

**THE NEW RAMBLER**



JOURNAL OF  
THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

JANUARY 1969

**THE JOHNSON SOCIETY  
OF  
LONDON**

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# The New Rambler

JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Serial No. C.VI.

JANUARY 1969

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## The Johnson Society of London

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ERSKINE FOR THE DEFENCE\*

Richard Clements, O.B.E., J.P.

I

A well-known passage in Boswell's Life of Johnson records the meeting of the great writer and the future Lord Chancellor of England. It reads:

On Monday April 6 [1772] I dined with him [Johnson] at Sir Alexander Macdonald's, where was a young officer in the regimentals of the Scots Royals, who talked with a vivacity, fluency, and precision so uncommon that he attracted particular attention. He proved to be the Honorable Thomas Erskine, youngest brother of the Earl of Buchan, who has since risen into such brilliant reputation at the bar in Westminster Hall.

Thus came face to face two great personalities of the 18th century.

The conversation during the evening described by Boswell was on literature. It began when Johnson discussed the respective merits of the authors of Tom Jones and Clarissa, and declared Fielding to be a "blockhead" and "a barren rascal," and added that "there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all Tom Jones."

Erskine then joined in: "Surely, Sir," he objected, "Richardson is very tedious." "Why, Sir," retorted Johnson, "if you were to read Richardson for the story, your patience would be much fretted, that you would hang yourself! But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving the occasion to the sentiment."

Boswell goes on to say that the young officer had "an egotistic propensity" to which he yielded on that occasion, for he went on to talk, "to the amusement and with the goodwill of the company," of his life with his regiment in Minorca, and of how he had read prayers and preached to his comrades in arms.

Then, entering upon a somewhat reckless course in view of Dr. Johnson's presence, he stated his objection to a

\* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 19 October 1968. Chairman: Mr. Lewis Raddon, LL.B., D.P.A.



passage in Scripture, "where it is said the Angel of the Lord in one night smote 185,000 Egyptians." "Sir," commented Johnson, "you should recollect that there was a supernatural interposition; they were destroyed by pestilence. You must not suppose that the Angel of the Lord went about and stabbed each of them with a dagger, or knocked them on the head man by man."<sup>1</sup>

## II

This chance meeting, under the observant eyes of Boswell, of those two great men, the renowned author and the youth of genius, is a fitting introduction for admirers of Dr. Johnson to the fascinating story of the rise to fame of Thomas Erskine. His life history has about it all the qualities of a fairy tale: luck, chance, fate and the exciting oscillations of failure and success, poverty and affluence, obscurity and dazzling fame. Eminent lawyers, from Lord Campbell to Lord Birkett in our own day, have traced inimitable literary portraits of the great advocate, and the interest of the general public in his exploits in the Courts of Law has never waned.

Erskine was born on the 10th of January, 1750, "in a small and ill-furnished room in an upper flat of a very lofty house in the old town of Edinburgh." He died on the 17th of November, 1823. Thus his life spanned rather more than seven decades of history crowded with dramatic events - wars, revolutions, new scientific discoveries and inventions, the coming of industrialism, and the growth of democratic forms of government. Such was the background, economic, political and social, to the life and work of this remarkable man.

The social and financial position of his family also exerted a powerful influence upon the boy's early life, education and outlook. Thomas was the youngest son of Henry David, tenth Earl of Buchan; thus by origin he was a scion of the old Scottish nobility. At the time of his birth, the fortune of the family had sunk to a very low level: it was said to have been reduced to existence on "an annual income of some £200 a year." The parental home - an ancient castle - had been abandoned because the means were lacking to maintain it, and the presence of the family in the Scottish capital was due to a desire to conceal its poverty and to provide the children with an excellent education in the city's schools and academies on terms more favourable than could be found elsewhere.

The boy's mother was a woman of outstanding intellect and charm. She was the daughter of Sir James Stewart of Good-trees in the County of Midlothian; and, though she was charged with the care of a large family and burdened by the constant struggle to make ends meet, she succeeded in maintaining a happy home which never lost its atmosphere of culture, piety and peace - thanks to her courage, bright spirit and skill in housewifery. Erskine, like so many other men of genius, owed his happy nature, gay courage and personal charm, to his mother.

Thomas received his formal education by attendance for some years at the High School of Edinburgh. Then, in 1762, the Buchan family went to live at St. Andrews, in the County of Fife. The family was perhaps led to take this step on account of its need for a home in a town where house-rents were lower than in Edinburgh and the educational facilities no less good. Thomas was at this time described "as of quick parts and retentive memory, rather idly inclined, but capable of great application - full of fun and frolic - and ever the favourite of his master and his playmates." Even in boyhood he was fond of books, and "read, in a desultory way, many English poems, plays, voyages, and travels."

The depleted fortunes of the family were a sad handicap to its youngest member. When his elder brothers had been provided for, there was no money left to send him to one of the ancient universities. And although his parents knew that his character and intelligence merited such an education, and that this was also their youngest son's own wish, it was decided that he should be sent to sea as a midshipman. Thomas stood out against this course for a time, pleading that as he could not be given a university education, a commission in the army be procured for him. It was not to be.

Lack of money settled the issue. It was found to be too expensive to buy a commission, as was then the custom; and, somewhat sorrowfully, he was given his blue jacket, his cocked hat and sword, and in March 1764, after taking an affecting leave of his family, he embarked in the Tartar man-of-war at Leith, and began a four-years' spell of service in the West Indies and on the coast of America. The young midshipman never saw his father again. Happily, his mother - to whom he owed so much - lived to welcome him back home and to see the opening of his brilliant career at the Bar.

The captain of his ship, Sir David Lindsey, by his kind and considerate conduct, helped the young officer to master his professional duties and to settle down to his hard and uncongenial life aboard a man-of-war. Erskine, true to his own nature, managed often to escape into a quiet corner of the vessel to indulge his passion for reading. It has been said of him that he picked up some new volume at every port he visited. His own ardent spirit and gay temperament inclined him to acceptance of life at sea. But in those years it was a hard school for a youth in his teens.

Later on, when his captain was replaced, Erskine continued to serve under his successor, Commodore Johnson, an old sea dog, who had the reputation of being a harsh disciplinarian. Indeed, the story was widely believed that it was his conduct towards the young officer which decided the latter to leave the Navy. There is scant evidence to support the supposition. In fact, the midshipman was something of a favourite with his new commander, and it was he who appointed Erskine to the rank of acting-lieutenant. But when, at the conclusion of the voyage, the ship returned to Portsmouth and the crew was paid off, he was told by the Admiralty that, owing to the number of midshipmen awaiting promotion, he could not be granted a lieutenant's commission. Naturally he was indignant and vowed he would not go to sea again as a midshipman.

### III

Perplexed by the collapse of his hopes of a career in the Royal Navy, he had at this time to bear the grief caused by the death of his father. Erskine was then eighteen years of age, when in accordance with the custom of the English upper classes he ought to have been entered as a student at Oxford or Cambridge. Such indeed was his own wish. However, the pittance which came to him under his father's will would not suffice to pay the cost of such an education, nor were his talents then sufficiently known to risk sending him to the Bar. He had no alternative but to join the Army. So, backed by a recommendation from John Duke of Argyll, he purchased an ensign's commission "at the regulation price." It absorbed the whole of his small patrimony.

The next two years were spent with the Royals - then quartered in various provincial towns at home. There is little factual evidence as to how Erskine reacted to his new life.

But Lord Campbell conjectured that "the sprightly ensign, when he was not at drill, or carrying the colours on a field day, employed himself in reading books which he borrowed from circulating libraries, and flirting with pretty girls in the neighbourhood."<sup>2</sup>

He fell in love with one of them, the daughter of Daniel Moore, M.P. for Marlow; and on the 21st April 1770 they were married. This match was considered by some to be "imprudent" or "ill-advised," but such criticism had no foundation in fact. It arose from the simple truth that the girl was without fortune. The union proved to be a lasting and happy one. In Lord Campbell's phrase, "They lived together in un-interrupted harmony."

Soon the time came when his regiment was ordered to Minorca, then under British rule; Erskine and his wife spent the next two years in the island. His duties appear to have been light, and he was left with ample leisure to improve his mind. The time was devoted to a systematic study of English literature. He read and re-read the great English poets and dramatists - Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden and Pope. Lord Campbell says of Erskine's study in those years: "He was ... so familiar with Shakespeare, that he could almost, like Porson, have held conversations on all subjects for days together in the phrases of this great dramatist. Dryden and Pope ... he not only perused and re-perused, but got almost entirely by heart."

He also tells us that the young officer delighted in Milton and quotes Lord Brougham, the distinguished 18th century law reformer's tribute to the thoroughness of those studies: "the noble speeches in Paradise Lost may be deemed as good a substitute as could be discovered by the future orator for the immortal originals in the Greek models."<sup>3</sup>

No wonder that in after years Erskine always remembered and spoke of his life in Minorca with intense pleasure.

On his return to England, still only an ensign, he was granted leave of absence for some six months. He seems to have spent the greater part of his time with aristocratic relations in London, and was thus introduced to a gay and cultivated social life. His charming personality, gracious manners and vivacious talk also ensured for him a welcome in

literary circles. "Often he enlivened the assemblies of Mrs. Montague," Lord Campbell says; and amongst those he met there were Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Burney, and other celebrated wits of the day.

In 1773 Erskine became a lieutenant, but he was still dissatisfied with his position and future prospects. He moved from one country town to another with his regiment, but soon novelty wore off such a mode of life, and he still dreamed of a career at the Bar. The urge upon him to become a learned, famous and honoured man was as strong as ever.

#### IV

Then again chance played its transformative role in his life. It came about that the Assizes were being held in one of the country towns visited by the regiment. In an idle moment, Erskine, in full regimentals, entered the court to listen to the proceedings. The presiding judge was Lord Mansfield. Noticing the presence of the young officer, he asked who he was, and on being told that he was the youngest son of the late Lord Buchan, who was known personally to the judge, he invited the young man to the Bench and explained to him the case then being tried.

Erskine listened attentively to the conduct of two of the leading barristers on the circuit, and this again revealed the trait of vanity in his character: for the conclusion he drew was that he could have made "a much better speech than either of the two leaders." It was perhaps at that very moment he decided he would himself try his fortunes at the Bar. Later the same day, when he was at dinner with Lord Mansfield, Erskine told the famous judge of his resolve to read for the Bar. The advice he received was cautious; namely, while not discouraging his ambitions, Mansfield told him to consult in the first place with his family on the whole subject.

His mother, as was to be expected, lent eager and strong support to the idea; his brothers - one of whom was at the Scottish Bar - did not actually disapprove, but warned him of the hard path that lay ahead. His own mind was set upon making the experiment. In the course of the next year, he began his legal studies. So, on the 26th of April, 1775, he was admitted a student of Lincoln's Inn; and in January, 1776, under the somewhat free and easy method then prevailing, he

matriculated at Cambridge, and was entered on the books of Trinity College as a Gentleman Commoner. He resided in college for the period necessary to keep his terms, paying no attention to any studies in the place, and in due course became entitled to a degree without examination. He was later granted an honorary degree of A.M. Meanwhile, he had of course kept his terms at Lincoln's Inn. He had not yet quitted the Army, but had been given leave of absence.

He was desperately poor at this time. But he succeeded in selling his lieutenancy in September 1775, and the money he received enabled him to proceed with his plans. As early as possible, he entered the chambers of Mr. Justice Buller, and when the latter was raised to the Bench, Erskine entered himself as the pupil of another eminent pleader, George Wood, with whom he continued to study until he was called to the Bar. That important event in his life took place at Lincoln's Inn on the 3rd July, 1778. He was then twenty-eight years of age.

It may here be remarked that despite his somewhat haphazard education, his late entry upon his professional career, his pecuniary straits, and the fact that "he never did become a profound jurist,"<sup>4</sup> he was destined to become, as Lord Birkett declared, "the very greatest advocate who ever practised at the English Bar."<sup>5</sup>

#### V

His rise to fame and wealth at the Bar was unprecedented and spectacular. The impression made upon the minds of lawyers by his success is shown in Lord Campbell's own account of "Erskine's first appearance to the dazzled eyes of the British public." He prefaced these words by remarking: "But suddenly he was to be the idol of all ranks of the community, and to wallow in riches. Such a quick transition from misery to splendour is only equalled in the Arabian Nights, when the genii of the wonderful lamp appeared to do the bidding of Aladdin."<sup>6</sup>

Chance again played its part in securing him a dramatic opening in his new career as advocate. He owed his instant success in getting a first brief to a chance contact with a certain Captain Baillie at a house to which Erskine had been driven to take shelter from a passing storm. Though, in fact, the two men were not introduced to each other on that



night. The link between them was that both had been seamen.

