

THE NEW RAMBLER



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THE NEW RAMBLER

Journal of The Johnson Society of London

Editor: David Parker, B Litt, MA
10 Beaumont Buildings, Oxford

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Journal of the Johnson Society of London

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10 Beaumont Buildings, Oxford

From the Editor

In the next issue of The New Rambler (1988/9) it is proposed to mark the sixtieth anniversary, which falls in that period, of the founding of The Johnson Society of London.

It is also proposed to introduce a new section of the journal devoted to Notes and Queries. We hope that this will encourage members to submit to the Editor any Johnsonian queries on which they seek information, and also to produce short notes on subjects of Johnsonian interest which do not call for more extended treatment.

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JONAS HANWAY PHILANTHROPIST AND FOUNDER OF THE MARINE SOCIETY

Lieutenant - Commander R.M. Frampton, RN, MNI, FRSA - 17 October 1987

Chairman: Major-General M.H.P. Sayers, OBE

The Chairman introduced Lieutenant - Commander Frampton as General Secretary of The Marine Society. He had been a Scholar of Clifton College before joining the Navy, and after retirement had worked for Rolls Royce and for The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. His paper is reproduced in full.

In 1757 Jonas Hanway, a merchant of The Russia Company, published his essay on tea. It was not an essay, but rather a treatise on the origins of tea, methods of drinking, introduction into England, trade figures, effects on the populace and a description on the beneficial use of other herbs. There was no doubt that the popularity of tea and the expenses of importation had inevitably resulted in its adulteration with cheaper and more noxious herbs to create brews positively harmful to the general public which could only afford these cheaper grades of tea. However Dr Johnson, stirred by this attack on his favourite beverage, condescended, as John Pugh, Hanway's Senior Secretary and first biographer, says 'to stoop from that dignity of character' and in an anonymous essay in the Literary Magazine attacked Jonas on his personal character without answering the latter's criticism - Pugh goes on "The Doctor in his warmth, perceived not that Mr Hanway's remarks were not intended for people in his line of life, and by this essay convinced their mutual friends, that he was not more superior to his adversary in learning, than inferior to him in affability or social benevolence".

Hanway set out his essay on tea between 1755 and 1756 when Britain and France were once more heading for war as a result of British success in India under Lord Clive, and French success against the British Colonists in North America. Hanway's concern over the trade was that national wealth was being given to other countries which ought better be used in preparing the nation's defence and the effect of tea on the populace which was in his eyes being weakened by this drug. As a merchant with overseas experience in Portugal, North Europe, Russia and Persia, he was able to view the general state of the nation from the outside. As the eldest son of a civil servant in the Admiralty's victualling department and brother of the Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth, he understood the need for a strong maritime presence, itself dependent on the quality of the nation's seafarers. As a person who had lost his father when he was two, had educated himself, had seen the effect of poverty in London and Europe and the charitable organisations set up to relieve the needy, he understood only too well the problems of the one parent family, the orphans and the need to conserve and use human and material resources wisely. With such a knowledge of Jonas Hanway's background, the reasons for his many charitable activities become clear enough.

Born in Portsmouth in August 1712 he was one of four children, two girls and two boys. On the death of their father in a riding accident, the family moved from Portsmouth into the country. At the age of 16 Hanway travelled to London where his uncle Captain Jonas Hanway helped him to obtain an apprenticeship in the English Factory in Lisbon. (Incidentally, Hanway Street and Hanway Place linking Oxford Street with Tottenham Court Road are named after his uncle and not Jonas).

For the next eleven years Hanway worked his way up the ladder but soon after the outbreak of the war of Jenkins' Ear in 1739 he decided to return to England. In 1743 he joined The Russia Company and was invited to investigate the problems encountered by the Company in opening up a trade route through Russia and Persia. This route was intended to take advantage of the effective closure, as a result of the war, of the trade route through the Mediterranean. In the following eighteen months he travelled into Persia, nearly lost his life on several occasions and emerged from this adventure with a low bank balance and a very poor state of health. His recommendations to The Russia Company to close the route were accepted and he spent the next five years in North Europe and Russia trading and recovering his fortunes. A legacy from his uncle encouraged him to return to England to semi-retirement and to follow his awakening desire to help those in need.

He decided to publish his travels into Persia and in January 1753 the first edition of four volumes was published privately. They were an immediate success. Dr Johnson in one of his typical comments said of the Travels that what Hanway's reputation gained from these was soon lost in his subsequent essays. Indeed Hanway, a self-taught man, was always somewhat pedantic but at the same time thoughtful and thorough.

The travels were followed by a pamphlet against a proposed bill on naturalization of the Jews. The bill did become an Act but was repealed after a few months. His next pamphlet proved far more valuable to the population for he proposed a detailed plan for paving the streets of the City of Westminster. The matter was debated but it took an accident to the Speaker's carriage in 1762 to generate interest in the subject and an Act of Parliament followed. By 1771 London was well ahead of the other cities of Europe in this matter.

Reports of a French invasion force being assembled at Brest in 1755 aroused Hanway to produce his "Thoughts on Invasion" and to consider the problems of defending the nation and more particularly of manning the Navy.

The problem of ensuring a resource of trained seamen had been tackled in 1704 when an Act was passed directing every master of a vessel of thirty tons or more to take one or more apprentices. This Act had been completely neglected. Hanway tried to rouse the necessary interest to enforce the Act but without success. Meanwhile war loomed and in March 1756 Fowler Walker, a barrister, proposed to John Fielding, the magistrate at Bow Street, that a collection should be made to provide clothing for boys brought before the latter to clothe them for the sea service. Independently Hanway, making no headway with the 1704 Act, decided that action was essential if there were to be sufficient seamen and on 25th June 1756, as a result of the interest which he had aroused, a meeting at the King's Head Tavern, Cornhill, chaired by the Rt Hon. Slingsby Bethel, Lord Mayor of London, decided to form The Marine Society. By 15th July the first ten men, called landmen, were delivered with complete kits to a naval vessel. From that day the Society has never ceased operations.

Hanway himself found time to devote himself not only to the day to day operations of The Marine Society, which in its first three years raised over seven thousand men and boys and by the end of the Seven Years War ten thousand, but also to the problems of The Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce which he joined in April 1756. He became chairman of the Committee of Manufactures. In addition he devoted his remaining time to several other charities and causes.

Early in 1758 he paid fifty pounds to qualify as a life governor of The Foundling Hospital and set about putting it on a sound financial footing which would be less dependent on the public purse than it had become in recent years. He investigated the hospital's operations in detail from the staff to the weight of the coal buckets carried by the children. Concerned at the "open house" admission rules - any child said to be in need of care could be accepted - he sought to bring sense to the rules. This was as well for public funds were withdrawn in 1771 and the Foundling Hospital thenceforward depended on charitable donations and parish fund support. Inevitably in listening to the stories of individual orphans, and of those volunteering for sea service through The Marine Society, Hanway's attention was drawn to the plight of young prostitutes.

As early as 1750 Mr Dingley, Russia Company merchant and friend of Hanway, discussed with the latter his plans for a Magdalene House. In view of the lack of public interest and a full understanding of the problems, the plan was not made public. However, Dr Johnson was also moved by the plight of the mothers of the children who had been deserted and wrote a pamphlet in March 1751. As with all novel ideas it took years, in this case seven, to work into a practicable and acceptable form. In 1758 Robert Dingley, supported by Hanway, proposed his plan for establishing a Place of Reception for Penitent Prostitutes. Within a few weeks of the first meeting of the committee of eight, of whom four were also on the committee of The Marine Society, three thousand pounds had been raised, and the premises in Prescott Street, recently vacated by the London Hospital, were taken. The first eight young prostitutes were accepted on 10th August 1758 a week after Hanway's 46th birthday. Within nine years the Hospital found this building too small and in 1772 its operation moved to its own freehold site at St George's Circus.

Hanway himself was always concerned that those who were rescued should not find themselves once again in poverty or distress, and took great trouble to keep in touch with those who had been helped by any of the charities with which he was associated.

His next charity was the Stepney Society which, founded in 1674 to apprentice boys to marine trades, was still operating in 1758 when he became one of its Stewards. In 1759 he promoted a collection for British troops on the continent to provide relief for widows and orphans.

As a digression from charitable work he wrote a pamphlet in 1762 on vails giving - in which he attacked the practice of tipping servants in private houses by the departing guests. In the same year he was appointed a

Commissioner of the Naval Victualling Board, a post he held until 1783, his 71st year.

During this period he not only revised the control procedures for bread and fresh provisions but also visited several countries in Northern Europe to study their practices. He found time to direct The Marine Society, act as Treasurer of the Magdalen Hospital, help set up the Misericordia Hospital for Venereal Diseases, open and direct the Maritime School for merchant service officers at Chelsea, be active on the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Sunday School movement, and raise funds for the victims of the Montreal Fire in 1766 and the hurricane disasters in Barbados and Jamaica in 1781. As if all these were not enough, he used his experience and knowledge gained on the ground to drive through the Acts of Parliament of 1762 and 1767 to regulate the workhouses, and worked tirelessly until his death to improve the lot and to remove the need for chimney sweep boys. His work resulted in the first Act in 1787 a year after his death.

He was undoubtedly one of the greatest social workers of his day and his methods and rules for the charities he set up provided the solid foundation for the new charities of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century. In support of this statement the rules of the Marine Society are often repeated, and several members of the Committee of the Society during its first one hundred years were also founder members of other charities. Of these the most famous is undoubtedly Wilberforce the Younger of the anti-slave-trade movement.

Hanway's own motto "Never Despair" was devised by him as the result of his trials and tribulations in Persia. It stood him well in the ensuing years. He remained a bachelor throughout his life although Pugh, his biographer, says that he nearly married when he was in Lisbon. The loss of his father, the sights of poverty of Europe and of London in particular, his own conviction that an underlying goodness lay within every member of the human species, a desire to be thorough and objective in everything he did, and a very wide education in the technology of the day and experience of life in many walks, all combined to make him a practical and effective philanthropist. So often philanthropists have many of Hanway's attributes and yet seem to leave out practicality.

Before presenting a brief description of the progress and the present day operations of the Marine Society, Hanway's principal charity, it might be worth reviewing the efforts of his other labours. Naval Victualling was undoubtedly in good order by 1783, the year in which the American War of Independence ended, and his guidance served the Navy well until the last four years of the century when funds and material shortages caused major problems to the Navy. The Magdalen Hospital operated until the 1930s in its original form, first in Prescott Street, then St George's Circus and from 1869 in Streatham. Today it is a Trust. The poor chimney sweeps were eventually reprieved in 1875 with the strong support of the Earl of Shaftesbury, a Vice President and member of the Committee of the Marine Society. The Chelsea Maritime School faded through lack of support soon after Hanway's death in

1786. The Hospital for Venereal Diseases, set up in Prescott Street, appears to have been operating in 1802 but its history is scanty. Perhaps it was absorbed with the London Hospital which still owned this site? The Foundling Hospital exists as a Trust, SPCK and the Sunday School movement are active, as is the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce.

During the Seven Years' War The Marine Society ably directed by Jonas Hanway, with John Thornton of The Russia Company as Treasurer, Lord Romney in the Chair, thirty members of the Committee who were also members of the Society of Arts, and eight from the Russia Company, the Naval presence represented by Lords Hawke and Boscawen, and the senior naval recruiting officers, its patron George II, with strong support from the Prince and Princess of Wales, was able to raise funds sufficient to equip 5140 men and 4787 boys for the Navy, and to place 12 boys under a schoolmaster to educate them in English, mathematics, navigation, seamanship and religious knowledge. Some were taught to play the fife and drum. Thus the Society from the beginning set its policy of encouraging and properly equipping young persons for the sea services. A legacy in 1763 from William Hickes, Hanway's friend, disputed for some years, provided adequate capital to enable the Society to be incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1772 and to apprentice boys to the sea service. During peace the Society recruited a small number of poor boys of good character for the merchant service, and in war its effort was devoted to the Naval recruiting problem. The Committee always hoped to find sufficient volunteers to obviate the need for the press gangs, which were odious, but in the absence of other methods of manning ships, essential. Hanway was always concerned at the inadequate methods of finding seamen whom he considered essential for the prosperity and defence of the nation. His continental travel and work as a Commissioner for Victualling convinced him of the need for proper schools. In 1783 he produced his treatise - "A proposal for County Naval Free Schools" - published by him at a cost of £700. It was and is the best example of his methods and thought. The idea was to build these schools in each seaport to accept poor boys of good character, and to take six scholars who would pay their way, to provide a regular supply of pre-sea-trained seamen who were self sufficient not only at sea, but also ashore as they would be taught to farm and how to look after themselves. After much debate The Society felt it had insufficient funds to go ahead with this project but resolved to buy and fit out a ship for pre-sea training. Beatty was purchased in June 1786 and eight days after Hanway's death the first group of boys, officers and two schoolmasters embarked at Deptford. Thus started the era of pre-sea-training ships. The Society's example was followed seventy years later in 1855/6 by the Navy and by various organisations. By this time the Beatty had been destroyed and the Society was using the fourth ship to be lent to the Navy. By 1940 when its last ship, purchased by the Society, was paid off, 40,000 men and 76,000 boys had been equipped and, in the case of boys, trained for the sea service.

