

THE
NEW RAMBLER

Journal of The Johnson Society of London

JANUARY, 1963

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JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

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WILLIAM LAW

by

The Very Reverend W. R. Matthews, C.H., K.C.V.O., D.D.,
Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London.

The external life of William Law is easily described. He was born in 1686 at a village in Northants. He was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and elected a fellow of the College in 1711. He held this fellowship until the accession of George I in 1714, when Law refused to take the oath of allegiance and became a non-juror, suffering the loss of any preferment and of the opportunity to exercise his public ministry. For ten years, from 1727 to 1737, he lived with the family of the Gibbons in Putney, acting as tutor to the father of the historian. This episode in his life is of some interest, for we have the judgment of Edward Gibbon, who was certainly no particular lover of the clergy, that Law had a distinguished mind, somewhat clouded by enthusiasm, and also that, if a man had any tendency to piety, Law would speedily warm it into zeal. In 1740, he retired to his birthplace and was joined there later by two ladies, Mrs. Hutcheson and Miss Hester Gibbon, the historian's aunt. Together Law and his two female companions engaged in religious work and devotional exercises, organising schools and almshouses in the village. Although, as we have noted, precluded from officiating in church on political grounds, Law and his associates were never absent from the parish church. The incumbent of the parish appears to have been a good and conscientious pastor - certainly no absentee pluralist - but perhaps not surprisingly he found his saintly parishioner sometimes a trial. The only other events to chronicle in Law's career are the publications of his books and sundry controversies in which he took part.

Law was no quietist so far as controversy was concerned. He had a forceful prose style and he evidently enjoyed laying about him in righteous causes. In 1717, he published "Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor", which were an effective blast in the attack by the high Church and Tory Anglicans on the low Church and Whig bishops of whom Dr. Hoadly was a pugnacious specimen. The Bangorian controversy would make an interesting topic for another paper, but we must not be diverted from our main theme now. In 1726, Law struck a blow against the drama in his pamphlet "The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment". The high-Church cleric, on the verge of becoming a non-juror, in this matter

was on the side of the Puritans. In 1726, he published the first of his popular religious works, "On Christian Perfection", which was followed in 1728 by his most famous book, "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life", which seems to have made an immediate impression and has remained one of the few books of devotion which have been read from generation to generation. It has been claimed that Law's Serious Call is second only to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, among books that have exercised influence on the religious life of England and I certainly do not know what other candidate for second place to suggest. Law's power of writing and forcible style are here seen at their best and are used for the inculcation of what, in the main, are plain and straightforward religious principles. Apart from a controversial book against Deism, as represented by Mat. Tindal, entitled "The Case of Reason" (1732), Law's later writings have a distinctive flavour, which differentiates them into a separate group. They show the influence of Jakob Boehme and are the documents on which we have to rely, if we hold that Law ranks among the English mystics. Two remarkable books belong to the final period of Law's life and to his mystical phase: "The Spirit of Prayer" and "The Spirit of Love" (1749, 1752). It is a not unimportant part of the external events of Law's career that his mystical development estranged John Wesley, who had been an enthusiastic disciple.

From our point of view, Law offers, I think, four points of interest. He was a contemporary of Johnson and an object of the sage's animadversion. He has a notable place in the literary history of the 18th century, his handling of prose in controversy, exposition and exhortation being of outstanding merit. Deeper than either of these concerns must be our enquiry into the nature of Law's religious experience and the evidence it provides for the spiritual condition of Church and people in 18th century England; and deeper still the question whether Law was in fact a mystic and, if so, in what sense.

The major reference to Law in Boswell is well-known, but you will, no doubt, forgive me for recalling it. Reporting Johnson's communication about his religious progress, Boswell tells us that Johnson "fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it," in his ninth year and this precocious, critical attitude continued until he went to Oxford. Johnson says that he became "a sort of lax talker against religion", but, "When at Oxford, I took up 'Law's Serious Call 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

became capable of rational inquiry."

Johnson, in characteristic phrase, described "The Serious Call" as "the best piece of Parnetick Divinity" and even as "The finest piece of hortatory theology in any language"; though he added "William Law was no reasoner". It is clear that one work at least of William Law's had a lasting influence over Dr. Johnson's mind and spiritual life. Among the literary thinkers of the period, Law stands out as one of the masters of prose writing and Johnson was not the only great man to recognise this. Edward Gibbon, after mentioning his "ridiculous intemperance of sentiment and language" on the subject of theatrical entertainments, proceeds, "But these sallies of religious frenzy must not extinguish the praise which is due to Mr. William Law as a wit and a scholar. His argument on topics of less absurdity is specious and acute, his style forcible and clear; and had not his vigorous mind been clouded by enthusiasm, he might be ranked with the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the times." And, again, 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". That this same book had a great influence on the minds of John Wesley and Whitfield is well-known. These facts, among others, throw a light upon the 18th century, the so-called "Age of Reason". Some of the accepted views about its religious life in England may have to be revised. It has been the custom to speak of the Church in that period as dead or dormant and, of course, there is a good deal of evidence to support this view. The deplorable conditions of many parishes, owing to the pluralism of many of the clergy, and the moralising sermons which were customary, must be given their weight. But it is now evident that there was a very genuine and, in spite of the "prejudice against enthusiasm", even a mystical type of devotion in some quarters. A century which produced not only William Law, but William Blake and the two Wesleys cannot be dismissed as devoid of living religion.

William Law was a man who was, in many respects, in harmony with the culture of the period and, as we have already noted, his prose style has a good claim to be among the very best examples of the period. We might rank Law along with Joseph Butler and George Berkeley, as those who addressed themselves effectively to the "cultured despisers of religion". I have borrowed this phrase from Schleiermacher, whose "Lectures in Defence of Religion" were given this title. Though Law and Schleiermacher are separated by

a century in time, they were, to some extent, similar in their aims and in the problems they attempted to solve. The 18th century in England was undoubtedly a time when religion had many cultured despisers. Schleiermacher, in appealing to them, attempted to grasp and convey to his hearers the essence of religion and to form the outline of a new theology based on "feeling" and, specially, on the "feeling of absolute dependence". Law was no innovator and did not react against reason. His appeal was to the New Testament and the tradition of the Church; and his aim to give life to the beliefs which were still respected by the majority of the people.

To summarise a book of devotion is almost as difficult as to summarise a poem. In both cases, the effect is to destroy the appeal. The only way, as it seems to me, to do anything like justice to such writings as Law's is to point out any characteristic features and to try to illustrate them by quotations. It is specially hard to select short quotations from Law, because his writing is so continuous and sentences taken out of their context lose a good part of their significance. As I have said, Law is steeped in scripture and loyal to the traditional teaching of the Church. As we know, he was a high churchman, a non-juror, and therefore, a sacramentalist. But the sacramental aspect of Church life is not so central in his writings as we might perhaps have expected. He is concerned primarily with the personal and inner life of the individual and with making holiness not a vague term, but a definite objective for the ordinary Christian believer. We shall have, later, to say something about mysticism in regard to Law. Here it is enough to say that a spirit which could be described as mystical in a general way pervades the "Serious Call". It is, I think, always the mysticism which we find in St. Paul, what Schweitzer has called, I think "Christ-mysticism". Law certainly means us to strive to imitate Christ, but not precisely in the same way as Thomas à Kempis. Law is thinking not of copying the historical Jesus so much as with the Pauline conception of suffering with Christ and rising with him. The imitation of Christ in Law's teaching, as with St. Paul, leads to and aims at an identification of the self with the experience of Christ. But this identification is not in any sense of the word magical, nor is it produced by ritual. It is a growing spiritual experience. Law insists, not only in the "Serious Call", but in his later and more mystical works, that the sacrifice of Christ is of no effect for us unless we share in it; and the Atonement is not simply something done for us, but something done in us.

The perennial attraction of the "Serious Call" lies in the

masterly exposition of the life of the spirit in concrete terms which can be understood by anyone. The conflict between spirit and flesh is dramatised and personified, particularly in the two contrasted women, Flavia and Miranda, both, it seems, based upon aunts of Edward Gibbon. The strict and devoted life of Miranda is beautifully described with abundant detail and no one could fail to be moved by it. I wonder, however, whether, if we speak candidly, we could say that we would feel perfectly happy in Miranda's company. Perhaps we should, but we might, I suggest, sometimes feel that we needed a little holiday from her unremitting austerity. She gives us an example of one who has certainly attained peace. She is at peace with God and men; but is the element of joy to be found in her? One hardly feels that, in C.S. Lewis' phrase, in her conversion she was "surprised by joy". Perhaps it is a sign of a coarse mind, but I must confess that, now and then when reading the "Serious Call", I have thought of Sir Toby Belch and his exclamation, "Because thou art virtuous, shall there be no more cakes and ale?" But there is a more serious criticism which concerns not cakes and ale but literary and artistic values. It is strange that William Law, who was a great writer with the imagination of a poet, should seem to adopt as the ideal of Christian life one which would condemn Christian humanism and very much of the literary and artistic inheritance of our culture. A questionable element in the actual conduct of Miranda, which is held up for our admiration, is the indiscriminating and unreflective charity which seems to win Law's hearty approval. I quote a passage: "...It may be, says Miranda, that I may often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an ill use of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of Divine goodness? Does not God make "His sun to rise on the evil and on the good"? Is not this the very goodness that is recommended to us in Scripture, that, by imitating of it, we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, who "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"? And shall I withhold a little money, or food from my fellow-creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to His own great goodness; and shall I be so absurd as to withhold my charity from a poor brother, because he may perhaps not deserve it? Shall I use a measure towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me?..." Experience - and indeed common sense - lead us to conclude that such unreasonable generosity in the end defeats its own object.

