

THE
NEW RAMBLER

Journal of The Johnson Society of London

JUNE, 1963

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JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

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SAMUEL JOHNSON

by

H. A. Morgan, Esquire.

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION

Three years ago we were celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Samuel Johnson at Lichfield on December 9th. 1709. During these celebrations, both here and in America, many books were published, many essays written, many speeches made, paying tribute to the life, character and work of this great and good man. The movement has continued, and since the 1959 celebrations more contributions have been made to the great body of Johnsonian bibliography. Some of these recent writings we may consider to be redundant, as only having a remote academic interest. But many of the new writings, whether critical or purely biographical, have been of a high quality and when these are incorporated with the rest of our knowledge - soon to include the great new and enlarged edition of the "Life" - we shall have a picture of Samuel Johnson more complete than that of any other man of his generation. Indeed, we shall know him as we know few of our own contemporaries.

In biographical writing a distinction is often made between the man and his work, the every-day personality and the genius, which in some great men seem to co-exist as a dichotomy in which the genius appears as something miraculously superimposed on an otherwise little distinguished personality. At the other extreme there are writers, poets, artists, musicians, whose characters are deeply integrated with their work, realised and recognised in it. Such a one was Johnson - not just the style but the substance of the writing was the man. Some would say that this applies more particularly to his talk; but in his best and most deeply felt work - in the life of Savage, the lives of the poets, the introduction to Shakespeare and in the letters - the writing often resembles the talk. This is most true when his feelings are aroused in resentment of injustice or sympathy with suffering, for he was a deeply compassionate man. At such moments his fondness for poly-syllabic latinisms and verbal symmetry are forgotten, the

Address given at the Annual Commemoration of the Johnson Society of London on Thursday 13th. December 1962, in Westminster Abbey.

writing becomes simple and direct.

Although he wrote so well and occupied such an authoritative place in the world of letters, it is strange to reflect that Johnson's interest in writing was only intermittent. Unlike such authors as Anthony Trollope or Arnold Bennett he had no continuous urge to do his so many thousand words a day. He was certainly not what the French call a *Littérature*. Primarily, he was a moral philosopher concerned with lifemanship rather than bookmanship. As he himself said - "Men and women are my concern"; he was interested in human character and the human scene and brought to bear on them a psychological acuteness that in some respects anticipates Freud. Without having the jargon of psycho-analysis, he knew intuitively and by experience something about it.

It is interesting to recall what did motivate Johnson's writings: the natural desire to communicate himself, of course; then for many years the dire necessity of earning a living which drove him into the wastes of Grub Street. He made much of this last motive, proclaiming that only fools wrote for anything but money; but how nobly he contradicted this in his own practice, sometimes doing good work for nothing. To overcome what he called his sloth a trigger pull was required. That was most easily evoked by an appeal to his generosity, compassion, or a religious sense of duty. When his house guest, blind Mrs. Williams, asked his help to obtain an award from the Admiralty in recognition of her father's researches on the Mariner's Compass, Johnson devoted some weeks to the study of the subject and wrote a commendatory monograph on Captain Williams' behalf which is now in the Bodleian. For this service there is no record of Johnson ever having received a fee. His indifference to bargaining with booksellers on Good Friday eve when the "Lives of the Poets" was commissioned, and the hopelessly inadequate fee he then accepted for the work, must be the classical example of the uncommercial author.

Johnson's best writing, controlled though it is by a classical sense of form, has the eloquence of feeling, and the strength of conviction. It is often overcast with melancholy, for Johnson, like most of the great poets, had a tragic sense of the human situation and its sometime nearness to the abyss. At the same time he never lost faith in the possibility of human betterment or respect for human dignity. He rebukes the unfortunate Richard Savage for being unjustly satirical; but how wisely and tenderly he does so - to quote - "When Savage was himself ridiculed in the character of a distressed poet, he very easily discovered that

distress was not a proper subject for merriment, or topic of invective. He was then able to discern that if misery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be revered; if of ill fortune; to be pitied; and if of vice, not to be insulted, because it is perhaps itself a punishment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deserve no panegyric, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner."

