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# The New Rambler

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JOHNSON AND HUME\*

Canon A. R. Winnett, Ph.D.

It is worthy of note that in our little British Isles the two grand antagonisms of Europe should have stood embodied . . . in two men produced simultaneously among ourselves. Samuel Johnson and David Hume . . . were children nearly of the same year: through life they were spectators of the same life-movement, often inhabitants of the same city. . . . Through life they did not meet: as contrasts, 'like in unlike', love each other, so they two might have loved and communed kindly - had not the terrestrial dross and darkness that was in them withstood! . . . They were the two half-men of their time: whoso should combine the intrepid candour and decisive scientific clearness of Hume, with the reverence, the love and devout Humility of Johnson, were the whole man of a new time.<sup>1</sup>

Before we consider the deeper aspects of Carlyle's judgment upon Johnson and Hume, contained in his essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson, there is one matter of fact which calls for examination. Carlyle asserts that the two men never met. Was this really the case? The circles in which Johnson moved and Hume moved had their centres far apart, but they nevertheless overlapped. Friends and acquaintances they had in common, the chief of these being James Boswell, whom we see running to and fro between them, repeating to each what the other had said, and baiting the one with mention of the other. If Johnson and Hume did meet, what would we not give to have a record of their meeting and of the words which passed between the two! Did they love each other and commune kindly, or did (to use Carlyle's expression) the "dross and darkness that was in them" keep them apart? Let us look at the evidence. Writing on 4th November 1762 Boswell notes that Johnson "holds Hume in abhorrence and left a company one night upon his coming in."<sup>2</sup> When Johnson was in Edinburgh in 1773 Hume was not among the distinguished men of letters invited to meet him,<sup>3</sup> and we can hardly look on this as due to an oversight. Come near to meeting they did in May 1768 when on the same day they both called upon Boswell in London, but at a different hour. "I am really the Great Man now"

\* An abbreviated version of a paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 19 February, 1966; the Very Rev. the Dean of St. Paul's in the Chair.

wrote Boswell to his friend William Temple, "I have had David Hume in the forenoon and Mr Johnson in the afternoon of the same day visiting me."<sup>4</sup> It seems likely that a meeting did take place between Johnson and Hume some five years before this, if only to the extent of their being in the same company. There is a letter of Thomas Birch, the Secretary of the Royal Society, to his friend and patron, Philip Yorke, Lord Royston, in which he mentions that dining at the Chaplain's Table in St. James's on 20th August 1763 he met "David Hume the historian, who has just come to town at the invitation of the Earl of Hertford, who I find has an intention of taking him with him to France, if he can make it worth Mr Hume's while." Birch continues: "Your Lordship will smile when I tell you that another of our company at dinner was Samuel Johnson, and a third Cumming the Quaker, who projected the conquest of Senegal."<sup>5</sup> What, if anything, Johnson and Hume said to each other we are not told, but we may presume from Birch's silence that the occasion passed off without an open clash between the two guests.

If Johnson and Hume did not engage in kindly communion it must be confessed that the "dross and darkness" which separated them was on Johnson's side rather than Hume's. In spite of their differences Hume would certainly have welcomed a friendly relationship with Johnson. He was always glad to meet in person those who disagreed with him; and after the publication of his Essay on Miracles he got his publisher Cadell to arrange for him to meet at a dinner three divines who had written replies to his Essay, one of them being Johnson's friend, Dr. Adams, of Pembroke College, Oxford, to whom Hume remarked, "You have treated me much better than I deserve." Hume's charm, we are told, delighted the three divines, who remained on friendly terms with him, and Adams and Hume exchanged visits.<sup>6</sup> This courtesy to an unbeliever shocked both Boswell and Johnson. When in 1776 they visited Dr. Adams in Oxford Boswell took the opportunity of objecting to Adams's "treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such importance to him who maintains it to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a robber. . . . An infidel then shall not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to

to Rob with ingenuity." Johnson agrees with Boswell: "When a man engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning." Adams turns to Johnson with the remark, "You will not jostle a chimney-sweeper," to which Johnson retorts, "Yes, Sir, if it were necessary to jostle him down." Johnson did not shrink from personalities in controversy where weighty issues were at stake, and no nice distinctions were to be drawn between false opinions and the one who held them. We are not surprised to learn that, according to Napier, Johnson "would never hear Hume mentioned with any temper."<sup>8</sup> At a dinner-party shortly before his death, when Adam Smith said that the world was a spiteful and ill-natured place, Hume replied with good humour, "No, no. Here am I, who have written on all sorts of subjects that are calculated to excite hostility. But I have no enemies - except all the Whigs, all the Tories and all the Christians."<sup>9</sup> Among the last Samuel Johnson must be included, though for William Warburton must be reserved the title of enemy-in-chief.<sup>10</sup>

Johnson's reverence for established ideas and institutions stands in contrast to the critical and uninhibited intellect of Hume, for whom there was nothing so sacred as to be exempt from free examination. The eighteenth century stands midway between the mediaeval and the modern worlds, and Janus-like it looks in both directions. If one line stretches back from Johnson to the piety of the Middle Ages, another line stretches forward from Hume to Bertrand Russell and Professor Ayer.

There was in Johnson unquestionably an element of the mediaeval. He is to be numbered among the High Churchmen of his day, which is to say that his piety had affinities with that of the pre-Reformation period. We may adduce in evidence of this his practice of fasting, his strong adherence to episcopacy which led him to unchurch the Presbyterians,<sup>11</sup> the fact that certain lines of the Dies Irae moved him to tears,<sup>12</sup> and the degree of reverence which he accorded to the monastic life. "I have never read of a hermit," he said, "but in imagination I kiss his feet; never of a monastery, but I could fall on my knees and kiss the pavement."<sup>13</sup> Contrast with this Hume's denunciation of what he calls the "monkish virtues," which

are the mark of the "gloomy hair-brained enthusiast", and which "neither advance a man's fortune in the world nor render him a more valuable member of society."<sup>14</sup> But this was a subject on which Johnson was not entirely consistent, for on another occasion he expressed the view that to embrace the monastic life was a form of moral cowardice.<sup>15</sup>

Johnson's antagonism to Hume was basically religious. For Johnson God and the soul were the two great luminous realities. He lived as one who was accountable to God and stood in need of God's mercy. He looked forward, though not always with the degree of confidence that he could desire, to a life beyond death. For Hume these things meant nothing. He appears quite unashamedly as a secular man, and we detect in him no sense of loss in living without those convictions which for Johnson lay at the very centre of life. What precisely Hume's religious views were, what if any residual beliefs still remained his, is uncertain. Once indeed he wrote what many Christians in both ancient and modern times have held, that "our most holy religion is founded on faith, not on reason",<sup>16</sup> but this could hardly have been intended in a seriously Christian sense. When Mrs. Mallet introduced herself to Hume with the words, "We Deists ought to know each other", he at once disclaimed the name of Deist.<sup>17</sup> From his remark to the Baron d'Holbach in Paris, that he had never seen an atheist, we may conclude that he would have repudiated that designation for himself.<sup>18</sup> It was not Hume's object to scandalise or to play the role of a crusading iconoclast: hence as Professor Kemp Smith has pointed out, "his general policy" was to state "his sceptical positions with the least possible emphasis compatible with definiteness."<sup>19</sup> The fact that Hume's most important discussion of religion was in dialogue form - the Dialogues concerning Natural Religion - adds to the ambiguity. It is uncertain through which character Hume himself is speaking. If we follow the majority of interpreters and identify Hume with Philo, it would appear that Hume's position was an attenuated form of theism based on a weakened version of the Design Argument and expressed in the proposition "that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence."<sup>20</sup> We are not entitled to go further than this and make any inference as to the moral attributes of God or His providence in human affairs.

By orthodox Christians until comparatively recent times the miracles of the New Testament were appealed to as guaranteeing the truth of the Christian revelation, and to impugn the miracles was to impugn the revelation itself. Hume wrote the Essay on Miracles as early as 1735, intending that it should form part of the Treatise of Human Nature, but withheld it from publication owing, it is said, to his desire not to offend Bishop Butler, whom he held in high regard and to whom he sent a copy of the Treatise. The Essay was eventually published in 1748 in the Philosophical Essays, and was largely responsible for the attention which that book received. Hume's argument against miracles implied an attack on the idea of revelation, for on the traditional view miracles were the proof of revelation. Hume does not say that miracles are impossible, but that they are contrary to experience, to our observation of the way in which things uniformly happen. The evidence for a miracle depends on the credibility of the testimony alleged in its support, but according to Hume no amount of testimony to a miracle can outweigh the evidence against it, namely our "firm and unalterable experience" of the way things happen. "No testimony," he says, "is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish",<sup>21</sup> and in Hume's opinion this condition is never satisfied. In other words it is more likely that the witnesses were mistaken than that the miracle took place.

On two occasions in conversation with Johnson, Boswell mentioned Hume's argument against miracles. On the first occasion, in 1763, Johnson replied by stating the case for the authenticity of the miracles. "Although God has made nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think that He may suspend those laws in order to establish a system highly beneficial to mankind." The possibility of miracles thus conceded, Johnson considers the evidence for the miracles. This comes from men who had no interest in deceiving us and who were ready to suffer persecution for what they believed and preached. Nor did the heathen deny the Christian miracles: they were content to ascribe them to evil spirits. Johnson concludes, "Supposing a miracle possible, we have as strong evidence for the miracles in support of Christianity as the nature of the thing permits."<sup>22</sup>

On the second occasion fourteen years later Johnson appears to have been somewhat less confident. "Sir, you come near Hume's argument against miracles, 'That it is more probable witnesses should lie, or be mistaken, than that they should happen'," said Boswell, referring to Johnson's reluctance to believe the extraordinary. To this Johnson replied, "Why, Sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right. But the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought."<sup>23</sup> Do we detect here an indication that Johnson had, in spite of himself, felt the force of Hume's argument? Gibbon's observation in the second volume of the Decline and Fall may reflect the extent of Hume's influence: "In modern times a latent and even involuntary scepticism adheres to the most pious dispositions. . . . Accustomed long since to observe and to respect the invariable order of nature, our reason, or at least our imagination, is not sufficiently prepared to sustain the visible action of the Deity."<sup>24</sup>

Johnson could not bring himself to regard Hume's scepticism as the result of sincere conviction, but ascribed it instead to vanity and a desire for notoriety. "Hume and other sceptical innovators," he said, "are vain men and will gratify themselves at any expense. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity, so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull."<sup>25</sup> Nor had Hume really examined Christianity. When Johnson observed that "no honest man could be a Deist, for no man could be so after a fair examination of Christianity", Boswell countered by mentioning Hume, to which Johnson replied, "No, Sir, Hume owned to a clergyman in the bishoprick of Durham that he had never read the New Testament with attention."<sup>26</sup> Johnson was doubtless right in detecting an element of insincerity in Hume, though he was wrong in thinking that Hume was insincere in his scepticism. Certainly on one occasion at least Hume shows himself ready to justify insincerity, for writing in March 1764 to his friend Colonel Edmondstone concerning a young minister who had read his writings and had come to hold sceptical opinions, he advises that he should not abandon the ministry but consult his own self-interest. The letter continues: "It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar on their superstitions, to pique one's self on sincerity with regard to them. . . . I wish it were still in my power to be a

hypocrite in this particular. The common duties of society usually require it; and the ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to the innocent dissimulation, or rather simulation, without which it is impossible to pass through this world."<sup>27</sup> It is hard to believe that Hume was serious in giving such cynical advice as this. In spite of his friendship with Blair and other "Moderate" ministers of the Church of Scotland, Hume had a low opinion of the clergy as a whole, and his letter may do no more than reflect his unfavourable estimate of clerical honesty.