In 1976 The Marine Society which had supported financially young people to take up a sea career, and helped other nautical and maritime youth charities and educational establishments, merged formally under a charity scheme with the

Seafarers Education Service founded in 1919, and at the same time took over the remaining assets of the Sailors' Home and Red Ensign Club in Dock Street founded in 1830, The British Ship Adoption Society founded in 1936 and The Incorporated Thames Nautical Training College (HMS Worcester) founded in 1862.

The present beneficiaries of the Society are persons wishing to go to sea, seafarers and the nation itself as the objects of the charity show.

As a result of this Scheme the "new" Marine Society now operates the following -

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Seafarers Libraries | - an exchange library service for merchant ships. |
| The College of the Sea | - a further education and advice service for professional seafarers. |
| Ship Adoption | - a service to link schools with seafarers to bring a breath of sea air into the classroom. |
| Training Ship <u>Jonas Hanway</u> | - A 107 foot twin engine ship on loan from the Navy (7th ship) to provide basic and advanced sea training for young persons wishing to go to sea, and professional seafarers. |
| Sea Careers Advice | - for young persons wishing to go to sea. |
| Financial Assistance | - for seafarers in need and for maritime charities. |

The Society is also a member of the Booksellers Association so that it can sell books, to seafarers in particular, who would otherwise have great difficulty in obtaining them. It is a member of the Library Association and is also a publisher in its own right. During the past year it has, in furtherance of its concern for the state of the Merchant Navy and of British seafarers in particular, submitted evidence to the Select Committee on Transport enquiring into the decline of the Merchant Navy, and is currently active in seeking ways to halt and reverse the trend. All these activities would undoubtedly have the approval of Hanway, but I am not so sure about Dr Johnson.

As you know there are two relevant quotations in the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations from Boswell's Life of Johnson:

"When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land".

I doubt if Hanway would agree with that. As proof I offer his proposal for County Naval Free Schools in which he suggested that the boys should not only be taught how to be seamen but also how to farm so that they would be useful ashore, once they left the sea.

The second quotation is rather longer but is worth repeating in full, for it highlights Johnson's dislike of the sea in no uncertain terms.

No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned.....A man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company.

This may be Johnson's view but it obviously was not the view of the ten thousand men and boys who had volunteered for the Navy through the Marine Society in The Seven Years War, nor indeed was it Hanway's, as he considered it better than a man should contribute to the prosperity and defence of the country rather than be a liability.

I have, I hope, given you in this brief survey of Jonas Hanway, a true philanthropist, some idea of the breadth of his experience and of his activities. Even though he did rouse the Doctor to write an anonymous article in defence of tea drinking, and there was clearly disagreement over the matter of the value of life at sea, they were in agreement on improving the general welfare of the poor and particularly of the young prostitutes. Johnson wrote, Hanway acted.

DR HEBERDEN AND DR JOHNSON
Ernest Heberden MA - 21st November 1987
Chairman: David Parker

The Chairman introduced Mr. Heberden as a descendant of one of Johnson's friends. He had read Greats at Keble College, Oxford, and for seventeen years had been Director of Examinations at Trinity College of Music, London. He had, in retirement, written a biography of his distinguished ancestor based on a wealth of previously unpublished material. His paper is reproduced in full.

Dr. William Heberden began his attendance on Dr Johnson in June 1783, when the patient had only eighteen months to live. My purpose this afternoon is to describe some of the contrasts and similarities between the personalities and careers of these two men, to consider some of the many interests they had in common and some of the friends and acquaintances they shared, many years before they met. I shall try to avoid recounting too much of what you, as Johnsonians, already know, and shall concentrate more on the less familiar figure of Heberden in my attempt to explain the mutual affection and esteem that developed during the closing stages of Johnson's life.

When William Heberden's father Richard married Elizabeth Cowper in September 1698, he was earning his living as a coachman in the parish of St. Brides, Fleet Street. Two years later the couple moved to Southwark and Richard became an innkeeper in the parish of St. Saviours. Four children - three boys and a girl - survived the perils of infancy, and William, the second son, was born in August 1710. All three boys were admitted to the free Grammar School which stood in the precincts of St Saviours church, now Southwark Cathedral. The function of the school, founded in the reign of Elizabeth, was to equip the brighter sons of the poor to succeed in the learned professions and the curriculum therefore concentrated on the Greek and Latin

classics and on the religion of the Established Church.

The contrasts between the academic atmosphere of the Southwark classroom and the harsh realities of life and death beyond its walls were stark: burials at St Saviours were a daily occurrence - there were 582 in 1708, many of them of children, of whom only one quarter had survived their fifth birthday. As sanitation was primitive and standards of personal cleanliness low, fevers and infections abounded; remedies were ineffective and Nature took its course. Cheap gin and bad housing added to the toll of distress. Behaviour, at least among the strong and healthy, tended to be noisy and aggressive, with much shouting and laughter - a reaction to the feeling that as life was so precarious, every moment should be enjoyed to the full. Appetites were hearty; gambling was a universal passion. People were stoical in enduring pain and callous towards the suffering of others. Public executions were regarded as exciting theatrical events. For many children life was an education in brutality.

Heberden took to his formidable programme of studies like a duck to water and his exceptional talents were encouraged by his headmaster, who considered him ready to proceed to Cambridge while still only fourteen. But there was a snag: in the same year that Heberden had been admitted to the school his father had suddenly died, and though the widow had continued to manage the inn, she was unable to find the money to support him at a University. The problem was solved by the headmaster who arranged an exhibition of £7 per annum and with this modest assistance Heberden entered St John's College Cambridge as a sizar - a lowly status which entitled him to free board in return for the performance of certain domestic tasks such as waiting in Hall.

His objective now was to obtain his BA and his studies for this degree provided the best possible foundation for his future progress. The classics and Divinity were only a part (however essential) of the curriculum; among the books prescribed for the Philosophical course (which included mathematics, physics and astronomy) were Newton's Opticks and Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding. From these two authors, pioneers of the Age of Enlightenment, Heberden absorbed the sceptical, empirical attitude of mind which he later employed so effectively both in his practice and his writings. After gaining his BA he continued his studies for the senior degree of MA, until at the age of 21 he was awarded a College Fellowship: it was at that point that he began to study medicine.

It is impossible to say how long the idea of a medical career had been maturing in Heberden's mind. Perhaps he was influenced by his brother Thomas, seven years his senior, who had qualified as a surgeon and was practicing in Rotherhithe. As for entering the church - an option that he must surely have considered in view of his interest in religious matters - his rejection of a clerical career may have been influenced by the attitude of the many Fellows and Tutors in the University who, though in Holy Orders, showed no sign of any serious religious commitment and were on the whole an unattractive advertisement for the Sacred Profession.

The quality of medical training available at Cambridge was low and most of Heberden's studies were self-directed. He read every book he could lay his hands on, from the works of Hippocrates and Galen to such recent or contemporary authors as Sydenham or Boerhaave. Members of the Medical Faculty evidently gave him some practical instruction (however inadequate) and he supplemented this by visits to a London hospital, probably St Thomas's in Southwark, where a former member of St John's, Sir Edward Wilmot, was on the staff. The Faculty thought well of Heberden's talents and by a special dispensation of the Senate he received his MD in 1738, one year earlier than the statutes prescribed.

During the seven years that had elapsed since his election to Fellowship, Heberden had made numerous friends among both the students and senior members of the University. Most of them, like himself, were classical scholars with literary interests and by the time he obtained his Doctorate he had become a member of a coffee-house circle which discussed literary topics and corresponded with a similar circle presided over by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Birch at Rauthmell's Coffee-house in Covent Garden. It was Birch too who was at least partly responsible for providing Heberden with his first chance to appear in print by promoting an elaborate academic exercise entitled The Athenian Letters. These fictional compositions were supposedly translations of letters written at the time of the Peloponnesian War - when Hippocrates was alive - and Heberden seized the opportunity to write a critique of the much revered Father of Medicine, cutting him down to size by pointing out that all men, however talented, are subject to the limitations of the times in which they live and to their own human frailties. The message for modern physicians was clear: they should never seek to evade their responsibilities by blindly following some ancient authority or item of received wisdom, but should at all times give priority to personal experience and patient observation.

This theme was further developed in the annual course of public lectures which Heberden first delivered in 1740 on the subject of *Materia Medica* - the almost inexhaustible range of substances which had at one time or another been credited with the power to heal or avert sickness or injury.

One of the most glaring deficiencies in the system of Cambridge medical teaching was the lack of any up-to-date syllabus or reading list. In an attempt to remedy the matter Heberden wrote a short work which he completed in 1741, entitled *An Introduction to the Study of Physic*. Besides giving a critical evaluation of some 114 medical works both ancient and recent, he describes the educational background that the serious student of physic should seek to acquire: 'He should', Heberden wrote, 'be sufficiently versed in the Latin and Greek and should have some knowledge of the rise and progress and present state of medicine; he should be able to read one or two modern languages and should not be ignorant of geography, chronology, history, logic, metaphysics, ethics, mathematics and natural philosophy' - particularly the last two - 'if he would be secure from error and superstition, from mistaken theories and ill-grounded practice'. Heberden had studied all these subjects and was aware that no single theory or system of medicine could be a reliable guide to the physician in the sick-room. He did however find some merit in

the Hippocratic doctrine of humours and it was this that often dictated the forms of treatment he prescribed. It is unfortunate that Heberden never published the Introduction; had he done so, it could have made a significant impact on medical education in England and even perhaps in the American colonies.

The pattern of his practice was linked to the University Calendar; in termtime there was no shortage of patients, but during the vacations, when the Colleges were almost deserted, Heberden looked elsewhere to widen his experience. Sometimes he acted as an assistant at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London and on two or three occasions during the summer months he visited the popular spa of Scarborough and to quote his friend William Cole 'met there with abundant success'.

Heberden's growing reputation had been noted by several influential physicians such as Richard Mead and in 1746 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. As Cambridge, despite its many happy associations, offered no opportunities for advancement, the pull of the metropolis steadily increased. In the autumn of 1748 he took the road to London and by Christmas was installed in a house in Cecil Street, on the South side of the Strand, long since demolished and buried under the Savoy Hotel. He had a number of friends within easy reach and his circle was very soon widened by his election to Fellowship of the Royal Society and to membership of the dinner club associated with it.

This is a suitable moment to remind ourselves of how Samuel Johnson (born less than a year before Heberden) had been faring in the meantime. His bookseller father was probably superior in terms of social status to the Southwark innkeeper; and Lichfield must have been healthier than the filthy, sooty atmosphere of the Thames riverside. But for Johnson these potential advantages counted for nothing. For whereas Heberden had been blessed with excellent health and a buoyant temperament which enabled his talents to develop unhindered, Johnson had to contend with physical afflictions from infancy; and if the disfigurements of scrofula, partial loss of sight, deafness in one ear and the embarrassment of involuntary movements were not enough to bear, the melancholia which first struck him with full force after his year at Oxford imposed an extra burden from which he was seldom entirely free. No wonder that his attempts at schoolmastering ended in failure.

Having eventually made up his mind to become an author by profession, he set out for London in 1737 and soon began his long series of contributions to the Gentleman's Magazine - virtually his only source of income for several years. The proprietor of this remarkable monthly journal Edward Cave employed Thomas Birch as his editorial adviser and we can hardly doubt that it was Birch who provided the first link between Johnson and Heberden many years before they met. Birch entertained Johnson at his house and had (said Johnson) more anecdotes than any man. Some of Birch's talk must surely have been concerned with his literary friends at Cambridge, including the rising young University physician.

Johnson's interest in medicine had understandably been sharpened by his own afflictions and Mrs Thrale recorded that he studied the subject diligently in all its branches. He was able to turn this interest to literary advantage following the death in 1738 of the distinguished Dutch physician Hermann Boerhaave, whose biography he wrote for the Gentleman's Magazine, where it was serialised in four instalments. He also contributed a preface and some biographical material to the three-volume Medicinal Dictionary compiled by his school-friend Robert James and published between 1743 and 45. By the time Heberden had settled into his London home, Johnson had started work on his own great Dictionary of the English Language - but despite all his labours, was still living in comparative poverty and 'writing for bread'.

Heberden, by contrast, had adopted a profession where merit could be amply rewarded. Influential personages such as Mrs Delany, who moved in Court circles, were among his early patients and his practice was soon producing a comfortable income. Marriage in 1752 to a daughter of the Banker and MP John Martin made him a man of property and although his wife died two years later, after the birth of a son, his second marriage in 1760 to a daughter of Francis Wollaston was lasting and - so far as it is possible to judge from the meagre evidence - happy.

Despite the increasing demands of his practice Heberden managed to make time for the pursuit of his other interests, some of them clearly relevant to his profession, others remote from it - but nearly all of them of a kind likely to engage the attention of Johnson. His pleasure in literary discussion can be gauged from the guests he invited to his dinner parties; they included Thomas Birch, the poet-physician Mark Akenside (author of the influential Pleasures of Imagination); and the novelist Samuel Richardson (whom Johnson knew well enough to borrow money from in moments of financial crisis). Heberden also maintained friendly contact with various literary Bishops, including the quarrelsome William Warburton (who had published editions of Pope and Shakespeare); Richard Hurd (author of Letters on Chivalry and Romance) and Robert Lowth, an authority on Hebrew poetry. After the death of his Cambridge friend the Rev. Conyers Middleton, who had stirred up several hornet's nests with his unorthodox religious views, he acted as his literary executor and some years later assisted the scholar Jeremiah Markland with the publication of some of the plays of Euripides.