Johnson held his moral and religious convictions with great strength, but they never became with him a cause of aversion to, or diminished his sympathy with his fellowmen. Rakes and n'er-do-wells like Savage, Topham Beauclerc, Thos. Hervey, and even street women like Bet Flint ("who never would be categorical") were numbered among his friends and acquaintances. Johnson has been described as "a pessimist with an immense appetite for life". The word pessimism as used in practice is often a word of dubious meaning, it can signify a passing mood of frustration or despair or a whole system of philosophy. Aesthetically it has found expression in art; indeed, a measure of it may be found in the work of nearly all the great poets, in Shakespeare, and later in Baudelaire, Leopardi, and Thomas Hardy. The latter poets brief line of apology for it is well known - "If a better there be, it demands a good look at the worst". Johnson had a good look at the worst in his "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes", and during his long life never deceived himself about the measure of sin and sorrow he found in the world around him. In himself he suffered periodically a full measure of both physical and mental pain; no wonder that in some dark moments his faith failed him and like another poet he "heard a voice, 'believe no more', and heard an ever breaking shore that tumbled on a Godless deep". The fact is, that like many other deeply religious men, for Johnson there was no clear out line of division between doubt and belief, the one, in times of weakness and pain, fading like a dissolving view into the other; and in the struggle to hold belief there was much pain and apprehension, the cry on Calvary was at times his also. Though fearing insanity, he was spared the fate of William Cowper nor did he sink into the ultimate agonising despair of Swift and become bitter and uncharitable. These things he avoided, to find in the end that peace, to achieve which his life had been a continuous struggle.

"He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them. So he came at length to find
A deeper faith his own.
And power was with him in the night
That makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone."

TOPHAM BEAUCLERK AT

THE GROVE, MUSWELL HILL

by

F. W. M. Draper, M.A. Ph.D., F.S.A.

"Topham Beauclerk told me," says Boswell (in his "Life of Samuel Johnson"), "that at his house in the country two large ferocious dogs were fighting."

Then follows the well-known story of Johnson calmly separating dogs described by Boswell as above, by Beauclerk (telling the tale to Mrs. Thrale) as "two large mastiffs," and by Johnson himself as "two stout young pointers."

Topham was the great-grandson of Charles II and Nell Gwynn and it was the royal blood in his veins and the likeness to his ancestor that helped to attract Johnson's attention and engage his friendship. It was Boswell, that snob of genius, who was instrumental in making this able aristocrat almost as well known as the paternal friend who admired his brilliance and forgot his follies.

Topham's grandfather was the first Duke of St. Albans, the "pretty boy" whom Evelyn saw at Whitehall in 1684. His father was Lord Sidney Beauclerk, "the man in England," according to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "who gave the greatest pleasure and the greatest pain," the man who, in Lord Dover's phrase, "was notorious for panting after the fortunes of the old and childless." Lord Sidney nearly married the wealthy Lady Betty Germaine, but eventually, as Horace Walpole relates, she "gave Lord Sidney £1,000 to be off." In the end he married a Lancastrian heiress, that Mary Norris, of Speke, who "had no idea of a joke." Mr. Richard Topham, M.P. for Windsor, was one of the old and childless whom Lord Dover had in mind. When he died, he bequeathed to Sidney Beauclerk his lands and collections and to Sidney's son his name.

In his young days Topham Beauclerk was a gold-digger like his father. For a time he was engaged to Anna Maria Draycott, the future Countess of Pomfret, the rich but scarcely stream-lined lady of whom Charles Townshend remarked that her tonnage was become the equal of her poundage. In March, 1768, Viscountess Bolingbroke, who had been Lady Diana Spencer daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, was divorced by her blackguardly husband, second holder of the title,

and she married Beauclerk almost immediately. She was a passable artist, praised by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose portrait of her hangs in Ken Wood House.

Beauclerk's house in the country was The Grove, Muswell Hill, of which two pictures subsist. One may be seen in the public library here. The other, a light colour-wash, is to be found - together with the 18th century pencil sketch of Muswell Hill Common mentioned below - in a grangerised copy of Lysons' Environs in the Guildhall Library. It is labelled "Mr. Porker's Muswell Hill," having been executed in the time of Topham's successor at The Grove.

Three other pictures exist illustrating the surroundings of The Grove. The first is a "View from Muswell Hill, Highgate, looking towards Shooters Hill," drawn by T. M. Baynes, and printed by C. Hallmandel. It shows the winding and ill-kept road down Muswell Hill with, on the left, the entrance to The Grove, with a small, tiled building that might be a lodge or stables. The date is 1822, but the scene can have changed but little between then and Beauclerk's death in 1780.

The second, entitled "Hornsey, Middlesex," was drawn for The Beauties of England and Wales by J. Clennell, whose collateral descendants still live at Muswell Hill, and engraved by J. Greig. The date of publication was 1812. The engraving shows the tower of Hornsey Church standing out from the trees and represents, in fact, the view seen from the back of the property.