Boswell's first meeting with Hume was in the summer of 1758, and he found him "a most discreet, affable man as ever I met with." It was not until five years later that Boswell met Johnson, and it is interesting to speculate what would have been Boswell's legacy to posterity had he taken Hume instead of Johnson as his hero, for he did at one time consider writing the life of Hume. One thing, however, stood in the way of this, namely Hume's religious scepticism, for Boswell, though hardly himself deeply religious, had a profound concern for religion, chiefly it seems as affording to mankind the hope of a life beyond death. While visiting Hume in Edinburgh Boswell drew out Hume on the subject of Johnson. Hume spoke of Johnson's Dictionary as a "kind of national work" entitling him to the patronage of the State, and continued, "He is a man of enthusiasm and antiquated notions, a keen Jacobite yet hates the Scotch. He holds the episcopal hierarchy in supreme veneration and said that he would stand before a battery of canon to have the Convocation restored to its full powers."<sup>28</sup> When this last remark was repeated to Johnson, "his eye flashed with indignation" as he thundered out, "Shall the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland have its General Assembly and the Church of England be denied its Convocation?"<sup>29</sup>

Hume would seem to have lost few opportunities of making clear to Boswell his opinion of Johnson. Hume offered Boswell half-a-crown for every page in Johnson's Dictionary in which he could not find an absurdity, if Boswell would give him half-a-crown for every page in which he did find one.<sup>30</sup> When on 6th March 1775 Boswell went to pay Hume the rent of his apartment in James's Court he noted, "Drank tea with David Hume. . . . He spoke of Mr Johnson's Journey [to the Western Islands] in terms so slighting that it could have no effect but to show his resentment."<sup>31</sup> Johnson was equally frank and uncomplimentary in expressing

his view of Hume: for example, "I know not indeed whether he has first been a blockhead and that has made him a rogue, or first been a rogue and that has made him a blockhead."<sup>32</sup> Johnson's remarks on Hume which appear in Boswell's Private Papers are either omitted or toned down in the Life, and Boswell in the Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides records himself as rebuking Johnson for his attitude to Hume and reminding him that "violence is in my opinion not suitable to the Christian cause."<sup>33</sup>

Boswell was both fascinated and perplexed by Hume, for here was a sceptic in religion who nevertheless lived a life of unimpeachable uprightness and goodness, and this perplexity was increased by Hume's demeanour in the face of death. According to the pious of the day the infidel's death-bed was darkened by the dread forebodings of judgment, but Hume faced death calmly and without fear. In November 1775 Boswell, after hearing a sermon on the Consolations of Christianity, decided to enquire of Hume what he should do in the unlikely event of his losing his faith and by what reflections "a man of sense and feeling could support his spirit as an infidel."<sup>34</sup> A few weeks later Boswell paid his intended visit but did not get round to broaching the question. It was not until 7th July 1776, when Hume was dying, that Boswell boldly raised the subject of religion. Hume, calm and cheerful, now gave uninhibited expression to his scepticism. He had never, he said, had any belief in religion since reading Locke and Clarke. In his youth he had been religious, and had been in the habit of reading The Whole Duty of Man and examining himself by the catalogue of sins in that work. He considered the morality of every religion to be bad, and when he heard a man was religious he concluded he was a rascal, though he had known exceptions. The idea of immortality he regarded as "a most unreasonable fancy", and the prospect of annihilation caused him no more disquiet than the thought that he had once not existed. Boswell comments on this conversation: "I had a strong curiosity to be satisfied if he persisted in disbelieving a future state even when he had death before his eyes. I was persuaded from what he now said, and from his manner of saying it, that he did persist."<sup>35</sup>

Hume's reference to Clarke is interesting in connection with Johnson. When Hume named Clarke as in part responsible for his scepticism, he had no doubt in mind Clarke's a priori argument for theism in The Being and

Attributes of God, an argument which an empiricist like Hume would hardly find convincing. Johnson, on the other hand, while aware of Clarke's heretical leanings, held his sermons in high esteem, to the point of declaring that "they made him a Christian" and that to them he should be "indebted for his salvation."<sup>36</sup> *The Whole Duty of Man* (an anonymous devotional manual widely used at the time), which Hume was in the habit of reading in his early religious phase, also formed part of the youthful Johnson's reading, being assigned to him by his mother as a Sunday task, but he found it un congenial and derived no benefit from it.

Boswell's encounter with the dying Hume threw his mind into confusion, a state which he describes as "a degree of horror, mixed with a sort of wild strange hurrying recollection of my excellent mother's pious instructions, of Dr. Johnson's noble lessons, and of my religious sentiments and affections during the course of my life."<sup>37</sup> On 25th August 1776 Hume died, and on the day of the funeral, after watching the procession to the grave from behind a wall, Boswell went to the Advocates' Library, there to read certain of Hume's essays, a thing which he had done a few weeks previously "from," he says, "a kind of curiosity and self-tormenting inclination which we feel on many occasions."<sup>38</sup>

Boswell was both shocked by Hume's persistence in unbelief and anxious to find an excuse for it. So on 30th August he writes to Mrs. Thrale: "My notion is that he had by long study in one view brought a stupor upon his mind as to futurity. He had pored upon the earth till he could not look up to heaven."<sup>39</sup> There was only one way for Boswell to resolve his perplexity, and that was to consult Johnson. Johnson's reply was immediate and unequivocal. When Boswell spoke of Hume's "being easy at the thought of annihilation" Johnson retorted, "He lied. He had a vanity in being thought easy. It is more probable that he lied than that so very improbable a thing should be as a man not afraid of death; of going into an unknown state and not being uneasy at leaving all he knew." And as if to clinch the matter he added, "Upon his own principle of annihilation he had no motive not to lie." Johnson's earnestness of speech on this occasion led Boswell to remark, "The horror of death which I have always observed in Dr. Johnson appeared strong to-night. . . . He said he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him." As the result of his conversation with Johnson, Boswell found a measure of reassurance. "I felt,"

he says, "my own mind much firmer than formerly, so that I was not depressed to-night; and even the gloom of uncertainty in solemn religious speculation, being mingled with hope, was much more consolatory than the emptiness of infidelity."<sup>40</sup>

Even so Boswell's perplexity concerning Hume was not wholly dispelled. How could one so good as Hume, and one so fearless in face of death, not have been a Christian? As early as 1768 in a letter to Temple, Boswell had hinted that Hume's lack of faith may have been only a pretence, but nearly sixteen years later, on 8th January, 1784, certainty came through the medium of a dream. Boswell dreamed that he had found a diary kept by Hume "from which it appeared that though his vanity made him publish treatises of scepticism and infidelity, he was in reality a Christian and a very pious man. He had, I imagined, quieted his mind by thinking that whatever he might appear to the world to show his talents, his religion was between God and his conscience." The dream was so vivid that for some time he could not "perceive that it was only a fiction."<sup>41</sup>

To portray Johnson and Hume as the representatives respectively of belief and unbelief, of orthodoxy and scepticism, would be, in the case of Johnson at least, to over-simplify the issue. Belief and unbelief, as we are now coming to recognize, are not exclusive of each other but may co-exist in the same person, and there is no evidence that they did so in the case of Johnson. Johnson's religious struggle was not only with his sense of guilt and unworthiness: it was also a struggle with an inborn tendency to scepticism. Johnson was, as we know, sceptical in mundane and practical matters. He refused to credit the Cock Lane ghost, he was cautious in accepting the genuineness of the Highlanders' second-sight, he was quick to deny the authenticity of Macpherson's Ossian, and it is said that he took six months to become convinced of the Lisbon earthquake.<sup>42</sup> But there is reason to believe that Johnson's scepticism also extended into the realm of religion: that, to quote Professor Mossner, it was "subdued but never extinguished" and therein "lies the secret of his consuming hatred of Hume, a hatred that seemed to him a good hatred."<sup>43</sup> Johnson himself confessed that he was not an entire stranger to sceptical notions when he told Boswell, "Everything which Hume has advanced against Christianity had passed through my mind long before he wrote."<sup>44</sup> To the end faith remained for Johnson a matter not of demonstrative certainty, but of commitment based on a

balance of probabilities. (Here one is reminded of Bishop Butler.) Boswell in the Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides recounts a conversation in which Johnson counsels the blind poet Blacklock to follow the same course in the matter of religion as men do in the common concerns of life. "Why, Sir," said Johnson, "the greatest concern we have in this world, the choice of our profession, must be determined without demonstrative reasoning. Human life is not yet so well known, as that we can have it. And take the case of a man who is ill. I call two physicians; they differ in opinion. I am not to lie down and die between them. I must do something."