At the Royal Society Heberden took an active interest in the work of some of the most distinguished scientists of the time. He corresponded with the Rev. Stephen Hales on the best equipment for procuring pure water by distillation; he contributed to a pension for the impoverished Joseph Priestley, who was investigating the constituents of air and the nature of combustion, and was a friend of the shy and reclusive Henry Cavendish. The papers that Heberden read to the Society were sometimes his own compositions, usually on meteorological subjects such as rainfall and lightning. On other occasions he read letters addressed to him acknowledging his help on investigating (for example) the constituents of the water at a Huntingdon spa and the phenomenon of static electricity. Several papers were based on

letters he had received from his surgeon brother Thomas, who had migrated first to Tenerife and later to Madeira: earthquakes, astronomical observations and the ascent of a mountain are ably described. Discussions were held not only at the formal meetings of the Society, but also at the Society's dinner club, to which distinguished guests were regularly invited.

In the affairs of the Royal College of Physicians Heberden was active and influential. Even before he had been elected Fellow he had succeeded in persuading the College to omit some of the more absurd concoctions from the new 1746 edition of the Pharmacopoeia. In 1764 the College decided to publish the collected works of William Harvey, who had described the circulation of the blood. The members of the committee charged with carrying out the task were Heberden, Akenside (who wrote the preface) and Johnson's physician Thomas Lawrence, who contributed a brief biography. Within two years the project was completed to everyone's satisfaction.

After this success Heberden proposed that the College should hold regular meetings for the reading of papers which could then be published in volumes entitled Medical Transactions, modelled on the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. The proposal was approved; the first volume contained a preface and six papers from Heberden's pen and a further ten appeared in volumes 2 and 3. Whether or not Johnson ever saw any of these volumes, he would surely have read the summaries of Heberden's more important papers which were published in the Gentleman's Magazine and the Critical Review. Heberden's first paper was concerned with the hazards of drinking London pump water; other papers discussed the significance of differing pulse-rates, and dealt with gall-stones, jaundice, measles, nettle-rash, gout and rheumatic complaints; he gave the first scientific account of chickenpox and explained how its early symptoms differed from those of smallpox; in his most celebrated paper he gave the first description of angina, identifying it as a hitherto unrecognised condition and giving it a name.

From the beginning of his career Heberden had attached great importance to the keeping of accurate records and it is not surprising that he should have become interested in the so-called Bills of Mortality - the summaries of baptisms and burials (listed under the alleged causes of death) that were published annually by the London parishes. In January 1759 he published a complete sequence of these Bills for the past hundred years and in a lengthy Preface stressed the importance of these statistics as a basis for discovering how the toll of death could be reduced, and at the same time suggested how the accuracy of future Bills could be improved. The figures indicated that smallpox still claimed many lives, despite the increasing popularity of inoculation, which Heberden actively supported. His views on the matter were shared by Benjamin Franklin, who was in England as Agent for the Pennsylvania Legislature and at his request Heberden wrote a pamphlet for distribution in the American colonies entitled Plain Instructions by which any Person may be enabled to perform the Operation and conduct the Patient through the Distemper.

When or where Johnson and Heberden first met is unrecorded, but the scope of Heberden's interests and knowledge ensured that there would be no lack of subjects for discussion. As for the art of conversation, Heberden regarded its cultivation as essential for any educated person, and though he probably would have had no desire to emulate Johnson's habit of 'talking for victory', he would certainly have agreed with the view that talk should be based on solid information and proceed by rational stages.

Yet there were good reasons why many years were to elapse before the two men were able to get to know each other. Every waking hour of Heberden's life seems to have been fully occupied; his practice did not end with his visits to his patients' sickrooms or their consultations with him at his home or in a coffee house; every case was meticulously recorded and besides the patients he saw in person, there were others whom he was expected to advise by post. When he was invited late in 1761 by George III to be physician to the young Queen Charlotte, he politely declined the honour on the grounds that 'it might interfere with those connexions in life that he had now formed'.

Johnson at this moment, despite his fame as the author of the Dictionary, was still financially insecure; his royal pension, his meeting with Boswell and his introduction to the Thrales were still in the future. Boswell mentions Heberden for the first time in connexion with Topham Beauclerk, an original member of Johnson's Club:

21 March [1775]: Johnson informed me that though Mr. Beauclerk was in great pain, it was hoped he was not in danger, and that he now wished to consult Dr Heberden to try the effect of a new understanding.

On another occasion Johnson's friend the Rev. John Taylor, of Ashbourne in Derbyshire, who was a Prebendary of Westminster Abbey, came to consult Heberden in London. Johnson seems to have been present at the interview and in a letter to his friend a few days later wrote:

Heberden's talk was rather prudential than medical; you might however perceive from it how much he thought peace of mind necessary to your re-establishment.

Johnson's comment points to an aspect of Heberden's talk which must often have been far more beneficial to patients than doses of physic. Clear and coherent advice on how they should look after themselves would on many occasions have speeded a recovery or prevented a condition from deteriorating; and although Heberden trod the path of tradition whenever he prescribed such routine measures as bleeding or clysters, he regarded them merely as a means of encouraging the healing powers of nature, in which he so firmly believed, to do their work.

When Henry Thrale suffered a stroke in 1779, Johnson wrote to Mrs Thrale 'I am glad you have Heberden and hope his restoratives and his

preservatives will both be effectual'. And four months later when the patient appeared to be on the road to recovery and had been persuaded to make a trip to Tunbridge Wells, Johnson wrote again: 'I earnestly wish that before you set out, even though you should lose a day, you would go to Heberden and see what advice he will give you'.

By the time Thrale had his final and fatal stroke in 1781, Heberden had reached the age of 70 and was planning to reduce his work-load. He had amassed a sizeable fortune and was living in a fine house in Pall Mall, which he had built on the site of an earlier one which had been occupied by Nell Gwynne. He now purchased a second home as a summer retreat, a stone's throw from the walls of Windsor Castle, and moved in during 1782. He had no intention of being idle and immediately settled down to complete his major work, Commentaries on the History and Cure of Diseases, which was firmly based on the two sets of records he had kept throughout his career - his case notes and his Index of Diseases, to which he transcribed any facts which appeared significant. The work, written in Latin, was translated by his son, who published both versions after his father's death.

For several years Johnson's favourite physician had been Thomas Lawrence, who had served the College of Physicians as Registrar and later as President. After some months of declining health, he died in January 1783. As Johnson had already sought the advice of another FRCP - the Edinburgh-trained Lucas Pepys - for his asthma, there seemed no immediate reason to call in Heberden, despite the high opinion of his abilities that Johnson had so clearly expressed in his letters during the illness of Henry Thrale. But in the early hours of 17 June the situation changed dramatically, when Johnson suffered the stroke that rendered him speechless, though his other faculties remained virtually intact. To his friend Dr Taylor (who once again was on a visit to London) he wrote:

June 17, 1783

Dear Sir, It has pleased GOD, by a paralytic stroke in the night to deprive me of speech. I am very desirous of Dr Heberden's assistance, as I think my case is not past remedy. Let me see you as soon as it is possible. Bring Dr Heberden with you if you can.....

I think that by a speedy application of stimulants much may be done. I question if a vomit, vigorous and rough, would not rouse the organs of speech to action. As it is too early to send, I will try to recollect what I can, that can be suspected to have brought on this dreadful distress.

I have been accustomed to bleed frequently for an asthmatic complaint; but have forborne for some time by Dr Pepys's persuasion, who perceived my legs beginning to swell. I sometimes alleviate a painful, or more properly an oppressive constriction of my chest by opiates; and have lately taken opium frequently, but the last, or two last times, in smaller quantities. My largest dose is three grains, and last night I

took but two. You will suggest these things (and they are all that I can call to mind) to Dr Heberden.

Johnson's toughness and presence of mind is apparent throughout his letter; despite his distress he is entirely lucid and practical; he gives the maximum amount of information to put his 'new' physician in the picture and it is typical of him that he includes some suggestions of his own for consideration.

As it was nearly midsummer, we may suppose that Heberden was at Windsor; he came as soon as possible and his colleague Dr Brocklesby (who lived near the patient in Norfolk Street off the Strand) was also summoned. Blisters were applied to Johnson's head and throat and after a fortnight he was able to inform Boswell:

....I have been continually improving in articulation. I can now speak, but the nerves are weak and I cannot continue discourse long; but strength, I hope, will return. The physicians consider me as cured. I was last Sunday at church.

But within two months Johnson was again in trouble, this time with a testicular swelling: it was punctured and drained and Johnson was then able to accept an invitation to stay with a friend near Salisbury. But the swelling returned and after three weeks he was obliged to travel home. He wrote to Heberden begging him to visit him again, but by the time he arrived, the fluid had drained spontaneously.

For many years Johnson had so dreaded the onset of depression that (in Sir Joshua Reynolds' words) 'he would never trust himself alone but when employed in writing or reading'. Hence the importance of the Literary Club, where he had so often enjoyed himself in the company of his friends. But by now several of the original members were dead or no longer available and the meetings no longer gave him any pleasure. To combat his feelings of dejection Johnson now decided to start a new conversation club at the Essex Head tavern. Heberden was invited to join and his fellow-members included Boswell, the politician William Windham and the Shakespearean commentator George Steevens. The first weekly meeting was held on 8 December, but within a few days Johnson was once again housebound by an attack of arthritis. His old enemies asthma and dropsy added to his difficulties and he had to suffer the attentions of a dentist to extract an abscessed tooth; yet despite all these afflictions there were days when Johnson was in good humour and was able to preside at small dinner parties. At other times inevitably he felt depressed and in February he wrote to Heberden:

Dear Sir, When you favoured me with your last visit, you left me full of cheerfulness and hope. But my Distemper prevails, and my hopes sink, and dejection oppresses me. I entreat you to come again to me and tell me if any hope of amendment remains and by what medicines or methods it may be promoted. Let me see you, dear Sir, as soon as you can. I am, Sir, Your most obliged and most humble servant, Sam: Johnson.

A few days later Johnson wrote to Boswell that the dropsy was gaining ground and that his legs and thighs were very much swollen with water and on 19 February he discharged 'in about twenty hours a full twenty pints of urine'. By mid-April he had recovered sufficiently to go out of doors and insisted on attending a dinner to celebrate an exhibition of pictures at the Royal Academy in the newly built Somerset House.

In May Boswell arrived from Scotland and the following month accompanied Johnson on a visit by coach to Oxford. In July Johnson started out on an even more exhausting trip, first to his home town of Lichfield and then on to Ashbourne to stay with Taylor. In August he wrote to Brocklesby: 'My appetite is still good, which I know is dear Dr Heberden's criterion of the vis vitae'. Finally in October he sent Heberden a full report on the state of his health during the past few months:

At Oxford (in June) I was much distressed by the shortness of breath, so much that I never attempted to scale the library: the water gained upon me, but by the use of squills was in a great measure driven away. In July I went to Lichfield, and performed the journey with very little fatigue in the common vehicle, but found no help from my native air. I then removed to Ashborne, in Derbyshire, where for some time I was oppressed very heavily by the asthma; and the dropsy had advanced so far, that I could not without great difficulty button me at my knees.

After detailing the medicines he had taken and the effects they had produced, Johnson concludes:

The summary of my state is this: I am deprived by weakness and the asthma of the power of walking beyond a very short space. I draw my breath with difficulty upon the least effort, but not with suffocation or pain. The dropsy still threatens, but gives way to medicine. The Summer has passed without giving me any strength. My appetite is, I think, less keen than it was, but not so abated as that its decline can be observed by anyone but myself. Be pleased to think on me sometimes.

By now, Johnson had only a few more weeks to live. He managed to make the return journey to London and Boswell recorded:

Dr Johnson being asked in his last illness what physician he had sent for, 'Dr Heberden', replied he, 'ultimus romanorum, the last of our learned physicians'.

The description was not strictly accurate, as there were many physicians of a younger generation who were good classical scholars; but the days when physicians wrote their major works in Latin were drawing to an end. Had Heberden, we may wonder, told Johnson about his unpublished Latin MS of the

Commentaries? Whatever Johnson had in mind, his words were certainly a tribute to Heberden's erudition.

Heberden returned to his Pall Mall house in the autumn and John Hoole refers to one of his visits to his patient as follows:

Sat. Nov 27 1784 Mr Sastres and myself went together homewards discouraging on the dangerous state of our friend, when it was resolved that Mr Sastres should write to Dr Heberden; but going to his house that night, he fortunately found him at home and he promised to be with Dr Johnson next morning.

By now Johnson was suffering from a fatal combination of ailments affecting both his heart and lungs. He was persuaded to make his will, in which he bequeathed to Heberden and several other friends 'each a book at their election, to keep as a token of remembrance'. The news of his death on 13 December was conveyed to Boswell by Brocklesby, who described the scene at the bedside when the doctors consulted together for the last time. Johnson knew that he had been a difficult patient and humorously predicted how his doctors would excuse themselves for his death: 'Brocklesby will lay my death to disobedience...and Dr Heberden will say, I disturbed Nature's operation...

