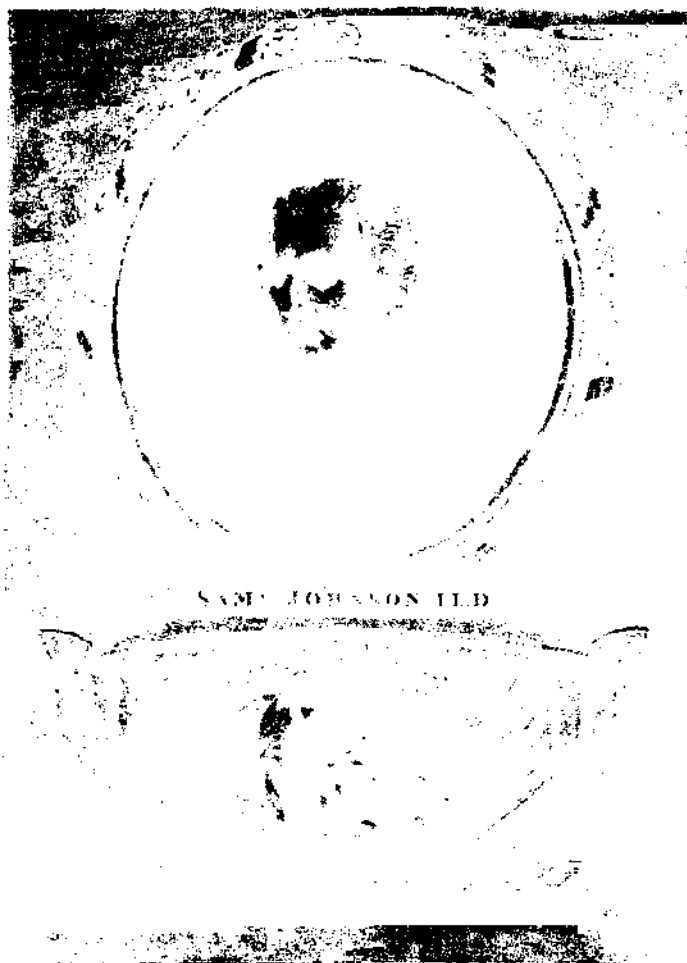


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Biography

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THE LIFE OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.



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THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON LL.D.

By JAMES BOSWELL

THE FIRST EDITION, 1791, REPRINTED VERBATIM WITH
THE APPENDIX, "THE PRINCIPAL CORRECTIONS AND
ADDITIONS," 1793, AND ILLUSTRATED WITH TWENTY
PHOTOGRAVURE ETCHINGS, FIFTY HALF-TONE PLATES,
AND A FACSIMILE AUTOGRAPH LETTER

PREFACE BY
CLEMENT K. SHORTER

IN THREE VOLUMES

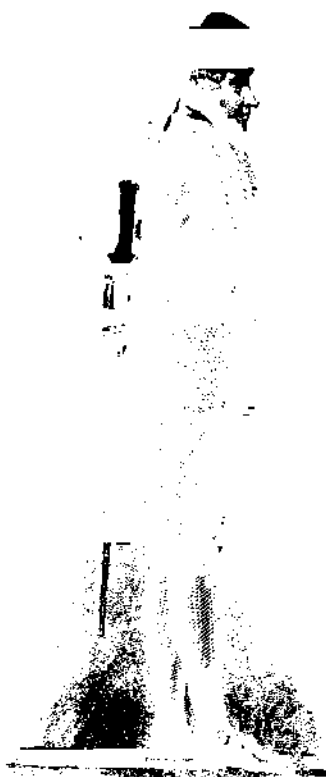
VOLUME THE SECOND

LONDON: PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE NAVARRE
SOCIETY LIMITED, 23 NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.
MCMXXIV

Printed in Great Britain

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THE MAN WHO WAS THE MAN WHO WAS THE MAN

THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

1772. *Ætat.* 63. In 1772 he was altogether quiescent as an author; but it will be found, from the various evidences which I shall bring together, that his mind was acute, lively and vigorous.

To Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR SIR,—Be pleased to send to Mr Banks, whose place of residence I do not know, this note, which I have sent open, that, if you please, you may read it.

When you send it, do not use your own seal. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 27, 1772.

To JOSEPH BANKS, Esq.

*“Perpetua ambitâ bis terrâ præmia lactis
Hæc habet altrici Capra secunda Jovis.”*¹

SIR,—I return thanks to you and to Dr Solander for the pleasure which I received in yesterday's conversation. I could not recollect a motto for your Goat, but have given

¹ Thus translated by a friend :

“In fame scarce second to the nurse of Jove,
This Goat, who twice the world had travers'd round,
Deserving both her master's care and love,
Ease and perpetual pasture now has found.”

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her one. You, sir, may perhaps have an epic poem from some happier pen than, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET,

Feb. 27, 1772.

To Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *March 3, 1772.*

MY DEAR SIR,—It is hard that I cannot prevail on you to write to me oftener. But I am convinced that it is in vain to expect from you a private correspondence with any regularity. I must, therefore, look upon you as a fountain of wisdom, from whence few rills are communicated to a distance, and which must be approached at its source, to partake fully of its virtues.

* * * * *

I am coming to London soon, and am to appear in an appeal from the Court of Session in the House of Lords. A schoolmaster in Scotland was, by a court of inferior jurisdiction, deprived of his office for being somewhat severe in the chastisement of his scholars. The Court of Session considering it to be dangerous to the interest of learning and education to lessen the dignity of teachers, and make them afraid of too indulgent parents, instigated by the complaints of their children, restored him. His enemies have appealed to the House of Lords, though the salary is only twenty pounds a year. I was Counsel for him here. I hope there will be little fear of a reversal; but I must beg to have your aid in my plan of supporting the decree. It is a general question, and not a point of particular law.

* * * * *

I am, etc.,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—That you are coming so soon to town I am very glad; and still more glad that you are coming as an

THE LIFE OF DR JOHNSON

advocate. I think nothing more likely to make your life pass happily away than that consciousness of your own value which eminence in your profession will certainly confer. If I can give you any collateral help, I hope you do not suspect that it will be wanting. My kindness for you has neither the merit of singular virtue, nor the reproach of singular prejudice. Whether to love you be right or wrong, I have many on my side: Mrs Thrale loves you, and Mrs Williams loves you, and what would have inclined me to love you, if I had been neutral before, you are a great favourite of Dr Beattie.

Of Dr Beattie I should have thought much, but that his lady puts him out of my head: she is a very lovely woman.

The ejection which you come hither to oppose appears very cruel, unreasonable, and oppressive. I should think there could not be much doubt of your success.

My health grows better, yet I am not fully recovered. I believe it is held that men do not recover very fast after threescore. I hope yet to see Beattie's College: and have not given up the western voyage. But however all this may be or not, let us try to make each other happy when we meet, and not refer our pleasure to distant times or distant places.

How comes it that you tell me nothing of your lady? I hope to see her some time, and till then shall be glad to hear of her. I am, dear Sir, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 15, 1772.

To BENNET LANGTON, Esq., near Spilsby, Lincolnshire

DEAR SIR,—I congratulate you and Lady Rothes¹ on your little man, and hope you will all be many years happy together.

Poor Miss Langton can have little part in the joy of her family. She this day called her Aunt Langton to receive the sacrament with her; and made me talk yesterday on

¹ Mr Langton married the Countess Dowager of Rothes.

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such subjects as suit her condition. It will probably be her *viaticum*. I surely need not mention again that she wishes to see her mother. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 14, 1772.

On the 21st of March, I was happy to find myself again in my friend's study, and was glad to see my old acquaintance Mr Francis Barber, who was now returned home. Dr Johnson received me with a hearty welcome, saying: "I am glad you are come, and glad you are come upon such an errand" (alluding to the cause of the schoolmaster). BOSWELL: I hope, sir, he will be in no danger. It is a very delicate matter to interfere between a master and his scholars: nor do I see how you can fix the degree of severity that a master may use. JOHNSON: Why, sir, till you fix the degree of obstinacy and negligence of the scholars, you cannot fix the degree of severity of the master. Severity must be continued until obstinacy be subdued, and negligence be cured.—He mentioned the severity of Hunter, his own master. "Sir," said I, "Hunter is a Scotch name: so it should seem this schoolmaster who beat you so severely was a Scotchman. I can now account for your prejudice against the Scotch." JOHNSON: Sir, he was not Scotch; and, abating his brutality, he was a very good master.

We talked of his two political pamphlets, *The False Alarm*, and *Thoughts concerning Falkland's Islands*. JOHNSON: Well, sir, which of them did you think the best? BOSWELL: I liked the second best. JOHNSON: Why, sir, I liked the first best; and Beattie liked the first best. Sir, there is a subtlety of disquisition in the first that is worth all the fire of the second. BOSWELL: Pray, sir, is it true that Lord North paid you a visit, and that you got two hundred a year in addition to your pension? JOHNSON: No, sir. Except what I had from the bookseller, I did not get a farthing by them. And, between you and me, I believe Lord North is no friend to me. BOSWELL: How so, sir?

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JOHNSON: Why, sir, you cannot account for the fancies of men. Well, how does Lord Elibank? and how does Lord Monboddo? BOSWELL: Very well, sir. Lord Monboddo still maintains the superiority of the savage life. JOHNSON: What strange narrowness of mind now is that, to think the things we have not known are better than the things which we have known. BOSWELL: Why, sir, that is a common prejudice. JOHNSON: Yes, sir; but a common prejudice should not be found in one whose trade it is to rectify error.

A gentleman having come in who was to go as a mate in the ship along with Mr Banks and Dr Solander, Dr Johnson asked what were the names of the ships destined for the expedition. The gentleman answered, they were once to be called the *Drake* and the *Raleigh*, but now they were to be called the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*. JOHNSON: Much better; for had the *Raleigh* returned without going round the world, it would have been ridiculous. To give them the names of the *Drake* and the *Raleigh* was laying a trap for satire. BOSWELL: Had not you some desire to go upon this expedition, sir? JOHNSON: Why, yes; but I soon laid it aside. Sir, there is very little of intellectual in the course. Besides, I see but at a small distance. So it was not worth my while to go to see birds fly which I should not have seen fly, and fishes swim which I should not have seen swim.

The gentleman being gone, and Dr Johnson having left the room for some time, a debate arose between the Reverend Mr Stockdale and Mrs Desmoulins, whether Mr Banks and Dr Solander were entitled to any share of glory from their expedition. When Dr Johnson returned to us I told him the subject of their dispute. JOHNSON: Why, sir, it was properly for botany that they went out: I believe they thought only of culling of simples.

I thanked him for showing civilities to Beattie. "Sir," said he, "I should thank *you*. We all love Beattie. Mrs Thrale says, if ever she has another husband, she'll have

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Beattie. He sunk upon us that he was married; else we should have shown his lady more civilities. She is a very fine woman. But how can you show civilities to a non-entity? I did not think he had been married. Nay, I did not think about it one way or other; but he did not tell us of his lady till late."

He then spoke of St Kilda, the most remote of the Hebrides. I told him I thought of buying it. JOHNSON: Pray do, sir. We shall go and pass a winter amid the blasts there. We shall have fine fish, and we shall take some dried tongues with us, and some books. We shall have a strong built vessel, and some Orkney men to navigate her. We must build a tolerable house: but we may carry with us a wooden house ready made, and requiring nothing but to be put up. Consider, sir, by buying St Kilda, you may keep the people from falling into worse hands. We must give them a clergyman, and he shall be one of Beattie's choosing. He shall be educated at Marischal College. I'll be your Lord Chancellor, or what you please. BOSWELL: Are you serious, sir, in advising me to buy St Kilda? for if you should advise me to go to Japan, I believe I should do it. JOHNSON: Why, yes, sir, I am serious. BOSWELL: Why, then, I'll see what can be done.

I gave him an account of the two parties in the Church of Scotland, those for supporting the rights of patrons, independent of the people, and those against it. JOHNSON: It should be settled one way or other. I cannot wish well to a popular election of the clergy, when I consider that it occasions such animosities, such unworthy courting of the people, such slanders between the contending parties, and other disadvantages. It is enough to allow the people to remonstrate against the nomination of a minister for solid reasons.—(I suppose he meant heresy or immorality.) He was engaged to dine abroad, and asked me to return to him in the evening at nine, which I accordingly did.

We drank tea with Mrs Williams, who told us a story of second sight, which happened in Wales where she was

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born. He listened to it very attentively, and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated. His elevated wish for more and more evidence for spirit, in opposition to the grovelling belief of materialism, led him to a love of such mysterious disquisitions. He again justly observed that we could have no certainty of the truth of supernatural appearances, unless something was told us which we could not know by ordinary means, or something done which could not be done but by supernatural power; that Pharaoh in reason and justice required such evidence from Moses; nay, that our Saviour said: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." He had said in the morning that Macaulay's *History of St Kilda* was very well written, except some foppery about liberty and slavery. I mentioned to him that Macaulay told me, he was advised to leave out of his book the wonderful story that upon the approach of a stranger all the inhabitants catch cold; but that it had been so well authenticated, he determined to retain it. JOHNSON: Sir, to leave things out of a book, merely because people tell you they will not be believed, is meanness. Macaulay acted with more magnanimity.

We talked of the Roman Catholic religion, and how little difference there was in essential matters between ours and it. JOHNSON: True, sir: all denominations of Christians have really little difference in point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms. There is a prodigious difference between the external form of one of your Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and a church in Italy; yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same.

I mentioned the petition to Parliament for removing the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. JOHNSON: It was soon thrown out. Sir, they talk of not making boys at the University subscribe to what they do not understand; but they ought to consider that our universities were founded to bring up members for the Church of England, and we must not supply our enemies with arms from our arsenal.

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No, sir, the meaning of subscribing is, not that they fully understand all the Articles, but that they will adhere to the Church of England. Now take it in this way, and suppose that they should only subscribe their adherence to the Church of England, there would be still the same difficulty ; for still the young men would be subscribing to what they do not understand. For if you should ask them, what do you mean by the Church of England? Do you know in what it differs from the Presbyterian Church? from the Romish Church? from the Greek Church? from the Coptic Church? they could not tell you. So, sir, it comes to the same thing. BOSWELL: But, sir, would it not be sufficient to subscribe the Bible? JOHNSON: Why, no, sir ; for all sects will subscribe the Bible ; nay, the Mahometans will subscribe the Bible, for the Mahometans acknowledge Jesus Christ, as well as Moses, but maintain that God sent Mahomet as a still greater prophet than either.

I mentioned the motion to abolish the fast of the 30th of January. JOHNSON: Why, sir, I could have wished that it had been a temporary Act, perhaps, to have expired with the century. I am against abolishing it, because that would be declaring it was wrong to establish it ; but I should have no objection to make an Act continuing it for another century, and then letting it expire.

He disapproved of the Royal Marriage Bill : " Because," said he, " I would not have the people think that the validity of marriage depends on the will of man, or that the right of a King depends on the will of man. I should not have been against making the marriage of any of the Royal Family, without the approbation of King and Parliament, highly criminal."

In the morning we had talked of old families, and the respect due to them. JOHNSON: Sir, you have a right to that kind of respect, and are arguing for yourself. I am for supporting the principle, and am disinterested in doing it, as I have no such right. BOSWELL: Why, sir, it is one more incitement to a man to do well. JOHNSON: Yes, sir, and it is

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a matter of opinion, very necessary to keep society together. What is it but opinion, by which we have a respect for authority, that prevents us, who are the rabble, from rising up and pulling down you who are gentlemen from your places, and saying: "We will be gentlemen in our turn"? Now, sir, that respect for authority is much more easily granted to a man whose father has had it, than to an upstart, and so society is more easily supported. BOSWELL: Perhaps, sir, it might be done by the respect belonging to office, as among the Romans, where the dress, the *toga*, inspired reverence. JOHNSON: Why, sir, we know very little about the Romans. But surely it is much easier to respect a man who has always had respect, than to respect a man who we know was last year no better than ourselves, and will be no better next year. In republics there is not a respect for authority, but a fear of power. BOSWELL: At present, sir, I think riches seem to gain most respect. JOHNSON: No, sir, riches do not gain hearty respect; they only procure external attention. A very rich man, from low beginnings, may buy his election in a borough; but, *ceteris paribus*, a man of family will be preferred. People will prefer a man for whose father their fathers have voted, though they should get no more money, or even less. That shows that the respect for family is not merely fanciful, but has an actual operation. If gentlemen of family would allow the rich upstarts to spend their money profusely, which they are ready enough to do, and not vie with them in expense, the upstarts would soon be at an end, and the gentlemen would remain: but if the gentlemen will vie in expense with the upstarts, which is very foolish, they must be ruined.

I gave him an account of the excellent mimicry of a friend of mine in Scotland, observing, at the same time, that some people thought it a very mean thing. JOHNSON: Why, sir, it is making a very mean use of a man's powers. But to be a good mimic requires great powers, great acuteness of observation, great retention of what is observed, and great pliancy of organs, to represent what is observed. I remember

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a lady of quality in this town, Lady ———, who was a wonderful mimic, and used to make me laugh immoderately. I have heard she is now gone mad. BOSWELL: It is amazing how a mimic cannot only give you the gestures and voice of a person whom he represents, but even what a person would say on any particular subject. JOHNSON: Why, sir, you are to consider that the manner and some particular phrases of a person do much to impress you with an idea of him, and you are not sure that he would say what the mimic says in his character. BOSWELL: I don't think Foote a good mimic, sir. JOHNSON: No, sir; his imitations are not like. He gives you something different from himself, but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out of himself without going into other people. He cannot take off any person unless he is very strongly marked, such as George Faulkner. He is like a painter who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who, therefore, is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, Foote can hop upon one leg. But he has not that nice discrimination which your friend seems to possess. Foote is, however, very entertaining, with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery.

On Monday, 23rd March, I found him busy preparing a fourth edition of his folio *Dictionary*. Mr Peyton, one of his original amanuenses, was writing for him. I put him in mind of a meaning of the word *side*, which he had omitted—viz. relationship; as, father's side, mother's side. He inserted it. I asked him if *humiliating* was a good word. He said he had seen it frequently used, but he did not know it to be legitimate English. He would not admit *civilization*, but only *civility*. With great deference to him I thought *civilization*, from *to civilize*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*, as it is better to have a distinct word for each sense than one word with two senses, which *civility* is, in his way of using it.

He seemed busy about some sort of chemical operation. I was entertained by observing how he contrived to send

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Mr Peyton on an errand, without seeming to degrade him. "Mr Peyton, Mr Peyton, will you be so good as to take a walk to Temple Bar? You will there see a chemist's shop, at which you will be pleased to buy for me an ounce of oil of vitriol; not spirit of vitriol, but oil of vitriol. It will cost three halfpence." Peyton immediately went, and returned with it, and told him it cost but a penny.

I then reminded him of the schoolmaster's cause, and proposed to read to him the printed papers concerning it. "No, sir," said he, "I can read quicker than I can hear." So he read them to himself.

After he had read for some time we were interrupted by the entrance of Mr Kristrom, a Swede, who was tutor to some young gentlemen in the city. He told me that there was a very good *History of Sweden*, by Daline. Having at that time an intention of writing the history of that country, I asked Dr Johnson whether one might write a history of Sweden without going thither. "Yes, sir," said he, "one for common use."

We talked of languages. Johnson observed that Leibnitz had made some progress in a work, tracing all languages up to the Hebrew. "Why, sir," said he, "you would not imagine that the French *jour*, day, is derived from the Latin *dies*, and yet nothing is more certain; and the intermediate steps are very clear. From *dies*, comes *diurnus*. *Diu* is, by inaccurate ears or inaccurate pronunciation, easily confounded with *giu*; then the Italians form a substantive of the ablative of an adjective, and thence *giurno*, or, as they make it, *giorno*; which is readily contracted into *giour*, or *jour*." He observed that the Bohemian language was true Slavonic. The Swede said it had some similarity with the German. JOHNSON: Why, sir, to be sure, such parts of Slavonia as confine with Germany will borrow German words; and such parts as confine with Tartary will borrow Tartar words.

He said he never had it properly ascertained that the Scotch Highlanders and the Irish understood each other.

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I told him that my cousin, Colonel Graham, of the Royal Highlanders, whom I met at Drogheda, told me they did. JOHNSON: Sir, if the Highlanders understood Irish, why translate the New Testament into Erse, as was done lately at Edinburgh, when there is an Irish translation? BOSWELL: Although the Erse and Irish are both dialects of the same language, there may be a good deal of diversity between them, as between the different dialects in Italy.—The Swede went away, and Mr Johnson continued his reading of the papers. I said: "I am afraid, sir, it is troublesome to you." "Why, sir," said he, "I do not take much delight in it; but I'll go through it."

We went to the Mitre, and dined in the room where he and I first supped together. He gave me great hopes of my cause. "Sir," said he, "the government of a schoolmaster is somewhat of the nature of military government—that is to say, it must be arbitrary, it must be exercised by the will of one man, according to particular circumstances. You must show some learning upon this occasion. You must show that a schoolmaster has a prescriptive right to beat; and that an action of assault and battery cannot be admitted against him unless there is some great excess, some barbarity. This man has maimed none of his boys. They are all left with the full exercise of their corporeal faculties. In our schools in England many boys have been maimed; yet I never heard of an action against a schoolmaster on that account. Puffendorf, I think, maintains the right of a schoolmaster to beat his scholars."

On Saturday, 27th March, I introduced to him Sir Alexander Macdonald, with whom he had expressed a wish to be acquainted. He received him very courteously.

Sir Alexander observed that the Chancellors in England are chosen from views much inferior to the office, being chosen from temporary political views. JOHNSON: Why, sir, in such a Government as ours, no man is appointed to an office because he is the fittest for it, nor hardly in any other Government; because there are so many connections and

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dependencies to be studied. A despotic prince may choose a man to an office merely because he is the fittest for it. The King of Prussia may do it. SIR A. : I think, sir, almost all great lawyers, such at least as have written upon law, have known only law, and nothing else. JOHNSON : Why, no, sir ; Judge Hale was a great lawyer, and wrote upon law, and yet he knew a great many other things, and has written upon other things. Selden too. SIR A. : Very true, sir ; and Lord Bacon. But was not Lord Coke a mere lawyer ? JOHNSON : Why, I am afraid he was ; but he would have taken it very ill if you had told him so. He would have prosecuted you for scandal. BOSWELL : Lord Mansfield is not a mere lawyer. JOHNSON : No, sir. I never was in Lord Mansfield's company ; but Lord Mansfield was distinguished at the University. Lord Mansfield, when he came first to town, "drank champagne with the wits," as Prior says. He was the friend of Pope. SIR A. : Barristers, I believe, are not so abusive now as they were formerly. I fancy they had less law long ago, and so were obliged to take to abuse to fill up the time. Now they have such a number of precedents they have no occasion for abuse. JOHNSON : Nay, sir, they had more law long ago than they have now. As to precedents, to be sure they will increase in course of time ; but the more precedents there are, the less occasion is there for law—that is to say, the less occasion is there for investigating principles. SIR A. : I have been correcting several Scotch accents in my friend Boswell. I doubt, sir, if any Scotchman ever attains to a perfect English pronunciation. JOHNSON : Why, sir, few of them do, because they do not persevere after acquiring a certain degree of it. But sir, there can be no doubt that they may attain to a perfect English pronunciation if they will. We find how near they come to it ; and certainly a man who conquers nineteen parts of the Scottish accent may conquer the twentieth. But, sir, when a man has got the better of nine-tenths, he grows weary, he relaxes his diligence, he finds he has corrected his accent so far as not to be disagreeable,

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and he no longer desires his friends to tell him when he is wrong; nor does he choose to be told. Sir, when people watch me narrowly, and I do not watch myself, they will find me out to be of a particular county. In the same manner Dunning may be found out to be a Devonshire man. So most Scotchmen may be found out. But, sir, little aberrations are of no disadvantage. I never caught Mallet in a Scotch accent; and yet Mallet, I suppose, was past five-and-twenty before he came to London.

Upon another occasion I talked to him on this subject, having myself taken some pains to improve my pronunciation, by the aid of the late Mr Love of Drury Lane Theatre, when he was a player at Edinburgh, and also of old Mr Sheridan. Johnson said to me: "Sir, your pronunciation is not offensive." With this concession I was pretty well satisfied; and let me give my countrymen of North Britain an advice not to aim at absolute perfection in this respect; not to speak *High English*, as we are apt to call what is far removed from the *Scotch*, but which is by no means good English, and makes "the fools who use it" truly ridiculous. Good English is plain, easy and smooth in the mouth of an unaffected English gentleman. A studied and factitious pronunciation, which requires perpetual attention, and imposes perpetual constraint, is exceedingly disgusting. A small intermixture of provincial peculiarities may, perhaps, have an agreeable effect, as the notes of different birds concur in the harmony of the grove, and please more than if they were all exactly alike. I could name some gentlemen of Ireland to whom a slight proportion of the accent and recitative of that country is an advantage. The same observation will apply to the gentlemen of Scotland. I do not mean that we should speak as broad as a certain prosperous Member of Parliament from that country; though it has been well observed that "it has been of no small use to him, as it rouses the attention of the House by its uncommonness, and is equal to tropes and figures in a good English speaker." I would give as an instance of what I mean to recommend

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to my countrymen the pronunciation of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot; and may I presume to add that of the present Earl of Marchmont, who told me, with great good humour, that the master of a shop in London, where he was not known, said to him: "I suppose, sir, you are an American?" "Why so, sir?" said his lordship. "Because, sir," replied the shopkeeper, "you speak neither English nor Scotch, but something different from both, which I conclude is the language of America."

BOSWELL: It may be of use, sir, to have a dictionary to ascertain the pronunciation. JOHNSON: Why, sir, my *Dictionary* shows you the accents of words, if you can but remember them. BOSWELL: But, sir, we want marks to ascertain the pronunciation of the vowels. Sheridan, I believe, has finished such a work. JOHNSON: Why, sir, consider how much easier it is to learn a language by the ear than by any marks. Sheridan's *Dictionary* may do very well; but you cannot always carry it about with you: and, when you want the word, you have not the *Dictionary*. It is like a man who has a sword that will not draw. It is an admirable sword, to be sure; but while your enemy is cutting your throat you are unable to use it. Besides, sir, what entitles Sheridan to fix the pronunciation of English? He has, in the first place, the disadvantage of being an Irishman; and if he says he will fix it after the example of the best company, why, they differ among themselves. I remember an instance: when I published the Plan for my *Dictionary*, Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state*; and Sir William Young sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat*, and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait*. Now here were two men of the highest rank, the one, the best speaker in the House of Lords, the other, the best speaker in the House of Commons, differing entirely.

I again visited him at night. Finding him in a very good humour, I ventured to lead him to the subject of our situation in a future state, having much curiosity to know his notions

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on that point. JOHNSON: Why, sir, the happiness of an unembodied spirit will consist in a consciousness of the favour of God, in the contemplation of truth, and in the possession of felicitating ideas. BOSWELL: But, sir, is there any harm in our forming to ourselves conjectures as to the particulars of our happiness, though the Scripture has said but very little on the subject? "We know not what we shall be." JOHNSON: Sir, there is no harm. What philosophy suggests to us on this topic is probable: what Scripture tells us is certain. Dr Henry More has carried it as far as philosophy can. You may buy both his theological and philosophical works in two volumes folio, for about eight shillings. BOSWELL: One of the most pleasing thoughts is, that we shall see our friends again. JOHNSON: Yes, sir; but you must consider that when we are become purely rational, many of our friendships will be cut off. Many friendships are formed by a community of sensual pleasures: all these will be cut off. We form many friendships with bad men because they have agreeable qualities, and they can be useful to us; but, after death, they can no longer be of use to us. We form many friendships by mistake, imagining people to be different from what they really are. After death we shall see everyone in a true light. Then, sir, they talk of our meeting our relations: but then all relationship is dissolved; and we shall have no regard for one person more than another, but for their real value. However, we shall either have the satisfaction of meeting our friends, or be satisfied without meeting them. BOSWELL: Yet, sir, we see in Scripture that Dives still retained an anxious concern about his brethren. JOHNSON: Why, sir, we must either suppose that passage to be metaphorical, or hold with many divines, and all the Purgatorians, that departed souls do not all at once arrive at the utmost perfection of which they are capable. BOSWELL: I think, sir, that is a very rational supposition. JOHNSON: Why, yes, sir; but we do not know it is a true one. There is no harm in believing it: but you must not compel others to make it an article of faith,

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for it is not revealed. BOSWELL: Do you think, sir, it is wrong in a man who holds the doctrine of purgatory to pray for the souls of his deceased friends? JOHNSON: Why no, sir. BOSWELL: I have been told that in the liturgy of the Episcopal Church of Scotland there was a form of prayer for the dead. JOHNSON: Sir, it is not in the liturgy which Laud framed for the Episcopal Church of Scotland: if there is a liturgy older than that, I should be glad to see it. BOSWELL: As to our employment in a future state, the sacred writings say little. The Revelation, however, of St John gives us many ideas, and particularly mentions music. JOHNSON: Why, sir, ideas must be given you by means of something which you know: and as to music, there are some philosophers and divines who have maintained that we shall not be spiritualised to such a degree, but that something of matter, very much refined, will remain. In that case, music may make a part of our future felicity.

BOSWELL: I do not know whether there are any well-attested stories of the appearance of ghosts. You know there is a famous story of the appearance of Mrs Veal, prefixed to *Drelincourt on Death*. JOHNSON: I believe, sir, that is given up. I believe the woman declared upon her death-bed that it was a lie. BOSWELL: This objection is made against the truth of ghosts appearing: that if they are in a state of happiness, it would be a punishment to them to return to this world; and if they are in a state of misery, it would be giving them a respite. JOHNSON: Why, sir, as the happiness or misery of unembodied spirits does not depend upon place, but is intellectual, we cannot say that they are less happy or less miserable by appearing upon earth.

We went down between twelve and one to Mrs Williams's room, and drank tea. I mentioned that we were to have the remains of Mr Gray, in prose and verse, published by Mr Mason. JOHNSON: I think we have had enough of Gray. I see they have published a splendid edition of Akenside's works. One bad ode may be suffered, but a number of them

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together makes one sick. BOSWELL : Akenside's distinguished poem is his *Pleasures of the Imagination* ; but, for my part, I never could admire it so much as most people do. JOHNSON : Sir, I could not read it through. BOSWELL : I have read it through, but I did not find any great power in it.

I mentioned Elwal, the heretic, whose trial Sir John Pringle had given me to read. JOHNSON : Sir, Mr Elwal was, I think, an ironmonger at Wolverhampton ; and he had a mind to make himself famous by being the founder of a new sect, which he wished much should be called *Elwallians*. He held that everything in the Old Testament that was not typical was to be of perpetual observance ; and so he wore a ribband in the plaits of his coat, and he also wore a beard. I remember I had the honour of dining in company with Mr Elwal. There was one Barter, a miller, who wrote against him ; and so you had *The Controversy between Mr Elwal and Mr Barter*. To try to make himself distinguished, he wrote a letter to King George the Second, challenging him to dispute with him, in which he said : " George, if you be afraid to come by yourself, to dispute with a poor old man, you may bring a thousand of your *black-guards* with you ; and if you should still be afraid, you may bring a thousand of your *red-guards*." The letter had something of the impudence of Junius to our present King. But the men of Wolverhampton were not so inflammable as the Common Council of London ; so Mr Elwal failed in his scheme of making himself a man of great consequence.

On Tuesday, 31st March, he and I dined at General Paoli's. A question was started whether the state of marriage was natural to man. JOHNSON : Sir, it is so far from being natural for a man and woman to live in a state of marriage, that we find all the motives which they have for remaining in that connection, and the restraints which civilised society imposes to prevent separation, are hardly sufficient to keep them together.—The General said, that in a state of nature a man and woman uniting together would form a strong

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and constant affection, by the mutual pleasure each would receive; and that the same causes of dissension would not arise between them as occur between husband and wife in a civilised state. JOHNSON: Sir, they would have dissensions enough, though of another kind. One would choose to go a-hunting in this wood, the other in that; one would choose to go a-fishing in this lake, the other in that; or, perhaps, one would choose to go a-hunting when the other would choose to go a-fishing; and so they would part. Besides, sir, a savage man and a savage woman meet by chance; and when the man sees another woman that pleases him better, he will leave the first.

We then fell into a disquisition whether there is any beauty independent of utility. The General maintained there was not. Dr Johnson maintained that there was; and he instanced a coffee-cup which he held in his hand, the painting of which was of no real use, as the cup would hold the coffee equally well if plain; yet the painting was beautiful.

We talked of the strange custom of swearing in conversation. The General said that all barbarous nations swore from a certain violence of temper, that could not be confined to earth, but was always reaching at the powers above. He said, too, that there was greater variety of swearing, in proportion as there was a greater variety of religious ceremonies.

Dr Johnson went home with me to my lodgings in Conduit Street and drank tea, previous to our going to the Pantheon, which neither of us had seen before.

He said: "Goldsmith's *Life of Parnell* is poor; not that it is poorly written, but that he had poor materials: for nobody can write the life of a man but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him."

I said that if it was not troublesome and presuming too much, I would request him to tell me all the little circumstances of his life: what schools he attended, when he came to Oxford, when he came to London, etc., etc. He did not

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disapprove of my curiosity as to these particulars, but said :
“ They'll come out by degrees as we talk together.”

He censured Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*, and said, “ he knew nothing of Pope, and nothing of poetry.” He praised Dr Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope* ; but said he supposed we should have no more of it, as the author had not been able to persuade the world to think of Pope as he did. BOSWELL : Why, sir, should that prevent him from continuing his work ? He is an ingenious Counsel, who has made the most of his cause : he is not obliged to gain it. JOHNSON : But, sir, there is a difference when the cause is of a man's own making.

We talked of the proper use of riches. JOHNSON : If I were a man of a great estate, I would drive all the rascals whom I did not like out of the county at an election.

I asked him how far he thought wealth should be employed in hospitality. JOHNSON : You are to consider that ancient hospitality, of which we hear so much, was in an uncommercial country, when men, being idle, were glad to be entertained at rich men's tables. But in a commercial country, a busy country, time becomes precious, and therefore hospitality is not so much valued. No doubt there is still room for a certain degree of it ; and a man has a satisfaction in seeing his friends eating and drinking around him. But promiscuous hospitality is not the way to gain real influence. You must help some people at table before others ; you must ask some people how they like their wine oftener than others. You therefore offend more people than you please. You are like the French statesman who said, when he granted a favour, “ *J'ai fait dix mécontents e tun ingrat.*” Besides, sir, being entertained ever so well at a man's table, impresses no lasting regard or esteem. No, sir ; the way to make sure of power and influence is by lending money confidentially to your neighbours at a small interest, or, perhaps, at no interest at all, and having their bonds in your possession. BOSWELL : May not a man, sir, employ his riches to advantage in educating young men of merit ? JOHNSON : Yes, sir,

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if they fall in your way; but if it is understood that you patronise young men of merit, you will be harassed with solicitations. You will have numbers forced upon you who have no merit; some will force them upon you from mistaken partiality, and some from downright interested motives, without scruple; and you will be disgraced.

"Were I a rich man I would propagate all kinds of trees that will grow in the open air. A greenhouse is childish. I would introduce foreign animals into the country; for instance, the reindeer."¹

The conversation now turned on critical subjects. JOHNSON: Bayes, in *The Rehearsal*, is a mighty silly character. If it was intended to be like a particular man, it could only be diverting while that man was remembered. But I question whether it was meant for Dryden, as has been reported; for we know some of the passages said to be ridiculed were written since *The Rehearsal*; at least a passage mentioned in the Preface is of a later date.—I maintained that it had merit as a general satire on the self-importance of dramatic authors. But even in this light he held it very cheap.

We then walked to the Pantheon. The first view of it did not strike us so much as Ranelagh, of which he said the *coup d'œil* was the finest thing he had ever seen. The truth is, Ranelagh is of a more beautiful form; more of it, or rather indeed the whole *rotunda*, appears at once, and it is better lighted. However, as Johnson observed, we saw the Pantheon in time of mourning, when there was a dull uniformity; whereas we had seen Ranelagh when the view was enlivened with a gay profusion of colours. Mrs Bosville, of Gunthwait, in Yorkshire, joined us, and entered into conversation with us. Johnson said to me afterwards: "Sir, this is a mighty intelligent lady."

I said there was not half-a-guinea's worth of pleasure in

¹ This project has since been realised. Sir Henry Liddel, who made a spirited tour into Lapland, brought two reindeer to his estate in Northumberland, where they bred; but the race has unfortunately perished.

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seeing this place. JOHNSON: But, sir, there is half-a-guinea's worth of inferiority to other people in not having seen it. BOSWELL: I doubt, sir, whether there are many happy people here. JOHNSON: Yes, sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them.

Happening to meet Sir Adam Fergusson, I presented him to Dr Johnson. Sir Adam expressed some apprehension that the Pantheon would encourage luxury. "Sir," said Johnson, "I am a great friend to public amusements; for they keep people from vice. You now" (addressing himself to me) "would have been with a wench had you not been here. Oh! I forgot you were married."

Sir Adam suggested that luxury corrupts a people, and destroys the spirit of liberty. JOHNSON: Sir, that is all visionary. I would not give half-a-guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual. Sir, the danger of the abuse of power is nothing to a private man. What Frenchman is prevented from passing his life as he pleases? SIR ADAM: But, sir, in the British constitution it is surely of importance to keep up a spirit in the people, so as to preserve a balance against the Crown. JOHNSON: Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig. Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the Crown? The Crown has not power enough. When I say that all governments are alike, I consider that in no government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree, they will rise and cut off his head. There is a remedy in human nature against tyranny that will keep us safe under every form of government. Had not the people of France thought themselves honoured as sharing in the brilliant actions of the reign of Lewis XIV. they would not have endured him; and we may say the same of the King of Prussia's people.—Sir Adam introduced the ancient Greeks and Romans. JOHNSON: Sir, the mass of both of them were barbarians. The mass of every people must be barbarous

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where there is no printing, and consequently knowledge is not generally diffused. Knowledge is diffused among our people by the newspapers.—Sir Adam mentioned the orators, poets, and artists of Greece. JOHNSON: Sir, I am talking of the mass of the people. We see even what the boasted Athenians were. The little effect which Demosthenes's orations had upon them, shows that they were barbarians.

Sir Adam was unlucky in his topics; for he suggested a doubt of the propriety of bishops having seats in the House of Lords. JOHNSON: How so, sir? Who is more proper for having the dignity of a peer than a bishop, provided a bishop be what he ought to be; and if improper bishops be made, that is not the fault of the bishops, but of those who make them.

On Sunday, 5th April, after attending divine service at St Paul's Church, I found him alone. Of a schoolmaster of his acquaintance, a native of Scotland, he said: "He has a great deal of good about him; but he is also very defective in some respects. His inner part is good, but his outer part is mighty awkward. You in Scotland do not attain that nice critical skill in languages which we get in our schools in England. I would not put a boy to him whom I intended for a man of learning. But for the sons of citizens, who are to learn a little, get good morals, and then go to trade, he may do very well."

I mentioned a cause in which I had appeared as Counsel at the bar of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where a *Probationer* (as one licensed to preach, but not yet ordained, is called) was opposed in his application to be inducted, because it was alleged that he had been guilty of fornication five years before. JOHNSON: Why, sir, if he has repented, it is not a sufficient objection. A man who is good enough to go to heaven is good enough to be a clergyman.—This was a humane and liberal sentiment. But the character of a clergyman is more sacred than that of an ordinary Christian. As he is to instruct with authority, he should

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be regarded with reverence, as one upon whom divine truth has had the effect to set him above such transgressions, as men less exalted by spiritual habits, and yet upon the whole not to be excluded from heaven, have been betrayed into by the predominance of passion. That clergymen may be considered as sinners in general, as all men are, cannot be denied; but this reflection will not counteract their good precepts so much as the absolute knowledge of their having been guilty of certain specific immoral acts. I told him that by the rules of the Church of Scotland, in their *Book of Discipline*, if a *scandal*, as it is called, is not prosecuted for five years, it cannot afterwards be proceeded upon, "unless it be of a *heinous nature*, or again become flagrant"; and that hence a question arose whether fornication was a sin of a heinous nature; and that I had maintained that it did not deserve that epithet, inasmuch as it was not one of those sins which argue very great depravity of heart: in short, was not, in the general acceptance of mankind, a heinous sin. JOHNSON: No, sir, it is not a heinous sin. A heinous sin is that for which a man is punished with death or banishment. BOSWELL: But, sir, after I had argued that it was not a heinous sin, an old clergyman rose up, and repeating the text of Scripture denouncing judgment against whoremongers, asked, whether, considering this, there could be any doubt of fornication being a heinous sin. JOHNSON: Why, sir, observe the word *whoremonger*. Every sin, if persisted in, will become heinous. Whoremonger is a dealer in whores, as ironmonger is a dealer in iron. But as you don't call a man an ironmonger for buying and selling a penknife, so you don't call a man a whoremonger for getting one wench with child.

I spoke of the inequality of the livings of the clergy in England, and the scanty provisions of some of the curates. JOHNSON: Why, yes, sir; but it cannot be helped. You must consider that the revenues of the clergy are not at the disposal of the State, like the pay of the army. Different men have founded different churches; and some are better



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endowed, some worse. The State cannot interfere and make an equal division of what has been particularly appropriated. Now when a clergyman has but a small living, or even two small livings, he can afford very little to a curate.

He said he went more frequently to church when there were prayers only than when there was also a sermon, as the people required more an example for the one than the other, it being much easier for them to hear a sermon, than to fix their minds on prayer.

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

Fielding being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, "he was a blockhead"; and upon my expressing my astonishment at so strange an assertion, he said: "What I mean by his being a blockhead is, that he was a barren rascal." BOSWELL: Will you not allow, sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life? JOHNSON: Why, sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say, that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*. I, indeed, never read *Joseph Andrews*. ERSKINE: Surely, sir, Richardson is very tedious. JOHNSON: Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment. —I have already given my opinion of Fielding, but I cannot refrain from repeating here my wonder at Johnson's excessive and unaccountable depreciation of one of the best writers that England has produced. *Tom Jones* has stood the test of public opinion with such success as to have established its great merit, both for the story, the sentiments, and the

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manners, and also the varieties of diction, so as to leave no doubt of its having an animated truth of execution throughout.

A book of travels, lately published under the title of *Coriat Junior*, and written by Mr Paterson, the auctioneer, was mentioned. Johnson said this book was an imitation of Sterne, and not of Coriat, whose name Paterson had chosen as a whimsical one. "Tom Coriat," said he, "was a humorist about the Court of James the First. He had a mixture of learning, of wit, and of buffoonery. He first travelled through Europe, and published his travels. He afterwards travelled on foot through Asia, and had made many remarks; but he died at Mandoa, and his remarks were lost."

We talked of gaming, and animadverted on it with severity. JOHNSON: Nay, gentlemen, let us not aggravate the matter. It is not roguery to play with a man who is ignorant of the game while you are master of it, and so win his money; for he thinks he can play better than you, as you think you can play better than he; and the superior skill carries it. ERSKINE: He is a fool, but you are not a rogue. JOHNSON: That's much about the truth, sir. It must be considered that a man who only does what every one of the society to which he belongs would do is not a dishonest man. In the republic of Sparta it was agreed that stealing was not dishonourable, if not discovered. I do not commend a society where there is an agreement that what would not otherwise be fair shall be fair; but I maintain that an individual of any society who practises what is allowed is not a dishonest man. BOSWELL: So then, sir, you do not think ill of a man who wins perhaps forty thousand pounds in a winter? JOHNSON: Sir, I do not call a gamester a dishonest man; but I call him an unsocial man, an unprofitable man. Gaming is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good. Trade gives employment to numbers, and so produces intermediate good.

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Mr Erskine told us that when he was in the island of Minorca he not only read prayers, but preached two sermons to the regiment. He seemed to object to the passage in Scripture where we are told that the angel of the Lord smote in one night forty thousand Assyrians. "Sir," said Johnson, "you should recollect that there was a supernatural interposition; they were destroyed by pestilence. You are not to suppose that the angel of the Lord went about and stabbed each of them with a dagger, or knocked them on the head, man by man."

After Mr Erskine was gone, a discussion took place whether the present Earl of Buchan, when Lord Cardross, did right to refuse to go Secretary of the Embassy to Spain, when Sir James Gray, a man of inferior rank, went Ambassador. Dr Johnson said that perhaps in point of interest he did wrong; but in point of dignity he did well. Sir Alexander insisted that he was wrong, and said that Mr Pitt intended it as an advantageous thing for him. "Why, sir," said Johnson, "Mr Pitt might think it an advantageous thing for him to make him a vintner, and get him all the Portugal trade; but he would have demeaned himself strangely had he accepted of such a situation. Sir, had he gone Secretary while his inferior was Ambassador, he would have been a traitor to his rank and family."

I talked of the little attachment which subsisted between near relations in London. "Sir," said Johnson, "in a country so commercial as ours, where every man can do for himself, there is not so much occasion for that attachment. No man is thought the worse of here whose brother was hanged. In uncommercial countries many of the branches of a family must depend on the stock; so, in order to make the head of the family take care of them, they are represented as connected with his reputation, that, self-love being interested, he may exert himself to promote their interest. You have first large circles, or clans; as commerce increases, the connection is confined to families. By degrees that too goes off, as having become unnecessary, and there

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being few opportunities of intercourse. One brother is a merchant in the city, and another is an officer in the guards. How little intercourse can these two have ! ”

I argued warmly for the old feudal system. Sir Alexander opposed it, and talked of the pleasure of seeing all men free and independent. JOHNSON : I agree with Mr Boswell that there must be a high satisfaction in being a feudal lord ; but we are to consider that we ought not to wish to have a number of men unhappy for the satisfaction of one.—I maintained that numbers, namely, the vassals or followers, were not unhappy, for that there was a reciprocal satisfaction between the lord and them : he being kind in his authority over them, they being respectful and faithful to him.

On Thursday, 9th April, I called on him to beg he would go and dine with me at the Mitre tavern. He had resolved not to dine at all this day, I know not for what reason ; and I was so unwilling to be deprived of his company that I was content to submit to suffer a want, which was at first somewhat painful, but he soon made me forget it ; and a man is always pleased with himself when he finds his intellectual inclinations predominate.

He observed that to reason too philosophically on the nature of prayer was very unprofitable.

Talking of ghosts, he said, he knew one friend, who was an honest man and a sensible man, who told him he had seen a ghost, old Mr Edward Cave, the printer at St John’s Gate. He said Mr Cave did not like to talk of it, but seemed to be in great horror whenever it was mentioned. BOSWELL : Pray, sir, what did he say was the appearance ? JOHNSON : Why, sir, something of a shadowy being.

I mentioned witches, and asked him what they properly meant. JOHNSON : Why, sir, they properly mean those who make use of the aid of evil spirits. BOSWELL : There is no doubt, sir, a general report and belief of their having existed. JOHNSON : Sir, you have not only the general report and belief, but you have many voluntary solemn confessions.—He did not affirm anything positively upon a

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subject which it is the fashion of the times to laugh at as a matter of absurd credulity. He only seemed willing, as a candid inquirer after truth, however strange and inexplicable, to show that he understood what might be urged for it.¹

On Friday, 10th April, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where we found Dr Goldsmith.

Armorial bearings having been mentioned, Johnson said, they were as ancient as the siege of Thebes, which he proved by a passage in one of the tragedies of Euripides.

I started the question whether duelling was consistent with moral duty. The brave old General fired at this, and said, with a lofty air: "Undoubtedly a man has a right to defend his honour." GOLDSMITH (turning to me): I ask you first, sir, what you would do if you were affronted?—I answered I should think it necessary to fight. "Why, then," replied Goldsmith, "that solves the question." JOHNSON: No, sir, it does not solve the question. It does not follow that what a man would do is therefore right.—I said, I wished to have it settled whether duelling was contrary to the laws of Christianity. Johnson immediately entered on the subject, and treated it in a masterly manner; and so far as I have been able to recollect, his thoughts were these: "Sir, as men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise; which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour he lies, his neighbour tells him he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow: but in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must therefore be resented, or, rather, a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from their society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence.

¹ See this curious question treated by him with most acute ability, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 33.

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He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self-defence—to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish that there was not that superfluity of refinement; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel.”

Let it be remembered that this justification is applicable only to the person who *receives* an affront. All mankind must condemn the aggressor.

The General told us, that when he was a very young man, I think only fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene of Savoy, he was sitting in a company at table with a Prince of Wirtemberg. The Prince took up a glass of wine, and, by a fillip, made some of it fly in Oglethorpe’s face. Here was a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly might have fixed a quarrelsome character upon the young soldier: to have taken no notice of it might have been considered as cowardice. Oglethorpe, therefore, keeping his eye upon the Prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what his Highness had done in jest, said: “*Mon Prince* ——” (I forget the French words he used, the purport however was), “That’s a good joke; but we do it much better in England,” and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince’s face. An old General who sat by, said: “*Il a bien fait, mon Prince, vous l’avez commencé*”; and thus all ended in good humour.

