the Temple, and in 1754 was introduced to Johnson by George Grierson, the Government Printer in Dublin. Maxwell speaks of his friendship with Johnson, which continued until the latter's death, as "a connection that was at once the pride and happiness of my life." Maxwell's recollections, incorporated by Boswell in the Life, are a vivid record of Johnson's opinions and pronouncements on a variety of subjects. In 1775 Maxwell left London for the Rectory of Mount Temple in Co. Westmeath. His final meeting with Johnson took place at the Mitre, where they dined *tete-a-tete*.

Three clergymen destined to occupy Irish bishoprics were numbered amongst Johnson's circle of friends. These were Thomas Percy, compiler of the Reliques, Bishop of Dromore 1782-1811; Thomas Barnard, Bishop of Killaloe 1780-1794 and Limerick 1794-1806; and Richard Marlay, Bishop of Clonfert 1787-1795 and Waterford 1795-1802. All three were members of "The Club", and Barnard was one of the signatories of the Round Robin requesting that Johnson should revise his epitaph on Goldsmith. Of the three, however, only Marlay was educated at Trinity, though Barnard, a Cambridge man, held a Trinity degree ad eundem. Another Trinity-bred divine of Johnson's acquaintance was Augustus Montague Toplady, author of the hymn "Rock of Ages". At dinner at Dilly's, when Johnson gave

---

(26) Boswell IV p.205.

(27) Boswell II 253-5.

his views on toleration, Toplady paid him the compliment, "Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity." He may not have been equally satisfied with Johnson's answer to his question whether the invocation of saints did not imply their omnipresence.<sup>27</sup>

I have left until last the two most illustrious graduates of Trinity in Johnson's circle, Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke, who are commemorated by statues on either side of the main entrance to the College. Goldsmith, the son of a poor physician in Co. Westmeath, entered College as a Sizar in 1744 at the age of fourteen. His Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning may in part reflect the far from happy experiences of his College days. He resented his humble position and the menial tasks he had to perform as a Sizar. The enforced and excessive study of mathematics was uncongenial to him, and in his view the restrictions imposed by the College authorities kept young men too long from mixing in the world, the "only true school of improvement." - a defect from which the less rigidly disciplined Scottish and Dutch universities were free. The unhappiness of Goldsmith's College days was increased by the fact of his having as tutor Dr. Theaker Wilder, a cleric, mathematician and something of a brute. Goldsmith was once holding a party in his rooms contrary to College rules when Wilder entered, beat him and knocked him down. Goldsmith, humiliated by being so treated, left the College, but later, on his brother's persuasion, returned to take his degree.<sup>28</sup>

Goldsmith's career in College was not, as is sometimes asserted, entirely without distinction. He gained a small Exhibition on the Erasmus Smith foundation and a premium at a Christmas examination, he is twice recorded in the Senior Lecturer's book as remarkably diligent at Morning Lecture, according to Johnson a friend of his (probably Burke) "recollected something of his having been distinguished at College."<sup>29</sup> But against this has to be set the fact that he was cautioned for bad answering and finally relegated to a lower class for neglect of his studies. Much of his time was spent in idling and in writing ballads to pay his fees. Goldsmith's medical training was received not at Dublin but at Edinburgh and on the Continent. Though there is no record in the College Register of his having graduated M.B. at Dublin, he must be presumed to have done so, since in February 1769 Oxford admitted him,

---

(27) Boswell II. 253-5.

(28) Maxwell. Dublin under the Georges. 190 and 195.