Heberden describes most of the conditions by which Johnson was afflicted in the pages of the Commentaries. He had seen scores of cases of stroke and understood the many ways in which the mental and physical capacities of the victim could be affected. Although bleeding was an accepted routine, he warns that for elderly patients this is often dangerous 'as the *vis vitae* wants to be excited rather than lowered'....'The medicines proper to be given, when the patient is sufficiently recovered to be able to swallow, are such as have the general property of strengthening and invigorating....'

For asthma Heberden lists numerous remedies which appear to have helped some patients and to have been useless to others. 'Squills afford some present ease in a fit....Opium is a powerful remedy in some asthmas, when all other means have failed'. With regard to dropsy, this, writes Heberden 'is very rarely an original distemper, but is generally a symptom of some other, which is too often incurable; and hence arises its extreme danger'. For a diuretic 'prepared squills may be tried'. But though 'many medicines have been delivered down from former physicians as diuretics, it must be owned that their effects are too uncertain and often so slight, that whoever relies much upon them will in most cases be disappointed'.

One of the most memorable chapters deals with Depression (or to use Heberden's own terms Hysterical and Hypochondriacal Affections).

While this (he writes) is in a slight degree, and of short continuance, it passes off unobserved by others, and is not much regarded by the sufferer; but when the returns of it are frequent and strong, and of long continuance, it appears to be a misery much harder to be borne than most other human

evils, and makes every blessing tasteless and unenjoyable. It is a sort of waking dream, which though a person be otherwise in sound health, makes him feel symptoms of every disease; and though innocent, yet fills his mind with the blackest horrors of guilt.

Although the Commentaries leave us in no doubt that Heberden had exceptional powers of observation, almost every chapter demonstrates the limitations under which he worked: he had no diagnostic aids, such as thermometer or stethoscope; he relied on his five senses and on his ability to interpret the data - including, most importantly, the patient's own description of his symptoms. Having made his diagnosis, what remedies could he prescribe with any confidence? Peruvian Bark (the source of quinine) was a reliable specific for certain fevers and opium (despite its dangers) was invaluable as a pain-killer; but nearly all the other 'reputed specifics' - of which there were hundreds - were at best 'inconstant in their operations', if not positively dangerous or nauseous. No wonder that Heberden laid such stress on the vis medicatrix naturae - the healing power of nature and that the advice he gave (as in the case of the Rev. John Taylor) was often 'prudential'.

Heberden's attitude towards his patients went hand-in-hand with his view of the Christian religion. His faith accorded with his buoyant and optimistic temperament and was essentially practical rather than mystical. There is no direct reference to religion in his medical works, but in a pamphlet written in his old age he affirms that

Practical religion should be the first object of every man's life, and consequently of his knowledge; in comparison to it, all other acquisitions vanish into trifles.

He was tolerant of other people's differing interpretations of the Christian message and in 1772 gave his active support to the two Petitions presented to Parliament; the first of which aimed to abolish compulsory subscription to the thirty-nine articles and the second to secure the repeal of the laws which discriminated against the Dissenters.

Johnson's religious views were altogether more sombre and his frequent feelings of guilt and unworthiness, associated with his attacks of depression and inertia, sharpened his belief in the reality of hell and damnation. He was troubled also by what he perceived as the tension between faith and reason. To quote his biographer John Wain:

He clung to reason as to a handrail in an unlighted passage; but to safeguard his religious faith, it was necessary for him now and then to let go of this handrail of reason. The effort this cost, the agony it caused, are there in the records of his life.

Heberden lived on to see the dawn of the new century and died at his

house in Pall Mall in 1801. In the course of his long career he had attended some 6,500 patients, of whom we can identify roughly 150. But in only a handful of these cases are the surviving records sufficient to provide even a rudimentary picture of the parts played by the protagonists in these dramas - the ministrations of the physician and the comments and reactions of the patient. It is fortunate for us that both these elements are so amply documented in the case-history of William Heberden's most celebrated patient Dr Samuel Johnson.

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JOHNSON AND JUVENAL

W.B. Hutchings BA, PhD, Lecturer in English Literature
Manchester University - 16 January 1988
Chairman: Trevor Russell-Cobb BA, BSc(Econ)

The Chairman introduced Dr Hutchings as the third speaker to come from Manchester University, and as someone who already had an interesting Johnsonian link. He had been a pupil at St Clement Danes Grammar School, which had recently tried to revive a Johnson Essay Prize in succession to the Roscoe Medal.

The following precis of his paper has been supplied by Dr Hutchings.

Johnson's poetry is not always as highly regarded as it should be: London is seen as an early, derivative work (Pope), even Vanity of Human Wishes is less popular than Rasselas, and often seen as its prose equivalent.

Critics are uncertain about the poems:

- (i) problems of allocating them to a single genre
- (ii) decision to imitate Juvenal

But a review of Juvenal's career (the little of it that is known), an estimation of the bases of Juvenal's satiric impulse, and an awareness of the degree of Johnson's admiration for those who speak the truth, however bitter it might be, suggest qualities which Johnson would have found congenial in Juvenal.

From Boswell we can well see how much of a constant presence the satires of Juvenal were for Johnson: 'he had them all in his head'.

An imitation does not remove the original poem: the Juvenal text still exists, especially for one who knew them so well. Johnson's own comments on Pope's imitations reveal, through their implied self-depreciation, a clue about the reading of imitations - that both texts, both where they are similar and where they are different, are part of the reading process. Johnson wanted quotations from or line-references to the original printed in his text.

A comparative examination of some passages from the poems reveals a pattern of mingled similarity and difference, the latter being in the direction of elevating the original:

- (i) the rural retreat passage in London makes more positive reading than Juvenal's relatively cynical account of the country, both responses emerging from a shared view of the corruption of the city
- (ii) the description of Wolsey in The Vanity of Human Wishes awards him a tragic dignity entirely lacking in Juvenal's equivalent figure, Sejanus
- (iii) similarly, the old-age passage in The Vanity of Human Wishes allows a possible dignity to old-age lacking in the Juvenal, even though Johnson follows Juvenal in agreeing that no state of life can bring happiness.
- (iv) the process is at its most extreme in the finales of satire X and The Vanity of Human Wishes, where Johnson's religious ending takes its place alongside Juvenal's more cynical view of religion. Both attitudes are equally possible conclusions from a shared premise: while Johnson's is true to his own lights, the continued existence of Juvenal's poem (Johnson is aware of Juvenal even on his death-bed) sets up a debate of a kind true to Johnson's honesty and love of argument.

JOHNSON'S REVISIONS TO HIS DICTIONARY, 1755 - 1773

Dr Nigel Wood, Department of English
University of Birmingham - 20 February 1988

Chairman: Dr I. M. Grundy

The Chairman introduced Dr Wood, mentioning his book on Pope and Swift, his forthcoming book on Gay and his editorship of a book on Johnson. He had also been at work on the application of the computer to Johnson.

The following summary of his paper, together with some detailed illustration, has been provided by Dr Wood.

Johnson's attempt to overhaul his Dictionary in 1773 might on the face of it appear mere tinkering. He claimed in the "Advertisement" to the 4th. ed. to have only "methodised some parts that were disordered, and illuminated some that were obscure..." These constituted, however, "a very small proportion to the whole..." Why revise the Dictionary therefore?

Arthur Sherbo, in a Philological Quarterly article of 1952 (vol. 31, 372-82) made a detailed study of the changes made in the entries under "M", and came up with 700 changes in the 105 pages of text. If we extrapolate from this frequency over the whole work this leads us to conclude that there could be as many as 16,000 modifications. Given that there are only 18 more pages in the revised ed., and the addition of some 2,670 quotations, this would seem to suggest a large measure of revision. I have collated the entries A - C, and have broken down Johnson's revisions into three major categories: (a) amendment of typographical errors (c.65%), (b) regularising the order of the illustrative quotations on chronological lines (22%) (c) an entire revision of the categories used in defining the entries (13%). In section (c) there is clear evidence that Johnson was aware of some of the adverse criticism levelled at his first edition from such as Adam Smith or John Maxwell, viz. its inconsistent principles of entry - headings. Using the examples of Law, Ornament and Poet, I tried to show that Johnson was also conscious of the connotations that a literary set of definitions would provide and that, far from rationalising his definitions, he often developed a feeling for decorum and literary tact in his arrangement and ordering of the illustrative quotations. Only by trying to instil this sensitivity as well as order in lexicography could a language develop organically - not as often claimed (see John Barrell) prescriptively.

Some Illustrative Quotations

1755, [1773].

(1) ORNAMENT n.s.

1. Embellishment; decoration.

So may the outward shows be least themselves;

The world is still deceiv'd with ornament. Shakesp.

The Tuscan chief, to me has sent

Their crown, and ev'ry regal ornament. Dryden
No circumstance of life can place a man so far below
notice of the world, but that his virtues or vices will
render him, in some degree, an ornament or disgrace to
his profession. Rogers, Serm.9.

2. Honour; that which confers dignity.

The persons of different qualities in both sexes.
are indeed allowed their different ornaments; but
these are by no means costly, being rather designed as
marks of distinction than to make a figure.

Addison on Italy

- [1773 - Under 1., just the Merchant quote from Sh. 2. is
"Something that embellishes.

Ivorie, wrought in ornaments to decke the cheekes of
horse. Chapman"

Then comes the Dryden and the Rogers.

3. is "Honour...", and the first illustration is from
William Law: "They are abused and injured, and betrayed
from their only perfection, whenever they are taught,
that any thing is an ornament in them, that is not an
ornament in the wisest amongst mankind. Law"
Then the Addison is included.]

- (2) LAW n.s.

1. A rule of action.

Unhappy man! to break the pious laws
Of nature, pleading in his children's cause. Dryden

2. A decree, edict, statute, or custom, publickly established
as a rule of justice.

He hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial
Than the severity of publick power.

Shakesp. Coriolanus

Thou art a robber,

A law-breaker, a villain; yield thee, thief. Shakesp.
Our nation would not give laws to the Irish, therefore
now the Irish gave laws to them. Davies on Ireland
One law is split into two. Baker Reflect. on Learning

3. Judicial process.

When every case in law is right. Shakesp. K. Lear

Who has a breast so pure,

But some uncleanly apprehensions

Keep leets and law days, and in sessions sit,

With meditations lawful. Shakesp. Othello

Tom Touchy is a fellow famous for taking the law of
every body: there is not one in the town where he lives
that he has not sued at a quarter-sessions.

Addison's Spectator

4. Conformity to law; any thing lawful.

In a rebellion,

When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,

Then were they chosen.

Shakesp. Coriolanus

5. An established and constant mode or process; a fixed correspondence of cause and effect.

I dy'd, whilst in the womb he stay'd,

Attending Nature's law.

Shakesp. Cymbeline

[1773 - Under 1: the first quotation is from Hooker, "That which doth assign unto each thing the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working; the same we term a law."

Under 2: the first quotation is from Milton,

"Ordain them laws, part such as appertain

To civil justice, part religious rites."

There is no Shakespeare

the second and final quotation is the Davies.

There is a new 3: "A decree authoritatively annexing rewards or punishments to certain actions.

So many laws argue so many sins. Milton

Laws politique among men presuming man to be rebellious. Hooker"

There then follow "4. Judicial Process, 5. A distinct edict or rule, 6. Conformity to law; any thing lawful, 7. The rules or axioms of science; as, the laws of mechanicks. 8. An established and constant mode or process; a fixed correspondence of cause and effect: as, the laws of magnetism, 9. The mosaical institution: distinguished from the gospel, 10. The books in which the Jewish religion is delivered: distinguished from the prophets, 11. A particular form or mode of trying and judging; as, law martial, law mercantile: the ecclesiastical law whereby we are governed, 12. Jurisprudence; the study of law: as, a doctor of law." The Baker quotation is in 5.

In Blount's Glossographia, there is no "Ornament". "Law" does not exist independently.

In Bailey's Dictionarium Britannicum, "Ornament" is "set off, finery, attire, dress; also Beauty; also a Rhetorical Flourish of Speech"; "Law", is split into 16 derivatives, yet the single word without a qualifier, means "a Decree by which a Sovereign obliges a Subject to conform his Actions to what he prescribes, or a Rule of acting or not acting, set down by some intelligent Being, or Persons having Authority for so doing."

(3) LIGHT, n.s.

1. That quality or action of the medium of sight by which we see, [1773 - "That material medium of sight; that body by which we see; luminous matter."]

Light is propagated from luminous bodies in time, and spends about seven or eight minutes of an hour in passing from the sun to the earth.

Newton's Opticks

2. Illumination of mind; instruction; knowledge. [meaning 7. 1773]
Of those things which are for direction of all the parts of our life needful, and not impossible to be discerned by the light of

nature itself, are there not many which few mens natural capacity hath been able to find out.

Hooker, b.i

Light may be taken from the experiment of the horsetooth ring, how that those things which assuage the strike of the spirits, do help diseases contrary to the intention desired.