Dr Johnson said: “Pray, General, give us an account of the siege of Bender.” Upon which the General, pouring a little wine upon the table, described everything with a wet finger: “Here were we, here were the Turks,” etc., etc. Johnson listened with the closest attention.

A question was started, how far people who disagree in any capital point can live in friendship together. Johnson said they might. Goldsmith said they could not, as they had not the *idem velle atque idem nolle*—the same likings and the same aversions. JOHNSON: Why, sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke: I love his knowledge, his genius,

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his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party. GOLDSMITH: But, sir, when people live together who have something as to which they disagree, and which they want to shun, they will be in the situation mentioned in the story of Bluebeard: "You may look into all the chambers but one." But we should have the greatest inclination to look into that chamber, to talk of that subject. JOHNSON (with a loud voice): Sir, I am not saying that *you* could live in friendship with a man from whom you differ as to some point: I am only saying that *I* could do it. You put me in mind of Sappho in Ovid.

Goldsmith told us that he was now busy in writing a natural history, and that he might have full leisure for it he had taken lodgings at a farmer's house, near to the six milestone on the Edgware Road, and had carried down his books in two returned post-chaises. He said, he believed the farmer's family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which *The Spectator* appeared to his landlady and children: he was *The Gentleman*. Mr Mickle, the translator of *The Lusiad*, and I, went to visit him at this place a few days afterwards. He was not at home; but having a curiosity to see his apartment, we went in and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals, scrawled upon the walls with a black-lead pencil.

The subject of ghosts having been introduced, Johnson repeated what he had told me of a friend of his, an honest man and a man of sense, having asserted to him that he had seen an apparition. Goldsmith told us, he was assured by his brother, the Reverend Mr Goldsmith, that he also had seen one. General Oglethorpe told us that Pendergrast, an officer in the Duke of Marlborough's army, had mentioned to many of his friends that he should die on a particular day. That upon that day a battle took place with the French; that after it was over, and Pendergrast was still alive, his brother officers, while they were yet in the field, jestingly asked him where was his prophecy now. Pendergrast

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gravely answered: "I shall die, notwithstanding what you see." Soon afterwards there came a shot from a French battery, to which the orders for a cessation of arms had not yet reached, and he was killed upon the spot. Colonel Cecil, who took possession of his effects, found in his pocket-book the following solemn entry:

[Here the date.] "Dreamt—or ————¹ Sir John Friend meets me" (here the very day on which he was killed was mentioned). Pendergrast had been connected with Sir John Friend, who was executed for high treason. General Oglethorpe said he was in company with Colonel Cecil when Pope came and inquired into the truth of this story, which made a great noise at the time, and was then confirmed by the Colonel.

On Saturday, 11th April, he appointed me to come to him in the evening, when he said he should be at leisure to give me some assistance for the defence of Hastie, the school-master of Campbelltown, for whom I was to appear in the House of Lords. When I came, I found him unwilling to exert himself. I pressed him to write down his thoughts upon the subject. He said: "There's no occasion for my writing. I'll talk to you." He was, however, at last prevailed on to dictate to me, while I wrote as follows:

"The charge is, that he has used immoderate and cruel correction. Correction, in itself, is not cruel; children, being not reasonable, can be governed only by fear. To impress this fear, is therefore one of the first duties of those who have the care of children. It is the duty of a parent; and has never been thought inconsistent with parental tenderness. It is the duty of a master, who is in his highest exaltation when he is *loco parentis*. Yes, as good things become evil by excess, correction, by being immoderate, may become cruel. But when is correction immoderate?

¹ Here was a blank, which may be filled up thus: "was told by an apparition"—the writer being probably uncertain whether he was asleep or awake when his mind was impressed with the solemn presentiment with which the fact afterwards happened so wonderfully to correspond.

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When it is more frequent or more severe than is required *ad monendum et docendum*, for reformation and instruction. No severity is cruel which obstinacy makes necessary; for the greatest cruelty would be to desist, and leave the scholar too careless for instruction, and too much hardened for reproof. Locke, in his treatise of *Education*, mentions a mother, with applause, who whipped an infant eight times before she had subdued it; for had she stopped at the seventh act of correction, her daughter, says he, would have been ruined. The degrees of obstinacy in young minds are very different; as different must be the degrees of persevering severity. A stubborn scholar must be corrected till he is subdued. The discipline of a school is military. There must be either unbounded licence or absolute authority. The master who punishes not only consults the future happiness of him who is the immediate subject of correction, but he propagates obedience through the whole school, and establishes regularity by exemplary justice. The victorious obstinacy of a single boy would make his future endeavours of reformation or instruction totally ineffectual. Obstinacy, therefore, must never be victorious. Yet it is well known that there sometimes occurs a sullen and hardy resolution, that laughs at all common punishment, and bids defiance to all common degrees of pain. Correction must be proportioned to occasions. The flexible will be reformed by gentle discipline, and the refractory must be subdued by harsher methods. The degrees of scholastic as of military punishment, no stated rules can ascertain. It must be enforced till it overpowers temptation; till stubbornness becomes flexible, and perverseness regular. Custom and reason have, indeed, set some bounds to scholastic penalties. The school-master inflicts no capital punishments, nor enforces his edicts by either death or mutilation. The civil law has wisely determined that a master who strikes at a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal. But punishments, however severe, that produce no lasting evil, may be just and reasonable, because they may be necessary. Such have been the

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punishments used by the respondent. No scholar has gone from him either blind or lame, or with any of his limbs or powers injured or impaired. They were irregular, and he punished them: they were obstinate, and he enforced his punishment. But, however provoked, he never exceeded the limits of moderation, for he inflicted nothing beyond present pain; and how much of that was required, no man is so little able to determine as those who have determined against him—the parents of the offenders. It has been said that he used unprecedented and improper instruments of correction. Of this accusation the meaning is not very easy to be found. No instrument of correction is more proper than another, but as it is better adapted to produce present pain without lasting mischief. Whatever were his instruments, no lasting mischief has ensued; and therefore, however unusual, in hands so cautious they were proper. It has been objected that the respondent admits the charge of cruelty, by producing no evidence to confute it. Let it be considered that his scholars are either dispersed at large in the world, or continue to inhabit the place in which they were bred. Those who are dispersed cannot be found: those who remain are the sons of his persecutors, and are not likely to support a man to whom their fathers are enemies. If it be supposed that the enmity of their fathers proves the justice of the charge, it must be considered how often experience shows us that men who are angry on one ground will accuse on another; with how little kindness, in a town of low trade, a man who lives by learning is regarded; and how implicitly, where the inhabitants are not very rich, a rich man is hearkened to and followed. In a place like Campbelltown it is easy for one of the principal inhabitants to make a party. It is easy for that party to heat themselves with imaginary grievances. It is easy for them to oppress a man poorer than themselves; and natural to assert the dignity of riches, by persisting in oppression. The argument which attempts to prove the impropriety of restoring him to his school, by alleging that he has lost the confidence

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of the people, is not the subject of juridical consideration ; for he is to suffer, if he must suffer, not for their judgment, but for his own actions. It may be convenient for them to have another master, but it is a convenience of their own making. It would be likewise convenient for him to find another school ; but this convenience he cannot obtain. The question is not what is now convenient, but what is generally right. If the people of Campbelltown be distressed by the restoration of the respondent, they are distressed only by their own fault ; by turbulent passions and unreasonable desires ; by tyranny, which law has defeated, and by malice which virtue has surmounted."

"This, sir," said he, "you are to turn in your mind, and make the best use of it you can in your speech."

Of our friend Goldsmith he said : "Sir, he is so much afraid of being unnoticed that he often talks merely lest you should forget that he is in the company." BOSWELL : Yes, he stands forward. JOHNSON : True, sir ; but if a man is to stand forward, he should wish to do it not in an awkward posture, not in rags, not so as that he shall only be exposed to ridicule. BOSWELL : For my part, I like very well to hear honest Goldsmith talk away carelessly. JOHNSON : Why yes, sir ; but he should not like to hear himself.

On Tuesday, 14th April, the decree of the Court of Session in the schoolmaster's cause was reversed in the House of Lords, after a very eloquent speech by Lord Mansfield, who showed himself an adept in school discipline, but I thought was too rigorous towards my client. On the evening of the next day I supped with Dr Johnson, at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, in company with Mr Langton and his brother-in-law, Lord Binning. I repeated a sentence of Lord Mansfield's speech, of which, by the aid of Mr Longlands, the solicitor on the other side, who obligingly allowed me to compare his note with my own, I have a full copy : "My Lords, severity is not the way to govern either boys or men." "Nay," said Johnson,

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"it is the way to *govern* them. I know not whether it be the way to *mend* them."

I talked of the recent expulsion of six students from the University of Oxford who were Methodists, and would not desist from publicly praying and exhorting. JOHNSON: Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper. What have they to do at a university who are not willing to be taught, but will presume to teach? Where is religion to be learnt but at a university? Sir, they were examined, and found to be mighty ignorant fellows. BOSWELL: But, was it not hard, sir, to expel them, for I am told they were good beings? JOHNSON: Sir, I believe they might be good beings; but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden.—Lord Elibank used to repeat this as an illustration uncommonly happy.

Desirous of calling Johnson forth to talk, and exercise his wit, though I should myself be the object of it, I resolutely ventured to undertake the defence of convivial indulgence in wine, though he was not to-night in the most genial humour. After urging the common plausible topics, I at last had recourse to the maxim *in vino veritas*: a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth. JOHNSON: Why, sir, that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him.¹

Mr Langton told us he was about to establish a school upon his estate, but it had been suggested to him that it might have a tendency to make the people less industrious. JOHNSON: No, sir. While learning to read and write is a

¹ Mrs Piozzi, in her *Anecdotes*, p. 261, has given an erroneous account of this incident, as of many others. She pretends to relate it from recollection, as if she herself had been present; when the fact is, that it was communicated to her by me. She has represented it as a personality, and the true point has escaped her.

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distinction, the few who have that distinction may be the less inclined to work: but when everybody learns to read and write, it is no longer a distinction. A man who has a laced waistcoat is too fine a man to work; but if everybody had laced waistcoats, we should have people working in laced waistcoats. There are no people whatever more industrious, none who work more, than our manufacturers; yet they have all learnt to read and write. Sir, you must not neglect doing a thing immediately good, from fear of remote evil—from fear of its being abused. A man who has candles may sit up too late, which he would not do if he had not candles; but nobody will deny that the art of making candles, by which light is continued to us beyond the time that the sun gives us light, is a valuable art, and ought to be preserved. BOSWELL: But, sir, would it not be better to follow Nature; and go to bed and rise just as Nature gives us light or withholds it? JOHNSON: No, sir; for then we should have no kind of equality in the partition of our time between sleeping and waking. It would be very different in different seasons and in different places. In some of the northern parts of Scotland how little light is there in the depth of winter!

We talked of Tacitus, and I hazarded an opinion that with all his merit for penetration, shrewdness of judgment, and terseness of expression, he was too compact, too much broken into hints, as it were, and therefore too difficult to be understood. To my great satisfaction Dr Johnson sanctioned this opinion. "Tacitus, sir, seems to me rather to have made notes for an historical work than to have written a history."¹

At this time it appears, from his *Prayers and Meditations*, that he had been more than commonly diligent in religious duties, particularly in reading the Holy Scriptures. It was Passion Week, that solemn season which the Christian

¹ It is remarkable that Lord Monboddo, whom, on account of his resembling Dr Johnson in some particulars, Foote called an Elzevir edition of him, has, by coincidence, made the very same remark. *Origin and Progress of Language*, vol. iii., 2nd edit., p. 219.

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world has appropriated to the commemoration of the mysteries of our redemption, and during which, whatever embers of religion are in our breasts, will be kindled into pious warmth.

I paid him short visits both on Friday and Saturday, and seeing his large folio Greek Testament before him, beheld him with a reverential awe, and would not intrude upon his time. While he was thus employed to such good purpose, and while his friends in their intercourse with him constantly found a vigorous intellect and a lively imagination, it is melancholy to read in his private register: "My mind is unsettled and my memory confused. I have of late turned my thoughts with a very useless earnestness upon past incidents. I have yet got no command over my thoughts; an unpleasing incident is almost certain to hinder my rest."¹ What philosophic heroism was it in him to appear with such manly fortitude to the world, while he was inwardly so distressed! We may surely believe that the mysterious principle of being "made perfect through suffering" was to be strongly exemplified in him.

On Sunday, 19th April, being Easter Day, General Paoli and I paid him a visit before dinner. We talked of the notion that blind persons can distinguish colours by the touch. Johnson said that Professor Sanderson mentions his having attempted to do it, but that he found he was aiming at an impossibility; that to be sure a difference in the surface makes the difference of colours; but that difference is so fine that it is not sensible to the touch. The General mentioned jugglers and fraudulent gamblers, who could know cards by the touch. Dr Johnson said, "the cards used by such persons must be less polished than ours commonly are."

We talked of sounds. The General said, there was no beauty in a simple sound but only in an harmonious composition of sounds. I presumed to differ from this opinion, and mentioned the soft and sweet sound of a fine woman's

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 111.

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voice. JOHNSON: No, sir, if a serpent or a toad uttered it, you would think it ugly. BOSWELL: So you would think, sir, were a beautiful tune to be uttered by one of those animals. JOHNSON: No, sir, it would be admired. We have seen fine fiddlers whom we liked as little as toads (laughing).

Talking on the subject of taste in the arts, he said that difference of taste was, in truth, difference of skill. BOSWELL: But, sir, is there not a quality called taste, which consists merely in perception or in liking? For instance, we find people differ much as to what is the best style of English composition. Some think Swift's the best; others prefer a fuller and grander way of writing. JOHNSON: Sir, you must first define what you mean by style, before you can judge who has a good taste in style, and who has a bad. The two classes of persons whom you have mentioned don't differ as to good and bad. They both agree that Swift has a good neat style; but one loves a neat style, another loves a style of more splendour. In like manner, one loves a plain coat, another loves a laced coat; but neither will deny that each is good in its kind.

While I remained in London this spring, I was with him at several other times, both by himself and in company. I dined with him one day at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand, with Lord Elibank, Mr Langton, and Dr Vansittart of Oxford. Without specifying each particular day, I have preserved the following memorable things:

I regretted the reflection in his Preface to Shakspeare against Garrick, to whom we cannot but apply the following passage: "I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative." I told him that Garrick had complained to me of it, and had vindicated himself by assuring me that Johnson was made welcome to the full use of his collection, and that he left the key of it with a servant, with orders to have a fire and every convenience for him. I found Johnson's notion was, that Garrick wanted to be

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courted for them, and that, on the contrary, Garrick should have courted him and sent him the plays of his own accord. But, indeed, considering the slovenly and careless manner in which books were treated by Johnson, it could not be expected that scarce and valuable editions should have been lent to him.

A gentleman having to some of the usual arguments for drinking added this: "You know, sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would you not allow a man to drink for that reason?" JOHNSON: Yes, sir, if he sat next *you*.

I expressed a liking for Mr Francis Osborn's works, and asked him what he thought of that writer. He answered: "A conceited fellow. Were a man to write so now, the boys would throw stones at him." He however did not alter my opinion of a favourite author, to whom I was first directed by his being quoted in *The Spectator*, and in whom I have found much shrewd and lively sense, expressed indeed in a style somewhat quaint, which, however, I do not dislike. His book has an air of originality. We figure to ourselves an ancient gentleman talking to us.

When one of his friends endeavoured to maintain that a country gentleman might contrive to pass his life very agreeably: "Sir," said he, "you cannot give me an instance of any man who is permitted to lay out his own time, contriving not to have tedious hours." This observation, however, is equally applicable to gentlemen who live in cities, and are of no profession.

He said: "There is no permanent national character; it varies according to circumstances. Alexander the Great swept India: now the Turks sweep Greece."

A learned gentleman who in the course of conversation wished to inform us of this simple fact, that the Counsel upon the circuit at Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took, I suppose, seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plenitude of phrase told us that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town hall—that

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by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers—that the lodgings of the Counsel were near to the town hall—and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out: “It is a pity, sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth.”¹

He would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield; for he was educated in England. “Much,” said he, “may be made of a Scotchman, if he be *caught* young.”

Talking of a modern historian and a modern moralist, he said: “There is more thought in the moralist than in the historian. There is but a shallow stream of thought in history.” BOSWELL: But surely, sir, an historian has reflection. JOHNSON: Why, yes, sir; and so has a cat when she catches a mouse for her kitten. But she cannot write like the moralist; neither can the historian.

He said: “I am very unwilling to read the manuscripts of authors, and give them my opinion. If the authors who apply to me have money, I bid them boldly print without a name; if they have written in order to get money, I tell them to go to the booksellers and make the best bargain they can.” BOSWELL: But, sir, if a bookseller should bring you a manuscript to look at. JOHNSON: Why, sir, I would desire the bookseller to take it away.

I mentioned a friend of mine who had resided long in Spain, and was unwilling to return to Britain. JOHNSON: Sir, he is attached to some woman. BOSWELL: I rather believe, sir, it is the fine climate which keeps him there. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, how can you talk so? What is *climate* to happiness? Place me in the heart of Asia, should I not be exiled? What proportion does climate bear to the complex system of human life. You may advise me to go and live at Bologna to eat

¹ Mrs Piozzi, to whom I told this anecdote, has related it as if the gentleman had given “the *natural history* of the mouse.” *Anecdotes*, p. 191.

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sausages. The sausages there are the best in the world; they lose much by being carried.

On Saturday, 9th May, Mr Dempster and I had agreed to dine by ourselves at the British coffee-house. Johnson, on whom I happened to call in the morning, said he would join us, which he did, and we spent a very pleasant day, though I recollect but little of what passed.

He said: "Walpole was a minister given by the King to the people: Pitt was a minister given by the people to the King—as an adjunct."

"The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich; we may say of Goldsmith, it is a pity he is not knowing. He would not keep his knowledge to himself."

Before leaving London this year, I consulted him upon a question purely of Scotch law. It was held of old, and continued for a long period, to be an established principle in that law, that whoever intermeddled with the effects of a person deceased, without the interposition of legal authority to guard against embezzlement, should be subjected to pay all the debts of the deceased, as having been guilty of what was technically called *vicious intromission*. The Court of Session had gradually relaxed the strictness of this principle where the interference proved had been inconsiderable. In a case¹ which came before that Court the preceding winter, I had laboured to persuade the judges to return to the ancient law. It was my own sincere opinion that they ought to adhere to it; but I had exhausted all my powers of reasoning in vain. Johnson thought as I did; and in order to assist me in my application to the Court for a revision and alteration of the judgment, he dictated to me the following argument:

"This, we are told, is a law which has its force only from the long practice of the Court; and may, there-

¹ Wilson *against* Smith and Armour.

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fore, be suspended or modified as the Court shall think proper.

“Concerning the power of the Court to make or to suspend a law, we have no intention to inquire. It is sufficient for our purpose that every just law is dictated by reason; and that the practice of every legal court is regulated by equity. It is the quality of reason to be invariable and constant; and of equity, to give to one man what, in the same case, is given to another. The advantage which humanity derives from law is this: that the law gives every man a rule of action, and prescribes a mode of conduct which shall entitle him to the support and protection of society. That the law may be a rule of action, it is necessary that it be known; it is necessary that it be permanent and stable. The law is the measure of civil right; but if the measure be changeable, the extent of the thing measured never can be settled.

“To permit a law to be modified at discretion is to leave the community without law. It is to withdraw the direction of that public wisdom, by which the deficiencies of private understanding are to be supplied. It is to suffer the rash and ignorant to act at discretion, and then to depend for the legality of that action on the sentence of the judge. He that is thus governed, lives not by law, but by opinion: not by a certain rule to which he can apply his intention before he acts, but by an uncertain and variable opinion, which he can never know but after he has committed the act on which that opinion shall be passed. He lives by a law (if a law it be) which he can never know before he has offended it. To this case may be justly applied that important principle, *misera est servitus ubi jus est aut incognitum aut vagum*. If intromission be not criminal till it exceeds a certain point, and that point be unsettled, and consequently different in different minds, the right of intromission, and the right of the creditor arising from it, are all *jura vaga*, and, by consequence, are *jura incognita*; and the result can be no other than a *misera servitus*, an uncertainty concerning the event of action, a servile dependence on private opinion.

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“ It may be urged, and with great plausibility, that there may be intromission without fraud ; which, however true, will by no means justify an occasional and arbitrary relaxation of the law. The end of law is protection as well as vengeance. Indeed, vengeance is never used but to strengthen protection. That society only is well governed where life is freed from danger and from suspicion ; where possession is so sheltered by salutary prohibitions that violation is prevented more frequently than punished. Such a prohibition was this, while it operated with its original force. The creditor of the deceased was not only without loss, but without fear. He was not to seek a remedy for an injury suffered ; for injury was warded off.

“ As the law has been sometimes administered, it lays us open to wounds, because it is imagined to have the power of healing. To punish fraud when it is detected is the proper act of vindictive justice ; but to prevent frauds, and make punishment unnecessary, is the great employment of legislative wisdom. To permit intromission, and to punish fraud, is to make law no better than a pitfall. To tread upon the brink is safe ; but to come a step farther is destruction. But, surely, it is better to enclose the gulf, and hinder all access, than by encouraging us to advance a little, to entice us afterwards a little farther, and let us perceive our folly only by our destruction.

“ As law supplies the weak with adventitious strength, it likewise enlightens the ignorant with extrinsic understanding. Law teaches us to know when we commit injury and when we suffer it. It fixes certain marks upon actions, by which we are admonished to do or to forbear them. *Qui sibi bene temperat in licitis*, says one of the fathers, *nunquam cadet in illicita*. He who never intromits at all, will never intromit with fraudulent intentions.

“ The relaxation of the law against vicious intromission has been very favourably represented by a great master of jurisprudence,¹ whose words have been exhibited with

¹ Lord Kames, in his *Historical Law Tracts*.

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unnecessary pomp, and seem to be considered as irresistibly decisive. The great moment of his authority makes it necessary to examine his position. 'Some ages ago,' says he, 'before the ferocity of the inhabitants of this part of the island was subdued, the utmost severity of the civil law was necessary, to restrain individuals from plundering each other. Thus, the man who intermeddled irregularly with the moveables of a person deceased was subjected to all the debts of the deceased without limitation. This makes a branch of the law of Scotland, known by the name of *vicious intromission*; and so rigidly was this regulation applied in our Courts of Law, that the most trifling moveable abstracted *malâ fide*, subjected the intermeddler to the foregoing consequences, which proved in many instances a most rigorous punishment. But this severity was necessary, in order to subdue the undisciplined nature of our people. It is extremely remarkable, that in proportion to our improvement in manners, this regulation has been gradually softened, and applied by our sovereign Court with a sparing hand.'

"I find myself under a necessity of observing that this learned and judicious writer has not accurately distinguished the deficiencies and demands of the different conditions of human life, which, from a degree of savageness and independence, in which all laws are vain, passes, or may pass, by innumerable gradations, to a state of reciprocal benignity, in which laws shall be no longer necessary. Men are first wild and unsocial, living each man to himself, taking from the weak, and losing to the strong. In their first coalitions of society, much of this original savageness is retained. Of general happiness, the product of general confidence, there is yet no thought. Men continue to prosecute their own advantages by the nearest way; and the utmost severity of the civil law is necessary to restrain individuals from plundering each other. The restraints then necessary are, restraints from plunder, from acts of public violence, and undisguised oppression. The ferocity of our ancestors, as of all other nations, produced not fraud but rapine. They

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had not yet learned to cheat, and attempted only to rob. As manners grow more polished, with the knowledge of good, men attain likewise dexterity in evil. Open rapine becomes less frequent, and violence gives way to cunning. Those who before invaded pastures and stormed houses, now begin to enrich themselves by unequal contracts and fraudulent intromissions. It is not against the violence of ferocity, but the circumventions of deceit, that this law was framed; and I am afraid the increase of commerce, and the incessant struggle for riches which commerce excites, give us no prospect of an end speedily to be expected of artifice and fraud. It therefore seems to be no very conclusive reasoning which connects those two propositions—‘the nation is become less ferocious, and therefore the laws against fraud and *coven* shall be relaxed.’

“Whatever reason may have influenced the judges to a relaxation of the law, it was not that the nation was grown less fierce; and, I am afraid, it cannot be affirmed that it is grown less fraudulent.

“Since this law has been represented as rigorously and unreasonably penal, it seems not improper to consider what are the conditions and qualities that make the justice or propriety of a penal law.

“To make a penal law reasonable and just, two conditions are necessary, and two proper. It is necessary that the law should be adequate to its end; that, if it be observed, it shall prevent the evil against which it is directed. It is, secondly, necessary that the end of the law be of such importance as to deserve the security of a penal sanction. The other conditions of a penal law, which, though not absolutely necessary, are to a very high degree fit, are, that to the moral violation of the law there are many temptations, and that of the physical observance there is great facility.

“All these conditions apparently concur to justify the law which we are now considering. Its end is the security of property, and property very often of great value. The

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method by which it effects the security is efficacious, because it admits, in its original rigour, no gradations of injury, but keeps guilt and innocence apart, by a distinct and definite limitation. He that intromits is criminal; he that intromits not is innocent. Of the two secondary considerations it cannot be denied that both are in our favour. The temptation to intromit is frequent and strong; so strong and so frequent as to require the utmost activity of justice and vigilance of caution to withstand its prevalence; and the method by which a man may entitle himself to legal intromission is so open and so facile, that to neglect it is a proof of fraudulent intention: for why should a man omit to do (but for reasons which he will not confess) that which he can do so easily, and that which he knows to be required by the law? If temptation were rare, a penal law might be deemed unnecessary. If the duty enjoined by the law were of difficult performance, omission, though it could not be justified, might be pitied. But in the present case, neither equity nor compassion operates against it. A useful, a necessary law is broken, not only without a reasonable motive, but with all the inducements to obedience that can be derived from safety and facility.

“I therefore return to my original position, that a law, to have its effect, must be permanent and stable. It may be said, in the language of the schools, *Lex non recepit majus et minus*—we may have a law, or we may have no law, but we cannot have half a law. We must either have a rule of action, or be permitted to act by discretion and by chance. Deviations from the law must be uniformly punished, or no man can be certain when he shall be safe.

“That from the rigour of the original institution this Court has sometimes departed, cannot be denied. But as it is evident that such deviations, as they make law uncertain, make life unsafe, I hope that of departing from it there will now be an end; that the wisdom of our ancestors will be treated with due reverence; and that consistent and steady decisions will furnish the people with a rule of action,

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and leave fraud and fraudulent intromission no future hope of impunity or escape."

With such comprehension of mind, and such clearness of penetration, did he thus treat a subject altogether new to him, without any other preparation than my having stated to him the arguments which had been used on each side of the question. His intellectual powers appeared with peculiar lustre, when tried against those of a writer of so much fame as Lord Kames, and that too in his lordship's own department.

This masterly argument, after being prefaced and concluded with some sentences of my own, and garnished with the usual formularies, was actually printed and laid before the Lords of Session, but without success. My respected friend Lord Hailes, however, one of that honourable body, had critical sagacity enough to discover a more than ordinary hand in the *Petition*. I told him that Dr Johnson had favoured me with his pen. His lordship, with wonderful acumen, pointed out exactly where his composition began, and where it ended. But that I may do impartial justice, and conform to the great rule of courts, *Suum cuique tribuito*, I must add that their lordships in general, though they were pleased to call this "a well-drawn paper," preferred the former very inferior petition which I had written; thus confirming the truth of an observation made to me by one of their number, in a merry mood: "My dear sir, give yourself no trouble in the composition of the papers you present to us; for, indeed, it is casting pearls before swine."

I renewed my solicitations that he would this year accomplish his long-intended visit to Scotland.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—The regret has not been little with which I have missed a journey so pregnant with pleasing expectations, as that in which I could promise myself not only the gratification of curiosity, both rational and fanciful, but the

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delight of seeing those whom I love and esteem,* * * * *. But such has been the course of things, that I could not come; and such has been, I am afraid, the state of my body, that it would not well have seconded my inclination. My body, I think, grows better, and I refer my hopes to another year; for I am very sincere in my design to pay the visit, and take the ramble. In the meantime, do not omit any opportunity of keeping up a favourable opinion of me in the minds of any of my friends. Beattie's book is, I believe, every day more liked; at least, I like it more, as I look more upon it.

I am glad if you got credit by your cause, and am yet of opinion that our cause was good, and that the determination ought to have been in your favour. Poor Hastie, I think, had but his deserts.

You promised to get me a little Pindar, and may add to it a little Anacreon.

The leisure which I cannot enjoy, it will be a pleasure to hear that you employ upon the antiquities of the feudal establishment. The whole system of ancient tenures is gradually passing away; and I wish to have the knowledge of it preserved adequate and complete. For such an institution makes a very important part of the history of mankind. Do not forget a design so worthy of a scholar who studies the laws of his country, and of a gentleman who may naturally be curious to know the condition of his own ancestors. I am, dear Sir, yours with great affection,

SAM. JOHNSON.

August 31, 1772.

To Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *Dec. 25, 1772.*

MY DEAR SIR,—* * * * * I was much disappointed that you did not come to Scotland last autumn. However, I must own that your letter prevents me from complaining; not only

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because I am sensible that the state of your health was but too good an excuse, but because you write in a strain which shows that you have agreeable views of the scheme which we have so long proposed.

* * * * *

I communicated to Beattie what you said of his book in your last letter to me. He writes to me thus: "You judge very rightly in supposing that Dr Johnson's favourable opinion of my book must give me great delight. Indeed it is impossible for me to say how much I am gratified by it; for there is not a man upon earth whose good opinion I would be more ambitious to cultivate. His talents and his virtues I reverence more than any words can express. The extraordinary civilities (the paternal attentions I should rather say), and the many instructions I have had the honour to receive from him, will to me be a perpetual source of pleasure in the recollection.

'Dum memor ipse mei dum spiritus hos reget artus.'

"I had still some thoughts, while the summer lasted, of being obliged to go to London on some little business; otherwise I should certainly have troubled him with a letter several months ago, and given some vent to my gratitude and admiration. This I intend to do, as soon as I am left a little at leisure. Meantime, if you have occasion to write to him, I beg you will offer him my most respectful compliments, and assure him of the sincerity of my attachment and the warmth of my gratitude."

* * * * *

I am, etc.,

JAMES BOSWELL.

1773. *Ætat.* 64. In 1773 his only publication was an edition of his folio *Dictionary*, with additions and corrections; nor did he, so far as is known, furnish any productions of his fertile pen to any of his numerous friends or dependants, except the Preface* to his old amanuensis Macbean's

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Dictionary of Ancient Geography. His Shakspeare, indeed, which had been received with high approbation by the public, and gone through several editions, was this year republished by George Steevens, Esq., a gentleman not only deeply skilled in ancient learning, and of very extensive reading in English literature, especially the early writers, but at the same time of acute discernment and elegant taste. It is almost unnecessary to say, that by his great and valuable additions to Dr Johnson's work, he justly obtained considerable reputation :

" Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have read your kind letter much more than the elegant Pindar which it accompanied. I am always glad to find myself not forgotten, and to be forgotten by you would give me great uneasiness. My northern friends have never been unkind to me : I have from you, dear sir, testimonies of affection, which I have not often been able to excite ; and Dr Beattie rates the testimony which I was desirous of paying to his merit, much higher than I should have thought it reasonable to expect.

I have heard of your masquerade. What says your Synod to such innovations ? I am not studiously scrupulous, nor do I think a masquerade either evil in itself, or very likely to be the occasion of evil ; yet as the world thinks it a very licentious relaxation of manners, I would not have been one of the *first* masquers in a country where no masquerade had ever been before.¹

A new edition of my great *Dictionary* is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise ; but having made no preparation, I was able to do very little. Some superfluities I have expunged, and some faults I have corrected,

¹ There had been masquerades in Scotland before, but not for a very long time.

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and here and there have scattered a remark ; but the main fabric of the work remains as it was. I had looked very little into it since I wrote it, and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected.

Baretti and Davies have had a furious quarrel ; a quarrel, I think, irreconcilable. Dr Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it. The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce. The dialogue is quick and gay, and the incidents are so prepared as not to seem improbable.

I am sorry that you lost your cause of Intromission, because I yet think the arguments on your side unanswerable. But you seem, I think, to say that you gained reputation even by your defeat ; and reputation you will daily gain if you keep Lord Auchinleck's precept in your mind, and endeavour to consolidate in your mind a firm and regular system of law, instead of picking up occasional fragments.

My health seems in general to improve ; but I have been troubled for many weeks with a vexatious catarrh, which is sometimes sufficiently distressful. I have not found any great effects from bleeding and physic ; and am afraid, that I must expect help from brighter days and softer air.

Write to me now and then ; and whenever any good befalls you, make haste to let me know it, for no one will rejoice at it more than, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, *Feb.* 24, 1773.

You continue to stand very high in the favour of Mrs Thrale.

On Saturday, 3rd April, the day after my arrival in London this year, I went to his house late in the evening, and sat with Mrs Williams till he came home. I found in *The London Chronicle*, Dr Goldsmith's apology to the

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public for beating Evans, a bookseller, on account of a paragraph in a newspaper published by him, which Goldsmith thought impertinent to him and to a lady of his acquaintance. The apology was written so much in Dr Johnson's manner that both Mrs Williams and I supposed it to be his; but when he came home he soon undeceived us. When he said to Mrs Williams: "Well, Dr Goldsmith's *manifesto* has got into your paper," I asked him if Dr Goldsmith had written it, with an air that made him see I suspected it was his, though subscribed by Goldsmith. JOHNSON: Sir, Dr Goldsmith would no more have asked me to write such a thing as that for him, than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or to do anything else that denoted his imbecility. I as much believe that he wrote it as if I had seen him do it. Sir, had he shown it to any one friend, he would not have been allowed to publish it. He has, indeed, done it very well; but it is a foolish thing well done. I suppose he has been so much elated with the success of his new comedy that he has thought everything that concerned him must be of importance to the public. BOSWELL: I fancy, sir, this is the first time that he has been engaged in such an adventure. JOHNSON: Why, sir, I believe it is the first time he has *beat*; he may have *been beaten* before. This, sir, is a new plume to him.

I mentioned Sir John Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, and his discoveries to the prejudice of Lord Russel and Algernon Sydney. JOHNSON: Why, sir, everybody who had just notions of government thought them rascals before. It is well that all mankind now see them to be rascals. BOSWELL: But, sir, may not those discoveries be true without their being rascals. JOHNSON: Consider, sir; would any of them have been willing to have had it known that they intrigued with France? Depend upon it, sir, he who does what he is afraid should be known, has something rotten about him. This Dalrymple seems to be an honest fellow; for he tells equally what makes against both sides. But nothing can be poorer than his mode of writing: it is

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the mere bouncing of a schoolboy. Great He! but greater She! and such stuff.

I could not agree with him in this criticism; for though Sir John Dalrymple's style is not regularly formed in any respect, and one cannot help smiling sometimes at his affected grandiloquence, there is in his writing a pointed vivacity, and much of a gentlemanly spirit.

At Mr Thrale's, in the evening, he repeated his usual paradoxical declamation against action in public speaking. "Action can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action; you hold up your hand thus, because he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them." MRS THRALE: What then, sir, becomes of Demosthenes's saying? "Action, action, action!" JOHNSON: Demosthenes, madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes; to a barbarous people.

I thought it extraordinary, that he should deny the power of rhetorical action upon human nature, when it is proved by innumerable facts in all stages of society. Reasonable beings are not solely reasonable. They have fancies which may be pleased, passions which may be roused. ●

Lord Chesterfield being mentioned, Johnson remarked that almost all of that celebrated nobleman's witty sayings were puns. He, however, allowed the merit of good wit to his lordship's saying of Lord Tyrawley and himself, when both very old and infirm: "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years; but we don't choose to have it known."

He talked with approbation of an intended edition of *The Spectator*, with notes; two volumes of which had been prepared by a gentleman eminent in the literary world, and the materials which he had collected for the remainder had been transferred to another hand. He observed that all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less; and told us he had communicated all he knew that could throw light upon *The Spectator*.

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He said: "Addison had made his Sir Andrew Freeport a true Whig, arguing against giving charity to beggars, and throwing out other such ungracious sentiments; but that he had thought better, and made amends by making him found an hospital for decayed farmers." He called for the volume of *The Spectator* in which that account is contained, and read it aloud to us. He read so well, that everything acquired additional weight and grace from his utterance.

The conversation having turned on modern imitations of ancient ballads, and someone having praised their simplicity, he treated them with that ridicule which he always displayed when this subject was mentioned.

He disapproved of introducing Scripture phrases into secular discourse. This seemed to me a question of some difficulty. A Scripture expression may be used, like a highly classical phrase, to produce an instantaneous strong impression; and it may be done without being at all improper. Yet I own there is danger, that applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects may tend to lessen our reverence for it. If therefore it be introduced at all, it should be with very great caution.

On Thursday, 8th April, I sat a good part of the evening with him, but he was very silent. He said: "Burnet's *History of his own Times* is very entertaining. The style, indeed, is mere chit-chat. I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied; but he was so much prejudiced that he took no pains to find out the truth. He was like a man who resolves to regulate his time by a certain watch, but will not inquire whether the watch is right or not."

Though he was not disposed to talk, he was unwilling that I should leave him; and when I looked at my watch, and told him it was twelve o'clock, he cried: "What's that to you and me?" and ordered Frank to tell Mrs Williams that we were coming to drink tea with her, which we did. It was settled that we should go to church together next day.

On the 9th of April, being Good Friday, I breakfasted with him on tea and cross-buns; *Doctor Levett*, as Frank

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called him, making the tea. He carried me with him to the church of St Clement Danes, where he had his seat; and his behaviour was, as I had imaged to myself, solemnly devout. I never shall forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: "In the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us."

We went to church both in the morning and evening. In the interval between the two services we did not dine, but he read in the Greek New Testament, and I turned over several of his books.

In Archbishop Laud's *Diary*, I found the following passage, which I read to Dr Johnson:

"1623. February 1, Sunday. I stood by the most illustrious Prince Charles,¹ at dinner. He was then very merry, and talked occasionally of many things with his attendants. Among other things, he said, that if he were necessitated to take any particular profession of life, he could not be a lawyer, adding his reasons: 'I cannot,' saith he, 'defend a bad, nor yield in a good cause.'" JOHNSON: Sir, this is false reasoning; because every cause has a bad side: and a lawyer is not overcome though the cause which he has endeavoured to support be determined against him.

I told him that Goldsmith had said to me a few days before: "As I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the tailor, so I take my religion from the priest." I regretted this loose way of talking. JOHNSON: Sir, he knows nothing; he has made up his mind about nothing.

To my great surprise, he asked me to dine with him on Easter Day. I never supposed that he had a dinner at his house, for I had not then heard of any one of his friends having been entertained at his table. He told me: "I generally have a meat pie on Sunday: it is baked at a public oven, which is very properly allowed, because one man can attend it; and thus the advantage is obtained of not keeping servants from church to dress dinners."

¹ Afterwards Charles I.

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11th April, being Easter Sunday, after having attended divine service at St Paul's, I repaired to Dr Johnson's. I had gratified my curiosity much in dining with Jean Jacques Rousseau, while he lived in the wilds of Neufchatel: I had as great a curiosity to dine with Dr Samuel Johnson in the dusky recess of a court in Fleet Street. I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange uncouth ill-dressed dish; but I found everything in very good order. We had no other company but Mrs Williams and a young woman whom I did not know. As a dinner here was considered as a singular phenomenon, and as I was frequently interrogated on the subject, my readers may perhaps be desirous to know our bill of fare. Foote, I remember, in allusion to Francis, the *negro*, was willing to suppose that our repast was *black broth*. But the fact was, that we had a very good soup, a boiled leg of lamb and spinach, a veal pie, and a rice pudding.

Of Dr John Campbell, the author, he said: "He is a very inquisitive and a very able man, and a man of good religious principles, though I am afraid he has been deficient in practice. Campbell is radically right; and we may hope that in time there will be good practice."

He owned that he thought Hawkesworth was one of his imitators, but he did not think Goldsmith was. Goldsmith, he said, had great merit. BOSWELL: But, sir, he is much indebted to you for his getting so high in the public estimation. JOHNSON: Why, sir, he has, perhaps, got *sooner* to it by his intimacy with me.

Goldsmith, though his vanity often excited him to occasional competition, had a very high regard for Johnson, which he at this time expressed in the strongest manner in the Dedication of his comedy, entitled, *She Stoops to Conquer*.¹

¹ "By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you, as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety."

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Johnson observed, that there were very few books printed in Scotland before the Union. He had seen a complete collection of them in the possession of the Honourable Archibald Campbell, a nonjuring bishop.¹ I wish this collection had been kept entire. Many of them are in the library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh. I told Dr Johnson that I had some intention to write the life of the learned and worthy Thomas Ruddiman. He said: "I should take pleasure in helping you to do honour to him. But his farewell letter to the Faculty of Advocates, when he resigned the office of their Librarian, should have been in Latin."

I put a question to him upon a fact in common life, which he could not answer, nor have I found anyone else who could. What is the reason that women servants, though obliged to be at the expense of purchasing their own clothes, have much lower wages than men servants, to whom a great proportion of that article is furnished, and when in fact our female house servants work much harder than the male?

He told me, that he had twelve or fourteen times attempted to keep a journal of his life, but never could persevere. He advised me to do it. "The great thing to be recorded," said he, "is the state of your own mind; and you should write down everything that you remember, for you cannot judge at first what is good or bad; and write immediately while the impression is fresh, for it will not be the same a week afterwards."

I again solicited him to communicate to me the particulars of his early years. He said: "You shall have them all for twopence. I hope you shall know a great deal more of me before you write my *Life*." He mentioned to me this day many circumstances, which I wrote down when I went home, and have interwoven in the former part of this narrative.

¹ See an account of this learned and respectable gentleman, and of his curious work on the "Middle State," *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 371.

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On Tuesday, 13th April, he and Dr Goldsmith and I dined at General Oglethorpe's. Goldsmith expatiated on the common topic, that the race of our people was degenerated, and that this was owing to luxury. JOHNSON: Sir, in the first place, I doubt the fact. I believe there are as many tall men in England now as ever there were. But, secondly, supposing the stature of our people to be diminished, that is not owing to luxury; for, sir, consider to how very small a proportion of our people luxury can reach. Our soldiery, surely, are not luxurious, who live on sixpence a day; and the same remark will apply to almost all the other classes. Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people: it will strengthen and multiply them. Sir, no nation was ever hurt by luxury; for, as I said before, it can reach but to a very few. I admit that the great increase of commerce and manufactures hurts the military spirit of a people, because it produces a competition for something else than martial honours—a competition for riches. It also hurts the bodies of the people; for you will observe there is no man who works at any particular trade, but you may know him from his appearance to do so. One part or other of his body being more used than the rest, he is in some degree deformed: but, sir, that is not luxury. A tailor sits cross-legged; but that is not luxury. GOLDSMITH: Come, you're just going to the same place by another road. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, I say that is not *luxury*. Let us take a walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel, through, I suppose, the greatest series of shops in the world: what is there in any of these shops (if you except gin-shops) that can do any human being any harm? GOLDSMITH: Well, sir, I'll accept your challenge. The very next shop to Northumberland House is a pickle-shop. JOHNSON: Well, sir: do we not know that a maid can in one afternoon make pickles sufficient to serve a whole family for a year? nay, that five pickle-shops can serve all the kingdom? Besides, sir, there is no harm done to anybody by the making of pickles, or the eating of pickles.

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We drank tea with the ladies; and Goldsmith sung Tony Lumpkin's song in his comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and a very pretty one, to an Irish tune, which he had designed for Miss Hardcastle; but as Mrs Bulkeley, who played the part, could not sing, it was left out. He afterwards wrote it down for me, by which means it was preserved, and now appears amongst his poems. Dr Johnson, in his way home, stopped at my lodgings in Piccadilly, and sat with me, drinking tea a second time, till a late hour.

I told him that Mrs Macaulay said, she wondered how he could reconcile his political principles with his moral; his notions of inequality and subordination with wishing well to the happiness of all mankind, who might live so agreeably, had they all their portions of land, and none to domineer over another. JOHNSON: Why, sir, I reconcile my principles very well, because mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination. Were they to be in this pretty state of equality, they would soon degenerate into brutes; they would become Monboddo's nation—their tails would grow. Sir, all would be losers, were all to work to all: they would have no intellectual improvement. All intellectual improvement arises from leisure: all leisure arises from one working for another.

Talking of the family of Stuart, he said: "It should seem that the family at present on the throne has now established as good a right as the former family, by the long consent of the people; and that to disturb this right might be considered as culpable. At the same time I own that it is a very difficult question, when considered with respect to the House of Stuart. To oblige people to take oaths as to the disputed right, is wrong. I know not whether I could take them: but I do not blame those who do." So conscientious and so delicate was he upon this subject, which has occasioned so much clamour against him.

Talking of law cases, he said: "The English reports, in general, are very poor: only the half of what has been said is taken down; and of that half, much is mistaken.

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Whereas, in Scotland, the arguments on each side are deliberately put in writing, to be considered by the Court. I think a collection of your cases upon subjects of importance, with the opinions of the judges upon them, would be valuable."

On Thursday, 15th April, I dined with him and Dr Goldsmith at General Paoli's. We found here, Signor Martinelli, of Florence, author of a *History of England* in Italian, printed at London.

I spoke of Allan Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, in the Scottish dialect, as the best pastoral that had ever been written; not only abounding with beautiful rural imagery, and just and pleasing sentiments, but being a real picture of manners; and I offered to teach Dr Johnson to understand it. "No, sir," said he, "I won't learn it. You shall retain your superiority by my not knowing it."

This brought on a question whether one man is lessened by another's acquiring an equal degree of knowledge with him. Johnson asserted the affirmative. I maintained that the position might be true in those kinds of knowledge which produce wisdom, power, and force, so as to enable one man to have the government of others; but that a man is not in any degree lessened by others knowing as well as he what ends in mere pleasure—eating fine fruits, drinking delicious wines, reading exquisite poetry.

The General observed, that Martinelli was a Whig. JOHNSON: I am sorry for it. It shows the spirit of the times: he is obliged to temporise. BOSWELL: I rather think, sir, that Toryism prevails in this reign. JOHNSON: I know not why you should think so, sir. You see your friend Lord Lyttelton, a nobleman, is obliged in his *History* to write the most vulgar Whiggism.

An animated debate took place whether Martinelli should continue his *History of England* to the present day. GOLDSMITH: To be sure he should. JOHNSON: No, sir; he would give great offence. He would have to tell of almost all the living great what they do not wish told. GOLDSMITH:

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It may, perhaps, be necessary for a native to be more cautious ; but a foreigner who comes among us without prejudice may be considered as holding the place of a judge, and may speak his mind freely. JOHNSON : Sir, a foreigner, when he sends a work from the press, ought to be on his guard against catching the error and mistaken enthusiasm of the people among whom he happens to be. GOLDSMITH : Sir, he wants only to sell his *History*, and tell truth ; one an honest, the other a laudable, motive. JOHNSON : Sir, they are both laudable motives. It is laudable in a man to wish to live by his labours ; but he should write so as he may *live* by them, not so as he may be knocked on the head. I would advise him to be at Calais before he publishes his history of the present age. A foreigner who attaches himself to a political party in this country is in the worst state that can be imagined : he is looked upon as a mere intermeddler. A native may do it from interest. BOSWELL : Or principle. GOLDSMITH : There are people who tell a hundred political lies every day, and are not hurt by it. Surely, then, one may tell truth with safety. JOHNSON : Why, sir, in the first place, he who tells a hundred lies has disarmed the force of his lies. But besides : a man had rather have a hundred lies told of him, than one truth which he does not wish should be told. GOLDSMITH : For my part, I'd tell truth and shame the devil. JOHNSON : Yes, sir ; but the devil will be angry. I wish to shame the devil as much as you do ; but I should choose to be out of the reach of his claws. GOLDSMITH : His claws can do you no harm, when you have the shield of truth.

It having been observed that there was little hospitality in London—JOHNSON : Nay, sir, any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I have been told, has had engagements for three months. GOLDSMITH : And a very dull fellow. JOHNSON : Why no, sir.

Martinelli told us that for several years he lived much with Charles Townshend, and that he ventured to tell him

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he was a bad joker. JOHNSON: Why, sir, thus much I can say upon the subject. One day he and a few more agreed to go and dine in the country, and each of them was to bring a friend in his carriage with him. Charles Townshend asked Fitzherbert to go with him, but told him: "You must find somebody to bring you back: I can only carry you there." Fitzherbert did not much like this arrangement. He however consented, observing sarcastically: "It will do very well; for then the same jokes will serve you in returning as in going."

