

THE NEW RAMBLER



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The Johnson Society of London

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QUEEN CHARLOTTE: FANNY BURNEY'S EMPLOYER

(Part two)*

T. S. Blakeney, Esq.

The King's madness in the winter of 1788/89 marked a critical point in the relationship of the King and Queen. Both had been ill in the summer of 1788; for the King, the doctors prescribed a course of the waters at Cheltenham Spa, and when he returned rather the worse for the treatment, the doctors put it down to a surfeit of the waters. Throughout the autumn the King became more and more odd and "hurried" and loquacious, and the Queen, with memories of earlier outbreaks, became increasingly worried. Fanny could not understand at first, but all too soon the King's condition became only too plain.

The strain upon the Queen proved severe; she had grown stouter than in past years, but now she went to the other extreme and it was said that her stays would go round her twice. Mrs. Papendiek tells us that her hair turned grey; she was horrified at the prospect that seemed to be arising, of a long Regency and of her life spent tied to a babbling lunatic. The doctors were all at sixes and sevens and in constant disagreement: the quarters at Kew, to which the King was moved in mid-winter, were bitterly cold and uncomfortable. Moreover, certain aspects of the King's condition were particularly calculated to upset the Queen; it is well-known that he developed a passion for Lady Pembroke, one of the Queen's own Ladies, and at an interview that the doctors rather unwisely allowed between the King and Queen on December 28, 1788, he told her he did not love her, that he no longer recognized her as Queen, and that he would not have her in his bed for the next four years - a dispensation that might have been welcome if given a dozen years earlier!

- * Part one, including the Bibliography, was published in the January 1968 issue of The New Rambler. Mr. Blakeney's paper is an expanded version of one which he read to the Johnson Society of London on 20 January, 1968; Miss Jane Langton, M.A., Royal Archivist, Windsor Castle, in the Chair.

Facing page: Queen Charlotte with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. By Allan Ramsay. Copyright.

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Once the crisis was over, in March 1789, a gradual but undoubted change came over the Queen's attitude to the King. She was as dutiful as ever, but the strain she had been through seems to have left some permanent marks. It was recognized, not only by her, but by the politicians, that it was undesirable to upset the King in any way, for fear of a relapse into insanity: when, in the early 1800's, Pitt did stand out for certain political measures, such as Catholic Emancipation, the King did have a relapse, and eventually Pitt resigned office, only re-obtaining it some years later on an understanding that the subject must not be raised again. One matter of delicacy in the personal relations of the King and Queen can be disposed of at this point; the Queen seems to have formed a definite horror of the King's madness that never left her completely, even after his recovery; eventually, she was to insist on separate rooms and even the appeals of the Cabinet to alter her decision would not move her. We may remember, too, that in the decade after the King's breakdown, the Queen, now in her mid-forties or more, was going through a difficult phase of her life. The King, on the other hand, was no longer even the passably-goodlooking young man he had once been; the family addiction to excessive fat overtook him, his features deteriorated and altogether he could not have been entirely pleasing to have about one. For his mind was always close to the verge of insanity, and periodically in the 1800s it crossed the verge, until the final breakdown in 1810. Yet he retained the "boiling passions" of which he had once written to his boyhood friend, Lord Bute; indeed, if the Princess of Wales can be believed - by no means a matter of course - the King on one occasion attempted to assault his own daughter-in-law. It would not be surprising, therefore, if some strain in the relationship between the King and Queen arose, as it seems to have done. Not that this affected ordinary Court life, which went on as before along lines settled by the King. The Court moved from Windsor to London and back again; summer holidays were spent at Weymouth, which the King liked, but the Queen and the rest of the family did not.

In their relations with their children, the King and Queen were not unlike many other parents; the father was fonder of the daughters, and the mother was more tolerant with the sons. George III showed little understanding or regard for his sons, excepting perhaps his second, Frederick, Duke of York: they rebelled against parental tyranny as much as they could, and they had so little in common with the King that he had often to reckon on them as belonging to his Opposition. Still, he could spoil their lives in some ways - and did. They might be sent

abroad for years, to serve in some military establishment, and be refused any requests for leave to visit England: excepting the Duke of Cambridge, they ran up mountainous debts, accumulated mistresses, and generally tended to justify Wellington's terse description of them as being "the damndest millstone about the necks of any Government that can be imagined".

The Queen seems to have acted as something of a buffer state between the King and her sons: as one of her daughters wrote many years later to Lady Harcourt, it was the Queen who kept the family together. Like many another mother, she tended to be indulgent to her eldest son, though prepared, if need be, to hold her own if he became too difficult. The Prince, on his part, despite occasional rifts in their relationship, was always dependent on her in many ways: all his life he required a lot of "mothering", and in the main his conduct to the Queen was one of the more admirable traits in his character.

It may be asked, what were the Queen's views about Mrs. Fitzherbert? The subject is discursive and I think all I can say here is that the Queen (like the King) regarded it as a liaison - more respectable than any other the Prince had had, but a liaison nonetheless. Not only did the Prince, but his sisters also, refer to it as a marriage of the left hand, and we know what that means.

The Queen's disposition towards the Prince's marriage to Caroline of Brunswick calls for some mention. Briefly, she was dismayed at his choice of bride, for she had heard such bad reports of the Princess's behaviour that when George III once casually mentioned that he had suggested that the Princess (his own niece) might marry Queen Charlotte's brother Charles, the Queen wrote off hurriedly to the latter to warn him against any such choice. It was, therefore, an unpleasant blow to find that her own son was to marry this undesirable Princess, and it would seem that the Queen steeled herself to have a strong argument with the King about it, though to no effect. She declined speaking further about the marriage, somewhat to the puzzlement of her family, and the accusation that she chose the future Princess of Wales's household would seem to be untrue, for the Prince did the choosing and the King gave his approval before even the names of the ladies involved were sent by the Prince to his mother, with whom, indeed, he was on rather strained terms at the time. She had in fact been approached by people desirous of obtaining places in the Princess of Wales's household, and she forwarded the letters to the Prince, only making commendation

in one case, a Miss Bruhl. The lamentable choice of Lady Jersey to be one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber was done by the Prince, not by the Queen.

The latter, faced with this ill-omened marriage, "put her best leg foremost" and devoted herself to choosing robes and other garments for the Princess. That her judgment of the latter's character was not at fault is only too well known; badly as the Prince treated his wife, she was an impossible choice, and once their daughter, Princess Charlotte, was born in January 1796 the Prince took little time to break with his wife. For some years the Queen and the devoted "Sisterhood" strove to believe that a rapprochement could be effected; inevitably, they took the Prince's side, but the Queen continued to maintain formal contacts with the unhappy Princess and refused to let her son dictate to her with a view to severing all relations, until the Prince, as Regent, was in a position to enforce an absolute ban on the Princess of Wales attending at Court.

Caroline herself was not ill-looking, and was essentially good-natured. She had little control over her tongue, and little enough notion of etiquette and protocol. Her hectic life and exuberant character have been so often examined that there is no occasion to repeat the process: au fond, one feels that, as a royal personage she was out of her element. Could she have been born in a different sphere of life and about a century later, she would probably have been a success in the "Naughty Nineties" as a barmaid at the old Criterion; there is always an atmosphere of plush and feathers about Caroline, of heartiness, of flirtatiousness, of verbal cracks and back-chat, all enveloped in a general "matey-ness" that would have made her a great success with the members of the Pelican Club. Her vulgarity went hand-in-hand with a generous temperament and a zest for life that unfitted her for the formal routine of a Court. Lady George Murray records how her son was one of a party that visited Caroline at Woolwich, to find her in "a Gorgeous dress, which was looped up to show her petticoat, covered with stars, with silver wings on her shoulders, sitting under a tree, with a pot of porter on her knee; and, as a finale to the gaiety, she had the doors opened of every room in the house and, selecting partner, she galloped through them, desiring all the guests to follow her example!" One cannot easily see such a woman opening the Ball at some brilliant fete at Windsor Castle or Carlton House; but if she could have lived in the twentieth century she might well have been in her element amid the gaieties of a Butlin's Camp, or in leading the revels at some local "hop" with a demonstration of

"The Lambeth Walk" or "Knees up, Mother Brown"

In the management of her daughters, Queen Charlotte was less successful, and is open to criticism. The unfortunate girls grew up in dull surroundings and what they wanted was to get away and be "settled" - i.e. married. The King's declared reason for not doing anything for them was his reluctance to part with them, another instance of his good-hearted selfishness. In November 1788 he did go so far as to tell his two eldest daughters, the Princess Royal and Princess Augusta, that he would take them abroad and they could look round for husbands - but he never did so in fact. When Prince Frederick of Wurtemberg came to England to solicit Augusta's hand, he was rejected by the King with the intimation that the eldest daughter must be settled first. Eventually, Prince Frederick switched to the Princess Royal, but George III threw every obstacle he could in their way and dragged out negotiations for nearly eighteen months. Admittedly, the bridegroom was quite fantastically unattractive, but the Princess Royal seems to have been glad to get away at any cost, for she was not very happy at home.

It may be asked, why did not Queen Charlotte intervene for her daughters? In the main, she seems to have declined pressing their claims lest their departure should upset the King too much and cause a relapse in mental health. Even the Princess Royal's wedding (1797) had agitated the King pretty badly. In April 1805, however, the Queen did bring herself to write to the King concerning a proposal from the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz that his eldest son might marry one of the younger Princesses:

... I have never named the subject to any of the Princesses, for I have made it a rule to avoid a subject in which I know their opinions differ with your Majesty's, for every one of them have at different times assured me that, happy as they are, they should like to settle, and I feel I cannot blame them ...

Though the Queen made it clear that she welcomed this alliance, the King postponed any decision, and nothing was to come of the proposal.

Ultimately, two more of the daughters did marry; Elizabeth to the Grand Duke of Hesse-Homburg (1818), another extremely unattractive German princeling, while Mary married her half-witted cousin, the Duke of Gloucester (1816). Augusta, the second daughter, and, perhaps, the best of them, was to lose her

heart to General Sir Brent Spencer, but the idea of her marrying a Commoner was hopeless in those days. In a pathetic letter, soon after the establishment of the Regency, in 1812, she begged the Regent to allow her to have a "private" marriage, though she well knew the Queen could not countenance it. Nor did the Regent, apparently, for nothing resulted. Princess Sophia had an illegitimate son, Tommy Garth, son of General Garth, though scandalmongers hawked the paternity round a bit, even attributing it to her own brother, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland. Amelia, the youngest daughter, and a martyr to consumption, was in love with General FitzRoy, and seems to have died, in 1810, of a mixture of her disease and of a broken heart.