(29) Boswell III. 168.

as a Bachelor of Physick of Dublin, to the same degree *ad eundem*.<sup>30</sup> "Burke at College was everything that Goldsmith was not", observes Dr. Constantia Maxwell. Burke entered Trinity in 1744 at the age of fifteen. Writing to a friend he describes the College Entrance Examination, at which he was told by the Fellow in charge that he "was a good scholar, understood the authors very well and seemed to take pleasure in them, and was more fit for the College than three parts of his class." At the end of his second year he successfully sat for Scholarship. He graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1748 and later left Dublin to study law in London. In 1790 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, the proposal as recorded in the College Register making reference to "the various endowments of his mind and his transcendent talents and philanthropy" and describing him as "the powerful advocate of the Constitution, the friend of public order and virtue, and consequently of the happiness of mankind."<sup>31</sup> Burke's great contribution to the College during his time as an undergraduate was the formation of a Debating Club, one of the predecessor of the later Historical Society, the Dublin equivalent of the Oxford and Cambridge Unions. The Club, which held its first meeting in April 1747, met twice a week from 5 to 9 p.m. and the subjects debated included politics, economics, foreign affairs, literature and morals. The Club's Minute Book, largely in Burke's handwriting, is still preserved. The purpose of the Club, in the words of the preamble to its constitution, was "the improvement of its members in the more refined, elegant and useful parts of literature, these seeming the most likely means for attaining the great end in view - the formation of our minds and manners for the functions of civil society." The Minute Book contains the following summary of a speech by Burke in a debate on the Passions; "The root whence every vice has its nourishment and growth: Wisdom and Virtue, the children and graces of the mind: the Passions enemies to both, and continual rebels to Reason and Decorum." We surely detect there those accents which years later were to be sounded forth with such force and clarity in Burke's writings against the French Revolution, which for him made the height of passion and fanaticism over law and virtue and the due decorum of society. In the same Minute Book it is recorded that at the Club's second meeting, "Mr. Burke, for an essay on the Genoese, was given thanks for the matter but not for the delivery". It is strange that although Johnson had so many links with Trinity College he never once crossed the Irish Sea and even

(30) Boswell I. 549.

(31) Stubbs. opus cit. 263.



described Ireland as "the last place where I should wish to travel" and Dublin as a "worse capital" though "not so bad as Iceland" were Johnson living today London might well be a strange and uncongenial city to him, but in Dublin he would be completely at home. In all essentials Dublin remains still the same capital that it was in the eighteenth century. In this day of squalid vulgarity to within the squares of Trinity College is to breathe again the urbane and critical air of the age of pleasure. No place in the world is more full of clubbable men than Dublin; nowhere is it easier for a man to stretch his legs and have his talk out. It is an Englishman and a Londoner who addresses you this afternoon, but let him not be too hardly judged if desiring to survey "the full tide of human existence" he shall choose to take his stand not at Charing Cross but on College Green.

---

To the Johnson Society of London by Professor Charles R. Hart,  
Atlanta, Georgia.

Friends, if I have the right to use the word,  
You who have with such kind attention heard  
My story, telling how year after year  
I strove to make a lifelong purpose clear,  
And paid at last my tribute to a heart  
That still beats for us, as we set apart  
A place for Samuel Johnson in our day,  
May "friends" not be too bold a word to say,  
But may you rather think it well employed  
By one who at such distance has enjoyed  
Your fellowship. It is these ties that bind  
Our hearts, and make one people of mankind.

We are one, though an ocean lies between,  
And though for me a president, a queen  
For you is head. With equal pride we claim  
The lustre shed by many a hallowed name;  
I wrote of Johnson, since he pictured you,  
But we behold in him our image too.  
This is the thought that I essayed to bring:  
He was a man, tempered by suffering,  
For whom some torment always was at hand,  
Who learned from pain and loss to understand.

Thanks then for lending such a ready ear,  
When my words reached you, though I was not near,  
Detained by circumstance. I prize the bond  
That joins my home to London and beyond,  
And hope some day to learn, full in your sight,  
That I have called you friends with perfect right.

NO APOLOGY FOR COLLEY CIBBER

by

Malcolm Morley Esquire.