An eminent public character being mentioned—JOHNSON: I remember being present when he showed himself to be so corrupted, or at least something so different from what I think right, as to maintain that a Member of Parliament should go along with his party, right or wrong. Now, sir, this is so remote from native virtue, from scholastic virtue, that a good man must have undergone a great change before he can reconcile himself to such a doctrine. It is maintaining that you may lie to the public; for you lie when you call that right which you think wrong, or the reverse. A friend of ours, who is too much an echo of that gentleman, observed that a man who does not stick uniformly to a party is only waiting to be bought. Why then, said I, he is only waiting to be what that gentleman is already.

We talked of the King's coming to see Goldsmith's new play. "I wish he would," said Goldsmith; adding, however, with an affected indifference: "Not that it would do me the least good." JOHNSON: Well then, sir, let us say it would do *him* good (laughing). No, sir, this affectation will not pass; it is mighty idle. In such a state as ours, who would not wish to please the chief magistrate? GOLDSMITH: I *do* wish to please him. I remember a line in Dryden:

"And ev'ry poet is the Monarch's friend."

It ought to be reversed. JOHNSON: Nay, there are finer lines in Dryden on this subject:

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"For colleges on bounteous Kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend."

General Paoli observed that successful rebels might. MARTINELLI: Happy rebellions. GOLDSMITH: We have no such phrase. GENERAL PAOLI: But have you not the *thing*? GOLDSMITH: Yes; all our *happy* revolutions. They have hurt our constitution, and will hurt it, till we mend it by another HAPPY REVOLUTION.—I never before discovered that my friend Goldsmith had so much of the old prejudice in him.

General Paoli, talking of Goldsmith's new play, said: "*Il a fait un compliment très gracieux à une certaine grande dame*"; meaning a duchess of the first rank.

I expressed a doubt whether Goldsmith intended it, in order that I might hear the truth from himself. It, perhaps, was not quite fair to endeavour to bring him to a confession, as he might not wish to avow positively his taking part against the Court. He smiled and hesitated. The General at once relieved him, by this beautiful image: "*Monsieur Goldsmith est comme la mer qui jette des perles et beaucoup d'autres belles choses, sans s'en apercevoir.*" GOLDSMITH: *Très bien dit, et très élégamment.*

A person was mentioned who, it was said, could take down in shorthand the speeches in Parliament with perfect exactness. JOHNSON: Sir, it is impossible. I remember one Angel, who came to me to write for him a Preface or Dedication to a book upon shorthand, and he professed to write as fast as a man could speak. In order to try him I took down a book and read while he wrote; and I favoured him, for I read more deliberately than usual. I had proceeded but a very little way when he begged I would desist, for he could not follow me.—Hearing now for the first time of this Preface or Dedication, I said: "What an expense, sir, do you put us to in buying books, to which you have written Prefaces or Dedications." JOHNSON: Why, I have dedicated to the Royal Family all round—that is to say, to the last

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generation of the Royal Family. GOLDSMITH : And perhaps, sir, not one sentence of wit in a whole Dedication. JOHNSON : Perhaps not, sir. BOSWELL : What then is the reason for applying to a particular person to do that which anyone may do as well? JOHNSON : Why, sir, one man has greater readiness at doing it than another.

I spoke of Mr Harris, of Salisbury, as being a very learned man, and in particular an eminent Grecian. JOHNSON : I am not sure of that. His friends give him out as such, but I know not who of his friends are able to judge of it. GOLDSMITH : He is what is much better : he is a worthy humane man. JOHNSON : Nay, sir, that is not to the purpose of our argument : that will as much prove that he can play upon the fiddle as well as Giardini, as that he is an eminent Grecian. GOLDSMITH : The greatest musical performers have but small emoluments. Giardini, I am told, does not get above seven hundred a year. JOHNSON : That is, indeed, but little for a man to get who does best that which so many endeavour to do. There is nothing, I think, in which the power of art is shown so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all other things we can do something at first. Any man will forge a bar of iron if you give him a hammer ; not so well as a smith, but tolerably. A man will saw a piece of wood, and make a box, though a clumsy one ; but give him a fiddle and a fiddle-stick, and he can do nothing.

On Monday, 19th April, he called on me with Mrs Williams, in Mr Strahan's coach, and carried me out to dine with Mr Elphinston, at his academy at Kensington. A printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach was a good topic for the credit of literature. Mrs Williams said that another printer, Mr Hamilton, had not waited so long as Mr Strahan, but had kept his coach several years sooner. JOHNSON : He was in the right. Life is short. The sooner that a man begins to enjoy his wealth the better.

Mr Elphinston talked of a new book that was much admired, and asked Dr Johnson if he had read it. JOHNSON : I have looked into it. "What !" said Elphinston, "have you

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not read it through?" Johnson, offended at being thus pressed, and so obliged to own his cursory mode of reading, answered tartly: "No, sir; do *you* read books *through*?"

He this day again defended duelling, and put his argument upon what I have ever thought the most solid basis: that if public war be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so. Indeed we may observe what strained arguments are used to reconcile war with the Christian religion. But, in my opinion, it is exceedingly clear that duelling, having better reasons for its barbarous violence, is more justifiable than war, in which thousands go forth without any cause of personal quarrel and massacre each other.

On Wednesday, 21st April, I dined with him at Mr Thrale's. A gentleman attacked Garrick for being vain. JOHNSON: No wonder, sir, that he is vain; a man who is perpetually flattered in every mode that can be conceived. So many bellows have blown the fire, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder. BOSWELL: And such bellows too. Lord Mansfield with his cheeks like to burst: Lord Chatham like an Æolus. I have read such notes from them to him as were enough to turn his head. JOHNSON: True. When he whom everybody else flatters flatters me, I then am truly happy. MRS THRALE: The sentiment is in Congreve, I think. JOHNSON: Yes, madam, in *The Way of the World*:

"If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me."

No, sir, I should not be surprised though Garrick chained the ocean and lashed the winds. BOSWELL: Should it not be, sir, lashed the ocean and chained the winds? JOHNSON: No, sir; recollect the original:

*"In Corum atque Eurum solitus sævire flagellis
Barbarus, Æolio nunquam hoc in carcere passos,
Ipsum compedibus qui vinxerat Cænosigæum."*

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This does very well when both the winds and the sea are personified, and mentioned by their mythological names, as in Juvenal; but when they are mentioned in plain language, the application of the epithets suggested by me, is the most obvious; and accordingly my friend himself, in his imitation of the passage which describes Xerxes, has

“The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind.”

The modes of living in different countries, and the various views with which men travel in quest of new scenes, having been talked of, a learned gentleman who holds a considerable office in the law expatiated on the happiness of a savage life; and mentioned an instance of an officer who had actually lived for some time in the wilds of America, of whom, when in that state, he quoted this reflection with an air of admiration, as if it had been deeply philosophical: “Here I am, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of Nature, with this Indian woman by my side, and this gun, with which I can procure food when I want it: what more can be desired for human happiness?” It did not require much sagacity to foresee that such a sentiment would not be permitted to pass without due animadversion. JOHNSON: Do not allow yourself, sir, to be imposed upon by such gross absurdity. It is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might as well exclaim: “Here am I with this cow and this grass; what being can enjoy greater felicity?”

We talked of the melancholy end of a gentleman who had destroyed himself. JOHNSON: It was owing to imaginary difficulties in his affairs, which, had he talked with any friend, would soon have vanished. BOSWELL: Do you think, sir, that all who commit suicide are mad? JOHNSON: Sir, they are often not universally disordered in their intellects, but one passion presses so upon them that they yield to it, and commit suicide, as a passionate man will stab another.—He added: “I have often thought that after a man has taken the resolution to kill himself, it is not courage in him to do anything, however desperate, because he has nothing

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to fear." GOLDSMITH: I don't see that. JOHNSON: Nay but, my dear sir, why should not you see what everyone else sees? GOLDSMITH: It is for fear of something that he has resolved to kill himself; and will not that timid disposition restrain him? JOHNSON: It does not signify that the fear of something made him resolve; it is upon the state of his mind after the resolution is taken that I argue. Suppose a man, either from fear, or pride, or conscience, or whatever motive, has resolved to kill himself; when once the resolution is taken, he has nothing to fear. He may then go and take the King of Prussia by the nose, at the head of his army. He cannot fear the rack, who is resolved to kill himself. When Eustace Budgel was walking down to the Thames determined to drown himself, he might, if he pleased, without any apprehension of danger, have turned aside, and first set fire to St James's Palace.

On Tuesday, 27th April, Mr Beauclerk and I called on him in the morning. As we walked up Johnson's Court I said: "I have a veneration for this court," and was glad to find that Beauclerk had the same reverential enthusiasm. We found him alone. We talked of Mr Andrew Stuart's elegant and plausible *Letters to Lord Mansfield*, a copy of which had been sent by the author to Dr Johnson. JOHNSON: They have not answered the end. They have not been talked of: I have never heard of them. This is owing to their not being sold. People seldom read a book which is given to them; and few are given. The way to spread a work is to sell it at a low price. No man will send to buy a thing that costs even sixpence, without an intention to read it. BOSWELL: May it not be doubted, sir, whether it be proper to publish letters, arraigning the ultimate decision of an important cause by the supreme judicature of the nation? JOHNSON: No, sir, I do not think it was wrong to publish these letters. If they are thought to do harm, why not answer them? But they will do no harm. If Mr Douglas be indeed the son of Lady Jane, he cannot be hurt: if he be not her son, and yet has the great estate of the family

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of Douglas, he may well submit to have a pamphlet against him by Andrew Stuart. Sir, I think such a publication does good, as it does good to show us the possibilities of human life. And, sir, you will not say that the Douglas cause was a cause of easy decision, when it divided your Court as much as it could do, to be determined at all. When your judges were seven and seven, the casting vote of the President must be given on one side or other, no matter, for my argument, on which; one or the other *must* be taken; as when I am to move, there is no matter which leg I move first. And then, sir, it was otherwise determined here. No, sir, a more dubious determination of any question cannot be imagined.¹

He said: "Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. Sir, a game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of chance. A man may be beat at times by one who has not the tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith's putting himself against another, is like a man laying a hundred to one who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man's while. A man should not lay a hundred to one, unless he can easily spare it, though he has a hundred chances for him: he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state. When he contends, if he gets the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation: if he does not get the better, he is miserably vexed."

Johnson's own superlative power of wit set him above any risk of such uneasiness. Garrick had remarked to me

¹ I regretted that Dr Johnson never took the trouble to study a question which interested nations. He would not even read a pamphlet which I wrote upon it, entitled *The Essence of the Douglas Cause*, which, I have reason to flatter myself, had considerable effect in favour of Mr Douglas, of whose legitimate filiation I was then, and am still, firmly convinced. Let me add, that no fact can be more respectably ascertained, than by a judgment of the most august tribunal in the world; a judgment, in which Lord Mansfield and Lord Camden united in 1769, and from which only five of a numerous body entered a protest.

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of him, a few days before : " Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared with him. You may be diverted by them ; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no."

Goldsmith, however, was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in company with them one day, when Goldsmith said that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. " For instance," said he, " the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill," continued he, " consists in making them talk like little fishes." While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie he observed Johnson shaking his sides and laughing. Upon which he smartly proceeded : " Why, Dr Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think ; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like *whales*."

Johnson, though remarkable for his great variety of composition, never exercised his talents in fable, except we allow his beautiful tale published in Mrs Williams's *Miscellanies* to be of that species. I have, however, found among his manuscript collections the following sketch of one :

" Glow-worm lying in the garden saw a candle in a neighbouring palace—and complained of the littleness of his own light ;—another observed—wait a little ;—soon dark ;—have outlasted πολλ [many] of these glaring lights which only are brighter as they haste to nothing."

On Thursday, 29th April, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Langton, Dr Goldsmith, and Mr Thrale. I was very desirous to get Dr Johnson absolutely fixed in his resolution to go with me to the Hebrides this year ; and I told him that I had received a letter from Dr Robertson, the historian, upon the subject,

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with which he was much pleased, and now talked in such a manner of his long-intended tour, that I was satisfied he meant to fulfil his engagement.

The custom of eating dogs at Otaheite being mentioned, Goldsmith observed that this was also a custom in China; that a dog-butcher is as common there as any other butcher, and that when he walks abroad all the dogs fall on him. JOHNSON: That is not owing to his killing dogs, sir. I remember a butcher at Lichfield, whom a dog that was in the house where I lived always attacked. It is the smell of carnage which provokes this, let the animals he has killed be what they may. GOLDSMITH: Yes, there is a general abhorrence in animals at the signs of massacre. If you put a tub full of blood into a stable, the horses are like to go mad. JOHNSON: I doubt that. GOLDSMITH: Nay, sir, it is a fact well authenticated. THRALE: You had better prove it before you put it into your book on natural history. You may do it in my stable if you will. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, I would not have him prove it. If he is content to take his information from others, he may get through his book with little trouble, and without much endangering his reputation. But if he makes experiments for so comprehensive a book as his, there would be no end to them: his erroneous assertions would then fall upon himself, and he might be blamed for not having made experiments as to every particular.

The character of Mallet having been introduced, and spoken of slightly by Goldsmith—JOHNSON: Why, sir, Mallet had talents enough to keep his literary reputation alive as long as he himself lived; and that, let me tell you, is a good deal. GOLDSMITH: But I cannot agree that it was so. His literary reputation was dead long before his natural death. I consider an author's literary reputation to be alive only while his name will ensure a good price for his copy from the booksellers. I will get you (to Johnson) a hundred guineas for anything whatever that you shall write, if you put your name to it.

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Dr Goldsmith's new play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, being mentioned—JOHNSON: I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry.

Goldsmith having said that Garrick's compliment to the Queen, which he introduced into the play of *The Chances*, which he had altered and revised this year, was mean and gross flattery—JOHNSON: Why, sir, I would not *write*, I would not give solemnly under my hand a character beyond what I thought really true; but a speech on the stage, let it flatter ever so extravagantly, is formular. It has always been formular to flatter kings and queens; so much so, that even in our Church Service we have "our most religious King," used indiscriminately, whoever is King. Nay, they even flatter themselves—"we have been graciously pleased to grant." No modern flattery, however, is so gross as that of the Augustan age, where the Emperor was deified. "*Præsens Divus habebitur Augustus.*" And as to meanness (rising into warmth), how is it mean in a player—a showman—a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his Queen? The attempt, indeed, was dangerous; for if it had missed, what became of Garrick, and what became of the Queen? As Sir William Temple says of a great General, it is necessary not only that his designs should be formed in a masterly manner, but that they should be attended with success. Sir, it is right, at a time when the Royal Family is not generally liked, to let it be seen that the people like at least one of them. SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: I do not perceive why the profession of a player should be despised; for the great and ultimate end of all the employments of mankind is to produce amusement. Garrick produces more amusement than anybody. BOSWELL: You say, Dr Johnson, that Garrick exhibits himself for a shilling. In this respect he is only on a footing with a lawyer, who exhibits himself for his fee, and even will maintain any nonsense or absurdity, if the case requires it. Garrick refuses a play or a part which



DAVID GARRICK

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he does not like ; a lawyer never refuses. JOHNSON : Why, sir, what does this prove ? only that a lawyer is worse. Boswell is now like Jack in *The Tale of a Tub*, who, when he is puzzled by an argument, hangs himself. He thinks I shall cut him down, but I'll let him hang (laughing vociferously). SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS : Mr Boswell thinks that the profession of a lawyer being unquestionably honourable, if he can show the profession of a player to be more honourable, he proves his argument.

On Friday, 30th April, I dined with him at Mr Beauclerk's, where were Lord Charlemont, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some more members of the Literary Club, whom he had obligingly invited to meet me, as I was this evening to be balloted for as candidate for admission into that distinguished society. Johnson had done me the honour to propose me, and Beauclerk was very zealous for me.

Goldsmith being mentioned—JOHNSON : It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than anyone else. SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS : Yet there is no man whose company is more liked. JOHNSON : To be sure, sir. When people find a man of the most distinguished abilities as a writer their inferior while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them. What Goldsmith comically says of himself is very true—he always gets the better when he argues alone—meaning, that he is master of a subject in his study, and can write well upon it ; but when he comes into company, grows confused, and unable to talk. Take him as a poet, his *Traveller* is a very fine performance ; aye, and so is his *Deserted Village*, were it not sometimes too much the echo of his *Traveller*. Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as an historian, he stands in the first class. BOSWELL : An historian ! My dear sir, you surely will not rank his compilation of the *Roman History* with the works of other historians of this age ? JOHNSON : Why, who are before him ? BOSWELL : Hume—Robertson—Lord Lyttelton. JOHNSON (his antipathy to the Scotch beginning to rise) :

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I have not read Hume; but, doubtless, Goldsmith's *History* is better than the verbiage of Robertson, or the foppery of Dalrymple. BOSWELL: Will you not admit the superiority of Robertson, in whose *History* we find such penetration—such painting? JOHNSON: Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history, it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw, draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir Joshua paints faces in a history piece: he imagines an heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson's work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his *History*. Now Robertson might have put twice as much into his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool: the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, sir; I always thought Robertson would be crushed by his own weight—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you shortly all you want to know: Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson's cumbrous detail a second time; but Goldsmith's plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils: "Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out." Goldsmith's abridgment is better than that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius; and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot, in the same places of the *Roman History*, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying everything he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a *Natural History*, and will make it as entertaining as a Persian tale.

I cannot dismiss the present topic without observing that it is probable that Dr Johnson, who owned that he often "talked for victory," rather urged plausible objections to Dr Robertson's excellent historical works, in the ardour

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of contest, than expressed his real and decided opinion ; for it is not easy to suppose that he should so widely differ from the rest of the literary world.

JOHNSON: I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poets' Corner, I said to him :

“ *Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.*”¹

When we got to Temple Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slyly whispered me :

“ *Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur ISTIS.*”²

Johnson praised John Bunyan highly. “ His *Pilgrim's Progress* has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story ; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable that it begins very much like the poem of Dante ; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser.”

A proposition which had been agitated, that monuments to eminent persons should, for the time to come, be erected in St Paul's Church as well as in Westminster Abbey, was mentioned ; and it was asked, who should be honoured by having his monument first erected there. Somebody suggested Pope. JOHNSON: Why, sir, as Pope was a Roman Catholic, I would not have his to be first. I think Milton's rather should have the precedence. I think more highly of him now than I did at twenty. There is more thinking in him and in Butler than in any of our poets.

Some of the company expressed a wonder why the author of so excellent a book as *The Whole Duty of Man* should

¹ Ovid, *De Art. Amand.*, l. iii., v. 13.

² In allusion to Dr Johnson's supposed political principles, and perhaps his own.

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conceal himself. JOHNSON : There may be different reasons assigned for this, any one of which would be very sufficient. He may have been a clergyman, and may have thought that his religious counsels would have less weight when known to come from a man whose profession was Theology. He may have been a man whose practice was not suitable to his principles ; so that his character might injure the effect of his book, which he had written in a season of penitence. Or he may have been a man of rigid self-denial, so that he would have no reward for his pious labours while in this world, but refer it all to a future state.

The gentlemen went away to their club, and I was left at Beauclerk's till the fate of my election should be announced to me. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found. Mr Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance ; Dr Nugent, Mr Garrick, Dr Goldsmith, Mr (now Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined. Upon my entrance, Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and with humorous formality gave me a *Charge*, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a good member of this club.

Goldsmith produced some very absurd verses which had been publicly recited to an audience for money. JOHNSON : I can match this nonsense. There was a poem called *Eugenio*, which came out some years ago, and concluded thus :

“ And now, ye trifling self-assuming elves,
Brimful of pride, of nothing, of yourselves,
Survey *Eugenio*, view him o'er and o'er,
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more.”

Nay, Dryden in his poem on the Royal Society has these lines :

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“ Then we upon our globe’s last verge shall go,
And see the ocean leaning on the sky ;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.”

Talking of puns, Johnson, who had a great contempt for that species of wit, deigned to allow that there was one good pun in *Menagiana*, I think on the word *corps*.

Much pleasant conversation passed, which Johnson relished with great good humour. But his conversation alone, or what led to it, or was interwoven with it, is the business of this work.

On Saturday, 1st May, we dined by ourselves at our old rendezvous, the Mitre tavern. He was placid, but not much disposed to talk. He observed that “ The Irish mix better with the English than the Scotch do : their language is nearer to English ; as a proof of which, they succeed very well as players, which Scotchmen do not. Then, sir, they have not that extreme nationality which we find in the Scotch. I will do you, Boswell, the justice to say, that you are the most *unscottified* of your countrymen. You are almost the only instance of a Scotchman that I have known who did not at every other sentence bring in some other Scotchman.”

We drank tea with Mrs Williams. I introduced a question which has been much agitated in the Church of Scotland, whether the claim of lay-patrons to present ministers to parishes be well founded ; and supposing it to be well founded, whether it ought to be exercised without the concurrence of the people. That Church is composed of a series of judicatures : a Presbytery—a Synod—and, finally, a General Assembly ; before all of which this matter may be contended : and in some cases the Presbytery having refused to induct or *settle*, as they call it, the person presented by the patron, it has been found necessary to appeal to the General Assembly. He said I might see the subject well treated in *The Defence of Pluralities* ; and although he

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thought that a patron should exercise his right with tenderness to the inclinations of the people of a parish, he was very clear as to his right. Then supposing the question to be pleaded before the General Assembly, he dictated to me what follows:

“Against the right of patrons is commonly opposed, by the inferior judicatures, the plea of conscience. Their conscience tells them that the people ought to choose their pastor; their conscience tells them that they ought not to impose upon a congregation a minister ungrateful and unacceptable to his auditors. Conscience is nothing more than a conviction felt by ourselves of something to be done or something to be avoided; and, in questions of simple unperplexed morality, conscience is very often a guide that may be trusted. But before conscience can determine, the state of the question is supposed to be completely known. In questions of law, or of fact, conscience is very often confounded with opinion. No man’s conscience can tell him the rights of another man; they must be known by rational investigation or historical inquiry. Opinion, which he that holds it may call his conscience, may teach some men that religion would be promoted, and quiet preserved, by granting to the people universally the choice of their ministers. But it is a conscience very ill informed that violates the rights of one man, for the convenience of another. Religion cannot be promoted by injustice: and it was never yet found that a popular election was very quietly transacted.

“That justice would be violated by transferring to the people the right of patronage, is apparent to all who know whence that right had its original. The right of patronage was not at first a privilege torn by power from unresisting poverty. It is not an authority at first usurped in times of ignorance, and established only by succession and by precedents. It is not a grant capriciously made from a higher tyrant to a lower. It is a right dearly purchased by the first possessors, and justly inherited by those that succeeded them. When Christianity was established in this island, a regular

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mode of public worship was prescribed. Public worship requires a public place ; and the proprietors of lands, as they were converted, built churches for their families and their vassals. For the maintenance of ministers, they settled a certain portion of their lands ; and a district, through which each minister was required to extend his care, was, by that circumscription, constituted a parish. This is a position so generally received in England, that the extent of a manor and of a parish are regularly received for each other. The churches which the proprietors of lands had thus built and thus endowed, they justly thought themselves entitled to provide with ministers ; and where the Episcopal government prevails, the bishop has no power to reject a man nominated by the patron, but for some crime that might exclude him from the priesthood. For the endowment of the church being the gift of the landlord, he was consequently at liberty to give it according to his choice to any man capable of performing the holy offices. The people did not choose him, because the people did not pay him.

“ We hear it sometimes urged, that this original right is passed out of memory, and is obliterated and obscured by many translations of property and changes of government ; that scarce any church is now in the hands of the heirs of the builders ; and that the present persons have entered subsequently upon the pretended rights by a thousand accidental and unknown causes. Much of this, perhaps, is true. But how is the right of patronage extinguished ? If the right followed the lands, it is possessed by the same equity by which the lands are possessed. It is, in effect, part of the manor, and protected by the same laws with every other privilege. Let us suppose an estate forfeited by treason, and granted by the Crown to a new family. With the lands were forfeited all the rights appendant to those lands ; by the same power that grants the lands the rights also are granted. The right lost to the patron falls not to the people, but is either retained by the Crown, or, what to the people is the same thing, is by the Crown given away.

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Let it change hands ever so often, it is possessed by him that receives it with the same right as it was conveyed. It may, indeed, like all our possessions, be forcibly seized or fraudulently obtained. But no injury is still done to the people; for what they never had, they have never lost. Caius may usurp the right of Titius; but neither Caius nor Titius injures the people: and no man's conscience, however tender or however active, can prompt him to restore what may be proved to have been never taken away. Supposing, what I think cannot be proved, that a popular election of ministers were to be desired, our desires are not the measure of equity. It were to be desired that power should be only in the hands of the merciful, and riches in the possession of the generous; but the law must leave both riches and power where it finds them; and must often leave riches with the covetous, and power with the cruel. Convenience may be a rule in little things, where no other rule has been established. But as the great end of government is to give every man his own, no inconvenience is greater than that of making right uncertain. Nor is any man more an enemy to public peace than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination, by inciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher.

"Having thus shown that the right of patronage, being originally purchased, may be legally transferred, and that it is now in the hands of lawful possessors, at least as certainly as any other right, we have left to the advocates of the people no other plea than that of convenience. Let us, therefore, now consider what the people would really gain by a general abolition of the right of patronage. What is most to be desired by such a change is, that the country should be supplied with better ministers. But why should we suppose that the parish will make a wiser choice than the patron? If we suppose mankind actuated by interest, the patron is more likely to choose with caution, because he will suffer more by choosing wrong. By the deficiencies of his

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minister, or by his vices, he is equally offended with the rest of the congregation; but he will have this reason more to lament them, that they will be imputed to his absurdity or corruption. The qualifications of a minister are well known to be learning and piety. Of his learning the patron is probably the only judge in the parish; and of his piety not less a judge than others; and is more likely to inquire minutely and diligently before he gives a presentation, than one of the parochial rabble, who can give nothing but a vote. It may be urged, that though the parish might not choose better ministers, they would at least choose ministers whom they like better, and who would therefore officiate with greater efficacy. That ignorance and perverseness should always obtain what they like was never considered as the end of government; of which it is the great and standing benefit, that the wise see for the simple, and the regular act for the capricious. But that this argument supposes the people capable of judging, and resolute to act according to their best judgments, though this be sufficiently absurd, is not all its absurdity. It supposes not only wisdom, but unanimity, in those who upon no other occasions are unanimous or wise. If by some strange concurrence all the voices of a parish should unite in the choice of any single man, though I could not charge the patron with injustice for presenting a minister, I should censure him as unkind and injudicious. But, it is evident, that as in all other popular elections there will be contrariety of judgment and acrimony of passion, a parish upon every vacancy would break into factions, and the contest for the choice of a minister would set neighbours at variance and bring discord into families. The minister would be taught all the arts of a candidate, would flatter some and bribe others; and the electors, as in all other cases, would call for holidays and ale, and break the heads of each other during the jollity of the canvass. The time must, however, come at last, when one of the factions must prevail, and one of the ministers get possession of the church. On what terms does he enter

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upon his ministry but those of enmity with half his parish? By what prudence or what diligence can he hope to conciliate the affections of that party by whose defeat he has obtained his living? Every man who voted against him will enter the church with hanging head and downcast eyes, afraid to encounter that neighbour by whose vote and influence he has been overpowered. He will hate his neighbour for opposing him, and his minister for having prospered by the opposition; and as he will never see him but with pain, he will never see him but with hatred. Of a minister presented by the patron, the parish has seldom anything worse to say than that they do not know him. Of a minister chosen by a popular contest, all those who do not favour him have nursed up in their bosoms principles of hatred and reasons of rejection. Anger is excited principally by pride. The pride of a common man is very little exasperated by the supposed usurpation of an acknowledged superior. He bears only his little share of a general evil, and suffers in common with the whole parish: but when the contest is between equals, the defeat has many aggravations; and he that is defeated by his next neighbour is seldom satisfied without some revenge: and it is hard to say what bitterness of malignity would prevail in a parish where these elections should happen to be frequent, and the enmity of opposition should be rekindled before it had cooled."

Though I present to my readers Dr Johnson's masterly thoughts on this subject, I think it proper to declare that, notwithstanding I am myself a lay-patron, I do not entirely subscribe to his opinion.

On Friday, 7th May, I breakfasted with him at Mr Thrale's in the Borough. While we were alone I endeavoured as well as I could to apologise for a lady who had been divorced from her husband by Act of Parliament. I said that he had used her very ill, had behaved brutally to her, and that she could not continue to live with him without having her delicacy contaminated; that all affection for him was thus destroyed; that the essence of conjugal union

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being gone, there remained only a cold form, a mere civil obligation ; that she was in the prime of life, with qualities to produce happiness ; that these ought not to be lost ; and, that the gentleman on whose account she was divorced had gained her heart while thus unhappily situated. Seduced, perhaps, by the charms of the lady in question, I thus attempted to palliate what I was sensible could not be justified ; for, when I had finished my harangue, my venerable friend gave me a proper check : “ My dear sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman’s a whore, and there’s an end on’t.”

He described the father of one of his friends thus : “ Sir, he was so exuberant a talker at public meetings, that the gentlemen of his county were afraid of him. No business could be done for his declamation.”

He did not give me full credit when I mentioned that I had carried on a short conversation by signs with some Esquimaux, who were then in London, particularly with one of them who was a priest. He thought I could not make them understand me. No man was more incredulous as to particular facts which were at all extraordinary ; and therefore no man was more scrupulously inquisitive, in order to discover the truth.

I dined with him this day at the house of my friends, Messieurs Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry : there were present their elder brother, Mr Dilly of Bedfordshire, Dr Goldsmith, Mr Langton, Mr Claxton, Reverend Dr Mayo, a dissenting minister, the Reverend Mr Toplady, and my friend the Reverend Mr Temple.

Hawkesworth’s compilation of the voyages to the South Sea being mentioned—JOHNSON : Sir, if you talk of it as a subject of commerce, it will be gainful ; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will not be much of that. Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him, and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think. BOSWELL : But many insects, sir. JOHNSON : Why, sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty

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thousand species. They might have stayed at home and discovered enough in that way.

Talking of birds, I mentioned Mr Daines Barrington's ingenious essay against the received notion of their migration. JOHNSON: I think we have as good evidence for the migration of woodcocks as can be desired. We find they disappear at a certain time of the year, and appear again at a certain time of the year; and some of them, when weary in their flight, have been known to alight on the rigging of ships far out at sea.—One of the company observed that there had been instances of some of them found in summer in Essex. JOHNSON: Sir, that strengthens our argument. *Exceptio probat regulam*. Some being found shows that, if all remained, many would be found. A few sick or lame ones may be found. GOLDSMITH: There is a partial migration of the swallows; the stronger ones migrate, the others do not.

BOSWELL: I am well assured that the people of Otaheite who have the bread-tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread—ploughing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking. JOHNSON: Why, sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are told of the advantages of civilised life. Were you to tell men who live without houses how we pile brick upon brick and rafter upon rafter, and that after a house is raised to a certain height a man tumbles off a scaffold and breaks his neck, he would laugh heartily at our folly in building; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, sir (holding up a slice of a good loaf), this is better than the bread-tree.

He repeated an argument, which is to be found in his *Rambler*, against the notion that the brute creation is endowed with the faculty of reason: "Birds build by instinct; they never improve: they build their first nest as well as any one that they ever build." GOLDSMITH: Yet we see if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will

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make a slighter nest and lay again. JOHNSON: Sir, that is because at first she has full time, and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight. GOLDSMITH: The nidification of birds is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it.

I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON: Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word: it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right. MAYO: I am of opinion, sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion, and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right. JOHNSON: Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right; for he ought to inform himself and think justly. But, sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what that society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks; but, while he thinks himself right, he may, and ought, to enforce what he thinks. MAYO: Then, sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians. JOHNSON: Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other.

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GOLDSMITH: But how is a man to act, sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?

JOHNSON: Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day. GOLDSMITH: But have they a moral right to do this?

JOHNSON: Nay, sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from heaven.

GOLDSMITH: I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the Grand Signor to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet. JOHNSON: Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, "thou shalt not kill." But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner, it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity. I have said that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from heaven. GOLDSMITH: How is this to be

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known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ—— JOHNSON (interrupting him): Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred: as many of them ran away as could. BOSWELL: But, sir, there was your countryman, Elwal, who you told me challenged King George with his black-guards and his red-guards. JOHNSON: My countryman, Elwal, sir, should have been put in the stocks: a proper pulpit for him, and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough. BOSWELL: But Elwal thought himself in the right. JOHNSON: We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood (meaning Moorfields). MAYO: But, sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth? JOHNSON: Why, sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extra scandalum*; but, sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves? MAYO: This is making a joke of the subject. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, take it thus: that you teach them the community of goods, for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to anything but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, sir, you sap a great principle in society—property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notions of the Adamites, and they should run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog 'em into their doublets? MAYO: I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act. BOSWELL: So, sir, though he sees an enemy to the State charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off? MAYO: He must be sure of its direction against

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the State. JOHNSON: The magistrate is to judge of that. He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centres in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate, as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent. Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable that he who is chopping off his own fingers may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place, and he is hanged. MAYO: But, sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience? JOHNSON: I have already told you so, sir. You are coming back to where you were. BOSWELL: Dr Mayo is always taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half price. JOHNSON: Dr Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words.¹ Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third; this would be very bad with respect to the State; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains that the magistrate should "tolerate all things that are tolerable."

¹ Dr Mayo's calm temper and steady perseverance rendered him an admirable subject for the exercise of Dr Johnson's powerful abilities. He never flinched; but, after reiterated blows, remained seemingly unmoved as at the first. The scintillations of Johnson's genius flashed every time he was struck, without his receiving any injury. Hence he obtained the epithet of "The Literary Anvil."

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This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle ; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable. **TOPLADY** : Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity.

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and shine. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester who, at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone : "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person : "Sir," said he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour ; pray allow us now to hear him." **JOHNSON** (sternly) : Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent.—Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

A gentleman present ventured to ask Dr Johnson if there was not a material difference as to toleration of opinions which lead to action, and opinions merely speculative ; for instance, would it be wrong in the magistrate to tolerate those who preach against the doctrine of the Trinity ? Johnson was highly offended, and said : "I wonder, sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company." He told me afterwards that the impropriety was that perhaps some of the company might have talked on the subject in such terms as would have

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shocked him; or he might have been forced to appear in their eyes a narrow-minded man. The gentleman, with submissive deference, said he had only hinted at the question from a desire to hear Dr Johnson's opinion upon it. JOHNSON: Why then, sir, I think that permitting men to preach any opinion contrary to the doctrine of the Established Church tends, in a certain degree, to lessen the authority of the Church, and, consequently, to lessen the influence of religion. "It may be considered," said the gentleman, "whether it would not be politic to tolerate in such a case." JOHNSON: Sir, we have been talking of *right*: this is another question. I think it is *not* politic to tolerate in such a case.

Though he did not think it fit that so awful a subject should be introduced in a mixed company, and therefore at this time waived the theological question; yet his own orthodox belief in the sacred mystery of the Trinity is evinced beyond doubt, by the following passage in his private devotions:—"O Lord, hear my prayers, for Jesus Christ's sake; to Whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, *three persons and one God*, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen."¹

BOSWELL: Pray, Mr Dilly, how does Dr Leland's *History of Ireland* sell? JOHNSON (bursting forth with a generous indignation): The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation and other penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign: he had not been acknowledged by the Parliament of Ireland when they appeared in arms against him.

I here suggested something favourable of the Roman Catholics. TOPLADY: Does not their invocation of saints suppose omnipresence in the saints? JOHNSON: No, sir;

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 40.

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it supposes only pluripresence ; and when spirits are divested of matter, it seems probable that they should see with more extent than when in an embodied state. There is, therefore, no approach to an invasion of any of the divine attributes in the invocation of saints. But I think it is will-worship, and presumption. I see no command for it, and therefore think it is safer not to practise it.

He and Mr Langton and I went together to the club, where we found Mr Burke, Mr Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us : " I'll make Goldsmith forgive me " ; and then called to him in a loud voice : " Dr Goldsmith—something passed to-day where you and I dined ; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly : " It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr Langton observed that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit ; and that he said to a lady, who complained of his having talked little in company : " Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds." I observed that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. JOHNSON : Yes, sir, and that so often an empty purse !

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which

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was everywhere paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. "Sir," said he, "you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic."

He was still more mortified, when talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present; a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying: "Stay, stay, Doctor Shonson is going to say something." This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but, upon occasions, would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends; as, Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. I remember one day when Tom Davies was telling that Dr Johnson said: "We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy's* play," Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said: "I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*." Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. I recollect his telling me once, on my arrival in London: "Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr Sheridan. He calls him now *Sherry derry*."

To the Reverend Mr BAGSHAW, at Bromley.¹

SIR,—I return you my sincere thanks for your additions to my *Dictionary*; but the new edition has been published

¹ The Reverend Thomas Bagshaw, M.A., who died on 20th November 1787, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, Chaplain of Bromley College,

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some time, and therefore I cannot now make use of them. Whether I shall ever revise it more, I know not. If many readers had been as judicious, as diligent, and as communicative as yourself, my work had been better. The world must at present take it as it is. I am, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

May 8, 1773.

On Sunday, 8th May, I dined with Johnson at Mr Langton's, with Dr Beattie and some other company. He descanted on the subject of Literary Property. "There seems," said he, "to be in authors a stronger right of property than that by occupancy; a metaphysical right, a right, as it were, of creation, which should from its nature be perpetual; but the consent of nations is against it, and indeed reason and the interests of learning are against it; for were it to be perpetual, no book, however useful, could be universally diffused amongst mankind, should the proprietor take it into his head to restrain its circulation. No book could have the advantage of being edited with notes, however necessary to its elucidation, should the proprietor perversely oppose it. For the general good of the world, therefore, whatever valuable work has once been created by an author, and issued out by him, should be understood as no longer in his power, but as belonging to the public; at the same time the author is entitled to an adequate reward. This he should have by an exclusive right to his work for a considerable number of years."

He attacked Lord Monboddo's strange speculation on the primitive state of human nature; observing: "Sir, it is all conjecture about a thing useless, even were it known

in Kent, and Rector of Southfleet. He had resigned the cure of Bromley parish some time before his death. For this, and another letter from Dr Johnson in 1784, to the same truly respectable man, I am indebted to Dr John Loveday, of the Commons, who has obligingly transcribed them for me from the originals in his possession.

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to be true. Knowledge of all kinds is good. Conjecture, as to things useful, is good ; but conjecture as to what it would be useless to know, such as whether men ever went upon all-fours, is very idle."

On Monday, 9th May, as I was to set out on my return to Scotland next morning, I was desirous to see as much of Dr Johnson as I could. But I first called on Goldsmith to take leave of him. The jealousy and envy which, though possessed of many most amiable qualities, he frankly avowed, broke out violently at this interview. Upon another occasion, when Goldsmith confessed himself to be of an envious disposition, I contended with Johnson that we ought not to be angry with him, he was so candid in owning it. "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "we must be angry that a man has such a superabundance of an odious quality that he cannot keep it within his own breast, but it boils over." In my opinion, however, Goldsmith had not more of it than other people have, but only talked of it freely.

He now seemed very angry that Johnson was going to be a traveller ; said "he would be a dead-weight for me to carry, and that I should never be able to lug him along through the Highlands and Hebrides." Nor would he patiently allow me to enlarge upon Johnson's wonderful abilities ; but exclaimed : "Is he like Burke, who winds into a subject like a serpent?" "But," said I, "Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle."

I dined with Dr Johnson at General Paoli's. He was obliged, by indisposition, to leave the company early ; he appointed me, however, to meet him in the evening at Mr (now Sir Robert) Chambers's in the Temple, where he accordingly came, though he continued to be very ill. Chambers, as is common on such occasions, prescribed various remedies to him. JOHNSON (fretted by pain) : Pr'ythee don't tease me. Stay till I am well, and then you shall tell me how to cure myself.—He grew better, and talked with a noble enthusiasm of keeping up the representation of respectable families. His zeal on this subject

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was a circumstance in his character exceedingly remarkable, when it is considered that he himself had no pretensions to blood. I heard him once say: "I have great merit in being zealous for subordination and the honours of birth; for I can hardly tell who was my grandfather." He maintained the dignity and propriety of male succession, in opposition to the opinion of one of our friends, who had that day employed Mr Chambers to draw his will, devising his estate to his three sisters, in preference to a remote heir male. Johnson called them three *dowdies*, and said, with as high a spirit as the boldest baron in the most perfect days of the feudal system: "An ancient estate should always go to males. It is mighty foolish to let a stranger have it because he marries your daughter and takes your name. As for an estate newly acquired by trade, you may give it, if you will, to the dog Towzer, and let him keep his *own* name."

I have known him at times exceedingly diverted at what seemed to others a very small sport. He now laughed immoderately, without any reason that we could perceive, at our friend's making his will; called him the *testator*, and added: "I dare say he thinks he has done a mighty thing. He won't stay till he gets home to his seat in the country to produce this wonderful deed: he'll call up the landlord of the first inn on the road, and, after a suitable preface upon mortality and the uncertainty of life, will tell him that he should not delay making his will; and here, sir, will he say, is my will, which I have just made, with the assistance of one of the ablest lawyers in the kingdom; and he will read it to him" (laughing all the time). "He believes he has made this will; but he did not make it: you, Chambers, made it for him. I trust you have had more conscience than to make him say, 'being of sound understanding'; ha, ha, ha! I hope he has left me a legacy. I'd have his will turned into verse, like a ballad."

In this playful manner did he run on, exulting in his own pleasantry, which certainly was not such as might be expected from the author of *The Rambler*, but which is here

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preserved, that my readers may be acquainted even with the slightest occasional characteristics of so eminent a man.

Mr Chambers did not by any means relish this jocularity upon a matter of which *pars magna fuit*, and seemed impatient till he got rid of us. Johnson could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till we got without the Temple Gate. He then burst into such a fit of laughter, that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot-pavement, and sent forth peals so loud, that in the silence of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch.

This most ludicrous exhibition of the awful, melancholy, and venerable Johnson happened well to counteract the feelings of sadness which I used to experience when parting with him for a considerable time. I accompanied him to his door, where he gave me his blessing.

He records of himself this year: "Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low Dutch language."¹ It is to be observed that he here admits an opinion of the human mind being influenced by seasons, which he ridicules in his writings. His progress, he says, "was interrupted by a fever, which, by the imprudent use of a small print, left an inflammation in his useful eye." We cannot but admire his spirit when we know that amidst a complication of bodily and mental distress he was still animated with the desire of intellectual improvement. Various notes of his studies appear on different days in his manuscript diary of this year; such as, "*Inchoavi lectionem Pentateuchi—Finivi lectionem Conf. Fab. Burdonum.—Legi primum actum Troadum.—Legi Dissertationem Clerici postremam de Pent.—2 of Clark's Sermons.—L. Appolonii pugnam Betriciam.—L. centum versus Homeri.*" Let this serve as a specimen of what accessions of literature he was perpetually

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 129.

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infusing into his mind, while he charged himself with idleness.

This year died Mrs Salusbury (mother of Mrs Thrale), a lady whom he appears to have esteemed much, and whose memory he honoured with an epitaph.¹

In a letter from Edinburgh, dated the 29th of May, I pressed him to persevere in his resolution to make this year the projected visit to the Hebrides, of which he and I had talked for many years, and which I was confident would afford us much entertainment.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—When your letter came to me, I was so darkened by an inflammation in my eye that I could not for some time read it. I can now write without trouble, and can read large prints. My eye is gradually growing stronger; and I hope will be able to take some delight in the survey of a Caledonian loch.

Chambers is going a Judge, with six thousand a year, to Bengal. He and I shall come down together as far as Newcastle, and thence I shall easily get to Edinburgh. Let me know the exact time when your Courts intermit. I must conform a little to Chambers's occasions, and he must conform a little to mine. The time which you shall fix must be the common point to which we will come as near as we can. Except this eye, I am very well.

Beattie is so caressed, and invited, and treated, and liked, and flattered, by the great, that I can see nothing of him. I am in great hope that he will be well provided for, and then we will live upon him at the Marischal College, without pity or modesty.

— left the town without taking leave of me, and is gone in deep dudgeon to —. Is not this very childish? Where is now my legacy?"

I hope your dear lady and her dear baby are both well.

¹ Mrs Piozzi's *Anecdotes of Johnson*, p. 131.

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I shall see them too when I come ; and I have that opinion of your choice as to suspect that when I have seen Mrs Boswell I shall be less willing to go away. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET,
July 5, 1773.

Write to me as soon as you can. Chambers is now at Oxford.

I again wrote to him, informing him that the Court of Session rose on the 12th of August, hoping to see him before that time, and expressing, perhaps in too extravagant terms, my admiration of him, and my expectation of pleasure from our intended tour.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I shall set out from London on Friday the sixth of this month, and purpose not to loiter much by the way. Which day I shall be at Edinburgh I cannot exactly tell. I suppose I must drive to an inn, and send a porter to find you.

I am afraid Beattie will not be at his College soon enough for us, and I shall be sorry to miss him ; but there is no staying for the concurrence of all conveniences. We will do as well as we can. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

August 3, 1773.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—Not being at Mr Thrale's when your letter came, I had written the enclosed paper and sealed it ; bringing it hither for a frank, I found yours. If anything could repress my ardour, it would be such a letter as yours. To disappoint a friend is unpleasant : and he that forms

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expectations like yours must be disappointed. Think only when you see me that you see a man who loves you, and is proud and glad that you love him. I am, Sir, your most affectionate

SAM. JOHNSON.

August 3, 1773.

To the Same

NEWCASTLE, *Aug. 11, 1771.*

DEAR SIR,—I came hither last night, and hope, but do not absolutely promise, to be in Edinburgh on Saturday. Beattie will not come so soon. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

My compliments to your lady.

To the Same

Mr Johnson sends his compliments to Mr Boswell, being just arrived at Boyd's.

Saturday Night.

His stay in Scotland was from the 18th of August, on which day he arrived, till the 22nd of November, when he set out on his return to London; and I believe ninety-four days were never passed by any man in a more vigorous exertion.

He came by the way of Berwick upon Tweed to Edinburgh, where he remained a few days, and then went by St Andrews, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Fort Augustus, to the Hebrides, to visit which was the principal object he had in view. He visited the Isles of Sky, Rasay, Col, Mull, Inchkenneth, and Icolmkill. He travelled through Argyleshire by Inveraray, and from thence by Loch Lomond and Dunbarton to Glasgow, then by Loudon to Auchinleck in Ayrshire, the seat of my family, and then by Hamilton back to Edinburgh, where he again spent some time. He thus saw the four universities of Scotland, its three principal cities, and as

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much of the Highland and insular life as was sufficient for his philosophical contemplation. I had the pleasure of accompanying him during the whole of this journey. He was respectfully entertained by the great, the learned, and the elegant, wherever he went; nor was he less delighted with the hospitality which he experienced in humbler life.

His various adventures, and the force and vivacity of his mind, as exercised during this peregrination, upon innumerable topics, have been faithfully and to the best of my abilities displayed in my *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, to which, as the public has been pleased to honour it by a very extensive circulation, I beg to refer, as to a separate and remarkable portion of his life, which may be there seen in detail, and which exhibits as striking a view of his powers in conversation as his works do of his excellence in writing. Nor can I deny to myself the very flattering gratification of inserting here the character which my friend Mr Courtenay has been pleased to give of that work:

“ With Reynolds’ pencil, vivid, bold, and true,
So fervent Boswell gives him to our view :
In every trait we see his mind expand ;
The master rises by the pupil’s hand ;
We love the writer, praise his happy vein,
Grac’d with the naïveté of the sage Montaigne.
Hence not alone are brighter parts display’d,
But ev’n the specks of character portray’d :
We see the Rambler with fastidious smile
Mark the lone tree, and note the heath-clad isle ;
But when the heroic tale of Flora ¹ charms,
Deck’d in a kilt, he wields a chieftain’s arms :
The tuneful piper sounds a martial strain,
And Samuel sings, ‘ The King shall have his ain.’ ”

During his stay at Edinburgh, after his return from the Hebrides, he was at great pains to obtain information

¹ The celebrated Flora Macdonald. See Boswell’s *Tour*.

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concerning Scotland; and it will appear from his subsequent letters that he was not less solicitous for intelligence on this subject after his return to London.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I came home last night, without any in-commodity, danger, or weariness, and am ready to begin a new journey. I shall go to Oxford on Monday. I know Mrs Boswell wished me well to go¹; her wishes have not been disappointed. Mrs Williams has received Sir A.'s² letter.

Make my compliments to all those to whom my compliments may be welcome.

Let the box³ be sent as soon as it can, and let me know when to expect it.

Inquire, if you can, the order of the Clans: Macdonald is first, Maclean second; further I cannot go. Quicken Dr Webster.⁴ I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Nov. 27, 1773.