It was all very trying, and unfortunately the Queen's disposition was never at its best with her daughters. In the climate of opinion of the day, she had to disapprove any alliances with Commoners - an event of that sort would probably have sent the King right out of his mind. But her own health was declining, and her temper worsened with it. We cannot wholly excuse her over her daughters' interests, but we should try and understand her difficulties. The King, as his own mental decay advanced, became an oddly popular figure in England; we can easily imagine to what abuse the Queen would have been subjected had any action of hers precipitated his ultimate mental collapse. Apart from her own ills - rheumatism and the onset of dropsy - the Queen had much to contend with.

The 1790s were anything but restful. The public anxieties due to the French Revolution and the French Wars were enough in themselves, but on top the Queen faced many domestic worries. Two sons, Ernest and Adolphus, were wounded while fighting abroad; the Duke of Kent created trouble in his Army commands, both at Gibraltar and in Canada, as his ruthless treatment of soldiers tended to produce mutinies - eventually, he had to be deprived of all command. The Duke of York had to be removed from his command on the Continent, owing to inefficiency; the Duke of Clarence showed promise as a sailor (Nelson thought well of him), but was so headstrong and disobedient that he was relieved of his command and not employed again till the reign of George IV (and he then soon lost his post as Lord High Admiral). In 1793 the Duke of Sussex created trouble by going through an illegal ceremony of marriage with Lady Augusta Murray, entailing an annulment; the Prince of Wales's marriage in 1795, with its miserable outcome; the Princess Royal's marriage in 1797 - it was a sufficiently trying decade.

But with the turn of the century the Queen's worries multiplied. Between 1801 and 1805 the King was intermittently out of his mind; he was also beginning to go blind. In 1806-7 came the deplorable business known as The Delicate Investigation, an enquiry (which became very public property) into accusations that the Princess of Wales had had an illegitimate child; in 1809 the Duke of York had to resign the Commander-in-chiefship, following the revelations about his mistress, Mrs. Clarke, and the sale of Army Commissions. In 1810 the Duke of Cumberland was nearly murdered by his valet in a fit of madness (the man then committed suicide and scandal soon suggested that it was the Duke who had murdered the valet); this same year saw the death of Princess Amelia and the final collapse of the King's mind, followed by the institution of the Regency in 1811.

The year 1812 was clouded by serious clashes between the Queen and her daughters. Put shortly, this arose from the Prince of Wales, on becoming Regent, securing independent incomes for his three unmarried sisters. The Queen, mistakenly, seemed to take this to mean that she was going to be left by them alone at Windsor, in charge of the mad king, and there was a violent outburst between her and the daughters, with the Regent intervening to make peace. Actually, the wretched affair appears to have cleared the air somewhat; the family had been living at considerable tension since the King's collapse in 1810, and as anyone knows who has belonged to a large family, a "show-down" may act like a thunderstorm to clear an oppressive atmosphere.

The country was war weary and the Royal Family was unpopular and, with the Regent as principal exhibit, was to remain so till long after the Queen's death. She was now closing in on her 70th birthday and was old for her age, though fairly active all things considered. Between 1811 and Waterloo year the royal circle was to be convulsed by constant friction (all very much in the public eye) between the Regent and his daughter; his wife at length took herself off to the Continent, to make that highly scandalous progress through Europe that was to furnish George IV with materials for an attempt at divorce in 1820. The Queen had her share of the unpopularity; she had perforce to provide the feminine element at Court, and in 1814, after Napoleon's first abdication, she had her place in public junketings, with an invasion of royalties from abroad - Tsar of Russia, the King of Prussia, and others. There were food shortages and not enough done by Government; public responsibility was not well developed in such matters, and the Queen, like others, fell back on private gifts of money to try and help the hungry.

She rejoiced at the news of Waterloo and the downfall of "The Monster" (as Napoleon was felt to be), but her pleasure was short-lived, as a fearful domestic storm was brewing. Her widowed niece Frederica, who had been engaged to the Duke of Cambridge, had an affair with a foreign Prince, whom she had to marry in a hurry for her child to be born in wedlock. This although she had never renounced her engagement to the Duke of Cambridge. When this, her second marriage, ended in a divorce (and her husband died about the same time) she promptly became engaged to the Duke of Cumberland. At first, the Queen wished them both well; but Cumberland was so disliked in England that she thought he should do nothing till the question of a Civil List grant had been settled, and until a proper time had elapsed between her niece's widowhood and re-marriage.

But someone, perhaps the Princess Royal (or Queen of Wurtemberg as she now was) seems to have informed (or reminded) Queen Charlotte of the old scandal of Frederica while engaged to the Duke of Cambridge. The Queen decided that she would be unable to receive the Duchess of Cumberland when she came to England, because to do so, after the scandal, would be to give the Princess of Wales an excuse to claim that she too must be accepted at Court functions, a point on which the Regent had expressed determined opposition. And Queen Charlotte was very compliant with her eldest son's demands. Just as she had always shown great deference to the King, so now she had transferred it to the Regent.

The Duke of Cumberland was the last man to take opposition to his wishes lying down. He brought the Duchess to England; he failed to get his Parliamentary grant; and he failed to move the Queen to alter her decision. Today, we would most of us probably think the Queen was too unbending, though one can see her point of view. Whether the Regent, with his proverbial charm and with his tactful handling of his mother, might in time have worked a change about the Cumberlands, is uncertain. In fact, the Queen, though distressed almost beyond words, wished both the Duke and Duchess well, and merely stood out on the point of not receiving the latter at Court. No reconciliation over this was effected before she died.

Meantime, her granddaughter, Princess Charlotte of Wales, was being a handful. The girl was an awkward, self-willed, rather unattractive, hoydenish creature; she had had a most trying upbringing, with parents not on speaking or living terms. Though the Regent, in his selfish way, seemed fond of

her, he expected her to obey implicitly his most rigorous and unreasonable demands. After falling in and out of love with a number of unsuitable individuals, she accepted Prince Leopold of Coburg, the future King of the Belgians, the Queen being energetic in pushing on arrangements for them. The marriage was a happy one, but as everyone knows ended disastrously when the Princess died within an hour or two of giving birth to a dead son. The occasion was one for an orgy of woe on the part of the public and, most unfairly, the Queen came in for blame. In fact, though the Queen certainly had no mean experience of child-bearing, her advice had positively been avoided, although she told Lady Harcourt that she had had serious misgivings about her granddaughter's condition. Unluckily, the Queen's doctor had ordered her to Bath to take the waters for her own complaints; she selected a date a fortnight to three weeks after the expected date of birth of the Princess's child. But the latter date proved wrong; Princess Charlotte's doctors made mistakes at all stages, and as the days and weeks passed, and no birth took place, the Queen found herself obliged to keep to the long-prepared visit to Bath. She had hardly got there before the news of the double death in London was received.

We learn from the biography by Mr. Pope-Hennessy of Queen Mary that she had always felt a special affinity for Queen Charlotte. Could she have known it, Queen Mary would have found a particular instance of this in the circumstances of their respective deaths. Queen Mary never quite recovered from the emotional shock of being suddenly informed of the death of George VI, and she died within a year. A not dissimilar occurrence took place in November 1817 at Bath; Queen Charlotte was dining when Sir Herbert Taylor was called out and given the news from London. Coming back, his face must have betrayed him, for Queen Charlotte at once exclaimed, "I am sure it is over", and began to weep, though normally she mastered her emotions well. As with Queen Mary, she never got over the shock, and she, too, died within about twelve months. At the time, she promptly wrote to the Regent to condole with him, and broke her visit at Bath to return to town. She had then to grapple with the vagaries of her sons, for with the death of the heiress to the throne there was a hurried rush by the Dukes of Clarence, Kent and Cambridge to get married, and to beget heirs. Princess Elizabeth also married about the same time, in the first half of 1818. By now, however, the Queen was going steadily downhill; her last routine letter was in August 1818, and after that we hear of her but not from her.

By August/September Fanny Burney heard from the Princesses that her old employer was clearly sinking, though slowly. As the autumn progressed, the news got more serious, and on November 18th the Queen, desperately ill from dropsy, died. The Press, seldom disposed to speak well of her if they could help it, succeeded even now in making adverse comments on the fact that only four of her children were present round her death couch (in fact, everyone of the absentees is fully accounted for). To Fanny Burney, however, it meant the end of one of whom she had been genuinely fond: at church on the following day, the clergyman preached about the Queen; "I cried the whole time", adds Fanny.

Perhaps the final word may be left to the American Ambassador in London, Mr. Rush. England and America had been at war with one another so recently as 1815; in 1818 Rush presented his credentials to the Queen and was immensely impressed at once by her, as he was a little later when attending Princess Elizabeth's wedding. He writes quite fervently of her, and quotes his immediate predecessor, Mr. Adams, to the same effect. "There was a kindliness in her manner from which time had struck away useless forms"; her natural dignity and ease of manner struck Rush forcibly, and when she died he wrote that she enjoyed the respect of a very large portion of the inhabitants of Great Britain, and that the British Court maintained in her time "a character of uniform decorum and chastened grandeur".

In saying that the Queen had kept her Court respectable, Rush puts his finger on something we should not overlook. It was customarily said of Queen Victoria that she had made the Crown respected after the bad impression of Royalty left by those "wicked men", her uncles. Certainly, for 25 years, 1812-1837, the Crown was not popular and was, in the person of George IV, at times hated and despised. It has been rightly said that though the Court of George III and Queen Charlotte might lack glitter, might indeed be dull, yet at least it did not experience the fortunes of its brilliant rival Court at Versailles, which expired almost over night. Unconsciously, the King and Queen laid foundations on which their granddaughter, Victoria, could (as unconsciously) build; at a time when a big social change was gathering momentum, and the old-time aristocracy of county land-owners was to give place to the rising middle-class mercantile and business community, it was a positive asset to have a Court that, generally, reflected a simpler and more decorous routine of life than any of their predecessors. George III, if more than a little difficult within his family, was genial

outside it, and if at moments the object of political or social opposition, and if at times a figure of fun, was nonetheless generally popular with the masses. We can laugh at his mannerisms, or at the famous hidden band that played "God Save the King" as he entered the sea for a bathe; yet his accessibility, his interest in everything; his lack of "side" and snobbishness (the latter a particular weakness of the 19th rather than of the 18th century), all helped to preserve the monarchy at a time (after the French Revolution) when radical ideas were rampant. The Queen seems never to have aimed at nor to have achieved popularity; but, equally, she did not earn contempt or disgust, as her mother-in-law had done, as her sons were to do, and as her daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales, did. We are fortunate in having in Fanny Burney a diarist of some genius who can take us behind the scenes at Court: the Queen's correspondence gives us further insights.