The Grove faced the steep Muswell Hill Common, now vanished. The pencil drawing of this scene, labelled "View of Muswell Hill," shows, together with figures in 18th century dress, houses which are presumably, first, the old Green Man, then Bath House, once the property of the Earl of Bath and pulled down at the coming of the railway to the Alexandra Palace in the sixties, and then perhaps The Grove.

This was Beauclerk's country house. He was the lessee, not the owner. The date of his agreement has not been preserved, but in 1779 he transferred to Thomas Walker the lease, of November 25, 1769, which may have been a lease to himself. Walker, in turn, parted with the lease to John Porker, the banker, who bought the estate in that year from Anthony Dickins. A letter from Topham to his Irish friend, Charlemont, the Volunteer Earl, is written from "Muswell Hill, Summer Quarters, July 18, 1774," and concludes with the remark: "Pray tell Lady Charlemont, from me, that I desire she may keep you from politics, as they do children from sweetmeats that make them sick."

The old accounts of the parish officers in Hornsey have been preserved only in a fragmentary way and I have discovered but one reference to Beauclerk in them. It occurs in "The Account of Mr. Thomas Tyrrell of Money received and paid by him on Account of the Parish of Hornsey being left uncollected & unpaid by Mr. Wilcox the late overseer of the poor." It looks as if Beauclerk was in arrears with his poor rate. The amount of £12. 12s. 6d. "Red of Mr. Beauclerk" is in respect of "Oct., Nov. and Dec.," 1774.

To-day, The Grove, that is to say the house, has disappeared. But the little park called The Grove survives as part of the grounds of Alexandra Palace. A few years ago one might read of one of its paths called Dr. Johnson's Walk. But the local tradition of such a title has now disappeared, and rightly so, for only prolonged or frequent sojourns, like those at Streatham, could have justified such a name, and these, in fact, do not seem to have taken place.

Only one visit of Johnson to Muswell Hill, besides that involving the dogs, is indisputably recorded. On May 17, 1775, Boswell wrote to Temple from Streatham: "I came here yesterday to dinner and this morning Dr. Johnson and I return to London, and I go with Mr. Beauclerk to see his elegant villa and library, worth £3,000, at Muswell Hill, near Highgate, and return and dine with him." But their host was ill and in the end, says Boswell, "Mr. Johnson went with me to Beauclerk's villa, Beauclerk being ill. It is delightful. Just at Highgate. He has one of the most numerous and splendid private libraries that I ever saw. Greenhouses, hothouse, observatory, laboratory for chymical experiments - in short, every thing princely. We dined with him at his house in the Adelphi."

Beauclerk became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1770 and was greatly interested in science, a taste that helped to endear him to Johnson, whose own fondness for chemical experiments is not always remembered. In 1771 we find Goldsmith expressing to Langton the opinion that Topham is "going directly forward to become a second Boyle. Deep in Chymistry and Physics." He indulged his hobby at The Grove, fitting up there, as we saw, not only a laboratory, but an observatory as well. His country house, at the top of Muswell Hill and close to the modern headquarters of television, was ideal for searching the skies and a letter from Walpole to Conway in 1777 shows that he was keeping an astronomer who, as we know, was able to command the best telescope Short had ever made.

While the master of the house was indulging his taste for

science, Lady Di was busy with her painting.

The Beauclerks entertained their friends at Muswell Hill as well as at the Adelphi or Hertford Street or Great Russell Street. There are not many records of these occasions. Horace Walpole, who had one of his platonic attachments for Lady Di, went there in spite of his dislike for Topham and an entry in Wilkes' diary shows - surprisingly - that, when the latter dined at The Grove, the chaplain was a fellow guest; surprisingly, because, unlike his friend Langton, Beauclerk was an unbeliever.

Two sprightly letters from Mrs. Boscawen to her friend Mrs. Delany tell of visits to The Grove. The first of these was in 1776, when Mrs. Boscawen drove from her villa at Colney Hatch to Muswell Hill via Ken Wood and determined on the spur of the moment to visit the Beauclerks' gardens, which seem to have won some celebrity, and pay another pleasant call. But no! "Not such was our reception at Lady Di Beauclerk's on Muswell Hill; tho' we met her ladyship taking an airing and Mr. Beauclerk was in town, yet they wou'd not admit us to see the conservatory (which was all we aspir'd) without a ticket. Resistance, you know, always makes one more obstinate, so Mrs. Levenson has wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds to beg he will obtain the necessary passport."