¹ In this he showed a very acute penetration. My wife paid him the most assiduous and respectful attention while he was our guest; so that I wonder how he discovered her wishing for his departure. The truth is, that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with their heads downwards when they did not burn bright enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not but be disagreeable to a lady. Besides, she had not that high admiration of him which was felt by most of those who knew him; and what was very natural to a female mind, she thought he had too much influence over her husband. She once in a little warmth made, with more point than justice, this remark upon that subject: "I have seen many a bear led by a man; but I never before saw a man led by a bear."

² Sir Alexander Gordon, one of the professors at Aberdeen.

³ This was a box containing a number of curious things which he had picked up in Scotland, particularly some horn spoons.

⁴ The Reverend Dr Alexander Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, a man of distinguished abilities, who had promised him information concerning the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

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Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Dec. 2, 1773.

* * * * *

You shall have what information I can procure as to the order of the Clans. A gentleman of the name of Grant tells me that there is no settled order among them; and he says that the Macdonalds were not placed upon the right of the army at Culloden; the Stuarts were. I shall, however, examine witnesses of every name that I can find here. Dr Webster shall be quickened too. I like your little memorandums; they are symptoms of your being in earnest with your book of northern travels.

Your box shall be sent next week by sea. You will find in it some pieces of the broom bush, which you saw growing on the old castle of Auchinleck. The wood has a curious appearance when sawn across. You may either have a little writing-standish made of it, or get it formed into boards for a treatise on witchcraft, by way of a suitable binding.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Dec. 18, 1773.

* * * * *

You promised me an inscription for a print to be taken from an historical picture of Mary Queen of Scots being forced to resign her crown, which Mr Hamilton at Rome has painted for me. The two following have been sent to me:—

“ Maria Scotorum Regina meliori seculo digna, jus regium civibus seditiosis invita resignat.”

“ Cives seditiosi Mariam Scotorum Reginam sese muneri abdicare invitam cogunt.”

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Be so good as to read the passage in Robertson, and see if you cannot give me a better inscription. I must have it both in Latin and English; so if you should not give me another Latin one, you will at least choose the best of these two, and send a translation of it.

His humane forgiving disposition was put to a pretty strong test on his return to London, by a liberty which Mr Thomas Davies had taken with him in his absence, which was, to publish two volumes, entitled *Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces*, which he advertised in the newspapers, "By the Author of *The Rambler*." In this collection several of Dr Johnson's acknowledged writings, and several of his anonymous performances, and some which he had written for others, were inserted; but there were also some in which he had no concern whatever. He was at first very angry, as he had good reason to be. But, upon consideration of his poor friend's narrow circumstances, and that he had only a little profit in view, and meant no harm, he soon relented, and continued his kindness to him as formerly.

In the course of his self-examination with retrospect to this year, he seems to have been much dejected; for he says, 1st January 1774: "This year has past with so little improvement, that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning"¹; and yet we have seen how he *read*, and we know how he *talked* during that period.

1774. *Ætat.* 65. He was now seriously engaged in writing an account of our travels in the Hebrides, in consequence of which I had the pleasure of a more frequent correspondence with him.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—My operations have been hindered by a cough; at least I flatter myself that if the cough had not

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 129.

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come, I should have been further advanced. But I have had no intelligence from Dr W—— [Webster], nor from the excise office, nor from you. No account of the little borough.¹ Nothing of the Erse language. I have yet heard nothing of my box.

You must make haste and gather me all you can, and do it quickly, or I will and shall do without it.

Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, and tell her that I do not love her the less for wishing me away. I gave her trouble enough, and shall be glad, in recompense, to give her any pleasure.

I would send some porter into the Hebrides, if I knew which way it could be got to my kind friends there. Inquire, and let me know.

Make my compliments to all the Doctors of Edinburgh, and to all my friends from one end of Scotland to the other.

Write to me, and send me what intelligence you can: and if anything is too bulky for the post, let me have it by the carrier. I do not like trusting winds and waves. I am, dear Sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Jan. 29, 1774.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—In a day or two after I had written the last discontented letter I received my box, which was very welcome. But still I must entreat you to hasten Dr Webster, and continue to pick up what you can that may be useful.

Mr Oglethorpe was with me this morning. You know his errand. He was not unwelcome.

Tell Mrs Boswell that my good intentions towards her still continue. I should be glad to do anything that would either benefit or please her.

Chambers is not yet gone, but so hurried, or so negligent,

¹ The ancient burgh of Prestwick, in Ayrshire.

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or so proud, that I rarely see him. I have, indeed, for some weeks past, been very ill of a cold and cough, and have been at Mrs Thrale's, that I might be taken care of. I am much better, *novæ redeunt in prælia vires*; but I am yet tender, and easily disordered. How happy it was that neither of us were ill in the Hebrides.

The question of Literary Property is this day before the Lords. Murphy drew up the appellants' case, that is, the plea against the perpetual right. I have not seen it, nor heard the decision. I would not have the right perpetual.

I will write to you as anything occurs, and do you send me something about my Scottish friends. I have very great kindness for them. Let me know likewise how fees come in, and when we are to see you. I am, Sir, yours affectionately,
SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, Feb. 7, 1774.

He wrote the following letters to Mr Steevens, his able associate in editing Shakspeare:—

To GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq., in Hampstead

SIR,—If I am asked when I have seen Mr Steevens, you know what answer I must give; if I am asked when I shall see him, I wish you would tell me what to say.

If you have Lesley's *History of Scotland*, or any other book about Scotland, except Boetius and Buchanan, it will be a kindness if you send them to, Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 7, 1774.

To the Same

SIR,—We are thinking to augment our club, and I am desirous of nominating you, if you care to stand the ballot, and can attend on Friday nights at least twice in five weeks: less than that is too little, and rather more will be expected.

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Be pleased to let me know before Friday. I am, Sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 21, 1774.

To the Same

SIR,—Last night you became a member of the club ; if you call on me on Friday I will introduce you. A gentleman, proposed after you, was rejected.

I thank you for Neander, but wish he were not so fine. I will take care of him. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 5, 1774.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Dr Webster's informations were much less exact and much less determinate than I expected : they are, indeed, much less positive than, if he can trust his own book¹ which he laid before me, he is able to give. But I believe it will always be found that he who calls much for information will advance his work but slowly.

I am, however, obliged to you, dear sir, for your endeavours to help me, and hope that between us something will some time be done, if not on this, on some occasion.

Chambers is either married, or almost married, to Miss Wilton, a girl of sixteen, exquisitely beautiful, whom he has, with his lawyer's tongue, persuaded to take her chance with him in the East.

We have added to the club, Charles Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr Fordyce, and Mr Steevens.

Return my thanks to Dr Webster. Tell Dr Robertson

¹ A manuscript account drawn up by Dr Webster of all the parishes in Scotland, ascertaining their length, breadth, number of inhabitants, and distinguishing Protestants and Roman Catholics. This book had been transmitted to Government, and Dr Johnson saw a copy of it in Dr Webster's possession.

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that I have not much to reply to his censure of my negligence ; and tell Dr Blair that since he has written hither what I said to him, we must now consider ourselves as even, forgive one another, and begin again. I care not how soon, for he is a very pleasing man. Pay my compliments to all my friends, and remind Lord Elibank of his promise to give me all his works.

I hope Mrs Boswell and little Miss are well. When shall I see them again? She is a sweet lady, only she was so glad to see me go that I have almost a mind to come again, that she may again have the same pleasure.

Inquire if it be practicable to send a small present of a cask of porter to Dunvegan, Rasay, and Col. I would not wish to be thought forgetful of civilities. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 5, 1774.

On the 5th of March I wrote to him, requesting his counsel whether I should this spring come to London. I stated to him on the one hand some pecuniary embarrassments, which, together with my wife's situation at that time, made me hesitate ; and, on the other, the pleasure and improvement which my annual visit to the metropolis always afforded me ; and particularly mentioned a peculiar satisfaction which I experienced in celebrating the festival of Easter in St Paul's Cathedral ; that to my fancy it appeared like going up to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover ; and that the strong devotion which I felt on that occasion diffused its influence on my mind through the rest of the year.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

[Not dated, but written about the 15th of March.]

DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed to think that since I received your letter I have passed so many days without answering it.

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I think there is no great difficulty in resolving your doubts. The reasons for which you are inclined to visit London are, I think, not of sufficient strength to answer the objections. That you should delight to come once a year to the fountain of intelligence and pleasure is very natural; but both information and pleasure must be regulated by propriety. Pleasure, which cannot be obtained but by unseasonable or unsuitable expense, must always end in pain; and pleasure, which must be enjoyed at the expense of another's pain, can never be such as a worthy mind can fully delight in.

What improvement you might gain by coming to London, you may easily supply, or easily compensate, by enjoining yourself some particular study at home, or opening some new avenue to information. Edinburgh is not yet exhausted; and I am sure you will find no pleasure here which can deserve either that you should anticipate any part of your future fortune, or that you should condemn yourself and your lady to penurious frugality for the rest of the year.

I need not tell you what regard you owe to Mrs Boswell's entreaties; or how much you ought to study the happiness of her who studies yours with so much diligence, and of whose kindness you enjoy such good effects. Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions. She permitted you to ramble last year, you must permit her now to keep you at home.

Your last reason is so serious, that I am unwilling to oppose it. Yet you must remember that your image of worshipping once a year in a certain place, in imitation of the Jews, is but a comparison, and *simile non est idem*; if the annual resort to Jerusalem was a duty to the Jews, it was a duty because it was commanded; and you have no such command, therefore no such duty. It may be dangerous to receive too readily, and indulge too fondly, opinions, from which, perhaps, no pious mind is wholly disengaged, of local sanctity and local devotion. You know what strange effects they have produced over a great part of the Christian

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world. I am now writing, and you, when you read this, are reading under the Eye of Omnipresence.

To what degree fancy is to be admitted into religious offices, it would require much deliberation to determine. I am far from intending totally to exclude it. Fancy is a faculty bestowed by our Creator, and it is reasonable that all His gifts should be used to His glory, that all our faculties should co-operate in His worship; but they are to co-operate according to the will of Him that gave them, according to the order which His wisdom has established. As ceremonies prudential or convenient are less obligatory than positive ordinances, as bodily worship is only the token to others or ourselves of mental adoration, so Fancy is always to act in subordination to Reason. We may take Fancy for a companion, but must follow Reason as our guide. We may allow Fancy to suggest certain ideas in certain places, but Reason must always be heard, when she tells us that those ideas and those places have no natural or necessary relation. When we enter a church we habitually recall to mind the duty of adoration, but we must not omit adoration for want of a temple; because we know, and ought to remember, that the Universal Lord is everywhere present; and that therefore, to come to Jona, or to Jerusalem, though it may be useful, cannot be necessary.

Thus I have answered your letter, and have not answered it negligently. I love you too well to be careless when you are serious.

I think I shall be very diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected. I am, dear Sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Compliments to Madam and Miss.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—The lady who delivers this has a lawsuit, in which she desires to make use of your skill and eloquence,

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and she seems to think that she shall have something more of both for a recommendation from me; which, though I know how little you want any external incitement to your duty, I could not refuse her, because I know that at least it will not hurt her to tell you that I wish her well. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

May 10, 1774.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, May 12, 1774.

Lord Hailes has begged of me to offer you his best respects, and to transmit to you specimens of *Annals of Scotland, from the Accession of Malcolm Kenmore to the Death of James V.*, in drawing up which, his lordship has been engaged for some time. His lordship writes to me thus: "If I could procure Dr Johnson's criticisms, they would be of great use to me in the prosecution of my work, as they would be judicious and true. I have no right to ask that favour of him. If you could, it would highly oblige me."

Dr Blair requests you may be assured that he did not write to London what you said to him, and that neither by word nor letter has he made the least complaint of you; but, on the contrary, has a high respect for you, and loves you much more since he saw you in Scotland. It would both divert and please you to see his eagerness about this matter.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

STREATHAM, June 21, 1774.

DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I put the first sheets of the *Journey to the Hebrides* to the press. I have endeavoured to do you some justice in the first paragraph. It will be one volume in octavo, not thick.

It will be proper to make some presents in Scotland. You shall tell me to whom I shall give; and I have stipulated

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twenty-five for you to give in your own name. Some will take the present better from me, others better from you. In this, you who are to live in the place ought to direct. Consider it. Whatever you can get for my purpose, send me; and make my compliments to your lady and both the young ones. I am, Sir, your, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *June 25, 1774.*

You do not acknowledge the receipt of the various packets which I have sent to you. Neither can I prevail with you to *answer* my letters, though you honour me with *returns*. You have said nothing to me about poor Goldsmith,¹ nothing about Langton.

I have received for you, from the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, the following Erse books:—*The New Testament, Baxter's Call, The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, The Mother's Catechism, A Gaelic and English Vocabulary.*²

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,—I wish you could have looked over my book before the printer, but it could not easily be. I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than facts, the matter is not great, and the second edition will be mended, if any such there be. The press will go on slowly for a time, because I am going into Wales to-morrow.

I should be very sorry if I appeared to treat such a character as that of Lord Hailes otherwise than with high respect. I return the sheets,³ to which I have done what mischief

¹ Dr Goldsmith died 4th April this year.

² These books Dr Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library.

³ On the cover enclosing them, Dr Johnson wrote: "If my delay has given any reason for supposing that I have not a very deep sense of the honour done me by asking my judgment, I am very sorry."

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I could ; and finding it so little, thought not much of sending them. The narrative is clear, lively and short.

I have done worse to Lord Hailes than by neglecting his sheets : I have run him in debt. Dr Horne, the President of Magdalen College in Oxford, wrote to me about three months ago that he purposed to reprint Walton's *Lives*, and desired me to contribute to the work : my answer was, that Lord Hailes intended the same publication ; and Dr Horne has resigned it to him. His lordship now must think seriously about it.

Of poor dear Dr Goldsmith there is little to be told, more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before ?

You may, if you please, put the inscription thus :

" Maria Scotorum Regina nata 15—, a suis in exilium acta 15—, ab hospitâ neci data 15—." You must find the years.

Of your second daughter you certainly gave the account yourself, though you have forgotten it. While Mrs Boswell is well, never doubt of a boy. Mrs Thrale brought, I think, five girls running, but while I was with you she had a boy.

I am obliged to you for all your pamphlets, and of the last I hope to make some use. I made some of the former. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

July 4, 1774.

My compliments to all the three ladies.

MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Aug. 30, 1773.

You have given me an inscription for a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, in which you, in a short and striking manner, point out her hard fate. But you will be pleased to keep in

T H E
P A T R I O T.

Addressed to the
ELECTORS of GREAT BRITAIN.

*THEY bawl for Freedom in their senseless mood,
Yet still revolt when Truth would set them free,
License they mean, when they cry Liberty,
For who loves that must first be wise and good.*
MILTON.

L O N D O N :
Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand,
MDCCLXXIV.
[Price 6*d.*]

TITLE PAGE OF "THE PATRIOT "

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mind, that my picture is a representation of a particular scene in her history—her being forced to resign her crown while she was imprisoned in the castle of Lochleven. I must therefore beg that you will be kind enough to give me an inscription suited to that particular scene, or determine which of the two formerly transmitted to you is the best; and, at any rate, favour me with an English translation. It will be doubly kind if you comply with my request speedily.

Your critical notes on the specimen of Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland* are excellent. I agreed with you in every one of them. He himself objected only to the alteration of *free* to *brave*, in the passage where he says that Edward “departed with the glory due to the conqueror of a free people.” He says, “to call the Scots brave would only add to the glory of their conqueror.” You will make allowance for the national zeal of our annalist. I now send a few more leaves of the *Annals*, which I hope you will peruse, and return with observations, as you did upon the former occasion. Lord Hailes writes to me thus: “Mr Boswell will be pleased to express the grateful sense which Sir David Dalrymple has of Dr Johnson’s attention to his little specimen. The further specimen will show, that

‘Even in an *Edward* he can see desert.’”

It gives me much pleasure to hear that a republication of Isaac Walton’s *Lives* is intended. You have been in a mistake in thinking that Lord Hailes had it in view. I remember one forenoon, while he sat with you in my house, he said that there should be a new edition of Walton’s *Lives*; and you said that they should be benoted a little. This was all that passed on that subject. You must, therefore, inform Dr Horne that he may resume his plan. I enclose a note concerning it; and if Dr Horne will write to me, all the attention that I can give shall be cheerfully bestowed upon what I think a pious work, the preservation and

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elucidation of Walton, by whose writings I have been most pleasingly edified.

* * * * *

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 16, 1774.

Wales has probably detained you longer than I supposed. You will have become quite a mountaineer, by visiting Scotland one year and Wales another. You must next go to Switzerland. Cambria will complain, if you do not honour her also with some remarks. And I find *concessere columnæ*, the booksellers expect another book. I am impatient to see your *Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides*. Might you not send me a copy by the post as soon as it is printed off?

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I returned from my Welsh journey. I was sorry to leave my book suspended so long; but having an opportunity of seeing, with so much convenience, a new part of the island, I could not reject it. I have been in five of the six counties of North Wales, and have seen St Asaph and Bangor, the two seats of their bishops; have been upon Penmanmaur and Snowden, and passed over into Anglesea. But Wales is so little different from England, that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller.

When I came home, I found several of your papers, with some pages of Lord Hailes's *Annals*, which I will consider. I am in haste to give you some account of myself, lest you should suspect me of negligence in the pressing business which I find recommended to my care,¹ and which I knew nothing of till now, when all care is vain.

¹ I had written to him, to request his interposition in behalf of a convict, who I thought was very unjustly condemned.

THE LIFE OF DR JOHNSON

In the distribution of my books I purpose to follow your advice, adding such as shall occur to me. I am not pleased with your notes of remembrance added to your names, for I hope I shall not easily forget them.

I have received four Erse books, without any direction, and suspect that they are intended for the Oxford library. If that is the intention, I think it will be proper to add the metrical psalms, and whatever else is printed in Erse, that the present may be complete. The donor's name should be told.

I wish you could have read the book before it was printed, but our distance does not easily permit it.

I am sorry Lord Hailes does not intend to publish Walton ; I am afraid it will not be done so well, if it be done at all.

I purpose now to drive the book forward. Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, and let me hear often from you. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, *Octob.* 1, 1774.

This tour to Wales, which was made in company with Mr and Mrs Thrale, though it no doubt contributed to his health and amusement, did not give occasion to such a discursive exercise of his mind as our tour to the Hebrides. I do not find that he kept any journal or notes of what he saw there. All that I heard him say of it was, that instead of bleak and barren mountains, there were green and fertile ones ; and that one of the castles in Wales would contain all the castles that he had seen in Scotland.

Parliament having been dissolved, and his friend Mr Thrale, who was a steady supporter of Government, having again to encounter the storm of a contested election, he wrote a short political pamphlet, entitled *The Patriot*,* addressed to the electors of Great Britain ; a title which, to factious men, who consider a patriot only as an opposer of the measures of Government, will appear strangely misapplied. It was, however, written with energetic vivacity ;

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and, except those passages in which it endeavours to vindicate the glaring outrage of the House of Commons in the case of the Middlesex election, and to justify the attempt to reduce our fellow-subjects in America to unconditional submission, it contained an admirable display of the properties of a real patriot, in the original and genuine sense—a sincere, steady, rational, and unbiassed friend to the interests and prosperity of his King and country. It must be acknowledged, however, that both in this and his two former pamphlets, there was, amidst many powerful arguments, not only a considerable portion of sophistry, but a contemptuous ridicule of his opponents, which was very provoking.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—There has appeared lately in the papers an account of a boat upset between Mull and Ulva, in which many passengers were lost, and among them Maclean of Col. We, you know, were once drowned¹; I hope, therefore, that the story is either wantonly or erroneously told. Pray satisfy me by the next post.

I have printed two hundred and forty pages. I am able to do nothing much worth doing to dear Lord Hailes's book. I will, however, send back the sheets; and hope, by degrees, to answer all your reasonable expectations.

Mr Thrale has happily surmounted a very violent and acrimonious opposition; but all joys have their abatements: Mrs Thrale has fallen from her horse, and hurt herself very much. The rest of our friends, I believe, are well. My compliments to Mrs Boswell, I am, Sir, your most affectionate servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, *Octob. 27, 1774.*

This letter, which shows his tender concern for an amiable young gentleman to whom we had been very much obliged

¹ In the newspapers.

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in the Hebrides, I have inserted according to its date, though before receiving it I had informed him of the melancholy event that the young Laird of Col was unfortunately drowned.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Last night I corrected the last page of our *Journey to the Hebrides*. The printer has detained it all this time, for I had, before I went into Wales, written all except two sheets. *The Patriot* was called for by my political friends on Friday, was written on Saturday, and I have heard little of it. So vague are conjectures at a distance.¹ As soon as I can, I will take care that copies be sent to you, for I would wish that they might be given before they are bought; but I am afraid that Mr Strahan will send to you and to the booksellers at the same time. Trade is as diligent as courtesy. I have mentioned all that you recommended. Pray make my compliments to Mrs Boswell and the younglings. The club has, I think, not yet met.

Tell me, and tell me honestly, what you think and others say of our travels. Shall we touch the continent?² I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Nov. 26, 1774.

In his manuscript diary of this year there is the following entry:

“Nov. 27. Advent Sunday. I considered that this day, being the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, was a proper time for a new course of life. I began to read the Greek Testament regularly at 160 verses every Sunday. This day I began the Acts.

¹ Alluding to a passage in a letter of mine, where, speaking of his *Journey to the Hebrides*, I say, “But has not *The Patriot* been an interruption, by the time taken to write it, and the time luxuriously spent in listening to its applauses?”

² We had projected a voyage together up the Baltic, and talked of visiting some of the more northern regions.

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"In this week I read Virgil's *Pastorals*. I learned to repeat the Pollio and Gallus. I read carelessly the first *Georgic*."

Such evidences of his unceasing ardour, both for "divine and human lore," when advanced into his sixty-fourth year, and notwithstanding his many disturbances from disease, must make us at once honour his spirit, and lament that it should be so grievously clogged by its material tegument. It is remarkable that he was very fond of the precision which calculation produces. Thus we find in one of his manuscript diaries: "12 pages in 4to Gr. Test. and 30 pages in Beza's folio, comprise the whole in 40 days."

Dr JOHNSON to JOHN HOOLE, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have returned your play,¹ which you will find underscored with red, where there was a word which I did not like. The red will be washed off with a little water.

The plot is so well framed, the intricacy so artful, and the disentanglement so easy, the suspense so affecting, and the passionate parts so properly interposed, that I have no doubt of its success. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

December 19, 1774.

1775. *Ætat.* 66. The first effort of his pen in 1775 was "Proposals for Publishing the Works of Mrs Charlotte Lennox,"† in three volumes quarto. In his diary, 2nd January, I find this entry: "Wrote Charlotte's Proposals." But, indeed, the internal evidence would have been quite sufficient. Her claim to the favour of the public was thus enforced:

"Most of the pieces, as they appeared singly, have been read with approbation, perhaps above their merit, but of no great advantage to the writer. She hopes, therefore, that she shall not be considered as too indulgent to vanity, or too studious of interest, if, from that labour which has hitherto been chiefly gainful to others, she endeavours to obtain at

¹ *Gleonice*.

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last some profit for herself and her children. She cannot decently enforce her claim by the praise of her own performances; nor can she suppose that, by the most artful and laboured address, any additional notice could be procured to a publication, of which Her Majesty has condescended to be the Patroness."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—You never did ask for a book by the post till now, and I did not think on it. You see now it is done. I sent one to the King, and I hear he likes it.

I shall send a parcel into Scotland for presents, and intend to give to many of my friends. In your catalogue you left out Lord Auchinleck.

Let me know, as fast as you read it, how you like it; and let me know if any mistake is committed, or anything important left out. I wish you could have seen the sheets. My compliments to Mrs Boswell, and to Veronica, and to all my friends. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

January 14, 1775.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Jan. 19, 1775.

Be pleased to accept of my best thanks for your *Journey to the Hebrides*, which came to me by last night's post. I did really ask the favour twice; but you have been even with me, by granting it so speedily. *Bis dat qui cito dat*. Though ill of a bad cold, you kept me up the greatest part of the last night; for I did not stop till I had read every word of your book. I looked back to our first talking of a visit to the Hebrides, which was many years ago, when sitting by ourselves in the Mitre tavern, in London, I think about *witching time o' night*; and then exulted in contemplating our scheme fulfilled, and a *monumentum perenne* of it erected by your

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superior abilities. I shall only say that your book has afforded me a high gratification. I shall afterwards give you my thoughts on particular passages. In the meantime, I hasten to tell you of your having mistaken two names, which you will correct in London, as I shall do here, that the gentlemen who deserve the valuable compliments which you have paid them, may enjoy their honours. In page 106, for *Gordon* read *Murchison*; and in page 357, for *Maclean* read *Macleod*.

* * * * *

But I am now to apply to you for immediate aid in my profession, which you have never refused to grant when I requested it. I enclose you a petition for Dr Memis, a physician at Aberdeen, in which Sir John Dalrymple has exerted his talents, and which I am to answer as Counsel for the Managers of the Royal Infirmary in that city. Mr Jopp, the Provost, who delivered to you your freedom, is one of my clients, and, *as a citizen of Aberdeen*, you will support him.

The fact is shortly this. In a translation of the charter of the Infirmary from Latin into English, made under the authority of the Managers, the same phrase in the original is in one place rendered *Physician*, but when applied to Dr Memis is rendered *Doctor of Medicine*. Dr Memis complained of this before the translation was printed, but was not indulged with having it altered, and he has brought an action for damages, on account of a supposed injury, as if the designation given to him were an inferior one, tending to make it be supposed he is *not a Physician*, and, consequently, to hurt his practice. My father has dismissed the action as groundless, and now he has appealed to the whole Court.¹

¹ In the Court of Session of Scotland an action is first tried by one of the judges, who is called the Lord Ordinary; and if either party is dissatisfied, he may appeal to the whole Court, consisting of fifteen—the Lord President and fourteen other judges, who have both in and out of Court the title of Lords, from the name of their estates; as Lord Auchinleck, Lord Monboddo, etc.

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To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I long to hear how you like the book ; it is, I think, much liked here. But Macpherson is very furious ; can you give me any more intelligence about him, or his *Fingal*? Do what you can, and do it quickly. Is Lord Hailes on our side?

Pray let me know what I owed you when I left you, that I may send it to you.

I am going to write about the Americans. If you have picked up any hints among your lawyers, who are great masters of the law of nations, or if your own mind suggests anything, let me know. But mum—it is a secret.

I will send your parcel of books as soon as I can ; but I cannot do as I wish. However, you find everything mentioned in the book which you recommended.

Langton is here ; we are all that ever we were. He is a worthy fellow, without malice, though not without resentment.

Poor Beauclerk is so ill, that his life is thought to be in danger. Lady Di. nurses him with very great assiduity.

Reynolds has taken too much to strong liquor,¹ and seems to delight in his new character.

This is all the news that I have ; but as you love verses, I will send you a few which I made upon Inchkenneth² ; but remember the condition, that you shall not show them except to Lord Hailes, whom I love better than any man whom I know so little. If he asks you to transcribe them for him, you may do it, but I think he must promise not to let them be copied again, nor to show them as mine.

I have at last sent back Lord Hailes's sheets. I never think about returning them, because I alter nothing. You

¹ It should be recollected, that this fanciful description of his friend was given by Johnson after he had become a water drinker.

² See them in *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 337.

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will see that I might as well have kept them. However, I am ashamed of my delay; and if I have the honour of receiving any more, promise punctually to return them by the next post. Make my compliments to dear Mrs Boswell, and to Miss Veronica. I am, dear Sir, yours most faithfully,

SAM. JOHNSON.¹

January 21, 1775.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Jan. 27, 1775.

* * * * *

You rate our lawyers here too high, when you call them great masters of the law of nations.

* * * * *

As for myself, I am ashamed to say that I have read little and thought little on the subject of America. I will be much obliged to you if you will direct me where I shall find the best information of what is to be said on both sides. It is a subject vast in its present extent and future consequences. The imperfect hints which now float in my mind tend rather to the formation of an opinion that our Government has been precipitant and severe in the resolutions taken against the Bostonians. Well do you know that I have no kindness for that race. But nations, or bodies of men, should, as well as individuals, have a fair trial, and not be condemned

¹ He now sent me a Latin inscription for my historical picture of Mary Queen of Scots, and afterwards favoured me with an English translation. Mr Alderman Boydell has subjoined them to the engraving from my picture:

*Maria Scotorum Regina,
Hominum seditiosorum
Contumeliis lassata,
Minis territa, clamoribus victa,
Libello, per quem
Regno cedit,
Lacrimans trepidansque
Nomen apponit.*

Mary Queen of Scots,
Harassed, terrified, and overpowered
By the insults, menaces,
And clamours
Of her rebellious subjects,
Sets her hand
With tears and confusion,
To a resignation of the kingdom.

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on character alone. Have we not express contracts with our colonies, which afford a more certain foundation of judgment, than general political speculations on the mutual rights of states and their provinces or colonies? Pray let me know immediately what to read, and I shall diligently endeavour to gather for you anything that I can find. Is Burke's speech on American Taxation published by himself? Is it authentic? I remember to have heard you say that you had never considered East Indian affairs; though surely they are of much importance to Great Britain. Under the recollection of this, I shelter myself from the reproach of ignorance about the Americans. If you write upon the subject, I shall certainly understand it. But, since you seem to expect that I should know something of it, without your instruction, and that my own mind should suggest something, I trust you will put me in the way.

* * * * *

What does Becket mean by the *Originals* of *Fingal* and other poems of Ossian, which he advertises to have lain in his shop?

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—You sent me a case to consider, in which I have no facts but what are against us, nor any principles on which to reason. It is vain to try to write thus without materials. The fact seems to be against you, at least I cannot know nor say anything to the contrary. I am glad that you like the book so well. I hear no more of Macpherson. I shall long to know what Lord Hailes says of it. Lend it him privately. I shall send the parcel as soon as I can. Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell. I am, Sir, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

January 28, 1775.

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Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Feb. 2, 1775.

* * * * *

As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here that before your book came out he sent to you, to let you know that he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of *Ossian's Poems*; that the originals were in his possession; that you might have inspection of them, and might take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so uncandid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; that then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity. You may believe it gives me pain to hear your conduct represented as unfavourable, while I can only deny what is said, on the ground that your character refutes it, without having any information to oppose. Let me, I beg it of you, be furnished with a sufficient answer to any calumny upon this occasion.

Lord Hailes writes to me (for we correspond more than we talk together): "As to *Fingal*, I see a controversy arising, and purpose to keep out of its way. There is no doubt that I might mention some circumstances; but I do not choose to commit them to paper." What his opinion is, I do not know. He says: "I am singularly obliged to Dr Johnson for his accurate and useful criticisms. Had he given some strictures on the general plan of the work, it would have added much to his favours." He is charmed with your verses on Inchkenneth, says they are very elegant, but bids me tell you he doubts whether

"*Legitimas faciunt pectora pura preces,*"

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be according to the rubric: but that is your concern; for, you know, he is a Presbyterian.

To DR LAWRENCE¹

February 7, 1775.

SIR,—One of the Scotch physicians is now prosecuting a corporation that in some public instrument have styled him *Doctor of Medicine* instead of *Physician*. Boswell desires, being advocate for the corporation, to know whether *Doctor of Medicine* is not a legitimate title, and whether it may be considered as a disadvantageous distinction. I am to write to-night, be pleased to tell me. I am, Sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

MY DEAR BOSWELL,—I am surprised that, knowing as you do the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favour of each other,² you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. Macpherson never in his life offered me the sight of any original or of any evidence of any kind, but thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till my last answer—that I would not be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian—put an end to our correspondence.

The state of the question is this. He, and Dr Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say that he copied the poem from old manuscripts. His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they were never shown. *De non existentibus et non apparentibus*, says our law, *eadem est*

¹ The learned and worthy Dr Lawrence, whom Dr Johnson respected and loved as his physician and friend.

² My friend has, in this letter, relied upon my testimony with a confidence, of which the ground has escaped my recollection.

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ratio. No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But, so far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purposes of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts.

But whatever he has, he never offered to show. If old manuscripts should now be mentioned, I should, unless there were more evidence than can be easily had, suppose them another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood.

Do not censure the expression ; you know it to be true.

Dr Memis's question is so narrow as to allow no speculation ; and I have no facts before me but those which his advocate has produced against you.

I consulted this morning the President of the London College of Physicians, who says, that with us, *Doctor of Physic* (we do not say *Doctor of Medicine*) is the highest title that a practiser of physick can have ; that *Doctor* implies not only *Physician*, but teacher of physick ; that every *Doctor* is legally a *Physician*, but no man, not a *Doctor*, can *practise physick* but by *licence* particularly granted. The Doctorate is a licence of itself. It seems to us a very slender cause of prosecution.

* * * * *

I am now engaged, but in a little time I hope to do all you would have. My compliments to Madam and Veronica. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

February 7, 1775.

What words were used by Mr Macpherson in his letter to the venerable sage I have never heard ; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language of literary contest. Dr Johnson's answer appeared in the newspapers of the day, and has since been frequently republished ; but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his

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presence, and authenticated by a note in his own handwriting: "*This, I think, is a true copy.*"

MR JAMES MACPHERSON,—I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

SAM. JOHNSON.

Mr Macpherson little knew the character of Dr Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated; for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an awful dread of death, or rather "of something after death"; and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection, his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death. Many instances of his resolution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven and fired it off against a wall. Mr Langton told me, that when they were swimming together near Oxford he cautioned Dr Johnson against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon

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which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay till the watch came up and carried both him and them to the round-house. In the playhouse at Lichfield, as Mr Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side-scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of him and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr Thomas Davies's the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr Davies "what was the common price of an oak stick"; and being answered sixpence, "Why then, sir," said he, "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

His *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland** is a most valuable performance. It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiments and lively description. A considerable part of it, indeed, consists of speculations which, many years before he saw the wild regions which we visited together, probably had employed his attention, though the actual sight of those scenes undoubtedly quickened and augmented them. Mr Orme, the very able historian, agreed with me in this opinion,

A
J O U R N E Y
TO THE
WESTERN ISLANDS
OF
S C O T L A N D.



L O N D O N:
Printed for W. STRAHAN ; and T. CADELL in the Strand.
MDCCLXXV.

TITLE PAGE OF "A JOURNEY TO THE
WESTERN ISLANDS "

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which he thus strongly expressed : " There are in that book thoughts which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean ! "

That he was to some degree of excess a *true-born Englishman*, so as to have ever entertained an undue prejudice against both the country and the people of Scotland, must be allowed. But it was a prejudice of the head, and not of the heart. He had no ill will to the Scotch ; for, if he had been conscious of that, he would never have thrown himself into the bosom of their country, and trusted to the protection of its remote inhabitants with a fearless confidence. His remark upon the nakedness of the country, from its being denuded of trees, was made after having travelled two hundred miles along the eastern coast, where certainly trees are not to be found near the road, and he said it was " a map of the road " which he gave. His disbelief of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to Ossian, a Highland bard, was confirmed in the course of his journey, by a very strict examination of the evidence offered for it ; and although their authenticity was made too much a national point by the Scotch, there were many respectable persons in that country who did not concur in this ; so that his judgment upon the question ought not to be decried, even by those who differ from him. As to myself, I can only say, upon a subject now become very uninteresting, that when the fragments of Highland poetry first came out, I was much pleased with their wild peculiarity, and was one of those who subscribed to enable their editor, Mr Macpherson, then a young man, to make a search in the Highlands and Hebrides for a long poem in the Erse language, which was reported to be preserved somewhere in those regions. But when there came forth an Epic Poem in six books, with all the common circumstances of former compositions of that nature ; and when, upon an attentive examination of it, there was found a perpetual recurrence of the same images which appear in the fragments ; and when no ancient

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manuscript, to authenticate the work, was deposited in any public library, though that was insisted on as a reasonable proof, *who* could forbear to doubt?

Johnson's grateful acknowledgments of kindnesses received in the course of this tour completely refute the brutal reflections which have been thrown out against him, as if he had made an ungrateful return; and his delicacy in sparing in his book those who we find from his letters to Mrs Thrale were just objects of censure, is much to be admired. His candour and amiable disposition is conspicuous from his conduct, when informed by Mr Macleod, of Rasay, that he had committed a mistake, which gave that gentleman some uneasiness. He wrote him a courteous and kind letter, and inserted in the newspapers an advertisement, correcting the mistake.¹

The observations of my friend Mr Dempster in a letter written to me, soon after he had read Dr Johnson's book, are so just and liberal that they cannot be too often repeated :

* * * * *

"There is nothing in the book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the country is true; and his observations on the people are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a convenient metropolis, where a man on thirty pounds a year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of life, than Col or Sir Allan.

"I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse language, and the antiquity of their manuscripts. I am quite convinced; and I shall rank Ossian, and his Fingals and Oscars, amongst the nursery tales, not the true history of our country, in all time to come.

"Upon the whole, the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in the history of Scotland, nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe,

¹ See *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 520.

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or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more curious, regions had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning, his observations on Glasgow University show he has formed a very sound judgment. He understands our climate too; and he has accurately observed the changes, however slow and imperceptible to us, which Scotland has undergone, in consequence of the blessings of liberty and internal peace."

* * * * *

Mr Knox, another native of Scotland, who has since made the same tour, and published an account of it, is equally liberal. "I have read," says he, "his book again and again, travelled with him from Berwick to Glenelg, through countries with which I am well acquainted; sailed with him from Glenelg to Rasay, Sky, Rum, Col, Mull, and Icolmkill, but have not been able to correct him in any matter of consequence. I have often admired the accuracy, the precision, and the justness of what he advances, respecting both the country and the people.

"The Doctor has everywhere delivered his sentiments with freedom, and in many instances with a seeming regard for the benefit of the inhabitants, and the ornament of the country. His remarks on the want of trees and hedges for shade, as well as for shelter to the cattle, are well founded, and merit the thanks, not the illiberal censure of the natives. He also felt for the distresses of the Highlanders, and explodes, with great propriety, the bad management of the grounds, and the neglect of timber in the Hebrides."

Having quoted Johnson's just compliments on the Rasay family, he says: "On the other hand, I found this family equally lavish in their encomiums upon the Doctor's conversation, and his subsequent civilities to a young gentleman of that country, who, upon waiting upon him at London, was well received, and experienced all the attention and regard that a warm friend could bestow. Mr Macleod having also been in London, waited upon the Doctor, who

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provided a magnificent and expensive entertainment, in honour of his old Hebridean acquaintance."

And talking of the military road by Fort Augustus, he says: "By this road, though one of the most rugged in Great Britain, the celebrated Dr Johnson passed from Inverness to the Hebride Isles. His observations on the country and people are extremely correct, judicious, and instructive."¹

His private letters to Mrs Thrale, written during the course of his journey, which therefore may be supposed to convey his genuine feelings at the time, abound in such benignant sentiments towards the people who showed him civilities, that no man whose temper is not very harsh and sour can retain a doubt of the goodness of his heart.

It is painful to recollect with what rancour he was assailed by numbers of shallow irritable North Britons, on account of his supposed injurious treatment of their country and countrymen, in his *Journey*. Had there been any just ground for such a charge, would the virtuous and candid Dempster have given his opinion of the book, in the terms which I have quoted? Would the patriotic Knox² have spoken of it as he has done? And let me add that, citizen of the world as I hold myself to be, I have that degree of predilection for my *natale solum*, nay, I have that just sense of the merit of an ancient nation, which has been ever renowned for its valour, which in former times maintained its independence against a powerful neighbour, and in modern times has been equally distinguished for its ingenuity and industry in civilised life, that I should have felt a generous indignation at any injustice done to it. Johnson treated Scotland no worse than he did even his best friends, whose characters he used to give as they appeared to him, both in light and shade. Some people, who had not exercised their minds sufficiently, condemned him for censuring his friends.

¹ Page 103.

² I observe with much regret, while this work is passing through the press (August 1790), that this ingenious gentleman is dead.

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But Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose philosophical penetration and justness of thinking are not less known to those who live with him than his genius in his art is admired by the world, explained his conduct thus : " He was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character ; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment."

He expressed to his friend Mr Windham of Norfolk, his wonder at the extreme jealousy of the Scotch, and their resentment at having their country described by him as it really was ; when, to say that it was a country as good as England, would have been a gross falsehood. " None of us," said he, " would be offended if a foreigner who has travelled here should say that vines and olives don't grow in England." And as to his prejudice against the Scotch, which I always ascribed to that nationality which he observed in *them*, he said to the same gentleman : " When I find a Scotchman to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman shall be as an Englishman to me." His intimacy with many gentlemen of Scotland, and his employing so many natives of that country as his amanuenses, prove that his prejudice was not virulent ; and I have deposited in the British Museum, amongst other pieces of his writing, the following note, in answer to one from me, asking if he would meet me at dinner at the Mitre, though a friend of mine, a Scotchman, was to be there :—" Mr Johnson does not see why Mr Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre."

My much-valued friend Dr Barnard, now Bishop of Killaloe, having once expressed to him an apprehension that if he should visit Ireland he might treat the people of that country more unfavourably than he had done the Scotch, he answered, with strong pointed double-edged wit : " Sir, you have no reason to be afraid of me. The Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations

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of the merits of their countrymen. No, sir; the Irish are a FAIR PEOPLE—they never speak well of one another.”

Johnson told me an instance of Scottish nationality, which made a very unfavourable impression upon his mind. A Scotchman, of some consideration in London, solicited him to recommend, by the weight of his learned authority, to be master of an English school, a person of whom he who recommended him confessed he knew no more but that he was his countryman. Johnson was shocked at this unconscientious conduct.

All the miserable cavillings against his *Journey*, in newspapers, magazines, and other fugitive publications, I can speak from certain knowledge, only furnished him with sport. At last there came out a scurrilous volume, larger than Johnson's own, filled with malignant abuse, under a name, real or fictitious, of some low man in an obscure corner of Scotland, though supposed to be the work of another Scotchman, who has found means to make himself well known both in Scotland and England. The effect which it had upon Johnson was to produce this pleasant observation to Mr Seward, to whom he lent the book: “This fellow must be a blockhead. They don't know how to go about their abuse. Who will read a five shilling book against me? No, sir, if they had wit, they should have kept pelting me with pamphlets.”

MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Feb. 18, 1775.

You would have been very well pleased if you had dined with me to-day. I had for my guests, Macquharrie, young Maclean of Col, the successor of our friend, a very amiable man, though not marked with such active qualities as his brother, Mr Maclean of Torloisk in Mull, a gentleman of Sir Allan's family, and two of the clan Grant, so that the Highland and Hebridean genius reigned. We had a great deal of conversation about you, and drank your health in

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a bumper. The toast was not proposed by me, which is a circumstance to be remarked, for I am now so connected with you, that anything that I can say or do to your honour has not the value of an additional compliment. It is only giving you a guinea out of that treasure of admiration which already belongs to you, and which is no hidden treasure; for I suppose my admiration of you is co-existent with the knowledge of my character.

I find that the Highlanders and Hebrideans in general are much fonder of your *Journey* than the low-country or *hither* Scots. One of the Grants said to-day, that he was sure you were a man of a good heart, and a candid man, and seemed to hope he should be able to convince you of the antiquity of a good proportion of the poems of Ossian. After all that has passed, I think the matter is capable of being proved to a certain degree. I am told that Macpherson got one old Erse MS. from Clanranald, for the restitution of which he executed a formal obligation; and it is affirmed that the Gaelic (call it Erse or call it Irish) has been written in the Highlands and Hebrides for many centuries. It is reasonable to suppose that such of the inhabitants as acquired any learning, possessed the art of writing as well as their Irish neighbours and Celtic cousins; and the question is, can sufficient evidence be shown of this?

Those who are skilled in ancient writings can determine the age of MSS. or at least can ascertain the century in which they were written; and if men of veracity, who are so skilled, shall tell us that MSS. in the possession of families in the Highlands and Isles are the works of a remote age, I think we should be convinced by their testimony.

There is now come to this city Ranald Macdonald, from the Isle of Egg, who has several MSS. of Erse poetry, which he wishes to publish by subscription. I have engaged to take three copies of the book, the price of which is to be six shillings, as I would subscribe for all the Erse that can be printed, be it old or new, that the language may be preserved. This man says that some of his manuscripts are

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ancient; and, to be sure, one of them which was shown to me does appear to have the duskiness of antiquity.

* * * * *

The inquiry is not yet quite hopeless, and I should think that the exact truth may be discovered, if proper means be used. I am, etc.,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I am sorry that I could get no books for my friends in Scotland. Mr Strahan has at last promised to send two dozen to you. If they come, put the names of my friends into them; you may cut them out,¹ and paste them with a little starch in the book.

You then are going wild about Ossian. Why do you think any part can be proved? The dusky manuscript of Egg is probably not fifty years old; if it be an hundred, it proves nothing. The tale of Clanranald has no proof. Has Clanranald told it? Can he prove it? There are, I believe, no Erse manuscripts. None of the old families had a single letter in Erse that we heard of. You say it is likely that they could write. The learned, if any learned there were, could; but knowing by that learning some written language, in that language they wrote, as letters had never been applied to their own. If there are manuscripts, let them be shown, with some proof that they are not forged for the occasion. You say many can remember parts of Ossian. I believe all those parts are versions of the English, at least there is no proof of their antiquity.

Macpherson is said to have made some translations himself; and having taught a boy to write it, ordered him to say that he had learned it of his grandmother. The boy, when he grew up, told the story. This Mrs Williams heard at Mr Strahan's table. Do not be credulous; you know how little a Highlander can be trusted. Macpherson is, so far

¹ From a list in his handwriting.

ROUND ROBIN, addressed to SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.
with FACSIMILES of the Signatures

Watson

With the Circumlocutors.

having read, with great pleasure, an
 intended Epitaph for the Monument of D.
 Goldsmith, which considered abstractedly, appears to
 be, for elegant Composition and Masterly Style, in
 every respect worthy of the pen of its learned Author.
 In my opinion, that the Character of the Deceased as
 a Writer, particularly as a Poet, is, perhaps, not delineated
 with all the exactness which D. Johnson is Capable of,
 giving it. — Therefore, with deference to his Sup-
 plement, humbly request, that he would at least take the trouble
 of revising it; & of making such additions and alterations
 as he shall think proper, upon a farther perusal. But
 if We might, venture to express our Wishes, they would
 lead us to request, that he would write the Epitaph
 in English, rather than in Latin: As We think that the
 Memory of so eminent an English Writer ought to be
 perpetuated in the language, to which his Works are
 likely to be so lasting an Ornament, Which we
 also know to have been the opinion of
 The late Doctor
 himself.

London: Published as the Act directs in April 1791, by Charles Dilly.

A ROUND ROBIN TO JOHNSON

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as I know, very quiet. Is not that proof enough? Everything is against him. No visible manuscript; no inscription in the language: no correspondence among friends: no transaction of business, of which a single scrap remains in the ancient families. Macpherson's pretence is, that the character was Saxon. If he had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts*, he might have fought with oral tradition much longer. As to Mr Grant's information, I suppose he knows much less of the matter than ourselves.

In the meantime, the bookseller says that the sale¹ is sufficiently quick. They printed four thousand. Correct your copy wherever it is wrong, and bring it up. Your friends will all be glad to see you. I think of going myself into the country about May.

I am sorry that I have not managed to send the books sooner. I have left four for you, and do not restrict you absolutely to follow my directions in the distribution. You must use your own discretion.

Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell; I suppose she is now just beginning to forgive me. I am, dear Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 25, 1775.

On Tuesday, 21st March, I arrived in London; and on repairing to Dr Johnson's before dinner, found him in his study, sitting with Mr Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, strongly resembling him in his countenance and voice, but of more sedate and placid manners. 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*." Both at this interview, and in the evening at Mr Thrale's, where he and Mr Peter Garrick and I met again, he was vehement on the subject of the Ossian controversy; observing: "We do not know that there are any ancient

¹ Of his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*.

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Erse manuscripts ; and we have no other reason to disbelieve that there are men with three heads, but that we do not know that there are any such men." He also was outrageous upon his supposition that my countrymen "loved Scotland better than truth," saying, "All of them—nay, not all—but *droves* of them, would come up, and attest anything for the honour of Scotland." He also persevered in his wild allegation that he questioned if there was a tree between Edinburgh and the English border older than himself. I assured him he was mistaken, and suggested that the proper punishment would be that he should receive a stripe at every tree above a hundred years old that was found within that space. He laughed and said: "I believe I might submit to it for a *bawbie* !"

The doubts which, in my correspondence with him, I had ventured to state as to the justice and wisdom of the conduct of Great Britain towards the American colonies, while I at the same time requested that he would enable me to inform myself upon that momentous subject, he had altogether disregarded ; and had recently published a pamphlet, entitled *Taxation no Tyranny; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress.**

He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America. For, as early as 1769, I was told by Dr John Campbell that he had said of them: "Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging."