When Samuel Johnson came to London in 1737 as a young man of twenty-eight, Colley Cibber, actor, manager, dramatist, poet and man of fashion, was a veteran of sixty-six retired from the stage. But in 1745 Cibber returned to the theatre with his own rewriting of Shakespeare's King John to which he had given the title of Papal Tyranny. Years earlier this piece had been put into rehearsal but Cibber, not content with what he saw of the preliminaries, secretly purloined the script from which the company was working. The actors assembled the next day to find the one and only copy of Cibber's adaptation had vanished. They could not rehearse without it and the author emphatically refused to produce the script for their use. After all it was his own property and he declined to let them have it. And so the performance was abandoned. But the year 1745 heralded national peril. Charles Edward, the Catholic Prince, claimant to the throne, had invaded England from Scotland and was prepared to march on London. Cibber, anti-catholic to the core, had the urge to bring out Papal Tyranny and to act Pandulph, the canting legate of the Pope, himself. His piece was produced at Covent Garden that year and the occasion would have been the only time that Johnson had an opportunity of seeing him act. Yet there must have been many meetings between the two in the literary circles of a London greatly smaller than it is today. Perchance Johnson may have been present at Button's Coffee House where Cibber held court, spreading his importance and humourously bandying conversation with the wits of the town. The lexicographer said in brief of Cibber "He 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." It was the truth in little. Johnson was blunt and direct; Cibber was bland and circuitous.

Colley, born in Southampton Street, London, was the son of Caius Cibber, a Danish sculptor who had settled in England, a specimen of whose art may be seen in the figures carved at the base of the Monument erected after the Great Fire of 1666. Young Colley went to Grantham Grammar School and, when the boys in his class were asked to write an Ode on the death of Charles II, he was the only one to undertake the task. He probably recited

it to the others and so grew to like the sound of his own verse, a liking that was never to lessen. School over, all his interest was centred upon the stage. Political events, however, prevented him from doing anything definite concerning this passion for the play. One King fled the country; another, William of Orange, entered. For a brief period Colley served as a soldier on the side of William III. There was no fighting to be done and, with the new king firmly established, he headed once more for the compelling stage. He was in and out of the playhouse until, in due course, he found himself a very minor member of the company at Drury Lane where the great Thomas Betterton reigned supreme.

The early appearances of Cibber were in microscopic roles, if such they could be called. In one of the plays, he had to bring on a message to Betterton. Having entered on his cue, he was so transfixed by the powerful acting of Betterton that he failed to deliver the message but just stood, a dummy on the stage. When the enraged magnate made his exit he descended upon Downes, the prompter, and demanded that the incompetent novice be fined five shillings from his salary. To which Downes replied that it was a difficult thing to do considering that no salary was paid the young man. Betterton quickly settled the difficulty by declaring that Cibber should be paid ten shillings a week and pay the fine. Promotion was slow at Drury Lane but, little by little, Cibber proved his worth. At short notice he played Fondlewife in Congreve's The Old Bachelor and was highly praised for his performance. Recognition was his - so he thought. For the opening of the new Season Colley wrote a verse Prologue intending to deliver it himself although, as he freely admitted, his voice was an insufficient one. Alas! poor poet: his Prologue was given to another actor to speak. Never defeated, Cibber came forward with a comedy of his own Love's Last Shift which the management was prevailed upon to produce. In it he played Sir Novelty Fashion, a coxcomb of the period. The piece was successful and Sir Novelty opened the door for Cibber to a long line of foppish and foolish characters in plays that followed. Vanburgh, an established dramatist, was so impressed with Love's Last Shift that he sat down and wrote a sequel, The Relapse, wherein Sir Novelty again appeared having now succeeded to the title of Lord Foppington. Cibber in the part wore the most gorgeous clothes, the height of fashion, exaggerated to extremes. His peruke was longer than any worn by the beaux in the audience and created a pattern that was copied by the ultra-fashionables of London.

The next stage offering of Colley was an alteration of Shakespeare's Richard III, a patchwork affair that was to supplant

the original until Irving restored the text and form of Shakespeare in his revival at the Lyceum a century and a half later. Cibber was proud of what he had done and anticipated Bernard Shaw in stating that he could take a work by Shakespeare and make it more like a play. Richard III as altered by Cibber is a compact melodrama. Much of Shakespeare is out; the characters, and consequently the scenes, of Clarence and Queen Marguerite are omitted altogether. Scenes and lines (some considerably changed) are inserted from Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI whilst Cibber contributes much matter of his own. He is responsible for "Conscience avaunt, Richard's himself again" following the Crookback's nightmare scene. The oft quoted "Off with his head - So much for Buckingham" is a bit of Cibber encased in some of his stilted verse. Tragedians who ranted at the Minor Theatres in the Victorian age were enamoured of Cibber's version, or perversion, and strutted the stage with it, time and time again, on their Benefit nights.