Captain Baillie, in recognition of his services at sea, had secured an appointment as Lieutenant Governor of Greenwich Hospital, and soon discovered grave abuses in its administration. These being such as to defraud those legally and morally entitled to the advantages of the institution. He prepared and presented successively petitions to the directors, the governors, and the Lord of the Admiralty, asking for inquiry and redress. His pleas fell on deaf ears.

He then set out a clear statement of his case, citing the facts without exaggeration, but at the same time commenting sternly upon the conduct of Lord Sandwich, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who was accused of abusing his official powers for electioneering purposes, to wit, to place in the Hospital men who had never been in sea service. The issue of this printed publication led to the suspension of the Lieutenant Governor by the Board of Admiralty. Then, at the instigation of Lord Sandwich, who carefully kept himself in the background, some of the minor agents who had come in for criticism decided to proceed against Captain Baillie for criminal libel. The case came on in the Michaelmas Term and excited an intense public interest.

Captain Baillie, having meanwhile learnt that Erskine had himself been a sailor and had spoken out against the corrupt and tyrannical actions of Lord Sandwich, declared that he would have him as one of his counsel. The young advocate, sitting the next day in his chambers, unknown and briefless, was delighted to receive a slip of paper on which was written the words:

King's Bench  
The King v. Baillie  
Retainer for the Defendant  
The Honorable Thomas Erskine  
One Guinea.

Lord Campbell adds, "and a yellow golden guinea was actually put into his hand." Typical of the man was his assumption, on receipt of this news, that he was to be sole counsel against the rule granted by the Court of Kings Bench. His consternation can be imagined when he learnt at a later stage that he was one of five counsels. In view of the seniority of the other four advocates, it seemed unlikely that his voice would be listened

to in court.

However, at a consultation, three of the counsels advised Captain Baillie to agree to a compromise which the prosecutors had suggested, namely, that the rule be discharged, the defendant paying all costs. The Junior seized the initiative by saying, "My advice, gentlemen, may savour more of my late profession than my present, but I am against consenting." This opinion coincided with that of the defendant. He gave the young advocate a friendly hug, declaring, "You are the man for me."

## VI

The scene moved to Westminster Hall. The case came on before a Bench presided over by Lord Mansfield. The proceedings dragged on during a whole afternoon. One of the leading counsel began to show cause; long affidavits were read; and other speeches were made. Then, as the daylight faded out, the prosy business was ended when the judge, supposing that all the defendant's counsel had spoken, rose and announced, "We will go on with this case tomorrow morning." Had the sitting been prolonged, it is almost certain that Erskine would not have been able to do more than add a few formal words. Fate had again granted him its favour. It ensured him the next day a dramatic entry upon a brilliant triumph in the Courts of Law.

When the proceedings opened next morning, it was expected the Solicitor General would speak in support of his rule, but instead Erskine rose from the back row of the court and began to speak in a clear and firm tone of voice:

"My Lord," he said, "I am likewise of counsel for the author of this supposed libel; and if the matter for consideration had been merely a question of private wrong, I should have thought myself well justified, after the very able defence made by the learned gentlemen who have spoken before me, in sparing your lordship, already fatigued with repetition, and in leaving my client to the judgement of the Court. But upon an occasion of this serious and dangerous complexion, - when a British subject is brought before a court of justice only for having ventured to attack abuses, which owe their continuance to the danger of attacking them, - when, without any motives but benevolence, justice, and public spirit, he has

ventured to attack, though supported by power, and in that department too where it was the duty of his office to detect and expose them, - I cannot relinquish the high privilege of trying to do justice to such merit, - I will not give up even my small share of the honour of repelling and of exposing so odious a prosecution."<sup>7</sup>

These words were the prelude to an address so moving and convincing that competent opinion has declared it to have been "unprecedented." Lord Campbell thought it to have been "the most wonderful forensic effort of which we have any account in our annals. It was the début of a barrister just called and wholly unpractised in public speaking - before a Court crowded with men of the greatest distinction, belonging to all parties in the state."<sup>8</sup>

Before leaving this account of the trial mention must be made of an incident which occurred during his speech that drew upon him a rebuke from the most eminent judge in the land. Erskine had mentioned the name of Lord Sandwich, who was not before the Court, as a preliminary to an attack upon him for the part he had played in the case. But so vehement was the young advocate, and so strong was the sympathy he had amongst those present in the Court, that even Lord Mansfield - who correctly tried to correct the irregularity - allowed Erskine to make his points.

His words in reply to the presiding judge were:

I know that he [Lord Sandwich] is not formally before the Court, but for that very reason I will bring him before the Court: he has placed these men in the front of the battle, in hopes to escape under their shelter, but I will not join battle with them; their vices, though screwed up to the highest pitch of human depravity, are not of dignity enough to vindicate the combat with me. I will drag him to light, who is the dark mover behind this scene of iniquity. I assert that the Earl of Sandwich has but one road to escape out of this business without pollution and disgrace, and that is, by publicly disavowing the acts of the prosecutors, and restoring Captain Bailey to his command ...

But if, on the contrary, he continues to protect the prosecutors, in spite of the evidence of their guilt ... if he keeps this injured man suspended, or dares to turn

that suspension into a removal, I shall not scruple to declare him an accomplice in their guilt, a shameful oppressor, a disgrace to his rank, and a traitor to his trust.<sup>9</sup>

The decision of the court was that the rule be discharged with cost. Captain Baillie had won his case; his young advocate had congratulations showered upon him in court; and he received an ovation from the public when he walked to the retiring through Westminster Hall.

When asked how he had the courage to stand up to Lord Mansfield, he made his memorable answer: "I thought my little children were plucking at my gown, and heard them saying 'Now is the time to get us bread.'" Before he left the Hall that day, the attorneys flocked around him with offers of retainers. Fame and fortune at the Bar were now at his command.

## VII

A volume would be needed to describe the succession of famous cases in which Erskine figured. Chance favoured him, because during the twenty-eight years from 1778, when he made his first speech before Lord Mansfield in the King's Bench, to the day in 1806 when he became Lord Chancellor in Grenville's ministry, he was engaged in an historic battle for the rights of the Jury, the liberty of the press, freedom to publish books and newspapers, and against the attempts of Government to misuse legal processes for its own purposes. In carrying out that noble task, Erskine became pre-eminent at Bar: in Lord Birkett's apt words, "he had no rival and no challenger."

In those years the cry "Erskine for the Defence" rang out over all England. His words and his example put courage and determination into hearts of thousands of nameless men and women - some of whom spent years in prison - thus strengthening the struggle for freedom in Britain. Erskine's legal labours therefore belong to a shining chapter in modern history.

The student of legal development may learn much from the perusal and analysis of his speeches, e.g. the one in which he defended Lord George Gordon in 1780. Lord Campbell, trained from youth as a lawyer and with thirty years' experience

at the Bar, found in it not only "great acuteness, powerful reasoning, enthusiastic zeal, and burning eloquence, but the most masterly view ever given of the English law of high treason the foundation of all our liberties." There seems little doubt that the advocate's address to the Jury on that occasion saved the life of the accused.

Another of his cases, and one which was a severe test of his moral fibre, had to do with the action taken by the Government against the Second Part of Thomas Paine's book The Rights of Man. A retainer was sent to Erskine, and he had to decide whether he should accept. The cause was to be tried in the Court in which he practised as a barrister; and it was prima facie his duty to defend the accused by all legal and honourable means. But he was also aware that public opinion had been worked up against Paine; and pressure was being exerted upon him by Lord Loughborough and by the then Prince of Wales, as well as by a number of well-meaning busy-bodies, not to take the brief. The advice they offered was rejected. He then became the target for the scurrilous attacks of the newspapers and their readers. He paid little heed to the clamour.

True to his usual practice in court, Erskine began with a clear statement of what was at stake in the case, and made a classic defence of his professional conduct:

"Little indeed did they know me, who thought that such calumnies would influence my conduct; I will for ever - at all hazards - assert the dignity, independence, and integrity of the English Bar; without which, impartial justice, the most valuable part of the English Constitution, can have no existence. From the moment that any advocate can be permitted to say, that he will or will not stand between the Crown and the subject arraigned in the Court where he daily sits to practice, from that moment the liberties of England are at an end. If the advocate refuses to defend from what he may think of the charge or of the defence, he assumes the character of the Judge; may he assume it before the hour of judgement; and, in proportion to his rank and reputation, puts the heavy influence of perhaps a mistaken opinion into the scale against the accused, in whose favour the benevolent principle of English law makes all presumptions, and which commands the very Judge to be his counsel." 10

He then proceeded to the defence of the accused, who was not present in court, and laid down the legal principles concerning political discussion and criticism in a free country. His plea was rejected by the Jury; they returned a verdict of guilty. Moncure Conway, author of The Life of Thomas Paine, pays this tribute to Erskine's advocacy: "Erskine's powerful defence of the constitutional rights of thought and speech in England is historical. He built around Paine an enduring constitutional fortress, compelling Burke and Fox to lend aid from their earlier speeches."<sup>11</sup>

At the end of the 18th century many societies were formed, and a widespread agitation was conducted, in favour of parliamentary reform. The governments of the time, drawn in the main from the land-owning aristocracy and the wealthy merchant princes, misguidedly proceeded against the reformers by resorting to the law of "constructive treason." Erskine struck his first shattering blow against these tactics when he secured the acquittal of Lord George Gordon. But for a time the authorities pursued the course upon which they had entered.

In these actions taken against the leaders of the popular movement, they were accused of attempting to bring about a revolution in these islands, and so became guilty constructively of conspiring, in legal parlance, "to compass the death of our Lord the King." Had the plans of the Government gone unchecked by the Courts, the campaign for a wider franchise and a more representative Parliament might well have been delayed, if not destroyed. But, thanks to Erskine's courage and skill as an advocate, he secured the acquittal of Hardy, Horne-Tooke and Thelwall when they were faced by these specious changes in the Courts, and thereby compelled the reactionary Government of the time to abandon such actions against the reformers and their supporters.

A brief reference must be made to the famous case of John Stockdale, a London bookseller, who, in the course of his ordinary business, published a pamphlet written by Mr. Logan, a minister of the Church of Scotland. It was written in defence of Warren Hastings and it criticized sharply his prosecutors. In one passage the House of Commons was referred to as "a tribunal of inquisition" rather than a court of Parliament. The publication had a large sale. On a motion of Charles James Fox, the House of Commons asked that Mr. Stockdale be proceeded against for libel. It was a preposterous



charge. It came for trial before Lord Kenyon and a special jury in the court of Kings Bench at Westminster.

Of Erskine's speech to the jury on behalf of Mr. Logan it can only be said that it was a masterpiece. A writer in the Edinburgh Review reflected the opinion of informed minds of that day when he wrote of the address: "It is justly regarded by all English lawyers as a consummate specimen of the art of addressing a jury - as a standard, a sort of precedent for treating cases of libel." Lord Campbell's own tribute was no less emphatic: "As counsel for Stockdale he made the finest speech ever delivered at the English Bar, and he won a verdict which for ever established the freedom of the press in England."<sup>12</sup> This great legal utterance, one of the gems of English eloquence, merits perusal in our own time, for it is a classic plea for free and rational discussion in human affairs.

## VII

It remains to say that there were other aspects of Erskine's life and work which have found no reference in this address; but it is necessary before we take our leave of him to remind ourselves of them. There was his work in the House of Commons as member for Portsmouth, but it must be said with candour that his talents were better fitted for the forum than the senate. Nor, when he was created a Peer of the Realm in 1806 and became Lord Chancellor, did he ever win in the House of Lords triumphs which equalled his achievements in the Courts of Law. He wrote several widely read pamphlets and, after he retired from legal and public work, sought to relieve his ennui by writing a book which bore the title of Armata, but again his achievements as a writer did not enhance his fame.

Then, too, in any attempt to give a rounded picture of his work in the Courts, it is necessary to have in mind not alone his powers of speech, or the quickness of his mind, or his command of language, or even his dramatic style of speaking. There was also the hard work that ensured his mastery of details in all his great cases, and enabled him to make - like Lord Simon in this century - those presentations which imposed order upon a mass of relevant fact and made the realities of a given case clear to both judge and juror.