That Johnson was more sympathetic than is commonly supposed to the new movements of thought in his time, is the thesis of an essay, "Johnson and the Enlightenment" contributed to the L. F. Powell presentation volume, Johnson, Boswell and their Circle. The author, Robert Shackleton, thus describes Johnson's attitude: "The situation of Johnson in relation to the Enlightenment is by no means simple. He believed in the spread of knowledge. He accepted the empiricism of Locke. He leaned to utilitarianism in politics. His natural bent of mind was sceptical. In all these respects he was at one with Voltaire and with Diderot."<sup>46</sup> The same author calls attention to the fact that Johnson's statement to Boswell, that "the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought", corresponds closely with one of the propositions maintained by the Abbe de Prades and condemned as heretical by the Sorbonne in 1752.<sup>47</sup>

From all these considerations one conclusion seems to follow: that there was enough of the sceptic in Johnson, and he was sufficiently aware of the sceptical arguments against religion, for him, sub-consciously at least, to fear that perhaps after all Hume might be right; and it was this fear which determined his attitude to Hume. Contemporary support for this view is afforded by a recollection of William Maltby, the friend of Samuel Rogers: "A very old gentleman who had known Johnson intimately assured me that the bent of his mind was decidedly towards scepticism; that he was afraid to examine his own thoughts on religious matters; and that hence partly arose his hatred of Hume and other such writers."<sup>48</sup>

Carlyle described Johnson and Hume as the "two half-men of their time", but the term is a singularly inappropriate one, for both Johnson and Hume were full-men, men in the round, men on the grand scale. They were men whose warm humanity won for them a unique place in the affection of their friends, and James Boswell, to his honour, was the friend of both. Nevertheless we may concur with Carlyle's judgment that Johnson and Hume, with their distinctive qualities and their particular limitations, were the complement of each other, and that the "whole man of a new time" will be one who shall "combine the intrepid candour and decisive scientific clearness of Hume with the reverence, the love and devout humility of Johnson." It would be tempting, but out of place at this moment, to enlarge upon the need for a synthesis of the scientific and the religious understanding of the world and the importance of this synthesis for the future of mankind. Instead I will close with some lines of Carlyle's contemporary, Tennyson, which seem to me to unite the spirit of Johnson with that of Hume:

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell,  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,  
But vaster . . . 49

#### Documentation

1. Carlyle, Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (Chelsea Edition) III, pp. 103-4.
2. Boswell, Private Papers, I, p.128.
3. E. C. Mossner, Life of David Hume, p.586.
4. Letters of James Boswell (ed. C. B. Tinker), I, p.160.
5. Notes and Queries, Nov. 1954, pp.477-8. The letter is preserved among the Hardwicke papers in the British Museum. The reason why Yorke is expected to smile may be that Johnson's earlier snub to Hume had become common gossip; or that Johnson was a Tory while the Yorkes were Whigs.
6. Boswell, Life of Johnson (ed. Hill and Powell) II, p.442.; Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers, to which is added Porsoniana (ed. A. Dyce), p.106. The other two divines were Dr. Douglas and Dr. Price.
7. Life, II, p.443.
8. Napier, Johnsoniana, p.122.

9. J. Y. T. Greig, David Hume, p.402.
10. Warburton attacked Hume both publicly and privately, and used threats against Millar, Hume's publisher, to prevent the publication of the Dissertations. Mossner, Life of Hume, pp.290 and 324.
11. Life, II, p.103.
12. Piozzi, Anecdotes, p.200.
13. Boswell, Tour to the Hebrides (ed. Hill and Powell), p.62.
14. Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, Sec. IX, Pt.1.
15. Life, II, p.435, cf. Imlac's view of the monastic life in Rasselas, ch.47.
16. Of Miracles, in Hume on Religion (ed. Wollheim), p.225.
17. Mossner, Life of Hume, p.395.
18. Ibid., p.483.
19. Dialogues concerning Natural Religion (ed. N. Kemp Smith), p.75.
20. Dialogues in Hume on Religion, p.203.
21. Of Miracles in Hume on Religion, p.211.
22. Life, I, p.445.
23. Ibid., III, p.188.
24. Gibbon, Decline and Fall (ed. J. B. Bury), II, p.31.
25. Life, I, p.444.; Boswell, London Journal, p.317.
26. Life, II, p.9.
27. J. H. Burton, Life and Correspondence of David Hume, II, p.185.
28. Boswell, Private Papers, I, p.129.
29. Life, I, p.464.
30. To Temple, 19th June 1775, Letters of James Boswell (ed. C. B. Tinker), I, pp.233-4.
31. Boswell, Private Papers, X, pp.109-10.
32. Ibid., VI, p.178.
33. Tour to the Hebrides, p.30.
34. Boswell, Private Papers, XI, p.5.
35. Ibid., XII, p.227.
36. M. J. Quinlan, Samuel Johnson, a Layman's Religion, pp.27-28.
37. Boswell, Private Papers, II, p.232.
38. Mossner, Life of Hume, p.605.; Johnson, Boswell and their Circle (Essays presented to L. F. Powell), p.257.
39. Letter in National Library of Scotland, quoted in Mossner, The Forgotten Hume, pp.184-5. The original reads "eight" instead of "eighteen."
40. Boswell, Private Papers, XIII, pp.23-24.
41. Ibid., XVI, pp.20-21.
42. E. C. Mossner, The Forgotten Hume, p.204.
43. Ibid., p.206.
44. Life, I, p.444.
45. Tour to the Hebrides, p.47.
46. Johnson, Boswell and their Circle, p.91.
47. Ibid., p.80.
48. Table Talk of Samuel Rogers, to which is added Porsoniana, p.326.

GARRICK, JOHNSON, AND LICHFIELD\*

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In the community of Lichfield of three thousand or more,<sup>1</sup> where all knew something about each other, Johnson and Garrick were separated by social barriers that did not prevail in almost any other small town. Johnson was the son of a tradesman and town official; his mother had to resort to ancestors and non-resident family to support her dignity. That Garrick was a descendant of a Huguenot wine merchant from Bordeaux meant far less to him and the community than that he was living in a garrison town and for thirty years his father was an officer in three of the top-ranking regiments in the aristocracy of the established army. On April 12, 1706, the grandfather, David Garric, bought for his son Peter a commission as ensign in Colonel James Tyrrel's, later Sir Robert Bradshaigh's, Regiment of Foot. At David's birth on February 19, 1717, Peter, his father, was a lieutenant in Colonel James Tyrrel's New Raised Regiment of Dragoons (July 22, 1715) and on December 26, 1726, he attained the rank of captain in Major General Percy Kirke's 2nd Regiment of Foot, the Queen's Own, all three regiments at various times garrisoned in Lichfield.

As a lieutenant in the Dragoons he received £109. 10. 0. a year; as a captain in a ranking foot regiment, £182. 10. 6., supplemented as always in the 18th century by allowances for clothes, maintenance, recruiting, perquisites, all of which so added up that the purchase of a commission, running into thousands of pounds, was actually a very sound investment. Captain Peter Garrick unfortunately was a career officer when the Crown did not "busy giddy minds With foreign quarrels" sufficient to employ all established regiments at full-pay, with the result that Captain Garrick for about half of his thirty years as an officer was on half-pay, though with the advantage of residing with his family in Lichfield. Eventually with seven children to support he sought active service in August 1729, in Kirke's 2nd Regiment of Foot stationed at Gibraltar, and he continued at Gibraltar for six years until he returned to Lichfield less than a year before his death (1737).<sup>2</sup>

\* Abridged from a paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 19 March, 1966; Dr. James M. Osborn in the Chair.

Eighteenth century incomes seem woefully inadequate until we remember a shilling was worth what a pound is now. Johnson's essay on how to live in London on £30 a year seems ridiculous until we remember the modern equivalent is around £600.<sup>3</sup>

Though the Garrick family lived on a basic income that varied from one to four or even five thousand pounds a year, in modern purchasing equivalent, and although the half-pay of an officer may not have always been adequate for a large family, it was certain and honourable. Garrick later often emphasized that he grew up accustomed to strict habits of economy, as Johnson remarked "to make four-pence do as much as others made four-pence halfpenny do."<sup>4</sup>

With Captain Garrick stationed at Gibraltar, and the eldest son Peter in the Mediterranean and West Indies as an ensign in the Navy, David as resident head of the family reported in the eleven surviving letters on family finances: the expenses for doctors for Mrs. Garrick in her long illness; bills for rent and the baker; the clearing up of small debts - only three or four brief references in eleven letters. But David's request for "some handsome thing for a wastecost & p<sup>r</sup> of Breeches . . . they tell me Velvet is very cheap at Gibraltar" (Letter 9); the sisters' request for some money for lace for their heads to distinguish them from the "Vulgar Madams" are hardly cries of distress (Letter 8). All references to finances are in great good humour - with no apprehensions. Johnson's painful memories of his father's earnings were not so much of the annual total as of the corrosive uncertainties, the sources in trade. Whether or not Captain Garrick sold his commission shortly before his death and the £1100, the approximate value of his commission, were a part of the estate of £2500 he willed (January 1, 1737) his children has not been settled. That Mrs. Garrick is not mentioned in the will would indicate that Captain Garrick retained his commission whereby his widow would receive a pension, as apparently she did. David was willed one shilling in anticipation of the £1000 coming to him from an Uncle David, when he would come of age. Contrast this heritage with the £20 only that Johnson received on June 12, 1732, from his father's estate - a contrast that is to be grasped only after multiplying each sum by twenty - the disparity between £400 as against £20,000.

In fact the Garrick family's relation to the armed

services was so satisfactory that Captain Garrick provided a commission in the Navy for Peter, his eldest son; later William, the youngest son, bought a commission as ensign in the regiment raised by Lord John Leveson-Gower, Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, to fight the Scots in 1745.<sup>5</sup> Two Lichfield cousins and/or uncles, Captain Hugh Bailye and Lieutenant John Kynaston, as well as other Lichfield acquaintances, were in Captain Garrick's regiment. There is no better proof of the attraction of the army for the Garrick family than David's enthusiastic report to his father:

I was in great hopes I should have Recruited my Self this Spring [1735], For Mr Hervey who is a Cornett in my Lord Car's Regt had given me & Mr Walmisley a promise for his Commission, If his Brother in Law Sr Thos Aston had died. (Letter 8)

and two months later (April 24, 1735):

I can tell my Papa I stand a good chance to get into ye Army, I have the promise of three Lieutenant Colonells to provide for me . . . & Col. Pyot who has sworn to make Chaplain to his Regt if I should be in orders. (Letter 10)

Pervading all the gossip in David's letters to his father of the officers and troops garrisoned in Lichfield are Garrick's acceptance by an aristocracy of officers and his inclination to follow his father's profession.

Of all the officers, with families, garrisoned in Lichfield, the Garricks were on the most congenial social terms with the Herveys. Henry Hervey, fourth son of the Earl of Bristol, and a coronet in the King's Own Regiment of Horse (Kerr's Dragoons) had married in 1730 Catherine Aston, the daughter of Sir Thomas Aston and sister of Magdalen whom Gilbert Walmesley was to marry in 1736. The ladies exchanged visits; Garrick wrote his father (January 21, 1733):

I am [a] great favourite of both of [the Herveys] and am with them every Day. . . . Mr Harvey . . . as lately come from London and has brought me two Pair of large Silver Buckles . . . and Mr Walmisley a fine Snuff Box. (Letters 1 and 2)

And on February 17, 1735, we learn, as mentioned above, that Hervey promised David his commission, worth £600, if he had succeeded to the estate of his brother-in-law Sir Thomas Aston. From these and other allusions, it is evident that the Herveys and Garricks were often together in the intimate social circle of Gilbert Walmesley in the Close. And, undoubtedly in Walmesley's home, Hervey noticed Johnson and was so kind to him that Johnson became devoted to Hervey in his dissolute and charming life and later asserted, "If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him."

Michael Johnson, with all his industry and ambition, opened for his son Samuel only the Lichfield communities of the Market Place, the Guildhall, and St. Mary's with little security and less guidance and help in finding a livelihood. Captain Garrick, a gentleman, gave his son the sophisticated life of officers in a garrison town, the security of an honoured profession, paternal care and affection, and the prospect of a university degree.