Mrs. Boscawen called again at The Grove. It was in 1782. Beauclerk was dead, The Grove has passed into the hands of John Porker, and there was to be a sale of plants. This time the visitor forced an entry and was most favourably received, although she thought her host's name was Poker and wondered to what warm hearth he belonged.

Lady Diana's sister, Elizabeth, had married the rakish Pembroke. A letter from her to her son, Lord Herbert, included in the Pembroke Papers, refers to the last days of the Beauclerks at The Grove. The malady which had ruined Topham's life and was to carry him off at 40 had made alarming strides. He had but six months to live. Lady Pembroke refers to the new library which, according to Walpole, reached halfway from Bloomsbury to Highgate. "My sister, too," she writes, "is there in London. They, the Beauclerks, I mean, are now settl'd in Great Russel Street by Bloomsbury Square, where he has built a very fine library, for they never go to Muswell Hill now."

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JOHNSON IN THE SCHOOLS

by

H. A. Morgan, Esq.

I have recently addressed three schools in London; Latimer, Queens College, and Marylebone Grammar School - and have spoken to the Senior scholars on Johnson, the man and the writer. In each of these Schools my audience averaged seventeen years of age, and judging by the close attention given to a talk lasting well over half an hour, seemed to find the subject interesting. Here one may speculate as to how much the quiet listening given to the discourse was spontaneous, and how far due to the kindly but intimidating presence of the Head-master and Staff. Did the scholars, in Johnsonian phrase, "enjoy or endure"? Perhaps they did both with the balance, one hoped, inclining to the former.

In preparing a talk for Schools it seemed best to assume that one's audience knew very little about Johnson or his work, and so to regard the occasion as being in the nature of an introduction to the subject. The distinction between the man and his work, the life and the writings - sometimes an arbitrary one, was in this case justified, and became a useful principle of action. In the first place the life, such an eventful one, was described, containing plenty of change, movement, and incident; all so delightfully related by Boswell in a narrative further enriched by many of Johnson's own wise and witty comments as he recalled and reflected on his past and present life. With so much material available, the problem was one of selection. What incidents, sayings, and adventures, of this extraordinary person would be of most interest to the young scholars and give them as nearly as possible a picture of the whole man? Obviously the more colourful episodes, as related for us in the "Life", had to be given priority; if only for their entertainment value: Johnson's Schooling at Lichfield Grammar School, and account of how Dr. Hunter taught the boys Latin; his humorous account of what he suffered when later he himself became a School-master and Usher at Market Bosworth; the one-horse ride with David Garrick from Lichfield to London, when in the words of the latter - "We rode and tied". The exciting first meeting with Boswell in book-seller Davies Russell St. shop is, as narrated by Boswell, a little masterpiece of dramatic presentation and when read from the "Life" aroused great interest. All these passages, together with many others have interested and amused generations of readers, and did not fail to do so in the

present instance.

But one could not be content with presenting Johnson merely as a source of entertainment, an oddity. Speaking to an Upper School audience some attention must be given to his skill and reputation as an author. Here one could effectively quote a short passage from the introduction to Lobo's travels, one of Johnson's earliest, and yet most characteristic, piece of prose writing. His poetry was illustrated by descriptive passages from the "London" and by the beautiful epilogue to the "Vanity of Human Wishes".

The dictionary had to be dealt with; some of its amusing definitions, so characteristic of the author, were quoted and won great appreciation. The long garret room at the Johnson house in which the work was composed; Johnson's method of Composition; and Boswell's account of the seven poor amanuenses who helped him were briefly described. By way of a Conclusion to this part of my talk, Sir Sydney Robert's Comparison of Bayley's dictionary, published in 1721, with that of Johnson, published 44 years later, was quoted. Professor Roberts in an address to the British Academy selects one letter, G. and compares Bailey's brief treatment of it with Johnson's much more comprehensive one. Among other good things, he quotes Johnson's definition of the not very elegant verb, to gargle: "To wash the mouth with some liquor not suffered immediately to descend." This definition Sir Sydney Roberts describes as "surely a little triumph of delicacy and precision". A remark which met with general approbation.

Reference was made to Rasselas and the pathetic circumstances in which it came to be written; having regard to its fundamentally moral-philosophic character and rather sombre tone, it was recommended for later reading. The value attached to Conversation and letter writing in the 18th Century and Johnson's excellence in both was emphasised. Letters were not quoted, but some of his conversational good things were listened to with amused appreciation.

In conclusion I reminded the scholars that Johnson's latest claim to eminence was to have his name bestowed on a quite reputable brand of Stout, and his portrait by Sir Joshua on millions of Barclay's beer bottles. Later, during question time, the Johnson-Thrale-Barclay-Perkins connection had to be explained.