Lord Birkett, in his famous broadcast on six great advocates, had this to say of Erskine's work in the Courts:

Erskine set new standards of advocacy. Until his day there were few graces of rhetoric exhibited in King's Bench courts. His strength lay in presentation. The clear statements of facts, which is the first requirement of modern advocacy, was always observed by Erskine; and he combined with persuasive presentation of the facts a clear and compelling view of the conclusions to which he desired the court to come. At a time when the bullying of witnesses was a common practice, Erskine was always courteous and good-humoured. He united cogency and lucidity; and though his style of oratory may be unsuited to modern ears, being too ornate and too prolix, it was perfectly adapted to the age in which he lived.<sup>13</sup>

Erskine, like Johnson, was a man of the 18th century. Some of the advocate's imperfections, to which none could be blind, belonged to the society in which he lived and worked. But in common with the greatest minds of the age he strove manfully to defend liberty, justice and reason. "He was," as Campbell wrote of him, "the brightest ornament of which the English Bar can boast ... and he was the charm of every society he entered."

#### Documentation

1. Life of Johnson, by Boswell. Roger Ingpen's Ed; Vol.1, p.405.
2. Lives of the Lord Chancellors, by Lord Campbell, Vol.9, p.377.
3. Ibid., pp.377/8.
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5. Six Great Advocates, by Lord Birkett, p.82. Penguin Books.
6. Lives of Lord Chancellors, p.389.
7. The Speeches of the Rt. Hon. Thomas Erskine. Collected by James Ridgway, 2nd Ed., (London, 1813) Vol. I, p.5. In the four volumes of this edition may be read the great speeches of Erskine on the liberty of the subject, in defence of Paine and against constructive treasons.
8. Ibid., p.396.
9. Speeches by Erskine, p.30/31.
10. Ibid., Vol.II, pp.90/91.
11. Life of Thomas Paine, p.153.
12. Lives of the Lord Chancellors, p.443.
13. Six Great Advocates, p.90.

## DOCTOR JOHNSON'S CATHOLIC CONTEMPORARIES\*

Douglas Woodruff, C.B.E., G.C.S.G., M.A.

"Doctor Johnson," said Mrs. Thrale, "though beloved by all his Roman Catholic acquaintance, yet was he a most unshaken Church of England man." It is true that when Mrs. Thrale married Signor Piozzi, Johnson took it extremely badly, and among the charges he brought against her was that she was betraying both her country and her religion by marrying an Italian and a Catholic. But he wrote this in the last years, and indeed in the last summer of his life, after he had grown into somewhat tyrannical ways as her guest. As is well known, she lived as Mrs. Piozzi for thirty-six years, and the marriage was not a mistake. But Johnson may have had a certain prejudice against Italian Catholics. Fond though he was of his Italian literary friend, Baretti, he had had to give testimony to the excellence of Baretti's character after Baretti, in the best Italian fashion, had stabbed a man in Soho, and was only acquitted because of the impressiveness of the literary friends, Burke as well as Johnson, who came to praise him. It was Baretti who told Johnson that there was in the Roman service a very fine prayer, the Pater Noster, about which he had often wondered who its author had been.

Boswell as a young man had embraced the Roman Catholic religion as a brief episode when he was twenty. He had been attracted to the Church in Glasgow, and his father, who had taken the news very badly, had written to his friends in London asking them to distract his son, and plainly thought any kind of dissipation much preferable to conversion to Rome. As is well known, Boswell took very happily to this occasion, and it was his undoing in his fifties. He does not seem to have told Johnson of this escapade, and in his biography, talks as a stout Protestant, serving up all the stock objections about Purgatory and the invocation of saints, and reporting Johnson's defence of the Roman position, though he adds the rider that he could well imagine Johnson taking the other side in the argument. But in general, there can be no question that the Doctor had more than usual tolerance for the Roman Church, that this came naturally out of his own Toryism, his hostility to the Whigs, the makers of 1688, and his attachment to the principle of hereditary monarchy. When he went to the Highlands he met a good many Catholics, and Jacobites, but he

\* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 16 November 1968. Chairman: The Very Reverend W. R. Matthews, C.H., K.C.V.O., D.Litt., D.D., S.T.D., F.R.S.L.

went nearly thirty years after the '45, in that decade of the '70s which saw the first beginning of toleration leading up to the First Toleration Act in 1778, in which his friend Burke played so large a part.

There was another contact with traditional Catholicism when Johnson went to Paris with Mrs. Thrale and visited a number of religious houses in 1774, and the English Benedictines in Paris promised to keep his cell for him. If he had ever written up the notes he took of his Paris outing it seems clear that these visits, though largely to inspect libraries and rare volumes, would have been the highlights of the month's tour.

But when this is said, the total volume of contact does not amount to a great deal, and it is quite easy to understand why. Johnson's life-span, 1709-1784, covered exactly the darkest period in the history of the English Roman Catholic minority. He was born a few years after the makers of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had sealed their victory by passing further penal laws by which no Catholic could either inherit or purchase land, while priests, though no longer liable to the death penalty for being in the country, were liable to life imprisonment if they were caught saying Mass. Historians differ in their estimates of the numerical strength of the Catholics and, what is even harder to measure, the intensity of their conviction and practical zeal when James II was king, but the alarm felt all through the century, from the Gunpowder Plot to the flight of James, is only intelligible on the assumption - for which there is abundant evidence - that in addition to the avowed Papists there were a great many well-disposed to the Old Religion, and likely to return to it. Charles I with his French Catholic wife had consistently sought to soften the harshness of the penal laws, and one of the first acts of the Long Parliament was to publish, with William Prynne as editor, all the papers which fell into their hands showing Charles letting off Catholics from recusancy fines, or letting them out of gaol, and this was one of the main charges against him, while the Catholics for their part were Cavaliers to a man. It was the same story under Charles II, with the King much better disposed than the Parliament but, at a pinch, always ready to give way and sacrifice the Catholics if the opposition seemed too fierce.

The Catholics knew they had much more to hope from the Stuarts than from the Whigs, and they were predominantly

Jacobite, sufficient to give a political colouring to the legislation against them. They were excluded from any participation in the life of their country because their loyalty was suspect. They recognised the Pope, and the Pope recognised James III as long as he lived. The new penal laws passed under William III were more in the nature of reserve powers which could be invoked immediately if need arose than positive enactments meant to be enforced. Thus Catholics were protected by the public opinion of their neighbours and did inherit their fathers' lands, although by law the nearest Protestant relative could step in and claim the inheritance. A man who did so would have incurred the opprobrium of his neighbours, and it was much more usual for Protestant relatives to agree to act as trustees. If a Catholic was forbidden by law to have a horse worth more than £5, there was nothing to prevent arrangements with Protestant relatives for the continuous use of much more valuable animals. But the policy of sustained discouragements was singularly effective.

Johnson died just a hundred years after the great anti-Catholic agitations of the last years of Charles II's reign, with the abortive drive to exclude the Duke of York from the Succession. It had been a hundred years in which the Catholic numbers had steadily declined. Historians estimate that we must consider that at least a tenth of the population was genuinely Catholic at the end of Charles II's reign, but that a hundred years later the Catholics were not one in ten of the population - they were at best one in a hundred. The figure that Burke gave the electors at Bristol when arguing for a measure of toleration was that there were perhaps 70,000 Catholics, and Newman in his *Apologia*, writing of his early boyhood, talks of the Catholics as numbering about 60,000 - and this in a country rising from six million at the earlier date to some ten million by the beginning of the next century.

Not only were they very few, but the only ones of any means and independence lived in the country and turned in on themselves. The old English Catholic landed families were strongest in Lancashire and North Staffordshire, but they were curiously strong also in Sussex, and it was from the household of one of those families, the Gages of Fyrie Place, that Johnson's chief Catholic contemporary came.

Richard Challoner, born in 1691, was eighteen years older than Johnson. His mother, who was housekeeper to the Gages, became a Catholic in the first years of Queen Anne's

reign and brought her son into the Church with her. Like all Catholic boys at that time, he could only be educated as a Catholic if he went abroad, and he was sent to the English College at Douai which Cardinal Allen had founded for just this purpose in the first years of Elizabeth's reign as soon as Elizabeth's government decided to treat schoolmasters like clergy and exact conformity with the Church Establishment. Challoner, thus educated overseas, came back on the English Mission just as George I mounted the throne. He was to live till 1781 not only to see the first beginnings of toleration, but also to suffer at the hands of the Gordon Rioters from whom he had to flee to Finchley from his Holborn home. As he was in his ninetieth year, it is not surprising that he succumbed soon after.

Challoner has left his mark, and it has not yet been wholly effaced. His literary output was very remarkable. He took the Rheims New Testament of 1582 and the Old Testament of 1605, the stock Catholic Bible which the compilers of the Authorised Version used. In his turn Challoner drew freely on the Authorised Version. There is thus a double relationship between the Authorised Version and Douai Challoner, the Catholic Bible, which held the field until the appearance of the late Ronald Knox's single-handed translation some fifteen years ago. Now there are many more translations, but there are many of us who still prefer the Authorised Version and Douai Challoner. He was the chief source for the histories of the three hundred martyrs, mostly priests, who were put to death from the time of Henry VIII until the last Archbishop Plunket of Dublin in 1681. It was Challoner's Memoirs of Missionary Priests, based on materials kept at Douai where most of the martyr priests had been educated, which told the depressed Catholics of the eighteenth century about the heroic age of their forebears. He compiled spiritual books, volumes of meditations which created a special kind of English piety and which held the field until the middle of the nineteenth century when enthusiastic Oxford converts, like Father Faber, brought in a whole range of more emotional devotions from Italy. He compiled the chief Catholic prayer-book The Garden of the Soul which lasted two hundred years as the leading prayer-book, only challenged in the last century by one with the even more attractively utilitarian title The Key of Heaven - a very useful thing to have. He wrote the Lives of the Saints until he was supplanted by his contemporary, Alban Butler, whose twelve volumes, one per month, have been many times re-edited.



I mention these works because it was a remarkable output for a scattered community, many of whom were not very literate. Even in the eighteenth century the small Catholic body included immigrants from Ireland, for Ireland at that time had a population about as large as that of England. It was the presence of some 5000 Irish in London, as well as other foreigners and those who liked to take advantage of the Catholic chapels attached to the Legations of Catholic powers, which resulted in something like a third of the Catholics in the country congregating in and around London.

The root reason for this was undoubtedly the protection that Henrietta Maria could and did give to Catholics in the reign of Charles I. Under James II, Catholic schools were started in London; by consequence public opinion in London was more conscious of a Catholic presence and more apprehensive of it than opinion in other cities. The word "mob" came into the English language to describe the processions of Londoners organised by Shaftesbury and his companions in their efforts to exclude James II from the throne, and the Gordon Riots were a London achievement, unmatched for violence anywhere else, with Bristol a poor second.

Richard Challoner in the last half of his life lived in Holborn, geographically quite near to Johnson. His office was that of Vicar-General for the South-Western District, London and the Home Counties. He was technically liable all the time to life imprisonment but it was fear of the populace rather than fear of the Law that made him live with extreme circumspection.

The Ship Inn still stands at the top of Kingsway in a passage leading to Lincoln Inn Fields where Challoner and his fellow-Catholics used to meet, and where Mass would be celebrated, being spoken of as Prayers, and with as little liturgical conspicuousness as the rubrics permitted, so that all a casual visitor would have seen would have been a small group huddled together on benches with their tankards. This was only a few hundred yards from the Sardinia Chapel, but these chapels were intended to be only for the foreign diplomats, rather in the way the Church of St. Louis in Moscow is permitted in our own time. A little further west, by Golden Square, was the Bavarian Chapel, which has also continued, like the Sardinian, as an ordinary Catholic parish church.

What really made a great difference to the general

attitude of both the government and the populace towards Roman Catholics was the atheistic character of the French Revolution. Before the two countries were at war in 1792 the civil constitution of the clergy had begun to drive French bishops and priests into exile and, in the course of a year or two, no fewer than five thousand had made their homes here, so that thirteen years after Dr. Johnson's death there were considerably more French priests than English priests in England.

Many of today's parishes, like St. Mary's, Cadogan Street, were founded by these French priests. The government of George III gave them pensions; not a voice was raised in Parliament when a vote was moved to give them £200,000 a year, a lot of money, though not a great deal for each recipient. Bishops got £10 a month, priests 35/-, and laymen 31/6, but many made themselves self-supporting, opening schools both for paying and for poor children, a soup kitchen and a seminary. The English clergy of the Establishment, entertained their French counterparts, and the origins of the Oxford Movement a generation later can be traced to this intercourse as English parsons learnt from French priests the Catholic doctrine of the priesthood in all its range and special dignity.

