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GILPIN AND THE PICTURESQUE*

Stella Pigrome, MA (Oxon)

The Rev. William Gilpin, Prebendary of Salisbury and Vicar of Boldre in the New Forest, was born on 4 June 1724 at Scaleby Castle near Carlisle, which had been purchased by his great-grandfather, Richard Gilpin, a well-known non-conformist preacher and a physician with a degree from Leyden. Richard's eldest son, William, also a churchman, became Recorder of Carlisle, and was well known for his artistic and antiquarian interests. His second son, John Bernard (1701 - 1776), a Captain in the 12th Foot, who later became Governor of Carlisle, was a talented amateur artist, who profited from his military duties up and down the country by finding suitable subjects for his pencil. On his retirement in 1750, while living in the Deanery in Carlisle, he set up a studio where he happily engaged in drawing and painting and instructed and encouraged local young people in the art, including John "Warwick" Smith and Robert Smirke. He learned to etch and was also an accomplished musician. His wife, Matilda Langstaffe, was also interested in drawing, and together with their son-in-law, the Rev. James Farish, they established a kind of centre for the arts, music and science in Carlisle. Boswell once met their daughter Catherine at a party at the Castle.

The parents passed on their interest in art to at least two of their children, William, and their seventh son, Sawrey Gilpin, who was first apprenticed to Samuel Scott the marine painter, but later became a specialist animal painter. His son William Sawrey Gilpin was a water colour painter and landscape gardener. Benjamin West, the history painter, was also connected with the family, so it is not surprising that William should have made his name in the artistic world.

William spent much of his childhood at Scaleby, attending school in Carlisle and later at St. Bees. His preoccupation with drawing was in evidence by the age of six, and all his life he was interested in nature and especially loved the wild scenery of his native county. In 1740 he went up to Queen's College, Oxford, without very much money, and spent six or seven years, he says, under a system that was "no better than solemn trifling". (I suspect Johnson might have agreed with him.) He graduated in 1744, was ordained in 1746 by the Bishop of Carlisle, and given a curacy at Irthington. Later he returned to Oxford to take his MA in 1748, and left owing £70. To pay off the debt he did some tutoring and wrote a life of his sixteenth-century collateral ancestor Bernard Gilpin, the "Apostle of the North", who had a great reputation as a reformer and teacher. Under Queen Mary he literally

* A paper read at the Johnson Society of London Meeting on 19th February, 1983. Chairman: Lewis Raddon, LLB, DPA.

had a lucky break, because he was on his way to what would probably have been execution for heresy had he not been prevented from travelling by a broken leg. By the time he had recovered, Elizabeth had succeeded Mary. The book was illustrated with etchings by his father. Later Gilpin was to write the lives of other reformers, including Wycliffe, Latimer and Cranmer.

His years at Oxford gave him the opportunity to pursue his interest in art. He drew, he learned to etch, he looked at all the pictures to which he could get access, he started to collect prints and he read widely outside the official classic authors - Addison, Pope and others. He visited Blenheim, Windsor and Stow, thus getting to know at first hand the manner in which the current fashion for improving estates by landscape gardening was developing. In 1748 he published anonymously A Dialogue Upon the Gardens at Stowe, which was the great show place for pictorial gardens, the object of which was to turn gardens into pictures, affording a foretaste of his favourite amusement - and I use the word as he did in Johnson's sense of "that which amuses", "to amuse" meaning "to fill with thoughts that engage the mind"; it wasn't until much later that "amuse" acquired a connotation of "risibility".

After several short curacies in London, in 1752, when he was 28, Gilpin went to Cheam in Surrey. Cheam School was said to have been founded during the reign of Charles II, when a London school was "evacuated" to Surrey to escape the plague. When William went there the school was owned by the Rev. James Sanxay, who was minded to dispose of it because his rich wife was not interested in it. Gilpin agreed to take it on, and since a headmaster needs a wife, it was about this time that he married his cousin Margaret Gilpin, who had had a highly suitable upbringing in domestic matters by her spinster aunts.

As an educationalist, Gilpin was well in advance of his time. Unlike Johnson, he did not believe in the rod, except for really serious offences, and instituted a system of fines and imprisonment, operated by a jury of boys. Prisoners were assured of a proper amount of exercise and the fines were spent on improving the facilities of the school in various ways - books for the library, paving the fives court, bats and balls for cricket (a game he encouraged), seats in the garden. A dole of bread was also given to the poor who were given to understand that it came from the "young gentlemen's" charity. He taught his pupils drawing, and encouraged them in gardening, and in habits of business, thinking they should be prepared for the world beyond school. For this reason he thought it was better for them to learn their own English language accurately than to trouble too much with a dead one. He built up the school from about 15 to an average of about 80. It became both popular and fashionable, drawing many of its pupils from Society, who would prove valuable and influential friends in the future. These included the future Lord Sidmouth, the first Lord Redesdale, and his brother Colonel William Mitford, the historian, who became both friend and

patron, and in 1777 presented him to the living of Boldre in the New Forest. He retired to Boldre for the rest of his life, handing over the school to his second son William (his eldest had taken himself off to America, and his two daughters had died in infancy) under whom it continued to flourish for the next 30 years, when young William was given a living at Pulverbatch in Shropshire, where he died in 1848 at the age of 91.

It has been suggested that Gilpin was the model for the usher Jennings in Smollet's Peregrine Pickle:

> the assistant was actually a man of learning, probity and good sense; and ... had by his sole capacity of application brought the school to that degree of reputation which it never could have attained from the talents of his superior. He had established an oeconomy, which though regular, was not at all severe, by enacting a body of laws, suited to the age and comprehension of any individual; and each transgressor was fairly tried by his peers, and punished according to the verdict of the jury. No boy was scourged for want of apprehension, but a spirit of emulation was raised by well timed praise and artful comparison, and maintained by a distribution of small prizes, which were adjudged to those who signalised themselves either by their industry, sobriety or genius.

When he arrived at Boldre he found his parishioners existing in a miserable state of poverty and "little better than a set of bandits", and did a great deal to improve their lot. He made some improvements to the church, promoted the establishment of a new poor-house, of which he wrote an account for the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, and built a school for the parish, with a house for the master, endowing it largely from the sale of his drawings and the profits from his posthumously published works. He refused a second living offered him because he did not believe in pluralities, and lived within his income of £600 a year (not a bad one for those times!). In 1779 he was made Prebendary of Beaminster Secunda in recognition of his often reprinted Lectures on the Catechism. Among his many other publications were sermons, other religious works, and Three Dialogues on the Amusements of Clergymen. He wrote memoirs of his family for his children and grandchildren and a memoir of his own life, and left a large number of letters and other manuscripts, now scattered among his numerous descendants. He died on 5 April 1804 at the age of 71.

While at Cheam School, Gilpin had continued to practise his drawing and during summer holidays he carried out a series of tours in England, Scotland and Wales. In 1768 he spent a week in Kent and later visited Stonehenge. The following year he toured the Eastern Counties, but his early tours were for the purpose of seeing paintings, which he compared with prints, and in 1768 he published an Essay on Prints based on the accumulated

notes made on his own collection. It quickly became a best-selling guide to collecting them. The book explained the principles of painting so far as they related to prints, and set out certain rules: "To make a print agreeable as a whole, a just observation of those rules is necessary, which relate to design, disposition, keeping and the disposition of light, to make it agreeable in its parts, of those which relate to drawing, expression, grace and design." For him, art and nature were linked, and nature was "the standard of imitation; and every object should be executed, as nearly as possible, in her manner." Always interested in art and nature, he explained one in terms of the other, but as he continued to make his tours he became more and more concerned with natural scenery.

In 1770 he sailed down the River Wye and looked a little at South Wales, returning home by way of Bristol and Bath. In 1772 he visited his native Cumberland and the Lakes. In 1774 and '75, Hampshire, Sussex and Kent, the Western Parts of England, and the Isle of Wight, and in 1776 he made the Tour of Scotland. During all his tours he made rough notes and sketches, for writing up later. His tours were extensively circulated in manuscript, reaching even Court circles: Queen Charlotte asked to see the Lake tour a second time. Comments and criticisms or suggestions by friends were seriously considered, and sometimes alterations made. His friend the Rev. William Mason, a Yorkshire vicar, was often very argumentative in his remarks.

In 1782 Gilpin published Observations on the River Wye and several Parts of South Wales, etc., relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, and over the next few years the other tours appeared under similar titles, including Remarks on Forest Scenery ... illustrated by Scenes of the New Forest.

What did he mean by "Picturesque Beauty"? And what indeed was "Picturesque"? The word appears to derive through French from the Italian Pittoresco, where it meant "painter like". "Picturesque" first appears in English in about 1705, and gradually came to have the rather different meaning of "like a picture". It is not in the first edition of Johnson, though in the 4th edition he uses it to define Prospect: "A view delineated; a picturesque representation of a landscape", where of course it still means "as in a picture". It wasn't defined until the 1801 Supplement, when it had acquired such senses as "What pleases the eye, what is singular, affording a good subject for a landscape". It grew up with the development of landscape painting in England, imported under the influence of French and Italian painters headed by Claude and the Poussin brothers and Salvator Rosa, and was encouraged by poets such as Thomson and Dyer who delighted to describe natural scenes, sometimes of a placid and peaceful Claude-like pastoral character, as in Thomson's pleasing prospect

> of hills, of Vales and Woods and Lawns and Spires
> And towers betwixt and gilded streams, till all
> The stretching landskip into smoak decays

and sometimes of Rosa-like sights which in an earlier period would have been quite inadmissible, inspiring horrid shudders rather than pleasure, like Dyer's Usk

> that frequent, among hoary rocks
> Or her deep waters paints th'impending scenes
> Wild torrents, craggs, and woods, and mountain snows.

In the past, even the Cotswolds had appeared hostile to Shakespeare, with "high wild hills and rough uneven ways".

The Picturesque rapidly became a cult during the eighteenth century. Gilpin first referred to it on the title page of his Essay on Prints - "the Principles of Picturesque Beauty", and in 1792 he published Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape, which had been written 16 years earlier. It included a poem on Landscape Painting full of good technical advice for the young artist. In the Essay on Prints he had defined the term Picturesque as "expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture", but at that time he had been more concerned with the artistic side. By the time he published his Western Tour he was turning his attention more to nature, or, rather, landscape itself. In this tour he had visited the Isle of Wight from end to end but was disappointed in the chief object of his pursuit, the picturesque beauty of its scenery.

> Picturesque beauty is a phrase but little understood. We precisely mean by it that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture. Neither grounds laid out by art, nor improved by agriculture, are of this kind. The isle of Wight is, in fact, a large garden or rather a field, which in every part has been disfigured by the spade, the coulter and the harrow. It abounds much more in tillage than in pasturage; and of all species of cultivation, cornlands are the most unpicturesque. The regularity of cornfields disgusts [this is 18th century for offends, perhaps, not as strong as our "disgusts"] and the colour of corn, especially near harvest is out of true with everything else ...

It seems easier to say what is not picturesque than what is. By linking picturesqueness with beauty, Gilpin seems to have caused some confusion. Followers of eighteenth-century aesthetics were used to distinguishing between the sublime and the beautiful, after Burke's essay on the subject, which very crudely seems to boil down to the fact that beauty meant smooth, and the sublime meant rough, terrifying, awe inspiring, in a pleasurable way. For Gilpin, picturesque seems more inclined to the sublime - it needs roughness and spikiness - vertical features, perhaps?

Perhaps it is now time to look at what Gilpin did actually say in some of his comments on picturesque beauty. He is a good descriptive

writer, but sometimes we cannot help being a little amused (in our sense) at some of the remarks he makes. He begins his tour to the Lakes with a disarming apology:

> The Author hopes no one will be so severe, as to think a work of this kind (though a work only of amusement) inconsistent with the profession of a clergyman.

In or near Grasmere, he tells us:

> The whole view is entirely of the horrid kind. Not a tree appeared to add the least chearfulness to it. With regard to the adorning of such a landscape with figures, nothing could suit it better than a group of banditti. Of all the scenes I ever saw, this was the most adapted to perpetration of some dreadful deed. The imagination can hardly avoid conceiving a band of robbers lurking under the shelter of some projecting rock; and expecting the traveller as he approaches along the valley below.

But he is reassuring:

> Nothing however of this kind was ever heard of in the country. The depredations of foxes are the only depredations to which the cottages in these vallies are exposed. Our postillion pointed to a rocky mountain on the left, which, he told us, was the great harbour of these animals. Here they bred; from hence they infested the country, and to this inaccessible asylum they retreated in the hour of alarm.

His conscience troubles him a little over some of the things that please his sense of the Picturesque:

> Moral and picturesque ideas do not always coincide. In a moral light, cultivation in all its parts is pleasing; the hedge and the furrow; the waving cornfield, and rows of ripened sheaves. But all these, the picturesque eye in quest of scenes of grandeur, looks at with disgust. It ranges after nature, untamed by art, and bursting wildly into all its irregular forms.
> ... juvat arva videre
> Non vastris hominum, non ulli obnoxia curae
> It is thus also in the introduction of figures. In a moral view, the industrious mechanic is a more pleasing object, than the loitering peasant. But in a picturesque light it is otherwise ...
> The characters which are most <u>suited to these scenes of grandeur</u> are such as impress us with some idea of greatness, wildness or ferocity; all which touch on the sublime. Figures in long folding draperies; gypsies; banditti; and soldiers, - not in modern regimentals; but

as Virgil paints them
... longis adnixi hastis, et scuta tenentes;
are all marked with one or other of these characters: and mixing with the magnificence, wildness or horror of the place, they properly coalesce; and reflecting the same images add a deeper tinge to the character of the scene.

Even animals cause problems:

The horse, in itself, is certainly a nobler animal than the cow. His form is more elegant; and his spirit gives fire and grace to his actions. But in a picturesque light the cow has undoubtedly the advantage; and is in every way better suited to receive the graces of the pencil.

In the first place, the lines of the horse are round and smooth; and admit of little variety: whereas the bones of the cow are high, and vary the line, here and there, by a squareness, which is very picturesque. There is a greater proportion also of cavity in them; the lines of the horse being chiefly convex.