When first hearing of the Johnson Essay Competition at St. Clements Dane Grammar School, founded in memory of Edward S. Roscoe by his daughter Theodora Roscoe, one was inclined to feel

dubious about putting Johnson over to Schools. Recent experience, and further reflection, however, have convinced me that this can be done with success. Johnson the man and the character cannot fail to interest, and a selection of the writings, if chosen with discrimination, should not be beyond the interest and understanding of any intelligent senior scholar.

NOTES

On March 16th, a paper on "Malone and Johnson" was read by Dr. James Osborn, Research Associate of Yale University. Our reporters have sent us the following account of this lecture. Edmund Malone, the son of an Irish judge, was born in Dublin in 1741 and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1756. In 1763 he came to London and was entered as a law student in the Inner Temple. He frequented the Grecian Coffee House where he met literary people and here, in 1765, he was introduced to Samuel Johnson by an Irish friend. In 1767 he was called to the Irish Bar but soon after he inherited a fortune and settled in London, in 1777 determined to follow a literary career. His residence was in the house which is now 140 Langham Street, where a tablet to his memory was unveiled by Dr. James Osborn last year. He became a frequent associate of Johnson and other writers, and was elected to the Literary Club in 1782; he said that Johnson seldom started a subject himself but that it was easy to lead him into a discussion and that he was always ready to give an opinion. After reading "The Tour to the Hebrides" he became acquainted with James Boswell and a firm friendship was formed; this was of great value because after the death of Johnson Malone gave Boswell material help in concluding the "Life", which indeed might never have been completed without the pressure put on Boswell to finish the task. Malone read Boswell's proof sheets; Dr. Osborn said that an important series of letters between Malone and Boswell are in the Library of Yale University and that Boswell directed that if he died before completing Johnson's Life, his material was to be handed over to Malone. Malone's habit of steady and regular application to work made him an invaluable friend to Boswell. Malone was present at the funeral of Samuel Johnson and had an important part in arranging for the memorial in Westminster Abbey, at which the annual Service of Commemoration is held on December 13th.

"ESTIMATE BROWN"

On January 19th, Sir Sydney Roberts read a paper on "Estimate Brown" of which he has kindly sent to us the following summary:

"Estimate Brown" was an eighteenth-century character who is remembered, if he is remembered at all, by one book - An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times (1757). This book, which denounced the decadence of the period (as it appeared to the author) was a "best-seller" and quickly ran into seven editions. But Sir Sydney was primarily concerned to show that the Estimate was but one item in a large and varied bibliography.

Educated at Wigton Grammar School, John Brown went up to St. John's College, Cambridge in 1732. After taking a good degree, he was ordained in 1736 and became a Minor Canon of Carlisle. There he preached some vigorous sermons at the time of the '45 rebellion but his publications were poems - Honour (1743) and An Essay on Satire (1745). The second of these was inspired by the death of Pope.

It was Warburton who suggested that Brown should reply to Shaftesbury's Characteristics and the Essays on the Characteristics (1751) were recognised as a good defence of the doctrine of utility. But Brown was nothing if not versatile. His play Barbarossa was produced by Garrick in 1755 and had a fair success. It was followed by another tragedy, Athelstan, in the following year. Brown hoped for preferment in the form of a deanery, but had to be content with the Vicarage of St. Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was a keen musician and wrote a Dissertation on the Rise of Poetry and Music (1763) and included with it a sacred ode entitled The Cure of Saul.

There was no end to the variety of his projects and the last of them was the most curious and the most ambitious of them all. The Empress Catherine of Russia had expressed a desire for help in establishing Schools throughout her dominions. Brown responded with alacrity and submitted a plan for the civilisation of the whole Russian empire. The Russian Minister in London advanced £1000 towards the cost of Brown's visit to St. Petersburg, but at the last minute he had an unusually severe attack of gout, which prevented him from making the journey. Frequently subject to melancholia, Brown was driven by this culminating disappointment to cut his throat with a razor on 23rd September 1776. It was the macabre climax of a literary career of extraordinary versatility.