At the same time the Royal Navy, which had up to then an unbroken tradition of warring with the two chief Catholic powers on the Continent, fighting the combined fleets of France and Spain, found itself in alliance with the Pope for the defence of the Papal States as well as of the Catholic Bourbons of Naples. All this bore fruit in the peace negotiations after the fall of Napoleon, when the Pope was restored to his estates.

But there was still a great battle to be fought for Catholic Emancipation. George III had been born on Catholic ground in Norfolk House because of the close friendship of his father, Poor Fred of the rhyme, with the Duke of Norfolk of the day. The same Duke and Duchess had also managed to be good friends with George II and Queen Caroline and their influence is credited with the way the 1745 did not lead to any new outcrop of Government measures against the Catholics who had, for their part, disappointed Charles Edward when he marched carefully through Lancashire in the hopes of attracting them to his banner. George III had been on good personal terms with Thomas Weld of Lulworth, and personally gave him advice that he might build a chapel provided it did not look like a chapel from the outside; this was done both at Lulworth and at Wardour by the Arundels. The nature of Catholic disabilities in the eighteenth century

was similar to that of Spanish Protestants in our own time, when most of the disabilities were to avoid breaches of public order - the fear which the Gordon Riots proved to be well-founded that anything that was recognised as a Catholic chapel would be in danger from the mob. But the Catholics also had great legal disabilities from which the Spanish Protestants have been free, because there was never any danger that the Protestants might come to power in Spain.

F. W. M. DRAPER, Ph.D., L ès L., F.S.A.

We very much missed Dr. Draper when he resigned from the Society over a year ago on account of ill-health, and now we deeply regret having to announce his death in October, 1968.

He had been a member of the Committee for many years, had read papers to the Society, and was proud that he had once carried out the wreath-laying ceremony at the Annual Commemoration in Westminster Abbey. We for our part are glad to think that he always gave us his loyal support, despite his many other activities.

DR. G. P. GOOCH, O.M., C.H.

The Society regrets to record the passing last year of the distinguished historian Dr. G. P. Gooch, aged 94. Throughout his long and active career, he made notable contributions in many fields. He sat as a Liberal Member of Parliament, edited the Contemporary Review for nearly half a century, was a past president of the Historical Association, and an authority on International affairs. In 1939 he was made a Companion of Honour and just before his 90th birthday he was admitted to the Order of Merit.

Although as an historian his special period was the 18th century, he wrote about many other subjects, particularly the diplomatic history of the 19th century. In 1958 he gave the second of two papers on "Anglo-French Contacts in the Age of Johnson" to our Society.

THE DICTIONARY AND DRINK\*

Ross Wilson, M.A., Th.L.

Dr. Johnson's coverage of alcoholic beverages and related matters in his Dictionary was so complete and recondite that we can only touch in this paper on the outstanding entries he made. First, we must make the subdivision into beverages and related matters which are essential parts of the alcoholic beverage industry, and its world-wide popular acceptance.

With the entry "Alcohol" we are at the heart of the matter and the Doctor borrowed his definition from John Quincy's Dictionary of Physic, as follows: "An Arabic term used by chymists for a high rectified dephlegmated spirit of wine, or for any thing reduced into an impalpable powder." The two appended quotations illustrate, first, the "impalpable powder" interpretation persists throughout the adjoining words. Thus "Alcoholization": "the act of alcoholizing or rectifying spirits; or of reducing bodies to an impalpable powder." Again with the verb "To Alcoholize": "1. To make an alcohol; that is, to rectify spirits till they are wholly dephlegmated. 2. To comminute powder till it is wholly without roughness."

The Doctor was perfectly correct in his derivation and "impalpable powder" interpretation: the word is of Arabic origin, being derived from the particle al and the word kohl, an impalpable powder used in the East for painting the eyebrows, and going back in practice to the ancient Egyptians. Its current application to the product resulting from the distillation of wine is comparatively recent.

"Ale" allows the Doctor free rein as a true Englishman to his knowledge and patriotism. First, the definition: "1. A liquor made by infusing malt in hot water, and then fermenting the liquor." The quotes open with one from the Porter in Shakespeare's Henry VIII: "I'll scratch your heads: you must be seeing christenings! do you look for ale and cakes here, you rude rascals?" The second quote is of accurate historical interest: "The fertility of the soil in grain, and its being not proper for vines, put the Egyptians upon drinking ale, of which they were the first inventors."

His second definition is also historically correct: "2. A merry meeting used in country places." The first

\* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 21 December 1968. Chairman: Mrs. A. G. Dowdeswell.

expanding quote puts it in perspective: "That ale is festival, appears from its sense in composition; as, among others, in the words Leet-ale, Lamb-ale, Whitson-ale, Clerk-ale, and Church-ale." Quite correct, and he might have added "Bride-ale" - from which we get the word "Bridal". We cannot here repeat all his quotations, such as one from Ben Jonson.

There follows "Aleberry" derived "from ale and berry" described as "A beer made by boiling ale with spice and sugar, and sops of bread: a word used only in conversation." So to "ale-brewer" - "One that professes to brew ale," with the factual addition: "The summer-made malt brews ill, and is disliked by most of our brewers." The next entry is "Ale-conner" with this interesting appendage: "An officer in the city of London, whose business it is to inspect the measures of publick houses. Four of them are chosen or rechosen annually by the common-hall of the city; and whatever might be their use formerly, their places are now regarded only as sine-cures for decayed citizens." In fact, they were not only appointed in London but were to be found across the country.

There follows a pile of words linked with ale: "Alecost" described as being "perhaps from ale and costus, the name of a herb". Or "Alegar", a relative of vinegar: "Sour ale; a kind of acid made by ale, as vinegar by wine, which has lost its spirit." Next, "Alehoof": "Ground-ivy so called by our Saxon ancestors, as being their chief ingredient in ale. An herb."

"Alehouse" allows Johnson to let rip with sheer Englishry and gives a precise example of his historical accuracy: "A house where ale is publicly sold; a tippling house. It is distinguished from a tavern where they sell wine." Actually, it was only shortly after the Doctor's death that this precise meaning of the word "Tavern" was dropped in statutory requirements and the like. "Alehouse" is illustrated by a quote from Shakespeare:

Thou, most beauteous inn,  
Why should hard-favoured grief be lodg'd in thee,  
When triumph is become an alehouse guest?

Then a quotation from South:

One would think it should be no easy matter to bring any man of sense in love with an alehouse; indeed, of so much

sense, as seeing and smelling amounts to; there being such strong encounters of both, as would quickly send him packing, did not the love of good fellowship reconcile to these nuisances.

The "Alehouse" entry acquired its functionaries and patrons. First, the "Alehouse-keeper" - "He that keeps ale publicly to sell." Then "Aleknicht" - "A pot-companion; a tippler: a word now out of use." After interruptions we come to "Ale-taster": "An officer appointed in every courtleet, and sworn to look to the assize and the goodness of bread and ale, or beer, within the precincts of that lordship." The "Ale" series rounds off with "Alewife" - "A woman that keeps an alehouse."

Meantime the Doctor intervenes with "Alembic": "A vessel used in distilling, consisting of a vessel placed over the fire, in which is contained the substance to be distilled, and a concave closely fitted on, into which the fumes arise by the heat; this cover has a beak or spout, into which the vapours rise, and by which they pass into a serpentine pipe which is kept cool by making many convolutions in a tub of water; here the vapours are condensed, and what entered the pipe in fumes, comes out in drops." A description of a pot still whisky distilling apparatus today, as in the Doctor's day.

With "Aqua" we are still with distilling and potable spirits, though the Latin meaning of the word is correctly given as "A word signifying water, very much used in chymical writings." So to "Aqua Fortis", described as "A corrosive liquor made by distilling purified nitre with calcined vitriol, or rectified oil of vitriol, in a strong heat," etc.

"Aqua-vitae" soon follows, and is defined thus: "It is commonly understood of what is otherwise called brandy, or spirit of wine, either simple or prepared with aromatics. But some appropriate the term brandy to what is procured from wine, or the grape; aqua-vitae, to that drawn after the same manner from malt." Shakespeare's Merry Wives provides the only quote:

I had rather trust a Fleming with my butter, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk with my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself.

Again it is spirits that assume pride of place in the Doctor's definition of "Ardent" - "1. Hot, burning; fiery."

And Newton's Optics is called in support:

Chymists observe, that vegetables, as lavender, rue, marjorum, &c. distilled before fermentation, yield oils without any burning spirits; but, after fermentation, yield ardent spirits without oils; which shews, that their oil is, by fermentation, converted into spirits.

It is of interest to note that the phrase "ardent spirits" was used by friend and foe alike well into the last century.

Then more particularized spirits, "Arrack": "The word arack is an Indian name for strong waters of all kinds; for they call our spirits and brandy English arack. But what we understand by the name arack is no other than a spirit procured by distillation from a vegetable juice called toddy, which flows by incision out of the coconut tree." Alternative spellings are given, with one or two r's.

With "Barley-broth" we are approaching beer; "A low word, sometimes used for strong beer." But first, a wine, "Bastard". Johnson lists it as No. 3 in this connection: "A kind of sweet wine. Coles, in his Dictionary, calls it raisin wine, 1677." It is illustrated by some examples drawn from literature, as Shakespeare:

Score a pint of bastard -  
Then your brown bastard is your only drink.

Now the Doctor was, of course, not only a Tory but a High Church Tory. But that does not preclude his recording the slang meaning of "Bishop": "A cant word for a mixture of wine, oranges, and sugar." Swift is called upon for the only quote:

Fine oranges,  
Well roasted, with sugar and wine in a cup,  
They'll make a sweet bishop when gentle folks sup.

And finally to "Beer": "Liquor made of malt and hops. It is distinguished from ale, either by being older or smaller." He might have made the distinction that ale is made without the addition of hops, but beer always with that addition. In any case, the Doctor gives four quotations to illustrate the usage and meaning of the word. With the rhyming "Bere" we are back with "Barley" once more, and Johnson simply adds, "beer corn,



barley bigge, or moncorne" appending "Cultivated every where to the foot of the hills, with oats, or bere, a species of barley."

The very word "Beverage" is given fascinating definitions. First, as natural to our enquiry, "Drink; liquor to be drunk in general." This is illustrated by four quotations, as, for instance, from Shakespeare:

I am his cupbearer;  
If from me he have wholesome beverage,  
Account me not your servant.

And from Dryden:

A pleasant beverage he prepar'd before,  
Of wine and honey mix'd.

No. 2 definition is taken from Mortimer: "Beverage, or water cyder, is made by putting the mure into a fat," - we should say vat - "adding water, as you desire it stronger or smaller. The water should stand forty-eight hours on it, before you press it; when it is pressed, tun it up immediately." Tun it, that is, cask it.

No. 3 is: "A treat upon wearing a new suit of clothes."  
No. 4: "A treat at first coming into a prison; called also a garnish."

Limiting ourselves at this stage strictly to the beverages, we come next to "Brandy" which Johnson defines as contracted from brandewine, or burnt wine, writing: "A strong liquor distilled from wine." Three quotes are given. First, from Beaumont and Fletcher's The Beggar's Bush: "Buy any brand wine, buy any brand wine." Secondly from the Restoration divine Dr. Robert South: "That man's work is done, and his name lies grovelling upon the ground in all the taverns, brandy-shops, and coffee-houses about the town." Thirdly, from Swift's Directions to the Footman: "If your master lodgeth at inns, every dram of brandy extraordinary that you drink raiseth his character."

"Brandy-wine" succeeds: "The same with brandy", with this quote from Wiseman's Surgery: "It has been a common saying, A hair of the same dog; and thought, that brandy-wine is a common relief to such." We may notice he makes no entry for Cognac; I have cited his brandy one in full.

"Brew" and its subsidiaries get the full Johnsonian treatment. The first meaning listed is "To make liquors by mixing several ingredients," and is illustrated by a quote from Francis Bacon: "We have drinks also brewed with several herbs, and roots, and spices." Later is listed another meaning, "To mingle," with the reference: "Take away these chalices; go, brew me a pottle of sack finely," drawn from The Merry Wives of Windsor. This quote is later enlarged upon in "Brewage" - "Mixture of several things" - with the subsequent dialogue:

With eggs, sir? -

Simple of itself: I'll no pullet sperm in my brewage.

The latter speaker is, of course, Falstaff. Sack is related to our modern Sherry: a pottle was a two-quart measure.