Law has a wonderful gift for turning the laugh against the devil and this is a valuable weapon, for nothing disconcerts him

more than to be made to look ridiculous. Law achieves this by his brilliant sketches of worldly and self-deceiving characters. Here, his gifts of wit and irony are most triumphantly displayed together with a psychological subtlety which makes his analysis of the respectable somewhat disturbing reading to most of us. I wish I had time to illustrate this by other quotations. I must content myself with passages about Caecus, the proud man who loves humility: "...You would not imagine yourself to be devout, because in your judgment you approved of prayers, and often declared your mind in favour of devotion. Yet how many people imagine themselves humble enough, for no other reason, but because they often commend humility, and make vehement declarations against pride!" Caecus is a rich man, of good breeding, and very fine parts. He is fond of dress, curious in the smallest matters that can add any ornament to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his inferiors, is very full of everything that he says, or does, and never imagines it possible for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of your understanding as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes everything in his house, his habit, and his equipage, as often as anything more elegant comes in his way. Caecus would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so. There is nothing so odious to Caecus as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quicksighted, that he discovers in almost everybody some strokes of vanity. On the other hand, he is exceedingly fond of humble and modest persons. Humility, says he, is so amiable a quality, that it forces our esteem wherever we meet with it. There is no possibility of despising the meanest person that has it, or of esteeming the greatest man that wants it. Caecus no more suspects himself to be proud, than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enraged at pride. It is very true, Caecus, you speak sincerely, when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no hypocrite, you speak the true sentiments of your mind: but then take this along with you, Caecus, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in other people. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride than that which you have seen in other people. The case of Caecus is a common case; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be governed by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people, and how mightily they are pleased with humility and modesty, wherever they find them. All their speeches in favour of humility, and all their railings against pride, are looked upon as so many true

exercises and effects of their own humble spirit. Whereas, in truth, these are so far from being proper acts or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it. For the fuller of pride any one is himself, the more impatient will he be at the smallest instances of it in other people. And the less humility any one has in his own mind, the more will he demand and be delighted with it in other people..."

No one, I think, could read the "Serious Call" without coming to admire Law, both as a writer and as a dedicated Christian; and yet, as it seems to me, there are qualifications to be made. Do we discern in him a strange lack of concern for humanity as a whole? Do not we miss in him a zeal for social righteousness like that of the great Hebrew prophets? The society in which Law lived was full of corruptions and injustices. It is sad that his great powers were not directed more than they were against the social evils of his time. I suppose that, had Law been taxed with this omission, he might have replied that he left the course of history to the direction of Providence. He does not seem to have reflected that Providence might have given him the opportunity to strike a blow for justice and on behalf of the oppressed. Was William Law a mystic? The answer to this question depends upon what we mean by mysticism and that is a difficult question to answer. It is certain that the two books which he wrote after 1749, "The Spirit of Prayer" and "The Spirit of Love" show the influence of Boehme, the Lutheran shoemaker, the unlearned man who strangely impressed so many and so diverse a collection of eminent persons: not only John Wesley, but the German philosophers of the Romantic period and particularly Hegel. It is a matter of dispute as to whether Boehme himself was in the full sense a mystic and some, I think, would prefer to describe him as a Theosophist. According to Professor Stace in his recent book "Mysticism and Philosophy", the complete mystic is one who aims at and to some extent achieves the unitive state, the vanishing of the individual self and its consummation in this experience of unity. I doubt very much whether William Law either aimed at or achieved this "self-naughting". However that may be, in the wide sense of mysticism, he must be numbered among mystical writers. It would extend this paper to inordinate length if I pursued this topic. I will content myself by concluding with a brief quotation from the opening of "The Spirit of Prayer": "...The greatest Part of Mankind, nay of Christians, may be said to be asleep; and that particular Way of Life, which takes up each Man's Mind, Thoughts, and Actions, may be very well called his particular Dream. This Degree of Vanity is equally visible in every Form and Order of Life. The Learned and the Ignorant, the Rich and the Poor, are all in the same State

of Slumber, only passing away a short Life in a different kind of Dream. But why so? It is because Man has an Eternity within him, is born into this World, not for any Thing this World can give him, but only to have Time and Place to become either an eternal Partaker of a divine Life with God, or to have an hellish Eternity among fallen Angels: And therefore, every Man who has not his Eye, his Heart, and his Hands, continually governed by this twofold Eternity, may be justly said to be fast asleep, to have no awakened Sensibility of Himself. And a Life devoted to the Interests and Enjoyments of this World, spent and wasted in the Slavery of earthly Desires, may be truly called a Dream, as having all the Shortness, Vanity, and Delusion of a Dream; only with this great Difference, that when a Dream is over, nothing is lost but Fictions and Fancies; but when the Dream of Life is ended only by Death, all that Eternity is lost for which we were brought into Being..."

The idea is here clearly and impressively stated that earthly life is a dream, an unreality compared with the waking life of those who have pushed beyond the dream and had the experience of the life which is eternal. In this respect at least Law is a mystic in the Platonic tradition. His quest is for Reality as opposed to appearance and his faith is that Reality is the Eternal unseen and ineffable One.

NOTES

On a hot summer day the editor was preparing a note on the unveiling of the tablet, by Mr. James Osborn, on the house in Langham Street, in which Edmund Malone lived and worked; then came a sad editorial lapse, which is recorded in our June issue. May we now call attention to the lecture which Mr. Osborn will give on "Malone and Johnson" at our meeting on March 16th. Mr. Osborn is a graduate of Columbia University and of the University of Oxford; he is now Keeper of XVIIIth century manuscripts at Yale and has written books on Edmund Malone, Dryden, and on Joseph Spence and Alexander Pope.

The Editor desires to thank all those who have responded to his appeal for back issues of this Journal. The number of our subscribers steadily increases, but the cost of production rises more quickly than our income. The result is that only a limited number of copies can be produced and any earlier issues which are returned are most useful.

SHAKESPEARE

"THE POET OF NATURE" AND "INTELLECTUAL NATURE"

by

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In his Proposals for Printing, by Subscription, the Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare, Johnson had hinted his wish to procure (Shakespeare) more rational approbation. From the later Preface to his edition it may be inferred that he thought of Shakespeare's critics as varying in attitude from those who form their judgments upon narrower principles to that modern critic - perhaps William Dodd - whose work he alludes to as follows: "I have seen....a collection of anomalies, which shew that (Shakespeare) has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour." In opposition to criticism either too pettifogging or too idolatrous Johnson offered a critical appraisal. He characterized his defence of Shakespeare against the specious unities of time and place with the remark, "What I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written." This remark may be taken more generally to express his impartiality. In the first edition, "deliberately" was printed as "deliberatively", which better suggests what Johnson would have meant by deliberately. With his keen sense of Latin origins, Johnson no doubt intended to express the underlying sense of deliberare ("to consider maturely, to weigh well in one's mind") which its being opposed to "dogmatically" clearly suggests. Johnson's criticism of Shakespeare was not external to his own response and assessment, but the Preface has sometimes been described as though it were; in the words of one commentator the famous Preface is, after all, only rarely an original and personal statement. This assertion implies that the Preface is merely a patchwork of critical commonplaces and derivative attitudes. But despite the tradition which, it is tacitly allowed, culminated in Johnson's Preface, it is misleading to deny the sense

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1. Sherbo, Arthur, 1956. "General Introduction to Johnson's Notes to Shakespeare" edited for the Augustan Reprint Society, No. 59 p.1.

in which it is original criticism by speaking as though it were merely the end-product of a process initiated by former Restoration critics. Even if their judgments appear often to have been similar to Johnson's, theirs could never be simply the cause of which Johnson's were the effect. Criticism must originate in first-hand appreciation of literary works, and in this sense Johnson's criticism of Shakespeare is "original" and personal.