Animals are difficult to arrange, too:

These two prints are meant to explain the doctrine of grouping larger cattle. Two will hardly combine. There is indeed no way of forming two into a group, but by uniting them, as they are represented in the former of these prints. If they stand apart, whatever their attitudes or situation may be, there will be a deficiency. But with three, you are almost sure of a good group, except indeed they all stand in the same attitude, and at equal distances. They generally however combine the most beautifully, when two are united, and the third a little removed.

Four introduce a new difficulty in grouping. Separate they would have a bad effect. Two, and two together would be equally bad. The only way, in which they will group well, is to unite three, as represented in the second of these prints, and remove the fourth.

In contrast to the treeless grandeur of Cumberland, let us look at the New Forest, which is, naturally, full of trees.

The blasted tree has often a fine effect both in natural, and in artificial landscape. In some scenes it is almost essential. When the dreary heath is spread before the eye, and ideas of wildness and desolation are required, what more suitable accompaniment can be imagined, than the blasted oak, ragged, scathed and leafless; shooting its peeled, white branches athwart the gathering blackness of some rising storm?

The next characteristic of the oak taken notice of by the poet [Virgil] is the twisting of its branches, bracchia tendit huc illuc. Examine the elm, the beech, or almost any other tree, and you may observe, in what

direct, and strait lines, the branches in each shoot from the stem. Whereas the limbs of an oak are continually twisting huc illuc, in various contortions; and like the course of a river sport and play in every possible direction; sometimes in long reaches, and sometimes in shorter elbows. There is not a characteristic more peculiar to the oak than this.

As well as trees, shrubs have their uses:

Nor are shrubs alone useful in harmonising the forest, the larger kinds of weeds, and the wild flowers have their effect in filling up the smaller vacances near the ground; and add to the richness of the whole. Among these, the heath, and broom, with their purple, and yellow tints; the foxglove with its pale-red pendent bells; then wide-spreading dock; and many of the thistle tribe, are very beautiful. The hue of the furze too is pleasant; but in bloom its luxurient yellow is too powerful. Nothing can accompany it.

There is much variety in the Forest:

The woods must in some parts approach nearer the eye; and in other parts retire; forming the appearance of bays and promontories.

Such objects we often meet with in the wild scenes of the forest, spires, towers, lodges, bridges, cattle-sheds, cottages, winding pales and other things of the same kind, which have often as beautiful an effect, when seen at a distance as we have just observed they have when sparingly met with in the internal parts of the forest.

The calm, overcast, soft, day, such as these climates often produce in the beginning of autumn, hazy, mild, and undisturbed, affords a beautiful medium; spreading over the woods a sweet, grey tint, which is especially favourable to their distant appearances. The internal parts of the forest receive little advantages from this hazy medium: but the various tuftings of distant woods, are wonderfully sweetened by it; and many a form, and many a hue, which in the full glare of sunshine would be harsh, and discordant, are softened, and melted together in harmony. We often see the effects of this mode of atmosphere in various species of landscape; but it has nowhere a better effect, than on the woods of the forest. Nothing appears through mist more beautiful than trees a little removed from the eye, when they are opposed to the trees at hand: for as the foliage of a tree consists of a great number of parts, the contrast is very pleasing between the varied surface of the tree at hand, and the dead, unvaried appearance of the removed one.

As a contrast to Forest Scenery, the River Wye offers many delightful scenes of a picturesque sort:

The beauty of these scenes arises chiefly from two circumstances: the lofty banks of the river, and its mazy course: both of which are

accurately described by the poet, when he describes the Wye as echoing through its winding bounds.

Pleas'd Vaga echoes thro' its winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.[Pope]

It could not well echo, unless its banks were both lofty and winding.

From these two circumstances, the views it exhibits are of the most beautiful kind of perspective, free from the formality of lines. The most perfect river-views, thus circumstanced, are composed of four grand parts: the area, which is the river itself; the two side-screens, which are the opposite banks, and lead the perspective, and the front screen, which points out the winding of the river. ....

The ornaments of the Wye may be ranged under four heads: ground, woods, rocks and buildings.

The various buildings which arise everywhere on the banks of the Wye, form the last of its ornaments: abbeys, castles, villages, spires, forges, mills and bridges ....

These works of art are, however, of much greater use in artificial than in natural landscape. In pursuing the beauties of nature, we range at large among forests, lakes, rocks and mountains ... and though the works of art may often give animation and contrast to these scenes, yet still they are not necessary: we can be amused without them. But when we introduce a scene on canvas; when the eye is to be confined within the frame of a picture and can no longer range among the varieties of nature, the aids of art become more important; and we want the castle or the abbey to give consequence to the scene.

In the drawings which accompanied his tours, Gilpin by no means disdained the uses of art. He did not claim that they were exact representations of what he saw, but only that they were to give an idea of picturesque scenes, and he did not hesitate to manipulate them accordingly, adding or removing trees, or resiting buildings as seemed appropriate. He has quite a lot to say about ruins; not only those in pictures, but those that so many improvers were putting up on their estates.

But among all objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles and abbeys.

In the ruins of castles however, other countries may compare with ours. But in the remains of abbeys no country certainly can.

A distant ruin is not too difficult to create because it is a ruin in a picture, but one on the spot is more difficult:

In constructing a ruin, no part should be presented which the eye does not easily conceive must necessarily have been there, if the whole had been compleat.

Nor is the expense, which attends the construction of such a ruin, a trifling difficulty. The picturesque ruin must have no vulgarity of shape; it must convey the idea of grandeur. And no ruins, that I know, except those of a castle, or an abbey, are suited to this purpose; and

both these are works of great expence.
...A paltry ruin is of no value. A grand one is a work of magnificence. A garden-temple, or a Palladian bridge, may easily be effected; but such a portion of ruin, as well give any idea of a castle, or an abbey, that is worth displaying, requires an expense equal to that of the mansion you inhabit.

There is great art and difficulty also in executing a building of this kind. It is not every man, who can build a house, that can execute a ruin. To give the stone its mouldering appearance - to make the widening chink run naturally through all the joints - to mutilate the ornaments - to peel the facing from the internal structure - to shew how correspondent parts have once united; though now the chasm runs wide between them - and to scatter heaps of ruin around with negligence and ease; are great efforts of art; much too delicate for the hand of a common workman; and what we very rarely see performed. Besides, after all, that art can bestow, you must put your ruin at last into the hands of nature to adorn, and perfect it. If the mosses and lychen grow unkindly on your walls - if the streaming weather-stains have produced no variety of tints - if the ivy refuses to mantle over your buttress; or to creep among the ornaments of your Gothic window - if the ash cannot be brought to hang from the cleft, or long spiry grass to wave over the shattered battlement - your ruin will still be incomplete - you may as well write over the gate, Built in the year 1772. Deception there can be none. The characters of age are wanting. It is time alone, which meliorates the ruin; which gives it perfect beauty; and brings it, if I may so speak, to a state of nature.

On laying all these difficulties together, we see how arduous a matter it is to construct such a ruin, as is to be seen on the spot. When it is well done, we allow, that nothing can be more beautiful: but we see everywhere so many absurd attempts of this kind, that when we walk through a piece of improved ground; and hear next of being carried to see the ruins, if the master of the scene be with us, we dread the encounter.

The pursuit of the Picturesque naturally attracted the satirists. Garrick and Coleman had a go in the Clandestine Marriage, in 1766:

Sterling, the rich merchant, is trying to marry his daughter into society:
The chief pleasure of a country house is to make improvements! you know, my lord. I spare no expense, not I. - This is quite another-guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun - smack-smooth, as you see. - Then I made a greenhouse out of the old laundry, and turned the brewhouse into a pinery. - The high octagon summerhouse you see yonder, is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East India captain who has turned many a thousand of my money ....
His sister joins in: I have a little gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste. - In the evening I shall hope for the honour of your

lordship's company to take a dish of tea there, or a syllabub warm from the cow.

Sterling: I'll only show his lordship my ruins, and the cascade, and the Chinese bridge ... Ay, ruins, my lord, and they are reckoned very fine ones too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair.

[Lord Ogleby inquires about a steeple he sees] It is no church at all, my lord, it is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or a something to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule of taste, my lord!

Gilpin himself came in for very pointed comment in William Combe's narrative poem on The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, though it was not published until after his death, first in magazine form, in 1809, and in 1812 in book form with Rowlandson's delightful drawings.

Dr. Syntax and his mare Grizzle are lost in a treeless waste with no company but some donkeys and a vandalised signpost:

The mangled post thus long had stood
An uninforming piece of wood:
Like other guides, as some folks say,
Who neither lead nor tell the way.

Syntax decides to wait for rescue, but to fill in time by drawing the post:

And, tho' a flimsy taste may flout it,
There's something picturesque about it:
"Tis rude and rough, without a gloss,
And is well covered o'er with moss;
And I've a right - (who dares deny it?)
To place yon group of asses by it.
Aye, this will do: and now I'm thinking,
That self-same pond where Grizzle's drinking,
If hither brought 'twould better seem,
And faith I'll turn it to a stream:
I'll make this flat a shaggy ridge,
And o'er the water throw a bridge:
I'll do as other sketchers do -
Put anything into the view....
What man of taste my right will doubt
To put things in, or leave them out?...
To heighten every work of art,
Fancy should take an active part:
Thus I (which few I think can boast)
Have made a Landscape of a post.

But mockery of a gentler and more affectionate kind comes with Jane Austen, whose brother tells us "She was a warm and judicious admirer of landscape, both in nature and on canvass. At a very early age she was enamoured of Gilpin on the Picturesque: and she seldom changed her opinions, either on books or men."

There are reflections of this interest in all her books, but it is in the three early ones, drafted while Gilpin was still current, that she teases him most.

Pride and Prejudice gives us picturesque travel, when Elizabeth Bennett is invited to go on a tour to the Lakes.

> Adieu to disappointment and spleen. What are men to rocks and mountains? Oh! what hours of transport we shall spend! And when we do return, it shall not be like other travellers, without being able to give one accurate idea of any thing. We will know where we have gone - we will recollect what we have seen. Lakes, mountains, and rivers, shall not be jumbled together in our imaginations; nor, when we attempt to describe any particular scene, will we begin quarrelling about its relative situation. Let our first effusions be less insupportable than those of the generality of travellers.

Earlier in the book, staying at Netherfield, she had gone walking in the grounds with Mrs. Hurst, when they met Darcy and Miss Bingley, whom Mrs. Hurst at once joins. The path is too narrow for four people and Darcy suggests moving into a broader walk, but Elizabeth will have none of it.

> No, no; stay where you are. You are charmingly group'd, and appear to uncommon advantage. The picturesque would be spoilt by admitting a fourth. Good bye.

Very young Jane Austen knew about ruins too: in her History of England she writes of Henry VIII:

> The Crimes and Cruelties of this Prince, were too numerous to be mentioned, ... and nothing can be said in his vindication, but that his abolishing Religious Houses and leaving them to the ruinous depredations of time has been of infinite use to the landscape of England in general, which probably was a principal motive for his doing it....

The young Tilneys, in Northanger Abbey knew about sketching picturesque landscape, and recruited a pupil:

> They were viewing the country with the eyes of persons accustomed to drawing, and decided on its capability of being formed into pictures, with all the eagerness of real taste. Here Catherine was quite lost.

She knew nothing of drawing - nothing of taste: - and she listened to them with an attention which brought her little profit, for they talked in phrases which conveyed scarcely any idea to her. The little which she could understand however appeared to contradict the very few notions she had entertained on the matter before. It seemed as if a good view were no longer to be taken from the top of a high hill, and that a clear blue sky was no longer a proof of a fine day.... She declared that she would give anything in the world to be able to draw; and a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed, in which his instructions were so clear that she soon began to see beauty in everything admired by him, and her attention was so earnest that he became perfectly satisfied of her having a great deal of natural taste. He talked of foregrounds, distances - side-screens and perspectives - lights and shades; - and Catherine was so hopeful a scholar, that when they gained the top of Beechen Cliff, she voluntarily rejected the whole city of Bath, as unworthy to make part of a landscape. Delighted with her progress, and fearful of wearying her with too much wisdom at once, Henry suffered the subject to decline, and by an easy transition from a piece of rocky fragment and the withered oak which he had placed near its summit, to oaks in general, to forests, the enclosure of them, waste lands, crown lands and government, he shortly found himself arrived at politics; and from politics, it was an easy step to silence.

In Sense and Sensibility the subject is picturesque landscape itself. Marianne Dashwood is disappointed that Edward Ferrers does not share her love for it.

Edward returned to them with fresh admiration of the surrounding country; in his walk to the village, he had seen many parts of the valley to advantage; and the village itself, in a much higher situation than the cottage, afforded a general view of the whole, which had exceedingly pleased him. This was a subject which ensured Marianne's attention, and she was beginning to describe her own admiration of these scenes, and to question him more minutely on the objects that had particularly struck him, when Edward interrupted her by saying, "You must not inquire too far, Marianne - remember I have no knowledge in the picturesque, and I shall offend you by my ignorance and want of taste if we come to particulars. I shall call hills steep, which ought to be bold; surfaces strange and uncouth, which ought to be irregular and rugged; and distant objects out of sight, which ought only to be indistinct through the soft medium of a hazy atmosphere. You must be satisfied with such admiration as I can honestly give. I call it a very fine country - the hills are steep, the woods seem full of fine timber, and the valley looks comfortable and snug - with rich meadows and several neat farm houses scattered here and there. It exactly answers my idea of a fine country because it unites beauty with utility - and I dare say it is a picturesque one too, because you admire it; I can easily believe it to be full of rocks and promontories, grey moss and brush wood, but these are all lost

> on me. I know nothing of the picturesque." .... "I like a fine prospect, but not on picturesque principles. I do not like crooked, twisted, blasted trees. I admire them much more if they are tall, straight and flourishing. I do not like ruined, tattered cottages. I am not fond of nettles, or thistles, or heath blossoms. I have more pleasure in a snug farm-house than a watch-tower - and a troop of tidy, happy villagers please me better than the finest banditti in the world."

Marianne complains that admiration of landscape has become a mere jargon, and that

> Every body pretends to feel and tries to describe with the taste and elegance of him who first defined what picturesque beauty was.