Bacon's Natural History, no. 968

I will place within them as a guide
My umpire conscience, whom if they will hear
Light after light well us'd they shall attain,
And to the end persisting safe arrive, Milton's Par. Lost

I opened Ariosto in Italian, and the very first two lines gave me light to all I could desire. Dryden

If this internal light, or any proposition which we take for inspired, be conformable to the principles of reason, or to the word of God, which is attested revelation, reason warrants it.

Locke

The ordinary words of language, and our common use of them, would have given us light into the nature of our idea, if considered with attention.

Locke

The books of Varro concerning navigation are lost, which no doubt would have given us great light in those matters.

Arbuthnot on Coins

3. The part of a picture which is drawn with bright colours, or in which the light is supposed to fall. [meaning 8. 1773]

Never admit two equal lights in the same picture; but the greater light must strike forcibly on those places of the picture where the principal figures are; diminishing as it comes nearer the borders.

Dryden's Dufresnoy

4. Reach of knowledge; mental view....[meaning 9. 1773]

5. Point of view; situation; direction in which the light falls. ...[meaning 10. 1773]

6. Explanation... [meaning 13. 1773]

7. Any thing that gives light; a pharos; a taper.... [meaning 14. 1773]

1755 ends here.

1773 includes:

4. Day.

The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor. Job

Ere the third dawning light

Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise

Out of his grave, fresh as th' dawning light. Milton

5. Life.

Infants that never saw light. Job

Swift roll the years, and rise the expected morn,

O spring to light, auspicious babe be born !

Pope

6. Artificial illumination.

Seven lamps shall give light.

Numb.....

11. Publick view; publick notice.

Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light;
Heav'ns ! was I born for nothing but to write ?

Pope

12. The publick.

Grave epistles bringing vice to light,
Such as a king might read, a bishop write.

Pope

Blount has no entry for Light. Bailey has:

LIGHT is either the Sensation that arises from beholding any bright Object, as the Sun, a Lamp, etc. called primary Light; or else it is the Cause of that Sensation.

as it is an Action or Property of that luminous or light Body...

Homogenial LIGHT [in Opticks] that Light, whose Rays are equally refrangible; called also similar or uniform Lights.

Heterogeneal LIGHT [in Opticks] is that whose Rays are unequally refrangible....

Secondary LIGHT, a certain Action of the luminous Body on the Medium between that and the Eye by means whereof one is supposed to act on the other.

LIGHT [by some] is understood to mean that Action of the Medium, that is interposed between us and the luminous Object; but others understand it of that train of Rays, which coming forth from thence pervades the Medium before it can come to affect the Eyes.

The Textual Situation:

(a) MS of First Ed.

Only one page (autograph) extant; now in the Hyde collection.

(b) First Ed., 1755

2,000 copies printed in 2 vols, folio.

(c) Second Ed., 1756

No corrected copy known. A few revisions (printers' typos ?), but essentially a reprint of ed. 1. Sold in weekly numbers.

(d) Third Ed., 1765

A reprint of ed. 2.

(e) Fourth Ed. 1773

Considerably revised, mainly through the inclusion of extra quotations and the correction of the unchronological order of quotations.

(f) Fifth Ed., 1784

Ed. 4

(g) Sixth Ed., and Seventh Ed., 1785

Due to the competition from two unauthorised reprints, these eds. were published simultaneously for sale as serials, in quarto and folio respectively. Their text derives closest from ed. 5, but certain of the corrections found in the Reynolds copy of ed. 4 (see below) are incorporated.

(h) Gimbel-Yale sheets

These are loose sheets of ed. 1, consisting of the body of the Dictionary from A - Pumper, but lacking Abide - Abolish, H - Hygroscope, Mactation - Mythology, Oary - Pack.

Contains c.1630 slips, added, with illustrative quotations, mostly in the hands of SJ's amanuenses, and numerous marginal corrections, an appreciable number by SJ. Few were eventually printed in any ed. Now at Yale.

(i) British Library Sheets

Essentially unbound sheets of vol.1, not entire. Bound by BL into 3 vols. SJ's own corrections are confined to sigs 2N to 3U1 (last page of A + B - Bystander). These sheets are from ed.1; the others are ed.3. Few of these corrections were ever printed; the SJ corrections (those that do appear) are for ed.4. It is possible that the other, ed.3 corrections have authority, since they, according to Sledd and Kolb (Dr. Johnson's Dictionary [Chicago, 1955]) may have belonged at some time or other to Johnson's working library. David Fleeman confirms that certain marked sections in Hyde Coll. volumes resemble some of the corrections on the ed.3 sheets.

(j) Reynolds's copy of ed.4

Now in the John Rylands Library. Contains over 200 holograph revisions, but these are sporadic.

THE LANGTONS OF LINCOLNSHIRE
Kate Sparks - 19th March 1988

Chairman: Cecil Farthing OBE, FSA

In introducing Society member Kate Sparks the Chairman said she had spent all her early days in North Lincolnshire and often returned there. She was a journalist who had worked on newspapers up and down eastern England as well as contributing to national newspapers. Having published a book several years ago, she was now immersed in another. She had had a lifelong interest in Johnson, and had done much research on Tetty Johnson with a view to writing a biography. There could no one one better qualified to speak on "The Langtons of Lincolnshire".

The speaker said that there were several towns or villages called Langton within a few miles, as well as an ecclesiastical parish. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury under King John, and the man mostly responsible for Magna Carta, came from Langton by Wragby, in the 12th century, but Bennet Langton's family were from Langton by Spilsby.

From the 13th century down to modern times they were Lords of the Manor, knights and squires, parsons and barristers and High Sheriffs. Boswell had suggested that Bennet's ancient family was one of the things that endeared him to Johnson.

Bennet was born in 1737 and first met Johnson when he was 15. He greatly admired The Rambler and in 1752 procured an introduction to Johnson through Robert Levett. Expecting a "remarkably decorous philosopher", he was astonished by the "hugh uncouth figure" untidily dressed who greeted him. But his conversation was "so rich" and his "religious and political notions" so congenial that the 42 year old widower and "young Lanky" became firm friends.

When Bennet went on to Trinity College Oxford he met Topham Beauclerk, and the two of them later joined Johnson on the famous night time "frisk". Johnson said of Bennet "his mind is as exalted as his stature" (his six foot six out-topped Johnson by 6 inches) and Bennet was liked and admired by many people, according to Fanny Burney and Miss Hawkins.

Bennet's father offered Johnson a living in his gift, but he refused it, not feeling qualified. In 1764 he visited father and son and enjoyed a roll down a steep hill. His visit was later commemorated by naming after him a yew walk in the woods. The house he visited had been built in 1550 on the site of an earlier dwelling but was later replaced more than once, the last house being finally demolished in 1961. Bennet did not live there much after 1780 since the situation did not suit his health and he moved to Southampton.

Bennet was a founder member of The Club and although there was for a time a coolness between Johnson and himself because Johnson was amused by Bennet's self-importance in making a will, they were in general so close that Bennet was almost the only person admitted to Johnson when he was on the verge of mental breakdown and again during his last illness. He was a pallbearer at Johnson's funeral and was left a Polyglot Bible and charged with paying an annuity of £70 to Francis Barber on the strength of money Johnson had lent Bennet.

Bennet was famous as a Greek scholar and was also well known for his activities as a captain in the Lincolnshire Militia; and Johnson spent a week visiting him in camp in Essex in 1778.

In 1770 he married the widow of the Earl of Rothes and produced ten children of whom one, Jane, was Johnson's godchild, and wore a miniature of him until her death in 1854. Some of them were considered rather spoilt and brought too much into company, but Bennet had advanced ideas about his daughters' education, believing they should follow the same curriculum as their brothers.

It was Bennet who filled in from his recollections and correspondence many gaps in Boswell's material for the Life, giving him among them Johnson's letter to Chesterfield. Although he contributed a paper to the Idler, he did

not otherwise publish anything, but he succeeded Johnson as Professor of Ancient Literature at the Royal Academy. He died at Southampton in 1801, and left an impression of a man of great erudition and consummate charm, of whom Johnson said, "the earth does not bear a worthier man" and "I know not who will go to heaven if Langton does not".

"THE ATHENIAN BLOCKHEADS": NEW LIGHT ON JOHNSON'S OXFORD

James Gray

Thomas McCullagh Professor of English Literature
Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada - 16 April 1988

Chairman: C Tom Davis, BA, MA

The Chairman welcomed Professor Gray as an old and distinguished member of the Society. Born in Scotland, he was educated at the Universities of Aberdeen, Oxford and Montreal, and made his career in Canada. At Bishop's University he was Professor of English and Chairman of the Humanities division, before moving to Dalhousie as Chairman of English. On the Faculty Council, he became Dean of Arts and Sciences, and in 1980 became Thomas McCullagh Professor of English Literature. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He was on the Editorial Board of the Yale Edition of Johnson's Works and co-editor of Johnson's Sermons. His own book on Johnson's Sermons was published in 1972. His work lay mostly in the field of 18th century literature, including the theatre, and various aspects of Johnson. His paper is reproduced in full.

Just over a month from now, on May the twenty-second, the literary world will be celebrating the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Alexander Pope. It may be appropriate, therefore, to begin this address to the Johnson Society of London with a quotation from Pope about Oxford. It comes from that elegant translation by Pope of Horace's *Epistles*, Book II, Letter 2, in which we are told that a genius chooses for his retreat quiet Athens (*Ingenium sibi quod vacuas desumpsit Athenas....*): Athens, of course, becomes Oxford in Pope's lines:

The man who stretch'd in Isis' calm retreat,
To books and study gives seven years compleat,
See! strow'd with learned dust, his night-cap on,
He walks, an object new beneath the sun!
The boys flock round him, and the people stare;
So stiff, so mute! some statue, you would swear
Stept from its pedestal to take the air.

These verses form the epigraph to Sir Richard Steele's Guardian No. XCIV (Monday, June 29, 1713), introducing an essay on university education, "The Errors of the Present System of Education Pointed Out". Published some fifteen years before Samuel Johnson's entrance as an Oxford freshman, this essay strongly criticizes the University on the grounds of mismanagement, stingy treatment of tutors, an all too conservative curriculum, neglect of character building, which is sacrificed, according to Steele, to a non-practical "deep learning" of a kind that few can sustain, and, finally, a total disregard for the social accomplishments "which make up the character of a well-bred man". In short, Steele's essay amounts to an indictment of the ivory tower, and the view it expresses is consonant with criticisms voiced by many others, including the notorious Terrae-filius, whose speeches were so damning to the University that they were banned for twenty years (between 1713 and 1733), including Johnson's time at Oxford.

It is of particular interest to us that Steele gives as an example of what he calls "mismanagement"

the calling together a number of pupils, of howsoever different ages, views, and capacities, to the same lectures. Surely there can be no reason to think, that a delicate tender babe, just weaned from the bosom of his mother, indulged in all the impertinencies of his heart's desire, should be equally capable of receiving a lecture of philosophy, with a hardy ruffian of full age, who has been occasionally scourged through some of the great schools, groaned under constant rebuke and chastisement, and maintained a ten years war with literature, under very strict and rugged discipline.⁽¹⁾

On checking the ages of Johnson's contemporaries or near-contemporaries at Pembroke College, I found the youngest to be one William Fox, aged fourteen, and the oldest, a servitor called John Hayward, who was twenty on entry. Johnson was nineteen, a hardy ruffian in his way, and one who had indeed felt the scourge in school.

I

When James Boswell visited Oxford for the first time, on April 23, 1763, he was, as always, on the lookout for men of great eminence and distinction.⁽²⁾ At first he found the students he talked with to be "just young old men without vivacity", and he lapsed into a deep Boswellian depression until, two days later, he went for a stroll that took him to Pembroke College, where, he remembered, George Whitefield, the great Methodist preacher, had been educated.⁽³⁾ In his journal for that date, astonishingly enough, there is no

mention of that other great Pembrochian, Samuel Johnson, whose biography the visitor from Scotland would one day compose, to the eventual acclaim of thousands, if not millions, of readers. It is true, we realize, that Boswell had not yet met Johnson in that delightfully embarrassing encounter in the back parlour of Davies' bookshop, but he was certainly aware of him, as the author of The Rambler and the Dictionary, as well as the recipient of an honorary M.A. from Oxford.

I mention this circumstance, not merely as a notable example of Boswell's apparent ignorance at that point in his career, but also as an indication that he was a somewhat unreliable commentator on the character and condition of Johnson's Oxford. After all, Boswell was as yet unborn when the subject of his biography entered Pembroke College, as a Commoner, on the last day of October, 1728, and he had to rely implicitly on the testimony of the few Oxford contemporaries of Johnson who were still alive when he was compiling his facts for his monumental life.

The Oxford period of Johnson's career is, without doubt, one of the most erratically documented in the entire biography. For this reason, I think it important for us to take another look at the Oxford of the late 1720s and to try to fill some of the obvious gaps in Boswell's account.