Of this performance I avoided to talk with him ; for I had now formed a clear and settled opinion that the people of America were well warranted to resist a claim that their fellow-subjects in the mother-country should have the entire command of their fortunes, by taxing them without their own consent ; and the extreme violence which it breathed, appeared to me so unsuitable to the mildness of a Christian philosopher, and so directly opposite to the principles of peace which he had so beautifully recommended in his pamphlet respecting Falkland's Islands, that I was sorry to

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see him appear in so unfavourable a light. Besides, I could not perceive in it that ability of argument, or that felicity of expression, for which he was, upon other occasions, so eminent. Positive assertion, sarcastical severity, and extravagant ridicule, which he himself reprobated as a test of truth, were united in this rhapsody.

That this pamphlet was written at the desire of those who were then in power, I have no doubt; and, indeed, he owned to me that it had been revised and curtailed by some of them. He told me, that they had struck out one passage, which was to this effect: "That the Colonists could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy, that they should not now be taxed. We do not put a calf into the plough; we wait till he is an ox." He said: "They struck it out either critically, as too ludicrous, or politically, as too exasperating. I care not which. It was their business. If an architect says, 'I will build five stories,' and the man who employs him says, 'I will have only three,' the employer is to decide." "Yes, sir," said I, "in ordinary cases. But should it be so when the architect gives his skill and labour *gratis*?"

Unfavourable as I am constrained to say my opinion of this pamphlet was, yet, since it was congenial with the sentiments of numbers at that time, and as everything relating to the writings of Dr Johnson is of importance in literary history, I shall therefore insert some passages which were struck out, it does not appear why, either by himself or those who revised it. They appear printed in a few proof leaves of it in my possession, marked with corrections in his own handwriting. I shall distinguish them by *italics*.

In the paragraph where he says, the Americans were incited to resistance by European intelligence from "men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves," there followed—"and made, by their selfishness, the enemies of their country."

And the next paragraph ran thus: "On the original

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contrivers of mischief, *rather than on those whom they have deluded*, let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance."

The paragraph which came next was in these words: "*Unhappy is that country, in which men can hope for advancement by favouring its enemies. The tranquillity of stable government is not always easily preserved against the machinations of single innovators; but what can be the hope of quiet, when factions hostile to the legislature can be openly formed and openly avowed?*"

After the paragraph which now concludes the pamphlet, there followed this, in which he certainly means the great Earl of Chatham, and glances at a certain popular Lord Chancellor:

"*If, by the fortune of war, they drive us utterly away, what they will do next can only be conjectured. If a new monarchy is erected, they will want a KING. He who first takes into his hand the sceptre of America, should have a name of good omen. WILLIAM has been known both as conqueror and deliverer; and perhaps England, however contemned, might yet supply them with ANOTHER WILLIAM. Whigs, indeed, are not willing to be governed; and it is possible that KING WILLIAM may be strongly inclined to guide their measures: but Whigs have been cheated like other mortals, and suffered their leader to become their tyrant, under the name of their PROTECTOR. What more they will receive from England, no man can tell. In their rudiments of empire they may want a CHANCELLOR.*"

Then came this paragraph:

"*Their numbers are, at present, not quite sufficient for the greatness which, in some form of government or other, is to rival the ancient monarchies; but, by Dr Franklin's rule of progression, they will, in a century and a quarter, be more than equal to the inhabitants of Europe. When the Whigs of America are thus multiplied, let the Princes of the earth tremble in their palaces. If they should continue to double and to double, their own hemisphere will not contain them. But let not our boldest oppugners of authority look forward with delight to this futurity of Whiggism.*"

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How it ended I know not, as it is cut off abruptly at the foot of the last of these proof pages.

His pamphlets in support of the measures of administration were published on his own account, and he afterwards collected them into a volume, with the title of *Political Tracts*, by the Author of "*The Rambler*," with this motto :

*"Fallitur egregio quisquis sub Principe credit
Servitium, numquam libertas gratior extat
Quam sub Rege pio."*

CLAUDIANUS.

These pamphlets drew upon him numerous attacks. Against the common weapons of literary warfare he was hardened; but there were two instances of animadversion which I communicated to him, and from what I could judge, both from his silence and his looks, appeared to me to impress him much.

One was, "A Letter to Dr Samuel Johnson, occasioned by his late political Publications." It appeared previous to his *Taxation no Tyranny*, and was written by Dr Joseph Towers. In that performance, Dr Johnson was treated with the respect due to so eminent a man, while his conduct as a political writer was boldly and pointedly arraigned, as inconsistent with the character of one who, if he did employ his pen upon politics, "it might reasonably be expected should distinguish himself, not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wisdom."

It concluded thus: "I would, however, wish you to remember, should you again address the public under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination or energy of language will ill compensate for the want of candour, of justice, and of truth. And I shall only add, that should I hereafter be disposed to read, as I heretofore have done, the most excellent of all your performances, *The Rambler*, the pleasure which I have been accustomed to find in it will be much diminished by the reflection that the writer of so moral, so elegant, and so valuable a work, was capable

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of prostituting his talents in such productions as *The False Alarm*, the *Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, and *The Patriot*."

I am willing to do justice to the merit of Dr Towers, of whom I will say, that although I abhor his Whiggish democratical notions and propensities (for I will not call them principles), I esteem him as an ingenious, knowing, and very convivial man.

The other instance was a paragraph of a letter to me, from my old and most intimate friend the Reverend Mr Temple, who wrote the character of Gray, which has had the honour to be adopted both by Mr Mason and Dr Johnson in their accounts of that poet. The words were: "How can your great, I will not say your *pious*, but your *moral* friend, support the barbarous measures of administration, which they have not the face to ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to defend."

However confident of the rectitude of his own mind, Johnson may have felt sincere uneasiness that his conduct should be erroneously imputed to unworthy motives by good men, and that the influence of his valuable writings should on that account be in any degree obstructed or lessened.

He complained to a Right Honourable friend of distinguished talents and very elegant manners, with whom he maintained a long intimacy, and whose generosity towards him will afterwards appear, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated that he declared his resolution to resign his pension. His friend showed him the impropriety of such a measure, and he afterwards expressed his gratitude, and said he had received good advice. To that friend he once signified a wish to have his pension secured to him for his life; but he neither asked nor received from Government any reward whatsoever for his political labours.

On Friday, 24th March, I met him at the Literary Club,

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where were Mr Beauclerk, Mr Langton, Mr Colman, Dr Percy, Mr Vesey, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr George Fordyce, Mr Steevens, and Mr Charles Fox. Before he came in we talked of his *Journey to the Western Islands*, and of his coming away "willing to believe the second sight,"¹ which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of it which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying: "He is only *willing* to believe, I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief." "Are you?" said Colman, "then cork it up."

I found his *Journey* the common topic of conversation in London at this time, wherever I happened to be. At one of Lord Mansfield's formal Sunday evening conversations, strangely called *levées*, his lordship addressed me: "We have all been reading your travels, Mr Boswell." I answered: "I was but the humble attendant of Dr Johnson." The Chief Justice replied, with that air and manner which none who ever saw and heard him can forget: "He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian."

Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions: "*The Tale of a Tub* is so much superior to his other writings, that one can hardly believe he was the author of it. There is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life." I wondered to hear him say of *Gulliver's Travels*: "When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest." I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last, of his own accord, allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pockets of the Man Mountain, particularly the description of his watch, which it was conjectured was his God, as he consulted it upon all

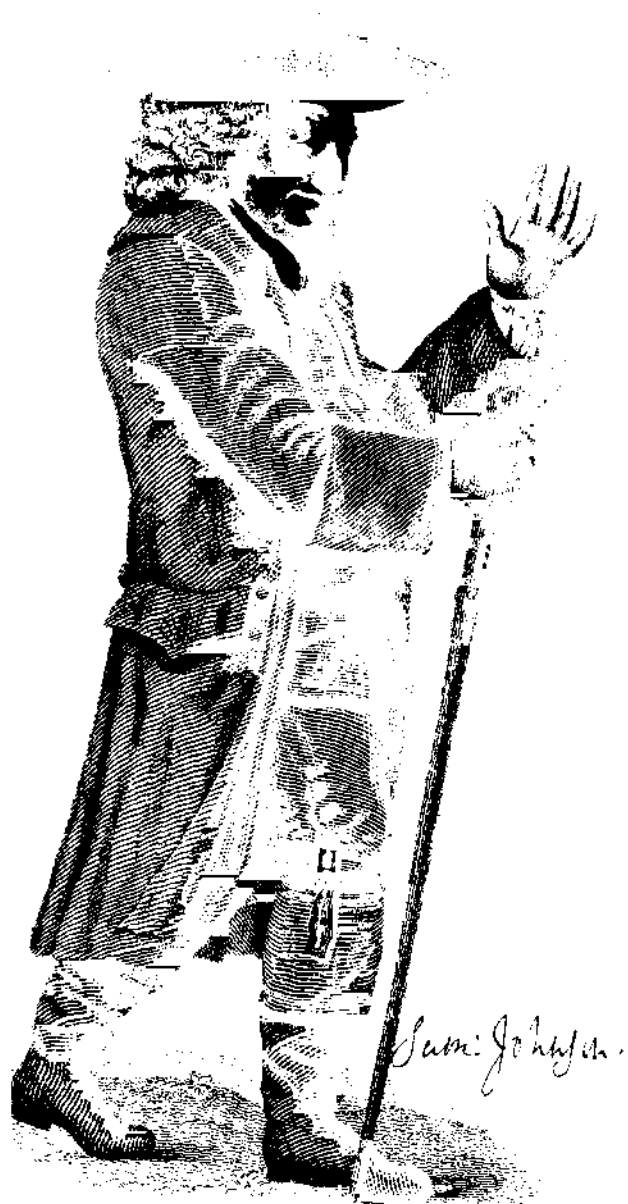
¹ Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, edit. 1785, p. 256.

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occasions. He observed that "Swift put his name to but two things (after he had a name to put)—*The Plan for the Improvement of the English Language*, and the last *Drapier's Letter*."

From Swift, there was an easy transition to Mr Thomas Sheridan. JOHNSON: Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of *Douglas*, and presented its author with a gold medal. Some years ago, at a coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him: "Mr Sheridan, Mr Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home for writing that foolish play?" This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatic excellence, he should have requested one of the universities to choose the person on whom it should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin.

On Monday, 27th March, I breakfasted with him at Mr Strahan's. He told us that he was engaged to go that evening to Mrs Abington's benefit. "She was visiting some ladies whom I was visiting, and begged that I would come to her benefit. I told her I could not hear: but she insisted so much on my coming, that it would have been brutal to have refused her." This was a speech quite characteristical. He loved to bring forward his having been in the gay circles of life; and he was, perhaps, a little vain of the solicitations of this elegant and fashionable actress. He told us the play was to be *The Hypocrite*, altered from Cibber's *Nonjuror*, so as to satirise the Methodists. "I do not think," said he, "the character of the Hypocrite justly applicable to the Methodists; but it was very applicable to the Nonjurors. I once said to Dr Madan, a clergyman of Ireland, who was a great Whig, that perhaps a Nonjuror would have been less criminal in taking the oaths imposed by the ruling power than refusing them; because refusing them, necessarily



Sam Johnson.

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laid him under almost an irresistible temptation to be more criminal; for, a man *must* live, and if he precludes himself from the support furnished by the establishment, will probably be reduced to very wicked shifts to maintain himself.”¹ BOSWELL: I should think, sir, that a man who took the oaths contrary to his principles was a determined wicked man, because he was sure he was committing perjury: whereas a Nonjuror might be insensibly led to do what was wrong, without being so directly conscious of it. JOHNSON: Why, sir, a man who goes to bed to his patron’s wife is pretty sure that he is committing wickedness. BOSWELL: Did the Nonjuring clergymen do so, sir? JOHNSON: I am afraid many of them did.

I was startled at his argument, and could by no means think it convincing. Had not his own father complied with the requisition of Government (as to which he once observed to me, when I pressed him upon it, “*That, sir, he was to settle with himself*”), he would probably

¹ This was not merely a cursory remark; for in his *Life of Fenton* he observes: “With many other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate [about the beginning of this century] consulted conscience well or ill informed, more than interest, he doubted the legality of the Government; and refusing to qualify himself for public employment, by taking the oaths required, left the University without a degree.” This conduct Johnson calls “perverseness of integrity.”

The question concerning the morality of taking oaths, of whatever kind, imposed by the prevailing power at the time, rather than to be excluded from all consequence, or even any considerable usefulness in society, has been agitated with all the acuteness of casuistry. It is related that he who devised the oath of abjuration, profligately boasted that he had framed a test which should damn one half of the nation and starve the other. Upon minds not exalted to inflexible rectitude, or minds in which zeal for a party is predominant to excess, taking that oath against conviction, may have been palliated under the plea of necessity, or ventured upon in heat, as upon the whole producing more good than evil.

At a county election in Scotland, many years ago, when there was a warm contest between the friends of the Hanoverian succession and those against it, the oath of abjuration having been demanded, the freeholders upon one side rose to go away. Upon which a very sanguine gentleman, one of their number, ran to the door to stop them, calling out with much earnestness: “Stay, stay, my friends, and let us swear the rogues out of it!”

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have thought more unfavourably of a Jacobite who took the oaths :

had he not resembled
My father as he *swore*——”

Mr Strahan talked of launching into the great ocean of London, in order to have a chance for rising to eminence, and observing that many men were kept back from trying their fortune there because they were born to a competency, said : “ Small certainties are the bane of men of talents ” : which Johnson confirmed. Mr Strahan put Johnson in mind of a remark which he had made to him : “ There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money.” “ The more one thinks of this,” said Strahan, “ the juster it will appear.”

Mr Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice, upon Johnson’s recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said : “ Mr Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I’ll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy, and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down.”

I followed him into the courtyard, behind Mr Strahan’s house ; and there I had a proof of what I had heard him profess, that he talked alike to all. “ Some people,” said he, “ tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that. I speak uniformly, in as intelligible a manner as I can.”

“ Well, my boy, how do you go on ? ” “ Pretty well, sir ; but they are afraid I a’n’t strong enough for some parts of the business.” JOHNSON : Why, I shall be sorry for it ; for when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear—take all the pains you can ; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There’s a guinea.

Here was one of the many, many instances of his active benevolence. At the same time, the slow and sonorous

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solemnity with which, while he bent himself down, he addressed a little thick short-legged boy, contrasted with the boy's awkwardness and awe, could not but excite some ludicrous emotions.

I met him at Drury Lane playhouse in the evening. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at Mrs Abington's request, had promised to bring a body of wits to her benefit; and having secured forty places in the front boxes, had done me the honour to put me in the group. Johnson sat on the seat directly behind me; and as he could neither see nor hear at such a distance from the stage, he was wrapped up in grave abstraction, and seemed quite a cloud, amidst all the sunshine of glitter and gaiety. I wondered at his patience in sitting out a play of five acts, and a farce of two. He said very little; but after the prologue to *Bon Ton* had been spoken, which he could hear pretty well from the more slow and distinct utterance, he observed: "Dryden has written prologues superior to any that David Garrick has written; but David Garrick has written more good prologues than Dryden has done. It is wonderful that he has been able to write such a variety of them."

At Mr Beauclerk's, where I supped, was Mr Garrick, whom I made happy with Johnson's praise of his prologues; and I suppose, in gratitude to him, he took up one of his favourite topics, the nationality of the Scotch, which he maintained in his pleasant manner, with the aid of a little poetical fiction. "Come, come, don't deny it; they are really national. Why, now, the Adams are as liberal-minded men as any in the world; but, I don't know how it is, all their workmen are Scotch. You are, to be sure, wonderfully free from that nationality; but so it happens, that you employ the only Scotch shoe-black in London." He imitated the manner of his old master with ludicrous exaggeration; repeating, with pauses and half whistlings interjected:

*"Os homini sublime dedit,—cælumque tueri—
Jussit,—et erectos ad sidera—tollere vulnus."*

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looking downwards all the time, and, while pronouncing the four last words, absolutely touching the ground with a kind of contorted gesticulation.

Garrick, however, when he pleased, could imitate Johnson very exactly; for that great actor, with his distinguished powers of expression which were so universally admired, possessed also an admirable talent of mimicry. He was always jealous that Johnson spoke lightly of him. I recollect his exhibiting him to me one day, as if saying, "Davy is futile," which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson.

I cannot too frequently request of my readers, while they peruse my account of Johnson's conversation, to endeavour to keep in mind his deliberate and strong utterance. His mode of speaking was indeed very impressive,¹ and I wish it could be preserved as music is written, according to the very ingenious method of Mr Steele,² who has shown how the recitation of Mr Garrick, and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity *in score*.

Next day I dined with Johnson at Mr Thrale's. He attacked Gray, calling him "a dull fellow." BOSWELL: I understand he was reserved, and might appear dull in company; but surely he was not dull in poetry. JOHNSON: Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him *great*. He was a mechanical poet.—He then

¹ My noble friend Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry and some truth, that "Dr Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary were it not for his *bow-wow way*." The sayings themselves are generally of sterling merit; but, doubtless, his *manner* was an addition to their effect, and therefore should be attended to as much as may be. It is necessary, however, to guard those who were not acquainted with him against overcharged imitations or caricatures of his manner, which are frequently attempted, and many of which are second-hand copies from the late Mr Henderson the actor, who, though a good mimic of some persons, did not represent Johnson correctly.

² See *Prosodia Rationalis*; or, *An Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols*." London, 1779.

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repeated some ludicrous lines, which have escaped my memory, and said: "Is not that *great*, like his Odes?" Mrs Thrale maintained that his Odes were melodious; upon which he exclaimed:

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof";

I added, in a solemn tone:

"The winding-sheet of Edward's race."

"*There* is a good line." "Aye," said he, "and the next line is a good one" (pronouncing it contemptuously):

"Give ample verge and room enough."

No, sir, there are but two good stanzas in Gray's poetry, which are in his *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*." He then repeated the stanza:

"For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey," etc.,

mistaking one word; for instead of *precincts* he said *confines*. He added: "The other stanza I forget."

A young lady who had married a man much her inferior in rank being mentioned, a question arose how a woman's relations should behave to her in such a situation; and, while I recapitulate the debate, and recollect what has since happened, I cannot but be struck in a manner that delicacy forbids me to express. While I contended that she ought to be treated with an inflexible steadiness of displeasure, Mrs Thrale was all for mildness and forgiveness, and, according to the vulgar phrase, making the best of a bad bargain. JOHNSON: Madam, we must distinguish. Were I a man of rank, I would not let a daughter starve who had made a mean marriage; but having voluntarily degraded herself from the station which she was originally entitled to hold, I would support her only in that which she herself

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has chosen, and would not put her on a level with my other daughters. You are to consider, madam, that it is our duty to maintain the subordination of civilised society; and when there is a gross and shameful deviation from rank, it should be punished so as to deter others from the same perversion.

After frequently considering this subject, I am more and more confirmed in what I then meant to express, and which was sanctioned by the authority, and illustrated by the wisdom, of Johnson; and I think it of the utmost consequence to the happiness of society, to which subordination is absolutely necessary. It is weak and contemptible and unworthy in a parent to relax in such a case. It is sacrificing general advantage to private feelings. And let it be considered that the claim of a daughter who has acted thus, to be restored to her former situation, is either fantastical or unjust. If there be no value in the distinction of rank, what does she suffer by being kept in the situation to which she has descended? If there be a value in that distinction, it ought to be steadily maintained. If indulgence be shown to such conduct, and the offenders know that in a longer or shorter time they shall be received as well as if they had not contaminated their blood by a base alliance, the great check upon that inordinate caprice which generally occasions low marriages will be removed, and the fair and comfortable order of improved life will be miserably disturbed.

Lord Chesterfield's letters being mentioned, Johnson said: "It was not to be wondered at that they had so great a sale, considering that they were the letters of a statesman, a wit, one who had been so much in the mouths of mankind, one long accustomed *virum volitare per ora*."

On Friday, 31st March, I supped with him and some friends at a tavern. One of the company attempted, with too much forwardness, to rally him on his late appearance at the theatre; but had reason to repent of his temerity. "Why, sir, did you go to Mrs Abington's benefit? Did

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you see?" JOHNSON: No, sir. "Did you hear?" JOHNSON: No, sir. "Why, then, sir, did you go?" JOHNSON: Because, sir, she is a favourite of the public: and when the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too.

Next morning I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him as to one of his particularities, which her ladyship laid I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which he made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. "Oh, sir," said I, "I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges which you put into your pocket at the club." JOHNSON: I have a great love for them. BOSWELL: And pray, sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them, it seems, very neatly, and what next? JOHNSON: I let them dry, sir. BOSWELL: And what next? JOHNSON; Nay, sir, you shall know their fate no further. BOSWELL: Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said (assuming a mock solemnity) he scraped them, and let them dry, but what he did with them next he never could be prevailed upon to tell. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, you should say it more emphatically—he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell.

He had this morning received his Diploma as Doctor of Laws from the University of Oxford. He did not vaunt of his new dignity, but I understood he was highly pleased with it. I shall here insert the progress and completion of that high academical honour, in the same manner as I have traced his obtaining that of Master of Arts.

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To the Reverend Dr FOTHERGILL, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, to be communicated to the Heads of Houses, and proposed in Convocation

MR VICE-CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN,—The honour of the degree of M.A. by diploma, formerly conferred upon Mr Samuel Johnson, in consequence of his having eminently distinguished himself by the publication of a series of essays, excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality has been maintained and recommended by the strongest powers of argument and elegance of language, reflected an equal degree of lustre upon the University itself.

The many learned labours which have since that time employed the attention and displayed the abilities of that great man, so much to the advancement of literature and the benefit of the community, render him worthy of more distinguished honours in the republic of letters: and I persuade myself that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in Convocation to confer on him the degree of Doctor in Civil Law by diploma, to which I readily give my consent; and am, Mr Vice-Chancellor and Gentlemen, your affectionate friend and servant,

NORTH.¹

DOWNING STREET,
March 23, 1775.

DIPLOMA

*CANCELLARIUS, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis
Oxoniensis, omnibus ad quos præsentēs Literæ pervenerint,
Salutem in Domino Sempiternam*

*SCIATIS, virum illustrem, SAMUELEM JOHNSON, in omni
humaniorum literarum genere eruditum, omniumque scientiarum*

¹ Extracted from the Convocation Register, Oxford.

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comprehensione felicissimum, scriptis suis, ad popularium mores formandos summâ verborum elegantia ac sententiarum gravitate compositis, ita olim inclaruisse, ut dignus videretur cui ab Academiâ suâ eximia quædam laudis præmia deferrentur, quique venerabilem Magistrorum Ordinem summâ cum dignitate cooptaretur :

Cum verò eundem clarissimum virum tot postea tantique labores, in patriâ præsertim linguâ ornandâ et stabiliendâ feliciter impensi, ita insigniverint, ut in Literarum Republicâ PRINCEPS jam et PRIMARIUS jure habeatur ; Nos CANCELLARIUS, Magistri et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis, quò talis viri merita pari honoris remuneratione exæquentur, et perpetuum suæ simul laudis, nostræque erga literas propensissimæ voluntatis extet monumentum, in solenni Convocatione Doctorum et Magistrorum regentium et non regentium, prædictum SAMUELEM JOHNSON Doctorem in Jure Civili renunciavimus et constituimus, eumque virtute præsentis Diplomatis singulis juribus, privilegiis et honoribus, ad istum gradum quâquâ pertinentibus, frui et gaudere jussimus. In cujus rei testimonium commune Universitatis Oxoniensis sigillum præsentibus apponi fecimus.

Datum in Domo nostræ Convocationis die tricesimo mensis Martii, Anno Domini Millesimo, septingentesimo, septuagesimo quinto.¹

Viro reverendo THOMÆ FOTHERGILL, S. T. P. Universitatis Oxoniensis Vice-Cancellario

S. P. D.

SAM. JOHNSON.

MULTIS non est opus, ut testimonium quo, te præside, Oxoniensis nomen meum posteris commendârunt, quali animo acceperim compertum faciam. Nemo sibi placens non lætatur ; nemo sibi non placet, qui vobis, literarum arbitris, placere potuit. Hoc tamen habet incommodi tantum beneficium, quod mihi nunquam posthac sine vestræ famæ detrimento vel labi liceat

¹ The original is in my possession.

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*vel cessare ; semperque sit timendum, ne quod mihi tam eximie laudi est, vobis aliquando fiat opprobrio. Vale.*¹

7 *Id.* Apr. 1775.

He revised some sheets of Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland*, and wrote a few notes on the margin with red ink, which he bade me tell his lordship did not sink into the paper, and might be wiped off with a wet sponge, so that he did not spoil his manuscript. I told him there were very few of his friends so accurate as that I could venture to put down in writing what they told me as his sayings. JOHNSON : Why should you write down *my* sayings? BOSWELL : I write them when they are good. JOHNSON : Nay, you may as well write down the sayings of anyone else that are good.—But *where*, I might with great propriety have added, can I find such?

I visited him by appointment in the evening, and we drank tea with Mrs Williams. He told me that he had been in the company of a gentleman whose extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation. But I found that he had not listened to him with that full confidence, without which there is little satisfaction in the society of travellers. I was curious to hear what opinion so able a judge as Johnson had formed of his abilities, and I asked if he was not a man of sense. JOHNSON : Why, sir, he is not a distinct relater, and I should say he is neither abounding nor deficient in sense. I did not perceive any superiority of understanding. BOSWELL : But will you not allow him a nobleness of resolution, in penetrating into distant regions? JOHNSON : That, sir, is not to the present purpose : we are talking of his sense. A fighting cock has a nobleness of resolution.

Next day, Sunday, 2nd April, I dined with him at Mr Hoole's. We talked of Pope. JOHNSON : He wrote his

¹ "The original is in the hands of Dr Fothergill, then Vice-Chancellor, who made this transcript.

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Dunciad for fame. That was his primary motive. Had it not been for that, the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary, without his troubling himself about them. He delighted to vex them, no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them.

The *Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion*, in ridicule of "cool Mason and warm Gray," being mentioned, Johnson said: "They are Colman's best things." Upon its being observed that it was believed these Odes were made by Colman and Lloyd jointly—JOHNSON: Nay, sir, how can two people make an Ode? Perhaps one made one of them, and one the other.—I observed that two people had made a play, and quoted the anecdote of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were brought under suspicion of treason, because while concerting the plan of a tragedy when sitting together at a tavern, one of them was overheard saying to the other, "I'll kill the King." JOHNSON: The first of these Odes is the best: but they are both good. They exposed a very bad kind of writing. BOSWELL: Surely, sir, Mr Mason's *Elfrida* is a fine poem: at least you will allow there are some good passages in it. JOHNSON: There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner.

I often wondered at his low estimation of the writings of Gray and Mason. Of Gray's poetry I have, in a former part of this work, expressed my high opinion; and for that of Mr Mason I have ever entertained a warm admiration. His *Elfrida* is exquisite, both in poetical description and moral sentiment; and his *Caractacus* is a noble drama. Nor can I omit paying my tribute of praise to some of his smaller poems which I have read with pleasure, and which no criticism shall persuade me not to like. If I wondered at Johnson's not tasting the works of Mason and Gray, still more have I wondered at their not tasting his works; that they should be insensible to his energy of diction, to his splendour of images, and comprehension of thought. Tastes may differ as to the violin, the flute, the hautboy, in short,

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all the lesser instruments : but who can be insensible to the powerful impressions of the majestic organ ?

His *Taxation no Tyranny* being mentioned, he said : " I think I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the reaction. I never think I have hit hard, unless it rebounds."

BOSWELL : I don't know, sir, what you would be at. Five or six shots of small arms in every newspaper, and repeated cannonading in pamphlets, might, I think, satisfy you. But, sir, you'll never make out this match, of which we have talked, with a certain political lady, since you are so severe against her principles. JOHNSON : Nay, sir, I have the better chance for that. She is like the Amazons of old ; she must be courted by the sword. But I have not been severe upon her. BOSWELL : Yes, sir, you have made her ridiculous. JOHNSON : That was already done, sir. To endeavour to make *her* ridiculous is like blacking the chimney.

I put him in mind that the landlord at Ellon in Scotland said, that he heard he was the greatest man in England—next to Lord Mansfield. " Aye, sir," said he, " the exception defined the idea. A Scotchman could go no farther :

' The force of Nature could no farther go.' "

Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her Vase at Batheaston villa, near Bath, in competition for honorary prizes, being mentioned, he held them very cheap : "*Bouts rimés*," said he, " is a mere conceit, and an *old* conceit *now* ; I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady." I named a gentleman of his acquaintance who wrote for the Vase. JOHNSON : He was a blockhead for his pains. BOSWELL : The Duchess of Northumberland wrote. JOHNSON : Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases : nobody will say anything to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw *****'s verses in his face.

I talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet Street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive

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passing through it. JOHNSON: Why, sir, Fleet Street has a very animated appearance; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross.

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined. "An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them; which he accordingly did. Here, sir, was a man, to whom the most disgusting circumstance in the business to which he had been used, was a relief from idleness."

On Wednesday, 5th April, I dined with him at Messieurs Dilly's, with Mr John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker, Mr Langton, Mr Miller (now Sir John), and Dr Thomas Campbell, an Irish clergyman, whom I took the liberty of inviting to Messieurs Dilly's table, having seen him at Mr Thrale's, and been told that he had come to England chiefly with a view to see Dr Johnson, for whom he entertained the highest veneration. He has since published *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, a very entertaining book, which has, however, one fault—that it assumes the fictitious character of an Englishman.

We talked of public speaking. JOHNSON: We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in public. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into Parliament, and never opened his mouth. For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it and fail; as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten.—This argument appeared to me fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would

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have done very well if he had tried ; whereas if he has tried and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. " Why then," I asked, " is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in public?" JOHNSON: Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in public than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say (laughing). Whereas, sir, you know courage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues ; because, unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other.

He observed that " the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into Parliament"; adding, that " if he were a gentleman of landed property, he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom he supported." LANGTON: Would not that, sir, be checking the freedom of election? JOHNSON: Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest ; of the permanent property of the country.

On Thursday, 6th April, I dined with him at Mr Thomas Davies's, with Mr Hicky, the painter, and my old acquaintance Mr Moody, the player.

Dr Johnson, as usual, spoke contemptuously of Colley Cibber. " It is wonderful that a man, who for forty years had lived with the great and the witty, should have acquired so ill the talents of conversation: and he had but half to furnish ; for one half of what he said was oaths." He, however, allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that *The Careless Husband* was not written by himself. Davies said he was the first dramatic writer who introduced genteel ladies upon the stage. Johnson refuted this observation by instancing several such characters in comedies before his time. DAVIES (trying to defend himself from a charge of ignorance): I mean genteel moral characters. " I think," said Hicky, " gentility and morality are inseparable." BOSWELL: By no means, sir. The genteeldest characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for

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uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk; but most vices may be committed very genteelly: a man may debauch his friend's wife genteelly: he may cheat at cards genteelly. HICKY: I do not think *that* is genteel. BOSWELL: Sir, it may not be like a gentleman, but it may be genteel. JOHNSON: You are meaning two different things. One means exterior grace; the other honour. It is certain that a man may be very immoral with exterior grace. Lovelace, in *Clarissa*, is a very genteel and a very wicked character. Tom Hervey, who died t'other day, though a vicious man, was one of the genteeldest men that ever lived.—Tom Davies instanced Charles the Second. JOHNSON (taking fire at any attack upon this Prince, for whom he had an extraordinary partiality): Charles the Second was licentious in his practice; but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The Church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best King we have had from his time till the reign of his present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good King, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics. *He* had the merit of endeavouring to do what he thought was for the salvation of the souls of his subjects, till he lost a great empire. *We*, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholics, had the merit of maintaining our religion, at the expense of submitting ourselves to the government of King William (for it could not be done otherwise)—to the government of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed. No; Charles the Second was not such a man as —— (naming another King). He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France; but he did not betray those over whom he ruled: he did not let the French fleet pass ours. George the First knew nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing: and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the

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crown to its hereditary successor.—He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second. When he ceased, Moody interjected, in an Irish tone, and with a comic look: "Ah! poor George the Second."

I mentioned that Dr Thomas Campbell had come from Ireland to London principally to see Dr Johnson. He seemed angry at this observation. DAVIES: Why, you know, sir, there came a man from Spain to see Livy¹; and Corelli came to England to see Purcell, and, when he heard he was dead, went directly back again to Italy. JOHNSON: I should not have wished to be dead to disappoint Campbell, had he been so foolish as you represent him; but I should have wished to have been a hundred miles off.—This was apparently perverse; and I do believe it was not his real way of thinking: he could not but like a man who came so far to see him. He laughed with some complacency when I told him Campbell's odd expression to me concerning him: "That having seen such a man was a thing to talk of a century hence"—as if he could live so long.

We got into an argument whether the Judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might. "For why," he urged, "should not judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less." I said they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the public. JOHNSON: No judge, sir, can give his whole attention to his office; and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself, for his own advantage, in the most profitable manner. "Then, sir," said Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatic, "he may become an insurer; and when he is going to the bench he may be stopped—'Your Lordship cannot go yet: here is a bunch of invoices: several ships are about to sail.'"
JOHNSON: Sir, you may as well say a judge should not have a house; for they may come and tell him, "Your Lordship's house is on fire"; and so, instead of minding the business

¹ Plin. *Epist.*, Lib. ii., Ep. 3.

Taxation no Tyranny;

AN

A N S W E R

TO THE

RESOLUTIONS AND ADDRESS

OF THE

AMERICAN CONGRESS.



L O N D O N,

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXV.

TITLE PAGE OF "TAXATION NO TYRANNY"

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of his Court, he is to be occupied in getting the engine with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every judge who has land, trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle; and in the land itself, undoubtedly. His steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A judge may be a farmer; but he is not to geld his own pigs. A judge may play a little at cards for his amusement; but he is not to play at marbles, or at chuck-farthing in the Piazza. No, sir; there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful, when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a judge upon the condition of being obliged to be totally a judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind at work but for a small proportion of his time: a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical. I once wrote for a magazine: I made a calculation that if I should write but a page a day, at the same rate I should, in ten years, write nine volumes in folio, of an ordinary size and print. BOSWELL: Such as Carte's *History*? JOHNSON: Yes, sir. When a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly.¹ The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write: a man will turn over half a library to make one book.

I argued warmly against the judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect judge, who devoted himself entirely to his office. JOHNSON: Hale, sir, attended to other things beside law: he left a great estate. BOSWELL: That was because what he got accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part.

While the dispute went on, Moody once tried to say something upon our side. Tom Davies clapped him on the back, to encourage him. Beauclerk, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, said that he "could not conceive a more humiliating situation than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies."

¹ Johnson certainly did, who had a mind stored with knowledge and teeming with imagery; but the observation is not applicable to writers in general.

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We spoke of Rolt, to whose *Dictionary of Commerce* Dr Johnson wrote the Preface. JOHNSON: Old Gardner, the bookseller, employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany, called *The Visitor*. There was a formal written contract, which Allen, the printer, saw. Gardner thought as you do of the judge. They were bound to write nothing else. They were to have, I think, a third of the profits of this sixpenny pamphlet; and the contract was for ninety-nine years. I wish I had thought of giving this to Thurlow, in the cause about Literary Property. What an excellent instance would it have been of the oppression of booksellers towards poor authors! (smiling).—Davies, zealous for the honour of *the trade*, said Gardner was not properly a bookseller. JOHNSON: Nay, sir; he certainly was a bookseller. He had served his time regularly, was a member of the Stationers' company, kept a shop in the face of mankind, purchased copyright, and was a *bibliopole*, sir, in every sense. I wrote for some months in *The Visitor* for poor Smart while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in *The Visitor* no longer.

Friday, 7th April, I dined with him at a tavern, with a numerous company. JOHNSON: I have been reading Twiss's *Travels in Spain*, which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keyser or Blainville; nay, as Addison's, if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydone's, but they are better than Pococke's. I have not, indeed, cut the leaves yet; but I have read in them where the pages are open, and I do not suppose that what is in the pages which are closed is worse than what is in the open pages. It would seem (he added) that Addison had not acquired much Italian learning, for we do not find it introduced into his writings. The only instance that I recollect is his quoting "*Stavo bene. Per star meglio, sto qui.*"

I mentioned Addison's having borrowed many of his

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classical remarks from Leandro Alberti. Mr Beauclerk said: "It was alleged that he had borrowed also from another Italian author." JOHNSON: Why, sir, all who go to look for what the classics have said of Italy must find the same passages; and I should think it would be one of the first things the Italians would do on the revival of learning, to collect all that the Roman authors had said of their country.

Ossian being mentioned—JOHNSON: Supposing the Irish and Erse languages to be the same, which I do not believe, yet as there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides ever wrote their native language, it is not to be credited that a long poem was preserved among them. If we had no evidence of the art of writing being practised in one of the counties of England, we should not believe that a long poem was preserved *there*, though in the neighbouring counties, where the same language was spoken, the inhabitants could write. BEAUCLERK: The ballad of *Lullabaleero* was once in the mouths of all the people of this country, and is said to have had a great effect in bringing about the Revolution. Yet I question whether anybody can repeat it now; which shows how improbable it is that much poetry should be preserved by tradition.

One of the company suggested an internal objection to the antiquity of the poetry said to be Ossian's, that we do not find the wolf in it, which must have been the case had it been of that age.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts; and while Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out: "Pennant tells of bears——" (what he added, I have forgotten). They went on, which he, being dull of hearing, did not perceive, or, if he did, was not willing to break off his talk; so he continued to vociferate his remarks, and *Bear* ("like a word in a catch," as Beauclerk said) was repeatedly heard at intervals, which, coming from him who,

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by those who did not know him, had been so often assimilated to that ferocious animal, while we who were sitting around could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludicrous effect. Silence having ensued, he proceeded: "We are told, that the black bear is innocent; but I should not like to trust myself with him." Mr Gibbon muttered, in a low tone of voice: "I should not like to trust myself with *you*." This piece of sarcastic pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to a competition of abilities.

Patriotism having become one of our topics, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apothegm, at which many will start: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But let it be considered that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. I maintained that certainly all patriots were not scoundrels. Being urged (not by Johnson) to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person, whom we all greatly admired. JOHNSON: Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest; but we have no reason to conclude from his political conduct that he *is* honest. Were he to accept of a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was: so that he may think it more for his interest to take his chance of his party coming in.

Mrs Pritchard being mentioned, he said: "Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of *Macbeth* all through. She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut."

On Saturday, 8th May, I dined with him at Mr Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs Abington's, with some fashionable

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people whom he named ; and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle.

Mrs Thrale, who frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating his *bon mots* in his hearing, told us that he had said a certain celebrated actor was just fit to stand at the door of an auction-room with a long pole, and cry : " Pray, gentlemen, walk in " ; and that a certain author, upon hearing this, had said, that another still more celebrated actor was fit for nothing better than that, and would pick your pocket after you came out. JOHNSON : Nay, my dear lady, there is no wit in what our friend added ; there is only abuse. You may as well say of any man that he will pick a pocket. Besides, the man who is stationed at the door does not pick people's pockets : that is done within, by the auctioneer.

Mrs Thrale told us, that Tom Davies repeated, in a very bald manner, the story of Dr Johnson's first repartee to me, which I have related exactly.¹ He made me say : " I *was* born in Scotland," instead of " I *come from* Scotland " ; so that Johnson's saying : " That, sir, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help," had no point, or even meaning : and that upon this being mentioned to Mr Fitzherbert, he observed : " It is not every man that can *carry a bon mot*."

On Monday, 10th April, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with Mr Langton and the Irish Dr Campbell, whom the General had obligingly given me leave to bring with me. This learned gentleman was thus gratified with a very high intellectual feast, by not only being in company with Dr Johnson, but with General Oglethorpe, who had been so long a celebrated name both at home and abroad.²

¹ Vol. i., page 256.

² Let me here be allowed to pay my tribute of most sincere gratitude to the memory of that excellent person, my intimacy with whom was the more valuable to me because my first acquaintance with him was unexpected and unsolicited. Soon after the publication of my *Account of Corsica*, he did me the honour to call on me, and approaching me with a frank, courteous air, said : " My name, sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be acquainted with you." I

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I must, again and again, entreat of my readers not to suppose that my imperfect record of conversation contains the whole of what was said by Johnson, or other eminent persons who lived with him. What I have preserved, however, has the value of the most perfect authenticity.

He this day enlarged upon Pope's melancholy remark :

“ Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest.”

He asserted, that *the present* was never a happy state to any human being, but that as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity was expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion that though, in general, happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered : “ Never, but when he is drunk.”

He urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his Life. He said : “ I know no man whose Life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials, I should be very glad to write it.”¹

Mr Scott of Amwell's *Elegies* were lying in the room.

was not a little flattered to be thus addressed by an eminent man, of whom I had read in Pope, from my early years :

“ Or, driven by strong benevolence of soul,
Will fly, like Oglethorpe, from pole to pole.”

I was fortunate enough to be found worthy of his good opinion, insomuch that I not only was invited to make one in the many respectable companies whom he entertained at his table, but had a cover at his hospitable board every day when I happened to be disengaged ; and in his society I never failed to enjoy learned and animated conversation, seasoned with genuine sentiments of virtue and religion.

¹ The General seemed unwilling to enter upon it at this time, but upon a subsequent occasion he communicated to me a number of particulars, which I have committed to writing ; but I was not sufficiently diligent in obtaining more from him, not apprehending that his friends were so soon to lose him ; for notwithstanding his great age, he was very healthy and vigorous, and was at last carried off by a violent fever, which is often fatal at any period of life.

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Dr Johnson observed: "They are very well; but such as twenty people might write." Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim—

mediocribus esse poetis

Non Di, non homines, non concessere columnæ."

—for here, I observed, was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like everything else, have different gradations of excellence, and, consequently, of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that "as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind." I declared myself not satisfied. "Why, then, sir," said he, "Horace and you must settle it." He was not much in the humour of talking.

No more of his conversation for some days appears in my journal, except that when a gentleman told him he had bought a suit of laces for his lady, he said: "Well, sir, you have done a good thing, and a wise thing." "I have done a good thing," said the gentleman, "but I do not know that I have done a wise thing." JOHNSON: Yes, sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is dressed as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is dressed.

On Friday, 14th April, being Good Friday, I repaired to him in the morning, according to my usual custom on this day, and breakfasted with him. I observed that he fasted so very strictly that he did not even taste bread, and took no milk with his tea, I suppose because it is a kind of animal food.

He entered upon the state of the nation, and thus discoursed: "Sir, the great misfortune now is, that Government has too little power. All that it has to bestow must, of necessity, be given to support itself; so that it cannot reward

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merit. No man, for instance, can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety¹; his only chance for promotion is his being connected with somebody who has parliamentary interest. Our several ministries in this reign have outbid each other in concessions to the people. Lord Bute, though a very honourable man—a man who meant well—a man who had his blood full of prerogative—was a theoretical statesman—a book-minister—and thought this country could be governed by the influence of the Crown alone. Then, sir, he gave up a great deal. He advised the King to agree that the judges should hold their places for life, instead of losing them at the accession of a new King. Lord Bute, I suppose, thought to make the King popular by this concession; but the people never minded it; and it was a most impolitic measure. There is no reason why a judge should hold his office for life, more than any other person in public trust. A judge may be partial otherwise than to the Crown: we have seen judges partial to the populace. A judge may become corrupt, and yet there may not be legal evidence against him. A judge may become froward from age. A judge may grow unfit for his office in many ways. It was desirable that there should be a possibility of being delivered from him by a new King. That is now gone by an Act of Parliament *ex gratiâ* of the Crown. Lord Bute advised the King to give up a very large sum of money,²

¹ From this too just observation there are some eminent exceptions.

² The money arising from the property of the prizes taken before the declaration of war which were given to his Majesty by the peace of Paris, and amounted to upwards of £700,000, and from the lands in the ceded islands, which were estimated at £200,000 more. Surely there was a noble munificence in this gift from a monarch to his people. And let it be remembered that during the Earl of Bute's administration the King was graciously pleased to give up the hereditary revenues of the Crown, and to accept, instead of them, of the limited sum of £800,000 a year; upon which Blackstone observes, that "The hereditary revenues, being put under the same management as the other branches of the public patrimony, will produce more, and be better collected than heretofore; and the public is a gainer of upwards of 100,000*l. per annum*, by this disinterested bounty of his Majesty."—Book I., Chap. 8, p. 330.

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for which nobody thanked him. It was of consequence to the King, but nothing to the public, among whom it was divided. When I say Lord Bute advised, I mean that such acts were done when he was minister, and we are to suppose that he advised them. Lord Bute showed an undue partiality to Scotchmen. He turned out Dr Nichols, a very eminent man, from being physician to the King, to make room for one of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession. He had ***** and **** to go on errands for him. He had occasion for people to go on errands for him; but he should not have had Scotchmen; and certainly he should not have suffered them to have access to him before the first people in England."

I told him, that the admission of one of them before the first people in England, which had given the greatest offence, was no more than what happens at every minister's levee, where those who attend are admitted in the order that they have come, which is better than admitting them according to their rank; for if that were to be the rule, a man who has waited all the morning might have the mortification to see a peer, newly come, go in before him, and keep him waiting still. JOHNSON: True, sir; but **** should not have come to the levee, to be in the way of people of consequence. He saw Lord Bute at all times; and could have said what he had to say at any time, as well as at the levee. There is now no Prime Minister: there is only an agent for Government in the House of Commons. We are governed by the Cabinet; but there is no one head there, as in Sir Robert Walpole's time. BOSWELL: What then, sir, is the use of Parliament? JOHNSON: Why, sir, Parliament is a larger council to the King; and the advantage of such a council is, having a great number of men of property concerned in the legislature, who, for their own interest, will not consent to bad laws. And you must have observed, sir, that administration is feeble and timid, and cannot act with that authority and resolution which is necessary. Were I in power, I would turn out every man who dared to oppose me. Government

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has the distribution of offices, that it may be enabled to maintain its authority.

"Lord Bute," he added, "took down too fast, without building up something new." BOSWELL: Because, sir, he found a rotten building. The political coach was drawn by a set of bad horses: it was necessary to change them. JOHNSON: But he should have changed them one by one.

I told him that I had been informed by Mr Orme, that many parts of the East Indies were better mapped than the Highlands of Scotland. JOHNSON: That a country may be mapped, it must be travelled over. "Nay," said I, meaning to laugh with him at one of his prejudices, "can't you say it is not *worth* mapping?"

As we walked to St Clement's Church, and saw several shops open upon this most solemn fast day of the Christian world, I remarked that one disadvantage arising from the immensity of London was, that nobody was heeded by his neighbour; there was no fear of censure for not observing Good Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country towns. He said it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London. He, however, owned that London was too large; but added: "It is nonsense to say the head is too big for the body. It would be as much too big though the body were ever so large—that is to say, though the country were ever so extensive. It has no similarity to a head connected with a body."

Dr Wetherell, Master of University College, Oxford, accompanied us home from church; and after he was gone, there came two other gentlemen, one of whom uttered the commonplace complaints, that by the increase of taxes, labour would be dear, other nations would undersell us, and our commerce would be ruined. JOHNSON (smiling): Never fear, sir. Our commerce is in a very good state; and suppose we had no commerce at all, we could live very well on the produce of our own country.—I cannot omit to mention that I never knew any man who was less disposed to be querulous than Johnson. Whether the subject was his own

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situation, or the state of the public, or the state of human nature in general, though he saw the evils, his mind was turned to resolution, and never to whining or complaint.

We went again to St Clement's in the afternoon. He had found fault with the preacher in the morning for not choosing a text adapted to the day. The preacher in the afternoon had chosen one extremely proper : " It is finished."

After the evening service, he said : " Come, you shall go home with me, and sit just an hour." But he was better than his word ; for after we had drunk tea with Mrs Williams he asked me to go up to his study with him, where we sat a long while together in a serene undisturbed frame of mind, sometimes in silence, and sometimes conversing, as we felt ourselves inclined, or, more properly speaking, as *he* was inclined ; for during all the course of my long intimacy with him, my respectful attention never abated, and my wish to hear him was such that I constantly watched every dawning of communication from that great and illuminated mind.

He observed : " All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to learn to hem a ruffle, of his wife, or his wife's maid ; but if a mere wish could attain it, he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle."

He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but not to mention such trifles as, that meat was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy. He had, till very near his death, a contempt for the notion that the weather affects the human frame.

I told him that our friend Goldsmith had said to me, that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the Temple of Fame ; so that as but a few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. JOHNSON : That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Goldsmith. It is difficult to get literary fame, and it is

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every day growing more difficult. Ah, sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that, how little are all other things! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it.—I said, it appeared to me that some people had not the least notion of immortality; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. JOHNSON: Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality, he would cut a throat to fill his pockets.—When I quoted this to Beauclerk, who knew much more of the gentleman than we did, he said in his acid manner: “He would cut a throat to fill his pockets, if it were not for fear of being hanged.”