EDITORIAL

1763

A letter in the Daily Telegraph of March 26th, 1963 draws attention to the fact that in the process of rebuilding London some houses of great interest to Johnsonians are in danger. One of them is No. 8 Russell Street, Covent Garden, the house of Mr. Davies, the bookseller. It was in the back parlour of this house that Boswell first met Samuel Johnson. Mr. Davies and his wife, who was a noted beauty, had both been on the stage before he took to the occupation of a bookseller and author. In the notes to the Powell-Hill edition of the Life we are told that, among other works, his "Memoirs of the Life of Garrick" was published in 1780, and "Dramatic Miscellanies" in 1785, both of them books which his previous experience on the stage enabled him to write with advantage. As became an actor, Davies was also in the habit of reciting verse. Charles Lamb reported that he is said to have recited the "Paradise Lost" better than any man in England. In his poem the "Rosciad", published in 1761, Charles Churchill thus describes Davies and his wife,

"With him came mighty Davies.

On my life,

That Davies hath a very pretty wife!

Statesman all over! In plots

Famous grown!

He mouths a sentence, as curs mouth a bone".

George Steevens, who was by no means a kindly critic, wrote of him, "His concern ought to be with the outside of books; but Dr. Johnson, Dr. Percy, and some others, have made such a coxcomb of him, that he is now hardy enough to open volumes, turn over their leaves, and give his opinions of their contents. Did I ever tell you an anecdote of him? About ten years ago I wanted the Oxford Homer, and called at Davies's to ask for it, as I had seen one thrown about his shop. Will you believe me when I assure you, he told me, 'he had but one, and that he kept for his own reading. One day, during a discussion in the Club, Johnson said of him, 'Sir, Davies has learning enough for a clergyman'". This account shows that Davies was a man of learning and an author, and is the reason for his familiarity with Johnson and other literary men of his day.

Boswell's description of his first interview with Johnson will be familiar to all our readers, "At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us, - he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, 'Look, my Lord, it comes.' I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him."

From this meeting what pleasure and interest have accrued to countless readers since that day. All this we owe to the faculty which Boswell possessed of carefully observing and recording.

Did the year 1763 see the foundation of the Literary Club? Sir John Hawkins says that it did; he was a lawyer and a magistrate, and so was accustomed to deal with dates, but his accuracy in this matter has been disputed. Macaulay calls attention to the errors in dates made by John Wilson Croker in his edition of the Life; in this case is it not most probable that what began as a dining together by mutual arrangement proved so suited to the tastes of all those concerned that it gradually became a regular engagement. The original Club began in 1749 and met in the King's Head, Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, a site now devastated by bombing during the last war; it arose from the fact that its members normally took their evening meal in a public tavern, as so many Londoners still do, and from their mutual pleasure in conversation. The original members of the Ivy Lane Club were, Johnson himself, Mr. Hawkesworth, Dr. Richard Bathurst, and three other physicians, and John Hawkins - not yet a knight - who gives this account of it, "Johnson had, in the winter of 1749, formed a club that met weekly at the King's Head, a famous beef-steak house, in Ivy Lane, near St. Paul's, every Tuesday evening. Thither he constantly resorted --- with a disposition to please and to be pleased -- our conversation seldom began till after a supper, so very solid, as led us to think, that with him it was a dinner. By the help of this reflection, and no other hilarity than lemonade, Johnson was, in

a short time after our assembling, transformed into a new creature: his habitual melancholy and lassitude of spirit gave way, his countenance brightened." This club came to an end about 1756. Johnson's need of company and his consequent habit of spending his evenings in taverns, caused Sir Joshua Reynolds to propose the formation of another club, which met in the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho. They met one evening in every week for supper and once every month for dinner, which was an afternoon meal. What talks they had. Today the very interesting discussions over the radio systems open such debates to everyone, but the viewer only listens, he cannot take part in the argument; all radio discussions are one sided in so far as the hearer or listener are concerned. The dining clubs of the eighteenth century, the debating clubs of the Victorian era, quickened mens wits whereas the tendency of the modern media are to make them sporadic. There is no question as to the importance of Boswell's first meeting with Johnson on May 16th, 1763, it is vividly portrayed for us. The development of the club life and the discussions which were carried on there was a gradual process continuing over many years and reaching its most formal stage in February, 1764. But the dinners which took place in 1763, are full of interest to us two hundred years later.

THE REVEREND CANON ADAM FOX, D.D.

Canon Adam Fox, who for many years has been one of our Vice-Presidents and has conducted the Annual Commemoration of Samuel Johnson in Westminster Abbey, has resigned the Canonry which he has held for twenty years. Dr. Fox has written many books, among them a notable contribution in the life of that great thinker, Dean Inge of St. Paul's Cathedral. He has also written on Plato, and also on "English Hymns and Hymn Writers" and a delightful informal story of life in the Cloisters of the Abbey entitled, "Meet the Greek". We understand that the first act of Canon Adam Fox in his retirement is to make a voyage to New Zealand but we hope that upon his return he may again be seen at meetings of the Johnson Society of London, where his presence has always been so welcome.