II

Boswell's main biographical resources for the Oxford phase were John Taylor of Ashbourne (1711-1788), school companion, college contemporary and lifelong friend; and William Adams (1706-1789), a very young, twenty-two-year-old tutor at Pembroke when Johnson was a freshman, and, later, Master of the College and also a staunch friend. Unfortunately, we have no direct testimony from Taylor -- only a transcript of what he told Boswell, though that is interesting enough.⁽⁴⁾ As for Adams, we have letters and verbal reports which throw some useful light on Johnson's continuing love affair with Oxford long after he had gone down, and indeed up until the last years of his life when he managed, with some help, to climb the steep staircase to his old room at Pembroke.

The record, then, is disappointingly thin. In spite of the heroic and unstinting efforts of Allen Lyell Reade, as reflected in his encyclopedic Johnsonian Gleanings, and the sedulous detective work of the late James L. Clifford and a succession of other biographers, together with the research of such eminent Oxford historians as Dame Lucy Sutherland, the facts that emerge are incomplete, to say the least. We know, for instance, or we think we know, that Sam's chances of getting to Oxford were almost non-existent until, by the unexpected windfall of a legacy of £40 to his mother from her

first cousin, the widow Mrs. Elizabeth Harriots of Trysul, near Wolverhampton, the way at last was clear. A further offer of assistance from a wealthy friend called Andrew Corbet, a gentleman commoner of Pembroke, never materialized, though Johnson was allowed to occupy his rooms while Corbet was away. On the strength of his mother's benefaction and nothing else, Johnson's year at Oxford became possible. The money ran out quickly, and his impoverished condition prevented him from staying beyond the Michaelmas term of 1729. The duration of that stay at the University, from October 31, 1728, to December 12, 1729, has been satisfactorily verified from the record of the buttery books at Pembroke. Boswell, we now realize, erred in thinking that he had been there for three years. The mistake was a pardonable one, since Johnson's name continued to appear on the books, for routine charges, after he had gone down.

Only the barebones of the story of that eventful period are known. It appears that Sam, in the company of his proud father, Michael, rode horseback the seventy-eight miles from Lichfield to Oxford, while the new student's belongings were sent on by wagon. On October 31 he paid his £7 caution money and was introduced to his tutor, the forty-three-year-old William Jorden, who was also Viceregent of Pembroke, deputy to the Master, Dr. Matthew Panting (1683?-1739), whom Johnson would in time describe as "a fine Jacobite fellow" -- a point that will be taken up later. Jorden, close to the end of his career at Pembroke, was looking for a suitable country living in which to spend the rest of his days. According to Thomas Hearne, the diarist, Jorden was elected by the University to the rectory of Odstock in the county of Wiltshire on March 15, 1729. It turned out, however, that the University had exceeded its prerogative, for the living was not in its gift and indeed belonged to the Roman Catholic family of Sir John Webb. Jorden had to wait until December 12, 1729, the very day that Johnson went down, to be presented to another living, that of Standon in Staffordshire, under a rather unusual arrangement by which he agreed to return the rectory to its incumbent, who happened to be one of Jorden's own pupils, William Vyse (the student who reputedly placed a pair of shoes outside Johnson's door) whenever Vyse chose to claim it. Jorden remained at Standon until 1731, when he became Vicar of Seighford, also in Staffordshire, where he died eight years later, on January 12, 1738/9.

The important point here is that Jorden, whom Johnson described as "a very worthy man but a heavy man" and a rather unsatisfactory tutor, was in competition for livings during the period of Johnson's residence at Pembroke, and unlikely, therefore, to be able to give his undivided attention to any of his pupils. (5)

Incidentally, the anecdote about William Vyse and the shoes, frequently

repeated by Johnson's biographers, takes on a new significance when we remember that gentlemen commoners, who were already a rank above commoners at the University, would often leave their old shoes to the servitors, the students who paid their fees by serving at table and doing other menial tasks. The obvious reason for Johnson's treating the gift as an insult, then, was that he thought he was being patronized as a humble servitor. At the same time, we should note that some men of eminence in later life had attended the University as servitors, including that famous Methodist preacher already referred to, George Whitefield, a student at Johnson's own college, Pembroke, who had matriculated four years later than Johnson.

Shortly after his arrival at the college, Johnson was required to prepare a Latin declamation on November 5, the day of the Gunpowder Plot, the custom at Pembroke being that undergraduates made two copies of verses on the subject, one to present to the Master and the other to recite from in the dining hall. Instead of writing about Guy Fawkes, however, Johnson chose the subject of Somnium, or sleep. George Birkbeck Hill and others have described this as an unusual departure, but in fact students were encouraged at that time to choose their own topics, and even their own examiners. The exercises, or declamations, were all oral: for the B.A. they included a Latin declamation and questions on three classical texts of the examinee's own choice. For that first exercise, you will recall, Johnson made only one copy, and he had to repeat his verses from memory, "improvising", as he said, "where recollection failed". This was not a very auspicious start, though it already testified to his spirit of independence as well as his remarkable memory.⁽⁶⁾

It is clear from the meagre record we have that the same independent spirit got him into trouble a number of times at Pembroke: sliding on the ice in Christ Church meadow during that unusually cold autumn of 1728 instead of attending his tutor's classes, his open rebellion against authority, his admitted laxity in matters of religion, and so on. In passing, it might be mentioned that Thomas Hearne, in his diary for October 10, 1728, recorded "a severe early cold" in Oxford, and "a very violent Storm of Thunder, Lightning, Rain, and Hail". The frost made the hillocks hard for sliding, and even skating on the ice in the meadow became possible. There is evidence, too, that retailers used to stand by with kegs of brandy and other cordials for the skaters -- an added inducement to skip one's tutorials. The intensely cold weather must have been quite localized, as Alexander Pope mentions in a letter that he was out in his garden at Twickenham in early November planting salad-beds.⁽⁷⁾

Returning to Johnson's activities at Oxford, one ought to balance the

record by noting that he read voraciously, translated Pope's Messiah into Latin as an exercise that seems to have impressed the poet, and had his translation published in John Husband's Miscellany of Poems by Several Hands in Oxford in 1731. His personal library, which he left behind with John Taylor for safe keeping, and which must surely have been one of the largest undergraduate collections in the University, one hundred and fifteen volumes in all, indicates a considerable breadth of reading interests, from ancient writers to living contemporaries such as William Law, Richard Blackmore, and Alexander Pope. While there is a preponderance of classical writers on the check-list that Johnson provided, on the back of a letter to his friend Gilbert Repington in 1735 -- a letter in which he asked for the return of his collection, then still at Christ Church where he had left it with Taylor -- there are also plenty of modern English authors such as Addison, Steele, Dryden, Waller, and Milton. Pope's Miscellanies, then hot off the press -- a joint publication with Swift who was then in England -- is the latest published work in the collection.

When we remember that Johnson was nineteen at the time of his matriculation -- three or four years older than the average freshman at Oxford, and that he had already had access to his father's extensive stock of books, the size and quality of his personal library become explicable. The range of his reading must certainly have given him an advantage over most, if not all, of his college contemporaries. One of the few exceptions was the classical scholar, John Meeke, senior to Johnson at Pembroke, who later became a fellow. "I remember", Johnson told Thomas Warton in 1754, "at the classical lecture in the Hall, I could not bear Meeke's superiority, and I tried to sit as far from him as I could, that I might not hear him construe".⁽⁸⁾

This story reminds us that most of the so-called "lectures" in Johnson's time at Oxford were, in fact, reading exercises, at which the students were required to translate viva voce. He told Boswell that "what he read solidly at Oxford was Greek; not the Grecian historians, but Homer and Euripides, and now and then a little Epigram".⁽⁹⁾ (Remember he had Pope's then recent editions of both the Iliad and the Odyssey in his collection, eleven volumes in all -- probably in the duodecimo sets of 1720-21 and 1725-26, and later he admitted that he had never read the Odyssey completely in the original).

Sir John Hawkins in his biography of Johnson points out that, in addition to his favourite studies in the classics, ethics, and theology, he planned to study the sciences. "He read by fits and starts", says Hawkins, "and, in the intervals, digested his reading by meditation, to which he was ever prone". It is to Hawkins, by the way, that we owe the story that Johnson "would oftener risque the payment of a small fine than attend his [tutor's]

lectures; nor was he studious to conceal the reason of his absence. Upon occasion of one such imposition, he said to Jordan [sic], "Sir, you have sconded me two-pence for non-attendance at a lecture not worth a penny." (10)

It is worth recalling that there was an age gap of some twenty-four years between Johnson and his tutor, who, as I have suggested, may not have had his mind on his job. By contrast, young William Adams, who would have been his tutor had Johnson continued at Pembroke, was, at twenty-two, only three years Johnson's senior. His account of the latter's conduct is both sympathetic and enthusiastic. Johnson, he related, "was caressed and loved by all about him, was a gay and frolicsome fellow, and passed there [at Pembroke] the happiest part of his life". In relaying this statement, Boswell had, of course, to apply the damper by reminding his readers that Johnson was then "depressed by poverty, and irritated by disease. When I mentioned [Dr. Adams' account] he said, 'Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolick. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my work so I disregarded all power and all authority.'"

In this context, I believe, Adams' genial testimony is to be trusted. When, during the bicentennial celebrations at Pembroke in 1984, the buttery books were on display, I confirmed with David Fleeman, the college librarian, [and, of course, one of our Vice Presidents (Ed.)] that Johnson spent as much as the next man on beer and other little luxuries. In later life, too, when he met by chance his college contemporary, Oliver Edwards (the man who said that he had tried to be a philosopher, but, he did not know how, 'cheerfulness was always breaking in'), Johnson recalled some convivial moments with Edwards over drinks at a nearby pub. (11)

There was, no doubt, some bravado in his demeanour during those thirteen-and-a-half months at Oxford. No doubt, too, the curriculum and the quality of the teaching troubled Johnson greatly. He must have felt, as have many other undergraduates, that he was being short-changed. This feeling was dramatically and amusingly illustrated in the incident related by Adams, and faithfully recorded in Boswell's notebook:

[Johnson] was lodged in the room up two pair of stairs over the gate of Pembroke. One day while he was sitting in his room Dr. Panting [that "fine Jacobite fellow"], then Master of the College overheard him making this Soliloquy with his strong voice. "Well I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I'll go see the Universities abroad. I'll go to France & Italy. I'll go to Padua and I'll mind my business -- For an Athenian Blockhead is the worst of all Blockheads." (12)

None of the biographers or commentators, so far as I have been able to discover, has noted the little ironies in this "soliloquy", which has frequently been quoted but never satisfactorily glossed. The "Athenian blockheads" were Johnson's teachers at Oxford, which was often regarded, by Anthony à Wood and others, as the modern Atheneum (and you will recall Pope's substitution of Oxford for Athens in the Horatian epistle I quoted at the outset). Johnson was disenchanted with them, and must have known that Panting would overhear his proclaimed disenchantment. As for his threat, "I'll go to Padua", the in-joke there was that Sir Thomas Browne, one of the most distinguished sons of Pembroke in the days when it was known as Broadgates Hall, had gone from Oxford exactly a century before to study medicine there. In his *Life of Browne*, prefixed to an edition of Browne's *Christian Morals* in 1756, Johnson noted that his subject was "the first man of eminence graduated from the new college, to which the zeal or gratitude of those that love it most, can wish little better, than that it may long proceed as it began" -- a nice incidental tribute to his own cherished *alma mater*. The same biography contains a clue to Johnson's view of academic life: "A scholastic and academical life", he wrote, "is very uniform; and has, indeed, more safety than pleasure". (13)

While it is true that in later years Johnson applauded the University regimen for undergraduates, the mental discipline and the spirit of competition it engendered, it is apparent that he found much that was wanting as well. The "Athenian blockheads" presented less of an intellectual challenge than he had expected, though he never went as far as some other celebrated critics of eighteenth-century Oxford, such as Edward Gibbon, who entered Magdalen College at the age of fifteen, and was at first delighted with his prematurely adult status:

I felt myself suddenly raised [wrote Gibbon in his *Memoirs*] from a boy to a man: the persons whom I respected as my superiors in age and academical rank entertained me with every mark of attention and civility; and my vanity was flattered by the velvet cap and silk gown which distinguish a gentleman commoner from a plebeian student. A decent allowance, more money than a school-boy had ever seen, was at my own disposal; and I might command among the tradesmen of Oxford an indefinite and dangerous latitude of credit. A key was delivered into my hands which gave me the free use of a numerous and learned library. My apartment consisted of three elegant and well-furnished rooms in the new buildings of Magdalen College; and the adjacent walks, had they been frequented

by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shades on the banks of the Ilissus. Such was the fair prospect of my entrance [April 3, 1752] into the University of Oxford.

This was almost a quarter century after Samuel Johnson's much humbler entrance through the portals of Pembroke. But if we are tempted to wish that Gibbon's opulence might have been substituted for Johnson's poverty, we ought to read on. How greatly and how soon was Gibbon to be totally disillusioned:

To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months most idle and unprofitable of my whole life.....

In much the same spirit as that in which Johnson had announced in his Master's hearing his intention of going to Padua, so Gibbon wished he had chosen "a well-constituted academy" in Europe, "under the guidance of skilful and vigilant professors".

A devastating analysis of Oxford's shortcomings follows, with the celebrated criticism of Magdalen's supinely indolent fellows, whose

days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, they had absolved their conscience.

As a gentleman-commoner, Gibbon had been admitted to the society of these same fellows, but found their conversation to be largely shop-talk about college business, "Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal". "Their dull and deep potations", he goes on,

excused the brisk intemperance of youth; and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of Hanover.