I do not think it is too much to say that the Queen was the best letter-writer of all her family. Though English was not her native tongue, and though she never lost a guttural accent (but did not Edward VII have one too?), she wrote the language with great facility, yet without the intolerable verbosity and fulsomeness that are the great drawbacks of so many letters of her sons and daughters. Moreover, she would relax in her letters to friends in a way that I think one would not find in Queen Victoria, another great royal letter-writer. One can only pick out a few specimens of what I mean.

Writing to Lady Harcourt in 1784, she commences:

I am particularly happy in the King's Commands of acquainting you that we propose Storming your Castle at Newnham, on Saturday the 18th of this month, if perfectly convenient to you & Lord Harcourt, & though we shall be a large Party, pray don't be alarmed, for we are all good Friends & well wishers to the Owners of the Castle, but none more Sincerely so than, my dear Lady Harcourt's

Very affectionate Friend, Charlotte.

Again, in 1786, she writes about some Presentations at Court:

I have of late seen several ladies just returned from Paris, some very much improved in looks, & others far otherwise. Mrs. Eden by wearing an Enormous Quantity of Rouge looks much more pleasing, and Mrs. Goldburn, by Hiding Her Fine Complexion, on the Contrary loses by that Ornament; the

latter is quite Formidable by Three immense Feathers, which so directly run into my Eyes when she was presented, I was under the necessity of drawing myself back in order to avoid Mischief ...

Or, writing on November 19, 1802 of the French Ambassador sent over by Napoleon after the Peace of Amiens, she says:

I was ... obliged to go to St. James, & of course you will guess that I have seen this Ambassador, who, by the by, displeased me more than any body I ever saw, for He had breakfasted upon Onions, & the smell He brought with Him into the Room, & left behind him, will leave an everlasting Remembrance upon all those who attended me ...

The Queen's sense of the ridiculous crops up time and again in her letters; for instance, when exchanging gossip with Lady Harcourt, she has a dig at another of her Ladies, Lady Sidney, who "as usual came to Windsor, but always confined when she is wanted, the Finger, the Bowels, the Head & the Stomach are warring against one another and make Her as useless as if she was not here".

I mentioned at the beginning that she had no false ideas of her own looks, and she cheerfully writes, in 1789 to Lady Harcourt:

... Adieu, excuse great haste, for Dinner is upon the Table. I intend to Eat Chicken in order to appear more beautifull when I see you next; but in case it does not succeed, believe me Equally handsome as Chicken can make me, or Ogly as I am,

Your sincere Friend.

And a quarter of a century later she has not lost her humorous touch, for in 1814 she commences a letter to her old friend:

My dearest Lady Harcourt - You do really stand the chance of seeing my Antique Face in about 10 Days at Brighton ...

I am not disposed to criticize Queen Charlotte for not aiming at popularity; playing to the gallery quite clearly was not her line of country, any more than it was for her great-granddaughter, Queen Mary. I question whether the latter would ever have won the respect and regard of the country as she undoubtedly did, had she tried to behave in a style other

than that which naturally became her. Queen Charlotte, too, stuck to her natural mode; I have indicated some, though not all of the trials she had to face, national trials (the loss of the American colonies, or the long ordeal - 22 years - over which the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were spread); family trials of all sorts, and the unpopularity of the royal family that resulted from the misdemeanours of her sons. Throughout it all, the Queen never cheapened herself; she made mistakes in some of the handling of her family; she might adopt too rigid a code of behaviour; her temper, sorely tried by domestic troubles and aggravated by her health, could be formidable. But her courage did not forsake her; when a dangerous mob surrounded her sedan-chair in the Mall, shouting abuse, during the food shortages of 1814, the Queen was not afraid. She lowered her window and remarked, "I am 70 years of age and have been a Queen for over 50 years, and never yet have I been spat upon", whereupon the mob, incontinently, applauded her and let her by.

She tended to be over-indulgent towards her turbulent sons, and was too strict and unimaginative with her daughters. Yet she held the family together in the face of great difficulties. Most of her own family abroad fell under the dominion of Napoleon, and her daughter, the Princess Royal, was married to a man who was, for a while, an ally of France against England. One would not claim for Queen Charlotte the quality of greatness, yet the qualities she did possess stood her in good stead throughout the long and rather joyless life that she experienced. Devout, well-read, resolute, she weathered storms that might easily have broken a lesser character, and for my part I have found that the study of her correspondence in particular has put me in agreement with Fanny Burney's estimate of her employer, and I have grown quite fond of the old lady.

Errata: Part I, p. 29. first line, after "Walpole said", add:
"her eyes were good and she had tolerable hair,
though some of ..."

Part I, p. 36. Add to Bibliography:
Bury, Lady Charlotte: Diary of a Lady-in-Waiting.

JOHNSON THE ESSAYIST*

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Johnson had considerable experience of periodical work before, as an intermission from his toil on the Dictionary, he began on 20 March, 1750, to issue twice a week his twopenny essays, The Rambler. When he ceased on 14 March 1752 he had published 208 numbers, all but four or five of which were written by himself. This was in itself no small feat, especially for a man who regarded his besetting sin as Sloth, but he could write fast, and believed that "a man may write at any time, if he will set himself doggedly to it." We must not confuse speed of composition with hastiness of conception; for he had thought long and hard about many of the subjects he chose, and one of the great virtues of his essays is his ability to relate the particular topic to the fundamental principles of religion, morals, manners and literary work which he had laid down for himself in previous years of observation, thought and reading.

His wife was dying when he finished the Rambler and it was a year before he was prevailed upon by his friend Hawkesmith to contribute twenty nine essays to The Adventurer. After the completion of the Dictionary and as a respite from his work on Shakespeare, he contributed The Idler to Newbery's Universal Chronicle, writing 91 of the 103 weekly essays himself between April 1758 and April 1760.

There was little difference between the Rambler and Adventurer essays except that the latter were rather longer; the Idler essays, being contributed to a newspaper, and not sold separately, were considerably shorter; they were also lighter in tone. I propose in the first part of my paper to confine myself to the Rambler, and in the last to include the Idler, since these papers, although often considered "less

* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 17 February, 1968; The Very Reverend W. R. Matthews, C.H., K.C.V.O., D.Litt., D.D., S.T.D., F.R.S.L. in the Chair.

impressive" than the others, have special virtues.

Johnson had a highly individual attitude to the periodical essay, and in beginning his Rambler he already had the intentions which in his final number he modestly claimed to have fulfilled. He greatly admired Addison's Spectator, which "employed wit in the service of virtue and religion", superadded literature and criticism", and varied these topics "with elegant fictions and refined allegories", using "different changes of style and felicities of invention" (Lives). Later however he described Steele's essays as "too thin ... for an Englishman's taste; mere superficial observations on life and manners", without enough body; and he always deplored the triviality of Addison's imitators. His papers would not be just a mirror of current fads and fashions, a bi-weekly talking-point for boudoirs and coffee-houses.

Johnson read Bacon's work when collecting material for the Dictionary, and was astonished by his range of learning and copious vocabulary. No doubt he was influenced by Bacon's Essays, which treated topics of social behaviour in a general way, with frequent aphorisms and brief illustrations from history and the classics. He read Seneca; and Cicero, whose "elegance and magnificence of style" in the dream of Scipio he praised in Rambler 118. He also liked Cowley's Essays for their "smooth and placid equability", but his own essays would avoid what he called "the ostentatious and haughty display of themselves which has been the usual refuge of diurnal writers." (Rambler I) His aim was primarily "to inculcate wisdom or piety", according "to the precepts of Christianity without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age" (Rambler 208). Many of the essays were to be lay-sermons, and with this in mind he prayed God at the outset "that in this my undertaking thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation both of myself and others." At the end he admitted that his seriousness had lost him readers, but he had met with equanimity the reproaches of correspondents who wished him "now and then [to] throw in ... some papers of a gay and humorous turn" (Rambler 10), to describe himself as Mr Spectator had done, to move in the "living world", and to join a club (like Sir Roger de Caverley).

In the first papers one senses some uncertainty in approaching his readers, as if he were oppressed by the solemnity of his task as "periodical monitor". Hence perhaps a heaviness

of style afterwards rarely found:

Whether my expectations are most fixed on pardon or praise I think it not necessary to discover, for having accurately weighed the reasons for arrogance and submission, I find them so nearly equiponderant, that my impatience to try the event of my first performance will not suffer me to attend any longer the trepidations of the balance. (Rambler, I)

In the second essay, on the dangers of looking into the future, it is not long before he is dismissing the illusory hopes of budding authors, so open to the censure of those who imagine "that they have made a deeper search, or wider survey, than others, and detected faults and follies, which escape vulgar observation." Clearly he is thinking of his own work, and ends by expressing no high hopes from the public:

He that endeavours after fame by writing, solicits the regard of a multitude fluctuating in measures, or immersed in business, without time for intellectual amusements; he appeals to judges prepossessed by passions, or corrupted by prejudices, which preclude their approbation of any new performance. Some are too indolent to read anything, till its reputation is established, others too envious to promote that fame which gives them pain by its increase.

Words scarcely calculated to win him many readers! But the Rambler made its way, to a circulation of about 500 copies, I believe, for there were readers who appreciated the sincerity of "a writer whose chief end is the regulation of common life, and whose precepts are to recommend themselves by their general use." (Rambler, II)

The basic religious and moral themes were not very varied. Johnson's constitutional melancholy, aggravated by ill-health, and his religious insistence on man's fallen nature and need of Divine Grace, made him reflect often on the Vanity of Human Wishes and apply the Juvenalian theme of the great poem he had recently published, to many different aspects of life. Related to this theme was the dominance of the passions in all their manifold symptoms and effects, including the delusions arising from self-love, the "diseases of the imagination" "to which (Mrs. Thrale said) he had given particular attention" in himself. Against the delusions of vanity he set the need for truth, but

Truth is, indeed, not often welcome for its own sake; it is generally unpleasing, because contrary to our wishes and opposite to our practice; and as our attention naturally follows our interest, we hear unwillingly what we have no inclination to impress upon our memories.
(Rambler, 96)

Nosce teipsum was a command to which he paid all too much attention, but if he was painfully aware, through self-examination, of the precarious nature of human virtue and reason, he was tolerant of those who fell short of their aims, whether they were unfledged writers or sinners whose practice belied their theories.