I will give her the last word in summing up William Gilpin.

Documentation

Gilpin's Observations ... relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty on:
The River Wye and several parts of South Wales etc 1782
The Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland 1786
Several Parts of Great Britain, particularly the High-lands of Scotland 1789
The Western Parts of England ... Remarks on the Isle of Wight 1798
The Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex and Kent 1804
The Counties of Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex also on Several Parts of North Wales 1809
Remarks on Forest Scenery ... Illustrated by Scenes of the New Forest 1791
Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape 1792

William Gilpin: His Drawings, Teaching and Theory of the Picturesque, Barbier, Carl Paul. Oxford University Press, 1963.

My Dearest Betsy, a self-portrait of William Gilpin [Gilpin's second son], Benson, Peter. Dennis Dobson. 1981.

RICHARD GRAVES (1715-1804): THE SPRIGHTLY AUTHOR OF THE SPIRITUAL QUIXOTE *

Professor Clarence Tracy
University of British Columbia

The Reverend Richard Graves, author of The Spiritual Quixote and three other novels popular in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, cannot be considered a member of the Johnson circle, for, so far as I know, the two men never met, though once late in his life Johnson sent Graves "an obliging message" that might have led to a meeting had it arrived in time.[1] What occasioned that message and what was its purport are unknown. The only certainty is that Graves read Johnson's works with admiration and honoured him as a man. When the petition to increase Johnson's pension failed to achieve its object, Graves wrote a witty epigram on the king who lets his fools roam idly through Europe while keeping "his wise and learned man at home," and when Johnson died he wrote an elegy that he hoped Boswell would print with other commendatory poems in his forthcoming biography. In it Graves wrote glowingly about the Rambler, Rasselas, the Dictionary (which he considered Johnson's greatest achievement), and the Lives of the Poets (though he differed from Johnson in his estimate of Shenstone, Gray, and other members of that new school of poetry). He got back at Boswell, who had brushed him off, in a footnote referring to "the officious Kindness of some of his friends" that lowered Johnson in the eyes of the public - an allusion to the Hebridean journal - and nailed his flag firmly to Johnson's mast:

> Mature in age, with fame, with honour crown'd,
> For virtue reverenc'd, as for wit renown'd;
> Whose bosom glow'd with purest precepts fraught,
> Whose life express'd each precept which he taught.
> Such Johnson was . . . .[2]

Though Graves was one of the singing birds who went to Pembroke College in Oxford, he was a few years later than Johnson. He had come up from Abingdon on a scholarship and acquitted himself so well as a Latin and Greek scholar that he was elected to a resident fellowship at All Souls. There he became a friend of William Blackstone, whom he may have helped in the organisation of the Codrington Library. He hoped for what he once called a "bright career" in learning, his studies having led him particularly

* A paper read at the Johnson Society of London meeting on 15th October, 1983. Chairman: D. Parker, B Litt, MA.

into Romano-British antiquities and archaeology. Whether or not his would have become one of the few great names to adorn Gibbon's Oxford is unclear, since only faint traces of his scholarly work survive. His academic hopes were dashed by what was considered an unsuitable marriage, which not only deprived him of his fellowship and his contact with university life and scholarly resources but also alienated his family. Desperate for money he was fortunate in obtaining the rectorship of Claverton, near Bath, where he stayed for the rest of his long life. That tiny parish gave him time to supplement his meagre income by conducting a school for gentlemen's sons. He also wrote compulsively publishing twenty-seven works in prose and verse in the last fifty years of his life, not counting editorial work and numerous contributions to miscellanies, newspapers, and magazines. And he continued to study. John Skinner, who read for orders under his direction late in his life, found the old man a perennial fountain not only of good sense but of fascinating lore about the antiquities of the Bath area. Though Graves never attained to fame as a scholar, he kept his intellectual interests alive throughout his long life.

The shrewdest insight into his character comes from a sketch written by William Shenstone when he and Graves were fellow collegians in the mid thirties. Shenstone commented on his friend's personal charm, his copious information, his articulateness, and, most interesting of all to the reader of his novels, his special kind of wit. "He gave delight," Shenstone wrote, "by a happy boldness in the extirpation of common prejudices, which he could as readily penetrate, as he could humorously ridicule: And he had such entire possession of the hearts, as well as understandings of his friends, that he could soon make the most surprising paradoxes believed and well-accepted."[3] By paradox Shenstone meant "a tenet contrary to received opinion," to borrow Johnson's definition, or indeed anything unfashionable. Graves once described a walking-stick that was out of style as "paradoxical". One must not assume that Graves and Shenstone were radical in their opinions, for in fact they generally inclined to the right. But Graves loved playing with ideas and went on doing so all his life. From Shenstone's sketch emerges the image of the archetypal bright undergraduate, lively, intelligent, eager to air his knowledge, and proud of his unconventional opinions. To get a complete picture of the mature man add to Shenstone's list a touch of eccentricity, a large amount of humour, and abounding energy, much less remarkable in the young man Shenstone knew than in the octogenarian parson-novelist who astonished the Reverend Richard Warner by his "uninterrupted flow of neat and epigrammatic impromptus; lively jeux d'esprit, and entertaining anecdotes."[4]

In the novels the quality of playfulness at first seems to be dominant. Graves habitually referred to all his writings as "trifling," even in his letters to his publisher, and the erratic structure and improvisational tone of The Spiritual Quixote, for example, suggest that he had had a rollicking good time writing it. The epithet sprightly became

regularly associated with his name and followed him even into his obituary. But one must not be deceived by this pose, for it was a pose. Behind this playful front he had a serious purpose in all his fiction, a purpose he put behind a mask because he had a low estimation of the capacity of his contemporaries for serious reading. "Romances," he wrote in an epigraph to The Spiritual Quixote (borrowing a sentence from the Nouvelle Héloise), "romances are almost the only Vehicles of instruction that can be administered to a refined and voluptuous People."[5] In his preface to Columella, his second novel, he put it even more precisely:

> The world is capricious and wants variety; they are tired of sermons and moral precepts, served up on the same tedious form. But maxims of life which are not new, or which are even so trite as to lose their effect, yet when tricked out in a more inviting dress, and set in a more amiable and striking light, may gain the attention of young people, who would not read even a Spectator or Guardian that was written fifty years ago.[6]

Eugenius, his third novel, was written thoughtfully after turning the theme over in his mind during a couple of years, as he explained in an unpublished letter, in order to defend a paradox,[7] and Plexippus, his last, to take the place of a sermon, even though the author had many of the latter on hand, as he wrote, "ready cut and dried" for the purpose.[8] Consequently the critic who sets out to discover what Graves was about in his novels must penetrate their artless exteriors so as to reach their intellectual cores - their themes, their maxims of life, their subjects of instruction. He must see them as they were intended to be seen, as novels of ideas containing social and ethical comment tailored to fit the capacities of the novel-reading public of the time.

To judge by the scarcity of comments in his letters and essays, Graves must not have been greatly interested in theorizing about the art of fiction. The ones I have just quoted are about all there are. But a few things may be inferred both from what he did say and also from what he did not. Even though he obviously imitated Fielding many times in The Spiritual Quixote, the name of that great innovative novelist is seldom mentioned by Graves. Richardson's name, however, frequently was, and Richardson was clearly his favourite novelist. Grandison, too, was his favourite novel. Clear evidence of his serious didactic intentions.

The Spiritual Quixote (1773), the first and best of his novels, owed its popularity among its first readers to its satire on the itinerant preachers who were going about propagating the gospel according to Wesley and Whitefield. The principal character is young Geoffry Wildgoose, who, nursing grievances against the parson of his parish, turned morose, fell to

reading a parcel of old books of piety found in his attic, and sallied forth to preach to the heathen at fairs, in inns, by the roadside, or wherever he could find them. He was the Don Quixote of Methodism. Naturally many adventures befell him, mainly hilarious ones, and the novel's debt to Joseph Andrews is obvious, though it owes more significant ones to the published journals of Wesley and Whitefield, from which many of the incidents were lifted. But there is more to it than clowning. Wildgoose's theology, which was Whitefield's rather than Wesley's, was given full satiric exposure: the Calvinist doctrines of election and reprobation, the more morbid of the phenomena connected with the New Birth, the worthlessness of good works, and the evil of such worldly pleasures as the theatre. In the conclusion, Wildgoose was brought back to his senses, ostensibly by means of a blow on his head from a wine decanter flung by one of the heathen. But it caused only a minor concussion, and everything ended in reconciliation.

The ostensible cause of Wildgoose's reconversion was just a part of the comedy; the real ones were more profound, chief among them being the advice he received from a number of older and wiser heads. At first he hardened his heart against it, but in the end his defences were penetrated by the good sense and warm humanity of a Dr. Greville, the hero of the final fifty pages. He was no Methodist, but paradoxically he felt that the Methodists had done some good by exposing weaknesses in the established church for which reform from within was overdue. "Dr. Greville," the author explained, "really was what Mr. Wesley and his associates ought to have been and what (I sincerely believe) they at first intended to be. He revived the practice of primitive piety in his own person, and in his own parish, and, by his examples and admonitions, excited many of the neighbouring Clergy to be more vigilant in the discharge of their duty." Graves took for granted that his readers knew what he meant by "primitive piety"; clearly it did not mean for him anything remotely like the perfectionism of William Law, whose works were studied by the early Methodists as well as by Samuel Johnson, but something more like the teaching of Archbishop Laud. It meant a conformity to the traditional practices and low-keyed faith of the Church of England. In particular, it meant that a parson make himself a real part of the community he served, avoiding non-residence and the laxity fashionable at the time, and in fact be the shepherd of his flock, exercising discipline when discipline was needed and showing compassion when it was called for. Dr. Greville, as the author went on to say, "had a Faith, which worked by Love; or, in modern language, his belief of the truths of the Gospel made him consider as an indispensable duty those acts of benevolence which his humanity prompted him to perform."[9] It was he who finally persuaded Wildgoose that the itinerant preachers were doing more harm than good by breaking down the parochial structure traditional in English society and introducing a divisive element.

The other profound cause of his reconversion was nature. The country-side through which the itinerant travelled - for this is very much a

a novel of the open road - beginning in the fleecy Cotswolds and the lush Vale of Evesham, called out Graves's best prose and moved Wildgoose himself to recite a few lines from Paradise Lose:

> These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
> Thus wondrous fair . . . .[10]

This theme mounted to a climax in volume three, in which Wildgoose undertook a missionary journey into the Peak District, a region well known to Graves from his own residence there in the forties and to numerous other devotees of the cult of the picturesque, who were coming in increasing numbers to inspect not only the great houses in the area but also such natural wonders as Mam Tor (the Shivering Mountain), Eldon Hole (the Bottomless Pit), a land-locked lagoon called Peak's Hole, as well as rivers that flowed underground, thundering cascades, and other similar attractions. Wildgoose was moved but troubled by them. When questioned he admitted that "the natural man cannot but be delighted with these terrestrial beauties," but went on to express the old-fashioned view that mountains and other irregularities in the earth's surface were due to God's wrath at the fall of man. "Considered in a religious Light," he continued, "these stupendous rocks and mountains appear to be as the ruins of a noble palace, designed for man in a state of innocence; and, I own, it makes me serious, when I reflect on the fallen state of mankind and that the whole creation suffers for our guilt, and groaneth for redemption." Though the matter was not discussed fully in the novel, one of his hearers, a lady, did say in reply that "the natural man is delighted with them; that is, every thing great, beautiful, or uncommon, is naturally agreeable to the imagination: and I can never think it unlawful to enjoy (under proper restrictions) what Providence has formed us for enjoying."[11] Her reply, simple though it was, went to the root of the matter. For the novel was an apologia for the natural man. From the start, the countryside and all the happy vigorous outdoor life associated with it stood in ironic contrast to the asceticism of Wildgoose. External nature, indeed, symbolised all those things in which the natural man takes pleasure, indoors as well as out. Graves was no libertine in his philosophy, but his novel is a manifesto declaring that it is wrong to reject the good things that God has created.

Sex was one of those good things. Early in his adventures Wildgoose met Julia Townsend and conceived a passion for her that grew steadily, in spite of separations enforced by his quixotic determination to leave everything and follow Jesus, until towards the end of the novel it became all consuming. Though Julia herself was something of a schismatic, their love not only drew them together but brought both of them into a new conformity with the tradional norms of behaviour. The impact of their love story on the reader was reinforced by another one interpolated by a Mr. Rivers,

a sensitively told tale of fascination, seduction, and eventual marriage. Years later word leaked out that Mr. Rivers was an avatar of Mr. Graves and that his tale was really the history of Graves's own courtship and marriage.[12] From both these stories it was clear that Graves ranked love high among the virtues and that for him love was neither Platonic nor altogether spiritual, but contained a large carnal ingredient. It was love as much as the advice of his friends or external nature that shook Wildgoose free from his delusions and induced him to return to the course of life normal for a young English gentleman.

Columella (1779), the second of Graves's novels, is likewise a novel of ideas. A clue to its deeper purpose is provided on an early page in a passing allusion to Johnson's Rasselas.[13] Like Rasselas, Columella is an exploration of the various ways in which people seek happiness. The story of Columella himself, the principal character, is an extended exemplum and clustered about it are several other shorter ones having a thematic relationship to it. The intellectual core of the novel is a discussion of happiness that took place among four of the characters, the substance as well as much of the language of which Graves borrowed from one of his own sermons.[14] Though his doctrine had few of the deeper moral and psychological insights found in Johnson's work, its main point was one that meant much to Graves himself and that Johnson might have agreed with, that happiness is not to be found in solitude and self-gratification but in integration into a community and contributions to its welfare.