Because Shakespeare's work had achieved "length of duration and continuance of esteem", it was judged to be a classic; but the enumeration of those qualities which ensured its esteem was the work of individual testimony. This Johnson offered without envious malignity or superstitious veneration, and because of the critic's community with other men, Johnson expected his judgments to be recognized as generally valid. It indicates the measure of Johnson's greatness as a critic that, his reasoned critical statement is often challenging to us as our own best critics of Shakespeare. But it differs enough from ours to give rise to certain difficulties of interpretation. Particularly difficult to interpret adequately is poet of nature, nature being that frequent blanketing term which nevertheless seems central to Johnson's criticism of Shakespeare. Briefly, to use Johnson's words, poet of nature seems to imply just representations of general nature, human sentiments in human language, or scenes exhibiting the transactions of the world, and... the progress of the passions. In so far as the elements of a drama can be discussed separately, the most important achievement of the poet of nature was considered to reside in character. The main critical point of Johnson's Dedication written for Mrs. Charlotte Lennox's Shakespeare Illustrated was that Shakespeare's genius lay in "character" rather than in plot. The term "poet of nature" was introduced in the Preface with a similar emphasis on characterization: "Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters... are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species."

The historian of ideas can scarcely be right who takes species out of context and talks about an Everyman or the doctrine of

character generalization,² for this would imply that there was thought to be a standard from which no character must deviate. But Johnson actually praises Shakespeare for giving individuality to his characters: "Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other." An individualized character was not what Johnson meant by an individual; instead, he meant one that did not recognizably belong to the species of mankind. On the other hand, membership of the species entailed the possession of emotions and states of mind in common, though individual aggregates of these might be infinite. In praising Shakespeare's characters for belonging to a species, Johnson is being no more aesthetic than anyone who describes Shakespeare's characters as rounded. Both terms imply that a character appears to possess a complex of human traits and emotions revealed throughout the changing situations of the play. Although we naturally expect the characters of literature to suggest the complexity of experience, we should perhaps remember, in assessing Johnson's estimate of Shakespeare's characterization, that critical tradition had then assumed instead that characters ought to be prototypical. It did not expect a character to be composed of only one trait or humour, but that the dramatic world should be peopled by types of men in which the occurrence of certain features would logically have been impossible. An artificial concept of decorum provided the rule. Since soldiers were regarded as upright and honest, it was assumed, that the character-drawing of Iago was faulty. Nor did Menenius preserve what was thought to be the essential gravity and majesty of a Roman senator. Both these characters offended against the decorum inferred from prototype. But Johnson saw that Shakespeare was right about character and that his critics who formed their judgments upon narrower principles were wrong. He realized that functional attributes were merely distinctions superinduced and adventitious and of no final consequence in determining character; that, in the words of Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth on the eve of Agincourt, the King, his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man. Wine might make kings drunk, and buffoons might be found in senate-houses. No position within society could automatically confer immunity from human motives and weaknesses.

Johnson's analysis of the character of Polonius may illustrate the extent to which Johnson regarded Shakespeare's characters as lifelike and convincing. A long note by Warburton had developed

2. Conklin, Paul S. 1957. "A History of Hamlet Criticism" p.49,57,n. London.

his summary of Polonius's character as that of a weak, pedant, minister of state. With this Johnson disagreed: "This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author. The commentator makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and of nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident of his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius."

Other notes occurring throughout Johnson's edition prevent us from falsely equating the achievement of the poet of nature merely with the number of individualized characters. It could easily be demonstrated from Johnson's Notes that he read Shakespeare with a clearly defined conception of character. Moreover, although he did not agree with Pope's exaggeration that every speech could be assigned to the proper speaker, he thought that the choice is right, when there is reason for choice. Johnson considered not only Shallow's boast of his long sword and Bottom's histrionical passions to be in character, but also Lear's hot-headed invoking of vows against Kent. Johnson does not record his appreciation of Shakespeare exclusively in terms of an artificial abstraction labelled characterization. He also responded to those representations of behaviour and feeling of which the truth could be considered as

3. Knight, L.C. 1946. "Explorations", p.4.

vouched for by general human experience. It was this knowledge of nature which made Shakespeare's work seem real and lifelike - a quality which perhaps more than anything else prompted Johnson to style him the poet of nature. Antony and Cleopatra excited Johnson's interest without being a play which, in his opinion, abounded in brilliantly delineated characters. The only note by Johnson himself indicating a touch of nature in Antony and Cleopatra was written against Hammer's proposed emendation of the answer to Cleopatra's "What shall we do, Enobarbus?" For Enobarbus's "Think, and die," Hammer had suggested "Drink, and die," but Johnson defended the old reading on the grounds that it was a natural answer.

Johnson's moralistic notes on Shakespeare are such as might be expected from someone who, speaking through one of his characters, suggested that the end of poetry was the inforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth. Especially for Johnson this was not an empty formula. The absoluteness of his values might be inferred from a passage in the Life of Waller in which he censures even devotional poetry because "Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer." Nevertheless, poetry could provide a picture of mankind that it was desirable for man to contemplate, and the resulting moral knowledge of self was one reason why man was the proper study of mankind. It was in the interest of every man to see himself as God would see and ultimately judge him. In Rambler No. 24, Johnson considered it the great praise of Socrates that he singularly sought to enforce the moral injunction know thyself. This paper strongly implied the fundamental importance of self-knowledge as a basis for moral action, and Johnson there promised to reserve to some future paper the religious and important meaning of this epitome of wisdom. This was developed in Rambler No. 28, where the injunction Know thyself was given a Christian application, and the unerring perception of effects in their causes, and actions in their motives was attributed to God. Several of Johnson's notes on Shakespeare suggest the knowledge of character which the reader should infer from a "poet of nature's" work. One of the most memorable is the note on King John's reproof of Hubert. Having been led to believe that the boy Arthur has been murdered, John rebukes Hubert as follows:

"Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a pause,
When I spake darkly what I purposed;
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face;
Or bid me tell my tale in express words;
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,

And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me:
 But thou didst understand me by my signs,
 And didst in signs again parley with sin;
 Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,
 And, consequently, thy rude hand to act
 The deed, which both our tongues held vile to name. -
 Out of my sight, and never see me more!"

Johnson commented: "There are many touches of nature in this conference of John with Hubert. A man engaged in wickedness would keep the profit to himself, and transfer the guilt to his accomplice. These reproaches vented against Hubert are not the words of art or policy, but the eruptions of a mind swelling with consciousness of a crime, and desirous of discharging its misery on another. This account of the timidity of guilt is drawn ab ipsis recessibus mentis, from an intimate knowledge of mankind, particularly that line in which he says, that to have bid him tell his tale in express words, would have struck him dumb; nothing is more certain, than that bad men use all the arts of fallacy upon themselves, palliate their actions to their own minds by gentle terms, and hide themselves from their own detection in ambiguities and subterfuges." King John's reproof of Hubert exemplifies the duplicity - the "tickling commodity" - of the play's world. But the light thrown on John's character is also as revealing as Johnson's note suggests: Shakespeare's knowledge of nature represents John as excusing his deceitfulness even to himself. This quality of character Johnson expected the reader to recognize, and Shakespeare, by presenting scenes from which such moral inferences could be drawn, was thought to offer one means by which the moral knowledge of attentive readers could be enlarged or reconfirmed. A detailed statement of Shakespeare's relevance for the moral task of self-knowledge occurs in the Introduction of William Richardson's A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of Some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters, published in 1774. Richardson not only stresses the importance of Know thyself as a moral precept, but argues that the study of human nature can borrow assistance from the poets, and especially from Shakespeare. He outlines at length the numerous reasons why he regards the passions and feelings of the heart as peculiarly defeating scientific attempts to investigate them: since they are involuntary, fleeting, compelling, and indistinctly remembered, they do not lend themselves to accurate and dispassionate observation.

A comparable line of reasoning occurs in a passage of Warburton's Preface. "Of all the literary exertions of speculative men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of

the world, there are none of so much importance, or what are more our immediate concern, than those which let us into the knowledge of our nature. Others may exercise the reason, or amuse the imagination; but these only can improve the heart, and form the human mind to wisdom. Now, in this science, our Shakespeare is confessed to occupy the foremost place; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human action; or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge, in the just and living paintings which he has given us of all our passions, appetites, and pursuits. These afford a lesson which can never be too often repeated, or too constantly inculcated". From this one begins to discern the pattern of assumptions underlying some of Johnson's argument in the Preface and his commentary in the Notes. By implying that Shakespeare showed insight into the motives of action, Johnson was testifying to his importance for every reader seeking better and undeluded self-knowledge.

This moral relevance of Shakespeare's work is also implied by Johnson's statement that Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men. Johnson had made the same point in the Dedication written for Mrs. Lennox: "Among his other Excellencies it ought to be remarked, because it has hitherto been unnoticed, that his Heroes are Men, that the Love and Hatred, the Hopes and Fears of his chief Personages are such as are common to other human Beings, and not like those which later Times have exhibited, peculiar to Phantoms that strut upon the Stage.

It is not perhaps very necessary to enquire whether the Vehicle of so much Delight and Instruction be a Story probable, or unlikely, native, or foreign." Delight and instruction proceeded from Shakespeare's heroes being men. For Johnson, especially for Johnson the strenuous moralist, pleasure no longer merely represented the sugar-coating which disguised the pill of instruction, but designated instead his actual interest or engagement in a work. That the distinction between heroes and heroes as men is intimately bound up with Johnson's moral appreciation of Shakespeare's plays seems clear from what Johnson says about the hero as man in Idler No. 84. There Johnson advocates that ideally a man should write his own life because only he can know the truth about himself, and present himself divested of those circumstances by which he might appear a hero to others.