Nothing is more unjust, however common, than to charge with hypocrisy him that expresses zeal for those virtues which he neglects to practise; since he may be sincerely convinced of the advantages of conquering his passions, without having yet obtained the victory, as a man may be confident of the advantages of a voyage, or a journey, without having courage or industry to undertake it, and may honestly recommend to others those attempts which he neglects himself. (Rambler, 14)

Johnson has often been called a Christian stoic, and certainly he leans more to the stoical than to the epicurean or Chestertonian:

Infelicity is involved in human nature, and interwoven with our being; all attempts therefore to decline it wholly are useless and vain: the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side, ... and the strongest armour which reason can supply, will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them.

The great remedy which heaven has put in our hands is patience, by which, though we cannot lessen the torments of the body, we can in a great measure preserve the peace of the mind ... (Rambler, 32)

He points out that "the utmost anguish which human wit can contrive or human malice can inflict, has been borne with constancy" (ibid.), but the patience he advocates is not that of "the stoicks, or scholars of Zeno, whose wild enthusiastick virtue pretended to an exemption from the sensibilities of unenlightened mortals" (ibid.), and who "removed pain, poverty,

loss of friends, exile, and violent death from the catalogue of evils", preaching indifference and neutrality. The Christian's patience on the other hand

must arise from frequent reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the God of nature, in whose hands are riches and poverty, honour and disgrace, pleasure and pain, and life and death. A settled conviction of the tendency of every thing to our good, and of the possibility of turning miseries into happiness, by receiving them rightly, will incline us to bless the name of the Lord, whether he gives or takes away.

"The Christian and the hero (he wrote in No. 44) are inseparable, and to aspirings of unassuming trust and filial confidence, are set no bounds."

With such doctrines Johnson turned his torch of truth upon the ethical weakness of his age and discussed a great variety of topics. He could smile at his own seriousness; for in Rambler 109, ostensibly in answer to a lady who writes "you seem to have taken a view sufficiently extensive of the miseries of human life and have employed much of your speculation on mournful subjects", he pictures himself as she imagines him,

snuffing his candle, rubbing his spectacles, stirring his fire, locking out interruption, and settling himself in his easy chair, that he may enjoy a new calamity without disturbance. (Rambler, 109)

As the series progressed he lightened it by including more diversity of method, although the material remained constant.

Letters from correspondents were only one of the many devices taken over from his predecessors. Others included allegories, anecdotal character-sketches, and moral tales with exotic settings. Often the anecdotes occur in letters. For instance, Rambler 12 is an admirable sketch of a young gentlewoman seeking employment as a lady's maid, who describes the various women who have insulted her. The worst was Mrs. Courtly, "a very fine lady, who had routs at her house, and saw the best company in town".

I had not waited two hours before I was called up and found Mr Courtly and his lady at picquet, in the height of good humour.

They combined to mock the poor girl: thus Mrs Courtly said:

... first turn about and let us see your fine shape. Well, what are you fit for, Mrs Mum? You would find your tongue, I suppose, in the kitchen. No, no, says Mr Courtly, the girl's a good girl yet, but I am afraid a brisk young fellow with fine tags on his shoulder - Come, child, hold up your head; what? you have stole nothing. - Not yet, says the lady, but she hopes to steal your heart quickly - Here was a laugh of happiness and triumph, prolonged by the confusion which I could no longer repress. At last the lady recollected herself: Stole? no - but if I had her, I should watch her; for that downcast eye - why cannot you look people in the face? Steal, says her husband; she would steal nothing but, perhaps, a few ribbands before they were left off by her lady. Sir, answer'd I, why should you, by supposing me a thief, insult one from whom you have received no injury? Insult? says the lady; are you come here to be a servant, you saucy baggage, and talk of insulting? What will this world come to, if a gentleman may not jest with a servant? ... Servants insulted - a fine time - Insulted! Get downstairs you, slut, or the footman shall insult you. (Rambler, 12)

In such vignettes of social life Johnson shows not only the sympathy for the underdog which he proved by so many generous acts, but also a remarkable ability to reproduce the turns of natural conversation.

The essays were written mainly for men, one feels, and show a masculine robustness even when discussing topics likely to interest the ladies. There is a marked tendency to mock at feminine occupations and to see the silly side of female character. So among several letters from men who have married - or more luckily - avoided marriage, there are two in which Hymenaeus (Rambler, 113, 115) describes his many narrow escapes. When he met "the gay, the sparkling, the vivacious Ferocula, I fancied to myself a perpetual source of happiness in wit never exhausted, and spirit never depressed ... I was, indeed, somewhat disturbed by the unshaken perseverance with which she enforced her demands of an unreasonable settlement", but he was saved only when "my curiosity led me to a crowd gathered in the street, where I found Ferocula in the presence of hundreds, disputing for sixpence with a chairman - I saw her in so little need of assistance, that it was no breach of the laws of chivalry to forbear interposition, and I spared myself the shame

of owning her acquaintance. I forgot some point of ceremony at our next interview, and soon provoked her to forbid me her presence." (Rambler, 113)

Then there was the learned lady who "scarcely condescended to make tea but for the linguist, the geometrician, the astronomer or the poet". He loved her till he found that "amidst the fondest transports of courtship she could call for a definition of terms, and treated every argument with contempt that could not be reduced to regular syllogism."

There is often a sly humour in the narrative which turns against the speaker, as in the lament of the young author whose first success has turned his head, and he has become so vain that all his friends shun him - he cannot tell why. Sometimes the moral is made explicit as in the account of Suspirius the male Cassandra, one of the "screech-owls of mankind", whose prophecies of woe have

intercepted fifteen authors in their way to the stage; persuaded nine and thirty merchants to retire from a prosperous trade for fear of bankruptcy, broke off a hundred and thirteen matches by prognostications of unhappiness, and enabled the smallpox to kill nineteen ladies by perpetual alarms of the loss of beauty. (Rambler, 59)

Less farcical is the lament of an ageing wit (Rambler, 141) who got through school and University on the strength of his gay talk and was a great success with the London ladies; but when he became middle-aged he found himself nothing but the slave

of his own unintermitted stream of jocularities. The task of every other slave has an end. The rower in time reached port; the lexicographer at last finds the conclusion of his alphabet [a personal touch!]; only the hapless wit has his labour always to begin; the call for novelty is never satisfied; and one jest only raises expectation of another.

The agreeable rattle realises at last that

gaiety must be recommended by higher qualities, and mirth can never please long but as the florescence of a mind loved for its luxuriance, but esteemed for its usefulness. (Rambler, 141)

The vanities of men in society were a never-failing source of entertainment. So were the differences between town and country life as seen by visitors. Thus in Rambler 42 and 46 Euphelia describes her disillusionment when, on visiting her relatives in the country, she finds that she is bored by country small talk and the ancient rivalries of countryfolk:

... there are two families in the neighbourhood who have destroyed each other's game from the time of Philip and Mary ... I have often lost the good opinion of my aunt's visitants by confounding the interests of York and Lancaster, and was once censured for sitting silent when William Rufus was called a tyrant. (Rambler, 46)

The comedy however cuts two ways, for the city lady is without mental resources,

forced to be awake at least twelve hours, without visits, without cards, without laughter and without flattery ... I cannot dress with spirit, for I have neither rival nor admirer. I cannot dance without a partner, nor be kind, or cruel, without a lover.

She realises she may be at fault, and begs Mr Rambler to teach her "the art of living alone". (Rambler, 42)

Quite Dickensian in its effect is the anecdote of the country law-student who returns home from London full of tall stories of his adventures there, all nicely calculated by Johnson to suggest how limited is Mr Frolick's experience, such as his wonderful escapes upon the Thames

on which he has been a thousand and a thousand times on the point of perishing, sometimes by the terrors of foolish women in the same boat, sometimes by his own acknowledged imprudence in passing the river in the dark, and sometimes by shooting the bridge, under which he has encountered mountainous waves, and dreadful cataracts. Nor less has been his temerity on land, nor fewer his hazards. He has reeled with giddiness on the top of the monument; he has crossed the street amidst the risk of coaches; he has been surrounded by robbers without number; he has headed parties at the playhouse; he has scaled the windows of every toast of whatever condition ... he has bilked coachmen; he has rescued his friends from the bailiffs, has knocked down the constable, has bullied the

justice, and performed many other exploits, that have filled the town with wonder and merriment. (Rambler, 61)

"A short visit to London (writes Johnson) entitles a man to knowledge, to wit, to politeness, and to a despotick and dictatorial power of presenting to the rude multitude, whom he condescends to honour with a biennial visit."

In the insistence on Johnson's personal involvement and solemn purpose in the Rambler, inadequate attention has been paid to his talent for fiction, the range of his comic invention, and the subtlety of his tone. An excellent anthology may have been made of his epistolary anecdotes, character-sketches, and fables, but I have not seen it. Johnson spoke truth when he claimed:

In the pictures of life I have never been so studious of novelty or surprize, as to depart wholly from all resemblance ... Some enlargement may be allowed to declamation, and some exaggeration to burlesque; but as they deviate farther from reality, they become less useful, because their lessons will fail of application. The mind of the reader is carried away from the contemplation of his own manners; he finds in himself no likeness to the phantom before him; and though he laughs or rages, is not reformed. (Rambler, 208)

We may well doubt whether many persons were reformed by the character-sketches even in The Rambler, but Johnson's remarks are in agreement with the classical theory of comedy held by Ben Jonson and Moliere.

One of the most interesting features of The Rambler and The Adventurer is their evidence that Johnson used the essays to rationalize his attitudes to literature and to develop his ideas about literary criticism. A few illustrations must suffice. Human nature is always the same in its essentials, he insisted, and the differences in manners and popular taste brought by changing circumstances and periods of history are minor, though important for the writer.