Columella himself, the central character in the novel, was said to be a portrait of William Shenstone. But the likeness is not exact, and he is best thought of as a man who typically sought happiness in what in the eighteenth century was called "retirement," that is in "a private way of life"[15] as opposed to an active participation in a trade, a business, a profession, or politics. In a society like that existing in England at that time, in which the social norm many people aimed at was a life of leisure, the idea of retirement had many attractions and was idealised by writers such as Richard Hurd, Richard Lucas, and James Thomson. Graves had little to say about that ideal kind, which in its purest form, as in the essay by Lucas, approached the contemplative life described by Boethius, and instead trained satirical guns on what in a private letter Graves called an "affected Love of Solitude and Retirement."[16] In spite of having been given a good education and of possessing genuine talents, Columella had buried himself in the country, where he toyed with landscape gardening and tried to convince himself that he was living an ideal life. Actually he was bored, frustrated, and lonely, bothered by his servants, harassed by his neighbours, and incapable to the inner serenity necessary for the contemplative life. Eventually he fell victim to the amorous advances of his housekeeper, whom he married and who offended his ears daily during the rest of his wretched life by her grammatical blunders.

Graves was interrupted during the composition of this novel by the death of his wife. His had been a happy marriage, and he was deeply affected by his loss, writing an elegy to her memory that later he published in one of his poetical miscellanies. How much of his novel had been finished before her death it is impossible to say, but the role in it of Parson Pomfret must have been enlarged if not created afterwards. For Pomfret, like Graves, lost his wife and composed an elegy, which in fact was Graves's own. Mrs. Graves's death sent the novel off on a new course, taking it away from amusing social satire and giving it a deeper and more universal moral significance. For Pomfret, before his loss, had glibly preached that "every one has it in his power to be happy, if it is not his own fault,"[17] but afterwards flew to the other extreme, declaring that the world was a desert and wishing that he were dead. That episode was an imitation of the well-known one in Rasselas concerning the "wise and happy" philosopher who preached the government of the passions until the sudden death of his daughter plunged him into despair. Time and the wise advice of his friends, coupled with the regular performance of his parochial duties, blunted the edge of Pomfret's grief, as it must also have done Graves's. Though the tragic irony of this incident may seem out of place beside the comic irony in Columella's story, the novel does not cease to be a comic one on that account. Pomfret is a comic character as Graves painted him, even if the tones he used are darker, and the lesson he taught is that, though happiness is not within easy reach, a sense of humour does take some of the hurt out of our misery. The novel was the richer for Graves's personal loss, though as a result the theme may be harder for the reader to get into focus.

Eugenius (1785), the third novel, contains two characters unusual in an eighteenth-century novel, who must have seemed paradoxical to most of his readers. The young idealist after whom the novel was named was full to the brim of what would today be called social awareness and looked forward to world government and universal peace. Opposite him stands an older, wiser, richer, and more practical man, who has created an utopia in his beautiful Welsh valley while Eugenius merely dreamed of one. Preaching the paradoxical doctrine that "the best conducted charity is to employ the poor, and bring them to a habit of industry, which will be a constant fund for their support,"[18] he established a woollen factory and made people who had been idle and dissolute happy, well dressed and well behaved. Schools, hospitals, and asylums had been set up and good roads built. Characteristically Graves associated this improvement in manners not only with sound economic sense but also a new sensitiveness to the beauties of nature, which Shenstone had told him years ago was a source of moral strength. This whole section of the novel suggests a romance by William Morris rather than the actual practices of the Industrial Revolution.

In Plexippus (1790), the last of the four, Graves began with the paradox explicitly stated that a man of plebeian birth who has ability and a good character is more worhty of respect than "the first nobleman in the kingdom, who has nothing but an hereditary title to boast of."[19] But he did not take it seriously enough. The issue was evaded when, in the final chapters, Plexippus, who has suffered through two volumes from being thought of as a man of lowly origins, not only unexpectedly inherited a large fortune but turned out to have good family connections as well. That may have been intended for irony, but if it was, his thesis was weakened by it. A secondary but more promising theme has to do with marriages between protestants and catholics, which was dealt with after a fashion by preaching toleration, scepticism over the importance of doctrinal differences, and the duty of conforming with the law of the land. In one of his letters to his publisher Graves wrote that this was a "more regular" novel than any of the others.[20] What he meant by "regular" it would be hard to say, unless he was thinking of the surprise happy ending so dear to the wishful thinkers among readers of romances for whom he had not much catered in the past.

Graves's novels were popular. The Spritual Quixote went through four editions in his lifetime, not counting piracies and translations, and British tourists travelling abroad even found copies of it in bookshops in Germany. Though the spread of his personal fame was a little restricted by his insistence as an author on anonymity, the secret was not closely guarded and many of the visitors to Bath, prompted by their guide books, knew that down there through the trees in Claverton dwelt the sprightly author of several entertaining novels. The author of Graves's obituary in The Gentleman's Magazine, moreover, risked the prediction that his works "will always be read with pleasure, there being a sprightliness and epigrammatic turn in his writings which was peculiar to himself." Elizabeth Gaskell's remark in one of her tales that copies of The Spiritual Quixote formed part of the stock in trade of every pedlar who made his rounds in Cumberland and Westmoreland, along with copies of Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, The Pilgrim's Progress, and The Death of Abel,[21] would bear this prediction out had she not gone on to categorise all five of those works as "grave, solid books," not epithets one would naturally choose to describe Graves's light-hearted novel. But it is unfair to expect any age to enter fully into the spirit of the humour of its predecessors. We, in this post-Shavian age, may perhaps be better placed than Mrs. Gaskell was for understanding Graves's characteristic mixture of the comic and the serious. The anonymous reviewer who greeted the appearance in 1967 of a new edition of The Spiritual Quixote got closer to the mark when he described it surprisingly as a new discovery and hailed it as a minor masterpiece.

Documentation

1 Letter: Graves to Sir Joshua Reynolds, 26. 12. 85 (Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds, ed. F. W. Hilles, Cambridge, 1920. pp. 249-50.)
2 Richard Graves, Lucubrations (1786), pp. 212, 216-20.
3 William Shenstone, Works in Verse and Prose (1764), II, 46.
4 Warner, Literary Recollections (1830), II, 18.
5 Richard Graves, The Spiritual Quixote, ed. Clarence Tracy (1967), p.11.
6 II, 245.
7 Letter: Graves to James Dodsley, 12. 4. [85], Phillipps MSS, in Record Office, Taunton, Somerset.
8 I, vi.
9 P.432.
10 P. 43. The Milton quotation is from book V, lines 153-55.
11 P. 396.
12 This identification was made privately by Thomas Percy in his manuscript Memoranda 1751-75 (B. L.: Add. Ms. 32, 336) and in notes that he inserted in his own copy of Shenstone's Works, now in the Bodleian Library.
13 I, 46.
14 None of the sermons in Graves's one published collection (1799) bears a date of composition, and I have merely assumed that the one on happiness was written before 1779. If it was not then the borrowing was the other way on. Cf: C. J. Hill, Literary Career of Richard Graves, Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, XVI (1935), 84-88.
15 Johnson's Dictionary.
16 Letter: Graves to James Dodsley, 21. 11. 78, ibid.
17 II, 151.
18 I, 160.
19 I, iii.
20 See note 7 above.
21 Elizabeth Gaskell, "Half a Lifetime ago," My Lady Ludlow and Other Tales (1906), p.280.

The Chairman introduced Professor Tracy as the distinguished holder of a number of Doctorates in Canada and the United States who had held professorships in Classics and English. His work had been particularly associated with Richard Savage, and with Richard Graves whose biography he was now preparing. He had edited The Spiritual Quixote for the OUP. As Professor Tracy was awaiting an operation for cataract at the time of the Meeting, he was unable to read his paper himself; it was however ably read for him by Mrs. Tracy.

SWIFT AND JOHNSON: THE PROBLEMS OF THE LIFE OF SWIFT

Dr. J. A. Downie, Lecturer in English,
Goldsmiths' College, London. - 15th January 1983.
Chairman: Margaret Berry

The following abstract of Dr. Downie's paper was kindly suppled by the author.

Johnson's "unaccountable prejudice" against Swift was felt by many of his contemporaries, as well as his modern critics, and it manifests itself most clearly in his Life of Swift - a work he did not want to write. But there appears to be no question of Johnson having been personally offended by Swift. How, then, are we to account for his bias towards the Dean of St. Patrick's?

First, it should be noted that on matters of morality, religion and politics, the views of Swift and Johnson were remarkably similar. True, Johnson outwardly displays more compassion than Swift, but Swift was also a compassionate man stimulated by "perfect rage and resentment, and the mortifying sight of slavery, folly, and baseness about me, among which I am forced to live". If he was a misanthrope, it was not in "Timons manner".

Not only do the views of Swift and Johnson coincide; so do their fears. In particular, Johnson's deep-rooted fear of insanity finds a sympathetic chord in Swift's decline into senility. His concern with lassitude, sensual images and moral depravity reflect, in a lower key, Swift's scatological satires. Perhaps, in the image he created of the misanthropic, depraved Dean Swift, Johnson saw himself reflected.

In compiling his Life of Swift, Johnson used the printed sources available to him, but if the outline of Swift's career is based on the account given by Hawkesworth, Orrery's outspokenness is preferred in the analysis of Swift's character. Johnson's scholarship, in this case, is scarcely exemplary. Nor his criticism sound.

Johnson's reluctance to give Swift his due either as a man or as a writer is the problem of the Life of Swift. The work's interest lies above all in the insight it gives not into its subject's mind and art, but into its author's. Swift troubled Johnson deeply. When we pause to consider why, then we can truly say we know Johnson better than we did before.

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A spirited discussion followed. Canon Winnett concluded the debate with a warm vote of thanks on behalf of those present.

SAMUEL JOHNSON AND JOHN WESLEY: THE ROUGH AND THE SMOOTH

Rev. Douglas Wollen, MA - 19th March 1983.
Chairman: J. H. Leicester, MA

In introducing the speaker, the Chairman said that when Douglas Wollen joined the Society as a member he had hoped for a paper from him on Johnson. When he learned that Mr. Wollen was the Historian of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, he looked forward to a paper on Wesley. He was doubly delighted, therefore, to be introducing today a paper on both of them.

Mr. Wollen began with a reference to the opening paragraph of a paper by Dr. John Bowmer printed in the January 1970 issue of the New Rambler, which, he said, he was unable to improve upon, pointing out the physical contrast between "the two best remembered Englishmen of the eighteenth century", though in spirit they had much in common. Johnson liked to sit and have his talk out; Wesley was always on the move to his next appointment.

Although Johnson was friendly with Wesley's sister, Mrs. Hall, the two men met only once, in 1783, when Wesley was 80 and Johnson 74. Wesley spent two hours with "that great man". The common view of Johnson was that he was rough and overbearing, while Wesley was smooth, elegant and fastidious. Yet fundamentally, Johnson was soft-hearted and gentle - "nothing of the bear but his skin" - while Wesley was a great disciplinarian. When his preachers failed to attend his early services because they had been up late, he sent them to bed at 9.0 p.m. and had them up by 4.0 a.m.

Nevertheless, the two men had in common a deep Christian faith, but whereas Wesley was immovable and extrovert, rough and determined in his writings, Johnson's religion was smooth, gentle and tender, dominated by a deep fear of death and judgement. Wesley expressed triumph and praise; Johnson was uncertain and fearful. Both were influenced by William Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.

GROWING UP IN LICHFIELD

Peter Stockham, BA - 16th April 1983.
Chairman: Trevor Russell-Cobb, BA, BSc Econ.

The Chairman introduced the speaker as a man of many interests and activities, whose main business was the running of his antiquarian bookshop,

Images, which specialised in art and children's books.

Mr. Stockham had called his talk "Growing up in Lichfield" and he explained how a boyhood in an essentially eighteenth-century city, with access to the Dean Savage Library, had taught him to develop an interest in both books and history of places as well as in persons. In learning the book trade, he came to appreciate the background against which Johnson grew up - in an ever changing library of books in the home and the bookshop. He learned book-binding, a skill which he shared with Johnson. He hoped that it would be possible to set up an eighteenth-century study centre in Lichfield. One subject to be studied might be the level of literacy, which might illuminate the need in a small town for a major bookshop like Michael Johnson's.

In talking about Michael Johnson and his problems, Mr. Stockham raised a number of interesting questions to which there would seem so far no known answers: how were books packed for transit to the provinces, how was payment made? How was a bookshop arranged? How were books priced? How was the stock carried? Mr. Johnson seemed not to have been a very good bookseller, although he worked hard and traded over a wide area. Did he carry his books with him on horseback? Or were they sent by carrier?

Besides Michael Johnson, Lichfield was peopled for Mr. Stockham by a number of other characters - Anna Seward, Thomas Day, and, one of his favourites, Erasmus Darwin. Darwin founded the Lichfield Botanic Society, which numbered three members. He enlisted the aid of Johnson in forming a suitable technical language for his botanical works, the products of a poetic but scientifically trained mind.

DR. JOHNSON ON THE RISE OF THE NOVEL

Mark Kinkead-Weekes, BA, MA,
Professor of English, Kent University - 19th November 1983.
Chairman: Dr. L. M. Grundy

The Chairman introduced the speaker who had been born in South Africa, educated at the Universities of Cape Town and Oxford and had taught at Edinburgh University before going to Kent. He had contributed most valuably to our knowledge of the eighteenth-century novel by his Everyman edition of Pamela and his irreplaceable book Samuel Richardson, Dramatic Novelist. More recently he had moved on to modern novels and was now working on D. H. Lawrence.

Taking as his subject "Dr. Johnson on the Rise of the Novel", the speaker said the striking thing about Johnson's criticism of "the novel" was

that there was so little of it: a generalising Rambler essay No. 4, remarks praising Richardson and damning Fielding, and a few asides about Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, and Tristram Shandy. Nevertheless this small remnant was illuminating of the nature and quality of Johnson's own sensibility, revealing what might be implicitly behind the more collected and pondered criticisms of poetry and drama. Between the rising novels of the 1750s and those of the 80s there were few of note, and Johnson had no occasion to write at length on fiction, which thus took little of his critical attention. He thought of prose fictions as largely directed towards the young and towards women, and thought they "took no hold of the mind".

In Rambler No. 4 he attacked romance and suggested that idealistic fictions in familiar histories could be justified only on condition that they dealt realistically with ordinary life in a morally improving way, distinguishing clearly between vice and virtue, and making vice abhorrent so that the young should not wish to emulate it. On these terms one might expect him to approve of Clarissa, with its knowledge of the human heart, and denounce Tom Jones as making vice too attractive. There was a close affinity at some points between the Rambler and the Preface to Book 9 of Tom Jones. What was astonishing was the consistency, vehemence and extremity of his comparative judgement of the two authors, and especially the apparent inconsistency with the attitudes of Rambler No. 4.