Johnson's imaginative engagement in fiction would seem to have been strong. Boswell reports Percy's testimony as follows: "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 summer 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 through. Yet I have heard him attribute to these extravagant fictions that unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing in any profession." In his fourth Rambler, Johnson had been inclined to deny that the crude fictions of "the romances formerly written" were capable of being morally pernicious. Nevertheless, it is clear from what he told Percy that he must at least have regarded those romances as having a deleterious influence on his own young mind. The reading of romances was regarded as the literary equivalent of day-dreaming;⁴ no doubt it was also thought to encourage "a voluntary dream, a temporary recession from the realities of life to airy fictions; and habitual subjection of reason to fancy." Both romance-reading and day-dreaming might have been supposed to be similarly culpable. Either would have seemed to Johnson an unconscionable waste of that time which ideally should have been spent in preparation for "the day in which every work of the hand, and imagination of the heart shall be brought to judgment, and an everlasting futurity shall be determined by the past."

Johnson praised Shakespeare "the poet of nature" in terms which seem to acknowledge the therapeutic value of his work: "This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions." It was Shakespeare's genius to excite his readers without letting them escape from the world of reality and the contemplation of their own. In this way the "poet of nature" would contribute to self-knowledge and what Johnson elsewhere called "the moral discipline of the mind." The reason which Imlac gives for the building of the pyramids is "that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life." In an interesting chapter of The Achievement of Samuel Johnson, Professor W.J. Bate relates "the hunger of imagination" to Johnson's own psyche: "The 'hunger of imagination', or what he elsewhere calls the 'hunger of mind', puts in a strong metaphor a perception almost constantly present in Johnson's writing: that 'few of the hours of life are filled up with objects adequate to the mind of man', since

4. Idler. No. 84.

the mind of man can conceive so much more than the present can ever supply... 'The vacuity of life,' said Mrs. Thrall, 'had at some early period of his life struck so forcibly' on Johnson's mind that it appeared in every context, even in casual talk."

In view of day-dreaming or romance-reading, there was a sense in which Johnson, with his insistence on the constructive "use of the present moment", might well have considered the imagination "a necessary evil". On the other hand, his description of the creative "imagination" in Rambler No. 125 as "a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations and impatient of restraint" is that of a faculty of which he endorses the potential. Admittedly, he thought that the "splendidly wicked" might make villainy seem less than "detestable", and he deprecated in the strongest terms any attempt on Garrick's part to imagine himself as Richard III. But apart from his reservations about the unhappy ending of King Lear, he obviously regarded neither "the poet's imagination" which created the play nor the imaginative response of its reader as licentious: "The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakespeare... So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along." Johnson read Shakespeare's plays as dramatic narratives and not as poems. His interest was held by the characters and their "motives of action", by "human nature as it acts in real exigences" or "as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed." Johnson did not look for latent patterns of imagery or ideas, or probe beyond character and action for a suggestive complex of themes. How exclusive of the symbolical was his method of reading Shakespeare can be illustrated from Macbeth. Although we do not believe in witches, we are ready to view the "weird sisters" figuratively: we see Macbeth as the man who, by listening to the prompting of subversive powers, commits acts which deprive life of all meaning and reduce it to "a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing." But Johnson suggests that the witches only had relevance for the original audience, or at least only for one that believed in supernatural prophecies.

But Johnson was neither lacking in feeling nor uninterested in character. The "pathetick" was one of his most unfailing criteria, and we are constantly being made aware of his emotionality as a reader of both drama and verse. Moreover, his criticism of Macbeth's characterization is here somewhat unfairly represented

5. Havens, Raymond, D., 1943. "Johnson's Distrust of the Imagination". E.L.H.X. p.248.

since it was Johnson's own complaint that "The events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents." "The course of the action" is presumably the realization of the witches' prophecies. Johnson's objection would seem to be that the witches were such obvious factors in the workings of the plot that Macbeth's action was largely robbed of moral interest and example. In his only long note on character during the course of the play, Johnson expresses the same sense of a constricting plot: Shakespeare's "plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield" to Lady Macbeth's arguments. Johnson thought that Shakespeare had made "the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment". In a conversation which Boswell reports for 8th. April 1779, Johnson described Shakespeare's witches as follows: "They are beings of his own creation; they are a compound of malignity and meanness, without any abilities."

As one who worked within the tradition of judicial criticism, Johnson enumerated Shakespeare's "faults"; and this section of the Preface is made to look even more anomalous when Johnson records it as Shakespeare's "first defect" "that he seems to write without any moral purpose." Nevertheless, it is necessary to underline the "seems" of Johnson's sentence since, in assessing the weight of its criticism, one must remember how "perpetually" a moralist Johnson was. Johnson rejected Milton's proposals for a more scientific form of education on the grounds that "we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance": "Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure." Intercourse with intellectual nature was there considered essential for the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong. Johnson's moralizing commentary on Shakespeare had its counterpart in his conversation, and even in his own creative writing, where the act of composition seems often to have been too deliberately a part of his own conscious mind. The undramatic side of Johnson's imagination wished that Shakespeare had been didactic: convinced of the potential formative influence of literature, Johnson would have welcomed both occasional pulpit morality and the observation of poetical justice. Where Shakespeare omitted opportunities of instructing or delighting, Johnson blamed him for artistic temporizing and moral indifference. But such remarks by the moralist should not obscure the subtler and deeper sense in which Johnson considered Shakespeare a morally instructive poet. The intercourse with intellectual nature which the poet of nature offered his readers was enough in itself to establish Shakespeare as one of literature's moral touchstones.

THE PLEASURE GARDENS AND THEIR PLACE IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF LONDON

IN THE AGE OF JOHNSON

by

The Rev. Dr. W. S. Scott.

I suppose that most of us, have reached an age when we can look back to the days which, in retrospect at any rate, seem to have been more enjoyable, more romantic, and in every way better than the present. And in those days - days when going out to spend an evening with friends meant "bringing your music" - in those days there was a song called "Down Vauxhall Way". It began, if I'm not mistaken, with the words,

"When Lady Betty walks abroad,"

By all who see her she's adored,

At Vauxhall in the morning.

And I suppose Oliver chose those words for his music because of the flavour of romance that was attached to the old Vauxhall Gardens - a place which for two hundred years had been synonymous with out-of-door entertainment in London, and which finally closed its gates in 1858, just over a century ago. I have mentioned Vauxhall specifically, because it was the best-known of the innumerable pleasure gardens which were to be found in London from the time of the Restoration until the latter half of last century. So well-known was it that the name was applied to similar places in other countries; we find Vauxhalls in Ireland, in France, and even in Russia.

The first question that I think it might be interesting to discuss today is this: What did people find so attractive about the pleasure gardens that not merely hundreds, but quite literally tens of thousands went to them every summer's day? Firstly, I suppose, one of the causes for their great and lasting popularity was the inherent love of the English people for out-of-doors amusements. It must be remembered that in the eighteenth century, when these gardens reached the height of their popularity, the summers were distinctly warmer as well as drier than they are now, and it was easier to arrange a party of pleasure with some reasonable probability of having suitable weather for it than it is today. Then, too, the Englishman has ever had a genuine love for the country. The appreciation of rus in urbe was very considerable in

the age of reason; not merely shown in the Londoner's liking for his week-end pleasure, but in the delight evidenced in the building of suburban and Thames-side villas by the richer classes at the time of the romantic revival. The interest in the "Gothick" both in literature and in architecture, was easily transferred to landscape and gardening, and resulted in an increased appreciation of rural delights. The second reason, I would suggest, was the natural reaction from the suppression of nearly all forms of amusement which was a part of the Puritan régime under which England laboured at the time of the Commonwealth. It is a point not without considerable social significance that the New Spring Gardens were opened to the public within a few months of the Restoration of Charles II. Thirdly was the fact that until the Restoration there were but few amusements of a public kind in which women could take any part. The coffee house was barred to them: the theatre was also barred until the latter half of the seventeenth century; athletic sports of all kinds were for men alone; in fact, dancing was virtually the only social amusement (of a public kind) in which women had a share. Small wonder, then, that an evening out, accompanied by the girl of one's heart, did not take long to become a popular amusement. Fourthly, it must be admitted that the increasing influence of the foreigner was responsible to a certain extent for popularising out-of-door entertainment. In France particularly, such pleasures had for some time been common. A slight additional reason, too, of a psychological kind, may be found in the fact that the pleasure of a visit to one of the gardens was enhanced by the fact that it was "out of town", and in certain cases even "over the water". The necessity of making a short trip to get there, possibly by coach, and sometimes by boat, increased the feeling of having put aside the cares of work, and given the seeker after amusement a strong impression of being "away on holiday".