Back to "Brew." "To perform the office of a brewer", that office being defined as "A man whose profession is to make beer", though we must remember that for centuries it was the woman's task to brew beer, thus the expression Brewster Sessions. The noun "Brew" - "Manner of brewing; or thing brewed" - also brings in Bacon again, with the reference: "Trial would be made of the like brew with potatoe roots, or burr roots, or the pith of artichokes, which are nourishing meats." Further elaboration ensues: "Brewhouse" is "A house appropriated to brewing." "Brewing" - tabulated as "Quantity of liquor brewed at once." Recompense is made over "Bridal" at this stage: a 1634 Grammar is cited as explaining "A brideale (is) of bride and ale; the word signifying not the wedding, but the wedding feast ... Some have asserted, that the bridal is so denominated from the circumstance of the bride in our northern counties, selling ale on the wedding-day, for which she received handsome presents from her friends. The word bride-bush is attributed to the same custom, and is only another expression for bride-ale; a bush at the end of a stake being once the usual sign in country places for the alehouse." "The nuptial festival" is then illustrated by a wealth of quotations.

This drink theme persists in the second meaning listed for "Bush": "A bough of a tree fixed up at a door, to shew that liquors are sold there." It carries the usual As You Like It excerpt: "If it be true, that good wine needs no bush ..." To which is added the Beaumont and Fletcher quote:

Twenty to one you find him at the bush;  
There's the best ale.

"Canary" is one of the few vinous geographical names listed. Bordeaux is not, for instance, but the first definition given to "Canary", ascribed to the Canary Islands, is: "Wine brought from the Canaries; now called sack." The usual Merry Wives quote is added:

I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink Canary with him. - I think I shall drink in pipe wine first with him; I'll make him dance.

"Carduus Benedictus" as listed by the Doctor serves to remind us that drinks have been made from almost everything. He names it as "The herb called Blessed Thistle," and quotes from Much Ado:

Get you some of this distilled carduus benedictus, and lay it to your heart; it is the only thing for a qualm.

Champagne gets no entry, but he does list "Chasselas" - "A sort of grape". Today, it is considered a lesser variety.

"Churchale" serves to recall the intimate connection over the ages between church and drinking: "A wake, or feast, commemorative of the dedication of the church." It carries two long explanatory quotations.

Cider, we all know, has a long and most respectable ancestry in Great Britain. And the Doctor's first definition comes as something of a shock: "All kinds of strong liquors, except wine." He does, however, add that "this sense is now wholly obsolete. But No. 2 is still very close: "Liquor made of the juice of fruits pressed." With a "This is now the sense," Johnson brings us down to modern usage: "The juice of apples expressed and fermented." The "Ciderist" is simply "A maker of cider", with an appropriate quote, while the diminutive "Ciderkin" is thus dismissed: "A low word used for the liquor made of the murk or gross matter of apples, after the cider is pressed out, and a convenient quantity of boiled water added to it; the whole infusing for about forty-eight hours."

"Claret", which he once verbally dismissed to be "the drink for boys", Johnson defined in the Dictionary quite accurately for his period as "French wine, of a clear pale-red colour", and he rightly deduced the word from the French "clairet". Two quotes are of interest. First, from Boyle: "Red and white

wines are in a trice confounded into claret"; then from the poet Thomson:

The claret smooth, red as the lips we press  
In sparkling fancy, while we drain the bowl.

"Cordial" receives, first, its correct medical meaning: "A medicine that increases the force of the heart, or quickens the circulation." Meaning No. 3 is more general: "Anything that comforts, gladdens, and exhilarates." But, as with its adjectival interpretations, there are no direct alcoholic connotations.

The eighteenth century was a heavy drinking, drunken age. Johnson gives it the full treatment under "To drink" and subsidiaries. The first explanation of the verb is "To swallow liquors; to quench thirst", carrying as its third illustration: "He drank of the wine," from *Genesis*. The second explanation is "To feast; to be entertained with liquors", again with a *Genesis* quotation: "They drank, and were merry with him." The third is more explicit: "To drink to excess; to be an habitual drunkard. A colloquial phrase." Pope provides the quote:

First for his son a gay commission buys,  
Who drinks, whores, fights, and in a duel dies.

"To drink to" is repeated - the first meaning listed being "To salute in drinking; to invite to drink by drinking first." The other interpretation is "To wish well in the act of taking the cup." More Shakespearean quotes follow, such as "I'll drink to master Bardolph, and to all the cavaleroes about London." A later definition of "To drink" repeats the theme, "To make drunk," with the Biblical quote: "Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions."

As a noun, "Drink" has as second definition: "Liquor of any particular kind." But with "Drinker" we return to the Johnsonian age: "1. One that drinks to excess; a drunkard ... 2. One that drinks any liquor, but not to excess." We even get the odd expression "Drinkmoney", or "Money given to buy liquor."

For "Drunk" we read: "1. Intoxicated with strong liquor; inebriated ... 'We generally conclude that man drunk, who takes pains to be thought sober. Spectator.'" Obviously,

"Drunkard" follows: "One given to excessive use of strong liquors; one addicted to habitual ebriety." The third illustrative quote is of interest as a sidelight on Johnson himself: "God will not take the drunkard's excuse, that he has so long accustomed himself to intemperate drinking, that now he cannot leave off."

"Drunken" follows: "1. Intoxicated with liquor; inebriated ... 2. Given to habitual ebriety ... 4. Done in a state of inebriation ..." "Drunkenly" is simply "In a drunken manner", but "Drunkenness" bears three meanings: "1. Intoxication with strong liquor ... 2. Habitual ebriety ... 3. Intoxication, or inebriation of any kind; disorder of the faculties. 'Passion is a drunkenness of the mind ...'"

We are all oppressed by the increase of duty on liquors, and we may note that the Doctor gives this connotation of "Duty" the last of the meanings he advances: "Tax, impost; custom; toll." The first attached quote is: "All the wines made their way through several duties and taxes, before they reach the port."

With "Ebriety" we are back in the mood of the century: "Drunkenness; intoxication by strong liquors", with a moralizing quote:

When Noah planted the vine, Satan attended, and sacrificed a sheep, a lion, an ape, and a sow. These animals were to symbolise the gradations of ebriety.

Similarly with "Excess": "Intemperance; unreasonable indulgence in meat and drink."

Not strictly a beverage - far from it - but a factor without which no drinks are available - "Excise". This clamours to be repeated, to be repeated every year or more often to Chancellors of the Exchequer: "A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom Excise is paid." The basic fact was probably his father's dispute with the Excise over parchment manufacture, but Boswell's note in the Life must be repeated here:

The Commissioners of Excise being offended by this severe reflection, consulted Mr. Murray, then Attorney-General, to know whether redress could be legally obtained. I

wished to have procured for my readers a copy of the opinion which he gave, and which may now be justly considered as history: but the mysterious secrecy of office it seems would not permit it. I am, however, informed by very good authority, that its import was, that the passage might be considered as actionable; but that it would be more prudent in the board not to prosecute. Johnson never made the smallest alteration in this passage. We find he still retained his early prejudice against Excise; for in *The Idler*, No. 65, there is the following very extraordinary paragraph: 'The authenticity of Clarendon's history, though printed with the sanction of one of the finest universities of the world, had not an unexpected manuscript been happily discovered, would, with the help of factious credulity, have been brought into question, by the two lowest of all human beings, a Scribbler for a party, and a Commissioner of Excise.'

Some of the quotations used by the Doctor agree very well with his definition. Marvel's, for instance:

Excise,  
With hundred rows of teeth, the shark exceeds,  
And on all trades like Cassawar she feeds.

Or Dryden's:

Can hire large houses, and oppress the poor,  
By farm'd excise.

Johnson makes the verb correspond, being derived from the noun. The more historical and traditional reason for the Doctor's hatred of Excise is, of course, that Excise always was - until recent years - hateful to the Tories, regarded as a Whig device, and a residue of the Civil War, during which it was introduced by the parliamentarians, who borrowed it from the Dutch and used the money it raised to fight - and defeat - the king, Charles I. It was, then, an outrage to any Jacobite.

"Flapdragon" reminds us of a manner of drinking which has passed entirely away: "A play in which they catch raisins out of burning brandy, and extinguishing them by closing the mouth, eat them. Gallants thus drank the healths of their mistresses." Secondly, the word means: "The thing eaten at

flapdragon." Shakespeare and contemporaries have ample references to it all. The Doctor quotes some of them.

Tracing drinks further, we come to "Geneva", first defined as "A corruption of genevre, French, a juniper berry." Remember that he had lived through London's gin craze and so quoted an excellent testimony on it: Hill's Materia Medica, as follows:

We used to keep a distilled spirituous water of juniper in the shops; but the making of it became the business of the distiller, who sold it under the name of geneva. At present only a better kind is distilled from the juniper berry: what is commonly sold is made with no better ingredient than oil of turpentine, put into the still, with a little common salt, and the coarsest spirit they have, which is drawn off much below proof strength, and is consequently a liquor that one would wonder any people could accustom themselves to drink with pleasure.

Further quotes we may disregard here.

The fourth meaning ascribed to "Gin" is "(Contracted from Geneva, which see.) The spirit drawn by distillation from juniper berries." Two couplets from Pope illustrate the word:

This calls the church to deprecate our sin,  
And hurls the thunder of our laws on gin.

Thee shall each alehouse, thee each gillhouse mourn,  
And answer gin shops sower sighs return.

"Gillhouse" is explained as "A house where gill is sold", gill having two meanings relevant to the present enquiry: "Malt liquor medicated with ground ivy"; and "A measure of liquids containing the fourth part of a pint ..." as it still does today.

"Glass" is directly related to drinks in this signification: "The quantity of wine usually contained in a glass; a draught." The quotes are of interest as reflecting Johnson himself: "While a man thinks one glass more will not make him drunk, that one glass hath disabled him from well discerning his present condition." From Taylor's Rule of Holy Living. And from Temple comes this one: "The first glass may pass for health, the second for good humour, the third for our friends; but the fourth is for our enemies." Likewise, a



"Goblet" is "A bowl, or cup, that holds a large draught."

"Grape" is defined in the most general of terms as "The fruit of the vine, growing in clusters; the fruit from which wine is expressed." But "Health" carries its alcoholic connotation: "Wish of happiness used in drinking", while one of the couplets,

Sack and the well-spiced hippocrass, the wine,  
Wassail the bowl, with ancient ribbons fine,

illustrates, too, "Hippocrass"-defined as "A medicated wine."

"Inebriate" takes us back to Johnson's drunken age: "To intoxicate; to make drunk"; then, "To grow drunk; to be intoxicated". "Inebriation" is, naturally, "Drunkenness; intoxication", and carries with it a curious quote from Sir Thomas Brown: "That cornelians and bloodstones may be of virtue, experience will make us grant; but not that an amethyst prevents inebriation." "Intemperance" and "Intemperancy" whisk us back to the age again: "Want of temperance; want of moderation; commonly excess in meat and drink." "To intoxicate" pursues the same theme.

But the "Inn" as a resort of drinking calls for attention: "1. A chamber; a lodging; a house; a dwelling", and "2. A house of entertainment for travellers." From the many quotes supplied I select only these two. From Macbeth:

The west, that glimmers with some streaks of day,  
Now spurs the lated traveller apace  
To gain the timely inn.

And from Dryden:

Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;  
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.

"Liquor" is given two definitions: "1. Anything liquid: it is commonly used of fluids inebriating, or impregnated with something, or made by decoction ... 2. Strong drink; in familiar language." The verb is only, "To drench or moisten."

"Malmsey" is one of the few wines listed by name in the Dictionary. It is accorded two interpretations: "1. A sort of grape - see vine. A kind of wine." Later it is listed under "Vine" but not under "Wine".

"Malt", used for making beer and some spirits, gets surprisingly short treatment: "Grain steeped in water and fermented, then dried on a kiln." The word "fermented" is a mistake: the grain is steeped, then artificially germinated; it is never fermented. Similarly, "Maltfloor" is in error. The Doctor defined it as "A floor to dry malt." No; it is the area on which the wet malt is left to germinate. The active and passive senses of the verb "To malt" are: "1. To make malt. 2. To be made malt ..." The term "Maltdrink" is explained as a combination of "malt" and "drink", but "Malthorse" is of interest: it "seems to have been, in Shakespeare's time, a term of reproach for a dull dolt." Derivative terms like "Maltman" and "Maltster" are simple.

Under the first definition of "Maturation" - "The state of growing ripe" - a passage from Bacon's Natural History introduces our subject: "There is the maturation of fruits, the maturation of drinks ..." But none of the excerpts under the adjective "Mature" bring in the drink element.