Johnson said that Richardson dealt with characters of nature, and Fielding with characters of manners. Fielding seemed better atuned to Johnson's insistence on the generality of truth, and his praise of Shakespeare for presenting a species rather than individuals, whereas Richardson took his readers into the unique subjective individuality of his characters. Fielding was an "authorial" writer, whose characters were intended to express the complexity inherent in one view, while Richardson was a dramatist who banished "the author".

The speaker suggested that Johnson's critical views of 1768 and 1772 arose from his immersion in Shakespeare, which sharpened his sense of characterisation and "knowledge of the heart", so that he then treasured not so much the exemplary force of realistic behaviour, as in the Rambler essay, but the inward psychological knowledge of the heart. The notes to his Shakespeare gave arresting evidence of how powerfully Johnson responded in imagination and feeling to Shakespeare's creations, particularly in the tragedies. It was not surprising therefore that Johnson should praise a novelist who moved both passion and imagination consistently in the cause of virtue. If fiction was a limited good in certain conditions, it was also a dangerous evil. Johnson possessed an imagination, a depth of feeling more powerful, but also more uncontrollable than this thick-skinned age. To such susceptibility and sensitivity the experience of Tom Jones, in which the pseudo-author appears to condone a number of vices, caused a strong reaction in Johnson: he felt the book full of corrupting influences and was really shocked that it could be read and enjoyed by such a woman as Hannah More.

Nevertheless, Johnson did read and enjoy Amelia as a book in which evil was not extenuated and moral discrimination was made articulate.

The distortion of Johnson's view of Tom Jones seemed to be a technical failure to understand Fielding's use of the subversive "double irony" of the unreliable author, teasing and challenging the reader to find the moral vision behind the presentation of false or inadequate alternatives. Once understood, the strength and consistency of Johnson's responses were admirable, its sensibility and sensitivity, its demands on fiction, challenged modern responses and produced discriminating criticism. It revealed valuably the complexity of Johnson's sensibility. In his criticism "generality" was reached through particularity - an individual truly and complexly imagined by a master of the heart was a revelation of species.

At the end of an interested discussion, during which Mr. Ross Wilson quoted some comments by Macaulay, Mr. Russell-Cobb thanked the speaker for giving members such a stimulating paper.

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION 1983

The annual ceremony was held in Westminster Abbey at noon on Saturday 17th December by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter. A wreath was laid on Samuel Johnson's grave by Professor James B. Misenheimer who also gave the Commemorative Address. The Service was conducted by the Very Reverend the Dean of Westminster.

Following the ceremony, a larger than usual number of members and guests assembled at the Vitello d'Oro Restaurant for an enjoyable Christmas Luncheon, arranged by the Luncheon Secretary, Mrs. A G Dowdeswell. The day ended with Professor Misenheimer's paper at the Society's normal venue, the Vestry Hall of the Church of St Edmund the King, Lombard Street, EC3.

The Chairman, Mr. J. R. G. Comyn, said that Dr. Misenheimer was an old friend and member of the Society. It was twelve years since he had last laid the wreath, but he had addressed the Society in 1980. Shortly after he had received an award from Leeds University for his studies in bibliography. Dr. Misenheimer's paper follows.

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS 1983

James B. Misenheimer, Jr., Ph.D.
Professor of English
Indiana State University, Terre Haute

We are gathered today in the Poets' Corner to honour the memory of Dr. Samuel Johnson, a great man, a great author, a great humanist, and a continuing inspiration to all who know him. He was born at Lichfield 274 years ago and was buried here on December 20, 1784. Dr. Johnson has warmed, inspired, and enlightened so many thousands upon thousands of people across the world and across more than two centuries, that those of us present in this hallowed sanctuary today are simultaneously humbled and lifted up as we commemorate the 199th anniversary of his death.

Johnson once replied to his friend Oliver Goldsmith, "Sir, you have not travelled over my mind, I promise you."[1] That statement, and others like it, have conspired to establish Dr. Johnson in the minds of those who hardly know him as a man of firm arbitrariness and self-will, invincible and proud. Johnson's mind continues to be subjected to perpetual inquiry, and it no doubt will continue to be rigorously analyzed as long as a world exists which permits the individual intellect to travel, to explore, and to evaluate.

What is perhaps constantly fascinating to Johnsonians of our day is the fact that Johnson unrelentingly subjected his own mind to a most serious and painful scrutiny - a scrutiny that led him, however excruciatingly, to a deeply sensitive appreciation of the agony and the ecstasy of being human.

Boswell was the fortunate auditor on one occasion when Johnson remarked that

> People are influenced more by what a man says, if his practice is suitable to it, - because they are blockheads. The more intellectual people are, the readier will they attend to what a man tells them. If it is just, they will follow it, be his practice what it will. No man practises so well as he writes. I have, all my life long, been lying till noon, yet I tell all young men, and tell them with great sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good.[2]

On another occasion he said to Mrs. Thrale: "I have through my whole progress of authorship honestly endeavoured to teach the right, though

I have not been sufficiently diligent to practise it, and have offered mankind my opinion as a rule, but never professed my behaviour as an example."[3] His hope for himself was closely akin to that which he held for all men everywhere.

Recently, at a lecture before the American Council of Learned Societies, Professor Maynard Mack spoke quite movingly of some of his own most profound impressions as one casting back across time. He remarked:

> One of my earliest memories is of my father coming out of his study, where he had been reading Wordsworth in preparation for a class, with tears in his eyes - a startling experience for a child. And I remember, later on, at Yale, how C. B. Tinker would bring very rare books or manuscripts from his own library to class, and urge us to touch them as if we were in a holy place. ... And one thinks, too, of Keats discovering Chapman's translation of the Odyssey and feeling like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken; and of Pope at his friend Lord Bathurst's reading aloud in Greek the scene of Priam's meeting with Achilles, and being unable to go on; and of Flaubert writing to a friend : 'The most beautiful works ... are serene in aspect, unfathomable. ... Through small apertures we glimpse abysses whose sombre depths turn us faint.'[4]

We in the Poets' Corner today share the quality of Professor Mack's sense of wonder as we commemorate the 199th anniversary of Dr. Johnson's death. We are somehow different for having known him and having loved him. We are somehow different because he has touched our lives so profoundly. For his legacy is a legacy of strength, of beauty, of learning, of pain, of humility.

In the name of the Johnson Society of London, I lay this wreath to the memory of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

1. James Boswell, Life of Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. and enl. by Lawrence F. Powell (Oxford, 1934-50), IV, 183.
2. Life of Johnson, V, 210.
3. Letters of Dr. Samuel Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1892), II, 378.
4. Maynard Mack, "The Life of Learning", American Council of Learned Societies Newsletter (ACLS), XXXIV (Winter-Spring 1983), 8.

THE CORDELL COLLECTION OF DICTIONARIES AND JOHNSON'S LEXICOGRAPHIC PRESENCE: THE LOVE OF BOOKS IN TWO CENTURIES

James B. Misenheimer, Jr.
Professor of English, Indiana State University

with

Robert K. O'Neill
Director, Indiana Historical Society Library

In 1644, in his brilliant defence of the freedom of the press known as the Areopagitica, John Milton defined a good book as "the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life."[1] He was here speaking in defence of books as one aspect of his argument against censorship, though he could just as easily have been pronouncing the credo for bibliophiles the world over; for if indeed a good book is "the pretious life-blood of a master spirit," it is deserving of the kind of attention stemming not only from scholarly interest, but also from the love, the care, and the respect sometimes manifest in an ardent collector, eager to nurture and to cherish in one place a portion of the cultural and intellectual legacy that is ours.

From our study of literary history, we know that not all great authors have been great collectors, just as not all great collectors have been great authors. We think of Sir Robert Cotton, but for whose efforts at collecting we might never have come to recognise and share in the glories of the Anglo Saxon epic Beowulf or in the productions of the Pearl Poet. His collection is his great claim to fame. But we also think of Coleridge and DeQuincey, two of the greatest representatives of English romanticism and also two of the most notorious borrowers of books on record. Many will recall Lamb's acerbic references to Coleridge as an example of those who borrow in the famous essay "The Two Races of Men."[2] Coleridge often scribbled in books that were not his own, and DeQuincey cut out with the scissors favourite or needed passages, seldom concerned with the sensitivities of the book owner as he did so. Samuel Johnson, from childhood, possessed an inveterate love of books. He was born above his father's bookshop in Lichfield, and from his earliest years Samuel had a profound respect for books as both physical objects and repositories of knowledge.

Indeed, in the early 1750's, when Johnson was writing as the Rambler, he referred in essay number 92 to Boileau, who Johnson says

"justly remarks, that the books which have stood the test of time, and been admired through all the changes which the mind of man has suffered from the various revolutions of knowledge ... have a better claim to our regard than any modern can boast, because the long continuance of their reputation proves that they are adequate to our faculties, and agreeable to nature."[3]

One of Johnson's many statements regarding love of books as an integral part of being a fully developed human being - a statement similar to Boileau's, though it begins in analogy - appears in a letter to his young friend Hester Maria Thrale, written on 28 August 1780, as follows:

> It is well for me that a Lady so celebrated as Miss Thrale can find time to write to me. I will recompense your condescension with a maxim. Never treat old friends with neglect however easily you may find new. There is a tenderness which seems the meer growth of time, but which is in [fact] the effect [of] many combinations; those with whom we have shared enjoyments, we remember with pleasure, those with whom we have shared sorrow, we remember with tenderness. You must already have begun to observe that you love a book ... that you have had a great part of your life, because it brings a great part of your life back to your view.[4]

Johnson's love of books expressed itself primarily, of course, through his choice of writing as his profession. At no time in his life did he have at his command large sums of money which would have allowed him to become a full-fledged collector of books in the modern sense. But his intense interest in the profession of authorship led him to a deep sense of responsibility for what books say and for how they can influence human thought and conduct. It is true that Johnson did not relish the discipline of writing. It is also true that he was his own harshest critic. Nevertheless, he knew that he had something worthwhile to say about the art of living, and though as he told the King no man is obliged to do all that he can, he devoted himself professionally to contributions to literary genres almost too numerous to count.

Paul Fussell has pointed out in his book Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing that Johnson "worked in tragedy, biography, the periodical essay, the oriental tale, the travel book, the political tract, the critical essay, and the book review; in the oration, the sermon, the letter, the prayer, the dedication, the preface, the legal brief, and the petition to royalty; in the poetic satire, the Horatian ode, the elegy, the theatrical prologue and epilogue, the song, the Anacreontic lyric, the epigram, and the epitaph."[5] Johnson wrote from the belief that authorship

is among the most intensely personal of professions. It verges on confession and hence lays one's self open to the scrutiny of the world. Thus his respect for books takes the form of a strong devotion to his profession; and though he owned many books, he did not always take time to read them completely or to attend to them as he ought, nor did he consider himself a collector. It was his fervent hope that men and women would be affected by the instruction of literature well written. In the Rambler, No. 57, he writes: "I am always pleased when I see literature made useful, and scholars descending from that elevation, which, as it raises them above common life, must likewise hinder them from beholding the ways of men otherwise than in a cloud of bustle and confusion."[6]

Thus it is, then, that Milton's definition of a good book as the "pretious life-blood of a master spirit" is a definition universal, replete with implications and ramifications for all who cultivate a life of the mind. And it is a definition that undergirds perhaps one of the greatest collections of books in twentieth-century America, the Cordell Collection of Dictionaries at Indiana State University, in which Dr. Johnson is so fully represented.

"The embalming and treasuring up on purpose of a life beyond life" was begun a number of years ago by Warren Cordell of Chicago when his interest in old dictionaries began to take the form of collecting. Mr. Cordell, who died in 1980, once remarked that the collecting of old dictionaries was not the result of "logical appraisal" but rather "an emotional course of action" that he had never bothered to examine too closely. Having grown up, like Johnson, among books, he was eventually led - or driven - by an unusual desire to acquire thousands of old dictionaries. He had early been fascinated by words - by the magic and power of language; and he on one occasion confessed the possibility that among the hidden recesses of the dictionary bibliomaniac's mind is the belief that physical acquisition of a book is tantamount to the mental acquisition and intellectual assimilation of its contents.

Mr. Cordell always insisted that he was not a scholar. He was, at least on the surface, a very successful business executive whose success eventually permitted him an avocation in the world of books that by far transcends and surpasses the professed scholarly interests and research of many who are primarily professional and scholarly. And when a flash flood from a cloudburst began pouring into the area of his home where his dictionary collection was shelved, he approached his alma mater, Indiana State University, about providing a home for these

volumes in its new library. He said that since this new library was to be constructed only a few miles from his birthplace, which was a flat over his father's grocery store, the opportunity of giving his collection a special residence in the university seemed to provide a poetic ending. The arrangements at Indiana State's Cunningham Memorial Library exceeded even Mr. Cordell's greatest expectations when it was decided that a special Cordell Room to house the collection would be planned as part of the rare books section. And the good fortune continued when a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities was obtained which matched the value of Mr. Cordell's first gift of 453 dictionaries, a sum that permitted significant additional acquisitions, repairs, and cataloging and use of the collection. The university's own programme for gradual improvement through a regular acquisition fund meant, moreover, that the Cordell Collection would remain alive and retain its place among the world's best collections of dictionaries.

The current status of the Collection would no doubt be of special interest to you before we examine further some of the processes and techniques of collecting that Mr. Cordell followed.