During the period of which we are thinking today, the pleasure gardens of London were of three distinct and separate kinds. Firstly were the tea-gardens pure and simple. These came to popularity with the increase of tea drinking in the reign of Queen Anne, and were for the most part the amusement of the respectable lower middle class, who wanted air, amusement and refreshment, and change from his strenuous and crowded labour during the week - the ancestor, in fact, of those who pour forth from the cheaper suburbs at week-ends to Hampstead, to Hampton Court, or to Southend-on-Sea.

The second kind were the amusement gardens - Vauxhall and Ranelagh and Marylebone, where fashion mixed with vulgarity, and the Cremorne of a slightly later period, where fashion was

represented only by the stronger sex, feminine charm being provided by a different class. The third division were the spas, or "Wells" as they were usually called, whose chief attraction, at any rate in their early days, was the existence of a spring of medicinal water, frequently warranted by its proprietor to be an unfailing cure for every imaginable ailment. These divisions were, however, by no means clearly marked. Bagnigge Wells, for example, soon became more of an amusement centre than a place for sufferers seeking alleviation of their pain; Copenhagen House degenerated into the lowest kind of tavern, where the most vicious sports could be freely indulged in; Beulah Spa eventually became a mild and respectable park, offering opportunity for the practice of the lady-like sport of toxophily. The tea gardens were all of a pattern. The essential was refreshment in a garden. In consequence, all the taverns had gardens, large or small according to their opportunities, laid out in accordance with the prevailing taste of the day, with walks through shrubberies, a pond, fountains, statues, a "Long Room" in which food and drink could be had and concerts heard when the weather was wet, an open-air "orchestra" for the music when the sun was kind, and above all, "arbours". These arbours were absolutely necessary pieces of equipment. They were separated, one from another, each one containing a small table and sufficient seating room for a family, since it was the custom for father, mother, and a host of children to arrive *en famille* to spend the day in the gardens. The arbours were usually backed with shrubs, and were earwiggy to a degree, the taste of the day demanding "shady bosage", even if it also meant that a certain element of insect life attended the feast uninvited. In the larger and more rustic gardens a pond was often provided, where boating and fishing could be enjoyed, and where children had a good chance of falling in and causing the consternation and general upset so characteristic of family parties. For loving couples, too, the arbours provided mild retreats, from which, their refreshments finished, they could walk round the gardens and gaze at the flowers, which were always a prominent part of the layout of such places. Frequently, too, there was a building set aside for those who found it impossible to refrain from "the filthy vice of smoaking", which was forbidden in the more genteel walks. A bowling green was another very usual attraction, and skittles, the popular game of "Dutch Pins", and in some places cricket and archery, were all to be found. I have referred to "walks through the shrubberies" as being a usual amenity in the pleasure gardens of the eighteenth century. In some of the gardens one or two of these pretty meandering paths were left unlit in the evenings, with the innocent intention of providing opportunities for a little gentle love-making. But the behaviour

of some of the visitors to these walks - specifically in the case of the famous and afterwards notorious "Dark Walk" at Vauxhall - was not always all that could be wished. It does not need much understanding of human nature to realise that a secluded and dark path is apt to provide opportunities for undesirable happenings, especially when the company gathered there is young, ardent, and in search of amusement.

As early as the year 1700 Tom Brown had written in his Amusements that ladies that have "an inclination to be private, take delight in the close walks of Spring Gardens, - where both sexes meet and mutually serve one another as guides to lose their way, and the windings and turnings in the little Wildernesses are so intricate, that the most experienced mothers have often lost themselves in looking for their daughters." The same writer gives a charming description of the delights of a Sunday spent in one of the Gardens: "It was the wont of the good citizens to rise betimes on Sunday mornings, and, with their wives and children under their arms, sally forth to brush the cobwebs from their brains, and the smoke from their lungs, by a trip into the country. Having no cheap excursions by boat and rail to relieve the groaning of the metropolis for twelve hours of a few of its labouring thousands, the immediate neighbourhood of London naturally becomes the breathing space and pleasure ground of the lieges to whom time and shillings were equally valuable. Then it was that Sadler's and Bagnigge Wells, the Conduit, Marylebone Gardens, the Gun (at Pimlico), Copenhagen House, Jack Straw's Castle, The Spaniards and Highbury Barn, first opened their hospitable portals, and offered to the dusty, thirsty, hungry, and perspiring pleasure-seeker rest and refreshment - shilling ordinaries - to which, by the way, a known good appetite would not be admitted under eighteenpence. Bowling greens, where the players, preferring elegance, appeared in their shirt-sleeves and shaven heads, their wigs and long-skirted coats being picturesquely distributed on the adjacent hedges, under the guard of their three-cornered hats and Malacca canes. Hollands, punch, claret, drawn from the wood at three-and-sixpence a quart. Skittles and quoits, accompanied, of course, with pipes and tobacco, offered their fascinations to the male customers; while the ladies and juveniles were beguiled with cakes and ale, tea and shrimps, strawberries and cream, syllabubs and junkets, swings and mazes, lovers' walks and woodbine bowers." At all the tea gardens the great day was Sunday. You will remember the description in The Idler of a poor husband who was compelled to take his wife to such a place on his day of rest. "You will pity me..." writes Johnson, "when I tell you the manner in which we generally pass our Sundays. In the morning (my wife) is commonly too ill to dress herself to go to church; she therefore

never gets up till noon; and, what is still more vexatious, keeps me in bed with her, when I ought to be busily engaged in better employment. It is well if she can get her things on by dinner-time; and when that is over, I am sure to be dragged out by her either to Georgia, or Hornsey Wood, or the White Conduit House. Yet even these near excursions are so very fatiguing to her, that, besides what it costs me in tea and hot rolls, and syllabubs, and cakes for the boy, I am frequently forced to take a hackney-coach, or drive them out in a one-horse chair. At other times, as my wife is rather of the fattest, and a very poor walker, besides bearing her whole weight upon my arm, I am obliged to carry the child myself." Not only fashion, however, and commerce, went to the Gardens, but the intellectual and artistic life of the capital as well. This was well shown in Rowlandson's delightful drawing of Vauxhall Gardens, where, seated in one of the arbours and enjoying a meal, Johnson is represented accompanied by Boswell, Goldsmith and Mrs. Thrale. The whole coterie were constant visitors to one or other of the Gardens - Johnson's remarks about "Cupid's Garden" and Goldsmith's unhappy adventure at the White Conduit House leap to the mind - nor does one forget Johnson's saying "When first I entered Ranelagh, it gave me an expansion and gay sensation in my mind, such as I never experienced anywhere else."

I have just mentioned the White Conduit House. Perhaps the best way in which I can bring to life a tea garden as it was in the eighteenth century is to take one of them, and describe it as minutely as possible. This will give an idea of the generality of the Gardens, for they all resembled each other more or less closely. The original house of the name was a small beer house, built in the years 1648-9, and according to tradition was finished on January 30, the day on which King Charles I suffered martyrdom, and the workmen celebrated both the conclusion of their labours and the beginning of the Commonwealth by a feast such as was commonly given to those engaged in building operations on the completion of their labours. In a field opposite was a conduit faced with stone of a remarkable whiteness, from which the inn took its name. In its early days it was a simple one-storied building, but by the forties of the eighteenth century it had become the custom for London tradesmen to take their wives and families for a country stroll in "Merry Islington" on Sundays, calling at the house for refreshments on the way. By 1745 the then proprietor, one Bartholomew, made considerable alterations and improvements in the property, and added a further storey, as well as a "Long Room" (the customary adjunct to all pleasure gardens), and the large circular erection seen in so many of the views of the Gardens.

At the same time the gardens were laid out in the manner customary to all such places of entertainment, with arbours in which refreshments were served, a fish-pond, and a maze which gave great delight to the children. Though various liquors were obtainable, tea, coffee and milk were the ordinary drink, and the loaves, served piping hot, were famous. "White Conduit Loaves" became a well-known street cry. The milk was served direct from the cow, and an advertisement makes a point of assuring the visitors that the cows belonging to the establishment "eat no grains." White Conduit House was essentially a place for family parties; it was at all times respectable, and although in its later years it had a fair proportion of visitors from the more aristocratic ranks of society, the majority of its clientèle was of the shopkeeper class, the "cits" of the poems of the period. As Charles Jenner wrote:

"Time was when satin waistcoats and scratch wigs,
Enough distinguished all the City prigs,
Whilst every sunshine Sunday saw them run
To club their sixpences at Islington;
When graver citizens, in suits of brown,
Lined every dusty avenue to town,
Or led the children and the loving spouse,
To spend two shillings at White Conduit House."

William Woty, in the Gentleman's Magazine, refers to the White Conduit House as follows:

"His meal meridian o'er,
With switch in hand, he to White Conduit House
Hies merry-hearted. Human beings here
In couples multitudinous assemble,
Forming the drollest group that ever trod,
Fair Islingtonian plains. Male after male,
Dog after dog succeeding - husbands - wives -
Fathers and mothers - brothers - sisters - friends
And pretty little boys and girls. Around,
Across, along the garden's shrubby maze
They walk, they sit, they stand."