REVIEWS

The Literary Critics by George Watson. London. Pelican

Books. Pp. 249. Price 4/6.

If the price of this book were 42/- it would be cheap, as a paper back it is within the reach of everyone to enjoy such a literary treat. Mr. Watson is a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, who graduated from Oxford, putting in reverse what Dryden wrote,

"Oxford to him a dearer name shall be,

Than his own mother University;

Thebes did his green, unknowing youth engage;

He chooses Athens in his riper age."

An Australian by birth he has previously taught in several Universities in Britain and in the United States, and has conversed with teachers of widely different outlook; no doubt this has contributed to the breadth of view in this book. He has already written books of real merit; his present purpose is to examine the work of some of the great critics of English literature. This book falls approximately into two equal parts, of which the first is the concern of our readers; it deals with John Dryden, Pope, Addison, Samuel Johnson, and some lesser critics; the second half deals with more recent writers. Mr. Watson describes three types of literary criticism; legislative, which teaches poets how to write, or how to write better than they have done before; theoretical, or literary aesthetics; descriptive, or the analysis of existing literary works.

He begins by writing of first principles and supports his arguments by a series of extracts from the work of the authors with whom he is dealing, thus enabling the reader to consider for himself what the original critic has actually written. The author considers that prior to the time of Dryden, criticism was written for the consideration of poets but that after this period criticism was increasingly directed to enable the readers to enjoy the beauties of poetic literature, rather than to examine its technical structure.

The examination of Dryden's work is divided into two parts; that of his earlier years, in which he was himself the author of poetry, essays, and plays; and that of his later years when he was the doyen of the literary circle which had its centre in the Covent Garden area. Some of Dryden's essays, such as that on

"An Essay on Dramatic Poesy" or "A Letter to the Hon. Sir Robert Howard", which is prefixed to the "Annus Mirabilis" are easily accessible and the other essays and criticisms have recently been republished by Dents and edited by Mr. Watson, in the book now under review the critical examination of the writings of Dryden is stimulating and thought provoking. Towards the end of his life Dryden wrote, "A true critic ought to dwell rather upon the excellencies than perfections, to discover the concealed beauties of a writer, and communicate to the world such things as are worth their observation".

In his chapter upon the Augustans the subheadings direct attention to Pope, Addison, etc., but the comments upon them are not separately treated. Mr. Watson discusses the inheritance of Pope from the writings of Dryden. For example, the observation is made that Dryden's attitude to French poetry is followed by Pope in his boyish "Essay on Criticism". Further, that Dryden had a keen appreciation of the historical evolution of poetry, as is evidenced in his preface to the "Fables" and that this aspect of the criticism of poetry was appreciated and followed by Pope.

The author's tribute to Dr. Johnson is this "With Samuel Johnson English criticism achieves greatness on a scale that any reader can instantly recognise." The Lives of the Poets "stand four-square as the foundation stone of our critical tradition." This is high praise. While Johnsonians welcome this tribute to the sanity and penetration of the criticisms made by the great doctor, is it not true that in the "Life of Dryden" there is redundant material; or that in the "Life of Pope" which is described as "the best general account in existence" there is no record of the meanness and underhand conduct which Pope used towards some of his acquaintances. Mr. Watson accuses Johnsonians of forming a fan club of devotees and quotes Professor Keast of Chicago in support of his argument thus, "It is --- the task of criticism to establish principles, to exalt opinion to knowledge, and to distinguish between those means of pleasing which depend upon known causes and rational deduction from the nameless and inexplicable elegancies which appeal wholly to the fancy". This writes Mr. Watson is positively schoolmasterly. Surely it is characteristic of Johnson that he is dogmatic in his assertions, he began life as a school master and had that manner to the end.

One cannot read a book like this four consecutive times without forming some critical reservations in regard to the

writings of Mr. Watson. But the end result must be a feeling of great satisfaction at a thought provoking book, full of stimulating suggestions, which can occupy leisure hours for many months to come.

F.N. Doubleday.

The Poetical Works of Richard Savage, edited by Clarence Tracy, Cambridge, at the University Press for the University Press of Saskatchewan. Pp. 277. Price 35/- nett.

In 1953 Professor Clarence Tracy, who was then working in the University of Toronto, published a life of Richard Savage under the title "The Artificial Bastard"; this he has now followed with an edition of his poetical works. Beginning with the Jacobinical poems of his early life and continuing with the lesser pieces, the two major contributions, "The Wanderer" and "London and Bristol Delineated", this volume gives a fully annotated edition of the poems.