The Warren N. and Suzanne B. Cordell Collection of Dictionaries, totalling now more than 8,000 volumes, represents virtually the entire spectrum of Western lexicography from the Manuscript period to the present day. It also includes a sizeable representation of non-Western language dictionaries. From the beginning, however, emphasis has been placed on collecting pre-1900 English language dictionaries and English bilingual dictionaries important in the development of English and American lexicography. The Collection includes complete or nearly complete runs of almost every major English language dictionary published since Robert Cawdrey's A Table Alphabeticall appeared in 1604. For example, the Collection boasts more than two-hundred (200) different editions and issues of Samuel Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Language plus splendid copies of the "Chesterfield" and "Non-Chesterfield" issues of the 1747 Plan in quarto and the 1755 octavo edition of the Plan. The Collection also includes every known edition of Nathan Bailey's Etymological English Dictionary, volumes I and II. Many copies in the Collection are unique, i.e., they represent the only recorded copies of a particular edition or issue of a work. Some are distinctive in other ways, as, for example, Peter Roget's personal copy of the first edition of his Thesaurus, with extensive corrections, revisions, and annotations throughout in his own hand.

While early English language dictionaries continue to be the focal point of the Cordell Collection, increasing attention in recent

years has been given to the collecting of major Renaissance and pre-1800 foreign language dictionaries, for these too were important in the development of English lexicography. Because of the generally high cost and relative scarcity of early modern European lexicons, it is doubtful that the Library will ever aim at being as comprehensive in this area as it is in the area of English and American lexicography. Nevertheless, the Cordell Collection includes a rather impressive representation of most of the key Renaissance and pre-1800 foreign language dictionaries. In some cases, it is outstanding. For example, its twenty-five different editions of Ambrogio Calepino's Dictionarium, perhaps the most influential lexicon of the Renaissance, rank it among the finest such holdings in the world. By comparison, the British Library and the Bibliotheque Nationale record only twenty copies each of Calepino's work.

While emphasis has been placed on strengthening the Collection's pre-1900 dictionary holdings, the twentieth century has not been entirely forgotten or neglected. Of the more than 8,000 volumes in the Collection, approximately 25% were published after 1900. The number and variety of twentieth-century dictionaries is, however, staggering, and the limited resources of the Library have made it impossible to collect either aggressively or comprehensively in this period. This is not to say that the Library undervalues the importance of twentieth-century dictionaries. Quite the contrary! But the line had to be drawn somewhere, and it was decided early on that it would be wisest to concentrate initially on rare and early dictionaries. As it becomes increasingly more difficult, for whatever reasons, to fill gaps in our pre-1900 holdings, the Library will likely turn more attention to the collection of post-1900 dictionaries.

In recent years the scope of the Collection has broadened to include not only dictionaries but the papers of distinguished dictionary makers. In 1977, the Library acquired the papers of Mitford Mathews of the University of Chicago, one of the foremost American lexicographers of the twentieth century. The Mathews Papers constitute a rich source for the study of how a lexicographer collects and uses definitions in compiling a dictionary. Efforts are underway to acquire similar collections to enhance the study of lexicography at Indiana State University.

To inform the book world about the Cordell Collection, a Short Title Catalogue, compiled by Paul S. Koda, now of the University of North Carolina, was published in 1975 with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. This limited edition of 500 copies was distributed free of charge, and the supply has long since been exhausted.

A new catalogue, entitled The Warren N. and Suzanne B. Cordell Collection of Rare and Early Dictionaries, ca. 1400 -1900, by Robert K. O'Neill, is in preparation. This catalogue will include full titles in most cases, collations, including signature collations, notes, provenance, reference, entry numbers, indexes, and other bibliographical aids.

Since the initial gift was made by Warren Cordell in 1969, the Collection has grown in number, in scope, and in depth beyond anything either Mr. Cordell or the University had envisioned. The principal force behind this growth was Warren Cordell himself. Not only did he personally donate more than 75% of the volumes in the Collection, but he worked tirelessly to promote the Collection. To this end he was amazingly successful. Through his efforts, for example, the antiquarian book trade in North America and in England has by and large come to identify dictionary collecting with the Cordell Collection. J. Clarke-Hall's Catalogue 18: "'Harmless Drudgery': Johnson and the Dictionary," contains the following dedication:

> We would like to pay tribute to Dr Warren N. Cordell, who died suddenly on the 5th January, 1980 and to whom we owe a great deal of our present interest in the Dictionaries. We dedicate this catalogue to a remarkable man whose collection of Dictionaries, housed at Indiana State University, is very possibly the greatest in the world, and whose enthusiasm for his subect was the greatest.

Numerous bookdealers, often at financial sacrifice to themselves, have taken pains in the past decade to direct dictionaries to the Cordell Collection, in large measure out of respect for Warren Cordell and for his work.

What therefore does the loss of Warren Cordell mean to the future of the Cordell Collection? Clearly, his generosity, his vision, his enthusiasm, and his knowledge are greatly missed. But the Collection he founded has taken on a life of its own. This was his expressed purpose. Moreover, the University and the Cordell family are firmly committed to the enhancement of the Collection, so that an already great collection will become even greater.

But the Collection would never have become reality in its present unique form, had an unusually deep and rich love of books not possessed this man who sought and found his avocation far from the madding crowd of big business.

The private collecting of old English dictionaries is unusual, Mr. Cordell once pointed out; because it differs so much in scope from

collecting the works of a single author. This difference is even greater, he emphasised, when the term "old English dictionaries" is interpreted broadly to include all kinds of dictionaries, all different editions, early multi-lingual dictionaries including English, and the early Latin and Greek dictionaries that contributed to the development of the English language. Such a full-scale interpretation would have set the Collection's early goal at considerably more than 5000 dictionaries published across a period of five centuries. But Mr. Cordell knew that unless a definite category or area of collection can be described, the Collection area will continue to expand as the collector's appetite grows and as bookdealers offer associated items of interest, so that the collector must exhibit considerable discipline to keep his collection instincts within appropriate bounds.

He directed his efforts to old dictionaries without troubling himself initially as to goals and purpose. Among his initial acquisitions were Webster's 1806 and 1828 editions, though for some reason Worcester's dictionaries eluded him for several years. His first acquisition of a Worcester dictionary, when finally it came, led him to a crucial reappraisal of his goals as a collector. This quarto edition of Worcester contained "A Catalogue of English Dictionaries" - a seven-page list of 398 lexicographical works by nearly that number of lexicographers. As he studied Worcester's Catalogue, he for the first time grasped how many English lexicographers there had been, the many different kinds of dictionaries, and the magnitude of work that would be involved if he held to his desire to acquire all editions instead of just first editions. He, of course, used other lists as well for gauging his progress, including those from Starnes and Noyes' English Dictionaries from Cawdrey to Johnson,[7] Starnes' Renaissance Dictionaries,[8] and Alston's bibliography of regular English dictionaries.[9] Later, Hayashi's list of English dictionary first editions[10] was helpful, although by then Mr. Cordell's own sources were nearly as complete and in some cases permitted him to offer Hayashi corrections. But the Worcester list and those acquired later made him fully aware of the optimism required to undertake the ambitious programme of collecting so many old dictionaries.

As Warren Cordell became increasingly more absorbed in collecting old dictionaries, he recognized the need to set specific goals, or, to use his expression, to take the rifle rather than the shotgun approach.[11] His first aim was to assemble the finest and most comprehensive collection of old English and American English dictionaries in the United States. To identify pre-1900 English language dictionaries,

he used R. C. Alston's A Bibliography of the English Language. He set out after as many "Alstons" as he could acquire, with the avowed purpose to collect every edition of every Alston title possible. "It became an intriguing challenge," he wrote, "to get what I choose to call a 'clean sweep' of all editions."[12] Certain titles were, for all practical purposes, impossible to collect in every edition. For example, Alston recorded only one extant copy of the 1604, 1609, and 1617 editions and only two copies of the 1613 edition of Robert Cawdrey's A Table Alphabeticall, the first English language dictionary. But for many and perhaps most of the Alston titles, a "clean sweep" was a distinct possibility.

Since Alston recorded not only various editions and issues of pre-1800 English dictionary titles but also locations, Cordell was able to identify major institutional holders. To his surprise, he found in 1967 that no single library in either Britain or the United States was exceptionally strong numerically in Alston holdings. The British Museum was first, with 172 out of a possible 353 editions, followed by Oxford, with 163. Only five other libraries recorded more Alstons than Cordell's personal total of sixty-seven.[13] To be sure, this was a quantitative rather than a qualitative comparison, and Cordell recognised this. Nevertheless, his findings showed that his original objective to assemble the finest collection of early dictionaries in the United States was clearly within reach. It seemed to Cordell that few libraries were strongly committed to improving their dictionary holdings. Consequently, he began even to consider a more ambitious goal, namely, establishing the Cordell Collection as the finest collection of its kind anywhere. He pursued Alstons aggressively, though not to the exclusion of other dictionaries. By early 1969, he had increased his holdings to 119, surpassing all but the British Museum and Oxford.[14] He finally passed the British Museum in August, 1970 with the acquisition of twelve Alstons from the Gene Freeman Collection.[15]

In his pursuit of Alstons, Cordell concentrated on two lexicographers above all - Nathan Bailey and Samuel Johnson. He was determined to make his collection of dictionaries by these two great eighteenth-century lexicographers second to none, and he spared neither time nor money in this quest. He was after nothing less than a "clean sweep."

Although Nathan Bailey's Etymological Dictionary may have been the most popular eighteenth-century English dictionary, Samuel Johnson's

collecting the works of a single author. This difference is even greater, he emphasised, when the term "old English dictionaries" is interpreted broadly to include all kinds of dictionaries, all different editions, early multi-lingual dictionaries including English, and the early Latin and Greek dictionaries that contributed to the development of the English language. Such a full-scale interpretation would have set the Collection's early goal at considerably more than 5000 dictionaries published across a period of five centuries. But Mr. Cordell knew that unless a definite category or area of collection can be described, the Collection area will continue to expand as the collector's appetite grows and as bookdealers offer associated items of interest, so that the collector must exhibit considerable discipline to keep his collection instincts within appropriate bounds.

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interest in early Johnson editions. Though he was a successful business executive who enjoyed a very comfortable income in the early 1960's, he was not a wealthy man. With four college-bound children, Cordell had to consider seriously the cost factors in pursuing his collecting interests. By his own admission, it took him awhile to train himself to accept the prices it would be necessary to pay if he were going to collect dictionaries, especially Johnsons, vigorously. He turned down the first 1755 Johnson set offered to him at the price of $1400.[17] But Cordell's eventual decision to pay the prices necessary to achieve his goals was probably never seriously in doubt. He had been bitten by the book collecting bug, and for this traumatic disease there is no known cure.

It would be greatly remiss of anyone to discuss Warren Cordell's magnificent achievement without paying credit to those who so greatly helped to make this achievement possible - namely, the antiquarian bookdealers in North America and Europe. Cordell was always the first to acknowledge his great debt to the many men and women of the booktrade who participated in the building of the Cordell Collection. "Without their friendly help and cooperation," he once wrote, "my efforts would have been futile."[18]

Indeed, he was attracted to book collecting for the fellowship of others who shared his love of books as much as for the physical possession of books or the thrill of making a "clean sweep." He visited bookshops at every opportunity and passed countless hours sharing news, anecdotes, and bits of knowledge with his bibliophilic friends. His enthusiasm for dictionaries was contagious, and his many friends in the booktrade often took great pains - sometimes at personal financial sacrifice, as mentioned earlier - to direct a key dictionary to the Cordell Collection. Warren Cordell always appreciated this help and friendship. In the Foreword to the Cordell STC, he wrote: "... I am extremely grateful, not only for their help, but also for their giving me the time to know them and share our mutual interests, not just in scholarly works but in the world developments and our philosophies on life."[19]

It should not, then, seem strange that so many volumes that are Dr. Johnson's dictionary should have taken up residence as one of the most vital segments of the renowned Cordell Collection at Indiana State University. For Warren Cordell, in his avocation, and Samuel Johnson, in his profession, though separated by two centuries, shared a love and a respect for books and for the learning that books can represent. It is pleasant to think of how Johnson might have regarded Warren Cordell as a man of unique parts whose love of books - indeed, whose unusual devotion to the lexicographical portion of the great humanistic

tradition - makes it possible, through his collection, for scholars and humanists from all parts of the world to have access to segments of our intellectual heritage which otherwise could have remained inaccessible and undiscovered for decades to come. In his Idler essay, No. 91, Johnson has remarked that "many useful and valuable books lie buried in shops and libraries, unknown and unexamined, unless some lucky compiler opens them by chance, and finds an easy spoil of wit and learning."[20] Warren Cordell was, of course, a compiler in his own right. And his service to the scholarly world, through his collection, has proved extraordinary, and will continue to prove so.

It is not only appropriate but also reassuring to see that Johnson's Dictionary, in its numerous editions and issues, forms so integral a part of the Cordell Collection. Johnson was the most highly respected man of letters of his day, and his salutations to his friends and to his reading public resound in particular throughout his letters and his essays to reveal the priority of emphasis that he placed upon books and their influence. Even just a few select passages from his letters underscore the profound respect - and need - that he felt:

(1) For example, on December 8, 1763, he wrote to his new friend James Boswell, who was studying law in Utrecht: "At least resolve, while you remain in any settled residence, to spend a certain number of hours every day amongst your books.... If you can but kindle in your mind any strong desire, if you can but keep predominant any wish for some particular excellence or attainment, the gusto of imagination will break away."[21]

(2) In a sense, even more moving is a brief exhortation to his black manservant Francis Barber, written on September 25, 1770, when Barber was away from London: "Let me know what English books you read for your entertainment. You can never be wise unless you love reading."[22]

(3) To Hester Maria Thrale, or Queeney, mentioned earlier, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thrale of brewery fame, he wrote on July 18, 1780: "You, my Love, are now in the time of flood, your powers are hourly encreasing, do not lose the time. When you are alone read diligently, they who do not read can have nothing to think, and little to say."[23]

(4) To Boswell, then in Edinburgh, on July 2, 1776, he wrote: "To hear that you have not opened your boxes of books is very offensive. The examination and arrangement of so many volumes might have afforded you an amusement very seasonable at present, and useful

for the whole of life. I am, I confess, very angry that you manage yourself so ill...."[24]

(5) And again to Boswell, only four days later: "Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many books among them which you never need read through; but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult."[25]

(6) Again to Queeney on July 24, 1783: "Your account of your time gives me pleasure. Never lose the habit of reading, nor ever suffer yourself to acquiesce in total vacuity.... If ever therefore you catch yourself contentedly and placidly doing nothing ..., break away from the snare, find your book or your needle, or snatch the broom from the maid."[26]

(7) And finally, to another young friend Jane Langton on May 10, 1784: "I am glad, my Dear, to see that you write so well, and hope that you mind your pen, your book, and your needle, for they are all necessary. Your books will give you knowledge, and make you respected...."[27]

As we read Johnson's advice to Jane Langton, we are aware of the date of this letter, May 10, 1784, since his death was only seven months away. "Your books will give you knowledge, and make you respected" - these words could be said to comprise a very fitting valediction to the lives of both Dr. Johnson and Warren Cordell.