In the fifties the proprietor, Robert Bartholomew, arranged a cricket pitch in an adjoining meadow, and provided bats and balls. Though in those early years it was but a rudimentary game that was played there, by the eighties the meadow was in use for serious matches, amongst those bringing teams to play there being Thomas Lord, the founder of the Marylebone Cricket Club, after whom Lord's takes its name. Another famous figure

of our period who was very fond of disporting himself here was Oliver Goldsmith. His description of the arbours filled with persons taking refreshments will be found in the pages of the Citizen of the World. He writes: "I proceeded forward, leaving a fair stone building called the White-Conduit-House on my right; here the inhabitants often assemble to celebrate a feast of hot rolls and butter: seeing such numbers, each with their little tables before them, employed on this occasion, must no doubt be a very amusing sight to the looker-on, but still more so to those who perform in the solemnity." Poor Goldsmith's habitual penury, and his great generosity of heart, are bywords. These characteristics were the cause of great embarrassment to him one day at the White Conduit House, as Washington Irving relates: "Oliver Goldsmith ... while strolling one day in these gardens ... met three daughters of the family of a respectable tradesman, to whom he was under some obligation. With his prompt disposition to oblige, he conducted them about the garden, treated them to tea, and ran up a bill in the most open-hearted manner imaginable; it was only when he came to pay that he found himself in one of his old dilemmas - he had not the wherewithal in his pocket. A scene of perplexity now took place between him and the waiter, in the midst of which came up some of his acquaintances, in whose eyes he wished to stand particularly well. When, however, they had enjoyed their banter, the waiter was paid, and poor Goldsmith enabled to carry off the ladies with flying colours."

You will remember Soloman's well-known painting, which he called "An Awkward Moment", which depicts this embarrassing episode. The manners in vogue in these gardens were not always of the ceremonious type that one associates, sometimes incorrectly, with the eighteenth century. They were indeed more of the type practised in certain haunts of Londoners at the present time, for "picking up" was the order of the day. The White Conduit method of effecting an introduction was to tread on a lady's train, to apologise profusely, and to suggest an adjournment for tea in one of the arbours. After all, the White Conduit House could hardly be expected to have the manners of the Pump Room at Bath, nor was Mr. Bartholomew an exact prototype of Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire. Bartholomew, at one time an exceedingly rich man, was unhappily wrecked by his own good fortune. He invested in one of the Lotteries, and won a large prize, a portion of which he expended by giving a large public breakfast in his gardens "to commemorate the smiles of fortune." His success, however, roused in him an appetite for gambling, which ultimately became insatiable. He invested in lottery after lottery, taking more and more tickets, but never winning any more prizes, until eventually his entire

fortune, at one time amounting to more than £50,000, a considerable sum in those days, was expended, and he had to retire to mean lodgings, where he lived in poverty and discomfort until his death. In the early years of last century, however, the new owners sold a portion of the gardens for building, and the rustic beauties of the surroundings were destroyed. Writing in 1827, William Hone speaks strongly of its decay: "White Conduit House has ceased to be a recreation in the good sense of the word ... Recollections of it some years ago are more in its favour. Its tea gardens, then, in summer afternoons, were well accustomed by tradesmen and their families; they are now comparatively deserted, and instead there is, at night, a starveling show of odd company and coloured lamps, a mock orchestra with mock singing, dancing in a room which decent persons would prefer to withdraw their young folks from if they entered, and fireworks "as usual", which, to say the truth, are usually very good. "Such is the present state of a vicinage which, "in my time", was the pleasantest near spot to the north of London. The meadow of the White Conduit commanded an extensive prospect of the Hampstead and Highgate hills, over beautiful pastures and hedge-rows which are now built on, or converted into brick-clamps, for the material of irruption on the remaining glades. The pleasant views are wholly obstructed. In a few short years, London will distend its enormous bulk to the heights that overlook its proud city; and, like locusts of old, devour every green field, and nothing will be left to me to admire, of all that I admired." This tragic forecast proved only too true. Lines of small streets now cover the site. London has devoured the green fields, spewing out its squalor and ugliness over what was once beauty and peace. Hone spoke more truly than he knew in saying that nothing would be left to admire of all that he admired. Of this, the site of White Conduit House provides the perfect example.

I began my talk to you today with a question: "What did people find so attractive about the pleasure gardens that not merely hundreds but thousands went to them on every summer's day?" So now I would like to finish by trying to answer the complementary question: "Why did people cease to go to them? What were the causes of their decline?" The causes were many. Suburban building had greatly increased, with the consequent provision of innumerable small private gardens, which enabled people to enjoy fresh air, grass and flowers without having to leave their own homes. The stand-up bar was invented, where a drink could be easily and rapidly obtained and consumed. With the coming of the industrial revolution very few Englishmen were willing to lay out the necessary capital and work the long hours that were essential if such places were to bring in a useful and satisfactory

return. The custom of the "summer holiday", "going to the sea-side" and such like, which was quite unknown in the hey-day of the pleasure gardens, had also begun. Organised games had greatly increased. The railways began to run cheap excursions. By no means least in importance, the quality and ultimately the numbers of the persons who went to the Gardens had declined. These were some of the causes of the tragic end of the numerous gardens which offered entertainment - and for the most part wholesome, healthy, outdoor entertainment - at a price which most people could afford to pay." I ended a book of mine on Vauxhall Gardens some years ago with words which I should like to quote to you as a conclusion to what I have said to you today; that "a more cogent reason than any of these was probably the psychological one; the gradual change-over from a simple type of pleasure which consisted in doing something for oneself, "making one's own fun" - coarse and vulgar and cruel though the fun may sometimes have been - to a more sophisticated type of amusement where the pleasure is provided by others, without any cost in exertion either physical or intellectual."

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J.H.L.

SAMUEL JOHNSON'S VIEW OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

by

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Both the writings of Samuel Johnson and the commentaries on his life and works attest that he was profoundly committed to dogmatic religion. His Diaries, Prayers, and Annals provide abundant evidence of constant concern about his personal religious practices and are filled with moral considerations. The body of resolutions, confessions and meditations illustrate his sincerity and exemplify his life-long reliance upon Christian revelation. In addition to his own journals, the testimonies of Boswell, Mrs. Piozzi, Sir John Hawkins and other contemporaries agree concerning Johnson's piety and the influence of Christian religion on his life and outlook.

Although a practising Anglican, Johnson on several occasions stoutly defended the Roman Church. This liberalism, uncommon in his age, stimulates an examination of the genesis and nature of Johnson's view of the Roman Church and provokes speculation as to what degree he personally espoused Roman Catholicism. Throughout his life Johnson minimized the differences in doctrine between all established religions. Boswell records Johnson's views on this subject in his Life: "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."

At a later date, in another conversation about the Roman religion and its doctrinal differences, Johnson reiterated his view for Boswell: "True, Sir, all denominations of Christians have really little difference in point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms. There is a prodigious difference between the external form of one of your Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and a church in Italy; yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same." That Johnson believed in such an essential agreement in doctrine is consonant with his practice of drawing freely from Roman Catholic sources and allying himself with various Roman Catholic observances. In his diary Johnson

1. Boswell's Life of Johnson. Powell-Hill edition 1. 405. 1934. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

records his adherence to the Papist practice of the Lenten fast on Good Friday, April 14, 1775: "Boswell came in, before I was up. We breakfasted. I only drank tea without milk or bread... Boswell and I went to Church, but came very late. We then took tea, by Boswell's desire, and I eat one bun, I think, that I might not seem to fast ostentatiously.² When Johnson's vast knowledge of the patristic writings is taken into account, there is little difficulty in understanding his inclination towards the traditional ascetical disciplines. Sir John Hawkins was impressed with Johnson's thorough grasp of Augustine, Aquinas and the ascetical writers and E.L. McAdam, drawing from Johnson's own journals, has recorded that besides Augustine and Chrysostom, nine other Church Fathers had a place in his library: Ambrose, Origen, Athanasius, Eusebius, Ephraem, Syrus, Basil, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. This reading background provided Doctor Johnson with a comprehensive view of the Church's body of doctrine. It was essentially this whole aggregate of truths that Johnson supported, rather than any specific article of faith. If questioned about particular tenets of the Roman Church, he seldom speculated at any length. Common sense in the Christian humanistic tradition, coupled with his own experiential knowledge⁴ was automatically invoked as a norm for judgment. The truly reasonable man was, for Johnson, a moral man. E.J. Drummond discusses this Johnsonian characteristic: "In all his thinking and talking and writing he stressed the rational power of the intellect and the determining power of free will. But he was not inclined to speculate beyond what he considered revealed doctrine. How to fit dogma with dogma was something he no doubt thought about, but it was something about which he usually refused to talk. Boswell pressed him more than once for his resolution of the problem of God's foreknowledge and man's free will, but his question was pushed aside with, 'Sir, we know our will is free, and there's an end on it!'"