Like most of the twenty-three other halls or colleges, Magdalen was, in Gibbon's words, "devoutly attached to the old interest".⁽¹⁴⁾ Evidence of this leaning towards the Stuarts and of hostility towards the Georges is everywhere apparent in the extant memoirs, letters and diaries of the

period. There were a few strongholds of Whiggism, friendly to Robert Walpole's government, but most of the University was resolutely and defiantly Tory.

You will remember that Johnson's Master, Dr. Matthew Panting, was, in his phrase, "a fine Jacobite fellow". A Jacobite indeed, and a high churchman, and in his mid-forties when Johnson matriculated, Panting no doubt set the tone for the college -- much the same tone, in fact, as that attributed to Magdalen by Gibbon. The only publication I have found under Panting's name is a sermon, preached at the consecration of the new chapel of Pembroke College on Monday, July 10, 1732, with the title, Religious Vows. Some seventeen years previously, on August 1, 1715, he had preached another sermon, this time in St. Mary's, in commemoration of the death of Queen Anne. Thomas Hearne, that indefatigable Oxford diarist, and himself a staunch hater of the Hanoverians, tersely observed "Dr. Panting is an honest gent. His sermon took no notice, at most very little, of the Duke of Brunswick". The Duke was, of course, the recently anointed King George the First, but Hearne never deigned to grant him the title. (15)

It would be a mistake to assume that the Whigs in London were content to leave matters as they stood in Oxford. Walpole and his brother-in-law, the Secretary of State, Charles, 2nd Viscount Townshend (later to be known in history as "Turnip" Townshend) were very much aware that both the English universities were Tory strongholds, and they did something about it, just before and during Johnson's time as an undergraduate.

We should remember that Johnson was born while a Stuart was on the throne, and his own loyalties were clearly Tory; and when he was six years old, in 1715, there took place the first major Jacobite Rebellion, which had dangerously threatened the security of the Hanoverian successor to Queen Anne. Even the defeat of the rebels at Sheriffmuir and the return of the Old Pretender to France did not entirely remove that threat, and Oxford, which did so much to nurture it, became one of the centres of special government attention. Matters were not exactly improved by the sudden death of George the First in the summer of 1727, when Jacobite rumblings were heard again.

John Wain, in his excellent book on Samuel Johnson, describes the Oxford of the late 1720s as "unimaginably more beautiful and peaceful than she will ever be again". (16) In some ways this was true. It was Wren's Oxford, its beauty greatly augmented by his designs of Tom Tower at Christ Church, in clear view from Johnson's room at Pembroke, his Sheldonian Theatre, his Trinity gates, and his improvement of the facade of the Ashmolean. The magnificent gardens, mostly geometric in shape, had benefited from the

feminine touches of the wives of the heads of colleges, and from the assiduous attentions of master gardeners.

But the peace of Oxford was only on the surface. The political jockeyings detected by Gibbon were already prevalent in Johnson's days as an undergraduate. In this connection, there is a special significance in the fact that John Taylor, his lifelong friend and an inveterate Whig, came up to Oxford in March, 1729. The story that Boswell apparently received from Taylor was that he, too, wanted to go to Pembroke, but that Johnson, who had done some scouting, recommended Christ Church, where a tutor by the name of Edmund Bateman, then twenty-four, had the best reputation as a teacher of the classics, ethics, and mathematics.

Now Taylor's political persuasion, I believe, had a lot to do with his easy admission to Christ Church, which had been singled out by the Whig government in London as the likeliest seat of influence in the campaign to reduce Tory power in the University. While Taylor's account of Johnson's recommendation is no doubt valid, the fact that he came from a strong Whig family must also be weighed in the balance.

Only five years Johnson's senior, Bateman, a Londoner born, was a close friend of Christopher Wren's son, a fellow coin-collector by the way, and a protégé of Archbishop Wake, through whose patronage he later rose to some eminence in the church and became Chancellor of Lichfield Cathedral. Interestingly enough, Bateman had a family connection with William Vyse, the supposed donor of the shoes, who became Treasurer of Lichfield Cathedral: a remarkable circularity of coincidence which has not been entirely probed yet by Johnsonian scholars.

Christ Church, as I pointed out at the Bicentennial Conference in Oxford in 1984, became the focus of an experiment to introduce into the University the study of modern history and modern languages. This experiment, begun in 1724, four years before Johnson's arrival at Pembroke, involved the establishment of a chair of Modern History which carried a salary, then quite princely, of £400 a year, out of which the incumbent, David Gregory, another Whig, had to pay two teachers of modern languages working under his direction. Ostensibly, the idea was to fit certain selected students "for the service of the State", and the successful candidates would eventually be given employment at home or abroad in a diplomatic or bureaucratic capacity. In other words, Walpole's government, under the agency of the Secretary of State, Lord Townshend, and with the active help and blessing of Edmund Gibson, then Bishop of London, was attempting to establish the microcosm of civil service training within the

setting of the University. The political motive was very plain: to counter-act the Tory hegemony in eighteenth-century Oxford. A similar plan was set in place in Cambridge at the same time.⁽¹⁷⁾

For various reasons the experiment failed, but some of those involved in it went on to achieve great things. One of the selected students, John Tottie, became Provost of Worcester College; another, Gilbert West, a successful poet and the eventual subject of one of Johnson's Lives; and a third, Robert James, the author of the famous Medicinal Dictionary to which Johnson contributed, as well as the inventor of one of the most popular patent medicines of all time, Dr. James's powders, the very same "remedy" that was reputed to have sent Oliver Goldsmith to an early grave. David Gregory, whose post as Professor of Modern History was virtually a sinecure, in time became a Canon of Christ Church and later Dean.

The modern languages experiment, which continued, if rather fitfully, into Johnson's time at Oxford, had the effect of injecting some new life into the place. In a university of fewer than one thousand students, with a very conservative curriculum and a less than dynamic teaching staff, it gave a special impetus to modern and practical studies. Moreover, as I have tried to show elsewhere, it had a good deal to do with Johnson's own developing proficiency in French, which he put to good use in his translation of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia, published six years after he went down.

Even without such innovations, Oxford was far from moribund. The University Press, relocated in 1724 in the Clarendon Building, was booming. At a time when professional theatre was proscribed in the universities, amateur theatricals flourished. Club life was vigorous. There was a flourishing poetry society. Political associations were in high gear. In nearby London, The Beggar's Opera was enjoying its first season. (I like to think that Johnson, who later exhibited a first-hand acquaintance with its lyrics, even singing one on occasion, might have managed, poor though he was, to attend its first run, as many other students did, at Lincoln's Inn Fields). Gay's phenomenal success was followed shortly afterwards by Fielding's first play, Love in Several Masques. Swift's Gulliver's Travels had recently been published, and Pope's Dunciad reappeared in expanded form. Sprightly satire was very much in the air, and Johnson's "nest of singing birds" had much to sing about.

One of the satires written in Johnson's time at the University was in the form of a lighthearted comedy called The Humours of Oxford, by one James Miller, a Gentleman of Wadham College and slightly senior to Johnson. Though not published until 1730, the play reflects something of

the social life with which Johnson became acquainted. In addition, a ballad opera called The Oxford Act, based on the rather outrageous antics of Terrae filius at the Encaenia, which was suspended during Johnson's time because of the disorders those antics had caused, was published in 1733, the year the Act was reinstated after a lapse of two decades.

Both the play and the ballad opera reflect the healthy frivolity in eighteenth-century Oxford. It is clear that Johnson's love of frolic was shared by many other students. The dramatis personae of The Oxford Act, for instance, include the Vice-Chancellor, a Proctor, two college fellows (well named Haughty and Pedant), and three Oxford scholars, Thoughtless, Spendthrift, and Sprightly, known in their day as "smarts". There were also four Oxford "toasts" -- the name given to female hangers-on -- Flippant, Hainessa, Vinessa, and Buella. Like The Beggar's Opera, it has many "airs" or lyrics -- thirty-seven in fact -- and most of these are lightheartedly critical of the University establishment. (18)

The Humours of Oxford, Miller's play, had its première at Drury Lane in January, 1730, enjoying a run of seven nights. According to Biographia Dramatica, it "drew on Mr. Miller the resentment of some of the heads of the colleges in Oxford, who looked on themselves as satirized in it". (19) And well they might, since one of the main characters is the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and another -- also called Haughty in the play -- is a college fellow, described as "an imperious, pedantic, unmannerly pedagogue; of a vile life and vicious principles" -- a bit worse, indeed, than "the Athenian blockheads" encountered by Johnson.

The comedy is in the cheeky Restoration mode, robust rather than subtle, and clearly inspired by the Terrae filius tradition of irreverent wit at the expense of academic authority. Though not exactly a masterpiece, it has its moments, and it serves to point up some of the paramount evils of Johnson's Oxford, such as academic affectation, intellectual inertia, social snobbery, and, worst of all, the treatment of women as inferior beings. (It is a sad fact that women were not admitted to the University until the early 1900s, and even then they were granted degrees, not by Oxford, but by Trinity College, Dublin). Miller's play reminds us that the only women who came into the lives of undergraduates were the wives of the heads of the colleges (fellows being celibate), the bed-makers, and those politely known as "toasts" -- some perfectly respectable, others "women of the town".

While this comedy is not exactly a forerunner of Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf, it tells us a good deal about the posturings and pretensions

of the academic world as seen from the inside. Clarinda, a lady of fortune and an anti-intellectual, is given a lecture by Haughty, the pedantic fellow: "Plato", he declares, "will teach you how to talk to the Purpose -- and Pythagoras how to hold your tongue -- Aristotle, how to see the World to Advantage -- and Diogenes, how to stay at home, and be contented -- Cicero, a useful Pride; and Socrates, an unaffected Humility". Clarinda replies by scoffing at the condescension and the arrogance of Haughty's profession, and particularly what she calls his "genteel way of contradicting everybody he converses with", and Victoria, her cousin, adds, "And talking Latin to those that don't understand it". Then Clarinda (piling it on): "Your noble magisterial Mien, and Behaviour -- that you always look and talk, as if you were handling the Birch -- and making poor Schoolboys afraid of you". (20)

It is doubtful that Johnson, after all the pummelling he had endured at the hands of his brutal schoolmaster Hunter at Lichfield, needed any such corporal punishment at Oxford, but we do know that it was meted out at Pembroke, and indeed in all the colleges, with the possible exception of All Souls, from time to time.

This is not the place for a full examen of Miller's play, but I can testify that it provides some interesting glimpses of Johnson's Oxford, glimpses that one is denied in the gossipy but usually pedestrian entries in Hearne's diaries. To put it bluntly, Johnson's Oxford lacked a Boswell to do it spicy justice, so to speak. Miller's Humours comes as close as I think we shall get to that. Moreover, it is unusual, at least in my experience of early eighteenth-century drama, in its vigorous representation of the woman's point of view. Gainlove, who is described as "a young fellow of ruined fortune and dissolute life" tries to seduce young Victoria, first by words and then by deeds, but she is more than a match for him. Using the age-old argument that chastity and virtue are two quite different things, Gainlove describes matrimony as

nothing but a mere civil Institution, occasionally adapted to the reigning Politicks, without any Obligation, but what is human and arbitrary - so Continence, is nothing but an unreasonable Conformity to that, in opposition both to Nature and Love - and is so far from being a Virtue, that it is the very worst degree of Avarice, which refuses to make another happy, with what, if kept, is no Advantage to the Owner.

Victoria. And so, in your opinion, a common Prostitute acts more consonant with the Laws of Nature and Reason, than those

who have a regard to Modesty and Chastity.

Gainlove. I think, Madam, they act more so, than those of their Sex, who commit Matrimony, as they generally do, directly for Interest - as both the Crime and Folly is greater, to prostitute themselves for Life - than for half an hour.

Victoria. Very well, Sir - and so you would fain persuade [sic] me, by this wondrous way of reasoning, that Chastity is a mighty silly thing, and Modesty a mere Chimera -- that if I am virtuous, I am no better than I should be -- and that, out of a Principle of Generosity, I ought to be entirely at your Service, or any Body's else that will do me the Favour. -- O' my word, Sir, you must have an excellent Opinion of my Understanding, to think I can judge no better of Right and Wrong, than to be impos'd on by such wretched Sophistry. (21)

Congreve's Millamant could hardly have said it better. At least one of the Athenian blockheads was put in his place. For our part, we may conclude that Johnson's Oxford was not, after all, so far out of touch with reality as we might be tempted to think.

DOCUMENTATION AND NOTES

- 1 The Guardian XCIV. Moore's Edition. 2 vols. Dublin, 1793, I.198-200.
- 2 He looked at John Locke's room in Christ Church and Joseph Addison's in Magdalen, and mentioned James Harvey of Lincoln College, a Methodist and poet of the Graveyard school. James Boswell, London Journal, 1762-3, ed. F.A.Pottle. New York and London (Yale University Press Edition), 1950, pp.245-7.
- 3 Whitefield entered Pembroke as a servitor, matriculating on November 7, 1732, and received his B.A. degree in July 1736. He was admitted to the Society of Methodists in 1735, under the sponsorship of Charles Wesley.
- 4 The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the Life of Johnson, ed. M. Waingrow. London (Yale Research Edition of the Private Papers of James Boswell), 1969, p.102 ff.
- 5 For more details of Jorden's story, see James Gray, "A Balliol Rival to Dr. Johnson's Tutor, Cornelius Crawford", The New Rambler, Serial C, No. XVII, 1976, pp.26-9.