Furthermore, Mrs. Johnson's family, with all her nervous defensive pride, availed Johnson little in the garrison, much less in the Close, where Johnson was never at home. On the other hand, Garrick, from his mother, a granddaughter and daughter of choral vicars, inherited an entrée into the intimate and established social, intellectual - even spiritual life such as it was - of the Cathedral Close.

As with so much that has to do with the twelve choral vicars in Lichfield Cathedral, the life of Garrick's grandfather Clough is a mystery. In the Subscription Books of the Cathedral, Anthony Clough on April 25, 1681, took the oath as "Vicar Choral belonging to the prebend of Ufton ex parte decani," and two years later (July 3, 1683) married Elizabeth Baillye, the daughter of a choral vicar. In 1718, William Walmesley, Dean of the Cathedral, in some way related to Gilbert, became prebend ex parte decani of Cloughton als Ufton, presumably in succession to Anthony Clough, though there is no record of Anthony Clough's death in the Cathedral register or in St. Mary's or St. Chad's. Though perhaps humble, the position as a vicar choral was one of the more lucrative sinecures held by many respected in the Cathedral Close.<sup>6</sup>

The house on Bird, now Beacon, Street, occupied by the Garricks, was opposite and the second door to the

south from the Cathedral Gate, and belonged to the prebend of Wolvey, apparently for the organist. The house, rebuilt after the Civil War, was located at the end of the Causeway and on an acre, "more or less," of land that reached down to the old marshes to the west and south. Garrick once called the house "the Castle on y<sup>e</sup> Bridge" (Letter 114). In the 1730's, when Garrick was writing his father, the grandmother, Arabella Clough, was living with the family, or perhaps it was the other way and she was the tenant as the widow of a vicar choral. In one letter (Letter 1) Garrick mentions paying a rent of £10 to Richard Rider, the deputy register. The property remained in possession of the choral vicars until 1857 when it was appropriated by the Ecclesiastical Commission and became the site of the present Probate Registry. In Garrick's boyhood, the house must have been a substantial dwelling with accommodations for eight to ten persons and conveniently located in a respected neighbourhood near the Close.<sup>7</sup>

Garrick had other ties with the Close. The births and deaths of some of his brothers and sisters and the deaths of his parents are recorded in the Cathedral registers and presumably the parents and several children were buried in the Close. Nor is it surprising that twelve relatively unoccupied and securely endowed vicars should beget a numerous progeny and that many Lichfield families should be inter-related in the Close. Through his mother's family, Garrick had three uncles or great uncles, vicars choral by the names of Morgan, Kynaston, and Bailye, and quite a few acquaintances - names that turn up in the Letters - were sons of vicars choral.<sup>8</sup>

In short, Garrick belonged to the community of the Cathedral Close that even more than now held itself above and apart from the Lichfield citizens to the south and below the Minister Pool - below the salt - in which the Johnsons moved and Samuel sought an identity. For the Johnson Society, I need not elaborate how Gilbert Walmesley, the register of the Lichfield ecclesiastical court and occupant of the Bishop's Palace for twenty years, in power and personality dominated the Close, nor need I repeat his biography and his patronage of Johnson and Garrick.<sup>9</sup>

Ample evidence there is that the Garricks were welcome in the Close; that Captain Garrick and Walmesley

were friends, that Walmesley's kindness to David was to the son of a respected friend and family, and that "Davy was in and out every day" - to Walmesley he was always Davy. "This Young Gentleman," Walmesley wrote Colson on February 5, 1736, "You must know, has bin much w<sup>th</sup> me, ever since he was a child, almost every day; & I have taken a Pleasure often in Instructing him, & have a great Affection & Esteem for him."<sup>10</sup> In eight of the eleven letters to his father, David mentions Walmesley sixteen times generally in connection with petitions for leave for Captain Garrick to return from Gibraltar. The one personal reference is this:

I have been to M<sup>r</sup> Ofleys who sent a Man & horse for me with M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Harvey & M<sup>r</sup> Walmisley, were I got acquainted with his two Sons, who are fine young Gentlemen, M<sup>r</sup> Walmisley gave me slyly, half a crown for y<sup>e</sup> Butler & another for y<sup>e</sup> Groom, for my self, which made me look very grand. (Letter 1)

Tradition, doubtless founded on idle speculation, singled out David as Walmesley's heir until he married Magdalen Aston in the spring of 1736. One small memento of the friendship is to be noticed here only because of its rarity. On July 3, 1732, according to the Latin inscription, Walmesley gave David, Claude Lancelot and L. J. Le Maistre de Sacy, Le Jardin des Racines Greques, (1701) an alphabetical listing of a Greek vocabulary with French meanings, cast in some 216 stanzas of from nine to twelve lines each, plus additional lexicographical material. The inscription reads in part:

D.D.D.G.G.W. ea vèro conditione, ut unam quoque die paginam memoriter ad verbum ediscat; postq. quovis tempore sine scripto verbis eisdem reddere ac pronunciare paratus promptusq. fuerit.  
Lichf. 30 Julii a.d.1732.<sup>11</sup>

Not very startling, to be sure, but I prefer this as a sounder basis for the relations of a man of fifty-two and a boy of fifteen, to:

the hours of convivial gaiety, did he [Gilbert Walmesley] delight to wave every restraint of superiority formed by rank, affluence, polished manners, and the dignity of advanced life; and . . . "as man to man, as friend friend," he drew forth the different powers of each

expanding spirit, by the vivid interchange of sentiment and opinion, and by the cheering influence of generous applause.<sup>12</sup>

The records of the association of Walmesley, Johnson, and Garrick outside the Close are few. According to Boswell, Johnson had "a kind reception in the best families at Lichfield. Among these I can mention Mr. Howard, Dr. Swinfen, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Levett, Captain Garrick . . . Mr. Gilbert Walmesley." Walmesley doubtless first noticed Samuel as a customer in Michael Johnson's bookshop. The earliest anecdote of Johnson and Garrick is the oft-repeated query of Mrs. Garrick "how little David went on at school," and Johnson's reply "he would probably come to be hanged, or come to be a great man."<sup>13</sup> When some young people, certainly including David and his sisters, proposed acting Ambrose Philips The Distressed Mother, Samuel wrote a special prologue. This was followed by Garrick's production, at the age of twelve, of Farquhar's Recruiting Officer, in the Bishop's Palace, for which Johnson failed to write the prologue Garrick sought from him.

Later before the London venture, the three attended in the Guildhall a production of Cibber's farce, Hob: Or the Country Wake when Johnson ejected a Scotsman who usurped his seat on the stage and Walmesley had to restore order. I think we can be fairly certain that the three attended plays in Lichfield, judging from a letter John Swinfen, Johnson's godfather's son, wrote to Peter October 20, 1741, commending David's first season at Goodman's Field.

Many of his Country Friends, who have been most used to Theatrical Performances in Town Halls and by Strollers will be apt to imagine the highest Pitch a Man can arrive at on the Stage, is about that exalted degree of Heroism as the Herberts & the Hallams have formally made us laugh & cry with. (Forster Collection)

Finally, though the setting was not in the Palace or even Lichfield, still Walmesley was the moving spirit in the Edial venture, and of this association of David and Samuel, we have what is undoubtedly Johnson's recollection conveyed to Thomas Davies for the first chapter of Davies' Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick.

Running through these several episodes is a common

interest of literature and the theatre. Johnson needed no introduction to books and literature, but as the son of a versatile bookseller, his approach to books was antiquarian and philosophical; he surveyed shelves of books and never was disposed to read through a book. Walmesley as a man of learning, of affairs, and social experience, developed, if he did not implant, in Johnson a pragmatic sense that the end of literature was action, the quality of literature was in the form as well as the context. On the other hand, Garrick was much taken up with Lichfield social life, with repartée, with occasional verse - "having a little smattering y<sup>t</sup> way" he professes in giving a long sample to his father - and dramatic composition. He was inclined to neglect books. Walmesley introduced him to a library such as he certainly did not find at home, to literature as embodying ideas, to a respect for humane letters. I have sought in vain the catalogue of Walmesley's library sold in 1756 by Thomas Osborne, for whom Johnson worked on the Harleian Catalogue.<sup>14</sup>

To be sure David and Samuel had in common the superior Lichfield Grammar School, but Johnson, seven years older, was no longer a pupil when Garrick entered. As for the Edial year together, if stronger ties had not already developed, the experience more than likely would have ended in estrangement. We are bothered that Garrick later caricatured Johnson and Tetty in a bedroom scene, but such is all too often the upshot of master-student relations. Johnson presumably told Davies that while at Edial, Garrick's "thoughts were constantly employed on the stage; for even at that time he was very busy in composing plays . . . he shewed [Johnson] several scenes of a new comedy, which had engrossed his time; and these, he told him, were the produce of his third attempt in dramatic poetry."<sup>15</sup> If anything the roles were reversed and Garrick must have inspired if he did not actually assist Johnson in the initial projecting of Johnson's tragedy Irene, on which Johnson undoubtedly worked at Edial. The sooner we minimize Johnson and Garrick as master and pupil (they never referred to each other in these terms) the better we shall see their friendship in the more enduring common devotion to the theatre and literature.

When they settled in London, Garrick and Johnson did not break with Lichfield. At first Garrick was dependent on Walmesley's recommendation to the Rev. John Colson, son of a Lichfield choral vicar and head of the Free

School at Rochester; Johnson, on Walmesley's introduction to Colson and Lintot, and both dependent on limited funds brought from Lichfield. Home ties were almost tragically tightened by the death of Johnson's brother Nathaniel, two days after their departure and of Garrick's father a week later. Peter, the older brother, had apparently returned from the Navy to Lichfield by 1736 when Johnson borrowed from him Richard Knolles' General History of the Turks and began writing his tragedy Irene. Peter, nine months older than Johnson had been with him in the Lichfield Grammar School. In the autumn of 1737, Peter was in London with David, to embark on the wine business on combined inheritance from father and uncle, and Johnson sought out Peter, to whom he read his play in the Fountain Tavern. Peter in turn solicited Fleetwood, the Manager of Drury Lane, and tried to prevail upon him to produce the tragedy, but to no avail. Just how Peter knew Fleetwood is a minor mystery. Peter apparently lived with David off and on in London. During these years from 1737-1741, Johnson was often with the Garrick brothers in London and occasionally must have seen Peter in Lichfield. Garrick staged Fielding's Mock Doctor at Johnson's behest for Cave and his staff in St. John's Gate. Johnson and Garrick were certainly often in each other's company in the Hervey home. One evening, at a tavern, Johnson composed his famous epitaph on Claudy Philips, the wandering musician whom both had known in Lichfield - an epitaph that Garrick recalled from memory twenty-five years later for Boswell. John Taylor recounts a meeting one evening of Johnson, Garrick, and Giffard after some dramatic performance when Johnson began his long depreciation of actors. Finally, Johnson mediated between Peter and David in the frictions that arose from David's increasing absorption in the theatre to the neglect of the wine business.