Such a staunch reliance on reason and experience curtailed Johnson's respect for truths handed down by tradition. It was partly his inability to accept traditional beliefs that kept him from ascribing to Roman Catholic transubstantiation. His attitude is made clear in a very terse exchange with Boswell:

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2. Hyde, Donald and Mary, McAdam, E.R., 1958 "Diaries, Prayers, and Annals of Samuel Johnson" p.225. Yale University Press.
 3. Hawkins, Sir John, 1787 "Life of Samuel Johnson" p.146. Dublin.
 4. Voitle, R. 1961. "Samuel Johnson the Moralist" Harvard University Press.

BOSWELL: "But what do you say, sir, to the ancient and continued tradition of the Church upon this point?"

JOHNSON: "Tradition, sir, has no place where the Scriptures are plain; and tradition cannot persuade a man into a belief of transubstantiation."

It is perhaps to be lamented that Johnson did not accept the doctrine of transubstantiation because his prayers and meditations mirror a deep yearning for such a belief. Edmund Walsh comments in The Catholic World that The atonement of Jesus Christ and the propitiatory merits of His most precious blood were the two vital principles which above all he had "grappled to his soul" to be his joy in gladness and his comfort in desolation....Johnson's repeated and emphatic reference to a "universal sacrifice and perpetual propitiation" as the essential requisite of real Christianity cannot but suggest to the Catholic mind the adorable sacrifice of the altar, in which this requisite is formally attained. Not only did he denounce Roman transubstantiation as a false doctrine, but he also spoke out against the Catholic practice of giving Holy Communion only under the species of bread. He regarded it as a criminal practice and as "contrary to the express institution of Christ." He wondered at the Council of Trent's permitting it.

Church practices and usages that were reconcilable with his common sense and his interpretation of the Scriptures regularly merited support from Johnson. For him reason served as the "handmaid of Religion, perhaps the chief handmaid." This esteem for reason caused Johnson to assign to himself the role of executing and promulgating judgments. His decisions were an alloy of Christian humanism and rational scepticism. His judgments were not restricted to the Roman Church by any means, however. On the contrary, they were concerned with a wide range of topics that involved other religions and other outlooks. By his charge, the Methodist claim of an "inward light" was ridiculous; the lack of liturgy and neglect of festival in the Presbyterian rite was deplorable; the Roman invocation of the saints was superogatory. Johnson's friends, Boswell, Mrs. Piozzi, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, all link the Doctor's congenital scepticism to his desire for truth, for "truth, whether in great or little matters he (Johnson) held sacred." Nonetheless, reason and the role of reason in religious belief was problematical for Johnson to the degree that anything outside the area of reason was likely to cause him distress. Joseph Wood Krutch considers this aspect of Johnson's mentality in his work, Samuel Johnson: "Johnson accepted the miracles of the Bible because he could not refuse to do so without plunging himself into an abyss of intolerable doubt from the brink of which he always

shuddered back; but even in works of pure imagination the supernatural was likely to trouble him, and what he said of the vein of 'stubborn rationality' that kept him from the Roman Catholic Church may give warrant for the guess that he would have been more comfortable if even Anglicanism had put less strain upon it." The paradox in Johnson's religious outlook results from the interweaving of his common sense approach to all daily concerns, even those of a religious nature, and his basic adherence to Christian revelation and Holy Scripture. The Gospels were frequently cited by Johnson and, throughout his life, he memorized the Gospel of the day. His rational approach is yoked to his regard for Holy Scripture in a letter to Mr. William Drummond, August 13, 1766:"Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity, and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate this side of the grave, is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example, except in the practice of the planters in America, a race of mortals whom, I suppose, no other man wishes to resemble. The Papists have, indeed, denied to the laity the use of the bible; but this prohibition, in few places now very rigorously enforced, is defended by arguments, which have for their foundation the care of souls. To obscure, upon motives merely political, the light of revelation, is a practice reserved for the reformed; and, surely, the blackest midnight of popery is meridian sunshine to such a reformation."⁵

Johnson's mention of reform illuminates another aspect of his religious outlook. He concurred with the current eighteenth century belief in a common religious heritage derived from the primitive church. It was on the basis of this universal bond that Johnson at times defended the early Roman Church; upon reaching the Reformation period, his allegiance generally swung along to the Protestant reformers. In the discussion that followed upon a local minister's rebuking a political agent from the pulpit, Johnson's peroration illustrates this point: "If we enquire into the practice of the primitive church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the word, exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the Church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment

5. Boswell, *idem*, vol 2.27.

of sinners was publick censure and open penance; penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time while the Church had yet no help from the civil power; while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod or persecution; and when the governours were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority. That the Church, therefore, had once a power of publick censure is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority is likewise certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.....

It therefore appears from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by publick censure has been always considered so inherent in the Church; and that this right was conferred by the civil power; for it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away; for the Church magistrate interposed his office, not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation; to add pain where shame was sufficient;.... It is not improbable that from this acknowledged power of publick censure, grew in time the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of publick reprehension, were willing to submit themselves to the priest, by a private accusation of themselves; and to obtain a reconciliation with the Church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance; conditions with which the priest would in times of ignorance and corruption, easily comply as they increased his influence, by adding the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconciliation.

From this bondage the Reformation set us free.⁶ Such a defense of the Reformation is indicative of Johnson's attitude and corresponds to the criticism found in The Gentleman's Magazine for November, 1738, in Johnson's essay on Father Paul Sarpi. Johnson favours Father Sarpi in his vigorous opposition to the Jesuits, saying that if the Jesuits had fallen, Rome would have fallen and religion could have been reformed. After outlining the Church's stand in the issue, Johnson scorns it: "The propositions maintained in the side of Rome were these: That the Pope is invested with all the authority of heaven and earth.... That the Pope cannot err...that the Pope is God upon earth.... that to call his power in question, is to call in question the power of God: maxims equally shocking, weak, pernicious, and absurd, which did not require the abilities or learning of Father Paul to demonstrate their falsehood...."

6. Boswell, idem, 3.59.

However, Johnson's pronouncements cannot be accepted without reserve for, as Boswell repeatedly points out, Dr. Johnson would hold down either side of any argument with equal relish. This observation seems to apply with regard to the Jesuits. In Mrs. Piozzi's recollections, the following passage is found: "When we were at Rouen together, he took a great fancy to the Abbé Roffette, with whom he conversed about the destruction of the order of the Jesuits, and condemned it loudly, as a blow to the general power of the church, and likely to be followed with many and dangerous innovations, which might at length become fatal to religion itself, and shake even the foundation of Christianity."

That Johnson upheld the existence of religious orders and recognized their long-standing contribution to the Church is incontestable; many favourable references to the monastic and eremetical life can be found in the journals. A great reverence for the monastic life is evident but it is also obvious that Johnson did not apprehend the spiritual motivation of those who renounced the world. While touring the Hebrides with Boswell he spoke on this subject: "I never read of a hermit, but in imagination I kiss his feet; never of a monastery, but I could fall on my knees and kiss the pavement. But I think putting young people there who know nothing of life, nothing of retirement, is dangerous and wicked." The idea of souls being called to the religious life seems to have had no place in Johnson's theology. He accused those who entered the cloister of looking for a place of refuge from temptation. Boswell records his own puzzlement at Johnson's conflicting views on the religious life: "We talked of religious orders. He said, 'It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself; but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit; for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart.' So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence, too, is absurd. We read in the Gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent, 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but for the fear of vice.' She said, 'She should remember this as long as she lived.' I thought it hard to give her this view of the situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his 'Rambler' and 'Idler', he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect."

7. Boswell, *idem*, 2.435.

It was typical of Johnson that he could alternately favour and criticize religious life while remaining personally attached to individual monks and certain religious houses. In October and November of 1775, while visiting on the continent, Johnson was closely associated with the English Benedictines in Paris. He wrote to Mr. Robert Levett that he "was very kindly used by the English Benedictine friars." From that time on he had a cell appropriated to his use in their convent and he recorded the following in his diary on Tuesday, October 31, 1775: "I lived at the Benedictines, meagre day. Soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce. Fryd fish. Lentils, tasteless in themselves....I parted very tenderly from the Prior and Friar Wilkes." It was during this visit that Johnson became friendly with one of the young monks, James Compton, who later left the monastery and the Roman Church, presumably after reading the 110th Rambler paper on "Repentance". When he arrived in London, he sought Johnson's aid and the latter was influential in establishing Compton as a teacher and Anglican preacher.⁸ That Johnson would do this is consistent with his attitude towards a life of religious solitude. In Rasselas a hermit makes a comment that clearly echoes Johnson's thinking on this matter and which explains, in part at least, the ready assistance he gave to Compton: "I am sometimes ashamed to think that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect that I was rather impelled by resentment, than led by devotion, into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament that I have lost so much, and have gained so little. In solitude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good. I have long been comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into the world tomorrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout." By Compton's own claim, he discouraged Johnson in his old age from returning to Paris to retire to his long-kept cell where he had been so cordially received nine years earlier. Johnson's desire to return to the Benedictine convent was also expressed to Boswell and it has aroused some speculation about the literary dictator's possible conversion. It would be rash, however, to assume that he was indicating a desire to join the Roman Catholic communion in his old age. While granting that in his last year, as his fear of death intensified, he did grow ever more sympathetic towards the Roman Church; nevertheless, there is no substantial evidence of an intended conversion. As Osborn has stated: "This is not to argue that Johnson considered joining the Roman communion and then retiring to the Benedictine convent in Paris. Guests at St. Edmond's were not required to

8. Osborn, James, 1954, in F.W. Hilles "New Light on Dr. Johnson." Yale University Press.

submit to the Roman obedience. Both Johnson's personal situation and his frame of mind are consistent with James Compton's twice-repeated statement that Johnson thought seriously of going to Paris to occupy the accommodation so cordially offered. Had Johnson done so, his eventual conversion might or might not have followed, a matter that Compton undoubtedly had well in mind. But that is now an academic question, for Johnson remained in England and died in his own bed."