We turn, then, briefly, once again, to the recognition of Johnson's abiding regard for the profession of authorship - a regard which informed his love of the world of books when books were at their best. His idealism was regularly tempered by his firm grasp of reality. Thus in Idler essay No. 85 he offers this admixture of what he wishes on the one hand and what he acknowledges on the other:

One of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age is the multiplication of books....

How much either happiness or knowledge is advanced by this multitude of authors, it is not very easy to decide.

He that teaches us anything which we knew not before, is undoubtedly to be reverenced as a master. He that conveys knowledge by more pleasing ways, may very properly be loved as a

> benefactor; and he that supplies life with innocent amusement, will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion.[28]

But Johnson often pricked the illusion of others who saw writers as residing in worlds apart from common life, and his statements in this regard remind us of his own days in Grub Street which have their poignant corollary in Warren Cordell's earliest dreams of collecting. Thus in Idler, No. 51:

> Of men, as of everything else, we must judge according to our knowledge. When we see of a hero only his battles, or of a writer only his books, we have nothing to allay our ideas of their greatness. We consider the one only as the guardian of his country, and the other only as the instructor of mankind. We have neither opportunity nor motion to examine the minuter parts of their lives, or the less apparent peculiarities of their characters; we name them with habitual respect, and forget, what we still continue to know, that they are men like other mortals.[29]

Even in the face of such reality, however, it was at times impossible for Johnson not to set himself apart, as it were. Boswell records this telling instance as proof: "[Johnson] told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where the room being small, the head of the table, at which he sat, was almost close to the fire, he persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him."[30] Surely, lurking somewhere nearby, was the spirit of Warren Cordell, waiting to be born.

(A longer version of this essay was published in Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America, no. 5 (1983) under the title "Dr. Johnson, Warren Cordell, and the Love of Books.")

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The Rev Dr Eric Abbott

The Rev Dr Eric Abbott, KCVO, Dean of Westminster from 1959 to 1974, died on 6th June 1983. His distinguished public ministry included service at Lincoln Theological College, King's College London, Keble College Oxford, and Westminster Abbey.

Members of the Johnson Society of London will recall with gratitude his interest in the Society and the many occasions on which he personally conducted the Annual Commemoration Service held around Dr Johnson's grave in Poets' Corner.

Miss A Terry

At the December 1983 Meeting, the Chairman, Mr J R G Comyn, asked members to stand in memory of Miss Terry, news of whose recent death had just reached him. Miss Terry was a very loyal member of long standing and a regular attender at the Society's Meetings.

VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

15 September 1983

At the invitation of the President, the Very Rev. Edward Carpenter, Dean of Westminster Abbey, members attended at 6.00 p.m. for a special tour of the Abbey. About 16 members and friends were able to take advantage of this unique opportunity, and for two hours were treated to their guide's knowledgeable and personal views on the history and function of this lovely building.

The tour began in the handsome and ancient Jerusalem Chamber with an introductory talk on the history of the Abbey from its foundation by Edward the Confessor, through its mediaeval construction under Abbot Litlyngton, and the erection of the great seventeenth-century overmantle in the Chamber commemorating the wedding of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, and on its changing status under various ecclesiastical régimes from shrine to Royal Peculiar owing allegiance to no other ecclesiastical authority.

Afterwards the party viewed the Nave, newly cleaned and white as when first built, with its oldest eighteenth-century windows (apart from a few pieces of mediaeval glass in the Jerusalem Chamber) and its modern chandeliers, the Choir, designed originally as a theatrum for the presentation of coronations, with the ornate High Altar now blocking the original view through to the Shrine of Edward the Confessor. The Shrine itself was seen, and the Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone, the splendidly roofed and gaily bannered Henry VII Chapel, link between mediaeval and renaissance architecture and craftsmanship, and the effigies of Queen Elizabeth I, with Orb and Sceptre happily restored, and Mary, Queen of Scots, under the same roof now as never in life.

A brief pause in Poets' Corner among the memorials to Johnson and his friends concluded a memorable tour under the guidance of a personal commentary which only Dr. Carpenter could have given.

S.B.S.P.

THE HISTORY OF DR. JOHNSON'S SUMMER-HOUSE

Donald N. Cook

"August 9, 3 P.M., aetat. 72, in the summer-house at Streatham."[1] With these brief words, Samuel Johnson gave distinction to a humble, rustic shelter, standing in Mr. Thrale's lavish garden at Streatham Park near London. The year was 1781 and for fifteen years he had been a frequent and honoured guest, and his health, so much improved with good meals and constant care, had produced, at least physically, a new man. His old sickness of doubt and irresolution had not, however, been cured, and he went on to record in his journal a course of action:

> After innumerable resolutions formed and neglected, I have retired hither, to plan a life of greater diligence, in hope that I may yet be useful, and be daily better prepared to appear before my Creator and my Judge, from whose infinite mercy I humbly call for assistance and support.
> My purpose is,
> To pass eight hours every day in some serious employment.
> Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next six weeks upon the Italian language, for my settled study.

The last entry is of considerable interest: Johnson, although now seventy-two years old, had not given up hope of the long awaited trip to Rome; the recent death of Henry Thrale had again cancelled the project but there was still a chance that Mrs. Thrale might decide later in the year to go abroad. The family business had been sold at a great profit and the whole family provided for. He had, with others, been made an executor and guardian of the children, and after a period of mourning, a period of recuperation and change was required from the last three months of worry. He was better in health and, cheered by the glorious weather that summer, he was optimistic. Perhaps his hostess at Streatham had even expressed a desire to visit Rome. In her journal at this time, there are no entries for the period in question, but under the date 7th July she writes: "Dear Piozzi is gone to Italy . . ."[2] Unknown to Johnson, she was in love with her daughter's music teacher, and would, within three years of searing discord, marry him. If she had expressed a desire to go, her old friend was not included as companion.

Exactly one year later she made her plans known to him: she, three of her daughters and Piozzi as courier, would make a tour of Italy; it would be a long stay, life was less costly there, and it would be educational for her children.[3] To her great surprise (and chagrin) he,

although not included, supported the idea and urged an early departure. The only guardian not to object, he knew well that his inclusion in the party, together with the younger man, was impossible and he accepted the situation with good grace.

There are at least three artists' impressions of the summer-house. The first, of approximately 1820, is a lithograph of a study by G. F. Prosser (British Museum and Minet Library, Lambeth) and is inscribed: A Summer House in the late Mr. Thrale's Park, Streatham. The Favourite Retreat of Dr. Johnson. The second, also in the Minet Library, is a small engraving, clearly based on the former, and illustrates a nineteenth-century edition of Boswell's Life.[4] The third is an engraving by E. Finden of a water-colour by William Clarkson Stanfield, dated 1835, and bearing the inscription: The Summer-house at Streatham 1773. It depicts Johnson with book, pen and ink, seated within, deep in thought. A copy of this, a leaf from the 1836 edition of Murray's Johnsoniana, is in the Minet Library,[5] while the original is owned by Mrs. Mary Hyde of Four Oaks Farm, New Jersey, U.S.A. This last is of particular interest. Throughout the 1830s, Stanfield (made Royal Academician in 1835) was working on a commission for the Marquess of Lansdowne, to paint a series of ten pictures on Italianate themes, for the banqueting hall at Bowood, his ancestral home in Wiltshire.[6]

His grandfather, the first Marquess, had lived at Streatham Park, 1782-84, while Prime Minister, and indeed had negotiated peace with France whilst in residence.[7] Soon an even greater link with the Thrales was to be formed: in 1843 the son Henry, the fourth Marquess, married Emily Elphinstone Flahault, direct descendant of Lord Keith, late husband of Hester Maria (Queeney) Thrale, whose own daughter Augusta, Lady Villiers, was to leave no heir. It was for this reason that all the Johnson and Thrale relics came to be housed at Bowood.[8]

Of significance also is another Thralian subject which Stanfield painted at this time. Called simply Mr. Thrale's House, Streatham, it shows the west wing with the new library and Johnson's room above. This is also engraved by E. Finden, 1835, both artists working for John Murray the book publishers of Albemarle Street, London, who brought out that year, "Graphic Illustrations of the life and times of Samuel Johnson." Among the prints is a View of Lichfield by Stanfield. (Quarto size and issued in four parts.) They published the above "Johnsoniana; or supplement to Boswell, being Anecdotes and Sayings of Dr. Johnson." This was in both the popular Octavo, and the large Quarto and came out the following year. It contained a number of prints all engraved by Finden from Stanfield's paintings, including also the view of Mr. Thrale's House and Johnson's birthplace. (Information: British Library and Mr. Colin Hebben of John Murray, Ltd.)

Nothing is recorded of the origins of the summer-house but the date on the Stanfield print may well be significant. As stated, the artist was working within a Streatham connection over a period of nearly ten years, having sent the first painting of the series to the Royal Academy exhibition of 1833, the last not being completed until 1840.[9] During this time, the year 1773 may have emerged as the date of erection. In support are the facts regarding building improvements taking place at Streatham Park at that time, culminating in the new library wing of 1773. With much improvement to the property taking place, Henry Thrale could have decided to erect a suitable garden shelter for the use of his family and his learned old friend for whom he had such great respect.

The first reference to its use is in 1776, at the usual joint celebrations of Johnson's and Queeney's birthdays and is described by Mrs. Thrale, now Mrs. Piozzi, in these words:

> On the birth-day of our eldest daughter, and that of our friend Dr. Johnson, the 17th and 18th of September, we every year made up a little dance and supper, to divert our servants and their friends, putting the summer-house into their hands for the two evenings, to fill with acquaintance and merriment. Francis and his white wife were invited of course. She was eminently pretty, and he was jealous, as my maids told me.

She goes on to recount an incident concerning Johnson's manservant in which he walked out of her house on the morning of his master's birthday and "in wrath" set out for London. He was, however, found an hour later on the road and brought back. . . .[10] Writing long after the event, she forgets the actual year; it can, however, be assigned to the above date for the following reasons. Francis Barber married in 1776, probably in early summer, an English girl named Elisabeth, and of whom he became excessively proud. She now became another tenant of Johnson's over-crowded menage in Bolt Court[11] and would have been delighted and curious to accept hospitality at such a grand house, offered perhaps in celebration of their recent marriage. (The year after, Johnson celebrated his birthday while staying with Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne.) Thus it was, so soon after his conquest, that Frank's jealousy got the better of him and produced this sorry scene. Indicative of the alterations that had taken place at the Thrales' mansion and its much improved appearance, is the information contained in Johnson's letter to his "Dear Lady" and dated May 14, 1776: "There is in the exhibition of Exeter Exchange, a picture of the house at Streatham, by one Laurence, I think of the Borough. This is something, or something like."[12]

Other visitors who came under the spell of Streatham Park were the children of Dr. Charles Burney, Queeney's music teacher. Fanny, the eldest, first came alone in the summer of 1778 and stayed several weeks,

during which she had many delightful hours in the company of her great fellow author. One day in August, after Johnson had left for London, she wrote in her diary: "Soon after he went, I went and shut myself up in a sweet cool summerhouse, to read Irene; which, indeed, though not a good play, is a beautiful poem."[13]

Her younger sister Susan came the year after, alluding to the rustic retreat in these words: "We stroll'd about the sweet plantations, and saw the summer-house, and Dick's island." The latter was Richard, their eleven year old schoolboy brother and close friend of nine year old Susanna Thrale. He often stayed with the Thrales, and evidently for him the island was a favourite and secret place.[14] That they found the setting quite enchanting is shown when she goes on to say: "As a place it surpassed all my expectations. The avenue to the house, plantations, &c., are beautiful; worthy of the charming inhabitants. It is a little Paradise, I think." This is borne out by the Prosser painting of c.1820, the earliest known pictorial reference of the summer-house. It is shown as a circular, wooden structure with a high thatched roof and standing on a mound, which itself rises out of a depression in the land, the angle making it difficult to ascertain whether it is in fact, the island in the lake or a projection from the bank.[15] Water can, however, be seen in the foreground while, to the rear, many magnificent trees sheltering deer, with a glade beyond, can be seen. Of great interest, moreover, is the fine Oak, which shares the middle distance with the house and around which the whole composition is built. It is possibly the one which survived the break-up of the property in 1863 and came to be known as "Dr. Johnson's Tree."[16]

It has been said that some of his work, such as the Lives of the Poets, may have been written in the summer-house; equally so, could Fanny Burney have been intent on emulating his attempt at dramatic authorship when, on that warm summer day in 1778, she retired to the same place to study his tragedy. Indeed, Mrs. Thrale had just heard that she was the anonymous author of the prestigious novel Evelina, and was now urging her to write a comedy of manners for the stage. It was at this time that a theme occurred to her, a satire on the self-appointed arbiters of taste, the ladies known as the "Blue Stocking Club". She would call her play "The Witlings." Johnson wrote his play, Irene, at the same age, 28 years, when lodging in Greenwich.[17]

Henry Thrale died on the 4th of April, 1781, and at once the vital nature of his Streatham Park, home and salon for many years, suffered a decline. His widow began plans for a new life, with new locations and new friends, knowing that eventually the result would be the disposal of the property. Johnson records his last days at his second home in these words: "Oct. 6, Die Dominica, 1782. Sunday, went to church at Streatham. Templo valedixi cum osculo." (I bade the church farewell with a kiss.)

The entry for this day is also in his private Latin, indicating the solemn nature of the moment:

> I dined at Streatham on a roast leg of lamb with spinach chopped fine, the stuffing of flour with raisons, a sirloin of beef, and a turkey poult; and after the first course figs, grapes not very ripe owing to the bad season, with peaches - hard ones. I took my place in no joyful mood, and dined moderately that I might not at the last fall into the sin of intemperance. If I am not mistaken, the banquet at the funeral of Hadon came into my mind. When shall I see Streatham again?