Peter became for both Johnson and Garrick their one common sustaining bond with Lichfield, and to Peter we must now turn.<sup>16</sup> After four years back and forth between London and Lichfield, Peter settled in Lichfield (June 10, 1741) and prospered in his wine business, twenty years later forming a partnership (1761-1769) with a cousin Richard Bailye. At first he may have resided with his mother and spinster sisters; later at a date as yet not determined, he moved north next door, in a house also belonging to the choral vicars, directly opposite the Cathedral Gate, hence called to this day, Westgate House. The handsome house, with the later addition of a fourth floor, is now a dormitory

for girls. In Peter's occupancy there was an extensive garden that was Peter's and his part-time gardener's special care for 37 years. With the passing of the years Peter prospered, leased and bought freeholds, served on a jury, headed up the Lichfield Volunteers, who prepared to resist the invasion of Prince Charles in 1745, signed the will of Francis Gastrell (1772), often borrowed books from the Cathedral Library, but most of all supported the St. Cecilia Society.

From its founding in 1739, the St. Cecilia Society became the sponsor of the most important musical concerts and social gatherings in the Close. The most honoured and responsible office was that of Steward, which Peter, honoured with an Esq., held a number of times from 1741 on. He kept the MS records of the Society, a partial transcript of which is in the William Salt Library, copied by Thomas Fernyhough, verger in the Cathedral who lived opposite Peter in Beacon Street. In 1742, Peter ordered through David musical instruments for the orchestra; in 1745 David attended the concert and ball; later he sent Peter sponces for the Vicar's Hall; in 1747 the library included some thirty volumes of music.

Shortly after the two brothers were settled in their different professions, Peter wrote David on February 21, 1742 from Lichfield:

you know your good fortune is as pleasing to me as my own, I wonder you did not give me my share of pleasure, & let me know all your good fortune, however for the future beg you'll let me hear from You once a fort-night at least, & I assure you will never trouble you with more Commissions. (William Salt Library)

Of the ensuing correspondence only one other of Peter's letters survive (June 1, 1765, *ibid.*), but thirty-eight of David's, full of London, family, and Lichfield news, greetings to the Walmesleys, all graced with affection.

If Peter in his occasional visits to David, and perhaps Johnson in London, expanded in the fame and fortune of his brother, David no less when he often visited Lichfield, at first alone and then with Mrs. Garrick, was received into a well-appointed residence of a prospering and respected brother who lived at ease a member of the increasingly

distinguished society of the Close. And when Johnson after 1769 began making his visits every year or two to Lichfield, he was often received and entertained by Peter, who also welcomed the Thrales, and later was visited by Boswell in search of biographical material, some of which is recorded in his Notebook and embodied in the Life. In his final illness he was attended by Dr. Erasmus Darwin and his approaching death memorialized by Anna Seward:

It is melancholy that the light of reason and comic originality should be utterly darkened with poor Peter Garrick, before the long and mornless night descends.<sup>17</sup>

In the forty years that Garrick and Johnson were both in London, each going his own way professionally and socially, it is remarkable how the friendship endured and deepened, how much they were together, how much they assisted each other, how many friends they shared. Their correspondence is no measure of their diverse relations; their rivalries were subordinate to their devotion. From first to last the common Lichfield ties endured.

Johnson wrote Boswell from Ashbourne after a visit to Lichfield on September 1, 1777:

the friends which merit or usefulness can procure us, are not able to supply the place of old acquaintances, with whom the days of our youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight.

Garrick and Johnson each had his own circle of family and friends in Lichfield, in London and elsewhere. This is not the place to enumerate the continuing relationships they shared with Lichfield acquaintances such, for example, as Dr. Robert James and Joseph Simpson.

With the successful production of Garrick's Lethe on April 15, and Johnson's return from his wanderings to labour for Cave, from that year 1740, neither, as far as I know were in Lichfield together except perhaps in 1761-62 when Johnson returned after an absence of twenty-two years, and the Garricks were on a visit to Peter. From then on Johnson returned semi-annually; but not until 1775 (Letter 968) after entertaining Lichfield friends in London, Garrick wrote one of his guests, Richard Bailly:

Tell my Lichfield friends that I long to be with them,  
that I certainly intend to shake Every dirty fist  
from Bacon Street to Green hill some time in y<sup>e</sup> summer.

On March 21 (Letter 995), with the sale of the  
patent to be completed on June 24, Garrick wrote Peter:

I wish from my Soul I could tell You when I shall be  
in Lichfield. . . . I really feel y<sup>e</sup> Joy, I us'd to  
do, when I was a boy at a breaking up.

And then he continues:

D<sup>r</sup> Johnson & M<sup>r</sup> Boswell will be in Lichfield almost  
as soon as this - he is coming to take his leave of  
you before his departure for Italy [with the Thrales].  
You are Johnson's prime favourite.

On the next day, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and again on the 24<sup>th</sup>,  
Johnson and Boswell called on Peter several times, recorded  
in the well-known passages in the Life, where both Johnson  
and Boswell remark on the "family likeness of the Garricks."  
Johnson and Garrick were back in Lichfield in 1776 and 1777,  
but not at the same time, yet we may be sure not without  
reminiscences with old Lichfield acquaintances and memories  
of each other.

After his comparatively early death in 1779,  
Garrick was remembered as time went on in terms of his  
London fame; Johnson's frequent return visits to Lichfield,  
however, gave his townsmen a sense of his presence among  
them - of a fellow citizen. Through the years since then,  
Johnson has gradually taken possession of Lichfield, and  
we have not only the Age of Johnson in London, but in  
Staffordshire, we have Johnson's Lichfield, with his father's  
bookshop a museum, his dame's school, two statues, his walk  
his willow replanted, the Johnson Society, and the Birthday  
Celebrations. All Garrick now has is a brass plate on the  
Registry Office, soon to be torn down. Yet in the Cathedral,  
the memorials to the two men are, may I say, more appropriately  
balanced. There Mrs. Garrick, in a rare moment of perception,  
chose for the inscription the few famous lines, identified  
only as "the observations of a friend" from the longer  
passage in Johnson's Life of Edmund Smith.<sup>18</sup>

The full passage is the most appropriate conclusion

to this study of Johnson, Garrick, and Lichfield.

At this man's table [Gilbert Walmesley's] I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found: with one who has lengthened and one who has gladdened life; with Dr James, whose skill in physick will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hope to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaity of nations, and impoverished the publick stock of harmless pleasure.

And what Johnson wrote of Walmesley, Garrick and Johnson could have said of each other:

it may be doubted whether a day now passes in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

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THE INDEBTEDNESS OF JAMES BOSWELL TO EDMOND MALONE

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That Edmond Malone was James Boswell's close friend and editor is well-known; however, the full significance of their friendship was brought to light only by the discovery at Malahide Castle and subsequent publication of the Boswell papers. While the association was not of great length (approximately ten years), it was an extremely profitable one for Boswell. Indeed, it would be difficult to estimate the course of Boswell's literary career after Johnson's death had he not fallen under Malone's influence.

The exact date of their meeting is unknown. James Boswell, Jr., assumed that they met first at Baldwin's printing office in 1785, where Boswell was examining proof sheets for his Tour to the Hebrides.<sup>1</sup> This dating is erroneous, however; it is now known that the two men were in the same company at a dinner given by Sir Joshua Reynolds on April 14, 1781;<sup>2</sup> and as early as July 29, 1780, Boswell was reading Malone's "Supplement" to Johnson's and Steevens's edition of Shakespeare.<sup>3</sup> Malone was elected to the Literary Club, of which Boswell was a member, on February 5, 1782, and Boswell records his presence at a meeting in that year.<sup>4</sup> While their intimate association may not have begun until 1785, they were acquainted and enjoyed some degree of familiarity prior to that date. The Literary Club was an exclusive group, and the members resident in London met frequently. It is known that Malone was often a visitor at Johnson's apartment and that Johnson esteemed him highly as a critic. In 1777 Malone edited Goldsmith's works; in 1778 he published his "Attempts to Ascertain the Order in Which the Plays of Shakespeare Were Written"; in 1780 he contributed two supplementary volumes to Steevens's version of Johnson's Shakespeare, and in 1781-82 he questioned in print the antiquity of the Rowley poems. These subjects, as the Life of Johnson indicates, were discussed not only at meetings of the Literary Club but by Johnson in Boswell's company. It is inconceivable that Boswell should not have known Malone personally as early as 1782, and, as the journal indicates, by reputation as early as 1780.

For the major purposes of literary history the intimacy began in 1785 when Boswell came to London to prepare for publication his Tour to the Hebrides and the Journey into North Wales. Arriving on March 30, he wasted a month in idleness before he met Malone and settled down to work under his guidance and with his assistance. On April 29 he dined with Malone, and on the next day he went with Baldwin, the printer, to see the publisher Charles Dilly "and fixed printing" of Boswell's Tour. By May 2 he had ready the first copy. Beginning with the entry for June 3, 1785, in which Boswell notes that he spent the "forenoon with Malone revising 'Hebrides'," the journal reveals in detail the closeness of the collaboration with and the dependence on Malone in preparing his copy for the press. Boswell was not reticent about revealing (in a journal which he hoped would some day be made public by his literary executors) his debt to his friend, as innumerable entries attest.

Most of the work was done at Malone's quarters in London; on occasion Boswell spent the entire day and most of the night in his friend's study. He breakfasted and supped with Malone regularly and usually discussed at such times his own work. While Boswell seemed to have nearly unlimited access to Malone's quarters and time, there were instances in which he was forced to give way to Malone's other work. At such times work on the Tour ceased.<sup>5</sup> He evidently was unable or considered it unprofitable to work without Malone's guidance. He wrote on August 10, 1785, that because "Malone was busy with his Shakespeare, . . . we did not sit upon my 'Tour'."<sup>6</sup> A week later he noted that he spent an entire day drinking and that he watched a hanging; Malone, he records, "had promised me all the evening to revise. I went between 6 and 7, but was not very fit for the task. We went on till one in the morning. . . ."<sup>7</sup> Two later entries further indicate his dependence. After the work was ostensibly finished,<sup>8</sup> Boswell wrote, "An addition to my 'Tour' (defending my faculty of writing conversations) occurred to me. So I staid in town and Malone and I laboured as usual."<sup>9</sup> A few days later (Wednesday, September, 1785) he notes that he discussed the book with the king, "then went to Malone's and settled title page."<sup>10</sup>

The first edition of the Tour was published on September 22, 1785. In celebration Malone entertained at his apartment; under that date Boswell notes that his

friends at Malone's applauded the Tour.<sup>11</sup> When the reviews began to appear, they were carried to Malone's to be read at breakfast.<sup>12</sup>

Boswell recognized fully his indebtedness to Malone and was never unwilling to give full credit to his friend not only in casual references (such as the journal and private letters) but also in public statements. Dedicating his Tour to Malone, Boswell makes such an acknowledgement of his respect and indebtedness:

You have obligingly taken the trouble to peruse the original manuscript of this Tour, and can vouch for the strict fidelity of the present publication. Your literary alliance with our much lamented friend, in consequence of having undertaken to render one of his labours more complete, by your edition of Shakespeare, a work which I am confident will not disappoint the expectations of the publick, gives you another claim. But I have a still more powerful inducement to prefix your name to this volume, as it gives me an opportunity of letting the world know that I enjoy the honour and happiness of your friendship; and of thus publicly testifying the sincere regard . . . with which I am . . . your . . . obedient servant . . .<sup>13</sup>

It must not be assumed that Boswell's dedication is mere flattery; for one receives from the letters and the journal supporting evidence of his high regard for and sincere gratitude to this man who so capably advised him.