There is no justification for linking Johnson's respect for religious life and his close bonds with Roman Catholic friends to an inclination towards joining the Roman Church. Mrs. Piozzi is explicit in her judgment of this matter in the *Anecdotes*: "His respect for places of religious retirement was carried to the greatest degree of earthly veneration: the Benedictine convent at Paris paid him all possible honours in return, and the Prior and he parted with tears of tenderness. Two of that college sent to England on the mission some years after, spent much of their time with him at Bolt Court, I know, and he was ever earnest to retain their friendship; but though beloved by all his Roman Catholic acquaintance, particularly Dr. Nugent (Burke's father-in-law), for whose esteem he had a singular value, yet was Mr. Johnson a most unshaken Church of England man... Johnson's being a fervent and staunch Anglican himself did not preclude his considering conversion to the Roman Church a good thing in se. A conversation between him and Sir William Scott has been recorded in which the former maintained that he would always respect a man who abandoned Protestantism for Popery because the change indicated an addition to what was possessed before. But, he went on to say, he distrusted a reverse conversion because '....a convert from Popery to Protestantism gives up so much of what he held as sacred as any thing that he retains; there is so much laceration of mind in such a conversion, that it can hardly be sincere and lasting.'"

How do we, in the final analysis, equate such seeming whole-hearted support of the Roman Catholic Church with an unwavering allegiance to the Anglican communion? Johnson perceptively analysed his own response to the Roman Church in a discussion with Boswell in the last year of his life. Boswell records: "On the Roman Catholick religion he said, 'If you join the Papists externally, they will not interrogate you strictly as to your belief in their tenets. No reasoning Papist believes every article of their faith. There is one side on which a good man

9. Boswell, *idem*. 2 - 106.

man might be prepared to embrace it. A good man of timorous disposition, in great doubt of his acceptance with GOD, and pretty credulous, might be glad to be of a Church where there are so many helps to get to heaven. I would be a Papist if I could. I have fear enough; but an obstinate rationality prevents me. I shall never be a Papist, unless on the near approach of death, of which I have a very great terrour. I wonder that women are not all Papists."¹⁰

Even if it can be said that Johnson wished to believe, it is equally clear that there were definite obstacles that made certain practices and customs untenable for him. Edmund Walsh emphasizes that Johnson's stubborn rationality prohibited his accepting many devotional practices while his loyalty to the English Crown and his Tory principles rebelled against the doctrine of Papal infallibility. Nevertheless, Johnson's vision in religious matters was free from much of the narrowness of his time. The prudence and moderation with which the Roman Church had through the ages restrained excesses and upheld orthodoxy made a strong appeal to his practical mind and broad common sense. Although the sober vindication of Catholic doctrine and the public approval of Church discipline were in striking contrast to the theological temper of the Protestant mind of his day, they were not more than one might expect from an advanced Ritualist of our own time. The inherited prejudices of the eighteenth century Protestant that made the Mass idolatrous, the Pope anti-Christ, and the Roman Church anti-Scriptural were not accepted unconditionally by Johnson. The Doctor evidently had an inherent sympathy with Catholic thought and principles but this sympathy was also cognate with other facets of his mind: reverence for antiquity, respect for prescriptive authority, zeal for all religious concerns. The juxtaposition of these characteristics with his hatred of any kind of oppression and his deep self-confidence resulted in a personality that vociferously upheld the religion of the ancient Christians but radically repudiated any dilution of its primitive purity and vigour.

10. Boswell, *idem*. 4 - 289.

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a long period he was a member of the Executive Committee. Probably the most notable paper which he read to the Society was that in which he traced out on the contemporary map of Streatham the house and boundaries of the garden, occupied by the Thrales and used by Samuel Johnson. Dr. Coleman was Dental Surgeon to St. Bartholomews and to the Royal Dental Hospitals; he was the author of a textbook of *Materia Medica*, which reached several editions. Coleman was a charming companion and was greatly interested in natural history.

F.N.D.

REVIEWS

"Johnsonian Studies, 1962". Edited by Dr. Magdi Wahba, Cairo, Egypt. In other countries O.U.P. London. Price 15/-.

We are now able to publish a further notice of this volume of essays. Dr. Magdi Wahba is a Johnsonian who is a graduate, and now Lecturer in English, in the University of Cairo; he is also a graduate of the University of Oxford. In 1961 and again in 1962 he has produced interesting volumes of studies in English, that of 1962 being entirely devoted to Johnsonian Studies, which we were able to notice briefly in our last issue. When international relations are strained the brotherhood of men of letters is of increasing importance. In this volume Dr. Wahba has secured the co-operation of writers from many countries, some of whose work we have already noted. In a paper entitled "Dr. Johnson and Fanny Burney", Miss Joyce Hemlow gives an account of the original manuscript of the Diary of Fanny Burney, which is now in the Public Library in New York. This has only been published in an abridged form. We are now given quite a new light on the dinners given by Mrs. Thrale. As Dr. Wahba observes in his introduction to this volume, we now try to see Dr. Johnson as he was and here we get a real insight into the manners of the time. Miss Hemlow quotes the Victorian deletions, previously suppressed. We get a fresh insight into the great doctor's behaviour both in his quarrels and in his playfulness. Arthur Sherbo makes a study of the possible contributions of Johnson to the Gentlemen's Magazine in the years from 1750-1755.

Two prominent members of the Johnson Society are authors of books which are not strictly relevant to the purpose of our Journal and yet are of much interest to our readers.

Felbrigg: the Story of a House. (Hart Davies 35/-) is written by our Vice-President, Mr. Ketton-Cremer; the Johnson Society have been hospitably entertained in this house. Its story from 1624 to the present time is an absorbing study.

Four Centuries of Merchant Taylors School, 1561-1961 (O.U.P., 30/- nett,) is written by Dr. F.W.M. Draper. To Londoners it is a fascinating account of the daily life of our great city and of the development of education over four hundred years. The pages are filled with the names of men who occupied great place in the literature of our country and in the life of our Church and nation.

OBITUARIES

THEODORA ROSCOE

Mrs. Theodora Roscoe, who died suddenly on October 7th. last, was the daughter of Edward S. Roscoe, who for many years was Registrar of the Admiralty and Prize Court and who was himself an ardent Johnsonian. Mrs. Roscoe was herself a minor poet and a writer on the County of Buckinghamshire, in which she lived for the greater part of her life. Through the kindness of Mr. F. Garside, M.A., the headmaster of St. Clement Danes Grammar School we are able to record the Deed of Trust established by Mrs. Roscoe in 1958, of which she gave some account in the issue of this Journal for January, 1959. The Trustees are the Chairman of the Governors of the School, the Head Master for the time being, and a member of the Johnson Society. The income from the Trust is used to provide medals and prizes for boys of the school who write essays on Johnsonian subjects.

We are able to print the following tribute to Mrs. Roscoe from Dr. G.P. Gooch, C.H., the eminent historian.

Theodora Roscoe was a delightful Friend of mine for over twenty years. She was exceptionally many-sided, loving the countryside into which she was born as much as the busy and stimulating atmosphere of London. She always read widely and was particularly at home in England of the Eighteenth century. Our common delight in the character and writing of Dr. Johnson was a bond between us from the start. She was a talented painter and poet and took keen interest in literature and the arts, politics and travel. Possessing many friends and many interests she "warmed both hands before the fire of life." She was one of the most hospitable of women, delighting to make full use of her large house and exquisite garden for gatherings of Women's Institutes, school children etc. Her wide travels in earlier life in the Old and New World, in Australia, Asia and Afrika, gave her a spacious outlook. Her weekly visits to me were one of the greatest pleasures of my later life. She was always the same, cheerful and full of talk. She was lucky in escaping a long illness, but the end came many years too soon.

G.P. Gooch. October 20th. 1962.

DR. F.C. COLEMAN, M.C., F.D.S., M.R.C.S.

During the many years of his residence in London Dr. Coleman was an active participator in the work of the Johnson Society, for