Some thirty plays were written and produced by Cibber. Among the number were The Careless Husband, She would and She would Not and The Double Gallant, comedies of intrigue though far less bawdy than those of the preceding Restoration dramatists and without the mawkish sentiment that was later to invade the theatre. They were lively works. Their concern was with the affectations and manners of the age; the characters represented largely people of rank and position, enobled somebodies-or nobodies. The dialogue was easy, more distinguished for humour than for wit. Perhaps Colley Cibber could be ascribed as the Frederick Lonsdale or the Noel Coward of his time. In 1711 Cibber with Robert Wilks and Thomas Dogget took over the management of Drury Lane and for twenty years the theatre prospered as it had never done before. The accounts were jealously guarded by Dogget. Opposed to him was the lavish Wilks seeking only stage glory. Between them was the diplomatic Cibber: his tact made for peace in the theatre and his sense of the taste of the public, and of its changing appetite, filled the benches nightly. His success as a manager was unequalled until the advent of Garrick.

The performance of The Non-Juror adapted by Cibber from Moliere's Tartuffe was largely responsible for securing his appointment as Poet Laureate when Busden died in 1730. The play was violently partisan with Doctor Wolf, the leading character, portrayed as a rabid Popish priest full of guile and hypocrisy. There was political flavour in the sentiments expressed that was in accord with the precepts of the ruling Hanoverians. Cibber fancied himself as a worthy poet though nobody else did, other



than the powers who created him Laureate. Johnson called his Odes nonsense and when Cibber read one to him would not let the reader reach the end. Small wonder with such couplets as:-

"Perched on the eagle's soaring wing  
The lonely linnet loves to sing".

It was said that the only fire in Cibber's verse was when the paper on which it was written was used to light a churchwarden pipe.

Despite all Colley Cibber remained the National Laureate for twenty-seven years churning out his Odes on the occasions of National Celebrations and State Ceremonies. Where are those Odes now? Are they preserved in the country's archives? The splenetic Alexander Pope, a true poet, writhed at the thought of Cibber's appointment. He classed him with the literary dunces. Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot were at war with the dullards of the pen. A paper battle raged; the field of conflict mostly the Grub Street Journal and Pope's poem The Dunciad in which he castigated those whose talents he despised. Pope had collaborated with Arbuthnot and John Gay in a comedy Three Hours after Marriage, none too well received when given at Drury Lane. There was a stupid scene where two would-be lovers of the newly-wedded wife disguise themselves, one as a stuffed crocodile and the other as a mummy. The absurdity of the disguises supplied Cibber with material for ridicule and, in his part of Bayes in The Rehearsal, he introduced some unflattering pleasantries in comment on the scene. It was customary for actors playing Bayes to write in dialogue and indulge in imitations of other actors. In such manner The Rehearsal, a burlesque, was brought to bear upon current stage happenings. After seeing a performance, Pope, boiling over with rage, went behind the scenes and accosted Cibber, threatening him with physical violence if he persisted in his mummery. But Cibber showed no fear and calmly stated that whenever he acted Bayes he would keep in the matter which had so incensed the little man attacking him. Indignant Alexander Pope took his revenge by including in an enlarged edition of The Dunciad an account of the election of Cibber to the throne by the Goddess of Dullness. In honour of his installation games are played and the task imposed of reading volumes of verse and prose without nodding. King Cibber is taken to the Temple of Dullness where he is lulled to sleep in the arms of the Goddess to dream of the triumphs of his empire. The satire was devastating. Cibber countered in some mildly caustic, light-hearted pamphlets. The heat of battle died down - the combatants exhausted.

Colley Cibber's "Apology for his Life" first appeared in 1739.