Nevertheless it is the business of authors to treat of "the alterations which time is always making in the modes of life, that they may gratify every generation with a picture of themselves". "Thus love is uniform, but courtship is perpetually varying ... Avarice has worn a different form, as

she activated the usurer of Rome, and the stock-jobber of England." (Adventurer, Oct. 2, 1753) This fund, therefore, provides writers with "an inexhaustible variety of images and allusions". Their task is not to neglect the universal laws of human nature in pursuit of ephemeral changes and novelties.

Similarly criticism, "which (in my opinion)" he writes, "is only to be ranked among the subordinate and instrumental arts" (Rambler, 208), must seek what is permanent; its task is

to establish principles; to improve opinion into knowledge; and to distinguish those means of pleasing which depend upon known causes and rational deduction, from the nameless and inexplicable elegancies which appeal wholly to the fancy, from which we feel delight, but know not how they produce it, and which may well be termed the enchantresses of the soul. (Rambler, 92)

This is in Rambler 92; in the next paper he discusses the ethical weaknesses which mar much critical judgement; vanity, ignorance, prejudice, including "the blindness of literary patriotism" which he believes makes comparative studies difficult. He disagrees with Addison who declared that the true critic "points out beauties rather than faults". No, "the duty of criticism is neither to depreciate, nor dignify by partial representations, but to hold out the light of reason, whatever it may discover; and to promulgate the determinations of truth, whatever she shall dictate." (Rambler, 93)

Of the Rules beloved by neo-classical pundits he had much to say. In No. 92 he asserted that Criticism reduced literature "under the dominion of science". By No. 158 he thought better of this: "Criticism ... has not yet attained the certainty of science. The rules hitherto received ... will (usually) be found the arbitrary edicts of legislators authorised only by themselves ... practice has introduced rules, rather than rules have directed practice", and "The excellencies and faults of celebrated writers have been equally recommended to posterity." (Rambler, 158) "Rules" (he added in No. 176) "are the instruments of mental vision, which may indeed assist our faculties when properly used, but produce confusion and obscurity by unskilful application."

In the same essay Johnson comments on two kinds of critic who are still very much with us today:

Some seem always to read with the microscope of criticism ... As they discern with great exactness, they comprehend but a narrow compass, and know nothing of the justness of the design, the general spirit of the performance ... they never conceive how small a proportion that which they are busy in contemplating bears to the whole.

Does not this hit off exactly some of the New Critics?

Others are furnished by criticism with a telescope. They see whatever is too remote to be discovered by the rest of mankind, but are totally blind to all that lies immediately before them. They discover in every passage some secret meaning, some remote allusion, or some occult imitation which no other reader ever suspected ... (Rambler, 176)

That is enough to suggest a parallel with our modern allegorists and symbol-hunters.

In a charming allegory in Rambler No. 3 he tells how when Criticism, eldest daughter of Labour and Truth, came down from Olympus to earth, Jupiter

gave a sceptre ... one end of which was tintured with ambrosia, and enwreathed with a golden foliage of amaranths and bays; the other end was incircled with cypress and poppies, and dipped in the waters of oblivion. In her left hand she bore an unextinguishable torch ... lighted by Truth.

With these weapons Criticism showed things in their true forms and consigned them either to immortality or oblivion. Whenever she was in doubt about the balance of beauties and faults, Criticism "referred the cause to be considered by Time", whose proceedings "though very dilatory, were, some few caprices excepted, conformable to justice." Time did so well indeed that Criticism withdrew from earth: "Before her departure she broke her sceptre; of which the shivers, that formed the ambrosial end, were caught up by Flattery, and those that had been infected with the waters of Lethe were, with equal haste, seized by Malevolence". "The followers of Flattery ... touched indiscriminately whatever Power or Interest happened to exhibit"; whereas the companions of Malevolence saw only faults. "But the sceptre had now lost its power, and Time passes his sentence at leisure, without any regard to their determinations."

This appeal to the verdict of Time Johnson was often to make against those "distorters of human quiet", the reviewers, the "virulent generation" of malevolent carpers and the coxcombs with their cant of "Taste and Grace, Purity and Delicacy, Manners and Unities". (Rambler, 23) In The Adventurer (May 25, 1758) he urged diffidence in judging the more difficult passages of the authors of antiquity:

Surely no man can, without the utmost arrogance, imagine that he brings any superiority of understanding to the perusal of these books which have been preserved in the devastation of cities, and snatched up from the wreck of nations; which those who fled before barbarians have been careful to carry off in the hurry of migration, and of which barbarians have repented the destruction. If in books thus made venerable by the uniform attestation of successive ages, any passages shall appear unworthy of that praise which they have formerly received, let us ... suspect at least that our ancestors had some reasons for their opinions, and that our ignorance of those reasons make us differ from them.

He supports this by discussing several passages in Horace which are now obscure but which may well have been topical and forceful when written.

The Rambler essays are valuable for students of Johnson's later works because they throw light on his attitudes to particular literary forms. Thus his inability to appreciate Milton's *Lycidas* becomes more comprehensible if we read the two papers (Nos. 36 and 37) in which he discussed the Pastoral. Here he shows no animosity to "true pastoral"; for he agrees that "since the life of the first men was rural", their compositions "being filled chiefly with such thoughts on the visible creation as must occur to the first observers, were pastoral hymns, like those which Milton introduces the first pair singing, in the day of innocence, to the praise of their Maker." He accepts too that

The images of true pastoral have always the power of exciting delight, because the works of nature, from which they are drawn, have always the same order and beauty, and continue to force themselves upon our thoughts.

What Johnson dislikes is the continual imitation by "numbers without number" of "the same images in the same combination

from one to another, till he that reads the title of a poem may guess at the whole series of the composition."

He ascribes the narrowness of the pastoral's range to the inevitable limitations of poetic treatment:

Poetry cannot dwell upon the minuter distinctions, by which one species differs from another, without departing from that simplicity of grandeur which fills the imagination.

So only "general effects on the eye and the ear" can be shown, and these are "uniform, and incapable of much variety of description."

In his second essay, defining pastoral in the light of Virgil, as "a poem in which any action or passion is represented by its effects upon a country life", Johnson deduces that "those ideas only are improper which, not owing their original to rural objects, are not pastoral." Its occasion must

be at least not inconsistent with a country life ... It is therefore improper to give the title of a pastoral to verses, in which the speakers, after the slight mention of their flocks, fall to complaints of errors in the Church, and corruptions in the government, or to lamentations of the death of some illustrious person, whom, when once the poet has called a shepherd, he has no longer any labour upon his hands, but can make the clouds weep, and lilies wither, and the sheep hang their heads, without art, or learning, genius, or study. (Rambler, 37)

So that is why nearly 30 years later he called Lycidas, "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting", and disliked the blending of Christian truths with pastoral fancies.

Rambler Nos. 139 and 140 likewise anticipate in much fuller form Johnson's strictures on Samson Agonistes in Lives of the Poets, arguing that

the poem ... has a beginning and an end which Aristotle himself could not have disapproved; but it must be allowed to want a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last, that either hastens or delays the death of Samson ... yet this is the tragedy which ignorance has admired and bigotry applauded. (Rambler, 139)

I am sure that students in our colleges who find Johnson's views arbitrary because so often succinct and dogmatic in the Lives, would gain a better appreciation of his critical principles if they were encouraged to read the Rambler essays on critical subjects.

If there were more time I should delight to cite his wise remarks on Tragicomedy, his castigation of the barren tragedies of his own day, and his remarks on versification. As it is I shall content myself with referring to the third Rambler essay in which he compared the high-romantic fiction (which he had loved as a boy) with what he calls "the comedy of romance", which exhibits life "in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind." Since he says that such romances are "to be conducted nearly by the rules of comick poetry", he is probably thinking particularly of works like Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742) and Tom Jones, published in the previous year (1749). He urges such writers to discriminate between good and bad so as not to confuse their young readers, and "to teach the means of avoiding the snares which are laid by Treachery for Innocence, without infusing any wish for that superiority with which the betrayer flatters his vanity" and so on. To us this might suggest Richardson, but in a later Rambler essay (97) Johnson calls Richardson one "who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue."

When we turn to The Idler from The Rambler and The Adventurer we find many striking differences, besides the shorter length. He was now contributing to a newspaper, whose success depended upon "early intelligence" and general topicality. Not surprisingly therefore his papers are much more occupied with current affairs. The Seven Years War was on, and when the Universal Chronicle first appeared Pitt's efforts had not yet remedied the military disasters of the previous years. The army was still in bad shape, and Johnson's fifth paper suggested the formation of an army of ladies, concluding sarcastically that

Our masculine squadrons will not suppose themselves disgraced by their auxiliaries, till they have done something which women could not have done. The troops of Braddock never saw their enemies, and perhaps were defeated by women ... Had Minorca been defended by a

female garrison, it might have been surrendered, as it was, without a breach.

When victories began in June 1758 he was sceptical about military claims. When news came of the capture by General Wolfe and Admiral Boscawen of Louisberg, the fortified capital of Cape Breton, he contributed two opposed views of the event, one as English historians might relate it, the other from the French point of view, both equally patriotic, exaggerated, and incorrect (Idler, 20). He had a low opinion of newspapers in general, whose compilation was

often committed to narrow and mercenary minds not qualified for the task of delighting or instructing and who are content to fill their paper, with whatever matter, without industry to gather, or discernment to select. (Idler, 7)

At times Johnson's particular dislikes were allowed almost libellous expression, as when he described two men who had questioned the authenticity of Clarendon's History, John Oldmixon and George Duckett, as "two of the lowest of human beings, a scribbler for a party, and a Commissioner of Excise". And when a certain lady obtained notoriety by riding a horse a thousand miles in a thousand hours for a wager, he ridiculed her fame, suggesting that she be given a statue at Newmarket, "to fill kindred souls with emulation, and tell the grand-daughters of our grand-daughters what an English maiden had once performed". (Idler, 6)

More important are the essays in which Johnson directly attacks particular social abuses. A violent anti-vivisectionist, he inveighs against the

inferior professors of medical knowledge ... whose lives are only varied by varieties of cruelty; whose favourite amusement is to nail dogs to tables and open them alive ... to examine whether burning-irons are felt more acutely by the bone or the tendon, and whether the more lasting agonies are produced by poison forced into the mouth, or injected into the veins. (Idler, 17)

In more moderate mood he writes against the imprisonment of debtors at the will of their creditors.