That night he composed prayers in respect of the "comforts and conveniences which I have enjoyed at this place" and for the Thrale family, "Bless, guide and defend them O Lord". "Oct. 7. I was called early. I packed up my bundles, and used the forgoing prayer, with my morning devotions somewhat, I think, enlarged. Being earlier than the family I read St. Pauls farewel (sic) in the Acts, and then read fortuitously in the Gospels, which was my parting use of the library."[18] Their last meeting took place at her lodgings in Argyll Street, London, which he records thus: "1785. April 5. I took leave of Mrs. Thrale. I was much moved. I had some expostulations. She said that she was likewise affected. I commended the Thrales with great good will to God; may my petition have been heard!"[19] Except for Queeney's only visit to Bolt Court, where her old tutor lay dying, he was never to see again the mother or her four daughters, for whose welfare he had been so much devoted.[20]

Streatham Park was let furnished and expensively renovated, after thirty years of careless tenants (and servants) it had deteriorated so badly that the ageing Mrs. Piozzi, now again widowed, was forced to sell off the contents while that was still possible. The interior made a depressing sight; her dressing room had been used as a children's eating area, Johnson's old room was the nursery, much valuable furniture was broken and all the beds ruined, even her mother's needlework carpet badly damaged . . . Many rooms had their walls defaced but fortunately the portraits by Joshua Reynolds in the library had escaped the ill-treatment. Outside, the gardens were neglected, the lawns and orchards untended and the coach-house in a state of collapse.[21]

The threat to the summer-house under such conditions was obvious; already some fifty years old and dilapidated, it would itself soon collapse unless very soon considered worthy of restoration.

After unsuccessfully offering to sell the property complete to her daughters for a modest £6000, she put the matter in the hands of auctioneers who arranged a sale to start on May 8th 1816, the disposal of the contents taking a full week. Many people came, including the daughters who bought

a number of items. Everything came under the hammer with the exception of two paintings which Mrs. Piozzi retained: portraits of her first husband, and her late and loyal friend, Arthur Murphy, who had introduced them to Johnson so long before. The great man's likeness, indeed, fetched the highest price for the library paintings - £378.[22] Susanna, the only unmarried daughter, had for years felt a need for some tangible relic of her old tutor, and had hoped to find it at the sale.[23]

It would have been at this event that the idea of acquiring the summer-house occurred to her. Although not for sale, and to be included as part of the grounds of the house now being let on leasehold, she knew that before long it would be hers by right, when she and her sisters inherited their old home.

She was at this time living a secluded life in the country, as a paying (and most welcome) guest, at Ashgrove, a delightful house mid-way between Chevening and Knockholt in Kent. The owner, William Frederick Wells, a prominent water-colour artist, also had a home in London, where he was known as a Royal Academy exhibitor and tutor.[24] He settled in Mitcham in 1819, and his visits became less frequent; when her mother died in 1821 Susanna, now claiming the summer-house, probably had it dismantled soon after and brought to Ashgrove. It was not however until 1825, and when it was possible for her to actually purchase the property, that she was able to erect it on her own land.

It gave her the sense of security, and of belonging, which she now so needed. Middle-aged and alone, she had depended on the visits of her sisters, but Lady Keith had settled in Scotland, Cecilia was widowed and living abroad and worst of all Sophia, Mrs. Hoare, who had lived at nearby Beckenham and with whom she had always shared a special affection, had died suddenly.

She now had to seek society nearer home and was fortunate indeed to find friends, kindred spirits even, in the Crawford and Fuller families of the local parish of Chelsfield. Spinster ladies also, they would bring friends and relations to Ashgrove, and in its gardens would declaim prose and verse, including their own; but the essence would be in the respect all felt for Dr. Johnson and the memories held of him by their hostess. With the summer-house now restored, and standing once again among fine trees, all serving as a setting for eager voices, the sound of bird song and rustle of leaves, her guests enjoyed an especial enchantment. Strangely, this charm was to be recalled without warning some fifty years later, when a young relation of one of those guests accompanied an aunt to an art gallery where she recognised a likeness of Miss Thrale (it was in fact the portrait of Queeney now at Bowood) with whom she had been intimate long before. Her nephew never forgot the incident and years later, and after much family research, was to give a fascinating lecture on the whole subject.[25]

It will be useful to quote from the published notes of this talk inspired by the memories of one who actually participated in these soirées, and who evidently retained much pleasure in their recollection:

> It was either in the last or the penultimate decade of the Victorian era that a fine exhibition of eighteenth century works of art was held at the Grosvenor - or was it the New? - Gallery in London. I went to it in excellent company, escorting that matchless thing in maiden aunts, my mother's twin sister, an amateur artist of no mean accomplishment.
>
> We began our inspection with the remoteness of the dilettante, surveying the field at large before examining at close quarters. But, as we turned into a fresh room, suddenly my companion plucked at my arm, exclaiming in excited tones "I know that face, I know that face!" She insisted. We had to pass almost the whole length of the gallery to identify the picture, which turned out to be the portrait of Mrs. Thrale, with, beside her, one of her daughters, a girl of perhaps sixteen summers at the time of painting.
>
> Slight as was the incident in the picture gallery, my sang-froid had gone. One flash of recollection had brought us into touch with the Johnsonian world of living men and women, never again to seem quite beyond recall. And that is so even if, as seems too likely, we had confused one sister with another, she of the portrait being Queeney, afterwards Lady Keith, while it was Susan Arabella, her junior by six years, who was the Miss Thrale of my aunt's acquaintance.

Another relevant passage regarding the use to which Ashgrove was put at this time is as follows:

> Beautifully situate near a corner of Lord Stanhope's Chevening Park, it afforded a delightful centre for herself and her chosen circle of friends. In course of time they came to regard it as a very temple of the Johnsonian tradition. Miss Thrale, with hospitality in her blood, enjoyed entertaining in her own elegant way. Her guests she drew from country houses within driving distance. So it was that my aunt as a young girl, coming under the wing of her seniors, had the luck to attend one or more of these receptions.

In 1858 Miss Thrale died leaving the property to her niece Lady Villiers (d. 1892). No Victorian print survives to show the summer-house in its new position, but this can, with some accuracy, be ascertained through the foresight of a later owner. At the turn of the present century, Mr. Brittain-Jones, who bought Ashgrove in 1895, decided to relocate it nearer the house; having done so he erected at the site, a circular stone seat (this is still there but in a different position) and thoughtfully had an inscription engraved on it reading: "On this mound originally stood Dr. Johnson's Summer House placed here about 1826 by Miss Thrale."[26]

Another inscription in a different style of lettering, obviously a later addition, says: "This seat was placed here in 1912 by W. Brittain-Jones Esq., G.S.I. then owner to recall the fact." This formal statement was clearly added by a later owner, probably as a testimony to his memory as he died later that year. He did however cause an important inscription to be painted around the walls inside the summer-house itself which gave much valuable information.[27] The inscription reads as follows:

> This summer house which stood in the Thrale's garden at Streatham, and was much used by Dr. Johnson, was brought here by Miss Susan Thrale, an unmarried daughter, after she settled at Ash Grove in 1826. She erected it on rising ground in the very centre of the grove, making all the paths lead up to it, and making the grove a kind of shrine to Dr. Johnson's memory. She made it open towards the north, with a vase in front of it commemorating the virtues of one of her dogs. At that time a footpath then ran along the front of the grove, necessitating a big hedge on the south side of the grove, making the grove very dark and making the look-out to the north almost a necessity. The abolition of the footpath and consequent destruction of the hedge made the change in the aspect of the summer house almost a necessity, and instead of turning it round, I thought it better to move it to where it now stands, bringing it much more into public view, but the small mound at the original site still remains. Placed here by W. Brittain Jones, G.S.I., late of Ash Grove, July, 1912.

It thus stood undisturbed, and in similar surroundings to Streatham, for nearly ninety years; an old photograph taken from the rear of a house which backed on to the grove, shows it standing in the shadow of a thickly wooded setting.[28] Further evidence is given by Ordnance Survey. Their six inch map of Knockholt for 1871 shows the property, the gardens front and back, and the grove containing a number of paths meandering and arriving in the centre area. Final evidence for the well secluded and private position among the trees of Johnson's old retreat, affording a tranquil and "shrine" like setting, is contained in a small clue on another O.S. local map. Examination of the grounds as shown in the twentyfive inch scale map, issued in 1909, reveals a tiny circle among the symbols for trees and shrubbery in the very centre of the grove. It is precisely and clearly drawn, and intended to be noted - the surveyor considering it as worthy of inclusion as were more typical items such as sundials. The rear footpath is now omitted and the date is clearly just before the decision taken to re-site because of its closure.[29]

By the 1950s it was sadly derelict with part of the roof thatch missing and corrugated iron; window frames and paving stones heaped around its walls.[30] It was most fortunately found and bought for posterity by Mr. W. H. Wells, an enthusiastic student of Johnsonian history, as it most certainly would otherwise have been demolished. He presented it to the old London County Council in 1962, who restored and re-erected it on Tooting

Graveny Common near the site of its former home.

Still its fate was in the balance, as it now began to suffer the effects of vandalism. The Greater London Council acted swiftly, removing it to an area under their control for its better safety. It was thoroughly restored once more and erected in the grounds of Kenwood House in Hampstead, in north London. It was opened to the public on the 24th September, 1968 and while nothing of the original timbers remains, it still stands after more than two centuries of vicissitude, a reminder of a fascinating family and a great Englishman.[31]

Documentation and Notes

1. Prayers and Meditations. (Johnsonian Miscellanies; ed. George Birkbeck Hill, Constable & Co. Ltd., London, 1966) Item 145, Vol.I, p.99.
2. Thraliana, The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale, 1776-1809, ed. Katharine C. Balderston, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1942. Vol.I, p.503.
3. Thraliana, Vol.I, p.540.
4. The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. J. Boswell, Routledge, London, 1859. Vol.II.
5. Archives Dept., Minet Library, Knatchbull Road, Lambeth, London. (I am indebted to Mrs. Hatfield, the Archivist, for her advice on the pictorial material held there on Streatham Park.)
6. A Century of British Painters, S. and R. Redgrave, Phaidon Press, London, 1946. p.422.
7. Thraliana, Vol.I, p.544, n.2.
8. The Queeney Letters, ed. The Marquis of Lansdowne, Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, 1934. pp.xvii-xxi. (I must here thank Miss Pilkington, Archivist at Bowood, for her ready answers to my queries.)
9. The Royal Academy of Arts, Complete Dictionary of Contributors, 1769-1904, Algernon Graves, 1970. Vol.4, p.231.
10. Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, H. L. Piozzi, 1786. (Johnsonian Miscellanies.) Vol.I, p.291.
11. By the end of 1777, Johnson was giving lodgings to at least seven people. These were: Mrs. Anna Williams and her maid; Frank Barber and his wife; Poll Carmichael; Mrs. Desmoulins and Robert Levett.
12. Letters of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. ed. George Birkbeck Hill, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1892. Vol.I, p.394 (letter no. 478). Sir Joshua Reynolds had made a drawing of Streatham Park (Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale. A. M. Broadley, John Lane, 1910) and presumably Johnson wanted to bring this, an early painting of the house, to her notice.
13. The Early Diary of Frances Burney, ed. A. R. Ellis, Bell, 1907.
14. Ibid.
15. It is likely that Thrale built the ornamental lake around the summer-house leaving it on a spit of land jutting into the water. His alterations to the grounds, and the lake and island in particular,

are mentioned in the Birkbeck Hill "Letters" of the period 1775-1783 (Nos. 427, 554, 591 and 857).

16. In the Surrey edition of the Victoria History of the Counties of England series, a description of Thrale's property includes the following comment: "A very old tree on the first common is still called 'Dr. Johnson's tree'". Victoria History of Surrey, Dowson, 1967.
17. It may well be that Clarkson Stanfield again had Johnson in mind, when he made the drawing of "Fisher Alley" beside the Greenwich water-front, to illustrate Captain Marryat's novel "Poor Jack", published in 1840. It shows a big man of about 30 years of age talking to a young child outside a tea-shop. The resemblance to Johnson, who stayed in the area when a young man, is quite striking.
18. Johnsonian Miscellanies. Vol.I, pp.108-110.
19. Ibid. Vol.I, p.111.
20. The Queeney Letters, p.xvi.
21. The Thrales of Streatham Park, Mary Hyde, Harvard University Press, 1977. pp.297-298.
22. Autobiography, Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi, Abraham Hayward, 2nd ed. 2 Vols. Longmans, London, 1861. Vol.2, pp.170-171.
23. The Queeney Letters, p.261.
24. The Family and Friends of William Frederick Wells, J. M. Wheeler, Cambridge, 1970. p.8. In his biography, Wheeler states: "The cottage has long disappeared ..." He is here mistaken - Ashgrove still stands, together with the oldest portion which was the original tiny cottage frequented by Wells's friend W. M. Turner.
25. One or Two Johnsonians, (Miss Thrale and Sir J. P. Salusbury); a paper read to the Literary and Philosophical Society, Liverpool, by A. T. Brown, 24th October, 1932; revised and printed, October, 1933.
26. History of Knockholt, Kent. G. H. Warlow, Hooker Bros. Ltd., Westerham, Kent. p.50. Warlow also describes how Susanna Thrale became a local benefactress endowing the first school, and "feeding and clothing poor children".
27. Ibid.
28. Published in the Sevenoaks Chronicle on the 28th February, 1964.
29. Information based on a full survey made by the writer of the Ashgrove grounds, in the summer of 1972. It was then still possible to trace the impressions of many paths meandering among the undergrowth, in the rear woodland, once the "grove". The site of the second placing was also evident but the original situation of the summer-house could be only estimated.
30. Information and photographs kindly supplied by Mr. Douglas Jeffrey (of the Sevenoaks Society) who made a site study in 1960.
31. Dr. Johnson's Summerhouse at Kenwood. A pamphlet published by the Greater London Council, County Hall, London, S.E.1. No. 7168 0425 5.July, 1972.