Dr Johnson proceeded: “Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity; but there are, in reality, very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say, that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels.”

He was pleased to say: “If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments.” In his private register this evening is thus marked: “Boswell sat with me till night; we had some serious talk.”¹ It also appears from the same record that after I left him he was occupied in religious duties, in “giving Francis, his servant, some directions for preparation to communicate; in reviewing his life, and resolving on better conduct.” The humility and piety which he discovers on such occasions is truly edifying. No saint, however, in the course of his religious warfare, was more sensible of the unhappy failure of pious resolves, than Johnson. He said one day, talking to an acquaintance on this subject: “Sir, Hell is paved with good intentions.”

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 138.

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On Sunday, 16th April, being Easter Day, after having attended the solemn service at St Paul's, I dined with Dr Johnson and Mrs Williams. I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nil admirari*, for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings; and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON: Sir, as a man advances in life he gets what is better than admiration—judgment, to estimate things at their true value.—I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgment, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast beef; love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON: No, sir; admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne; judgment and friendship like being enlivened. Waller has hit upon the same thought with you¹: but I don't believe you have borrowed from Waller. I wish you would enable yourself to borrow more.

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation," said he, "must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view."

On Tuesday, 18th April, he and I were engaged to go with Sir Joshua Reynolds to dine with Mr Cambridge, at his beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham. Dr Johnson's tardiness was such that Sir Joshua,

¹ "Amoret's as sweet and good
As the most delicious food;
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart.

Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness does incline;
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain."

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who had an appointment at Richmond early in the day, was obliged to go by himself on horseback, leaving his coach to Johnson and me. Johnson was in such good spirits that everything seemed to please him as we drove along.

Our conversation turned on a variety of subjects. He thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. "Public practice of any art," he observed, "and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female." I happened to start a question of propriety, whether when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend, with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation. JOHNSON: No, sir; he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him (smiling).

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know, his own character in the world, or, rather, as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. JOHNSON: It is wonderful, sir, how rare a quality good humour is in life. We meet with very few good-humoured men.—I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good humoured. One was *acid*, another was *muddy*, and to the others he had objections which have escaped me. Then, shaking his head and stretching himself at his ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said: "I look upon *myself* as a good-humoured fellow." The epithet *fellow*, applied to the great Lexicographer, the stately Moralist, the masterly Critic, as if he had been *Sam* Johnson, a mere pleasant companion, was highly diverting; and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling: "No, no, sir; that will *not* do. You are good-natured, but not good humoured: you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them, if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence, that they cannot escape."

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I had brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers, in which his *Journey to the Western Islands* was attacked in every mode; and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment. I wish the writers of them had been present: they would have been sufficiently vexed. One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr Maclaurin, now one of the Scottish judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. "This," said he, "is the best. But I could caricature my own style much better myself." He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch—"Their learning is like bread in a besieged town: every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal." "There is," said he, "in Scotland a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread. A merchant there has as much learning as one of their clergy."

He talked of Isaac Walton's *Lives*, which was one of his most favourite books. Dr Donne's *Life*, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed that "it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now." He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linen draper and sempster, and was only an author; and added, "that he was a great panegyrist." BOSWELL: No quality will get a man more friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others. I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, flattery pleases very generally. In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true; but, in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered.

No sooner had we made our bow to Mr Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room,

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intent on poring over the backs of the books. Sir Joshua observed (aside): "He runs to the books as I do to the pictures: but I have the advantage. I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books." Mr Cambridge, upon this, politely said: "Dr Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books." Johnson, ever ready for contest, instantly started from his reverie, wheeled about, and answered: "Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and at the backs of books in libraries." Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument. "Yes," said I, "he has no formal preparation, no flourishing with his sword; he is through your body in an instant."

Johnson was here solaced with an elegant entertainment, a very accomplished family, and much good company; among whom was Mr Harris of Salisbury, who paid him many compliments on his *Journey to the Western Islands*.

The common remark as to the utility of reading history being made—JOHNSON: We must consider how very little history there is; I mean real authentic history. That certain kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true; but all the colouring, all the philosophy, of history is conjecture. BOSWELL: Then, sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanac, a mere chronological series of remarkable events.—Mr Gibbon, who must at that time have been employed upon his history, of which he published the first volume in the following year, was present, but did not step forth in defence of that species of writing. He probably did not like to *trust* himself with Johnson.¹

¹ See page 164.



THE SUMMER-HOUSE AT STREATHAM

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Johnson observed, that the force of our early habits was so great that, though reason approved, nay, though our senses relished a different course, almost every man returned to them. I do not believe there is any observation upon human nature better founded than this ; and, in many cases, it is a very painful truth ; for where early habits have been mean and wretched, the joy and elevation resulting from better modes of life must be damped by the gloomy consciousness of being under an almost inevitable doom to sink back into a situation which we recollect with disgust. It surely may be prevented, by constant attention and unremitting exertion to establish contrary habits of superior efficacy.

The Beggar's Opera, and the common question, whether it was pernicious in its effects, having been introduced—JOHNSON: As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion that more influence has been ascribed to *The Beggar's Opera* than it in reality ever had ; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time I do not deny that it may have some influence, by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing.¹—Then collecting himself, as it were, to give a heavy stroke : “There is in it such a *labefaction* of all principles, as may be injurious to morality.”

While he pronounced this response we sat in a comical sort of restraint, smothering a laugh, which we were afraid might burst out. In his *Life of Gay* he has been still more

¹ A very eminent physician, whose discernment is as acute and penetrating in judging of the human character as it is in his own profession, remarked once at a club where I was, that a lively young man, fond of pleasure and without money, would hardly resist a solicitation from his mistress to go upon the highway immediately after being present at the representation of *The Beggar's Opera*. I have been told of an ingenious observation by Mr Gibbon, that *The Beggar's Opera* may, perhaps, have sometimes increased the number of highwaymen ; but that it has had a beneficial effect in refining that class of men, making them less ferocious, more polite, in short, more like gentlemen.” Upon this Mr Courtenay said, that “Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen.”

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decisive as to the inefficiency of *The Beggar's Opera*, in corrupting society. But I have ever thought somewhat differently; for, indeed, not only are the gaiety and heroism of a highwayman very captivating to a youthful imagination, but the arguments for adventurous depredation are so plausible, the allusions so lively, and the contrasts with the ordinary and more painful modes of acquiring property are so artfully displayed, that it requires a cool and strong judgment to resist so imposing an aggregate: yet I own I should be very sorry to have *The Beggar's Opera* suppressed; for there is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas, engage, soothe, and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits, delights me more.

The late "worthy" Duke of Queensberry, as Thomson, in his *Seasons*, justly characterises him, told me that when Gay first showed him *The Beggar's Opera*, his Grace's observation was: "This is a very odd thing, Gay; I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing, or a very bad thing." It proved the former, beyond the warmest expectations of the author or his friends. Mr Cambridge, however, showed us to-day that there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quin, that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song, "Oh ponder well, be not severe." Quin himself had so bad an opinion of it that he refused the part of Captain Macheath, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.

We talked of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blessed with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly

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delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed: "He resolved wisely and nobly, to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not *prepare* myself for a public singer, as readily as let my wife be one."

Johnson arraigned the modern politics of this country as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind. "Politics," said he, "are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politics, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation, and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. *Hudibras* affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in *Hudibras* a great deal of bullion, which will always last. But to be sure the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters which was upon men's minds at the time; to their knowing them, at table and in the street; in short, being familiar with them; and, above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the approbation or consent of the people. Had that been the case, Parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment. And we know what exuberance of joy there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth." A gentleman observed he would have done no harm if he had. JOHNSON: Why,

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sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government. CAMBRIDGE: There have been many sad victims to absolute power. JOHNSON: So, sir, have there been to popular factions. BOSWELL: The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many?

Johnson praised *The Spectator*, particularly the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. He said: "Sir Roger did not die a violent death, as has been generally fancied. He was not killed; he died only because others were to die, and because his death afforded an opportunity to Addison for some very fine writing. We have the example of Cervantes making Don Quixote die. I never could see why Sir Roger is represented as a little cracked. It appears to me that the story of the widow was intended to have something super-induced upon it: but the superstructure did not come."

Somebody found fault with writing verses in a dead language, maintaining that they were merely arrangements of so many words, and laughed at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge for sending forth collections of them not only in Greek and Latin, but even in Syriac, Arabic, and other more unknown tongues. JOHNSON: I would have as many of these as possible; I would have verses in every language that there are the means of acquiring. Nobody imagines that a university is to have at once two hundred poets; but it should be able to show two hundred scholars. Peiresc's death was lamented, I think, in forty languages. And I would have at every coronation, and every death of a King, every *Gaudium*, and every *Luctus*, University verses in as many languages as can be acquired. I would have the world to be thus told: "Here is a school where everything may be learnt."

Having set out next day on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, and to my friend, Mr Temple, at Mamhead, in Devonshire, and not having returned to town till the 2nd of May, I did not see Dr Johnson for a considerable time, and during the remaining part of my stay in London kept very

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imperfect notes of his conversation, which had I, according to my usual custom, written out at large soon after the time, much might have been preserved which is now irretrievably lost. I can now only record some particular scenes, and a few fragments of his *memorabilia*. But to make some amends for my relaxation of diligence in one respect, I have to present my readers with arguments upon two law cases, with which he favoured me.

On Saturday, the 6th of May, we dined by ourselves at the Mitre, and he dictated to me what follows, to obviate the complaint already mentioned,¹ which had been made in the form of an action in the Court of Session by Dr Memis, of Aberdeen, that in the same translation of a charter in which *physicians* were mentioned, he was called *Doctor of Medicine* :

“There are but two reasons for which a physician can decline the title of *Doctor of Medicine*, because he supposes himself disgraced by the doctorship, or supposes the doctorship disgraced by himself. To be disgraced by a title which he shares in common with every illustrious name of his profession, with Boerhaave, with Arbuthnot, and with Cullen, can surely diminish no man’s reputation. It is, I suppose, to the doctorate, from which he shrinks, that he owes his right of practising physic. A Doctor of Medicine is a physician under the protection of the laws, and by the stamp of authority. The physician who is not a Doctor, usurps a profession, and is authorised only by himself to decide upon health and sickness, and life and death. That this gentleman is a Doctor, his diploma makes evident; a diploma not obtruded upon him, but obtained by solicitation, and for which fees were paid. With what countenance any man can refuse the title which he has either begged or bought is not easily discovered.

“All verbal injury must comprise in it either some false position, or some unnecessary declaration of defamatory truth. That in calling him Doctor, a false appellation was

¹ Page 120.

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given him he himself will not pretend, who at the same time that he complains of the title, would be offended if we supposed him to be not a Doctor. If the title of Doctor be a defamatory truth, it is time to dissolve our colleges, for why should the public give salaries to men whose approbation is reproach? It may likewise deserve the notice of the public to consider what help can be given to the professors of physic, who all share with this unhappy gentleman the ignominious appellation, and of whom the very boys in the street are not afraid to say: '*There goes the Doctor.*'

"What is implied by the term Doctor is well known. It distinguishes him to whom it is granted as a man who has attained such knowledge of his profession as qualifies him to instruct others. A Doctor of Laws is a man who can form lawyers by his precepts. A Doctor of Medicine is a man who can teach the art of curing diseases. There is an old axiom which no man has yet thought fit to deny, *Nil dat quod non habet*. Upon this principle to be a Doctor implies skill, for *nemo docet quod non didicit*. In England, whoever practises physic, not being a Doctor, must practise by a licence: but the doctorate conveys a licence in itself.

"By what accident it happened that he and the other physicians were mentioned in different terms, where the terms themselves were equivalent, or where in effect that which was applied to him was the more honourable, perhaps they who wrote the paper cannot now remember. Had they expected a lawsuit to have been the consequence of such petty variation, I hope they would have avoided it.¹ But, probably, as they meant no ill, they suspected no danger, and, therefore, consulted only what appeared to them propriety or convenience."

A few days afterwards I consulted him upon a cause, *Paterson and Others* against *Alexander and Others*, which had been decided by a casting vote in the Court of Session,

¹ In justice to Dr Memis, though I was against him as an Advocate, I must mention, that he objected to the variation very earnestly, before the translation was printed off.

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determining that the Corporation of Stirling was corrupt, and setting aside the election of some of their officers, because it was proved that three of the leading men who influenced the majority had entered into an unjustifiable compact, of which, however, the majority were ignorant. He dictated to me, after a little consideration, the following sentences upon the subject :

“ There is a difference between majority and superiority ; majority is applied to number, and superiority to power ; and power, like many other things, is to be estimated *non numero sed pondere*. Now though the greater *number* is not corrupt, the greater *weight* is corrupt, so that corruption predominates in the borough, taken *collectively*, though, perhaps, taken *numerically*, the greater part may be uncorrupt. That borough which is so constituted as to act corruptly is in the eye of reason corrupt, whether it be by the uncontrollable power of a few, or by an accidental pravity of the multitude. The objection, in which is urged the injustice of making the innocent suffer with the guilty, is an objection not only against society, but against the possibility of society. All societies, great and small, subsist upon this condition : that as the individuals derive advantages from union, they may likewise suffer inconveniences ; that as those who do nothing and sometimes those who do ill, will have the honours and emoluments of general virtue and general prosperity, so those likewise who do nothing or perhaps do well, must be involved in the consequences of predominant corruption.”

This in my opinion was a very nice case ; but the decision was affirmed in the House of Lords.

On Monday, 8th May, we went together and visited the mansions of Bedlam. I had been informed that he had once been there before with Mr Wedderburne (now Lord Loughborough), Mr Murphy, and Mr Foote ; and I had heard Foote give a very entertaining account of Johnson's happening to have his attention arrested by a man who was very furious, and who, while beating his straw, supposed it to be William Duke of Cumberland, whom he was punishing

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for his cruelties in Scotland in 1746. There was nothing peculiarly remarkable this day; but the general contemplation of insanity was very affecting. I accompanied him home, and dined and drank tea with him.

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed: "You know, sir, he runs about with little weight upon his mind." And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said: "Sir, he leads the life of an outlaw."

On Friday, 12th May, as he had been so good as to assign me a room in his house, where I might sleep occasionally when I happened to sit with him to a late hour, I took possession of it this night, found everything in excellent order, and was attended by honest Francis with a most civil assiduity. I asked him whether I might go to a consultation with another lawyer upon Sunday, as that appeared to me to be doing work as much in my way as if an artisan should work on the day appropriated for religious rest. JOHNSON: Why, sir, when you are of consequence enough to oppose the practice of consulting upon Sunday, you should do it: but you may go now. It is not criminal, though it is not what one should do who is anxious for the preservation and increase of piety, to which a peculiar observance of Sunday is a great help. The distinction is clear between what is of moral and what is of ritual obligation.

On Saturday, 13th May, I breakfasted with him by invitation, accompanied by Mr Andrew Crosbie, a Scotch Advocate, whom he had seen at Edinburgh, and the Hon. Colonel (now General) Edward Stopford, brother to Lord Courtown, who was desirous of being introduced to him. His tea and rolls and butter, and whole breakfast apparatus were all in such decorum, and his behaviour was so courteous, that Colonel Stopford was quite surprised, and wondered at his having heard so much said of Johnson's slovenliness and

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roughness. I have preserved nothing of what passed, except that Crosbie pleased him much by talking learnedly of alchemy, as to which Johnson was not a positive unbeliever, but rather delighted in considering what progress had actually been made in the transmutation of metals, what near approaches there had been to the making of gold; and told us that it was affirmed that a person in the Russian dominions had discovered the secret, but died without revealing it, as imagining it would be prejudicial to society. He added, that it was not impossible but it might in time be generally known.

It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him—JOHNSON: I do not see, sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman has preferred to him; but angry he is, no doubt; and he is loath to be angry at himself.

Before setting out for Scotland on the 23rd, I was frequently in his company at different places, but during this period have recorded only two remarks: one concerning Garrick: "He has not Latin enough. He finds out the Latin by the meaning, rather than the meaning by the Latin." And another concerning writers of travels, who, he observed, "were more defective than any other writers."

I passed many hours with him on the 17th, of which I find all my memorial is "much laughing." It would seem he had that day been in a humour for jocularities and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. We may suppose that the high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom produced more than ordinary exertions of that distinguishing faculty of man which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good-humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."

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To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I make no doubt but you are now safely lodged in your own habitation, and have told all your adventures to Mrs Boswell and Miss Veronica. Pray teach Veronica to love me. Bid her not mind mamma.

Mrs Thrale has taken cold, and been very much disordered, but I hope is grown well. Mr Langton went yesterday to Lincolnshire, and has invited Nicolaida¹ to follow him. Beauclerk talks of going to Bath. I am to set out on Monday; so there is nothing but dispersion.

I have returned Lord Hailes's entertaining sheets, but must stay till I come back for more, because it will be inconvenient to send them after me in my vagrant state.

I promised Mrs Macaulay² that I would try to serve her son at Oxford. I have not forgotten it, nor am unwilling to perform it. If they desire to give him an English education, it should be considered whether they cannot send him for a year or two to an English school. If he comes immediately from Scotland, he can make no figure in our universities. The schools in the north, I believe, are cheap; and, when I was a young man, were eminently good.

There are two little books published by the Foulis, *Telemachus* and *Collins's Poems*, each a shilling; I would be glad to have them.

Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, though she does not love me. You see what perverse things ladies are, and how little fit to be trusted with feudal estates. When she mends and loves me, there may be more hope of her daughters.

I will not send compliments to my friends by name, because I would be loath to leave any out in the enumeration. Tell them, as you see them, how well I speak of Scotch

¹ A learned Greek.

² Wife of the Reverend Mr Kenneth Macaulay, author of *The History of St Kilda*.

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politeness, and Scotch hospitality, and Scotch beauty, and of everything Scotch, but Scotch oatcakes and Scotch prejudices.

Let me know the answer of Rasay, and the decision relating to Sir Allan.¹ I am, my dearest Sir, with great affection, your most obliged and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

May 27, 1775.

After my return to Scotland, I wrote three letters to him, from which I extract the following passages:—

“I have seen Lord Hailes since I came down. He thinks it wonderful that you are pleased to take so much pains in revising his *Annals*. I told him that you said you were well rewarded by the entertainment which you had in reading them.”

“There has been a numerous flight of Hebrideans in Edinburgh this summer, whom I have been happy to entertain at my house. Mr Donald Macqueen² and Lord Monboddo supped with me one evening. They joined in controverting your proposition that the Gaelic of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland was not written till of late.”

“My mind has been somewhat dark this summer. I have need of your warming and vivifying rays; and I hope I shall have them frequently. I am going to pass some time with my father at Auchinleck.”

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I am now returned from the annual ramble into the middle counties. Having seen nothing that I had not seen before, I have nothing to relate. Time has left that part of the island few antiquities; and commerce has left

¹ A lawsuit carried on by Sir Allan Maclean, Chief of his Clan, to recover certain parts of his family estate from the Duke of Argyle.

² A very learned minister in the Isle of Sky, whom both Dr Johnson and I have mentioned with regard.

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the people no singularities. I was glad to go abroad, and, perhaps, glad to come home; which is, in other words, I was, I am afraid, weary of being at home, and weary of being abroad. Is not this the state of life? But, if we confess this weariness, let us not lament it; for all the wise and all the good say that we may cure it.

For the black fumes which rise in your mind, I can prescribe nothing but that you disperse them by honest business or innocent pleasure, and by reading sometimes easy and sometimes serious. Change of place is useful; and I hope that your residence at Auchinleck will have many good effects.* * *

That I should have given pain to Rasay, I am sincerely sorry; and am therefore very much pleased that he is no longer uneasy. He still thinks that I have represented him as personally giving up the Chieftainship. I meant only that it was no longer contested between the two houses, and supposed it settled, perhaps, by the cession of some remote generation, in the house of Dunvegan. I am sorry the advertisement was not continued for three or four times in the papers.

That Lord Monboddo and Mr Macqueen should controvert a position contrary to the imaginary interest of literary or national prejudice might be easily imagined; but of a standing fact there ought to be no controversy: If there are men with tails, catch an *homo caudatus*; if there was writing of old in the Highlands or Hebrides, in the Erse language, produce the manuscripts. Where men write, they will write to one another, and some of their letters, in families studious of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts.

I have now three parcels of Lord Hailes's history, which I purpose to return all the next week: that his respect for my little observations should keep his work in suspense makes one of the evils of my journey. It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history, which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour

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of language, or affected subtlety of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raises my wonder. He seems to have the closeness of Henault without his constraint.

Mrs Thrale was so entertained with your *Journal*,¹ that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you.

Of Mrs Boswell, though she knows in her heart that she does not love me, I am always glad to hear any good, and hope that she and the little dear ladies will have neither sickness nor any other affliction. But she knows that she does not care what becomes of me, and for that she may be sure that I think her very much to blame.

Never, my dear sir, do you take it into your head to think that I do not love you; you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and my esteem; I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety. I hold you as Hamlet has it, "in my heart of heart," and, therefore, it is little to say that I am, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, *August 27, 1775.*

To the Same

SIR,—If in these papers² there is little alteration attempted, do not suppose me negligent. I have read them perhaps more closely than the rest; but I find nothing worthy of an objection.

Write to me soon, and write often, and tell me all your honest heart. I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

SAM. JOHNSON.

August 30, 1775.

¹ My *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, which that lady read in the original manuscript.

² Another parcel of Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland*.

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To the Same

MY DEAR SIR,—I now write to you, lest in some of your freaks and humours you should fancy yourself neglected. Such fancies I must entreat you never to admit, at least never to indulge, for my regard for you is so radicated and fixed, that it is become part of my mind, and cannot be effaced but by some cause uncommonly violent; therefore, whether I write or not, set your thoughts at rest. I now write to tell you that I shall not very soon write again, for I am to set out to-morrow on another journey.

* * * * *

Your friends are all well at Streatham, and in Leicester Fields. Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, if she is in good humour with me. I am, Sir, etc.

SAM. JOHNSON.

September 14, 1775.

What he mentions in such light terms as, "I am to set out to-morrow on another journey," I soon afterwards discovered was no less than a tour to France with Mr and Mrs Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the Continent.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *Oct. 14, 1775.*

MY DEAR SIR,—If I had not been informed that you were at Paris, you should have had a letter from me by the earliest opportunity, announcing the birth of my Son, on the 9th instant; I have named him Alexander, after my father. I now write, as I suppose your fellow-traveller, Mr Thrale, will return to London this week to attend his duty in Parliament, and that you will not stay behind him.

I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's *Annals*. I have undertaken to solicit you for a favour to him, which he thus

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requests in a letter to me: "I intend soon to give you the 'Life of Robert Bruce,' which you will be pleased to transmit to Dr Johnson. I wish that you could assist me in a fancy which I have taken, of getting Dr Johnson to draw a character of Robert Bruce, from the account that I give of that prince. If he finds materials for it in my work, it will be a proof that I have been fortunate in selecting the most striking incidents."

I suppose by "*The Life of Robert Bruce*" his lordship means that part of his *Annals* which relates the history of that prince, and not a separate work.

Shall we have "*A Journey to Paris*" from you in the winter? You will, I hope, at any rate be kind enough to give me some account of your French travels very soon, for I am very impatient. What a different scene have you viewed this autumn, from that which you viewed in autumn 1773! I ever am, my dear Sir, your much obliged, and affectionate humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I am glad that the young Laird is born, and an end, as I hope, put to the only difference that you can ever have with Mrs Boswell.¹ I know that she does not love me, but I intend to persist in wishing her well till I get the better of her.

Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the public anything of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself. We can talk of it when we meet.

I shall go next week to Streatham, from whence I purpose to send a parcel of the "History" every post. Concerning the character of Bruce, I can only say that I do not see any great

¹ This alludes to my old feudal principle of preferring male to female succession.

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reason for writing it, but I shall not easily deny what Lord Hailes and you concur in desiring.

I have been remarkably healthy all the journey, and hope you and your family have known only that trouble and danger which has so happily terminated. Among all the congratulations that you may receive, I hope you believe none more warm or sincere than those of, dear Sir, your most affectionate

SAM. JOHNSON.

November 16, 1775.

To Mrs LUCY PORTER, in Lichfield¹

DEAR MADAM,—This week I came home from Paris. I have brought you a little box, which I thought pretty; but I know not whether it is properly a snuff-box, or a box for some other use. I will send it when I can find an opportunity. I have been through the whole journey remarkably well. My fellow-travellers were the same whom you saw at Lichfield, only we took Baretti with us. Paris is not so fine a place as you would expect. The palaces and churches, however, are very splendid and magnificent; and what would please you, there are many very fine pictures; but I do not think their way of life commodious or pleasant.

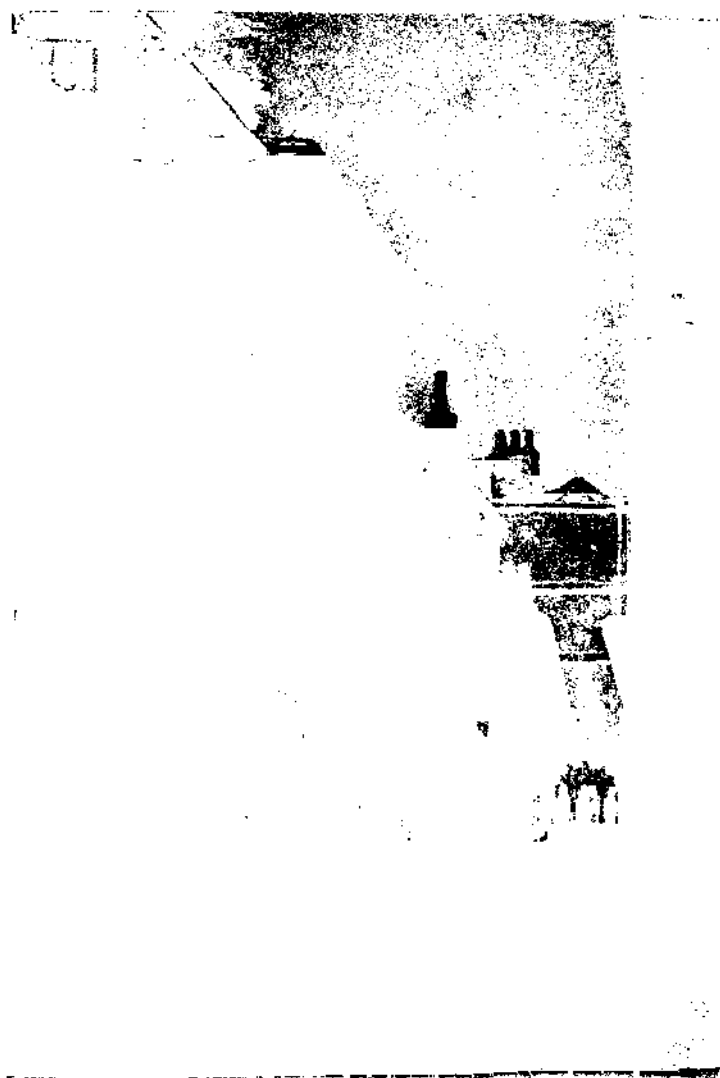
Let me know how your health has been all this while. I hope the fine summer has given you strength sufficient to encounter the winter.

Make my compliments to all my friends; and, if your fingers will let you, write to me, or let your maid write, if it be troublesome to you. I am, dear Madam, your most affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Nov. 16, 1775.

¹ There can be no doubt that many years previous to 1775 he corresponded with this lady, who was his stepdaughter, but none of his earlier letters to her have been preserved.



Dr. Johnson's House No. 1, Inner Temple Lane

Resided here from 1760-1793.

Pulled down 1837.

Now part of the University College London.

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To the Same

DEAR MADAM,—Some weeks ago I wrote to you, to tell you that I was just come home from a ramble, and hoped that I should have heard from you. I am afraid winter has laid hold on your fingers, and hinders you from writing. However, let somebody write, if you cannot, and tell me how you do, and a little of what has happened at Lichfield among our friends. I hope you are all well.

When I was in France, I thought myself growing young, but am afraid that cold weather will take part of my new vigour from me. Let us, however, take care of ourselves, and lose no part of our health by negligence.

I never knew whether you received the *Commentary on the New Testament*, and the *Travels*, and the glasses.

Do, my dear love, write to me; and do not let us forget each other. This is the season of good wishes, and I wish you all good. I have not lately seen Mr Porter,¹ nor heard of him. Is he with you?

Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs Adey, and Mrs Cobb, and all my friends; and when I can do any good, let me know. I am, dear Madam, yours most affectionately,
SAM. JOHNSON.

December, 1775.

It is to be regretted that he did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said that "he could write the Life of a Broomstick," so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost everything subject for remark in that great kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a valuable work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to

¹ Son of Mrs Johnson, by her first husband.

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show me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it; and the greatest part of them have been lost, or, perhaps, destroyed in that precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented. One small paper-book, however, entitled "France, II.," has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations, from the 10th of October to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days; and shows an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection:

"Oct. 10. Tuesday. We saw the *Ecole Militaire*, in which one hundred and fifty young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age;—flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine, except the council-room. The French have large squares in the windows;—they make good iron palisades. Their meals are gross.

"We visited the Observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with iron. The flat on the top is very extensive; but on the insulated part there is no parapet. Though it was broad enough, I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms.

"We walked to a small convent of the Fathers of the Oratory. In the reading-desk of the refectory lay *The Lives of the Saints*.

"Oct. 11. Wednesday. We went to see *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

"Thence we went to Mr Monville's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance.—Porphyry.

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"Thence we went to St Roque's church, which is very large;—the lower part of the pillars incrustured with marble.—Three chapels behind the high altar;—the last a mass of low arches.—Altars, I believe, all round.

"We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover Square.—Inhabited by the high families.—Lewis XIV. on horseback in the middle.

"Monville is the son of a farmer-general. In the house of Chatlois is a room furnished with japan, fitted up in Europe.

"We dined with Boccage, the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady.—The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear.—Mr Le Roy, Count Manucci the Abbé, the Prior, and Father Wilson, who stayed with me, till I took him home in the coach.

"Bathiani is gone.

"The French have no laws for the maintenance of their poor.—Monk not necessarily a priest.—Benedictines rise at four;—are at church an hour and half; at church again half-an-hour before, half-an-hour after dinner; and again from half-an-hour after seven to eight. They may sleep eight hours.—Bodily labour wanted in monasteries.

"The poor taken to hospitals, and miserably kept.—Monks in the convent fifteen;—accounted poor.

"Oct. 12. Thursday. We went to the Gobelins.—Tapestry makes a good picture;—imitates flesh exactly.—One piece with a gold ground;—the birds not exactly coloured.—Thence we went to the King's cabinet;—very neat, not, perhaps, perfect.—Gold ore.—Candles of the candle-tree.—Seeds.—Woods.—Thence to Gagnier's house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion of wealth and elegance which I never have seen before.—Vases.—Pictures.—The dragon china.—The lustre said to be of crystal, and to have cost 3,500l.—The whole furniture said to have cost 125,000l.—Damask hangings covered with pictures.—Porphyry.—This house struck me.

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—Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's.—Captain Irwin with us.¹—Spain. County towns all beggars.—At Dijon he could not find the way to Orleans.—Cross roads of France very bad.—Five soldiers.—Woman.—Soldiers escaped.—The Colonel would not lose five men for the death of one woman.—The magistrate cannot seize a soldier but by the Colonel's permission.—Good inn at Nismes.—Moors of Barbary fond of Englishmen.—Gibraltar eminently healthy;—it has beef from Barbary.—There is a large garden.—Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.

"Oct. 13. Friday. I staid at home all day, only went to find the Prior, who was not at home.—I read something in Canus.²—*Nec admiror, nec multum laudo.*

"Oct. 14. Saturday. We went to the house of Mr Argenson, which was almost wainscotted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold.—The ladies' closet wainscotted with large squares of glass over painted paper. They always place mirrors to reflect their rooms.

"Then we went to Julien's, the Treasurer of the Clergy :—30,000*l.* a year.—The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrors, and covered with gold.—Books of wood here and in another library.

"At D——'s I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and, in contempt, showed them to Mr T.—*Prince Titi*; *Bibl. des Fées*, and other books.—She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment.

"Then we went to Julien Le Roy, the King's watch-maker, a man of character in his business, who showed a small clock made to find the longitude.—A decent man.

"Afterwards we saw the *Palais Marchand*, and the Courts of Justice, civil and criminal.—Queries on the *Selleste*.—

¹ The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Captain Irwin.

² Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo in 1560. He wrote a treatise, *De Locis Theologicis*, in twelve books.

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This building has the old Gothick passages, and a great appearance of antiquity.—Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the gaol.

“ Much disturbed ;—hope no ill will be.¹

“ In the afternoon I visited Mr Freron the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me.—His house not splendid, but of commodious size.—His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated but decent.—I was pleased with my reception.—He is to translate my book, which I am to send him with notes.

“ Oct. 15. Sunday. At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about 7 m. from Paris.—The terrace noble along the river.—The rooms numerous and grand, but not discriminated from other palaces.—The chapel beautiful, but small.—China globes.—Inlaid table.—Labyrinth.—Sinking table.—Toilet tables.

“ Oct. 16. Monday. The Palais Royal very grand, large, and lofty.—A very great collection of pictures.—Three of Raphael.—Two Holy Family.—One small piece of M. Angelo.—One room of Rubens.—I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

“ The Thuilleries. — Statues. — Venus. — Æn. and Anchises in his arms.—Nilus.—Many more.—The walks not open to mean persons.—Chairs at night hired for two sous a piece.—Pont tournant.

“ Austin Nuns.—Grate.—Mrs Fermor, Abbess.—She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable.—Mrs — has many books ;—has seen life.—Their frontlet disagreeable.—Their hood.—Their life easy.—Rise about five ; hour and half in chapel.—Dine at ten.—Another hour and half at chapel ; half-an-hour about three, and half-an-hour more at seven ;—four hours in chapel.—A large garden.—Thirteen pensioners.—Teacher complained.

“ At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there.—Rope-dancing and farce.—Egg dance.

¹ This passage, which some may think superstitious, reminds me of Archbishop Laud's *Diary*.

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"N. [Note.] Near Paris, whether on week-days or Sundays, the roads empty.

"Oct. 17. Tuesday. At the Palais Marchand.—I bought

A snuff-box,	24L.
	6
Table book	15
Scissars 3 p [pair]	18

$$63 = 2 \ 12 \ 6$$

"We heard the lawyers plead.—N. As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year.—*Chambre de question*.—Tournelle at the Palais Marchand.—An old venerable building.

"The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé. Only one small wing shown;—lofty;—splendid;—gold and glass.—The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms. The present Prince a grandsire at thirty-nine.

"The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them, and impress them. As I entered, my wife was in my mind¹: she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased.

"N. In France there is no middle rank.

"So many shops open, that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris.—The palaces of Louvre and Thuilleries granted out in lodgings.

"In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fireplace.

"The French beds commended.—Much of the marble, only paste.

"The Colosseum a mere wooden building, at least much of it.

"Oct. 18. Wednesday. We went to Fontainebleau, which

¹ His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his *Prayers and Meditations*, appears very feelingly in this passage.

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we found a large mean town, crowded with people.—The forest thick with woods, very extensive.—Manucci secured us lodging.—The appearance of the country pleasant.—No hills, few streams, only one hedge.—I remember no chapels nor crosses on the road.—Pavement still, and rows of trees.

“ N. Nobody but mean people walk in Paris.

“ Oct. 19. Thursday. At court, we saw the apartments;—the King’s bed-chamber and council-chamber extremely splendid.—Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through which the family passes;—servants and masters.—Brunet with us the second time.

“ The introducer came to us;—civil to me.—Presenting.—I had scruples.—Not necessary.—We went and saw the King and Queen at dinner.—We saw the other ladies at dinner—Madame Elizabeth, with the Princess of Guimené.—At night we went to a comedy. I neither saw nor heard.—Drunken women.—Mrs Th. preferred one to the other.

“ Oct. 20. Friday. We saw the Queen mount in the forest.—Brown habit; rode aside: one lady rode aside.—The Queen’s horse light grey;—martingale.—She galloped.—We then went to the apartments, and admired them.—Then wandered through the palace.—In the passages, stalls and shops.—Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out.—We saw the King’s horses and dogs.—The dogs almost all English.—Degenerate.

“ The horses not much commended.—The stables cool; the kennel filthy.

“ At night the ladies went to the opera. I refused, but should have been welcome.

“ The King fed himself with his left hand as we.

“ Saturday, 21. In the night I got ground.—We came home to Paris.—I think we did not see the chapel.—Tree broken by the wind.—The French chairs made all of boards painted.

“ N. Soldiers at the court of justice.—Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates.—Dijon woman.¹

¹ See p. 196.

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"Faggots in the palace.—Everything slovenly, except in the chief rooms.—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

"Women's saddles seem ill made.—Queen's bridle woven with silver.—Tags to strike the horse.

"Sunday, Oct. 22. To Versailles, a mean town.—Carriages of business passing.—Mean shops against the wall.—Our way lay through Séve, where the China manufacture.—Wooden bridge at Séve, in the way to Versailles.—The palace of great extent.—The front long; I saw it not perfectly.—The Menagerie. Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame.—Halcyons, or gulls.—Stag and hind, young.—Aviary, very large: the net, wire.—Black stag of China, small.—Rhinoceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches cross; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips; a vast animal though young; as big, perhaps, as four oxen.—The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing.—The brown bear put out his paws;—all very tame.—The lion.—The tigers I did not well view.—The camel, or dromedary with two bunches, called the Huguin,¹ taller than any horse.—Two camels with one bunch.—Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish. His feet well webbed: he dipped his head, and turned his long bill sidewise. He caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

"Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles. It has an open portico; the pavement, and, I think, the pillars, of marble.—There are many rooms which I do not distinctly remember.—A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Lewis XIV. by the Venetian State.—In the council-room almost all that was not door or window, was, I think, looking-glass.—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house.—The upper floor paved with brick.—Little Vienne.—The court

¹ This epithet should be applied to this animal with one bunch.

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is ill-paved.—The rooms at the top are small, fit to sooth the imagination with privacy. In the front of Versailles are small basons of water on the terrace, and other basons, I think, below them.—There are little courts.—The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrors, not very large, but joined by frames. I suppose the large plates were not yet made.—The play-house was very large.—The chapel I do not remember if we saw.—We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon.—The foreign office paved with bricks.—The dinner half a louis each, and, I think, a louis over.—Money given at Menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

"Oct. 23. Monday. Last night I wrote to Levet.—We went to see the looking-glasses wrought. They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate on another with grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told. Those that are to be polished, are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal; they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aqua fortis: they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre. The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver. To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites. Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which, by its mutual [attraction] rises very high. Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slid till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it. It is then, I think, pressed upon

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cloths, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury ; the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

" In the way I saw the Grève, the mayor's house, and the Bastile.

" We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer. He brews with about as much malt as Mr Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at 6d. a bottle. He brews 4,000 barrels a year. There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he :—reckoning them at 3,000 each, they make 51,000 a year.—They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

" The moat of the Bastile is dry.

" Oct. 24. Tuesday. We visited the King's library—I saw the *Speculum humane Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black ; part supposed to be with wooden types, and part with pages cut on boards.—The Bible, supposed to be older than that of Mentz, in 62 : it has no date ; it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types.—I am in doubt ; the print is large and fair, in two folios.—Another book was shown me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types ;—I think, *Durandi Sanctuarium* in 58. This is inferred from the difference of form, sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons.—The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are metal.—I saw nothing but the *Speculum* which I had not seen, I think, before.

" Thence to the Sorbonne.—The library very large, not in lattices like the King's. *Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis*, many folios.—*Histoire Genealogique of France*, 9 vol.—*Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to the last, f. 12 vol.—The Prior and Librarian dined [with us] :—I waited on them home.—Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small ; yet may hold many students.—The Doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal ;—choose those who succeed to vacancies.—Profit little.

" Oct. 25. Wednesday. I went with the Prior to St Cloud,

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to see Dr Hooke.—We walked round the palace, and had some talk.—I dined with our whole company at the Monastery.—In the library, *Beroald*,—*Cymon*,—*Titus*,—from Boccace *Oratio Proverbialis*; to the Virgin, from Petrarch; Falkland to Sandys; Dryden's Preface to the third vol. of *Miscellanies*.¹

"Oct. 26. Thursday. We saw the china at Séve, cut, glazed, painted. Bellevue, a pleasing house, not great: fine prospect.—Meudon, an old palace.—Alexander in porphyry: hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks.—Plato and Aristotle.—Noble terrace overlooks the town.—St Cloud.—Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing.—In the rooms, Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Naudæus, Mazarine.—Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded.—Gough and Keene.—Hooke came to us at the inn.—A message from Drumgould.

"Oct. 27. Friday. I stayed at home.—Gough and Keene, and Mrs S——'s friend dined with us.—This day we began to have a fire.—The weather is grown very cold, and I fear, has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

"Sat. Oct. 28. I visited the Grand Chartreux built by St Louis.—It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more.—The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment.—Mr Baretti says, four rooms; I remember but three.—His books seemed to be French.—His garden was neat; he gave me grapes.—We saw the Place de Victoire, with the statues of the King, and the captive nations.

"We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery was shut.—We climbed to the top stairs.—I dined with Colbrooke, who had much company:—Foote, Sir George Rodney, Motteux, Udson, Taaf.—Called on the Prior, and found him in bed.

¹ He means, I suppose, that he *read* these different pieces while he remained in the library.

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"Hotel—a guinea a day.—Coach, three guineas a week.—Valet de place, three l. a day.—*Avant-coureur*, a guinea a week.—Ordinary dinner, six l. a head.—Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a day.—Our extraordinary expences, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon.—Our travelling is ten guineas a day.

"White stockings, 18 l. Wig.—Hat.

"Sunday, Oct. 29. We saw the boarding-school.—The *Enfans trouvés*.—A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour.—They lose a third; take in to perhaps more than seven [years old]; put them to trades; pin to them the papers sent with them.—Want nurses.—Saw their chapel.

"Went to St Eustatia; saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist.—Boys taught at one time, girls at another.—The sermon; the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at the name:—his action uniform, not very violent.

"Oct. 30. Monday. We saw the library of St Germain.—A very noble collection.—*Codex Divinorum Officiorum*, 1459:—a letter, square like that of the *Offices*, perhaps the same.—The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheim.—*Meursius*, 12 v. fol.—*Amadis*, in French, 3 v. fol.—*CATHOLICON sine colophone*, but of 1460.—Two other editions,¹ one by *Augustin. de Civitate Dei*, without name, date, or place, but of Fust's square letter as it seems.

"I dined with Col. Drumgould;—had a pleasing afternoon.

"Some of the books of St Germain's stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

"Oct. 31. Tuesday. I lived at the Benedictines; meagre

¹ I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Mattaire, and other typographical books, for the two editions of the *Catholicon*, which Dr Johnson mentions here, with names which I cannot make out. I read "one by *Latinius*, one by *Boedinus*." I have deposited the original MS. in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgments are due to Mr Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches.

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day; soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce; fried fish; lentils, tasteless in themselves. In the library; where I found *Maffeus's de Historiâ Indicâ: Promontorium flectere, to double the Cape*. I parted very tenderly from the Prior and Friar Wilkes.

"*Maitre es Arts*, 2 y.—*Bacc. Theol.* 3 y.—*Licentiate*, 2 y.—*Doctor Th.* 2 y. in all 9 years.—For the doctorate three disputations, *Major, Minor, Sorbonica*.—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuit's College.

"Nov. 1. Wednesday. We left Paris.—St Denis, a large town; the church not very large, but the middle aisle is very lofty and awful.—On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroy the symmetry of the sides.—The organ is higher above the pavement than any I have ever seen.—The gates are of brass.—On the middle gate is the history of our Lord.—The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful.—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the portal is a dome; we could not enter further, and it was almost dark.

"Nov. 2. Thursday. We came this day to Chantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé.—This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes.—The water seems to be too near the house.—All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried underground.—The house is magnificent.—The cabinet seems well stocked: what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small that I doubt its reality.—It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth.—Nothing was in spirits; all was dry.—The dog; the deer; the ant-bear with long snout.—The toucan, long broad beak.—The stables were of very great length.—The kennel had no scents.—There was a mockery of a village.—The

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Menagerie had few animals.¹—Two faussans,² or Brazilian weasels, spotted, very wild.—There is a forest, and, I think, a park.—I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes.

“Nov. 3. Friday. We came to Compiègne, a very large town, with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court.—The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose, an entry on one side by a gentle rise.—Talk of painting.—The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid.—I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier.—At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city.—The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothick and Corinthian.—We entered a very noble parochial church.—Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

“Nov. 4. Saturday. We rose very early, and came through St Quintin to Cambray, not long after three.—We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

“Nov. 5. Sunday. We saw the cathedral.—It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side.—The choir splendid.—The balustrade in one part brass.—The Neff very high and grand.—The altar silver as far as it is seen.—The vestments very splendid.—At the Benedictines church——”

Here his journal³ ends abruptly. Whether he wrote any

¹ The writing is so bad here that the names of several of the animals could not be deciphered without much more acquaintance with natural history than I possess. Dr Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the MS. To that gentleman, and to Dr Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me, I beg leave to express my best thanks.

² It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *Fossane*. It should be observed that the person who showed this Menagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossane* and the Brazilian weasel to be the same, the *fossane* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's *Synopsis of Quadrupeds*.

³ My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr Andrew Lumisdaine, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names which Dr Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously.

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more after this time, I know not ; but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November. These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of inquiry and acuteness of examination as, I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age. They completely refute the idle notion which has been propagated, *that he could not see* ; and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them, he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative.

When I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour was : " Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it ; but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there, would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgould, a very high man, sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire*, a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetoric, and then became a soldier. And, sir, I was very kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent."

He observed : " The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England. The shops of Paris are mean ; the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England : and Mr Thrale justly observed that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity ; for they could not eat their meat unless they added some taste to it. The French are an indelicate people ; they will spit upon any place. At Madame ——'s, a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside ; but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs make tea *à l'Angloise*. The spout of the teapot did not pour freely : she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in everything

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but climate. Nature has done more for the French ; but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done."

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr Johnson, and his description of my friend while there was abundantly ludicrous. He told me that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London—his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson: "Sir, you have not seen the best French players." JOHNSON: Players, sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint-stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs. "But, sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" JOHNSON: Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others.

While Johnson was in France he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin. It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferior, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the Royal Academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his Excellency did not understand it, owing, perhaps, to Johnson's English pronunciation: yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank who spoke English; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise, he answered: "Because I think my French is as good as his English." Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769; yet he wrote it, I imagine, very well, as appears from some of his letters in Mrs Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one.

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A Madame La Comtesse de —

July 16, 1771.

Oui, Madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parte. Mais pourquoi faut il partir ? Est ce que je m'ennuye ? Je m'ennuierai ailleurs. Est ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement ? Je ne cherche rien, je n'espere rien. Aller voir ce que j'ai vu, être un peu réjoui, un peu dégouté, ne resouvenir que la vie se passe, et qu'elle se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m'endurcir aux dehors ; voici le tout de ce qu'on compte pour les delices de l'année. Que Dieu vous donne, Madame, tous les agrémens de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s'y livrer trop.

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner ; and in justice to him it is proper to add that Dr Johnson told me I might rely both on the correctness of his memory and the fidelity of his narrative : " When Madame de Boufflers was first in England," said Beauclerk, " she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over, she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple Lane, when all at once I heard a noise like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who it seems upon a little recollection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and eager to show himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple Gate, and brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the

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knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Père Boscovich was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and at Dr Douglas's, now Bishop of Carlisle. Upon both occasions that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Dec. 5, 1775.

MY DEAR SIR,—Mr Alexander Maclean, the present young Laird of Col, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to show attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained. I ever am with respectful attachment, my dear Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Mr Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr Johnson.

In the course of this year Dr Burney informs me that "he very frequently met Dr Johnson at Mr Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted."

A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentleman collects, shall here be inserted :

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"I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me."

"The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath."

"There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end, they lose at the other."

"More is learned in public than in private schools, from emulation; there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises, yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody."

"I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known, as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss —— was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is, 'to suckle fools and chronicle small beer.' She tells the children, 'This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail; see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.' If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*."

After having talked slightly of music, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her: "Why don't you dash away like Burney?" Dr Burney upon this

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said to him: "I believe, sir, we shall make a musician of you at last." Johnson with candid complacency replied: "Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me."

He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before anybody appeared. When, on a subsequent day, he was twitted by Mrs Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning when he had been too early: "Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*."

Dr Burney having remarked that Mr Garrick was beginning to look old, he said: "Why, sir, you are not to wonder at that; no man's face has had more wear and tear."