The end of all civil regulation is to secure private happiness from private malignity; to keep individuals from the power of one another; but this end is

apparently neglected, when a man, irritated with loss, is allowed to be judge of his own cause, and to assign the punishment of his own pain. (Idler, 22)

He describes the miseries of those in prison, and the degradation they suffer:

In a prison, the awe of the public eye is lost, and the power of the law is spent, there are few fears, there are no blushes. The lewd inflame the lewd, the audacious harden the audacious. Every one fortifies himself as he can against his own sensibility, endeavours to practise on others the arts which are practised on himself; and gains the kindness of his associates by similitude of manners. (Idler, 38)

Of course The Idler continues many themes and methods found in the earlier essays. There are amusing letters on the ways of women, such as that from a man whose wife keeps their three daughters engaged in handwork and embroidery instead of encouraging them to read and write (Idler, 13), another from "the unfortunate husband of a buyer of bargains ... it is impossible to make her pass the door of a house where she hears goods selling by auction" (Idler, 35). And there are admirable male character-sketches, such as the two on Dick Minim the brewer's apprentice, who having been left "a large fortune in the stock", "resolved to be a man of wit and humour" and set up as a critic, with the dreariest results.

In this and other characters such as Drugget, Dick Shifter, and the sarcastic mistress of Molly Quick (Idler, 46), the style is lighter than but just as penetrating as in The Rambler. And in more didactic mood Johnson repeated the solemn strains of his earlier work. He never wrote anything more moving in its restrained simplicity than paper 41, in which he refers to his grief at the death of his mother:

there is none who does not ... hope another year for his parent or his friend; but the fallacy will be in time detected; the last year, the last day, must come. It has come, and is past. The life which made my own life pleasant is at an end, and the gates of death are shut upon my prospects.

Again he shows the inability of stoicism to meet the pangs of loneliness and grief, and concludes: "Philosophy may infuse

stubbornness, but Religion only can give patience."

In his last Rambler essay Johnson set first among his intentions

to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations. Something, perhaps, I have added to the elegance of its construction; and something to the harmony of its cadence.

He claimed also to have "familiarised the terms of philosophy by applying them to popular ideas". (Rambler, 208)

His influence may not have been as great or lasting as he hoped, but undoubtedly he made for himself a noble style which became such second nature that Mrs. Thrale said that his Rambler style was "so much like his common mode of conversing". He could indeed, as we have seen, write in a familiar style, and would often mingle a colloquial expression with more lofty ones. But as he wrote in an essay on the Epistolary form (Rambler, 152)

it is natural to depart from familiarity of language upon occasions not familiar ... Wherever we are studious to please, we are afraid of trusting our first thoughts, and endeavour to recommend our opinions by studied ornaments, accuracy of method, and elegance of style.

He knew the search for le mot juste:

It is one of the common distresses of a writer, to be within a single word of a happy period, to want only a single epithet to give amplification its full force, to require only a correspondent term in order to finish a paragraph with elegance and make one of its members answer to another.

Such reflections reveal the kind of style he wanted, "the happy period", "forceful amplification", a balance of terms with an elegant cadence to end the paragraph. And how often he achieved it! In addition Johnson, like Bacon, was a lover of the aphorism, and almost every paragraph of the essays has one or more of them, not isolated as so often in Bacon, but led up to by what has gone before, or starting off a new train of amplification:

the great end of society is mutual beneficence. (Rambler, 56)

In things which are not immediately subject to religious or moral considerations it is dangerous to be too long or too rigidly in the right. (Rambler, 112)

Pleasure is very seldom found where it is sought. (Idler, 58)

Nothing is more hopeless than a scheme of merriment. (Idler, 58)

Language proceeds, like everything else, through improvement to degeneracy. (Idler, 63)

At times the essays coruscate with apparently effortless brilliance. But in the last resort it is not so much the style we remember as the man behind it, with his quirks and prejudices, his wisdom and generosity, his immense power of applying general principles to particular issues, the homogeneity of imagination, understanding and character, which made him so formidable a critic and so reliable a friend.

MR. MICHAEL WATERHOUSE, 1888 - 1968

Mr. Michael Waterhouse, C.B.E., M.C., was not able to attend meetings for some time before his death, owing to a serious and protracted illness, but he was a valued and loyal member of the Johnson Society of London and gave an address on Architecture in the 18th Century about ten years ago.

His obituary in "The Times" gave details of his distinguished career. He was twenty years on the Royal Institute of British Architects Council and Hon. Secretary and Vice-President before being elected President.

Mrs. Waterhouse, a Life Member of the Society and a former Chairman of the Committee, has our deepest sympathy.

Many of us remember the very pleasant times we spent at their home at Yattendon in Berkshire, and Mr. Waterhouse's happy touch as a lecturer and host.

A. G. Dowdeswell.

Hester Lynch Piozzi: Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey Through France, Italy and Germany edited by Herbert Barrows (The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1967). xxx + 457 pp., cloth. \$12.50.

Mrs. Thrale became Mrs. Piozzi and set off with her second husband the year Samuel Johnson died, 1784, for a protracted European tour which lasted till 1787. Their route lay through France and then over the Alps to Italy. Having gone as far south as Naples, they turned north to revisit many of the cities they had already seen, and they finally came back to London by way of Germany and Calais.

In 1789 Mrs. Piozzi published her account of this grand tour based on the journals she had kept. We must congratulate Professor Barrows and his publishers for making available to us this excellently produced edition. The introduction is judiciously informative, while the notes afford the reader a great deal of help. Here and there certain matters have resisted research, but in time these interstices will be filled no doubt by students of the eighteenth century under the stimulus of Professor Barrow's work.

Mrs. P. was a formidable woman. Indefatigable in the pursuit of her many cultural interests and solidly educated, being acquainted with Latin as well as with French, Spanish and Italian, she had a lively and perceptive mind, which is amply demonstrated in this volume. Those who already know Professor James Clifford's masterly Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale) which appeared in 1941 will be grateful to Professor Barrows for all that he has done to supplement this. And very many non-specialists will find this a delightful book in which to browse. Of her comments Clifford says that they "always have a personal touch, and are often illuminating as well as amusing; her anecdotes, while sometimes absurd, are never dull; and her observant eye and insatiable curiosity, together with a strong desire to understand the social conditions of her husband's country and to interpret them sympathetically for her uncomprehending countrymen, render the account a valuable exposition of life in Europe in the seventeen-eighties."

Travel literature proliferated in the eighteenth century. There was Smollett's Travels through France and Italy (1766), there was Dr. John Moore's A View of Society and Manners in Italy (1781), there was Lalande's Voyage en Italie in seven volumes (third edition, Geneva, 1790), there was Robert Gray's

Letters During the Course of a Tour Through Germany, Switzerland and Italy (1794), and James Boswell, of course, contributed massively to the genre.

Mrs. P. is a worthy member of this company. Like the majority of contemporary travel-writers, she assigns first place to Italy, devoting about four-fifths of the whole book to enthusiastic treatment of the treasures, customs and peoples of the various cities visited (Turin, Genoa, Milan, Padua, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome, etc.). The stream of descriptions and anecdotes bears the reader along gently. St. Mark's Place in Venice "exceeded expectation", the university at Bologna had been, we read, "particularly civil to women", having as members very many learned ladies from France and Germany, at Florence Cardinal Corsini put her a little out of countenance upon meeting her by exclaiming, "Well, Madam! you never saw one of us red-legged partridges before, I believe", remarkably philanthropic lizards are recorded in the vicinity of Siena, the Roman ladies "cannot endure perfumes, and faint away even at an artificial rose" and so it goes smoothly and entertainingly on.

A few points of detail: the editor confesses himself unable to identify the Latin pentameter on p. 198 - pressit et inductis membra paterna rotis (of Tullia driving her chariot over her father's body). It is l. 362 of Ovid's strange piece of invective, the Ibis. One wonders if Mrs. P. knew the poem first-hand. The eleven Latin hexameters on p. 112 (again unidentified) are perhaps to be found in some Renaissance itinerary, but I have not had time to look into this. Professor Barrows cannot place the words nec vult panthera domari (which form the end of a hexameter) on p. 169, though Mrs. P. herself both here and in Thraliana (p. 68) attributes them to Lily's celebrated "Latin Grammar". They have a proverbial ring to them, and the tradition of using beast fables for ethical or generally didactic purposes has a long history lasting well into the medieval period and beyond; - one thinks of Dryden's "The Hind and the Panther", for instance. (Query: what about Lewis Carroll's "Owl and the Panther" which in "Alice" were "sharing a pie"? Is there some ultimate literary connection between this panther and Mrs. P.'s?) Let us hope it will not be long before the quotation is traced to its source. The note on "Suidas" (p. 438) is correct enough so far as eighteenth-century knowledge is concerned; until forty years ago it was believed that "Suidas" was, as Professor Barrows says, "a Greek lexicographer who lived in the tenth or eleventh century, author of a historical lexicon, biographical and literary, ...", and then a French scholar (a lady, Mrs. P.

would have been glad to know) showed definitively that the word "Suidas" concealed in fact a nickname applied to the whole compilation and meaning "the Fortress"!

The book has no index at all, which is rather a pity; a skeletal one would have been better than nothing. The book ends with six pages of notes on the text which Professor Barrows has treated conservatively, largely retaining her punctuation and spelling variants. In this piece of work American scholarship has once more increased the debt that students of English literature owe to it.

H. MacL. Currie.
Queen Mary College,
University of London.

The Political Writings of Dr. Johnson by J. P. Hardy (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968). xxii + 152 pp. Clloth 30s. Paperback 15s.

This brief, compact and convenient selection from the Doctor's political writings edited by John Hardy, Professor of English at the University of New England, New South Wales, deserves a place in every reference library that aims to be more than a miscellaneous jumble of "learned" works and a place of distinction on the shelves of every Johnsonian. Professor Hardy provides a minimum of introductory and appended notes which not only confirm his own scholarship but aid the reader by recalling precise details of persons and events embroiled in the text.

This is a selection, and while every Johnsonian, whether of literary or historical bent, will welcome his favourites and lament the absence of others, it is a convenient collection. One item in particular, that on the Falkland Islands, has even a topical ring while in all they make conveniently accessible to all treasures that too often are only to be found in large, unavailable reference collections.

We need not here utter encomiums on their literary style beyond re-affirming the brilliant command of thought and expression to be found in all of them. Too often we consider the Doctor only as the compiler of the Dictionary, and editor

of Shakespeare and the Lives of the Poets, with, maybe, his Scottish Jaunt thrown in as a make-weight. Too often we overlook his political writings, which in themselves go back to his earliest struggles in London. We have, then, to be grateful to Professor Hardy for making this selection available and to Routledge & Kegan Paul for presenting it to us in these two formats.