So popular was the work that a second edition was immediately called for. Malone's contribution to this edition was even more extensive than to the first.<sup>14</sup> In Malone's personal copy of the first edition, notes are written entirely in his own hand. These notes are not merely "a record of changes already made by Boswell," but are "directions for his use" in preparing a copy for the press. The greatest number of such notes are in the form of "verbal corrections written in the margins" and "references, presumably to a MS sent to Boswell, in the form of 'New Par.', 'Note', and the like . . . . Boswell made very few changes . . . except those which were suggested by Malone."<sup>15</sup>

We may judge the scope of Malone's general contribution by Boswell's comments in a letter to Joseph

Cooper Walker, the Irish antiquary. While not mentioning Malone, he notes that the Tour (in its second edition) "is considerably improved by a correction of many typographical errors and other inaccuracies, by a table of contents, several additional notes, and an appendix."<sup>16</sup>

Apparently as a result of the intimacy developed while working on the Tour, Boswell came to regard Malone not only as a helpful critic but as a trusted friend whom he felt free to consult concerning personal matters. On February 14, 1786, Boswell records in the journal that after a dinner at the Literary Club, he sat for an hour with Malone "and settled an affidavit to file a bill in chancery against [George] Robinson in Paternoster row, for publishing a great part of my Tour as Johnson's Table Talk"; the controversy was resolved amicably without court action. Another incident arose out of Boswell's including in the Tour an account of what he and Johnson had considered inhospitable treatment at the hands of Sir Alexander Macdonald. Sir Alexander had been offended and wrote "a most shocking abusive letter," which made Boswell think that possibly a duel was required. At Malone's suggestion Boswell wrote to Macdonald explaining that certain deletions had been planned and in turn asked that he not consider the publication of any of the correspondence that had been exchanged concerning the matter. Boswell sought Malone's company throughout the period in which negotiations were being conducted. After the affair had been brought to a bloodless conclusion, the papers incident to the matter were filed with extreme care: "Boswell enclosed them all in a wrapper, which he endorsed, Papers Between Lord Macdonald and Mr. Boswell, and gave them to Edmond Malone."<sup>17</sup>

While Boswell had achieved a moderate degree of success with his Account of Corsica . . . (1768) and the Tour, he still considered himself professionally a lawyer, and as such worried over his lack of success in that field. Malone, who had studied law in Dublin, encouraged his friend and lent assistance when necessary. On February 11, 1786, Boswell entered in his journal a notation to the effect that Malone accompanied him to the Temple "and subscribed my Bond as my Surety," and later notes that Malone insisted on greater application at Westminster and that he continually offered encouragement. On July 9 and 10 he wrote that he was confined to his own quarters and was generally dejected. He tried unsuccessfully to work and finally resolved to

return to Auchinleck. On the 11th (Tuesday) he wrote:

Fortunately Malone called on me on tuesday [sic], and with his judicious and elegant spirit roused me from despair. He urged that I must act rationally; that I must not appear so ridiculous as to fly off from Westminster Hall before there was time for its being wellknown that I was in it; that I must fulfill what I had proposed, and must certainly be at least one winter at the bar; that going no circuit was a kind of declaration that I did not mean to continue in the profession, therefore I must go the Home Circuit. . . . that all my notions of inferiority were pride, which ought to be repressed. He thus saved me from acting in a way of which I must have repented grievously.<sup>18</sup>

Three days later he comments that his spirits were good and concludes, "I wrote in a sound and gay frame to my dear wife, informing her how well I now was, and how fixed by my friend Malone."<sup>19</sup>

Immediately after the publication of the Tour, Boswell, in conjunction with Malone, began the laborious task of preparing the Life of Johnson. Here Malone's service was of primary importance. Reading the journal record of the progress of the work and Boswell's mental trials incident thereto, one is inclined to speculate that quite possibly the Life would never have been finished had it not been for Malone. Boswell was faced not only with the stupendous task of collecting, sorting, editing, and unifying the mass of Johnsoniana but with a sense of personal failure in his inability to achieve stature in the English courts. His financial affairs were troublesome; his wife became ill and soon died; his affairs at Auchinleck demanded his attention as did the care and education of his children. His sense of family and personal pride led him to seek, at times beyond his means, to establish an estate compatible with his family history. Frequently not only the work on which he was engaged but his personal character was attacked; many of his contemporaries felt that he was little more than a self-seeker living on the reputations of others, and they stated their assumptions in such a way as to insure his hearing of them. Some assailed his ability to do justice to Johnson; others, fearing to detract from their own reputations, refused him access to Johnson materials. Such troublesome personal problems, petty

jealousies, and literary strife frequently brought to Boswell a sense of futility and fear of failure.

Malone was the support to which he repeatedly appealed. The strength of the friendship is more vividly demonstrated when one realizes that Malone apparently understood his friend's faults and frailties as well as his genius. Boswell never attempted to dissemble before such men as William Temple and Malone. Malone especially, since Temple did not reside in London, saw Boswell at his worst moments. We feel, however, that he was willing to exert such effort as was necessary to stimulate the genius he saw in the biographer. It is impressive that Boswell, in the privacy of his journal, was frank in recording his debt to Malone. We find such statements as "lowspirited - went to Malone's. Revived by good eating and a good flow of talk"; "conversation never fails between him and me"; "I drank tea with Malone, with whom I'm allways [sic] happy."<sup>20</sup>

It is perhaps significant that it was Malone who first declared publicly that Boswell was the most qualified person to write the definitive biography of Johnson. Many of Johnson's friends had been dissatisfied with the choice of Sir John Hawkins as the official biographer; in January, 1785, an anonymous writer pointed out in the St. James Chronicle Boswell's unique qualification for the work. Boswell, having been suspected of thus attempting to advance his own cause, wrote from Edinburgh denying any connection and "begging the author to reveal himself 'by a private note' in order that he might 'be further indebted to him for his advice in the progress of his labours.'" The anonymous correspondent, who writes that his "intimacy with Dr. Johnson continued without interruption . . . through upwards of nineteen years," was almost certainly Malone." It was probably through the exchange of correspondence that the subsequent close association of the two came about.<sup>21</sup>

With the Tour out of the way the two friends began work on the Life. On June 9, 1786, Boswell wrote, "Malone's a little, and got advice as to my Life of Dr. Johnson: to make a Skeleton with references to the materials, in order of time." Later in the month he read some of the Johnsoniana at a gathering in Malone's quarters. Early in July he notes that he "could not rest at home, but did not lose the day, for I went to Malone's and with his assistance traced Dr. Johnson's publications chronologically through the Gentleman's

Magazine, and wrote their titles down under each year."<sup>22</sup> For a year Boswell was engrossed in the task of arranging the Johnson materials. His references to Malone are brief but frequent. Often the note for the day is a single word, "Malone's", or a phrase, "Dined Malone's", or "Malone's with some Johnson Papers." They breakfasted together "as usual on the first of the month" and on such occasions discussed matters relevant to the Life.

The work progressed with alternating periods of systematic activity and inertia on Boswell's part. As usual he was ultimately guided by his friend and was always conscious of his dependence. In November, 1786, he wrote in retrospect,

Was down in time to have a seat in the King's Bench, which was over a little after ten, so I had leisure to see Malone, with whom I drank some chocolate. His conversation never fails to console and cheer me. He encourages me to go on with Johnson's Life. One morning we revised a part of it, which he thought well of, and dispelled my vapourish diffidence; and he surprised me another day with a page of it in two different types, that we might settle how it was to be printed.<sup>23</sup>

Malone seems to have been more than a mere consultant in this work, for often he advised Boswell as to sources and as to procedure of search for materials; for example, on one occasion Boswell records, "Malone, who had dined at Sir Joshua's the day before, advised me to push him to get Johnson's Diaries from Sir. J. Hawkins, that I might see them."<sup>24</sup>

In the laborious business of bringing order to the chaotic mass of life materials, Malone could help only by suggestions and moral support. Boswell's reaction to the business before him was characteristic. His journal reflects the great personal discouragement and frequent recurrences of mental depression to which he was subject. On June 22, 1786, he wrote, "Sorted till I was stupified"; again a few days later, "sauntered into various Coffee-Houses 'seeking rest and finding none'"; on one occasion he wandered through the street with tears running down his cheeks and finally returned to his house "drearily, as to a prison." Always he resorted to Malone, by whom "my spirit revived";

Malone, he notes, saved him from "despicable fickleness."<sup>25</sup> He advised him to "attend laxly [his law work] this term and get on diligently with the Life,"<sup>26</sup> and later severely lectured him about his intemperance and the delays in preparing the Life on which was to rest his fame.<sup>27</sup>

The years between 1789 and 1791 brought severe trials to Boswell and incidentally to Malone. Boswell's letters to Temple at this time reflect candidly the distress caused by the upheaval in his personal affairs. His wife's illness made it impossible for her to live happily in London; Boswell felt that it would be impossible for him to complete the Life at Auchinleck. His own sense of remission continually brought forth expressions of agitation and self-condemnation. After her death in June, 1789, he wrote to Temple that he bitterly upbraided himself for having left her and that his failure to be with her at death would be a source of grief until his own death. He writes, "With grief continually at my heart I have been endeavouring to seek relief in dissipation and in wine, so that my life for some time past has been unworthy of myself, of you and of all that is valuable in my character and connections." Apologizing for the necessity of postponing a visit, he explained that his reasons were sufficiently valid; "for the revision of my Life of Johnson by so acute and knowing a critick as Mr. Malone is of the most essential consequence, especially as he is Johnsonianissimus, and he is to hasten to Ireland as soon as his Shakespeare is fairly published, I must avail myself of him now."<sup>28</sup>

Earlier in January of 1789 he had commented on the progress of the work:

I am now very near the conclusion of my rough draught of Johnson's Life. On Saturday I finished the Introduction and Dedication to Sir Joshua, both of which had appeared very difficult to be accomplished. I am confident they are well done. Whenever I have completed the rough draught, by which I mean the work without nice correction, Malone and I are to prepare one half perfectly, and then it goes to press, where I hope to have it early in February, so as to be out by the end of May.<sup>29</sup>

His melancholia had not been relieved by August when he wrote Temple, "I have an avidity for death . . .