That old British drink "Mead" is given its due: "A kind of drink made of water and honey." "Muddle" takes us back again to the drunken eighteenth century: "2. To make half drunk; to cloud or stupify." A quote gives a fine example of the meaning: "I was for five years often drunk, always muddled; they carried me from tavern to tavern."

No. 7 definition of "Pipe" has a good eighteenth-century ring: "A liquid measure containing two hogsheads." and pipe reminds at once of Port which the Doctor omitted, although his age was the first hey-day of Port drinking. Similarly with Porter, which flourished particularly in the Doctor's day, no mention is made of its alcoholic significance. In itself, it was a kind of strong beer, or stout, and got its name from being much drunk by porters.

A word rarely heard today, but common in the Doctor's day and earlier, is "Posset": "Milk curdled with wine or any acid." Three of the illustrative quotations are, in fact, medical, such as from Wiseman's Surgery: "I allowed him medicated broths, posset ale, and pearly julep." Modern possets, if made at all, recommend hot milk curdled with ale or wine.

"Pot" makes amends for the omission of Porter: "4. A cup; now usually supposed to contain a quart." Three quotes are appended, the Shakespearean one being:

But that I think his father loves him not,  
I'd have him poison'd with a pot of ale.

"Potation" becomes "1. Drinking bout. 2. Draught ...  
3. Species of drink. 'If I had a thousand sons, the first  
human principle I would teach them should be to forswear thin  
potations, and addict themselves to sack.' Shakespeare. Hen. IV."

"Potcompanion" is simple: "A fellow-drinker; a  
good fellow at carousels." And "Pottle", used earlier, is  
given its correct meaning: "Liquid measure containing four pints.  
It is sometimes used licentiously for a tankard, or pot out of  
which glasses are filled." "Potvaliant" is a good Elizabethan  
word: "Heated to courage by strong drink." "Potulent",  
adjective, is dismissed quickly: "1. Pretty much in drink.  
2. Fit to drink."

"Punch" finds the Doctor in his element. Remember  
his cry, "Who's for poonsh!" So, meaning No. 3 runs: "A  
liquor made by mixing spirit with water, sugar, and the juice  
of lemons; and formerly with spice." It continues: "Punch  
is an Indian word expressing the number of ingredients. - The  
palepuntz of Surat has been described as a drink consisting of  
aqua vitae, rose water, juice of citrons, and sugar. So  
Struys, in his voyages (1650) describes a liquor of Gombroon,  
which he calls palepunsche, as a mixture of arrack, sugar, and  
raisins." With "Purl" we are with another mixture: "A kind  
of medicated malt liquor, in which wormwood and aromatics are  
infused."

The then well known drink "Ratafia" - just obtainable  
today - is dealt with very briefly: "A liquor prepared from  
the kernels of apricots and spirits." A line from Congreve  
illustrates: "The red ratafia does your ladyship mean, or the  
cherry-brandy?" Ambrose Palmer's Complete Distiller, published  
in 1751, refers to it as "a liquor in great esteem, and most  
persons are acquainted with it; though the true method of  
making it is known only to a few. There are various kinds of  
Ratafia made from various fruits."

"Rum", after being dismissed as a cant word when  
applied to "A country parson," is then defined as "2. A kind  
of spirits distilled from molasses. I know not how derived."  
But quite accurately, he quotes William Guthrie that "Rum finds  
its market in North America."

"A kind of sweet wine, now brought chiefly from the Canaries," the Doctor wrote as the second meaning he gave to "Sack". He then continued: "Sec, French, of uncertain etymology; but derived by Skinner, after Mandesto, from Xeque, a city of Morocco. The sack of Shakespeare is believed to be what is now called Sherry." Two quotes are inserted at this stage. Under "Sherris, Sherris Sack, Sherry", all grouped together, Johnson wrote: "(from Xeres, a town of Andalusia in Spain.) A kind of sweet Spanish wine." Shakespeare provides the two quotes:

Your sherris warms the blood, which before, cold and settled, left the liver white, which is the badge of pusillanimity, but the sherris makes it course from the ineards to the parts extreme.

Secondly:

Good sherris sack ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish dull vapours, and makes it apprehensive.

With "Sillabub" we are landed in etymological difficulties, and the Doctor's derivation of the word need not delay us. He defines it as: "Curds make by milking upon vinegar." Yet sillabub generally meant a drink made of milk, wine or cider, and sugar.

"Soberness" brings us back to the eighteenth century, and the first meaning supplied is "Temperance; especially in drink." So with "Sobriety" whose No. 1 meaning is: "Temperance in drink; soberness." No. 2 meaning is: "Present freedom from the power of strong liquor." No. 3 is: "General temperance."

"Spirit" takes us more into his age. One of the many meanings he listed for it runs: "An inflammable liquor raised by distillation: as brandy, rum." Three quotes are supplied. First, from Boyle, as an example:

What the chymists call spirit, they apply the name to so many different things, that they seem to have no settled notion of the thing. In general, they give the name of spirit to any distilled volatile liquor.

The Arbuthnot quotation is practical:

In distillation, what trickles down the sides of the receiver, if it will not mix with water, is oil; if it will, it is spirit.

"Spirituousness" continues the theme of "Fineness and activity of parts" and "Spirituous" has as third signification: "Ardent; inflammable; as, spirituous liquors." The noun "Still" is related: "A vessel for distillation; an alembick." And the verb "Still": "To distil; to extract or operate upon by distillation." A later definition then produces this: "To drop; to fall in drops. Out of use." The theme persists, however, in the truly Johnsonian expression, "Stillatitious": "Falling in drops; drawn by a still." The further noun of "Stillatory" is then presented: "1. An alembick; a vessel in which distillation is performed." Meaning No. 2 is "The room in which the stills are placed; laboratory." "Stillicide" and "Stillicidious" continue the theme of "A succession of drops" and "Falling in drops."

"Stout" becomes as a noun in the Dictionary "A cant name for strong beer", illustrated by a quote from Swift including the line: "Surprise him with a pint of stout." One meaning of "Strong" is "Potent; intoxicating" and "Strongwater" is simply "Distilled spirits", strong waters being in common use as another name for spirits. The first Excise imposed on spirits laid it on "Strong waters," for instance.

"Tankard" we all naturally associate with alcoholic beverages and the Dictionary declares: "A large vessel with a cover, for strong drink." After the alcoholic associations of "Tap" we come to "Tapster", a word strong in Elizabethan connotations: "One whose business is to draw beer in an alehouse." The first two quotes are from Shakespeare. For example: "The oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster; they are both coiners of false reckonings."

"Tavern" was a word dear to the Doctor: "A house where wine is sold, and drinkers are entertained." Two quotes from Shakespeare and one from Swift complete the presentation.

"Temperance" resumes the theme constant to the volume and the century: "I. Moderation: opposed to gluttony and drunkenness." The adjective and adverbs related to the noun are all given similar interpretations - "Moderate in meat and drink"; "Without gluttony or luxury." And "Temperateness" has as one meaning: "Freedom from excesses; mediocrity."

Wine reappears under "Tent": "A species of wine deeply red, chiefly from Galicia in Spain." The old ballad quotation is worth repetition:

While the tinker did dine, he had plenty of wine,  
Rich canary with sherry and tent superfine.

With the verb "To tittle" we are once more well in the Johnson century: "To drink luxuriously; to waste life over the cup," is the first definition. The addition: "To drink in luxury or excess," both amply illustrated by quotations. The noun from the verb is simply "Drink; liquor." "Tippler" is representative of the century: "A sottish drunkard; an idle fellow". It bears the accumulation of "Gamesters, tipplers, tavern hunters, and other such dissolute people." "Tipsy" takes us a stage further into the age: "Drunk; over-powered with excess of drink." Hard drinking was typical of the age. "To tope," for instance, is "To drink hard; to drink to excess." From the verb to the noun "Toper" - "A drunkard;" then "Toss-pot" - "A toper and drunkard." Illustrative quotes abound throughout, with Shakespeare a chief contributor.

"The plant that bears the grape" is the Doctor's succinct definition of "Vine", and he then proceeds to quote the Gardener's Dictionary by Philip Miller, published under George II:

The flower consists of many leaves placed in regular order, and expanding in form of a rose: the ovary, which is situated in the bottom of the flower, becomes a small round fruit, full of juice and contains many small stones in each. The tree is climbing, sending forth clasps at the joints, by which it fastens itself to what plant stands near it, and the fruit is produced in bunches. The species are, 1. The wild vine, commonly called the claret grape. 2. The July grape. 3. The Corinth grape, vulgarly called the currant grape. 4. The parsley-leav'd grape. 5. The miller's grape. This is called the Burgundy in England: the leaves of this sort are very much powdered with white in the spring, from whence it had the name of miller's grape. 6. Is what is called the Burgundy Pineau, and at Orleans, Auverna: it makes a very good wine. 7. The white chasselas, or royal muscadine: it is a large white grape; the juice is very rich. 8. The black chasselas, or red muscadine. 10. The burlake grape. 11. The white muscat, or white Frontinac. 12. The red Frontinac. 13. The black Frontinac. 14. The damask grape. 15. The white sweet water. 16. The black sweet water. 17. The white

muscadine. 18. The raisin grape. 19. The Greek grape. 20. The pearl grape. 21. The St. Peter's grape, or hesperian. 22. The malmsey grape. 23. The malmsey muscadine. 24. The red Hamburg grape. 25. The black Hamburg, or warmer grape. 26. The Switzerland grape. 27. The white muscat, or Frontinac of Alexandria; called also the Jerusalem muscat or gross muscat. 28. The red muscat, or Frontinac of Alexandria. 29. The white melie grape. 30. The white morillon. 31. The Alicant grape. 32. The white Auvernat. 33. The grey Auvernat. 34. The raisin muscat. The late Duke of Tuscany, who was very curious in collecting all the sorts of Italian and Greek grapes into his vineyards, was possessed of upwards of three hundred several varieties.

Literary examples of the use of the word are then supplied in addition to this technical definition. Without becoming too botanically erudite on the vine, suffice it to say, in parenthesis, that the grape vine, or *Vitis*, is a genus of about thirty species and the best known and longest cultivated species is the old-world grape vine *Vitis vinifera*.

Leaping ahead to "Wine", the Doctor gives two definitions: "1. The fermented juice of the grape," calling in support twelve instances of its use in such writers as Shakespeare, Biblical authors, Bacon, Milton, Pope, etc. The second definition given is "Preparations of vegetables by fermentation, called by the general names of wines, have quite different qualities from the plant; for no fruit, taken crude, has the intoxicating quality of wine." The authority is quoted but, regrettably, no list of these fruit-wines is given. Leaving aside some of the subsidiary and derivative words of "Vine", we may notice "Vineyard": "A ground planted with vines," illustrated with two quotes. From Shakespeare:

Let us not live in France; let us quit all,  
And give our vineyards to a barbarous people.

And from Clarendon:

Though some had so surfeited in the vineyards, and with the wines, that they had been left behind, the generosity of the Spaniards sent them all home again.

"Vintage" demands notice; it is a rather over-worked word today: "The produce of the vine for the year; the time



in which grapes are gathered." The word "Vintner" receives a curious treatment, one smacking of animosity: "One who sells wine." The only quotes given are: "The vintner may draw what religion he pleases," from the Caroline Howell; and from Swift: "The vintner, by mixing poison with his wines, destroys more lives than any malignant disease." "Vintry" becomes just "The place where wine is sold."

"Whisky" gets no entry as such in the Dictionary, but appears under "Usquebaugh" with the definition: "An Irish and Erse word, which signifies the water of life. It is compounded distilled spirit, being drawn on aromatics; and the Irish sort is particularly distinguished for its pleasant and mild flavour. The Highland sort is somewhat hotter; and, by corruption, in Scottish they call it whisky."

Two quotes are served to reinforce the Irish ancestry: "Their wine, like the Irish usquebaugh, drunk immoderately, accelerates death," - from Sir Thomas Herbert: and from Swift: "Usquebaugh to our feast in pails was brought up, An hundred at least."

Johnson's Dictionary definition was written, of course, long before he had a chance to drink any, even of the Highland, and hotter, sort. The only occasion on which we know the Doctor did partake of it was with Boswell on their Scottish jaunt at an inn at Inverary. That was the occasion when the Doctor said, according to Boswell, "Come, let me know what it is that makes a Scotchman happy!" Certainly he had seen and heard of it on Skye and his judgment on the Inverary tasting was that it was "preferable to any English malt brandy. It was strong, but not pungent, and was free from the empyreumatick taste or smell. What was the process I had no opportunity of inquiring, nor do I wish to improve the art of making poison pleasant."