What a delightful autobiography! He tells of his failures and his triumphs whilst he positively revels in his weaknesses. His candour about himself is beguiling. One is immediately interested in the story of his noviate days when seeking recognition on the stage. Of the greatest value is the history he relates of the London theatre during the many years he was actively associated with the playhouses. The period, almost barren of chronicles has a faithful recorder and lives again under his lively and loving pen. The descriptions he gives of his contemporaries are both happy and masterly. His word picture of Betterton's Hamlet shows Cibber's own great knowledge of acting and his particular ability as an author. Retiring finally from the stage Colley, troubled to a degree by his disreputable son Theophilus and his errant daughter Charlotte Charke, did not allow sadness to enter his life. He continued to parade as a man of fashion, meeting his friends at the Coffee Houses and Ordinaries and enjoying with them the tittle-tattle of the town. A snob maybe but he ever extended a hand to help the young and striving. Colley Cibber bore few traces of the years that corrode even at eightysix when he died suddenly at his home in Islington in 1757. No apology is needed for his life. He is remembered as one of the foremost personalities of the Eighteenth Century.

Sir John Hawkins was a lawyer, a judge in the Quarter Sessions, and a distinguished musician. He was elected into the Ivy Lane Club, then the principal meeting place of the Johnson circle, in 1749. He did not prove an enthusiastic club member but he remained a life long friend of Johnson and was appointed by him as one of his executors. Three years after the death of Johnson Hawkins published, in 1787, his "Life and Works of Johnson". The original edition appeared in London and in Dublin, the book has never been republished. Now we understand that a new edition is almost completed and will appear with Jonathan Cape as publishers in the spring. James Boswell viewed Hawkins work with a jealous eye and often decried his work; this was unjust. In some respects Boswell is correct but Hawkins lived continuously in the life of the London of his day. His book gives many interesting pictures of the coffee houses, the method of election to the staffs of the great hospitals, the world of music and of the law courts. On the death of Mr. Thrale and the estrangement which followed the marriage of Mrs. Thrale to Signor Piozzi, Johnson resumed his close friendship with Hawkins and his family, going to tea and spending the evening with them. The book contains many pen pictures both of Johnson and of London, and will prove of great interest to many, all over the world, when it appears.

### Reviews

"The Achievement of Samuel Johnson" by Walter Jackson Bate.

Oxford University Press 1961. Price 8/6 nett.

"The Achievement of Samuel Johnson", following after so much recent writing on the subject, is an achievement by Professor Bate which entitles him to a worthy place among the many scholarly American writers and researchers whose work has added so much to our knowledge of the life and character of Samuel Johnson. The author's approach is original and is inspired by a remark of Keats on Shakespeare, of whom he says - "He led a life of allegory: his works are the comments on it." How far this may or may not be true of Shakespeare, it is certainly true of Johnson, and leads Professor Bate to regard him as an allegorical figure like Bunyan's "Valiant for Truth". In the first Chapter, entitled "A Life of Allegory", the life of Johnson is summed up as a progress through conflict to achievement. In three succeeding Chapters, bearing titles quoted from the works, his moral philosophy is expounded in relation to three besetting problems of mankind: unsatisfied desire, self deception and betrayal, and the quest of truth. Regarding the first question Idler No.5 is quoted, where Johnson says - "We desire, we pursue, we obtain, we are satiated; we desire something else and begin a new pursuit." Or again - "Of riches as of everything else, the hope is more than the enjoyment. - But hope, though unrealised, must not as with Swift end in bitterness, for hope itself is a source of happiness." In Chapter three, "The Treachery of the Human Heart", we are given a skilful analysis of all those envies, misunderstandings and embitterments which divide men and nations. Johnson's insight into the causes, conscious and unconscious, which produce these evils is illustrated by further apt quotations from Rasselas, The Vanity of Human Wishes, and the essays. These go to show that in psychological understanding Johnson in some measure anticipates Freud. In the introduction to Shakespeare occurs the phrase, "The stability of Truth"; and this the author has chosen as the title of his fourth and penultimate Chapter. What is truth? is a question which has admitted of many answers, and for many still remains unanswered. For Johnson it can only be answered in terms of religion, for he holds that only in the Christian belief and practice can the need of the heart for certitude be finally satisfied. In conclusion let it be said; that the numerous sayings and reflections chosen with such insight and quoted by the author as the textual substance of his exposition,

form in themselves as complete an anthology of the wisdom of Samuel Johnson as it is possible to conceive. The highest praise we can give to Professor Bate's own writing is to say, that it is fully worthy of its great subject.