Apart from his command of the language, the chief impression left on a re-reading of the writings is Johnson's fine legal - one might almost say legalistic - mind. The selection here made and published is confined to two periods: to 1756 and 1758, and to the 1770s.

First, then, we have three long papers the Doctor contributed in 1756 to the Literary Magazine: An Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain, which could well be read as a handy summary by schoolboys and which refreshes also the elders; his Observations, on treaties with Russia and Hesse-Cassel, of specialist interest but exhibiting Johnson's command of language and reason; and Observations on the Present State of Affairs, in the gloomy opening days of the Seven Years War, a down to earth document to be appreciated by all of robust commonsense.

Five smaller Observations succeed: all contributed in 1758 to the Universal Chronicle, in which the Doctor's own down-to-earth reasoning are given excellent expression, and again his powers of moving from the general to the specific and back to the general. They are all based on incidents of the day, but all persist in conveying a message for all time by their reference to the immutable in man and his affairs.

Finally, the great four of the '70s: The False Alarm, concerning the Wilkes election affair, where Johnson's legal mind is to the fore, without disregard of the permanent; second, Thoughts on the Falkland Islands, one of the Doctor's most impressive prose pieces and a fine display of his informed reasoning; third, The Patriot, again allied only to a passing contemporary event, but with its message to us all at all times while superbly illustrating the scene of the day. Finally, his Taxation no Tyranny, where his legalistic reasoning reaches its zenith, and his prose is little far behind. Some there have been and are who have dismissed the Doctor's political writings, but to those still with us who are so tempted we offer the advice to read or re-read them in this presentation and think anew.

Ross Wilson.

A Preliminary Handlist of Documents and Manuscripts of Samuel Johnson by J. D. Fleeman. (Oxford Bibliographical Society, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 1967.) Price 15/-

This is the second of the Oxford Bibliographical Society's Occasional Publications. It consists, as the compiler states, of a list of all documents and manuscripts in Dr. Johnson's handwriting, or which bear docketts, endorsements, or annotations in his autograph. "Inscriptions, presentation or otherwise, and marginalia, are deliberately excluded, though I have not been absolute in this exclusion ... and I have accepted corrected proof sheets and other texts used as proofs. I have not been consistent in rejecting interesting pieces which however bear no marks in Johnson's hand." Letters have been excluded from this survey. They form a body of documents that have been treated separately by Dr. Birkbeck Hill and Dr. R. W. Chapman, and will be dealt with by Mrs. Donald Hyde. Moreover their number is very great.

The arrangement of this List is chronological with of course a number of undated or imperfectly dated manuscripts. Undated documents, whether letters or other manuscripts, are the bane of an editor's existence.

Dr. Fleeman gives a concise history of the document from its first appearance or mention, its various ownerships, to its present location.

Dr. Fleeman's chief sources are the Life, Poems, the unfortunately named Prayers and Meditations, auction catalogues, a source not easily available to the ordinary reader, Notes and Queries, the Gentleman's Magazine, Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, and the R. B. Adam Catalogue (1929-30).

A specimen entry is:

- 41 Vanity of Human Wishes
Holograph draft, 8 leaves
James Boswell
Malahide Castle
Hyde

Works vi 90ff; facsimile published by Hydes (New York 21 Sept. 1962) (Exhibited (part) Pierpont Morgan Lib. 1959 no.23; Harvard 1966 no.27)

[This fascinating document was printed, not "published". It was issued as a keepsake at a meeting of the Johnsonians, the leading Johnson Society in America.]

The documents number over 260 and are highly varied in nature and importance, all of them must be taken into account. They include school exercises, verse and prose translations of the Classics, especially Horace and Virgil; epigrams; prayers (a very frequent entry), the great Dictionary, the original contract for its publication, individual words, method of noting words, notes on grammar, proofs and corrigenda for the 4th, the last life-time, folio edition of his Dictionary, which was sold at Sotheby's for £3750 and is not readily available today, the corrected sheets for the 1st and 3rd editions, which are available in the British Museum and the Corrections and Additions in a copy of the 4th folio edition which also are available in the John Rylands Library, Manchester. Dedications, holographs of Johnson's dedications to the Queen of Haole's translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* and to the Duke of Northumberland of the same translator's version of the *Works of Metastasio*. Election Addresses for Mr. Thrale (Dr. Fleeman has published a whole series of these addresses, which show Johnson in the character of a party agent). Papers concerning Dr. Dodd, the Maccaroni Parson, consisting of eight documents, including three Petitions for his life to be spared. Lives of the Poets; Preliminary notanda for the Preface to Pope; corrected proofs of this Preface (which was saved for Fanny Burney at SJ's direction). Preface to Young.

Unfortunately no manuscript of Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands* has survived; even a "Book of Remarks" which he says that he made has disappeared; two poems that he composed during it have survived; one, the Ode to Mrs. Thrale, "Permeo terras, ubi nuda rupes" is holograph and in the Hyde Collection, the other "Insula Sancti Kennethi" exists in two copies only. The Diary of a Journey into North Wales, 5 July to 24 Sept. 1774, which was quite unknown to Boswell, is now in the British Museum; the Diary of a visit to France, 15 Sept. to 11 Nov. 1775, of which only one of a possible three volumes has survived and that also is in the British Museum. The little known Epitaph on Hogarth, "The Hand of Art here torpid lies", now in Philadelphia; the epitaph on Mrs. Salusbury, Mrs. Thrale's mother, now in the John Rylands Library; the corrections to the original epitaph on Smollett, now owned by Major-General Telfer-Smollett; and, most famous of all, the Latin Epitaph on Goldsmith, now the cherished possession, with the Round Robin to which it gave rise, of Lord Crawford at Balcarres.

Dr. Fleeman modestly entitles his List Preliminary and invites his friends to report their discoveries. I have pleasure

in responding to his appeal. I was able to tell him of the amusing covenant under which Queeney Thrale "seriously and solemnly promised [to] come down every day (Sundays excepted) at nine o'clock in the morning to Mr. Baretti and read or write whatever Italian he shall bid me during a full hour, and no more." This is signed and sealed by Hester Maria Thrale and "witnessed by Sam. Johnson LL.D. & Hester Lynch Thrale". The document is in the hand of Baretti (alias "Taskmaster"). There is a full page illustration of it in Lord Lansdowne's Johnson and Queeney (1932).

These are amusing; a much more serious discovery concerns the help that Johnson gave, or is supposed to have given, Sir Joshua Reynolds with his Discourses. Prof. F. W. Hilles shows, with the help of a facsimile, that Johnson did at least improve Reynolds's style. S. J. first substituted the concluding words of a paragraph of Sir Joshua's eleventh Discourse. Reynolds crossed these words out and then rewrote them in his own hand, Johnson also rewrote the opening sentence of the following paragraph and once more Reynolds deleted Johnson's substitutions and rewrote them in his own hand. Prof. Hilles asks, (Literary Career of Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1936, p.136) "was this to make the scribe less likely to spread the report that the painter was not the author of his lecture, or was it merely his way of indicating that he approved the amendment?"

In return for my first discovery, Dr. Fleeman told me of one which "by a painful serendipity" he had spotted in Brady & Pottle Boswell in Search of a Wife (1956). This was no less than the Marriage Contract between "James Boswell Esquire and Miss Peggie Montgomerie". It is signed by J. B. before the witnesses, "Pascal Paoli, General of the Corsicans, and Samuel Johnson, Doctor of Laws and Authour of the Rambler and other works". S.J.'s name appears as "Sam: Johnson. Witness."

Dr. Fleeman has missed other instances of Johnson's appending his name to important documents, e.g. his marriage bond, 8 July 1735, which is where it ought to be at the Birthplace (cf. Life, I, 529) and the signature to his Will, 8 Sept. 1784, and Codicil, 9 Sept. 1784 (cf. Life, IV, 402, 404).

The Index is admirable; it will, I am confident, meet with the approval of the Society of Indexers.

L. F. Powell.

THE DEATH MASK OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

Dr. Ronald Mac Keith, F.R.C.P.

In 1960 Larry McHenry wrote from U.S.A. to suggest I apply at the Royal Society of Arts to see a reputed death mask of Samuel Johnson. I drew a blank there but found the cast at the Royal Literary Fund. On a table in one of the offices, on the third floor of a house just off Ludgate Hill and presumably of 17th or 18th century, the Secretary of the R.L.F., Mr. T. B. Broadbent, had set out what I sought. He added to his kindness by letting me see the file of letters and it is this, with some comments, which makes this article.

In September 1935 the Secretary of the Johnson Society of Lichfield accepts the offer of the death mask by the Secretary of the R.L.F., but further correspondence follows to the effect that the matter "will be discussed". The outlook appears to have been disappointing for in December the R.L.F. offers the bust on long loan to the Trustees of Johnson's House in Gough Square. Further disappointment follows for on 2nd January 1936 the Trustees regret they are unable to accept the offer. The R.L.F. then offers it to the National Portrait Gallery ("South Kensington"), but in February 1936 the N.P.G. Trustees suggest offering it to Oxford University of the Johnson Club in London. In April 1936 it is again offered to the Johnson Society of Lichfield for the birthplace but in May it is definitively rejected.

Confucius said "If three people tell you you are drunk, go to bed even if you are sober" and the conclusion seems inevitable that distinguished opinions at Gough Square, the National Portrait Gallery and the birthplace did not accept the so-called death mask as genuine. I had many large photographs taken of the bust and showed these to Keith Simpson, Professor of Forensic Medicine, as an expert on identification. He did not see the bust but on the evidence of these photographs he wrote:

I am not surprised that some doubt has been cast on the authenticity of the Johnson Death Mask. I myself think it looks less like a death mask than a piece of sculpture and in any case it bears little relationship with any of the portraits you enclose.

But to me the 1769 Reynold's portrait and some other portraits appeared to be probably of the same man as the death mask. I went further back into the file at the Royal Literary Fund.

1. A letter which is undated but which I suspect was written in 1878. It is from an Isabella Hutchins to her brother Edward Thomas.