With "Wassail", Johnson is back on his stamping-ground of the drunken eighteenth century. It is first defined as: "A liquor made of apples, sugar, and ale, anciently much used by English goodfellows." Then he moves to his own times: "A drunken bout," quoting from Hamlet in support of the usage.

Such is the main content of the Dictionary as it dwells on drinks and drinkers. But with his technical bent it should not be overlooked that the Doctor dwelt on such related topics as the gallon, pint and quart: on the tun, the

cask, on hops, very fully on malt; on proof, even in relation to what is today called proof spirit - a highly technical term used in assessing the duty to be paid on spirits. He enlarges even on such professional matters as the worm, the tube in which condensation of distilled spirits is effected; on yeast, the very instrumentation of fermentation. We have chosen to concentrate rather on the beverage element of the Dictionary, a concentration which, however permissible by the Doctor, must not be permitted to disregard the profound technical treatment he accorded so many professional elements of alcoholic beverages.

#### OLIVER D. SAVAGE

It is with sincere regret that we record the passing of Oliver D. Savage on 27th May, 1968. Mr. Savage served our Society with zeal and enthusiasm for a number of years. During the difficult days of the last war he was our Secretary, and by his energy and devotion our meetings and lectures were maintained with unbroken regularity in spite of the difficulties of communication and transport and the scattering of our Members.

In the world of journalism he held a definite place as an authority on the history of London, second only to the late William Kent; and his articles in What's On were eagerly read. He compiled the official history of the King's Theatre, Hammersmith; and at the conclusion of the war he published a book London Spotlight for Sight-seers which was widely read.

Many of our members will remember the last occasion on which we had the pleasure of listening to Oliver Savage. He spoke on "Two Eminent Londoners - Johnson and Dickens." The subject was appropriately chosen as he was an enthusiastic member of The Dickens Fellowship, thus forming a link between the two Societies. The close connection we have with the Johnson Societies of America and with Lichfield is also in a measure due to his activity.

Although for some time ill health made it impossible for our friend to be with us, all who knew him in the past will continue to count him one of our distinguished members, and to feel grateful for the work he carried out to perpetuate the memory of Samuel Johnson in London - and indeed, throughout the world.

AMERICA AND AMERICANS AS SEEN IN  
 JAMES BOSWELL'S THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.,  
 AND IN THE LETTERS OF JOHNSON AND BOSWELL

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It is not surprising that English intellectuals of the latter half of the eighteenth century were seriously concerned by the tenuous and often tempestuous relationships between their country and one of its colonies, America. Further, it is not surprising that those same intellectuals were interested in the opinions on the subject of their own Samuel Johnson, who as an eminent literary figure, moralist, and Tory, was often looked to for sage counsel. Because Johnson is indeed the spokesman of an age, intellectuals continue to consult Johnson's opinions not only to attempt to better understand a complex age, but also to attempt to understand a complex personality. Nearly everyone who has written about Johnson and his age has commented on his view of America and its inhabitants. Only a few of these commentators, however, in attempting to understand better the eighteenth-century world view and its most famous spokesman, have concerned themselves specifically with Johnson's opinions on America and Americans. Without exception, these writers function as apologists who attempt to excuse Johnson's attitudes by pointing either to moral or to legal justifications for his intellectual posture. In general, most apologists argue either that Johnson could not tolerate the immorality of Negro slavery and mistreatment of American Indians or that Johnson could not accept any opposition to England's "legal" rights regarding its colonies. Some of these apologists, however, do admit that Johnson was aware of his own country's failings in both moral and legal realms, and this admission seems curiously to defeat these apologists' arguments in so far as it finds Johnson, with immorality and illegality on every side of him, venting his spleen largely on America and Americans. In short, Johnson's violent prejudice seems to preclude the exercise of his usually incontrovertible logic. Doubtless the inherent hypocrisy of Johnson's position suggests that his position cannot be the product of his usually cogent deduction, and is rather the specious product of something other than his almost universally recognized powerful and rational intellect. Indeed, the self-

contradictory nature of Johnson's attacks on America and Americans because of injustices, and his love for England in spite of injustices, must be attributed only to chauvinistic zeal.

James Boswell, himself not an Englishman but a Scotsman, held more logically justifiable opinions of America and Americans than his friend, Johnson; and, indeed, the contrast between the two views reveals an almost rabid Johnson being bested intellectually by a cogent Boswell. That Johnson's attitudes are the result of patriotic zeal, not reason, and that Boswell's attitudes are the result of reasoned calm, is most dramatically illustrated in Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., and in the letters of Johnson and Boswell, for it is in these sources that one finds, naturally, candid Johnsonian and Boswellian utterances and not polished sophistry such as one finds in their political writings.

First mention of England's most vexing colonial problem in the Life is made by Boswell himself. Boswell reports that he wrote to Johnson asking for information concerning America, assuring Johnson that he, like Johnson, "has no kindness for that race."<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Boswell enters an unJohnsonian plea for justice:

But nations, or bodies of men, should, as well as individuals, have a fair trial, and not be condemned on character alone. Have we not express contracts with our colonies, which afford a more certain foundation of judgment, than general political speculations on the mutual rights of States and their provinces or colonies?

Life, II, 294.

Also, at least as regards the Boston Port Bill, Boswell concludes, "our government has been precipitant and severe in the resolutions taken against the Bostonians" (Life, II, 294). Shortly afterward, Boswell writes that he:

... has now formed a clear and settled opinion, that the people of America were well warranted to resist a claim that their fellow-subjects in the mother-country should have the entire command of their fortunes, by taxing them without their own consent.

Life, II, 312.

Boswell, however, despite his own strong convictions, and knowing the violent opinions of Johnson, reports that on at least one occasion he avoided talking to Johnson on the subject because, possibly, he did not wish to become involved in a discussion that did not partake of reason (Life, II, 312). Boswell reports that Johnson, "... had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America" (Life, II, 312). Indeed, Boswell writes, "... as early as 1769, I was told by Dr. John Campbell, that he [Johnson] said of them [Americans], 'Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging'" (Life, II, 312). Such was Johnson's attitude towards America and Americans that, according to Boswell, before Johnson could bring himself to speak once while in the presence of an American, Johnson had to sit down quietly and quell his sense of outrage. The incident that improbably rendered the great conversationalist speechless was a common enough occurrence. Johnson was at a dinner party and he asked after the identity of a man present. Johnson became outraged when he learned that the man was a patriot and an American (Life, III, 68). Surely we may believe Boswell when he reports that Johnson's, "... violent prejudice against our ... American settlers appeared whenever there was an opportunity" (Life, III, 200).

In spite of Boswell's efforts not to antagonize Johnson, the subject of England's colonial rebels did come up between them. Indeed, during an all-night argument about England's right to tax America, Boswell reports that he:

... insisted that America might be very well governed, and made to yield a sufficient revenue by the means of influence, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives, without whose consent money could not be exacted from them.

Life, III, 205.

Boswell tells us that Johnson became angry at this and that he, Boswell, began to wish that he had not brought up the subject. Boswell, however, went on to speak about the corruption of the English Parliament, a condition which Johnson denied, saying that there were no questions of importance before the parliament anyway (Life, III, 206-207). Such is not the sort of argument we expect from a mind like Johnson's. But Johnson's opinions

about America and Americans were not logically wrought. Indeed, Boswell records the usually reasonable Johnson as saying, "... I am willing to love all mankind, except an American ... Rascals - Robbers - Pirates" (Life, III, 290). Johnson even goes so far as to say that he would "burn and destroy" the Americans (Life, III, 290). Boswell grew so sensitive to Johnson's violent reactions to any mention of America and Americans that he would warn people not to mention the subject in Johnson's hearing (Life, IV, 283). Doubtless, Johnson is not a reasonable man as regards the American problem, and his unreason is displayed all the more when his views are contrasted with those of Boswell. Again, Johnson is taken with patriotism, Boswell with reason. Admittedly, Johnson displays a kind of logic that supports his prejudice; for example, he once said at a dinner party:

To a man of mere animal life, you can urge no argument against going to America, but that it will be some time before he will get the earth to produce. But a man of any intellectual enjoyment will not easily go and immerse himself and his posterity for ages in barbarism.<sup>3</sup>

Life, V, 78.

Johnson's letters contain other examples of his spleen. He writes to William Drummond:

To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example, except in the practice of the planters of America, a race of mortals whom, I suppose, no other man wishes to resemble.<sup>4</sup>

Paradoxically Johnson's attitudes toward America and Americans do not prevent his having some desire to know and be known by Americans. He writes to Phineas Bond:

You are not mistaken in supposing I set a high value on my American friends, and that you should confer a very valuable favour upon me by giving me an opportunity of keeping myself in their memory.

Johnson, Letters, I, #296, 304-305.

In contrast to the man of great patriotism and little reason in matters concerning America, Boswell is a steady

force, constantly, reasonably, and discreetly opposing Johnson's prejudices. The lucid mind of Boswell probably is illustrated best in his personal letters. Although Boswell was doubtless a careful letter writer, his letters, nonetheless, afford a more nearly candid glimpse of Boswell than many of his other writings and the Life offer. Boswell's reason and lucidity regarding America and Americans is seen to best advantage in one of his written exchanges with Johnson:

What do you say to "Taxation no Tyranny" now, after Lord North's declaration, or confession, or whatever his conciliatory speech should be called? I never differed from you in politicks but upon two points - the Middlesex Election and the Taxation of the Americans by the British House of Representatives. There is a charm in the word Parliament, so I avoid it. As I am a steady and warm Tory, I regret that the King does not see it to be better for him to receive constitutional supplies from his American subjects by the voice of their own assemblies, where his Royal Person is represented, than through the medium of his British subjects. I am persuaded that the power of the Crown, which I wish to increase, would be greater when in contact with all its dominions, than if "the rays of regal bounty" were to "shine" upon America through that dense and troubled body, a modern British Parliament.

In 1784, speaking to subjects similar to those of the above letter, Boswell writes to Johnson that he continues to differ with Johnson about America. Boswell says that although his respect for Johnson is high, he cannot believe that "Taxation Was no Tyranny," and, was more likely, "unjust and inexpedient." Despite the disagreement, Boswell assures Johnson that he is still a faithful Briton and begs Johnson's forgiveness for having been forced, through the exercise of reason, to disagree with Johnson (Boswell, Letters, II, #219, 318-319).

More revealing of Boswell's true feelings about America and Americans are his letters to persons other than Johnson. Knowing Johnson's feelings and wishing to avoid a dispute with him, Boswell often avoided any mention of America and Americans to Johnson. But, Boswell, as illustrated in the quotations above, did not avoid speaking his mind to Johnson, and, like a simpering sycophant, pay lip service to the support of Johnson's prejudice. Indeed, Boswell spoke his mind to Johnson, and, having clarified his position, merely



avoided attempting to discuss it with Johnson. This in itself is significant. Boswell, doubtless a "warm Tory" as we have no evidence to the contrary, nonetheless sought truth for himself, but, realizing his friend's narrowness of vision, merely did not discuss America and Americans with him, probably preferring the continuing friendship of Johnson over the truth of what were, to them, academic rather than bloody questions. Still, while Johnson seemingly eschewed further reason, once having formed his opinion, Boswell tenaciously continued to grapple for the truth. Often we find Boswell writing of his growing convictions to everyone but Johnson. Boswell writes to Temple:

I am growing more and more an American. I see unreasonable-ness of taxing them without the consent of their Assemblies. I think our ministry are mad in undertaking this desperate war.

Boswell, Letters, I, #148, 239.

Indeed, Boswell became rather a missionary for the cause of America and Americans despite the fact that most Englishmen of the period held opinions like those of Johnson. Boswell writes to Edmund Burke, for example, that he does not agree with Burke and that he is a friend to the Americans because of the taxation issue. So taken is Boswell with missionary enthusiasm that he mentions to Burke that he would like to "... assist at the compact between Britain and America" (Boswell, Letters, I, 182, 275). Boswell also writes the Bishop of Derry in a similar vein:

... we differ in American politics. As I never could believe that a majority of our fellow subjects on the other side of the Atlantic would choose to leave their property at the mercy of the representatives of the King's subjects ...

Boswell, Letters, II, #200, 298.

Probably one of Boswell's strongest statements on the subject is found in a letter to Temple:

I would not have one of those who rejected the petitions from America - no not for half the British Empire. Yet I am a Tory still; for I distinguish between our limited monarch, and a despotic ministry.

Boswell, Letters, II, #204, 309.