Not having heard from him for a longer time than I supposed he would be silent, I wrote to him on 18th December, not in good spirits: "Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year like a sort of pestilence has seized you severely; sometimes my imagination, which is upon occasions prolific of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Never dream of any offence, how should you offend me? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it. However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent, I shall make haste to disperse them, but hinder their first ingress if you can. Consider such thoughts as morbid.

Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes I cannot honestly plead. I have been hindered, I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions. I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his lordship. Mr Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted; he sends his compliments, and wishes to see you.

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You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance. How does the young Laird of Auchinleck? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser.

I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping: I have had quieter nights than are common with me.

I cannot but rejoice that Joseph¹ has had the wit to find the way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world.

Young Col brought me your letter. He is a very pleasing youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being.

I have had a letter from Rasay, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

My compliments to Mrs Boswell, who does not love me; and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do; and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them. I am, my dear, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

December 23, 1775.

1776. *Ætat.* 67. In 1776, Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the public: but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have at last sent you all Lord Hailes's papers. While I was in France I looked very often into

¹ Joseph Rieter, a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr Johnson and me in our tour to the Hebrides. After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me.

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Henault; but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far, and far, behind. Why I did not dispatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover: but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs Williams is very ill: everybody else is as usual.

Among the papers, I found a letter to you, which I think you had not opened; and a paper for *The Chronicle*, which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both.

I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes's first volume, for which I return my most respectful thanks.

I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady (for I know she does not love me), and the young ladies, and the young laird, all happiness. Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his mamma, to think and speak well of, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Jan. 10, 1776.

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were it not that the part which Dr Johnson's friendship for me made him take in it was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities, which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony or manor of Auchinleck (pronounced *Affleck*), in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the Crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland,

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granted it to Thomas Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the charter, "*dilecto familiari nostro*"; and assigning, as the cause of the grant, "*pro bono et fidei servitio nobis præstito.*" Thomas Boswell was slain in battle, fighting along with his Sovereign, at the fatal field of Flodden, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs male, to David Boswell, my father's great-grand-uncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burdened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The frugality of the nephew preserved, and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grandfather, an eminent lawyer, not only repurchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands; and my father, who was one of the Judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege allowed by our law,¹ to secure it to his family in perpetuity by an entail, which, on account of marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

In the plan of entailing the estate I heartily concurred with him, though I was the first to be restrained by it; but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or, in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, 1685, cap. 22.

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grandfather should be preferred to females; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs male, however remote, which I maintained, by arguments which appeared to me to have considerable weight.¹ And in the particular case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure which we held it, which was as heirs male, excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference; and I had

¹ As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse, as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort; which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of Scripture, "He was yet *in the loins of his Father* when Melchisedeck met him" (Heb. vii. 10), and, consequently, that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has, in reality, no connection whatever with his blood. And secondly, independent of this theory (which, if true, should completely exclude heirs general), that if the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture (as a son, though much younger, nay, even a grandson by a son, to a daughter), be once admitted, as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate, as in the nearest; because—however distant from the representative at the time—that remote heir male, upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant. A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is preferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance; in which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants.

I am aware of Blackstone's admirable demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere probability there will be a *certainty* that *the nearest heir male, at whatever period*, has the same right of blood with the first heir male—*namely, the original purchaser's eldest son.*

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reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness I wrote to Dr Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly requesting that he would consider it at leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I was much impressed by your letter, and, if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it: but whether I am quite equal to it, I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could you not tell your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a lawyer. I suppose he is above partiality, and above loquacity; and I believe he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering mind. Write to me, as anything occurs to you; and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make inquiries of you as my doubts arise.

If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father's fancies may claim the preference; but whether they are fanciful or rational is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

Make my compliments to dear Mrs Boswell; and tell her that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute to bring you all out of your troubles. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, *Jan.* 15, 1776.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—I am going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more

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acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim ; but I write, because you request it.

Land is, like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner ; and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgment shall direct, or passion incite.

But natural right would avail little without the protection of law ; and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore, in society, not fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

In the exercise of the right which law either leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such possession, with such power over it that he can sell it, and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary.

Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole : his posterity would be disappointed ; but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure, his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous ; they could not say that he was injurious or unjust.

He that may do more, may do less. He that, by selling or squandering, may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part, by a partial settlement.

Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes : the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war.

As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know ; and I

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know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's, to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *sartum tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and freewill be kept unviolated? Is land to be treated with more reverence than liberty? If this consideration should restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females?

Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will? Can he appoint, out of the inheritance, any portions to his daughters? There seems to be a very shadowy difference between the power of leaving land and of leaving money to be raised from land; between leaving an estate to females and leaving the male heir, in effect, only their steward.

Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law many estates to have descended, passing by the females, to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance: would not then the tenure of estates be changed? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another?

You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brothers.¹ I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you inquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention; for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those on which it was granted.

Intentions must be gathered from acts. When he left the estate to his nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or

¹ Which term I applied to all the heirs male.

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was it not, in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males? If he could have done it, he seems to have shown, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done; and, upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left.

If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement; and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example: it makes not an obligation. And, as you observe, he set no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession. He that overlooked a brother, would not wonder that little regard is shown to remote relations.

As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath anything, but upon legal terms; he can grant no power which the law denies; and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the powers which the law allows.

Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters; but it no more follows that he intended his act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother.

If, therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded?

It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody; he only admits nearer females to inherit before males more remote; and the exclusion is purely consequential.

These, dear sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative; but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence.

I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a lawyer and a Christian.

Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, though she does not love me. I am, Sir, your affectionate servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 3, 1773.

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I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed with legal and historical learning the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that "the succession of heirs general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record"; observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs male, and that though an heir male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the embarrassed state of affairs at that time; and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and money at the time, applied to the estate and the burdens upon it, there was nothing given to the heir male but the skeleton of an estate. "The plea of conscience," said his lordship, "which you put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side."

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr Johnson, begging to hear from him again, upon this interesting question.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Having not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position. "He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestor, inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgment or opinion." If this be true you may join with your father.

Further consideration produced another conclusion: "He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors, gives his heirs some reason to complain if he does not transmit

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it unlimited to posterity." For why should he make the state of others worse than his own, without a reason? If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates, I think, the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

It cannot but occur that "Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed." When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them; but that reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them.

These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously,¹ if it contains any conviction includes this position likewise, that only he who acquires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed that "he who inherits an estate inherits all the power legally concomitant." And that "he who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation which he omitted to take away, and to commit future contingencies to future prudence." In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest; every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties, and embarrassed with scruples.

If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great weight. You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave, and by Lord Hailes's estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

¹ I had reminded him of his observation mentioned on page 95.

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Lord Hailes's suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence, may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent institutions: I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision but for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing; but we may form conjectures from the past; and the power of forming conjectures includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability which we discover. Providence gives the power of which reason teaches the use. I am, dear Sir, your most faithful servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

February 9, 1776.

I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs Boswell; make my compliments to her, and to the little people.

Don't burn papers; they may be safe enough in your own box—you will wish to see them hereafter.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—To the letters which I have written about your great question I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied, you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.¹ I hope that it will at last end well. Lord Hailes's letter was very friendly,

¹ The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses was executed by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs male of his grandfather, which I found had been already done by my grandfather imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by selling the lands. I was freed by Dr Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession, in its full extent, remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters; for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.

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and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilised countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our constitution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage: and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are Barbarians, their want of *Stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful, till you have cogent arguments, which I believe you will never find; I am afraid of scruples.

I have now sent all Lord Hailes's papers, part I found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security, and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice. I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before.

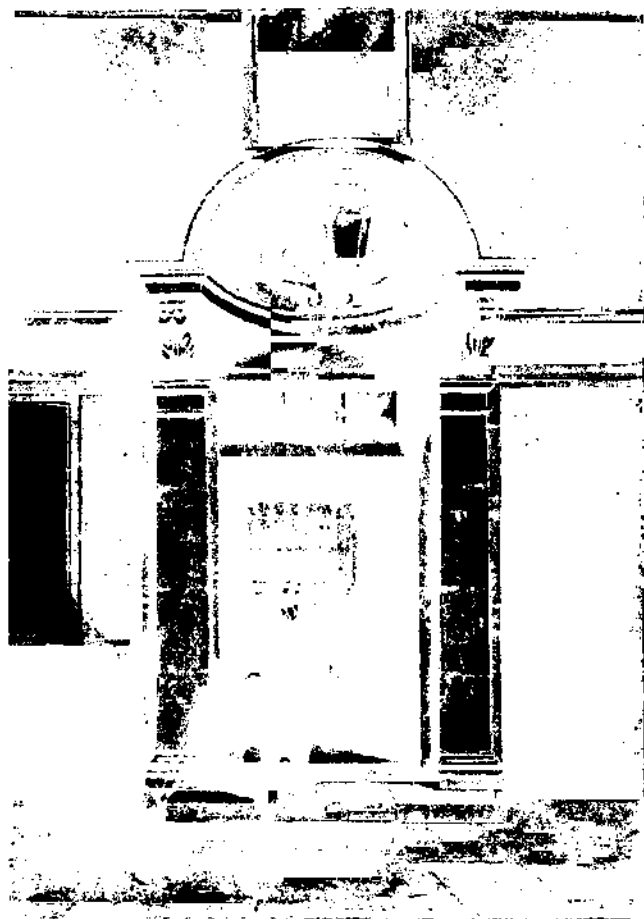
Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume; his accuracy strikes me with wonder; his narrative is far superior to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned.

I am afraid that the trouble, which my irregularity and delay has cost him, is greater, far greater, than any good that I can do him will ever recompense, but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

Pray let me know if Mrs Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 15, 1775.



L. Johnsons door and staircase, Temple Lane

Published by the Museum Society, London

THE LIFE OF DR JOHNSON

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 20, 1776.

* * * * *

You have illuminated my mind and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obligation. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father; but it is better not to act too suddenly.

Dr JOHNSON to Mr BOSWELL

DEAR SIR,—I am glad that what I could think or say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act, till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation, is very just. If you have been scrupulous, do not now be rash. I hope that as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty.

When I wrote last I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?

You must tell Mrs Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge,¹ and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon

* * *. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 24, 1776.

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr Johnson wrote concerning the question which perplexed me so much, his lordship wrote to me: "Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them; an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law."

¹ A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

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I wrote to Dr Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong desire to be with him; informing him that the ten packets came all safe; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have not had your letter half-an-hour; as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer.

I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it; but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the 1st of April.

Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes's opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me, you must come very quickly, and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield before I set out on this long journey. To this I can only add, that I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 5, 1776.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—Very early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time; of this I think it necessary to inform you,

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that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day.

Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes; and mention very particularly to Mrs Boswell my hope that she is reconciled to, Sir, your faithful servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 12, 1776.

Above thirty years ago, the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon presented the University of Oxford with the continuation of his *History*, and such other of his lordship's manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establishment of a *Manege* in the University. The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person being now recommended to Dr Johnson, as fit to superintend this proposed riding-school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But, on inquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution; the profits arising from the Clarendon Press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the Church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his Alma Mater.

To the Reverend Dr WETHERELL, Master of
University College, Oxford

DEAR SIR,—Few things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do; such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury's institution will, perhaps, appear, when you have read Dr *****'s letter.

The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance.

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The complaint¹ which he makes I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not yet been altered; for altered it must be, or our press will be useless with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity, and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of one another; for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the University can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the public, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale.

Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent; we inherit many of our instruments and materials; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers; and, in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

¹ I suppose the complaint was, that the trustees of the Oxford Press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications.

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It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader ; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

We will call our primary agent in London, Mr Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand ; by him they are sold to Mr Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country ; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer ; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted.

We are now come to the practical question, what is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great : but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five per cent., between six and seven shillings in the pound ; that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver a hundred and four.

The profits will then stand thus :

Mr Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly book.

Mr Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly book if he takes five-and-twenty, will sell it to his country customer at sixteen and sixpence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten per cent. which is expected in the wholesale trade.

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The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence, and, if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives.

With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad.

Thus, dear sir, I have been incited by Dr *****'s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider. I am, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.¹

March 12, 1776.

Having arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr Johnson, at his house; but found he was removed from Johnson's Court, No. 7, to Bolt Court, No. 8, still keeping to his favourite Fleet Street. My reflection at the time upon this change, as marked in my *Journal*, is as follows:—"I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name; but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a happier man than when I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination while I trod its pavement, in the solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom and piety." Being informed that he was at Mr Thrale's, in the Borough, I hastened thither, and found Mrs Thrale and him at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought

¹ I am happy in giving this full and clear statement to the public, to vindicate, by the authority of the greatest author of his age, that respectable body of men, the Booksellers of London, from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand.

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into another state of being. Mrs Thrale and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with great pleasure. I exclaimed to her: "I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus*, I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of *mind*." "There are many," she replied, "who admire and respect Mr Johnson, but you and I *love* him."

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr and Mrs Thrale. "But," said he, "before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend, Dr Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me." I was ready to accompany him; being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family in Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined; and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should die. Mrs Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity; and said: "I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner; of the land to the man who walks upon that land." JOHNSON: Nay, madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner; it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country which is of importance for ages not only to the chief but to his people, an establishment which extends upwards and downwards; that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing.

He said: "Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country serieses of men to whom the people are accustomed to look up to as their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry and keep money in the country; for if no land were to be bought in a country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there;

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or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life which is produced by money circulating in a country would be lost." BOSWELL: Then, sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once? JOHNSON: So far, sir, as money produces good it would be an advantage; for then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors.

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one third, or perhaps one half of the land of a country kept free for commerce; that the proportion allowed to be entailed should be parcelled out so as that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise: but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots; and as in the course of nature there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground."¹ JOHNSON: Why, sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt.

¹ The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *indefeasibly* from generation to generation is enjoyed by none of his Majesty's subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of a *fine and recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it dependent on the Royal Prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation to men who, having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The King, as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.

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I mentioned Dr Adam Smith's book on *The Wealth of Nations*, which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me that Dr Smith, who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject, any more than a lawyer upon physic. JOHNSON: He is mistaken, sir; a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer: but trade procures what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised, to write well upon a subject.—I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON: Why, sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice; though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his *Commentaries*. But upon the Continent the great writers on law have not all been in practice: Grotius, indeed, was; but Puffendorf was not, Burlamaqui was not.

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence, as it is to solicit votes to be elected a Member of Parliament? Mr Strahan had told me that a countryman of his and mine, who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON: Sir, it is wrong to stir up lawsuits; but when once it is certain that a lawsuit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit, rather than

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another. BOSWELL: You would not solicit employment, sir, if you were a lawyer. JOHNSON: No, sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it.—This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded: "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Lord Mountstuart's Bill for a Scotch militia, in supporting which his lordship had made an able speech in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topic of conversation. JOHNSON: As Scotland contributes so little land tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen; for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, sir; now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way by having a militia paid. If they are afraid, and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your little land tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia. BOSWELL: You should not talk of *we* and *you*, sir; there is now an *Union*. JOHNSON: There must be a distinction of interest while the proportions of land tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say: "Instead of paying our land tax, we will keep a greater number of militia," it would be unreasonable.—In this argument my friend was certainly in the wrong. The land tax is as unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland; nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of public revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland would soon penetrate into England.

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He thus discoursed upon supposed obligations in settling estates: "Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it: but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir; there is only a *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice, according to my liking. If I have a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance: but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The right of an heir-at-law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the King."

We got into a boat to cross over to Blackfriars; and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under the title of *Johnsoniana; or Bon Mots of Dr Johnson*. JOHNSON: Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing. BOSWELL: Pray, sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you dull stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely, as many ignorant relaters of your *bon mots* do? JOHNSON: No, sir; there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false? Besides, sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing? BOSWELL: I think, sir, you should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say: "Here is a volume which was publicly advertised and came out in Dr Johnson's own

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time, and, by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine." JOHNSON: I shall give myself no trouble about the matter.

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious publications; but I could not help thinking that many men would be much injured in their reputation by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them; and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said: "The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance: suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe; but it would be a picture of nothing. ***** (naming a worthy friend of ours) used to think a story, a story, till I showed him that truth was essential to it." I observed that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true; but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON: Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of everybody.

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of everything that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet Street. "A gentlewoman," said he, "begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor." This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention: when told

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by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.

We landed at the Temple Stairs, where we parted.

I found him in the evening in Mrs Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said: "It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent, for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself; but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit; for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence, too, is absurd. We read in the gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent: 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.' She said 'she should remember this as long as she lived.'" I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his *Rambler* and *Idler*, he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it. JOHNSON: Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it.

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some

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other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, some days afterwards: "Well, sir, what did your friend say to you as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered: "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it."

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon this subject: "A man," said he, "who has been drinking wine at all freely, should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people."

He allowed very great influence to education: "I do not deny, sir, but there is some original difference in minds; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining; yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it; and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles."

This is a difficult subject; but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. "A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land." "Then," said I, "it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea." JOHNSON: It would be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they

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have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as indeed is generally the case with men when they have once engaged in any particular way of life.

On Tuesday, 19th March, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met in the morning at the Somerset coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr Gwyn, the architect; and a gentleman of Merton College, whom we did not know, had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation; for it was very remarkable of Johnson that the presence of a stranger was no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the stage, would soon have an easier life. JOHNSON: I doubt that, sir. BOSWELL: Why, sir, he will be Atlas with the burden off his back. JOHNSON: But I know not, sir, if he will be so steady without his load. However, he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not partly the player: he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate. BOSWELL: I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been said he means to do. JOHNSON: Alas, sir! he will soon be a decayed actor himself.

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamental architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, "because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility." For the same reason he satirised statuary. "Painting," said he, "consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect; but a fellow will hack half-a-year at a block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot." Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste; for surely statuary is a noble art of imitation, and

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preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame; and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhances the value of a marble head, we should consider that if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability.

Gwyn was a fine lively rattling fellow. Dr Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority. The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothic attack, and he made a brisk defence. "What, sir! will you allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary? Why should we allow it then in writing? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments." Johnson smiled with complacency, but said: "Why, sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work."

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr Johnson, which he allowed to be excellent. Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge; and his expression was: "You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge." "No, sir," said Gwyn, "I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of the way*." JOHNSON (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation): Speak no more. Rest your colloquial fame upon this.

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr Johnson and I went directly to University College, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation. Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed: "A man

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so afflicted, sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them." BOSWELL: May not he think them down, sir? JOHNSON: No, sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bedchamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise. BOSWELL: Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chemistry? JOHNSON: Let him take a course of chemistry, or a course of ropedancing, or a course of anything to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind.

Next morning we visited Dr Wetherell, Master of University College, with whom Dr Johnson conferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon Press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page. I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life. Dr Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence. WETHERELL: I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a preface to his *Political Tracts*, by way of a Discourse on the British Constitution. BOSWELL: Dr Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions, a great friend to the constitution both in Church and State, has never written expressly in support of either. There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each, which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them. He should erect a fort on the confines of each.—

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I could perceive that he was displeased by this dialogue. He burst out: "Why should I be always writing?" I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship of his college, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave me part of that authentic information, which, with what I afterwards owed to his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr Adams had distinguished himself by an able answer to David Hume's *Essay on Miracles*. He told me he had once dined in company with Hume in London; that Hume shook hands with him, and said: "You have treated me much better than I deserve"; and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classic author, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber*; he will look upon him as *odious*, though the infidel may think himself in the right. A robber who reasons as the gang do in *The Beggar's Opera*, who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my wife; but

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shall I, therefore, not detest him? And if I catch him making an attempt, shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him downstairs, or run him through the body: that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An infidel then should not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to rob with ingenuity. I do declare, however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger, and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy; nor, indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I think ridicule may be fairly used against an infidel; for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me and said: "When a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his bad language." ADAMS: You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper? JOHNSON: Yes, sir, if it were necessary to jostle him *down*.

Dr Adams told us, that in some of the colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in the common room. JOHNSON: They are in the right, sir, for there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by; for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence. BOSWELL: But, sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority? JOHNSON: No animated conversation, sir, for it cannot be but one or other will come off superior. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side; but his superiority of parts and

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knowledge will necessarily appear : and he to whom he thus shows himself superior is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said : "*Mallem cum Scaligero errare quam cum Clavio rectè sapere.*" In the same manner take Bentley's and Jason de Neres's Comments upon Horace ; you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Jason when right.

We walked with Dr Adams into the master's garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON (after a reverie of meditation) : Aye ! Here I used to play at draughts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the Church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney, and got under the eye of some retainers to the Court at that time, and so became a violent Whig : but he had been a scoundrel all along, to be sure. BOSWELL : Was he a scoundrel, sir, in any other way than being a political scoundrel ? Did he cheat at draughts ? JOHNSON : Sir, we never played for *money*.

He then carried me to visit Dr Bentham, Canon of Christ Church, and Divinity Professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased. He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr Johnson told me was a high honour. "Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the Canons of Christ Church." We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the Master and Fellows, it being St Cuthbert's Day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this college is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr Horne, President of Magdalen College, now Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities, in different respects, the public has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's *Lives*, but had laid aside that design, upon Dr Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord

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Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negotiate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON: In order to do it well, it will be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's *Lives*. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age they have, in a later edition, left out a vision which he relates Dr Donne had, but it should be restored; and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor.

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography. JOHNSON: It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late bishop, whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs of his lordship, could tell me almost nothing.

I said, Mr Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr Warton said, he had published a little volume under the title of *The Muse in Livery*. JOHNSON: I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life: yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Darteneuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me: "I knew Darteneuf well, for I was once his footman."

Biography led us to speak of Dr John Campbell, who had written a considerable part of the *Biographia Britannica*. Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so much in his great work, *A Political Survey of Great Britain*, as the world had been taught to expect; and had said to me, that he believed Campbell's disappointment,

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on account of the bad success of that work, had killed him. He this evening observed of it: "That work was his death." Mr Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered: "I believe so; from the great attention he bestowed on it." JOHNSON: Nay, sir, he died of *want* of attention, if he died at all by that book.

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity. I said it was not fair to attack us thus unexpectedly; he should have warned us of our danger, before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising: "Spring-guns and man-traps set here." The author had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having "turned Papist." I observed, that as he had changed several times—from the Church of England to the Church of Rome—from the Church of Rome to infidelity—I did not despair yet of seeing him a Methodist preacher. JOHNSON (laughing): It is said that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mahometan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it. BOSWELL: I am not quite sure of that, sir.

I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his *Christian Hero*, with the avowed purpose of obliging himself to lead a religious life; yet that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable. JOHNSON: Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices.

Mr Warton, being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson, whether a man's being forward in making himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness. JOHNSON: No, sir; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge.

I censured some ludicrous fantastic dialogues between two coach-horses, and other such stuff, which Baretti had

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lately published. He joined with me, and said: "Nothing odd will do long. *Tristram Shandy* did not last." I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady who had been much talked of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation. JOHNSON: Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another.—I mentioned Mr Burke. JOHNSON: Yes; Burke is an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual.—It is very pleasing to me to record that Johnson's high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me, that when Mr Burke was first elected a Member of Parliament, and Sir John Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said: "Now we who know Burke, know, that he will be one of the first men in this country." And once, when Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr Burke having been mentioned, he said: "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me." So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, 21st March, we set out in a post-chaise to pursue our ramble. It was a delightful day, and we drove through Blenheim Park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the epigram made upon it—

"The lofty arch his high ambition shows,
The stream, an emblem of his bounty flows."

and saw that now, by the genius of Brown, a magnificent body of water was collected, I said: "They have *drowned* the epigram." I observed to him, while in the midst of the noble scene around us: "You and I, sir, have, I think,

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seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain—the wild rough island of Mull, and Blenheim Park.”

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel House, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. “There is no private house,” said he, “in which people can enjoy themselves so well, as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy; in the nature of things it cannot be: there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him: and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man’s house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome: and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward, in proportion as they please. No, sir; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.” He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone’s lines:

“Whoe’er has travell’d life’s dull round,
Where’er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.”¹

In the afternoon, as we were driven rapidly along in the post-chaise, he said to me: “Life has not many things better than this.”

We stopped at Stratford-upon-Avon, and drank tea and

¹ We happened to lie this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines.

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coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classic ground of Shakspeare's native place.

He spoke slightly of Dyer's *Fleece*. "The subject, sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets? Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that *excellent* poem, *The Fleece*." Having talked of Dr Grainger's *Sugar-Cane*, I mentioned to him Mr Langton's having told me that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus:

"Now, Muse, let's sing of *rats*."

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slyly overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified.¹

Johnson said, that Dr Grainger was an agreeable man; a man who would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done; but *The Sugar-Cane, a Poem*, did not please him; for he exclaimed: "What could he make of a sugar-cane? One might as well write, *The Parsley-Bed, a Poem*; or, *The*

¹ Such is this little laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation:—

"The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion; for the author, having occasion in that part of his work to mention the havoc made by rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock heroic, and a parody of Homer's battle of the frogs and mice, invoking the Muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it; but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgment, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned."

The Bishop gives this character of Dr Grainger: "He was not only a man of genius and learning, but had many excellent virtues; being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew."

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Cabbage-Garden, a Poem." BOSWELL: You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*. JOHNSON: You know there is already *The Hop-Garden, a Poem*: and, I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilised society over a rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them; and one might thus show how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms.—He seemed to be much diverted with the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him, that I heard Dr Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON: The wolf, sir! why the wolf? Why does he not write of the bear, which we had formerly? Nay, it is said we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the grey rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came? I should like to see *The History of the Grey Rat, by Thomas Percy, D.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty* (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL: I am afraid a court chaplain could not decently write of the grey rat. JOHNSON: Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat.—Thus could he indulge a luxuriant sportive imagination when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance. "He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as a rival to him in his practice of physic, and got so much the better of him in the opinion of the people of the island that he carried away all the business; upon which he returned to England, and soon after died."

On Friday, 22nd March, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock, and, after breakfast, went to call on his old schoolfellow, Mr Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us that "her master was gone

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out ; he was gone to the country ; she could not tell when he would return." In short, she gave us a miserable reception ; and Johnson observed : " She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession." He said to her : " My name is Johnson ; tell him I called. Will you remember the name ? " She answered with rustic simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation : " I don't understand you, sir." " Blockhead ! " said he, " I'll write." I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it. He, however, made another attempt to make her understand him, and roared loud in her ear, " JOHNSON," and then she caught the sound.

We then called on Mr Lloyd, one of the people called Quakers. He too was not at home ; but Mrs Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. Johnson said to me : " After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's, this invitation came very well." We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

I talked of legitimization by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON : I think it a bad thing ; because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good character ; nor should the children, by an illicit connection, attain the full rights of lawful children, by the posterior consent of the offending parties.—His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle there may, at times, be a hardship, and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals ; but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own, by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother, who is younger than her, gets their common father's estate. Why then should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by

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the same parents lawfully begotten, gets it? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and mother, has no stronger claim to the father's estate than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr Lloyd joined us in the street; and in a little while we met *Friend Hector*, as Mr Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe the joy which Johnson and he expressed on seeing each other again. Mr Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly showed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr and Mrs Lloyd had been married the same year with their Majesties, and, like them, had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said: "Marriage is the best state for man in general; and every man is a worse man in proportion as he is unfit for the married state."

I have always loved the simplicity of manners and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers; and talking with Mr Lloyd, I observed that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity; and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

As Dr Johnson had said to me in the morning, while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the Quakers, but not the sect; when we were at Mr Lloyd's I kept clear of introducing any question concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having asked to look at Baskerville's edition of *Barclay's Apology*, Johnson laid hold of it; and the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked: "He says there is neither precept nor practice for baptism in the Scriptures; that is false." Here he was the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner; and the good Quakers had the advantage of him; for he had read negligently, and had not observed that Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism, which they calmly made him perceive. Mr

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Lloyd, however, was in as great a mistake ; for when insisting that the rite of baptism with water was to cease when the *spiritual* administration of Christ began, he maintained that John the Baptist said : “ *My baptism* shall decrease, but *his* shall increase.” Whereas the words are : “ *He* must increase, but *I* must decrease.”¹

One of them having objected to the “ observance of days, and months, and years,” Johnson answered : “ The Church does not superstitiously observe days merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another : but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day will be neglected.”

Mr Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr Bolton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor showed me himself to the best advantage. I wish that Johnson had been with us ; for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have “ matched his mighty mind.” I shall never forget Mr Bolton’s expression to me : “ I sell here, sir, what all the world desires to have—Power.” He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. “ Your landlord is in the right, Smith,” said Bolton. “ But I’ll tell you what : find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I’ll lay down the other half ; and you shall have your goods again.”

From Mr Hector I now learnt many particulars of Dr Johnson’s early life, which, with others that he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

¹ John iii. 30.

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Dr Johnson said to me in the morning: "You will see, sir, at Mr Hector's, his sister, Mrs Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropped out of my head imperceptibly; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other." He laughed at the notion that a man never can be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

On our return from Mr Bolton's, Mr Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea with his *first love*, who, though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable, and well bred.

Johnson lamented to Mr Hector the state of one of their schoolfellows, Mr Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described: "He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to go into any house but his own. He takes a short airing in his post-chaise every day. He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged; not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more. He is quite unsocial; his conversation is monosyllabical: and when, at my last visit, I asked him what o'clock it was, that signal of my departure had so pleasing an effect on him, that he sprang up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare." When Johnson took leave of Mr Hector he said: "Don't grow like Congreve; nor let me grow like him, when you are near me."

When he again talked of Mrs Careless to-night, he seemed to have had his affection revived; for he said: "If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me." BOSWELL: Pray, sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy as with any one woman in particular? JOHNSON: Aye, fifty thousand. BOSWELL: Then, sir, you are not of opinion with

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some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other ; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts. JOHNSON : To be sure not, sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter.

I wished to have stayed at Birmingham to-night, to have talked more with Mr Hector ; but my friend was impatient to reach his native city : so we drove on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps : " Now," said he, " we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, which was kept by Mr Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property.¹ We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my Toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci* ; and I indulged in libations of that ale which Boniface, in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

Next morning he introduced me to Mrs Lucy Porter, his stepdaughter. She was now an old maid, with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds ; about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield. Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She revered him, and he had a parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our

¹ I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited. An engraved view of it, with the adjacent buildings, is in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1785.

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coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance Wilkins, of the Three Crowns. The family likeness of the Garricks was very striking; and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. "Sir," said he, "I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit." I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad, of a heavy German baron who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they; with which view he, with assiduous exertion, was jumping over the tables and chairs in his lodgings; and when the people of the house ran in and asked, with surprise, what was the matter, he answered: "*Sh'apprens i'être fif.*"

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr Jackson, one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse grey coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and a yellow uncurled wig; and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to "leave his can." He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cutler at Birmingham, but had not succeeded; and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common: to his indistinct account of which Dr Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice. Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life; though, that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied.

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale*; and oatcakes, not

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hard as in Scotland, but soft like a Yorkshire cake, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant to me to find that *Oats*, the *food of horses*, were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteellest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English." I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy; for they had several provincial sounds: as, *there*, pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*; *once*, pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse*, or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of his provincial accent. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company, and calling out: "Who's for *poonsh*?"

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found, however, two strange manufactures for so inland a place—sailcloth and streamers for ships; and I observed them making some saddle-cloths, and dressing sheepskins: but upon the whole, the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. "Surely, sir," said I, "you are an idle set of people." "Sir," said Johnson, "we are a city of philosophers: we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands."

There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr Stanton, sent his compliments, and requested leave to wait on Dr Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain decent well-behaved man, and expressed his gratitude to Dr Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick's name was soon introduced. JOHNSON: Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it: there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment too very powerful

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and very pleasing : but it has not its full proportion in his conversation.

When we were by ourselves he told me : " Forty years ago, sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs Emmet, who acted Flora, in *Hob in the Well*." What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was her figure, or her manner, I have not been informed : but, if we may believe Mr Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined ; he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell, that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield : " There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow " ; when in fact, according to Garrick's account, " he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

We had promised Mr Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr Johnson jocularly proposed me to write a Prologue for the occasion : " A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esq., from the Hebrides." I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, " Prologue, spoken before Dr Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, 1776," would have sounded as well as, " Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York, at Oxford," in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakspeare, by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was averse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud of being a relation of Dr Johnson's. It was, truly, a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all the articles accurately arranged, with their names upon labels printed at his own little press ; and on the staircase leading to it was a board with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a bookseller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr Green, in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things ; and Mr Green told me, that Johnson once said to him : " Sir, I should as soon

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have thought of building a man-of-war, as of collecting such a museum." Mr Green's obliging alacrity in showing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristical of his disposition, "*Nemo sibi vivat.*"

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. JOHNSON: Sir, it is not unreasonable; for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horse-flesh, nobody would employ him; though one may eat horse-flesh and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would.

We drank tea and coffee at Mr Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs Aston, one of the maiden sisters of Mrs Walmsley, wife of Johnson's first friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the navy.

On Sunday, 24th March, we breakfasted with Mrs Cobb, a widow lady, who lived in an agreeable sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great admirers of Dr Johnson; and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry, such as we see between old and intimate acquaintance. He accompanied Mrs Cobb to St Mary's Church, and I went to the cathedral, where I was very much delighted with the music, finding it to be peculiarly solemn, and accordant with the words of the service.

We dined at Mr Peter Garrick's, who was in a very lively humour, and verified Johnson's saying that if he had cultivated gaiety as much as his brother David, he might have equally excelled in it. He was to-day quite a

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London narrator, telling us a variety of anecdotes with that earnestness and attempt at mimicry which we usually find in the wits of the metropolis. Dr Johnson went with me to the cathedral in the afternoon. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in "the solemn temple" of his native city.

I returned to tea and coffee at Mr Peter Garrick's, and then found Dr Johnson at the Reverend Mr Seward's, Canon Residentiary, who inhabited the Bishop's palace, in which Mr Walmsley lived, and which had been the scene of many happy hours in Johnson's early life. Mr Seward had, with ecclesiastical hospitality and politeness, asked me in the morning, merely as a stranger, to dine with him; and in the afternoon, when I was introduced to him, he asked Dr Johnson and me to speed the evening and sup with him. He was a genteel well-bred dignified clergyman, had travelled with Lord Charles Fitzroy, uncle of the present Duke of Grafton, who died when abroad, and he had lived much in the great world. He was an ingenious and literary man, had published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and written verses in Dodsley's collection. His lady was the daughter of Mr Hunter, Johnson's first schoolmaster. And now, for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing his celebrated daughter, Miss Anna Seward, to whom I have since been indebted for many civilities, as well as some obliging communications concerning Johnson.

Mr Seward mentioned to us the observations which he had made upon the strata of earth in volcanoes, from which it appeared that they were so very different in depth in different periods, that no calculation whatever could be made as to the time required for their formation. This fully refuted an anti-mosaical remark introduced into Captain Brydone's entertaining *Tour*, I hope heedlessly, from a kind of vanity which is too common in those who have not sufficiently studied the most important of all subjects. Dr Johnson, indeed, had said before, independent of this observation: "Shall all the accumulated evidence of the history of the

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world—shall the authority of what is unquestionably the most ancient writing, be overturned by an uncertain remark such as this? ”

On Monday, 25th March, we breakfasted at Mrs Lucy Porter's. He had sent an express to Dr Taylor's, acquainting him of our being at Lichfield, and Taylor had returned an answer that his post-chaise should come for us this day. While we sat at breakfast, Dr Johnson received a letter by the post, which seemed to agitate him very much. When he had read it he exclaimed: “One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time.” The phrase *my time*, like the word *age*, is usually understood to refer to an event of a public or general nature. I imagined something like an assassination of the King—like a Gunpowder Plot carried into execution—or like another Fire of London. When asked, “What is it, sir?” he answered, “Mr Thrale has lost his only son!” This was, no doubt, a very great affliction to Mr and Mrs Thrale, which their friends would consider accordingly; but from the manner in which the intelligence of it was communicated by Johnson, it appeared for the moment to be comparatively small. I, however, soon felt a sincere concern, and was curious to observe how Dr Johnson would be affected. He said: “This is a total extinction to their family, as much as if they were sold into captivity.” Upon my mentioning that Mr Thrale had daughters, who might inherit his wealth—“Daughters!” said Johnson, warmly; “he'll no more value his daughters than——” I was going to speak.—“Sir,” said he, “don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name.” In short, I saw male succession strong in his mind, even where there was no name, no family of any long standing. I said it was lucky he was not present when this misfortune happened. JOHNSON: It is lucky for *me*. People in distress never think that you feel enough. BOSWELL: And, sir, they will have the hope of seeing you, which will be a relief in the meantime; and when you get to them, the pain will be so far abated that they will be capable of being

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consoled by you, which, in the first violence of it, I believe, would not be the case. JOHNSON: No, sir; violent pain of mind, as violent pain of body, *must* be severely felt. BOSWELL: I own, sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others as some people have, or pretend to have; but I know this, that I would do all in my power to relieve them. JOHNSON: Sir, it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off as he does. No, sir; you have expressed the rational and just nature of sympathy. I would have gone to the extremity of the earth to have preserved this boy.

He was soon quite calm. The letter was from Mr Thrale's clerk, and concluded: "I need not say how much they wish to see you in London." He said: "We shall hasten back from Taylor's."

Mrs Lucy Porter and some other ladies of the place talked a great deal of him when he was out of the room, not only with veneration but affection. It pleased me to find that he was so much *beloved* in his native city.

Mrs Aston, whom I had seen the preceding night, and her sister, Mrs Gastrel, a widow lady, had each a house and garden, and pleasure-ground, prettily situated upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence adjoining to Lichfield. Johnson walked away to dinner there, leaving me by myself without any apology. I wondered at this want of that facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate. I felt it very unpleasant to be thus left in solitude in a country town, where I was an entire stranger, and began to think myself unkindly deserted; but I was soon relieved, and convinced that my friend, instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety, for I received the following note in his handwriting: "Mrs Gastrel, at the lower house on Stowhill, desires Mr Boswell's company to dinner at two." I accepted of the invitation, and had here another proof

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how amiable his character was in the opinion of those who knew him best. I was not informed, till afterwards, that Mrs Gastrel's husband was the clergyman who, while he lived at Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was proprietor of Shakspeare's garden, with Gothic barbarity cut down his mulberry-tree, and, as Dr Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, participated in the guilt of what the enthusiasts for our immortal bard deem almost a species of sacrilege.

After dinner Dr Johnson wrote a letter to Mrs Thrale, on the death of her son. I said it would be very distressing to Thrale, but she would soon forget it, as she had so many things to think of. JOHNSON: No, sir, Thrale will forget it first. *She* has many things that she *may* think of. *He* has many things that he *must* think of.—This was a very just remark upon the different effect of those light pursuits which occupy a vacant and easy mind, and those serious engagements which arrest attention, and keep us from brooding over grief.

He observed of Lord Bute: "It was said of Augustus, that it would have been better for Rome that he had never been born, or had never died. So it would have been better for this nation if Lord Bute had never been minister, or had never resigned."

In the evening we went to the Town Hall, which was converted into a temporary theatre, and saw *Theodosius*, with *The Stratford Jubilee*. I was happy to see Dr Johnson sitting in a conspicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. We were quite gay and merry. I afterwards mentioned to him that I condemned myself for being so, when poor Mr and Mrs Thrale were in such distress. JOHNSON: You are wrong, sir; twenty years hence Mr and Mrs Thrale will not suffer much pain from the death of their son. Now, sir, you are to consider that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them;

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but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else; or sometimes the vacuity closes up of itself.

Mr Seward and Mr Pearson, another clergyman here, supped with us at our inn, and after they left us we sat up late, as we used to do in London.

Here I shall record some fragments of my friend's conversation during this jaunt:

"Marriage, sir, is much more necessary to a man than to a woman; for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. You will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried, than when married. I indeed did not mention the *strong* reason for their marrying—the *mechanical* reason." BOSWELL: Why, that *is* a strong one. But does not imagination make it seem much more important than it is in reality? Is it not, to a certain degree, a delusion in us as well as in women? JOHNSON: Why, yes, sir; but it is a delusion that is always beginning again. BOSWELL: I don't know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion. JOHNSON: I don't think so, sir.

"Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive."

"Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection."

"A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion."

"Much may be done if a man puts his whole mind to



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a particular object. By doing so, Norton has made himself the great lawyer that he is allowed to be."

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine, a sectary, who was a very religious man, who not only attended regularly on public worship with those of his communion, but made a particular study of the Scriptures, and even wrote a commentary on some parts of them, yet was known to be very licentious in indulging himself with women, maintaining that men are to be saved by faith alone, and that the Christian religion had not prescribed any fixed rule for the intercourse between the sexes. JOHNSON: Sir, there is no trusting to that crazy piety.

I observed that it was strange how well Scotchmen were known to one another in their own country, though born in very distant counties; for we do not find that the gentlemen of neighbouring counties in England are mutually known to each other. Johnson, with his usual acuteness, at once saw and explained the reason of this: "Why, sir, you have Edinburgh, where the gentlemen from all your counties meet, and which is not so large but that they are all known. There is no such common place of collection in England, except London, where, from its great size and diffusion, many of those who reside in contiguous counties of England may long remain unknown to each other."

On Tuesday, 26th March, there came for us an equipage properly suited to a wealthy well-beneficed clergyman—Dr Taylor's large, roomy post-chaise, drawn by four stout plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postilions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne, where I found my friend's school-fellow living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding with his substantial creditable equipage. His house, garden, pleasure-grounds, table, in short everything good, and no scantiness appearing. Every man should form such a plan of living as he can execute completely. Let him not draw an outline wider than he can fill up. I have seen many skeletons of show and magnificence which excite at once ridicule and pity. Dr Taylor had a good estate of his own,

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and good preferment in the Church, being a prebendary of Westminster and rector of Bosworth. He was a diligent justice of the peace, and presided over the town of Ashbourne, to the inhabitants of which I was told he was very liberal; and as a proof of this it was mentioned to me he had, the preceding winter, distributed two hundred pounds among such of them as stood in need of his assistance. He had consequently a considerable political interest in the county of Derby, which he employed to support the Devonshire family; for though the schoolfellow and friend of Johnson, he was a Whig. I could not perceive in his character much congeniality of any sort with that of Johnson, who, however, said to me: "Sir, he has a very strong understanding." His size and figure, and countenance and manner, were that of a hearty English squire, with the parson superinduced; and I took particular notice of his upper servant, Mr Peters, a decent grave man, in purple clothes and a large white wig, like the butler or *major domo* of a bishop.

Dr Johnson and Dr Taylor met with great cordiality; and Johnson soon gave him the same sad account of their schoolfellow Congreve that he had given to Mr Hector; adding a remark of such moment to the rational conduct of a man in the decline of life, that it deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse." Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution, and spirit, who in their latter days have been governed like children, by interested female artifice.

Dr Taylor commended a physician who was known to him and Dr Johnson, and said: "I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him." JOHNSON: But you should consider, sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and will resolve not to employ him; whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll think: "We'll send for Dr *****",

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nevertheless."—This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

Next day we talked of a book in which an eminent judge was arraigned before the bar of the public, as having pronounced an unjust decision in a great cause. Dr Johnson maintained that this publication would not give any uneasiness to the judge. "For," said he, "either he acted honestly, or he meant to do injustice. If he acted honestly, his own consciousness will protect him; if he meant to do injustice, he will be glad to see the man who attacks him so much vexed."

Next day, as Dr Johnson had acquainted Dr Taylor of the reason for his returning speedily to London, it was resolved that we should set out after dinner. A few of Dr Taylor's neighbours were his guests that day.

Dr Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of anything. "Then, sir," said I, "the savage is a wise man." "Sir," said he, "I do not mean simply being without—but not having a want." I maintained against this proposition that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON: No, sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient.—I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said: "Would not *you*, sir, be the better for velvet and embroidery?" JOHNSON: Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*.—I apologised by saying I had mentioned him as an instance of one who wanted as little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress.

Having left Ashbourne in the evening, we stopped to change horses at Derby, and availed ourselves of a moment

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to enjoy the conversation of my countryman, Dr Butter, then physician there. He was in great indignation because Lord Mountstuart's Bill for a Scotch militia had been lost. Dr Johnson was as violent against it. "I am glad," said he, "that Parliament has had the spirit to throw it out. You wanted to take advantage of the timidity of our scoundrels¹" (meaning, I suppose, the ministry). It may be observed that he used the epithet scoundrel very commonly, not quite in the sense in which it is generally understood, but as a strong term of disapprobation; as when he abruptly answered Mrs Thrale, who had asked him how he did, "Ready to become a scoundrel, madam; with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal"²—he meant, easy to become a capricious and self-indulgent valetudinarian; a character for which I have heard him express great disgust.

Johnson had with him upon this jaunt, *Il Palermino d'Inghilterra*, a romance praised by Cervantes; but did not like it much. He said, he read it for the language, by way of preparation for his Italian expedition. We lay this night at Loughborough.

On Thursday, 28th March, we pursued our journey. I mentioned that old Mr Sheridan complained of the ingratitude of Mr Wedderburne and General Fraser, who had been much obliged to him when they were young Scotchmen entering upon life in England. JOHNSON: Why, sir, a man is very apt to complain of the ingratitude of those who have risen far above him. A man when he gets into a higher sphere, into other habits of life, cannot keep up all his former connections. Then, sir, those who knew him formerly upon a level with themselves, may think that they ought still to be treated as on a level, which cannot be; and an acquaintance in a former situation may bring out things which it would be very disagreeable to have mentioned before higher company, though, perhaps, everybody knows of them.—He placed this subject in a new light to me, and showed that a man who has risen in the world must not be condemned

¹ See page 234.

² *Anecdotes of Johnson*, p. 176.

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too harshly for being distant to former acquaintance, even though he may have been much obliged to them. It is, no doubt, to be wished that a proper degree of attention should be shown by great men to their early friends. But if either from obtuse insensibility to difference of situation, or presumptuous forwardness, which will not submit even to an exterior observance of it, the dignity of high place cannot be preserved, when they are admitted into the company of those raised above the state in which they once were, encroachment must be repelled, and the kinder feelings sacrificed. To one of the very fortunate persons whom I have mentioned, namely, Mr Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, I must do the justice to relate that I have been assured by another early acquaintance of his, old Mr Macklin, who assisted him in improving his pronunciation, that he had found him very grateful. Macklin, I suppose, had not pressed upon his elevation with so much eagerness as the gentleman who complained of him. Dr Johnson's remark as to the jealousy entertained of our friends who rise far above us is certainly very just. By this was withered the early friendship between Charles Townshend and Akenside; and many similar instances might be adduced.

He said: "It is commonly a weak man who marries for love." We then talked of marrying women of fortune; and I mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionally expensive; whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expenses. JOHNSON: Depend upon it, sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune, being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously; but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion.

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their

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understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret. On the contrary, he was willing to speak favourably of his own age; and, indeed, maintained its superiority in every respect, except in its reverence for Government; the relaxation of which he imputed, as its grand cause, to the shock which our monarchy received at the Revolution, though necessary; and secondly, to the timid concessions made to faction by successive administrations in the reign of his present Majesty. I am happy to think that he lived to see the Crown at last recover its just influence.

At Leicester we read in the newspapers that Dr James was dead. I thought that the death of an old schoolfellow, and one with whom he had lived a good deal in London, would have affected my fellow-traveller much; but he only said: "Ah! poor Jamy." Afterwards, however, when we were in the chaise, he said, with more tenderness: "Since I set out on this jaunt I have lost an old friend and a young one—Dr James, and poor Harry" (meaning Mr Thrale's son).

Having lain at St Albans on Thursday, 28th March, we breakfasted the next morning at Barnet. I expressed to him a weakness of mind which I could not help—an uneasy apprehension that my wife and children, who were at a great distance from me, might perhaps be ill. "Sir," said he, "consider how foolish you should think it in *them* to be apprehensive that *you* are ill." This sudden turn relieved me for the moment; but I afterwards perceived it to be an ingenious fallacy. I might, to be sure, be satisfied that they had no reason to be apprehensive about me, because I *knew* that I myself was well: but we might have a mutual anxiety, without the charge of folly; because each was, in some degree, uncertain as to the condition of the other.

I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasure which it furnishes. I experienced

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immediate happiness while whirled along with such a companion, and said to him: "Sir, you observed one day at General Oglethorpe's, that a man is never happy for the present, but when he is drunk. Will you not add—or when driving rapidly in a post-chaise?" JOHNSON: No, sir, you are driving rapidly *from* something, or *to* something.

Talking of melancholy, he said: "Some men, and very thinking men too, have not those vexing thoughts. Sir Joshua Reynolds is the same all the year round. Beauclerk, except when ill and in pain, is the same. But I believe most men have them in the degree in which they are capable of having them. If I were in the country, and were distressed by that malady, I would force myself to take a book; and every time I did it I should find it the easier. Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking."