Years of life seem insupportable . . . Every prospect that I turn my mind's eye upon is dreary . . . The LIFE OF JOHNSON still keeps me up."<sup>30</sup> Later, in October, he wrote,

I have had a restless night, and many painful thoughts of my irreparable loss. Yesterday afternoon [October 13] Malone and I revised and made ready for the press the first thirty pages of Johnson's Life. He is much pleased with it. But I feel a sad indifference, and he says I have not the use of my faculties. They have been torpid for some time.<sup>31</sup>

By the first of the year he had revived somewhat and worked with greater ease:

I cannot account for my 'healthful mind' at this time. There is no change to the better in my circumstances . . . But my spirits are vigorous and elastick. I dine in a different company almost every day, at least scarcely ever twice running in the same company, so that I have fresh accessions of ideas. I drink with Lord Lonsdale one day; the next, I am quiet in Malone's elegant study, revising my Life of Johnson, of which I have high expectations both as to fame and profit. I surely have the art of writing agreeably.<sup>32</sup>

Malone's devotion to his friend was remarkable - as the journal incidentally reveals. Boswell evidently felt free to call on Malone at any hour and without previous notice. The two breakfasted together regularly, usually on the first of the month by habitual arrangement and occasionally as the plans for the day might dictate. At times Malone devoted entire days and evenings to the work. Numerous references reveal the frequency of the evenings at "Malone's revising." Wearied by hours of sorting or dejected by his inability to solve his personal problems, Boswell seemed best able to find relief in the company of Malone. Evidently Malone's study was used as a clearing house for the Johnson materials and as a gathering place for consultation concerning the disposition of those materials. When Boswell was forced by the pressure of family affairs to leave London, his work was left in the hands of Malone, who pushed it forward. Malone's unselfishness in these matters is noteworthy when one reflects that little or no literary recognition would accrue to his name and that researches on his own work, on which his fame was to depend,

were currently in progress. As a matter of fact, Boswell's statements concerning the date of the appearance of the Shakespeare lead us to believe that his demands forced a postponement, unintentionally, of Malone's opus. On February 9, 1788, Boswell wrote to Bishop Thomas Percy, "Malone flatters himself that his Shakespeare will be published in June. I should rather think that we shall not have it till winter."<sup>33</sup> In January of 1789 he commented in a letter to Temple, "I do not beleive, [sic] that Malone's Shakespeare will be much before me."<sup>34</sup> (Actually the Shakespeare was not published until November, 1790; the Life of Johnson six months later.)

By the end of 1789 approximately a third of the work was finished. In January, 1790, Boswell noted in the journal that he "passed a part of the morning at Malone's, and had the pleasure of consulting with him and Mr. Selfe, the corrector of Baldwin's press, as to a specimen of my Magnum Opus."<sup>35</sup>

I had talked of printing my Life of Johnson in Folio, rather than in two volumes, Malone said I might as well throw it into the Thames, for a folio would not now be read. His scheme was to print 1,000 on pica in Quarto, in one volume however thick, and at the same time by over-running the type, as it is called, to print 1,000 in octavo, which would be kept in petto and be in readiness for sale whenever the Quarto was sold. This scheme pleased me much, and both Dilly and Baldwin approved of it, so I had resolved on it and got a specimen of each; but having talked with Mr. John Nichols the Printer, he satisfied me it was a bad plan.<sup>36</sup>

The rest of the year 1790 was spent in revising, with Malone continuing the work during Boswell's occasional absences. Boswell with his usual candour lamented his inability to work with as great assiduity "as that which Malone employs on Shakespeare."<sup>37</sup>

The Shakespeare was published in November, 1790, and Malone left immediately for Ireland. In December Boswell wrote to him mentioning his abstinence from or rationing of wine and commenting that "the Magnum Opus advances." The journal entry for February 20, 1791, indicates that he had been offered one thousand pounds for the rights to the Life, but, he reflects as the entry

continues, "Malone had raised my hopes high of the success of my Work, and if it did succeed, the Quarto edition alone would yield me above £1200."<sup>38</sup>

He consulted, by mail, with Malone and stated that while he was strongly tempted by the offer, he yet could not give up hope of greater profits. Malone's absence, he lamented, was "a woeful want in all respects. You will [he adds] perceive a difference in the part which is revised only by myself."<sup>39</sup> And to Malone he revealed his increasing financial burdens incurred by his desire to augment his property holdings in Scotland:

In this situation, then, my dear Sir, would it not be wise in me to accept of 1000 guineas for my Life of Johnson, supposing the person who made the offer would now stand to it, which I fear may not be the case; for two volumes may be considered as a disadvantageous circumstance? Could I indeed raise £1000 upon the credit of the work, I should incline to game, as Sir Joshua says; because it may produce double the money, though Steevens kindly tells me that I have overprinted, and that the curiosity about Johnson is now only in our own circle. Pray decide for me; and if, as I suppose, you are for my taking the offer, inform me with whom I am to treat. In my present state of spirits, I am all timidity. Your absence has been a severe stroke to me. I am at present quite at a loss what to do.<sup>40</sup>

Two weeks later, February 10, 1791, he wrote insistently for Malone's "determination" as to the possible disposition of the work. He somewhat hesitantly suggested that perhaps Malone himself could lend a thousand pounds to ease the financial distress. Malone could not; fortunately Boswell found an acceptable solution, and, as a result, wrote that he was quite resolved to retain the property of the Life. He then directed to Malone the details of other matters concerning the work:

My title, as we settled it, is 'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., comprehending an account of his studies and various works, in chronological order, his conversations with many eminent persons, a series of his letters to celebrated men, and several original pieces of his composition: the whole exhibiting a view of literature and literary men in Great Britain, for

near half a century, during which he flourished.' It will be very kind if you will suggest what yet occurs. I hoped to have published to-day; but it will be about a month yet before I launch.<sup>41</sup>

Two months elapsed before the work was published; May 16, 1791, was chosen for the publication date, in commemoration of the twenty-eighth anniversary of Boswell's meeting with Johnson. Its success was instantaneous; the edition was exhausted by Christmas. In the Advertisement to the first edition Boswell publicly expressed to Malone the gratitude due:

I beg leave to express my warmest thanks to those who have been pleased to favour me with communications and advice in the conduct of my Work. But I cannot sufficiently acknowledge my obligations to my friend Mr. Malone, who was so good as to allow me to read to him almost the whole of my manuscript, and make such remarks as were greatly for the advantage of the Work; though it is but fair to him to mention, that upon many occasions I differed from him, and followed my own judgement. I regret exceedingly that I was deprived of the benefit of his revision, when not more than one half of the book had passed through the press; but after having completed his very laborious and admirable edition of SHAKSPEARE, for which he generously would accept no other reward but that fame which he deservedly obtained, he fulfilled his promise of a long-wished-for visit to his relations in Ireland; from whence his safe return finibus Atticus is desired by his friends here, with all the classical ardour of Sic te Diva potens Cypri; for there is no man in whom more elegant and worthy qualities are united; and whose society, therefore, is more valued by those who know him.<sup>42</sup>

Boswell had wearied of the great labour. He had earlier commented to Temple that he felt that the public would have no further demand on him once the Magnum Opus was published.<sup>43</sup> In April, 1791, he wrote George Dempster, one of his earliest friends: "When it is fairly launched I mean to stick close to Westminster Hall . . ."<sup>44</sup> However, it became apparent that a second edition would be called for. Both Boswell and Malone were soon engaged in additional revision and evaluation.

Although his work had met with success and his energies were still required for bringing that work closer to perfection, Boswell felt a sense of indirection. The journal entry for November, 1792, notes: "Paid a visit to Malone. Found him, as I always have done, engaged in literature, so as to have no weariness."<sup>45</sup> In December his notation was in the same vein: "I often called on Malone, and found him fully occupied in historical and biographical researches, on which he was intent while I had absolutely no pursuit whatever."<sup>46</sup> A year later (September 6, 1793) he wrote that Malone had sent for him. "I this morning found him busily engaged in arranging old papers which he had found at Stratford upon Avon, in hopes of illustrating Shakespeare's history more or less. I envied him the eagerness with which he examined them."<sup>47</sup>

On May 19, 1795, after an illness of five weeks and while he was preparing for the press materials for a third edition of the Life, Boswell died. Two days later Malone wrote to William Windham, who incidentally had been present at Johnson's death,

I suppose you know poor Boswell died on Tuesday Morning, without any pain. I don't think he at any time of his illness knew his danger. I shall miss him more and more every day. He was in the constant habit of calling on me almost daily, and I used to grumble sometimes at his turbulence, but now miss and regret his noise and his hilarity and his perpetual good humour, which had no bounds. Poor fellow, he has somehow stolen away from us, without any notice, and without my being at all prepared for it.<sup>48</sup>

Boswell left his MSS and letters to his literary executors, Sir William Forbes, the Reverend William Temple, and Edmond Malone, "to be published for the benefit of my younger children, as they decide; that is to say they are to have a discretionary power to publish more or less."<sup>49</sup> Joseph Farington, a friend of his later years, recorded in his diary that "Boswell's papers are put into Mr. Malone's possession. - No preparation for a regular work appears."<sup>50</sup> Although the papers were not published, Malone may have examined at least a part of them and made some notes relative to their publication. Evidently Forbes and Malone agreed to withhold publication out of respect for Alexander Boswell, the heir, who thought his father had demeaned himself by his

deferential service to Johnson. On June 30, 1796, Forbes wrote to Malone:

I much approve of your idea of our doing nothing in regard to the publication of any of our late much regretted friend's papers at present, but rather to wait till his second son be of an age fit for selecting such of them as may be proper for the public eye.<sup>51</sup>

Malone's attention to his friend's work and reputation continued unabated until his own death in 1812. On June 3, 1795, Malone wrote for the Gentleman's Magazine a response to an account imputing "a very unjust character of the late Mr. Boswell":

His fervent attachment to Dr. Johnson at the early age of three and twenty, when the dissipation and amusements of London hold out to men of such lively parts as he possessed irresistible attraction, reflects great credit on his memory. His veneration and esteem for his friend induced him, at a subsequent period, to go through the labourious task of digesting and arranging the immediate mass of materials with which his own diligence and the kindness of others had furnished him, and of forming his history of the life of that excellent and extraordinary man; one of the most instructive and entertaining books in the English language.

That in this book he had not both fame and profit in view, would be idle to assert, but to suppose that these were his principal objects, or (as some of his detractors have suggested) that he attached himself to Dr. Johnson for the purpose of writing his Life, is to know nothing of the author, and nothing of human nature.<sup>52</sup>

He concluded with a tribute to Boswell's intellectual qualities by referring again to the significance of the task involved in preparing such a work as the Life.