- 6 Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., ed. G.B. Hill and L.F. Powell. 6 vols. Oxford, 1934-50, I.60, 71; and A.L. Reade, Johnsonian Gleanings. 11 vols. Reprint, New York (Octagon Books), 1968, V.7-8.
- 7 J.R. Green, Oxford Studies. London, 1901, p.71; and George Sherburn, The Correspondence of Alexander Pope. 5 vols. Oxford, 1956, II.525. Pope's kitchen garden was, of course, well sheltered by trees. See John Searle's diagram in his Plan of Mr. Pope's Garden, London, 1745, reproduced in Maynard Mack, The Garden and the City, Toronto, 1969, p.55.
- 8 Boswell's Life of Johnson, I.272; and Sir John Hawkins, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., 2nd ed. London, 1787, p.12. John Meeke became a country parson whose only claim to fame was his inheritance of a house that had once belonged to Nell Gwynn. See A.L. Reade, Johnsonian Gleanings, V.16-17.
- 9 Boswell's Life of Johnson, I.70.
- 10 Hawkins, pp.9,12.
- 11 Boswell's Life of Johnson, I.73-4, III.302-7.
- 12 Ibid., I.72-3.
- 13 The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., ed. F.P. Walesby. 9 vols. Oxford, 1825, VI.476, 480.
- 14 Memoirs of Edward Gibbon, ed. H. Morley. London, 1891, p.64 ff.
- 15 Religious Vows. A Sermon Preach'd at the Consecration of a Chapel in Pembroke-College in Oxford, on Monday, July 10, 1732. By M. Panting, DD. Master of Pembroke-College. Oxford, 1732. This otherwise unremarkable sermon bears out Hearne's observation: Panting makes due acknowledgement of the College's governors, benefactors and well-wishers, but omits any reference to the royal family. See also A.L. Reade, Johnsonian Gleanings, V.179-80; and Thomas Hearne, Remains, ed. P. Bliss, 2nd ed. 2 vols. London, 1869, II.6.
- 16 John Wain, Samuel Johnson. London, 1974, p.43.
- 17 For a more detailed account of the language experiment at Oxford, see James Gray, "Arras/Hélas! A Fresh Look at Samuel Johnson's French", in Johnson After Two Hundred Years, ed. Paul J. Korshin. Philadelphia, 1986, pp.79-96.
- 18 The Oxford Act, a New Ballad-Opera. As it was perform'd by a Company of Students at Oxford. London: Printed for L. Gulliver, 1733.
- 19 Biographia Dramatica, ed. David Erskine Baker. New ed. 2 vols. London, 1782, II.158.
- 20 [James Miller], The Humours of Oxford, A Comedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal, By His Majesty's Servants. By a Gentleman of Wadham-College. London: Printed for J. Watts, 1730, p.21.
- 21 Ibid., p.36.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN THE 18th CENTURY: DR JOHNSON AND SOAME JENYNS

The Revd. Canon A.R.Winnett PhD,DD - 21st May 1988

Chairman: Helen Forsyth

The Chairman, introducing Canon Winnett as a Vice-President of the Society and a member for 30 years, said that he had graduated from London University and spent most of his Ministry in the Diocese of Guildford, being an Honorary (now Emeritus) Canon of Guildford Cathedral. He was the author of a number of books, articles and reviews and two volumes of poetry of great beauty and understanding. Today he was to speak on the Problem of Evil in the 18th Century. The following summary of his paper was provided by Canon Winnett himself.

The problem of evil constitutes a perennial and inescapable challenge to Christian, and indeed to all theistic, belief. How does evil come to exist in a world created by an omnipotent and beneficent God? Traditional Christian theology attributed the origin of evil to the act of a creature created good but endowed with a freedom which he misused to rebel against his Creator, hence the notion of a primal "Fall" such as is found in the Eden story in the book of Genesis and in the myth of a pre-mundane rebellion on the part of Satan or Lucifer, to which Milton gave classic expression in Paradise Lost. With the Enlightenment, however, this mythical account of the origin of evil gave place to a metaphysical one, evil being viewed as the necessary concomitant of a finite created order, and as such having its place in a total good. Nevertheless the distinction between the two explanations of evil was not an absolute one. The traditional Fall-doctrine which had the authority of the Bible and the Church was not explicitly denied, and the idea of evil as being involved in created existence itself had its antecedents in Plato and Neo-Platonism, "matter" or the "non-Being" out of which all things were formed representing the extreme limit from the One or Good. In the eighteenth century we meet with the idea of the "Great Chain of Being", that is the hierarchy of existence from God or perfection to nothingness; and along with this went the Principle of Plenitude, which required that the divine creativity should manifest itself in the vastest possible multiplicity and variety of creatures of lesser as well as greater degrees of perfection.

If self-existence be a necessary implicate of perfection it follows that all created beings must fall short of perfection and therefore be in some degree evil, but the amount of evil is the least which is demanded by the existence of a finite world-order. This is what was meant by Leibniz's statement that this is "the best of all possible worlds". There is no evil whose removal would not result in greater evil, and evil is itself contributory to a greater good, just as a discord in music when resolved

contributes to the beauty of the whole. This optimistic and minimising view of evil was propounded by Leibniz in the Theodicy, by Archbishop King in his De Origine Mali (the subject of controversy with his contemporary and friend Peter Browne), by Pope in the Essay on Man, and by Soame Jenyns in his Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, to which Johnson replied in a review which had the unintended effect of immortalising the name of Jenyns. Jenyns and Johnson were radically different in outlook and temperament. Johnson's robust common-sense had little patience with Jenyns's metaphysical subtleties, and the evil which for Jenyns was a problem to be explained was for Johnson a burden to be borne. Jenyns was the detached spectator, but Johnson knew from experience, his own and that of others, the suffering which is part of the human lot. Basil Willey uses the expression "Cosmic Toryism" to describe the eighteenth century optimism which saw this as the "best of all possible worlds" with the corollary that the existing social order was the best of all possible orders. For Jenyns the subordinationism implicit in the notion of the Great Chain of Being was reflected in the social order, which must necessarily be marked by inequality. Johnson was a Tory but a compassionate one, and he was revolted by Jenyns's complacency and by his smug attempt to justify poverty and other ills by invoking the alleged compensations provided by divine benevolence. Johnson's onslaught reaches its climax when he satirises Jenyns for supposing that the sufferings of mankind may be the means of affording pleasure to superior orders of beings.

Johnson attempted no systematic theodicy, but his thoughts on the subject are found dispersed throughout his writings. Abandoning the problem of evil as metaphysically insoluble, he falls back on the traditional view of its origin in a Fall or primal act of disobedience. Nevertheless man retains his freedom of choice between good and evil, and we are not to unload responsibility for our wrong-doing upon the Devil. Johnson looked to a future life to compensate for the ills of the present life, and central to his Christian faith was the revelation of immortality. It was the fear that this revelation could be undermined which accounts for Johnson's dismissive and often hostile attitude to Hume. It is difficult not to detect beneath Johnson's profound and sincere Christian piety an undertone of doubt, to which attention has been called by Bernard Bronson and Charles E. Pierce. This prayer of the man in the Gospel, "Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief" could have been Johnson's as well.

SOCIETY VISITS

On 17 September ten members and friends went to see the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden, a very enjoyable expedition. Of special interest to this

Society were the portraits, manuscripts, memorabilia and costumes relating to Garrick and Mrs Pritchard and their contemporaries, but the Museum had a wonderful display of items reflecting many aspects of the theatre - too much to take in at once, but serving to whet the appetite for further visits. Cups of tea in the Cafe were particularly welcome, bringing a respite for the feet!

THE WREATH LAYING 1987

The wreath laying in Westminster Abbey was to have been carried out on 12th December 1987 by Lord Dacre of Glanton, but a sudden indisposition prevented his attendance. The Chairman, Mr. Comyn, therefore deputised and in a short speech said that he hoped that this annual commemoration of Johnson would be long continued. Members felt that the presence of his young son Hugo was a good augury for such continuity.

The Luncheon, organised by Mrs. Dowdeswell, took place as usual at the Vitello d'Oro Restaurant.

Lord Dacre's indisposition meant that his proposed paper on Gibbon, Johnson and the Study of History could not be given at the members' meeting. The Chairman again stepped into the breach and read an article by Michael Davie "In search of the History Man" which had appeared in The Observer on 28th June 1987, 200 years almost to the day since Gibbon finished his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

BOOK REVIEW

Page, N. (ed.) Dr Johnson. Interviews and Recollections. Macmillan, 1987. Pp.xxii, 176. [£29.50]

This is a disappointing book since it represents both a missed opportunity and an unhappy performance. It is difficult to imagine for whom it has been compiled. It is possible that there is a General reader who will find a series of selections of comments and remarks on Johnson taken from various sources of some interest, yet such a reader is supposed here already to be acquainted with Boswell and indeed in some degree with Johnson. The editor offers a kind of supplement to Boswell whom he charges a little unfairly with indulgence in too much 'hero-worship'. This collection is therefore to redress the balance by providing alternative points of view.

The trouble is that Boswell has been the object of scholarly attention for a good century now, and, illuminated by work on the Boswell papers which

have so abundantly survived, his biographical procedures and attitudes are already clarified and cleared from the dross of Macaulayan extravagance. Boswell was no mere 'hero-worshipper' but a remarkably scrupulous investigator as became a trained lawyer, a careful canvasser of evidence and tester of information. Prof. Marshall Waingrow's edition of Boswell's Correspondence relating to the Making of the Life of Johnson, published twenty years ago (among many other studies to the same purpose), dispelled much of the mythology of Boswellian lily-gilding. There is therefore an unhappiness about much of Professor Page's 'Introduction' in which a tiresomely antiquated view is asserted in his observation 'I have dwelt on Johnson as a talker because that is, after all, his main claim to greatness'. This is the hoary old business of 'The Great Cham', the master of the put-down, the 'John Bull' of literature (whose literary works are conveniently ignored), the originator of good stories and the attractor of many more. Such a contribution to Johnsonian literature has nothing to tell the serious Johnsonian who knows better than that. Accordingly I am bound to conclude that this volume is not for him but is for some casual reader of miscellaneous -ana, for an indiscriminating Autolycus of anecdote, and for one indifferent to the single major motive of Johnson's own career, the quest for the truth and for accuracy is expressing it to the benefit of his readers.

This kind of reader is well served by Professor Page's compilation. It is a third-hand version of second-hand stories, tricked out with fluffy footnotes which offer more attraction to the eye than food for thought, not much use, not very demanding, not very accurate, not very learned because derived from well-known sources and innocent of any sort of original inquiry: easily digested because uncritically composed or borrowed. In short there is nothing here to dimple the glassy surface of thoughtlessness, nothing to arouse any hunger of the mind because no significant offer to satisfy it.

Professor Page acknowledges the assistance of material found in Birkbeck Hill's Johnsonian Miscellanies of 1897, but has missed the opportunity of superseding it. It is over 90 years old, and much important material has been discovered in the interval. A wider net might have been cast among both published and unpublished material, and greater scrupulosity shown towards sources. Of sources quoted here Reynolds's accounts survive in the Yale Boswell papers, and were indeed published by the late F.W. Hilles in 1952, the recollections of Joseph Cradock and Frances Reynolds also survive in unpublished manuscripts, the anecdotes of Baptist Noel Turner were published from the extant MS by Patricia Köster in New York in 1982, and Hoole's MS account of Johnson's deathbed was published by O.M. Brack in 1972, modified from some of Hoole's extant letters by P.J. Korshin in the recently published Samuel Johnson after 200 years (1986). Printed sources

have suffered at the hands of a cavalier copy-editor: spelling, punctuation, and syntax are changed without warning, and at other times old spellings are retained without comment. William Shaw's 'aukward' is modernized, but Thomas Campbell's 'akward' is retained. A host of minor slips in the annotation will do nothing to help the 'general reader', and it is depressing to find a University Professor who gets Johnson's birthday wrong because he ignores the calendar reform of 1752.

To be fair to Professor Page, I think he has been misled into supposing that Johnson is really a topic for casual chit-chat, so that anything can be made to contribute, and yet here and there even he has seen fit to sound warning notes about the degree to which reliance might be placed upon some of the pieces he reprints, but space has prevented any careful estimation of the authority of the various sources. If this collection was intended to redress the balance against Boswell, then it ought to have been as carefully selected, as scrupulously investigated, as accurately edited, and as thoroughly annotated as Boswell. As it is, it is none of those things. It would not have pleased Johnson to find himself the subject of a book which makes so little attempt to advance human knowledge or to clarify and correct misinformation. Pedantry (which is a name given by compilers to the fussiness of reviewers) is of course supposed to deter readers, but Johnson was never deterred from instructing his readers by that. Why should a professional teacher shrink from instructing his readers today, and why should a publisher like Macmillans be content with something less than the best?

J.D. Fleeman

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