H. A. MORGAN.

---

French Profiles by G.P. Gooch, C.H. 1961. Longmans 30/- nett.

The members of the Johnson Society who heard Dr. Gooch deliver his memorable lecture on Anglo-French Contacts in the Eighteenth Century will find it included in his latest book French Profiles. Here is the account of British visitors to France and vice versa, or to use the author's own words "the cultural cross fertilisation". We meet Voltaire on English ground just after his release from the Bastille. Admiration was mingled with gratitude towards his English friends, especially as, due to them, his Henriade was published here, and dedicated to Queen Caroline. This admiration for England, her people, and their form of government remained with Voltaire all his life, and English friends were ever welcome to his home, among them James Boswell. But it is the history of France just before and after the Revolution that Dr. Gooch has taken for his main subject in French Profiles. Clearly described is the battleground of two ideologies, which the author views with his wide, unprejudiced and experienced outlook. On the one side of this struggle are the upholders of the Church and its authority, such as Chateaubriand, Lacordaire and others, and on the opposite side the Rationalists, with Voltaire in their forefront. The account of how Lammenais, with his "dynamic energies" transferred his allegiance from the church of Rome to the cause of the people and to social justice is one of the most enthralling parts of this book that is so full of sympathy towards the diverse characters in it. Indeed all the clarity, and lucidity of thought which is characteristic of Dr. Gooch's works are found here at their best.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of French Profiles came the homage paid to him by twenty two historians of international reputation, in the form of a Zeitschrift. The title reads Studies in Diplomatic History and Historiography in Honour of G.P. Gooch, C.H. Edited by A.O. Sarkissen, and published by Longmans. It is a fitting honour and tribute to one who has given his whole life to the art of history.

Theodora Roscoe.



Samuel Johnson the Moralist. Robert Voitle. 1961. Pp.188. Price 34/-

The writer of this careful study quotes from an article on 'The History of the Science of Morals' in the 1797 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which states that Samuel Johnson is 'the first moralist of the age'. He proceeds to study him in the light of the age in which he lived. He considers Johnson's moral conceptions to be based upon Reason. He points out that among the examples quoted in the Dictionary is this one from Richard Hooler, 'Reason is the director of man's will, discovering in action what is good, the laws of well doing are the dictates of right reason'. Or again, he uses this illustration from Locke 'To reason, to argue rationally; to deduce consequences justly from premises'. The author describes what in his opinion was the Elizabethan view, that soul, not mind, is what matters and that the soul itself may be looked on in three aspects, which originally derive from Aristotle; vegetative, which is concerned with nutrition, growth, and reproduction; the sensitive soul which is the seat of motion and sensation, it mediates between the individual and his environment and finally, the rational soul which enables man to analyse and estimate the data of experience. In a letter from Johnson to Mrs. Thrale he distinguishes three principles of reason, ratiocination (reasoning or discourse, i.e. the logos), reflection, judgement; how well this is put. Discussing the freedom of the will the author considers that during the period from 1750-1780 Johnson seems to grow progressively more convinced that men, despite their limitations, can and do accomplish something morally in this world. Johnson follows Locke in his argument on happiness, 'Sir, that all who are happy are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally satisfied, but not equally happy, a peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher ----- our Maker, who, though he gave us such varieties of temper and such difference of powers, yet designed us all for happiness, undoubtedly intended that we should obtain that happiness by different means. This book is an interesting study of this aspect of the life of Johnson, the references are carefully given and it well repays study.

F.N. DOUBLEDAY.