"The Wanderer: A Vision" is the longest and most elaborate of them and is thought to have been influenced by The Seasons, written between 1725-1730 by James Thomson, with whom Richard Savage maintained a friendship over many years. This work seems poor when compared with Thomson or with Oliver Goldsmith's "Traveller".

To many of our readers the poem "London and Bristol Delineated" will prove interesting. In it Savage draws a picture of the Thames rising in the hills behind Oxford and flowing down to form the mighty river, crowded with the shipping of the world.

"Two Sea-port Cities mark Brittania's Fame,
And these from Commerce different Honours claim.
What different Honours shall the Muses pay,
While one inspires and one untunes the Lay?
Now silver Isis bright'ning flows along,
Echoing from Oxford's Shore each classic Song;
Then weds with Tame; and these, O London, see
Swelling with naval Pride, the Pride of Thee!
Wide deep unsullied Thames meand'ring glides
And bears thy Wealth on mild majestic Tides,

Thy Ships, with gilded Palaces that Vie,
 In glitt'ring Pomp, strike wondering China's Eye;
 And thence returning bear, in splendid State,
 To Britain's Merchants, India's eastern Freight.
 India, her Treasures from her western Shores,
 Due at thy Feet, a willing Tribute pours;"

The Londoner who takes the river steamer to Greenwich, two hundred and fifty years later, and sits drinking his tea and watching the river in flood, sees the same sights and knows the picture to be a true one. When Savage goes on to describe Bristol, the port through which the trade and wealth of America came, he is less than just.

"In a dark Bottom sunk, O Bristol now,
 With native Malice, lift thy low'ring Brow!
 Then as some Hell-born Spite, in mortal Guise,
 Borrows the Shape of Goodness and belies,
 All fair, all smug to yon prowd Hall invite,
 To feast all Strangers ape an Air Polite!"

When the account given by Johnson of the hospitality shown by the citizens of Bristol to Savage and of their generous gifts of money and care of him when he was in prison and dying, is considered, we understand why the literary gifts of Savage brought so little satisfaction.

Listen again to this, as true description of scenery and base ingratitude to his human friends.

"Despising all Men and despised by all.
 Sons, while thy Clifs a ditch-like River laves,
 Rude as thy Rocks, and muddy as thy waves;
 Of thoughts as narrow as of words immense;
 As full of Turbulence as void of Sense:
 Thee, Thee what senatorial Souls adorn?
 Thy Natives sure wou'd prove a Senate's Scorn."

Most of the work of Savage is written in heroic couplets, in decasyllabic lines. Professor Tracy tells us that these poems give an excellent picture of the life and customs in the first half of the eighteenth century. Some of the satirical pieces such as "The Progress of a Divine" make amusing reading. We wish that it had been possible to include in one volume some example of the prose writing of Richard Savage and of his plays.

F.N. Doubleday.

NOTES

The Johnson Society of the Great Lakes Region held their Annual Meeting in the Faculty Club of the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, on April 27th. The Meeting was organised and presided over by the President, Professor Andrew Wright. At the morning Session papers were read on "Johnson's Religious Development" by Chester Chapin, of the University of Michigan; on "Johnson's Translations from the French" by John Abbott, of Michigan State University", and "Johnson as Boswell's Moral Tutor" by James Gray of Bishop's University, Quebec. At a luncheon the Guest of Honour was Allen Hazen who spoke on "Boswell, Johnson, and the Editorial Problem." The afternoon session was filled by papers on "Reflections on a Literary Anniversary" by D.J. Greene, of the University of Toronto, and on "Temperance and Boswell's Muse" by Charles Weis, of Ohio Wesleyan University.

We have so many new subscribers that a note on the ordering of this Journal may be useful to them. It appears on January 1st and June 1st and under normal conditions contains the papers read at the monthly meetings of the Society during the Autumn and Spring Sessions.

From our correspondence it is evident that these papers are read with interest by many people all over the world, who cannot in person attend our meetings. Moreover, as increasing numbers of University Libraries are subscribing for the Journal that implies a larger number of readers than are likely to be reached by individual subscribers.

To facilitate filing by Libraries we are putting on each issue the letter B for the present editor, followed by a serial number to indicate the sequence of the issue. It would simplify the business arrangements if all letters relating to the Journal were directed to the Editor.

We should also very much appreciate it if orders which are paid for in U.S. \$ or other overseas currency had 50 cents - or the equivalent amount - added to the account to cover the cost of collection.