We are constantly assured by Boswell that he is a good Briton and a true Tory; indeed, it is a frequent theme of his writing. Boswell, however, was also a lawyer, and, perhaps despite himself, an idealist who valued fact over opinion, logic over prejudice.

Boswell did not review the gossip or test the temper of the times or of himself and then form a steadfast opinion. He approached an opinion cautiously. He wrote to Temple as he was beginning to concern himself with America and Americans:

As to American affairs, I have really not studied the subject. It is too much for me perhaps; or I am too indolent or frivolous. From the smattering which newspapers have given me, I have been of different minds several times. That I am a Tory, a lover of power in monarchy, and a discourager of much liberty in the people I avow. But it is not clear to me that our colonies are compleatly our subjects.

Boswell, Letters, I, #136, 213.

In short, Boswell reached his position with deliberate care, admitting his ignorance and then proceeding to find the truths of the issues, if indeed such issues partake of truth. Having carefully formed his opinions, Boswell then attempts to disseminate his unpopular views among his friends, but he never resorts to pyrotechnic statements, to violent displays of unreasoned prejudice. The usually august Johnson, on the other hand, also a faithful Briton and a thoroughgoing Tory, never displays the humble attitude of seeking truth in the matter, as we are taught Johnson always did, but rather chooses the establishment view and defends it with almost religious fervency that approaches fanaticism.

It remains a splendid irony that Johnson, the humanist, the great mind, views the issues concerning America and Americans so dogmatically, while Boswell, a man too often viewed as Johnson's spaniel and a person of little intellectual depth, is the champion of intellectual inquiry. Surely Boswell intellectually bests Johnson in any arguments regarding America and Americans.

#### Documentation

1. For example, Donald J. Greene in The Politics of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), M. J. C.

Hodgart in Samuel Johnson and His Times (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1962), Percy Hazen Houston in Doctor Johnson: A Study in Eighteenth Century Humanism (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1963), Joseph Wood Krutch in Samuel Johnson (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1944), and S. C. Roberts in Samuel Johnson (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1954), to name a few, all mention Johnson's views toward the colonies and the colonials, and a few, such as Krutch, make some excellent points, but it is those who treat of this issue in depth that need concern one here. For example, John L. Griffiths in "Dr. Johnson and America" (Litchfield Mercury, September 19, 1913), Charles W. Harvey in "Johnson's Hatred of America" (Cornhill Magazine, N. S., LXVII (December, 1929), 665-668), George Birkbeck Hill in "Johnson's Sentiments towards His Fellow-Subjects in America" (in James Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., ed. G. B. Hill, rev. and enlarged L. F. Powell, 6 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934, appendix "A," vol. 2, pp. 476-477), and Charles McCamic in Doctor Samuel Johnson and the American Colonies (Cleveland: The Rowfant Club, 1925), all treat in depth of Johnson and America and Americans, and all function as apologists who attempt to rationalize Johnson's prejudices. Of the lot, Hill is most nearly honest in characterizing Johnson's splenic dislike of America and Americans.

2. James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., ed. George Birkbeck Hill, revised and enlarged Lawrence Fitzroy Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), II, 294. Subsequent references to this edition are noted Life and are entered in the text.
3. Perhaps a study of Johnson's concept of the noble savage is called for. He displays a curious sympathy with Negroes and American Indians, and yet he also displays extreme disgust with all forms of "barbarism."
4. Samuel Johnson, The Letters of Samuel Johnson, collected and ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), I, #184, 188. Subsequent references to this edition are noted Johnson, Letters, and are entered in the text.
5. Life, III, 221. Subsequent references to Boswell's letters are to The Letters of James Boswell, collected and ed. Chauncy Brewster Tinker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), are noted Boswell, Letters, and are entered in the text.

Dr. Johnson und Boswell by Carl Brinitzer (Florian Kupferberg Verlag, Mainz, 1968). 190 pp., cloth.

Some years ago, a scheme called "The Heart of the Symphony" presented on records short excerpts from the music of a number of composers. You could, you were told, get all the really significant music of Brahms on one disc - one theme at a time. The scheme was endorsed by a well-known conductor, and he was accused by some musical circles of prostituting his reputation in supporting it. His defence was simple: listening to the Heart of Brahms might develop in some musically ignorant people a genuine interest in genuine Brahms. Those who didn't care to get their Brahms a spoonful at a time didn't have to listen.

The reviewer of Carl Brinitzer's Dr. Johnson und Boswell is in somewhat the same position as the conductor. This popular account of the friendship between the two men is in many respects unsatisfactory. But Boswell's Life of Johnson has never been fully translated into German, and (according to Brinitzer) virtually the only text now available to German readers interested in Johnson is a translation of the London Journal of Boswell.

Is one to leave the Germans in a Gothic ignorance of Johnson made light solely by the London Journal? Or should one tolerate this inadequate biography, for lack of a better?

It is sobering to think that a new acquaintance with Johnson might be based on a study which mentions five 17th century Shakespeare folios, which spells Hammer with two m's and Spenser with a c; a book which pays Johnson twenty guineas for "London" - and which equates without comment Thales and Savage in that poem. In writing the Parliamentary debates Johnson was, we are told, the first ghost-writer (the semi-logic of that statement is worth pursuing). The first edition of the Dictionary was completely exhausted before the second, serial edition began to appear. One of the illustrations in this book, a Rowlandson sketch of a Regency buck in a tavern, is labelled "London Coffee-House."

Brinitzer indulges in a good deal of psychological speculation about Johnson's character. The relationship between Mrs. Thrale and Johnson is based on Miss Balderston's celebrated article, "Johnson's Vile Melancholy," with what results may be anticipated; Mr. Clifford's biography of Mrs.

Thrale is not mentioned and does not seem to have been used. The Pottle biography of Boswell's younger years is absent from a Boswell bibliography of four items (they are: D. B. Lewis's Wyndham, The Hooded Hawk, or the Case of Mr. Boswell, 1946; J. L. Smith-Dampier's Who's Who in Boswell, 1935; C. B. Tinker's Young Boswell, 1922; and C. E. Vulliamy's James Boswell, 1932).

Yet Dr. Johnson und Boswell does include a good selection of translation from the Life and from Johnson's works, and the basic events of his literary and personal life are nearly all covered. The book is written in a pleasant, readable style. There is a good-sized appendix containing some Johnson anecdotes and sayings.

Obviously this is not a book of much interest to those who read English. But for those who read German but not English, I think it is better than nothing at all, for it could easily lead its readers on to a genuine interest in a more genuine Johnson.

Terry Belanger.  
Columbia University.

London, 1968.

#### DR. JOHNSON'S SUMMERHOUSE AT KENWOOD

The summerhouse in which Dr. Johnson often sat in the garden of Thrale Place, Streatham, was formally opened to the public in its new setting at Kenwood, Hampstead, at a ceremony on 24 September, 1968. Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Dowdeswell were present on behalf of the Johnson Society of London.

Mr. William Wells, who spoke at the ceremony, found the summerhouse six years ago in a derelict condition in the garden of Ashgrove, Knockholt, Kent, where it had been moved from Streatham in 1826. Mr. Wells bought the summerhouse to save it from demolition and gave it to the London County Council who restored it and placed it in the Rookery, Streatham Common.

The Greater London Council decided to move it to the garden of Kenwood House - the Iveagh Bequest - which is maintained as a typical eighteenth-century English country gentleman's residence, and where it is likely to be seen by more visitors.

Dr. Johnson spent many hours in the summerhouse in writing and meditation when staying with the Thrale family. It is a typical example of eighteenth-century rustic work, octagonal in plan with a thatched roof.

THE JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE APPEAL

Aims of the Appeal for £25,000

1. To make the Birthplace structurally sound and to restore certain features (such as the dormer windows in the roof) which early records tell us were once there.
2. To present the collection in a more attractive and more interesting manner. This will mean acquiring new and specially designed showcases (largely for manuscript material), redecorating the house throughout, and installing new heating and lighting systems. It is hoped to give back something of its original appearance to the room on the ground floor which was Michael Johnson's Bookshop.
3. To make the library and manuscript collection available to students in a comfortable and efficient setting. It is proposed to remodel the third storey as curator's office, library and reading-room and to provide reading desks and lamps.

Any sum left over from the Appeal Fund when these objects have been achieved will be devoted to the purchase of new acquisitions for the Museum and the Library.

"One might almost call this house in Lichfield a unique monument to one of the most gifted of Englishmen, who emerged from it as one of the humblest of all.

With all this, we know that houses undergo the ravages of time, and material trouble. Even the great building at Lichfield suffers from these. I believe that Dr. Johnson's Birthplace should now be secured from all the afflictions of age, and that, moreover, its many remarkable relics should be better exhibited for the advantage of those who wish to have an imaginative meeting with Dr. Johnson and his remarkable friends." From the President - Edmund Blunden.

Please send your donations to :

The Honorary Treasurer,  
The Johnson Birthplace Appeal,  
Guildhall, Lichfield,  
Staffordshire.

Doctor Johnson and his World by F. E. Halliday. Thames and Hudson, London 1968. 144 pages with 154 illustrations. 35/-.

Mr. Halliday first fell under the spell of Johnson when he read Boswell's Life as an undergraduate some forty years ago. It is evident from this profusely illustrated pictorial biography that the author's early pleasure has persisted; he now offers the work in the hope that it will introduce many readers to a similar lifelong delight. In so worthy an aim he deserves to succeed.

The tone of the book and the author's biographical standpoint are evident in an introductory passage: "The period 1750 - 1780 is known as the Age of Johnson, yet of all famous writers there can be few whose work is so little read today ... As a writer, a moralist in a mannered style, he was of his age, but as a man he was for all time; the man who is revealed in the pages of Boswell and, more endearingly, of Fanny Burney and Hester Thrale, but above all in his own works, which, until recently, have been so undeservedly neglected."

Any attempt to delineate Johnson "and his World" in 128 pages of text and pictures must perforce present problems of selection. Readers who know the road from Lichfield to Westminster Abbey will find delight in renewing acquaintanceship with the old familiar scenes; others may regret that their own favourite haunts are but briefly visited or hurriedly passed by.

In the equivalent of 50 pages of text, Mr. Halliday, for the most part, allows Johnson and his contemporaries to speak for themselves through quotations; he preserves the story line in his own economical and anecdotal style. In consequence we find the original story of Sir Joshua Reynolds' absorption when he took up the Life of Savage and began to read it with his arm leaning against a chimney piece, so that "It seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed" rendered as: "The Life of Richard Savage, read in absorption while standing up, first roused his interest in Johnson". Similarly, Mr. Halliday's sole reference to Johnson's visit to Iona becomes: "However, he allowed himself to be dragged to Iona, where Boswell felt himself a reformed character, but the disillusioned Rambler's peculiar accuracy of observation detected much fiction in the legends of that holy island." Johnsonians will recall Johnson's

own account: "We now left those illustrious ruins, by which Mr. Boswell was much affected, nor would I willingly be thought to have looked upon them without some emotions;" and his famous sentiments ending: "Far from me and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose pity would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona!"

If the book suffers inevitably from compression in the text, it is more successful as a visual introduction to the Johnsonian scene. The 154 black and white illustrations of portraits, facsimiles, maps, title pages etc., are captioned with quotations, e.g., A photograph of Ben Nevis - "A considerable protuberance;" the self-portrait of Reynolds as a deaf man, and the c.1775 Reynolds' portrait of Johnson - "He may paint himself as deaf if he chooses, but I will not be blinking Sam."

The minimal "Bibliographical Notes" comprise a list of some thirty Works by and about Johnson. More rewarding are the Notes on the Pictures, giving the location of the originals. Handsomely produced by Thames and Hudson, the book is one of a popular series on eminent men.

J. H. Leicester.

#### THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

##### Annual Commemoration

On Saturday, 21st December, 1968, a wreath was laid on the grave of Doctor Johnson in Westminster Abbey. The Commemorative address was given by Canon E. F. Carpenter, Archdeacon of Westminster.

After the ceremony Canon Carpenter attended the Society's annual luncheon at the White Hall Hotel, as guest of honour.

Mr. Frederick Vernon, the first Secretary of our Society, died in 1942 and is just a name to all except a very few of us, but his carefully kept Minute cum Scrap Books we still have from the start of the Society in 1928.

Last spring we heard from his elder daughter, Mrs. Edith R. Griffith of Melbourne, who sent us some old copies of The New Rambler, and a number of interesting papers which have been inserted in the Minute Books. We were very glad to hear from her and are deeply indebted for her kindness.



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