Hanover Lodge
Nov. 27

My dear Edward,

I am thankful to say my dear husband feels a little better but I see no prospect of his being able to leave his bedroom as his weakness is extreme. Very little rallying power to be expected at 95. I asked him the question about the cast. He said at once "Mr Cruikshank attended Dr. Johnson in his last illness and the cast was taken, under his direction, after his death - but the whole particulars are contained in a letter from Mrs Thomas which I sent with the cast to Mr Blewitt for the Literary Fund". I hope the letter of my mother's can be found in the archives of the Literary Fund and if it is nothing more satisfactory can be had. Sophy sent a card yesterday to ask how we were getting on. Rose will write a few lines today. Fanny's vessel, the Chinaman, is announced at Port Said yesterday, so we trust she will have no more disasters but reach her husband safely. Maria and Bella Foss (?) take charge of the 3 boys which I am not capable of doing.

With our kind love, I am

my dear Edward

Your affect. sister

Isabella Hutchins.

2. An undated note from "Edw. Thomas" (Isabella's brother, Edward A. Thomas, C.I.E., F.R.S. and a great Indian antiquary) to Octavian Blewitt (Secretary of the Royal Literary Fund) is rather surprising in his apparent total unawareness of the family possession.

My dear Blewitt,

Mr Scharf tells me that you are under an impression that I can give some information with regard to the cast of Dr Johnson's phiz, now in our rooms.

Is it so? or has he mistaken the individual?

Yours

Edw. Thomas

3. But another undated noted apparently his second thoughts, appears to go in the file with his sister Isabella Hutchins' letter and to correct this disavowal.
4. The Mr Scharf mentioned in the note 2 above (appointed in 1857 the first secretary of the National Portrait Gallery) corresponded in 1878 with Mr Blewitt (R.L.F.) about "adding a copy either in Terra Cotta or in Bronze of this interesting record of the great lexicographer to the National Collection". He seems to have become satisfied on the authenticity of the cast at the Royal Literary Fund, and today in the National Portrait Gallery storage rooms two plaster copies of the original cast are to be found. His inquiries were presumably the stimulus to Isabella's questions to her 95 year old husband.
5. Moving backwards to 1869 there is a letter from a Mr J. S. Prideaux, which reveals that Mr Blewitt (the name seems suitable) had explored the possibility of selling "the thing". The R.L.F. trustees evidently thought the idea inexpedient.
6. In 1864 William Hutchins whom we met above at the age of 95 wrote to Octavian Blewitt as follows:

Hanover Lodge, Lower Sydenham.
December 31st 1864.

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in enclosing the note authenticating the identity of the bust of Dr Johnson which I had the honor of presenting to the Royal Literary Fund.

The bust was given to me by my wife's mother, Mrs Thomas, in the year 1844, her note sent herewith will sufficiently explain every particular, it is therefore I believe unnecessary to trouble you further than to say that in moving hither from Hanover Square my papers got into such confusion that I did not find Mrs Thomas' note till yesterday evening.

Wishing you a happy new year,

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours truly,
William Hutchins.

It seems clear that the bust which is at the office of the Royal Literary Fund today came into its possession a hundred

years ago.

7. William Hutchins thus appears to have been in possession of the bust for twenty years and to have given it to the Royal Literary Fund in 1864 when he moved from Hanover Square to Hanover Lodge, Lower Sydenham. With it or soon afterwards he sent the following letter from his mother-in-law Mrs. H. L. Thomas from whom he received the cast in 1844 when she was, from the evidence in the letter, some 70 to 75 years old.

My dear Mr Hutchins,

I do not know any better certificate of the authenticity of Dr Johnson's bust than this. When I was a girl at school, upon one of my returns home for the holidays - my father, Mr. Cruikshank, showed me the bust with great enthusiasm; telling me it was that of the great Samuel Johnson taken from a cast after his death and that the likeness was most correct. I do not remember the names of the artist but I heard my father say that all Dr Johnson's friends had one of them. I travelled with a lady from Leamington to Cheltenham who had known Dr Johnson in early youth and remembered the cast being taken after death and Mr Cruikshank being one of his medical attendants. She added I ought to value such a relic.

We seem now to have followed the death mask from its arrival at the R.L.F. in 1864, backwards for 20 years in William Hutchins' possession and now at a jump from 1844 back to 1784 and to the very death-bed. Who was this Mrs A. Thomas who at 70 writes with such vivacity? In 1844 Mrs Thomas was four years a widow. Her husband was Horatius Leigh Thomas, once a dresser to the famous surgeon John Hunter and later a pupil of Mr or Dr Cruikshank. Horatius Thomas wisely married his teacher's elder daughter, Miss A. Cruikshank, and begat Isabella Thomas who married William Hutchins. It was Cruikshank's grand-daughter's husband who gave the cast to the Royal Literary Fund.

8. Who was this Dr. Cruikshank? William Cumberland Cruikshank came in 1771 at the age of 26 to London to practice medicine, being sometimes referred to as an apothecary and sometimes as a surgeon. Let us quote from Boswell's account of Dr. Johnson's last illness: "When Mr Cruikshank scarified his leg (Johnson) cried out 'Deeper, deeper, I will abide the consequence; you are afraid of your reputation, but that

is nothing to me'." On Sunday, 12th December 1784, he was sent for to dress the wounds Johnson had made on his calves and on Wednesday 15th, two days after Johnson had died, Cruikshank was present with Drs. Heberden, Brocklesby and Butler and Mr White, when James Wilson opened the body. Cruikshank was very much of the inner circle of friends at the time of Johnson's death and if any death mask was made he was likely to have received one, so it is easy to accept that his elder daughter was telling her son-in-law the truth.

9. Mrs. Thomas' story of the origin of the cast, written in 1844 is supported by a far more contemporary statement to be found in the 1897 (9th) edition of "The Beauties of Samuel Johnson".

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, immediately after the Doctor's death, ordered Mr. Hoskins, in St. Martins Lane, caster of figures to the Royal Academy, to make a plaster of Paris cast from his face."

10. It remains only to give the report made by Mrs Dawbarn, an artist medical research worker whose special occupation is the preparation of masks from life and after death.

After closely studying the bust, Mrs Dawbarn gave an emphatic report that it is a cast made in 3 portions, the face and the two ears; the chest is probably not cast from the original; there is little doubt that it was made after death. She remarked particularly on the puckered skin under the chin. This was without knowledge that S.J. had had scrofula.

In Conclusion: The above story with photostats of the various letters was presented to a small gathering of Johnsonians including, among others, Kingsley Adams of the National Portrait Gallery (now in Charing Cross Road) and James Osborn of Yale in 1965 and the evidence put forward for the authenticity of the Death Mask was found acceptable. It seems to some of us, including Larry McHenry who first suggested this project, that "such a relick" should indeed be valued and should be found a resting place at once safer and more particularly appropriate.

Summary

W.C.Cruikshank, F.R.S. (1745-1800)
a surgeon who attended S.J. in his terminal illness.

elder daughter "A" (?1770-1844+) = H.A.Thomas, F.R.S. (1769-1840)
(pupil & successor of W.C.
Cruikshank)

Edward A. Thomas, C.I.E., F.R.S. (1813-1886) = Isabella (?1815-1878+) =
Wm Hutchins (?1783-1879)

W. C. Cruikshank one of Sam Johnson's doctors acquired a copy of the original of the cast in 1784; it went to daughter "A", who became Mrs H. A. Thomas, probably at Cruikshank's death in 1800. In 1844 Mrs H. A. Thomas gave it to her son-in-law William Hutchins who had married her daughter Isabella. In 1864, when he moved from Hanover Square to Lower Sydenham, William Hutchins gave the cast to the Royal Literary Fund. In 1878 two plaster copies were made for the National Portrait Gallery. The cast is still at the Royal Literary Fund.

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to many people, but in particular to Larry McHenry, T. B. Broadbent, secretary of the Royal Literary Fund, and to Kingsley Adams of the National Portrait Gallery.

Facing page:

- Fig. 1. Death-Mask Bust.
- Fig. 2. A pen-and-ink drawing by Richard B. Blagden, M.A., 1774, said to have been taken from life (Broadley, 1910); this sketch shows the scars of the scrofula on the left in a similar manner to their appearance on the left side of Johnson's death-mask bust.
- Fig. 3. Death-Mask Bust.
- Fig. 4. Dr. Samuel Johnson.
Copy after the painting of 1769 by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

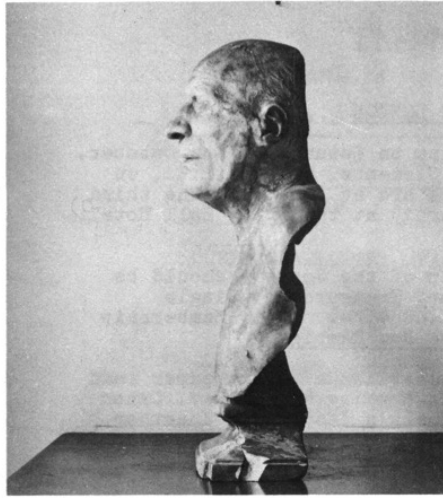


Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

The 1968-69 Programme begins on Saturday, 19th October. Our opening speaker will be Richard Clements, Esq., O.B.E., on "Erskine for the Defence". Meetings are at 3 p.m. on the third Saturday of the month (October to April) at the White Hall Hotel, Bloomsbury Square, London, W.C.1.

Applications for membership of the Society should be made to the Hon. Secretary or the Hon. Treasurer. Single subscription 30/-; joint subscriptions 45/-. Life Membership £15. 15s. Subscriptions include The New Rambler.

Reference was made in our last issue to the paper read to the Society at our December, 1967, Meeting by the Rev. Canon A. R. Winnett, B.D., Ph.D. Dr. Winnett's lecture on Jonathan Swift, Churchman has now been published and copies are obtainable from Moor Park College, Farnham, Surrey, at 3/- (3/6d. post free). It is attractively printed and produced, 16pp. with two illustrations.

Doctor Johnson and his World by F. E. Halliday was published in March by Thames and Hudson at 35/-; 144 pp. with 154 illustrations. Mr. Halliday's book will be reviewed in our next issue.

J. H. L.

The Age of the Grand Tour

**Anthony Burgess and
Francis Haskell**

'It is a large, leisurely, picturesque book about a large, leisurely, picturesque subject... excellent reproductions... brilliant choice of illustration... selection of the texts is admirable: If you happened to have had more than £50 to spend on travel abroad this year and have consequently... made a saving, then this book, laid down like claret against the impending British winter, would be a good investment for your surplus.' David Piper in the *Guardian*. 8 gns



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