Assisted by James Boswell, Jr., Malone continued the editorial work on successive editions of the Life. His letters to Bishop Percy suggest the attention which he gave to the four editions appearing after Boswell's death.<sup>53</sup> Always modest and tactful, he in no way allowed his own contribution to detract from that of his friend. In the

Advertisement to the fifth edition Malone recorded that "at the time of his death Boswell was revising for a new edition; that he had indicated where some of Addenda to the second edition were to be inserted, and had written out some notes in the margin of his copy. Malone implies that his own editorial judgment has been exercised only in the incorporation of those materials for which Boswell had not assigned a place and in adding new notes."<sup>54</sup>

Malone's task, however, called for much more than a mere mechanical distribution of materials under dates and instructions already indicated by Boswell. After Malone's death, James Boswell, Jr., published a memoir in which he recognized fully his father's debt. Referring to the Life, he wrote that Malone had felt "at all times a very lively interest, and gave every assistance to its author during its progress which it was in his power to bestow." He concluded by reviewing the family obligations incurred after his father's death in 1795.

Mr. Malone continued to show every mark of affectionate attention towards his family; and in every successive edition of Johnson's Life took the most unwearied pains to render it as much as possible correct and perfect. He illustrated it with many notes of his own and procured many valuable communications from his friends ...<sup>55</sup>

Boswell's journals and letters bring into better perspective his stature as a literary figure of utmost importance. They are not without significance to the student of Edmond Malone, for they reveal a friendship which has few parallels in literary consequence; in addition, they extend immeasurably our knowledge of Malone's literary contribution. It does not seem mere speculation to suggest that while Boswell possessed extraordinary intellectual powers, they nevertheless required the restraining and directing force of a self-sacrificing guide. That he found in Malone. Boswell's candid notes cannot but betray his feelings in the matter. Throughout the last ten years of his life, his pen was forced across the pages of the Johnson manuscript at the insistence of Malone; throughout the journal record for these years, it is Malone to whom he referred repeatedly in terms of sincere respect and gratitude. Malone's literary reputation is but enhanced by his relationship with Boswell, whose reputation is the brighter for having availed himself of "one of the best criticks" of

the age. Boswell, through the journals, provided for his friend the recognition which, through reticence and personal modesty, Malone refused to accept in his lifetime.

Documentation

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6. Ibid., XVI, 119.
7. Ibid., XVI, 121.
8. September 8, 1785.
9. Ibid., XVI, 124.
10. Ibid., XVI, 124-125.
11. Ibid., XVI, 125.
12. Ibid., XVI, 140.
13. Hill-Powell, Life, V, 1-2.
14. Boswell was in Scotland (September 24, 1785, until November 17, 1785) while the first part of the second edition was being printed. He had left Malone "in complete charge, with power to add or alter at his discretion." Malone probably worked over the material and then sent it to Boswell for final preparation. (Frederick A. Pottle, The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq. [Oxford, 1929], pp. 117-118; hereafter cited as Literary Career.)
15. Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D., edited by Robert W. Chapman (London, 1948), pp. xvii-xviii.
16. Letters of James Boswell, edited by Chauncey B. Tinker (Oxford, 1924), II, 330; hereafter cited as Letters.
17. Boswell Papers, XVI, 166, 241-257.
18. Ibid., XVI, 204.
19. Ibid., XVI, 206.
20. Ibid., XVI, 168; XVII, 8, 10.
21. Literary Career, pp. 161-163. James Prior, Malone's biographer, wrote that probably Malone's admiration for

Johnson's conversational powers led him about the time of his election to the Literary Club (1782) "to a new employment for leisure hours. This was to record his occasional remarks - those impressive droppings of wisdom and genius which left something on the mind for future remembrance, and use at fitting moments . . . At this time Malone knew not Boswell, neither probably had heard of his biographical projects." Their intimacy began soon afterward, "and the collector freely furnished the biographer with such notes as were new and useful for the purpose he had in view." (Life of

- Edmond Malone, Editor of Shakespeare [London, 1860], p.91.)
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| 22. <u>Boswell Papers</u> , XVI, 205-206.  | 23. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVII, 7.               |
| 24. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVII, 16.   | 25. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVI, 197, 200-201, 205 |
| 26. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVII, 55.   | 27. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVII, 106.             |
| 28. <u>Letters</u> , II, 381-382.  | 29. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 354.               |
| 30. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 377-378.  | 31. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 380.               |
| 32. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 390.  | 33. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 341.               |
| 34. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 354.  | 35. <u>Boswell Papers</u> , XVIII, 16.    |
| 36. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVIII, 19-20.   | 37. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVIII, 94.             |
| 38. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVIII, 107.   | 39. <u>Letters</u> , II, 414.             |
| 40. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 416.  | 41. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 427.               |
| 42. <u>Hill-Powell, Life</u> , I, 8.   | 43. <u>Letters</u> , II, 382.             |
| 44. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 435.  | 45. <u>Boswell Papers</u> , XVIII, 175.   |
| 46. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVIII, 188.   | 47. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVIII, 206.            |
| 48. <u>Ibid.</u> , XVIII, 278.   | 49. <u>Ibid.</u> , I, 2-3.                |
| 50. <u>The Farington Diary</u> , edited by James Greig (London, 1922), I, 95.  |   |
| 51. <u>Boswell Papers</u> , I, 6-7.  |   |
| 52. <u>The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle</u> , LXV, part I (January-June, 1795), 471-472.                                      |   |
| 53. <u>Correspondence of Thomas Percy and Edmond Malone</u> , edited by Arthur Tillotson ([Baton Rouge] 1944), pp. 82, 163, 171, 208, 277-278. |   |
| 54. <u>Literary Career</u> , 169-170.  |   |
| 55. "Memoir of Edmond Malone," p.518.  |   |

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BACK NUMBERS of The New Rambler are increasingly in demand. Members are earnestly requested to return any previous issues, especially the older ones, to the Editor if they can be spared. Our thanks to an anonymous donor for several copies of the Journal. These have already been sent on to university libraries.

J. H. L.

THE REV. F. N. DOUBLEDAY, M.R.C.S.

Doctor Johnson is renowned for his ability to express in a few brief sentences the outstanding gifts of his friends and associates. If it had been his good fortune to know the retiring Editor of our Journal he would probably have added another to these famous sayings: for Doctor Doubleday's combination of ability, business acumen, scholarship and courtesy could not fail to have aroused his admiration and regard.

During the nine years in which he held office Doctor Doubleday has produced eighteen issues of The New Rambler, and the circulation has risen steadily, particularly in America. Many universities at home and abroad now subscribe, and the sales for 1965 were the highest yet attained. From time to time he has generously subsidised the cost of production, and for this his fellow members of the Society are glad to have an opportunity to express their thanks. They are also proud to learn that he has accepted the invitation to become a Vice-President, and that his wise counsel and guidance will be available when occasion arises.

Frederick Nixon.

The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism: Ethics and Imagery from Swift to Burke by Paul Fussell, (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1965) 314pp. 1 plate. Price 55/-.

In this work, Paul Fussell enlarges the term 'Augustan' to embrace the 'orthodox' ethical and rhetorical tradition wherever it is found in the eighteenth century. In particular he delineates the ethical convictions and related rhetorical techniques of Swift, Pope, Johnson, Reynolds, Gibbon and Burke. Central to these is Samuel Johnson.

The book first explores the Augustan humanists' conception of man, noting the close alliance with a conservative literary past and an intensely anachronistic and reactionary response to the new age. Boswell, ill at ease between the ancient and modern world, is seen as "only occasionally an aspirant humanist." The humanists' preoccupation with man's unique moral obligations as man, in opposition to the naturalists and the mechanists, provides common ground to a seemingly disparate group. Johnson

appears as the main spokesman for man as uniquely the "social" creature. All that turns man away from his nature as a social being runs counter to Johnson's tenet. A further common element is the "idea of the potential dignity of man, for all his depravity and littleness . . ."

The second part of the work analyses the imagery used to communicate the humanist ethic. Dismissing notions of an Age of Prose alien to the creative world of metaphor and symbol, the author affirms: "Anyone . . . who has genuinely attended to the weight of sub-surface figure in a sentence from The Rambler is aware of the heavy freight of the figurative in distinguishing, in eighteenth-century literature, the received metaphor from the dead metaphor, the live traditional symbol from the cliché." The author traces the historical sources of recurrent humanistic ideas and modes of expression and provides illuminating contemporary detail to emphasise the living force behind them. The spate of new building at home and the growing interest in the ruins of antiquity add point to the architectural imagery. Sartorial symbolism - beloved by Swift - is no less characteristic of the age. The new microscopy of the later seventeenth century had revealed a disturbing world to the Augustans. A predominance of insect imagery exploited the possibilities of moral contempt. In an age of travel books, the motif of the journey became an occasion for moral irony and a device for expressing the frailty of mankind. A further characteristic of the Augustan humanists was the urge to elegise - not confined to sentimental retrospection but concerned with the continuity of moral and social action.

This most stimulating and perceptive book will be of special interest to Johnsonians. There yet remains the problem of how far a predilection for humanistic imagery determines a writer's allegiance to the underlying ethic; and the thought that Johnson himself cannot be comfortably contained within the circumscribed world of Augustan humanism.

J. H. Leicester.

THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

Change of Venue

Owing to extensive adaptations at the Kenilworth Hotel, it was not found possible to give us at least two dates next year. The committee, accordingly, had to find alternative accommodation for all the meetings and have been fortunate in securing the Swedenborg Hall at 20 Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1. The Hall, almost facing Bloomsbury Square, is well-known to many of us who attend the Dickens Fellowship meetings. The caretaker will provide an excellent tea for us.

Subscriptions

At the last Annual General Meeting in February it was unanimously agreed that subscriptions would have to be raised in 1967 to 30/- single and 45/- double. Life Membership was raised immediately to £15. 15s.

We were all pleased to see Mrs. A. Somerset Pick again at our February meeting. She has been compelled by ill-health to miss our Saturday meetings.

It was noted with pleasure that Professor Maurice Quinlan was present at our April meeting, to hear Mr. Emrys Jones talk on "Rasselas: Comic or Tragic?" Professor James L. Clifford took the Chair. Members will recall Professor Quinlan's address in 1960 on "Johnson's Sense of Charity". Professor Henry and Mrs. Pettit from Colorado and Mr. Thomas W. Copeland also attended.

The Society were sorry to receive the news of the death, in October 1965, of the Rev. Ronald Park, M.A., a life member of very long standing, who made many most generous donations to the Library in the past.

Johnsonians everywhere suffered a great loss in the death early this year of Mr. Donald Frizell Hyde. On behalf of the Society a message of deep sympathy was sent to his wife, Mrs. Mary C. Hyde. At the Memorial Service, held at Christ Church Methodist, Park Avenue, New York City, the Society were honoured to be represented by Professor Frederick A. Pottle.

Marguerite Dowdeswell.