We stopped at Messieurs Dilly's, booksellers in the Poultry; from whence he hurried away, in a hackney coach, to Mr Thrale's in the Borough. I called at his house in the evening, having promised to acquaint Mrs Williams of his safe return; when, to my surprise, I found him sitting with her at tea, and, as I thought, not in a very good humour: for, it seems, when he got to Mr Thrale's, he found the coach was at the door waiting to carry Mrs and Miss Thrale, and Signor Baretti, their Italian master, to Bath. This was not showing the attention which might have been expected to the "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend," the *Imlack* who had hastened from the country to console a distressed mother, who he understood was very anxious for his return. They had, I found, without ceremony, proceeded on their intended journey. I was glad to understand from him that it was still resolved that his tour to Italy with Mr and Mrs Thrale should take place, of which he had entertained some doubt, on account of the loss which they had suffered; and his doubts afterwards proved to be well founded. He observed, indeed very justly, that "their loss was an additional reason for their going abroad; and if it had not been fixed that he should have been one of the party, he would force them out;

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but he would not advise them unless his advice was asked, lest they might suspect that he recommended what he wished on his own account." I was not pleased that his intimacy with Mr Thrale's family, though it no doubt contributed much to his comfort and enjoyment, was not without some degree of restraint. Not, as has been grossly suggested, that it was required of him as a task to talk for the entertainment of them and their company; but that he was not quite at his ease; which, however, might partly be owing to his own honest pride—that dignity of mind which is always jealous of appearing too compliant.

On Sunday, 31st March, I called on him, and showed him, as a curiosity which I had discovered, his *Translation of Lobo's Account of Abyssinia*, which Sir John Pringle had lent me, it being then little known as one of his works. He said: "Take no notice of it, or don't talk of it." He seemed to think it beneath him, though done at six-and-twenty. I said to him: "Your style, sir, is much improved since you translated this." He answered with a sort of triumphant smile: "Sir, I hope it is."

On Wednesday, 3rd April, in the forenoon, I found him very busy putting his books in order, and as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves, such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle Dr Boswell's description of him: "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."

I gave him an account of a conversation which had passed between me and Captain Cook the day before at dinner at Sir John Pringle's, and he was much pleased with the conscientious accuracy of that celebrated circumnavigator, who set me right as to many of the exaggerated accounts given by Dr Hawkesworth of his voyages. I told him that while I was with the Captain, I caught the enthusiasm of curiosity and adventure, and felt a strong inclination to go with him on his next voyage. JOHNSON: Why, sir, a man *does* feel so, till he considers how very little he can learn from such

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voyages. BOSWELL: But one is carried away with the general grand and indistinct notion of *a voyage round the world*.

JOHNSON: Yes, sir, but a man is to guard himself against taking a thing in general.—I said I was certain that a great part of what we are told by the travellers to the South Sea must be conjecture, because they had not enough of the language of those countries to understand so much as they have related. Objects falling under the observation of the senses might be clearly known; but everything intellectual, everything abstract—politics, morals, and religion—must be darkly guessed. Dr Johnson was of the same opinion. He upon another occasion, when a friend mentioned to him several extraordinary facts, as communicated to him by the circumnavigators, slyly observed: "Sir, I never before knew how much I was respected by these gentlemen; they told *me* none of these things."

He had been in company with Omai, a native of one of the South Sea islands, after he had been some time in this country. He was struck with the elegance of his behaviour, and accounted for it thus: "Sir, he had passed his time, while in England, only in the best company; so that all that he had acquired of our manners was genteel. As a proof of this, sir, Lord Mulgrave and he dined one day at Streatham; they sat with their backs to the light fronting me, so that I could not see distinctly; and there was so little of the savage in Omai, that I was afraid to speak to either, lest I should mistake one for the other."

We agreed to dine to-day at the Mitre tavern, after the rising of the House of Lords, where a branch of the litigation concerning the Douglas estate, in which I was one of the counsel was to come on. I brought with me Mr Murray, Solicitor-General of Scotland, now one of the judges of the Court of Session, with the title of Lord Henderland. I mentioned Mr Solicitor's relation, Lord Charles Hay, with whom I knew Dr Johnson had been acquainted. JOHNSON: I wrote something for Lord Charles; and I thought he had nothing to fear from a court-martial. I suffered a great

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loss when he died; he was a mighty pleasing man in conversation, and a reading man. The character of a soldier is high. They who stand forth the foremost in danger, for the community, have the respect of mankind. An officer is much more respected than any other man who has as little money. In a commercial country money will always purchase respect. But you find, an officer, who has properly speaking no money, is everywhere well received and treated with attention. The character of a soldier always stands him in stead. BOSWELL: Yet, sir, I think that common soldiers are worse thought of than other men in the same rank of life; such as labourers. JOHNSON: Why, sir, a common soldier is usually a very gross man, and any quality which procures respect may be overwhelmed by grossness. A man of learning may be so vicious or so ridiculous that you cannot respect him. A common soldier, too, generally eats more than he can pay for. But when a common soldier is civil in his quarters, his red coat procures him a degree of respect.—The peculiar respect paid to the military character in France was mentioned. BOSWELL: I should think that where military men are so numerous, they would be less valued as not being rare. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, wherever a particular character or profession is high in the estimation of a people, those who are of it will be valued above other men. We value an Englishman highly in this country, and yet Englishmen are not rare in it.

Mr Murray praised the ancient philosophers for the candour and good humour with which those of different sects disputed with each other. JOHNSON: Sir, they disputed with good humour because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the poets. The people would not have suffered it. They disputed with good humour upon their fanciful theories because they were not interested in the truth of them. When a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humour with his opponent. Accordingly you

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see in Lucian, the Epicurean, who argues only negatively, keeps his temper; the Stoic, who has something positive to preserve, grows angry. Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy, and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Those only who believed in Revelation have been angry at having their faith called in question; because they only had something upon which they could rest as matter of fact. MURRAY: It seems to me that we are not angry at a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value; we rather pity him. JOHNSON: Why, sir; to be sure when you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him; but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first, and pity him afterwards. No, sir; every man will dispute with great good humour upon a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly upon the probability of another man's son being hanged, but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my own son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in very good humour with him.—I added this illustration: "If a man endeavours to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I have great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy." MURRAY: But, sir, truth will always bear an examination. JOHNSON: Yes, sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, sir, how should you like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried before a jury for a capital crime, once a week.

We talked of education at great schools, the advantages and disadvantages of which Johnson displayed in a luminous

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manner; but his arguments preponderated so much in favour of the benefit which a boy of good parts might receive at one of them, that I have reason to believe Mr Murray was very much influenced by what he had heard to-day, in his determination to send his own son to Westminster School.

I introduced the topic, which is often ignorantly urged, that the universities of England are too rich, so that learning does not flourish in them as it would do if those who teach had smaller salaries, and depended on their assiduity for a great part of their income. JOHNSON: Sir, the very reverse of this is the truth; the English universities are not rich enough. Our fellowships are only sufficient to support a man during his studies to fit him for the world, and accordingly in general they are held no longer than till an opportunity offers of getting away. Now and then, perhaps, there is a fellow who grows old in his college; but this is against his will, unless he be a man very indolent indeed. A hundred a year is reckoned a good fellowship, and that is no more than is necessary to keep a man decently as a scholar. We do not allow our fellows to marry, because we consider academical institutions as preparatory to a settlement in the world. It is only by being employed as a tutor that a fellow can obtain anything more than a livelihood. To be sure, a man who has enough without teaching will probably not teach, for we would all be idle if we could. In the same manner, a man who is to get nothing by teaching will not exert himself. Gresham College was intended as a place of instruction for London; able professors were to read lectures gratis, they contrived to have no scholars; whereas, if they had been allowed to receive but sixpence a lecture from each scholar, they would have been emulous to have had many scholars. Everybody will agree that it should be the interest of those who teach to have scholars; and this is the case in our universities. That they are too rich is certainly not true; for they have nothing good enough to keep a man of eminent learning with them for his life. In the foreign universities a professorship is a high thing. It is as much

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almost as a man can make by his learning ; and therefore we find the most learned men abroad are in the universities. It is not so with us. Our universities are impoverished of learning, by the penury of their provisions. I wish there were many places of a thousand a-year at Oxford, to keep first-rate men of learning from quitting the university. Undoubtedly, if this were the case, literature would have a still greater dignity and splendour at Oxford, and there would be grander living sources of instruction.

I mentioned Mr Maclaurin's uneasiness on account of a degree of ridicule carelessly thrown on his deceased father, in Goldsmith's *History of Animated Nature*, in which that celebrated mathematician is represented as being subject to fits of yawning so violent as to render him incapable of proceeding in his lecture ; a story altogether unfounded, but for the publication of which the law would give no reparation.¹ This led us to agitate the question whether legal redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication. Mr Murray maintained there should be reparation, unless the author could justify himself by proving the fact. JOHNSON : Sir, it is of so much more consequence that truth should be told, than that individuals should not be made uneasy, that it is much better that the law does not restrain writing freely concerning the characters of the dead. Damages will be given to a man who is calumniated in his lifetime, because he may be hurt in his worldly interest, or at least hurt in his mind : but the law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated. That is too nice. Let him deny what is said, and let the matter have a fair chance by discussion. But if a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove,

¹ Dr Goldsmith was dead before Mr Maclaurin discovered the ludicrous error. But Mr Nourse, the bookseller, who was the proprietor of the work, upon being applied to by Sir John Pringle, agreed very handsomely to have the leaf on which it was contained cancelled, and reprinted without it, at his own expense.

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history could not be written; for a great deal is known of men of which proof cannot be brought. A minister may be notoriously known to take bribes, and yet you may not be able to prove it.—Mr Murray suggested that the author should be obliged to show some sort of evidence, though he would not require a strict legal proof: but Johnson firmly and resolutely opposed any restraint whatever, as adverse to a free investigation of the characters of mankind.¹

On Thursday, 4th April, having called on Dr Johnson, I said, it was a pity that truth was not so firm as to bid defiance to all attacks, so that it might be shot at as much as people chose to attempt, and yet remain unhurt. JOHNSON: Then, sir, it would not be shot at. Nobody attempts to dispute that two and two make four: but with contests concerning moral truth, human passions are generally mixed, and therefore it must ever be liable to assault and misrepresentation.

On Friday, 5th April, being Good Friday, after having attended the morning service at St Clement's Church, I walked home with Johnson. We talked of the Roman Catholic religion. JOHNSON: In the barbarous ages, sir,

¹ What Dr Johnson has here said is undoubtedly good sense; yet I am afraid that law, though defined by Lord Coke "the perfection of reason," is not altogether with him; for it is held in the books, that an attack on the reputation even of a dead man may be punished as a libel, because tending to a breach of the peace. There is however, I believe, no modern decided case to that effect. In the King's Bench, Trinity Term, 1790, the question occurred on occasion of an indictment, *The King v. Topham*, who, as a proprietor of a newspaper entitled *The World*, was found guilty of a libel against Earl Cowper, deceased, because certain injurious charges against his lordship were published in that paper. One of the counsel for Mr Topham, my friend Mr Const, who is very able to maintain the argument with learning and ingenuity, informs me that it is intended to move in arrest of judgment; so that we shall probably have a solemn determination upon a point of universal importance. No man has a higher reverence for the law of England in general than I have; but, with all deference, I cannot help thinking that prosecution by indictment, if a defendant is never to be allowed to justify, must often be very oppressive, unless juries, who I am more and more confirmed in holding to be judges of law as well as of fact, interpose.

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priests and people were equally deceived ; but afterwards there were gross corruptions introduced by the clergy, such as indulgences to priests to have concubines, and the worship of images, not, indeed, inculcated, but knowingly permitted.—He strongly censured the licensed stews at Rome.

BOSWELL: So then, sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse whatever between the sexes? JOHNSON: To be sure I would not, sir. I would punish it much more than is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft ; but there may be more or less of the one, as well as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that prostitutes are necessary to prevent the violent effects of appetite from violating the decent order of life ; nay, should be permitted, in order to preserve the chastity of our wives and daughters. Depend upon it, sir, severe laws, steadily enforced, would be sufficient against those evils, and would promote marriage.

I stated to him this case : “ Suppose a man has a daughter who he knows has been seduced, but her misfortune is concealed from the world : should he keep her in his house ? Would he not, by doing so, be accessory to imposition ? And, perhaps, a worthy unsuspecting man might come and marry this woman, unless the father inform him of the truth.” JOHNSON: Sir, he is accessory to no imposition. His daughter is in his house ; and if a man courts her, he takes his chance. If a friend, or, indeed, if any man, asks his opinion whether he should marry her, he ought to advise him against it, without telling why, because his real opinion is then required. Or, if he has other daughters who know of her frailty, he ought not to keep her in his house. You are to consider the state of life is this : we are to judge of one another's characters as well as we can ; and a man is not bound, in honesty or honour, to tell us the faults of his daughter or of himself. A man who has debauched his

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friend's daughter is not obliged to say to everybody : " Take care of me ; don't let me into your houses without suspicion. I once debauched a friend's daughter ; I may debauch yours."

Mr Thrale called upon him, and appeared to bear the loss of his son with a manly composure. There was no affectation about him ; and he talked, as usual, upon indifferent subjects. He seemed to me to hesitate as to the intended Italian tour, on which, I flattered myself, he and Mrs Thrale and Dr Johnson were soon to set out ; and therefore I pressed it as much as I could. I mentioned that Mr Beauclerk had said that Baretti, whom they were to carry with them, would keep them so long in the little towns of his own district that they would not have time to see Rome. I mentioned this, to put them on their guard. JOHNSON : Sir, we do not thank Mr Beauclerk for supposing that we are to be directed by Baretti. No, sir ; Mr Thrale is to go, by my advice, to Mr Jackson (the all-knowing), and get from him a plan for seeing the most that can be seen in the time that we have to travel. We must, to be sure, see Rome, Naples, Florence, and Venice, and as much more as we can (speaking with a tone of animation).

When I expressed an earnest wish for his remarks on Italy, he said : " I do not see that I could make a book upon Italy ; yet I should be glad to get two hundred pounds or five hundred pounds by such a work. This showed both that a journal of his tour upon the Continent was not wholly out of his contemplation, and that he uniformly adhered to that strange opinion which his indolent disposition made him utter : " No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money." Numerous instances to refute this will occur to all who are versed in the history of literature.

He gave us one of the many sketches of character which were treasured in his mind, and which he was wont to produce quite unexpectedly in a very entertaining manner. " I lately," said he, " received a letter from the East Indies, from a gentleman whom I formerly knew very well ; he

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had returned from that country with a handsome fortune, as it was reckoned, before means were found to acquire those immense sums which have been brought from thence of late; he was a scholar, and an agreeable man, and lived very prettily in London, till his wife died. After her death he took to dissipation and gaming, and lost all he had. One evening he lost a thousand pounds to a gentleman whose name I am sorry I have forgotten. Next morning he sent the gentleman five hundred pounds, with an apology that it was all he had in the world. The gentleman sent the money back to him, declaring he would not accept it; and adding, that if Mr —— had occasion for five hundred pounds more he would lend it to him. He resolved to go out again to the East Indies and make his fortune anew. He got a considerable appointment, and I had some intention of accompanying him. Had I thought then as I do now, I should have gone: but, at that time, I had objections to quitting England."

It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shallow observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters; and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong yet nice portraits which he often drew. I have frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *une catalogue raisonnée* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction and entertainment. The suddenness with which his accounts of some of them started out in conversation was not less pleasing than surprising. I remember he once observed to me: "It is wonderful, sir, what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener behind the Royal Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week."¹

¹ This Mr Ellis is, I believe, the last of that profession called *Scriveners*, which is one of the London companies, but of which the business is no longer carried on separately, but is transacted by attorneys and others. He

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Volumes would be required to contain a list of his numerous and various acquaintance, none of whom he ever forgot ; and could describe and discriminate them all with precision and vivacity. He associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank, and accomplishments. He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the guards, who wrote *The Polite Philosopher*, and of the awkward and uncouth Robert Levett ; of Lord Thurlow, and Mr Sastres, the Italian master ; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven,¹ and the next with good Mrs Gardiner the tallow-chandler, on Snow Hill.

On my expressing my wonder at his discovering so much of the knowledge peculiar to different professions, he told me : " I learnt what I know of law chiefly from Mr Ballow, a very able man. I learnt some too from Chambers ; but was not so teachable then. One is not willing to be taught by a young man." When I expressed a wish to know more about Mr Ballow, Johnson said : " Sir, I have seen him but once these twenty years. The tide of life has driven us different ways." I was sorry at the time to hear this ; but whoever quits the creeks of private connections, and fairly

is a man of literature and talents. He is the author of a Hudibrastic version of *Mopheus's Canto*, in addition to the *Æneid* ; of some poems in Dodsley's collection, and various other small pieces ; but being a very modest man has never put his name to anything. He has shown me a translation which he has made of Ovid's *Epistles*, very prettily done. There is a good engraved portrait of him by Pepper, from a picture by Fry, which hangs in the hall of the Scriveners' Company. He is now a very old man. I have visited him this day (4th October 1790), in his ninety-third year, and found his judgment distinct and clear, and his memory, though faded so as to fail him occasionally, yet, as he assured me, and I indeed perceived, able to serve him very well, after a little recollection. It was agreeable to observe, that he was free from the discontent and fretfulness which too often molest old age. He in the summer of this year walked to Rotherhithe, where he dined, and walked home in the evening.

¹ Lord Macartney, who, with his other distinguished qualities, is remarkable also for an elegant pleasantry, told me that he met Johnson at Lady Craven's, and that he seemed jealous of any interference ; " So," said his lordship, smiling, " I kept back."

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gets into the great ocean of London, will, by imperceptible degrees, unavoidably experience this.

"My knowledge of physic," he added, "I learnt from Dr James, whom I helped in writing the proposals for his *Dictionary*, and also a little in the *Dictionary* itself. I also learnt some from Dr Lawrence, but was then grown more stubborn."

A curious incident happened to-day while Mr Thrale and I sat with him. Francis announced that a large packet was brought to him from the post office, said to have come from Lisbon, and it was charged *seven pounds ten shillings*. He would not receive it, supposing it to be some trick, nor did he even look at it. But upon inquiry afterwards he found that it was a real packet for him, from that very friend in the East Indies of whom he had been speaking; and the ship which carried it having come to Portugal, this packet, with others, had been put into the post office at Lisbon.

I mentioned a new gaming club, of which Mr Beauclerk had given me an account, where the members played to a desperate extent. JOHNSON: Depend upon it, sir, this is mere talk. *Who* is ruined by gaming? You will not find six instances in an age. There is a strange rout made about deep play; whereas you have many more people ruined by adventurous trade, and yet we do not hear such an outcry against it. THRALE: There may be few people absolutely ruined by deep play; but very many are much hurt in their circumstances by it. JOHNSON: Yes, sir; and so are very many by other kinds of expense.—I had heard him talk once before in the same manner; and at Oxford he said "he wished he had learnt to play at cards." The truth, however, is that he loved to display his ingenuity in argument; and therefore would sometimes in conversation maintain opinions which he was sensible were wrong, but in supporting which, his reasoning and wit would be most conspicuous. He would begin thus: "Why, sir, as to the good or evil of card-playing——" "Now," said Garrick, "he is thinking which side he shall take." He appeared to have a pleasure

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in contradiction, especially when any opinion whatever was delivered with an air of confidence ; so that there was hardly any topic, if not one of the great truths of religion and morality, that he might not have been incited to argue, either for or against it. Lord Elibank¹ had the highest admiration of his powers. He once observed to me : " Whatever opinion Johnson maintains, I will not say that he convinces me ; but he never fails to show me that he has good reasons for it." I have heard Johnson pay his lordship this high compliment : " I never was in Lord Elibank's company without learning something."

We sat together till it was too late for the afternoon service. Thrale said he had come with intention to go to church with us. We went at seven to evening prayers at St Clement's Church, after having drank coffee ; an indulgence which I understood Johnson yielded to on this occasion, in compliment to Thrale.

On Sunday, 7th April, Easter Day, after having been at St Paul's Cathedral, I came to Dr Johnson, according to my usual custom. It seemed to me that there was always something peculiarly mild and placid in his manner upon this holy festival, the commemoration of the most joyful event in the history of our world, the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Who, having triumphed over death and the grave, proclaimed immortality to mankind.

I repeated to him an argument of a lady of my acquaintance, who maintained that her husband's having been guilty of numberless infidelities, released her from conjugal obligations, because they were reciprocal. JOHNSON : This is miserable stuff, sir. To the contract of marriage, besides the man and wife, there is a third party—Society ; and, if it be considered as a vow—God : and therefore it cannot be dissolved by their consent alone. Laws are not made for particular cases, but for mankind in general. A woman may be unhappy with her husband ; but she cannot be freed from him without the approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical

¹ Patrick Lord Elibank, who died 1778.

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power. A man may be unhappy because he is not so rich as another; but he is not to seize upon another's property with his own hand. BOSWELL: But, sir, this lady does not want that the contract should be dissolved; she only argues that she may indulge herself in gallantries with equal freedom as her husband does, provided she takes care not to introduce a spurious issue into his family. You know, sir, what Macrobius has told us of Julia.¹ JOHNSON: This lady of yours, sir, I think, is very fit for a brothel.

Mr Macbean, author of the *Dictionary of Ancient Geography*, came in. He mentioned that he had been forty years absent from Scotland. "Ah, Boswell!" said Johnson, smiling, "what would you give to be forty years from Scotland?" I said: "I should not like to be so long absent from the seat of my ancestors." This gentleman, Mrs Williams and Mr Levett dined with us.

Dr Johnson made a remark, which both Mr Macbean and I thought new. It was this: that "the law against usury is for the protection of creditors as well as of debtors; for if there were no such check, people would be apt, from the temptation of great interest, to lend to desperate persons, by whom they would lose their money. Accordingly there are instances of ladies being ruined, by having injudiciously sunk their fortunes for high annuities, which, after a few years, ceased to be paid, in consequence of the ruined circumstances of the borrower."

Mrs Williams was very peevish; and I wondered at Johnson's patience with her now, as I had often done on similar occasions. The truth is, that his humane consideration of the forlorn and indigent state in which this lady was left by her father, induced him to treat her with the utmost tenderness, and even to be desirous of procuring her amusement, so as sometimes to incommode many of his friends, by carrying her with him to their houses, where, from her manner of eating, in consequence of her blindness, she could not but offend the delicacy of persons of nice sensations.

¹ "Nunquam enim nisi navi plenâ tollo vectorem," Lib. II., c. vi.

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After coffee, we went to afternoon service in St Clement's Church. Observing some beggars in the street as we walked along, I said to him I supposed there was no civilised country in the world where the misery of want in the lowest classes of the people was prevented. JOHNSON: I believe, sir, there is not; but it is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality.

When the service was ended, I went home with him, and we sat quietly by ourselves. He recommended Dr Cheyne's books. I said, I thought Cheyne had been reckoned whimsical. "So he was," said he, "in some things; but there is no end of objections. There are few books to which some objection or other may not be made."

Upon the question whether a man who had been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness—JOHNSON: No, sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only madness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgences.

On Wednesday, 10th April, I dined with him at Mr Thrale's, where were Mr Murphy and some other company. Before dinner, Dr Johnson and I passed some time by ourselves. I was sorry to find it was now resolved that the proposed journey to Italy should not take place this year. He said: "I am disappointed, to be sure; but it is not a great disappointment." I wondered to see him bear, with a philosophical calmness, what would have made most people peevish and fretful. I perceived, however, that he had so warmly cherished the hope of enjoying classical scenes, that he could not easily part with the scheme; for he said: "I shall probably contrive to get to Italy some other way. But I won't mention it to Mr and Mrs Thrale, as it might vex them." I suggested that going to Italy might have done Mr and Mrs Thrale good. JOHNSON: I rather believe not, sir. While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only

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irritates. You must wait till grief be *digested*, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it.

At dinner, Mr Murphy entertained us with the history of Mr Joseph Simpson, a schoolfellow of Dr Johnson's, a barrister-at-law, of good parts, but who fell into a dissipated course of life, incompatible with that success in his profession which he once had, and would otherwise have deservedly maintained; yet he still preserved a dignity in his deportment. He wrote a tragedy on the story of Leonidas, entitled *The Patriot*. He read it to a company of lawyers, who found so many faults, that he wrote it over again: so then there were two tragedies on the same subject, and with the same title. Dr Johnson told us that one of them was still in his possession. This very piece was, after his death, published by some person who had been about him, and, for the sake of a little hasty profit, was positively averred to have been written by Johnson himself.

I said, I disliked the custom which some people had of bringing their children into company, because it in a manner forced us to pay foolish compliments to please their parents. JOHNSON: You are right, sir. We may be excused for not caring much about other people's children, for there are many who care very little about their own children. It may be observed, that men, who from being engaged in business, or from their course of life in whatever way, seldom see their children, do not care much about them. I myself should not have had much fondness for a child of my own. MRS THRALE: Nay, sir, how can you talk so? JOHNSON: At least, I never wished to have a child.

Mr Murphy mentioned Dr Johnson's having a design to publish an edition of Cowley. Johnson said, he did not know but he should; and he expressed his disapprobation of Dr Hurd, for having published a mutilated edition under the title of *Select Works of Abraham Cowley*. Mr Murphy thought it a bad precedent; observing, that any author might be used in the same manner; and that it was pleasing to see the variety of an author's compositions, at different periods.

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We talked of Flatman's poems ; and Mrs Thrale observed that Pope had partly borrowed from him *The Dying Christian to his Soul*. Johnson repeated Rochester's verses upon Flatman, which, I think, by much too severe :

“ Nor that slow drudge in swift Pindaric strains,
Flatman, who Cowley imitates with pains,
And rides a jaded Muse, whipped with loose reins.” }

I like to recollect all the passages that I heard Johnson repeat : it stamps a value on them.

He told us, that the book entitled *The Lives of the Poets*, by Mr Cibber, was entirely compiled by Mr Shiels, a Scotchman, one of his amanuenses. “ The booksellers,” said he, “ gave Theophilus Cibber, who was then in prison, ten guineas, to allow *Mr Cibber* to be put upon the title page, as the author ; by this, a double imposition was intended : in the first place, that it was the work of a Cibber at all ; and, in the second place, that it was the work of old Cibber.”

Mr Murphy said, that “ the *Memoirs of Gray's Life* set him much higher in his estimation than his poems did ; for you there saw a man constantly at work in literature.” Johnson acquiesced in this, but depreciated the book, I thought very unreasonably. For he said : “ I forced myself to read it only because it was a common topic of conversation. I found it mighty dull ; and, as to the style, it is fit for the second table.” Why he thought so, I was at a loss to conceive. He now gave it as his opinion that “ Akenside was a superior poet both to Gray and Mason.”

Talking of the Reviews, Johnson said : “ I think them very impartial : I do not know an instance of partiality.” He mentioned what had passed upon the subject of the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*, in the conversation with which his Majesty had honoured him. He expatiated a little more on them this evening. “ The Monthly Reviewers,” said he, “ are not Deists ; but they are Christians with as little Christianity as may be, and are for pulling down all

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establishments. The Critical Reviewers are for supporting the constitution, both in Church and State. The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through, but lay hold of a topic, and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

He talked of Lord Lyttelton's extreme anxiety as an author; observing that "he was thirty years in preparing his *History*, and that he employed a man to point it for him; as if (laughing) another man could point his sense better than himself." Mr Murphy said he understood his *History* was kept back several years for fear of Smollett. JOHNSON: This seems strange to Murphy and me, who never felt that anxiety, but sent what we wrote to the press, and let it take its chance. MRS THRALE: The time has been, sir, when you felt it. JOHNSON: Why, really, madam, I do not recollect a time when that was the case.

Talking of *The Spectator*, he said: "It is wonderful that there is such a proportion of bad papers in the half of the work which was not written by Addison; for there was all the world to write that half, yet not a half of that half is good. One of the finest pieces in the English language is the paper on 'Novelty,' yet we do not hear it talked of. It was written by Grove, a dissenting *teacher*." He would not, I perceived, call him a *clergyman*, though he was candid enough to allow very great merit to his composition. Mr Murphy said he remembered when there were several people alive in London who enjoyed a considerable reputation merely from having written a paper in *The Spectator*. He mentioned particularly Mr Ince, who used to frequent Tom's coffee-house. "But," said Johnson, "you must consider how highly Steele speaks of Mr Ince." He would not allow that the paper on carrying a boy to travel, signed *Philip Homebred*, which was written by the Lord Chancellor Hardwick, had merit. He said "it was quite vulgar, and had nothing luminous."

Johnson mentioned Dr Barry's *System of Physic*. "He

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was a man," said he, "who had acquired a high reputation in Dublin, came over to England, and brought his reputation with him, but had not great success. His notion was, that pulsation occasions death by attrition; and that, therefore, the way to preserve life is to retard pulsation. But we know that pulsation is strongest in infants, and that we increase in growth while it operates in its regular course; so it cannot be the cause of destruction." Soon after this he said something very flattering to Mrs Thrale, which I do not recollect; but it concluded with wishing her long life. "Sir," said I, "if Dr Barry's system be true, you have now shortened Mrs Thrale's life, perhaps some minutes, by accelerating her pulsation."

On Thursday, 11th April, I dined with him at General Paoli's, in whose house I now resided, and where I had ever afterwards the honour of being entertained with the kindest attention as his constant guest while I was in London, till I had a house of my own there. I mentioned my having that morning introduced to Mr Garrick, Count Neni, a Flemish nobleman of great rank and fortune, to whom Garrick talked of Abel Drugger as *a small part*; and related, with pleasant vanity, that a Frenchman who had seen him in one of his low characters exclaimed: "*Comment! je ne le crois pas. Ce n'est pas, Monsieur Garrick, ce Grand Homme!*" Garrick added, with an appearance of grave recollection: "If I were to begin life again, I think I should not play those low characters." Upon which I observed: "Sir, you would be in the wrong; for your great excellence is your variety of playing, your representing so well, characters so very different." JOHNSON: Garrick, sir, was not in earnest in what he said; for, to be sure, his peculiar excellence is his variety: and, perhaps, there is not any one character which has not been as well acted by somebody else, as he could do it. BOSWELL: Why then, sir, did he talk so? JOHNSON: Why, sir, to make you answer as you did. BOSWELL: I don't know, sir; he seemed to dip deep into his mind for the reflection. JOHNSON: He had not far

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to dip, sir: he had said the same thing, probably, twenty times before.

Of a nobleman raised at a very early period to high office he said: "His parts, sir, are pretty well for a lord, but would not be distinguished in a man who had nothing else but his parts."

A journey to Italy was still in his thoughts. He said: "A man who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority—from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world: the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." The General observed that "The Mediterranean would be a noble subject for a poem."

We talked of translation. I said, I could not define it, nor could I think of a similitude to illustrate it; but that it appeared to me the translation of poetry could be only imitation. JOHNSON: You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical. Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated; and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve languages; for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language.

A gentleman maintained that the art of printing had hurt real learning, by disseminating idle writings. JOHNSON: Sir, if it had not been for the art of printing, we should now have no learning at all; for books would have perished faster than they could have been transcribed.—This observation seems not just, considering for how many ages books were preserved by writing alone.

The same gentleman maintained that a general diffusion

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of knowledge among a people was a disadvantage; for it made the vulgar rise above their humble sphere. JOHNSON: Sir, while knowledge is a distinction, those who are possessed of it will naturally rise above those who are not. Merely to read and write was a distinction at first; but we see when reading and writing have become general, the common people keep their stations. And so, were higher attainments to become general, the effect would be the same.

"Goldsmith," he said, "referred everything to vanity; his virtues, and his vices too, were from that motive. He was not a social man. He never exchanged mind with you."

We spent the evening at Mr Hoole's. Mr Mickle, the excellent translator of *The Lusiad*, was there. I have preserved little of the conversation of this evening. Dr Johnson said: "Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing everything in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes, that the sense can hardly peep through. Shiels, who compiled *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*, was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked: 'Is not this fine?' Shiels having expressed the highest admiration. 'Well, sir,' said I, 'I have omitted every other line.'"

I related a dispute between Goldsmith and Mr Robert Dodsley, one day when they and I were dining at Tom Davies's, in 1762. Goldsmith asserted, that there was no poetry produced in this age. Dodsley appealed to his own collection, and maintained, that though you could not find a palace like Dryden's *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*, you had villages composed of very pretty houses; and he mentioned particularly *The Spleen*. JOHNSON: I think Dodsley gave up the question. He and Goldsmith said the same thing; only he said it in a softer manner than Goldsmith did: for he acknowledged that there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You may find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry. *Hudibras* has a profusion of these; yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. *The Spleen*, in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he

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chiefly rested, is not poetry. BOSWELL: Does not Gray's poetry, sir, tower above the common mark? JOHNSON: Yes, sir; but we must attend to the difference between what men in general cannot do if they would, and what every man may do if he would. Sixteen-string Jack towered above the common mark. BOSWELL: Then, sir, what is poetry? JOHNSON: Why, sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all *know* what light is; but it is not easy to *tell* what it is.

On Friday, 12th April, I dined with him at our friend Tom Davies's, where we met Mr Cradock, a Leicestershire gentleman, author of *Zobeide*, a tragedy; and Dr Harwood, who has written and published various works.

I introduced Aristotle's doctrine in his *Art of Poetry*, of "the καθαρσις των παθηματων, the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy. "But how are the passions to be purged by terror and pity?" said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address. JOHNSON: Why, sir, you are to consider what is the meaning of purging in the original sense. It is to expel impurities from the human body. The mind is subject to the same imperfection. The passions are the great movers of human actions; but they are mixed with such impurities, that it is necessary they should be purged or refined by means of terror and pity. For instance, ambition is a noble passion; but by seeing upon the stage, that a man who is so excessively ambitious as to raise himself by injustice is punished, we are terrified at the fatal consequences of such a passion. In the same manner a certain degree of resentment is necessary; but if we see that a man carries it too far, we pity the object of it, and are taught to moderate that passion.—My record upon this occasion does great injustice to Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr Cradock whispered me: "O that his words were written in a book!"

I observed the great defect of the tragedy of *Othello* was, that it had not a moral, for that no man could resist the

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circumstances of suspicion which were artfully suggested to Othello's mind. JOHNSON: In the first place, sir, we learn from *Othello* this very useful moral, not to make an unequal match; in the second place, we learn not to yield too readily to suspicion. The handkerchief is merely a trick, though a very pretty trick; but there are no other circumstances of reasonable suspicion, except what is related by Iago of Cassio's warm expressions concerning Desdemona in his sleep; and that depended entirely upon the assertion of one man. No, sir, I think *Othello* has more moral than almost any play.

Talking of a penurious gentleman of our acquaintance, Johnson said: "Sir, he is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine; but he would not much care if it should sour."

He said he wished to see "John Dennis's Critical Works" collected. Davies said they would not sell. Dr Johnson seemed to think otherwise.

Davies said of a well-known dramatic author, that "he lived upon *potted stories*, and that he made his way as Hannibal did, by vinegar; having begun by attacking people, particularly the players."

He reminded Dr Johnson of Mr Murphy's having paid him the highest compliment that ever was paid to a layman, by asking his pardon for repeating some oaths in the course of telling a story.

Johnson and I supped this evening at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in company with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Langton, Mr Nairne, now one of the Scottish judges, with the title of Lord Dunsinan, and my very worthy friend, Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

We discussed the question whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained it did. JOHNSON: No, sir: before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding; and those who are conscious of their inferiority have the modesty not to talk.

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When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous : but he is not improved ; he is only not sensible of his defects.—Sir Joshua said that the Doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine ; but that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood. “ I am,” said he, “ in very good spirits when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted ; wine puts me in the same state as when I got up ; and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better.” JOHNSON : No, sir ; wine gives not light, gay, ideal hilarity ; but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment. I have heard none of those drunken—nay, drunken is a coarse word—none of those *vinous* flights. SIR JOSHUA : Because you have sat by, quite sober, and felt an envy of the happiness of those who were drinking. JOHNSON : Perhaps, contempt. And, sir, it is not necessary to be drunk one's self, to relish the wit of drunkenness. Do we not judge of the drunken wit of the dialogue between Iago and Cassio, the most excellent in its kind, when we are quite sober ? Wit is wit, by whatever means it is produced ; and, if good, will appear so at all times. I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking, as by the common participation of any pleasure ; cock-fighting, or bear-baiting, will raise the spirits of a company as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit, that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking, as there are fruits which are not good till they are rotten. There are such men, but they are medlars. I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking ; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general : and let it be considered that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man.—Sir William Forbes said : “ Might not a man warmed with wine be like a bottle of beer, which is made brisker by being set before the fire ? ” “ Nay,” said Johnson, laughing, “ I cannot answer that : that is too much for me.”

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I observed, that wine did some people harm, by inflaming, confusing, and irritating their minds; but that the experience of mankind had declared in favour of moderate drinking. JOHNSON: Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine, I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself: in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits; in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me.

He told us, "almost all his *Ramblers* were written just as they were wanted for the press; that he sent a certain portion of the copy of an essay, and wrote the remainder while the former part of it was printing. When it was wanted, and he had fairly sat down to it, he was sure it would be done."

He said, that for general improvement, a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to; though, to be sure, if a man has a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "what we read with inclination makes a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read." He told us, he read Fielding's *Amelia* through without stopping.¹ He said, "if a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it, to go to the beginning. He may, perhaps, not feel again the inclination."

Sir Joshua mentioned Mr Cumberland's *Odes*, which were just published. JOHNSON: Why, sir, they would have been thought as good as odes commonly are if Cumberland had not put his name to them; but a name immediately draws censure, unless it be a name that bears down everything before it. Nay, Cumberland has made his *Odes*

¹ We have here an involuntary testimony to the excellence of this admirable writer, to whom we have seen that Dr Johnson *directly* allowed so little merit.

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subsidiary to the fame of another man.¹ They might have run well enough by themselves ; but he has not only loaded them with a name, but has made them carry double.

We talked of the Reviews, and Dr Johnson spoke of them as he did at Thrale's.² Sir Joshua said, what I have often thought, that he wondered to find so much good writing employed in them, when the authors were to remain unknown, and so could not have the motive of fame. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, those who write in them, write well, in order to be paid well.

Soon after this day, he went to Bath with Mr and Mrs Thrale. I had never seen that beautiful city, and wished to take the opportunity of visiting it while Johnson was there. Having written to him, I received the following answer :

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Why do you talk of neglect? When did I neglect you? If you will come to Bath, we shall all be glad to see you. Come, therefore, as soon as you can.

But I have a little business for you at London. Bid Francis look in the paper-drawer of the chest of drawers in my bed-chamber, for two cases; one for the Attorney-General, and one for the Solicitor-General. They lie, I think, at the top of my papers; otherwise they are somewhere else, and will give me more trouble.

Please to write me immediately, if they can be found. Make my compliments to all our friends round the world, and to Mrs Williams at home. I am, Sir, your, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Search for the papers as soon as you can, that, if it is necessary, I may write to you again before you come down.

¹ Mr Romney, the painter, who has now deservedly established a high reputation.

² Pages 288, 289.

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On the 26th of April, I went to Bath; and on my arrival at the Pelican inn, found lying for me an obliging invitation from Mr and Mrs Thrale, by whom I was agreeably entertained almost constantly during my stay. They were gone to the rooms; but there was a kind note from Dr Johnson, that he should sit at home all the evening. I went to him directly, and before Mr and Mrs Thrale returned, we had by ourselves some hours of tea-drinking and talk.

I shall group together such of his sayings as I preserved during the few days that I was at Bath.

Of a person who differed from him in politics, he said: "In private life he is a very honest gentleman; but I will not allow him to be so in public life. People *may* be honest, though they are doing wrong: that is between their Maker and them. But *we*, who are suffering by their pernicious conduct, are to destroy them. We are sure that —— acts from interest. We know what his genuine principles were. They who allow their passions to confound the distinctions between right and wrong, are criminal. They may be convinced, but they have not come honestly by their conviction."

It having been mentioned, I know not with what truth, that a certain female political writer, whose doctrines he disliked, had of late become very fond of dress, sat hours together at her toilet, and even put on rouge—JOHNSON: She is better employed at her toilet than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters.

He told us that "Addison wrote Budgell's papers in *The Spectator*, at least mended them so much that he made them almost all his own; and that Draper, Tonson's partner, assured Mrs Johnson that the much-admired Epilogue to *The Distressed Mother*, which came out in Budgell's name, was in reality written by Addison."

"The mode of government by one may be ill adapted to a small society, but is best for a great nation. The characteristic of our own government at present is imbecility.

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The magistrate dare not call the guards for fear of being hanged. The guards will not come, for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries."

Of the father of one of our friends, he observed: "He never clarified his notions, by filtrating them through other minds. He had a canal upon his estate, where at one place the bank was too low. I dug the canal deeper," said he.

He told me that "so long ago as 1748 he had read *The Grave, a Poem*,¹ but did not like it much." I differed from him; for though it is not equal throughout, and is seldom elegantly correct, it abounds in solemn thought, and poetical imagery beyond the common reach. The world has differed from him; for the poem has passed through many editions, and is still much read by people of a serious cast of mind.

A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned, as one who did good to many, but by no means "by stealth," and, instead of "blushing to find it fame," acted evidently from vanity. JOHNSON: I have seen no beings who do as much good from benevolence as she does, from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds, I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame Jennyns says upon this subject is not to be minded; he is a wit. No, sir; to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive.

He would not allow me to praise a lady then at Bath; observing, "She does not gain upon me, sir; I think her empty-headed." He was, indeed, a stern critic upon

¹ I am sorry that there are no memoirs of the Reverend Robert Blair, the author of this poem. He was the representative of the ancient family of Blair, of Blair in Ayrshire, but the estate had descended to a female, and afterwards passed to the son of her husband by another marriage. He was minister of the parish of Athelstaneford, where Mr John Home was his successor; so that it may be truly called classic ground. His son, who is of the same name, and a man eminent for talents and learning, is now, with universal approbation, Solicitor-General of Scotland.

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characters and manners. Even Mrs Thrale did not escape his friendly animadversion at times. When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain, article by article, how one of our friends could possibly spend as much money in his family as he told us he did, she interrupted us with a lively extravagant sally, on the expense of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner. Johnson looked a little angry, and said: "Nay, madam, when you are declaiming, declaim; and when you are calculating, calculate." At another time, when she said, perhaps affectedly, "I don't like to fly." JOHNSON: With *your* wings, madam, you *must* fly: but have a care, there are *clippers* abroad.—How very well was this said, and how fully has experience proved the truth of it! But have they not *clipped* rather *rudely*, and gone a great deal *closer* than was necessary?

A gentleman expressed a wish to go and live three years at Otaheite, or New Zealand, in order to obtain a full acquaintance with people so totally different from all that we have ever known, and be satisfied what pure nature can do for man. JOHNSON: What could you learn, sir? What can savages tell, but what they themselves have seen? Of the past, or the invisible, they can tell nothing. The inhabitants of Otaheite and New Zealand are not in a state of pure nature; for it is plain they broke off from some other people. Had they grown out of the ground, you might have judged of a state of pure nature. Fanciful people may talk of a mythology being amongst them, but it must be invention. They have once had religion, which has been gradually debased. And what account of their religion can you suppose to be learnt from savages? Only consider, sir, our own state: Our religion is in a book; we have an order of men whose duty it is to teach it; we have one day in the week set apart for it, and this in general pretty well observed: yet ask the first ten gross men you meet, and hear what they can tell of their religion.

On Monday, 29th April, he and I made an excursion

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to Bristol, where I was entertained with seeing him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "*Rowley's* poetry," as I had seen him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "*Ossian's* poetry." George Catcot, the pewterer, who was as zealous for Rowley as Dr Hugh Blair was for Ossian (I trust my reverend friend will excuse the comparison), attended us at our inn, and with a triumphant air of lively simplicity called out: "I'll make Dr Johnson a convert." Dr Johnson, at his desire, read aloud some of Chatterton's fabricated verses, while Catcot stood at the back of his chair, moving himself like a pendulum, and beating time with his feet, and now and then looking into Dr Johnson's face, wondering that he was not yet convinced. We called on Mr Barret, the surgeon, and saw some of the *originals* as they were called, which were executed very artificially; but from a careful inspection of them, and a consideration of the circumstances with which they were attended, we were quite satisfied of the imposture, which, indeed, has been clearly demonstrated from internal evidence, by several able critics.¹

Honest Catcot seemed to pay no attention whatever to any objections, but insisted, as an end of all controversy, that we should go with him to the tower of the church of St Mary, Redcliff, and *view with our own eyes* the ancient chest in which the manuscripts were found. To this Dr Johnson good-naturedly agreed; and though troubled with a shortness of breathing, laboured up a long flight of steps, till we came to the place where the wondrous chest stood. "*There,*" said Catcot, with a bouncing confident credulity, "*there* is the very chest itself." After this *ocular demonstration*, there was no more to be said. He brought to my recollection a Scotch Highlander, a man of learning too, and who had seen the world, attesting, and at the same time giving his reasons for the authenticity of *Fingal*: "I have heard all that poem when I was young." "Have you, sir? Pray what have you heard?" "I have heard *Ossian*, *Oscar*, and *every one of them*."

¹ Mr Tyrwhitt, Mr Warton, Mr Malone.

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Johnson said of Chatterton: "This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things."

We were by no means pleased with our inn at Bristol. "Let us see now," said I, "how we should describe it." Johnson was ready with his raillery. "Describe it, sir? Why, it was so bad that Boswell wished to be in Scotland!"

After Dr Johnson's return to London, I was several times with him at his house, where I occasionally slept, in the room that had been assigned to me. I dined with him at Dr Taylor's, at General Oglethorpe's, and at General Paoli's. To avoid a tedious minuteness, I shall group together what I have preserved of his conversation during this period also, without specifying each scene where it passed, except one, which will be found so remarkable as certainly to deserve a very particular relation. Where the place or the persons do not contribute to the zest of the conversation, it is unnecessary to encumber my page with mentioning them. To know of what vintage our wine is, enables us to judge of its value, and to drink it with more relish: but to have the produce of each vine of one vineyard, in the same year, kept separate, would serve no purpose. To know that our wine (to use an advertising phrase) is "of the stock of an Ambassador lately deceased," heightens its flavour; but it signifies nothing to know the bin where each bottle was once deposited.

"Garrick," he observed, "does not play the part of Archer in *The Beaux' Stratagem* well. The gentleman should break out through the footman, which is not the case as he does it."

"Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this: but it would be so, exclusive of that; for it is mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better."

"The little volumes entitled *Republicæ*, which are very well done, were a bookseller's work."



THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD

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"There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation; but they are recompensed by existence. If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be nearly so numerous." This argument is to be found in the able and benignant Hutchinson's *Moral Philosophy*. But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of existence upon the terms on which they have it. Madame Sevigné, who, though she had many enjoyments, felt with delicate sensibility the prevalence of misery, complains of the task of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent.

"That man is never happy for the present is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment."

"Though many men are nominally entrusted with the administration of hospitals and other public institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest are driven on, owing to confidence in him, and indolence in them."

"Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* to his son, I think, might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman. An elegant manner and easiness of behaviour are acquired gradually and imperceptibly. No man can say, 'I'll be genteel.' There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in."

No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those in whose company he happened to be, than Johnson; or, however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements. Lord Eliot

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informs me, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner at a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal than accused of deficiency in *the graces*." Mr Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, madam" (looking towards Johnson), "that among *all* your acquaintance you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce.

"I read," said he, "Sharpe's letters on Italy over again when I was at Bath. There is a great deal of matter in them."

"Mrs Williams was angry that Thrale's family did not send regularly to her every time they heard from me while I was in the Hebrides. Little people are apt to be jealous: but they should not be jealous; for they ought to consider that superior attention will necessarily be paid to superior fortune or rank. Two persons may have equal merit, and on that account may have an equal claim to attention; but one of them may have also fortune and rank, and so may have a double claim."

Talking of his notes on Shakspeare, he said: "I despise those who do not see that I am right in the passage where *as* is repeated, and 'asses of great charge' introduced. That on 'To be, or not to be,' is disputable."¹

A gentleman, whom I found sitting with him one morning, said, that, in his opinion, the character of an infidel was more detestable than that of a man notoriously guilty of an atrocious crime. I differed from him, because we are surer

¹ It may be observed, that Mr Malone, in his very valuable edition of Shakspeare, has fully vindicated Dr Johnson from the idle censures which the first of these notes has given rise to. The interpretation of the other passage, which Dr Johnson allows to be *disputable*, he has clearly shown to be erroneous.



J. Bushrod, sculp.

General James Oglethorpe

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of the odiousness of the one, than of the error of the other. JOHNSON: Sir, I agree with him; for the infidel would be guilty of any crime if he were inclined to it.

"Many things which are false are transmitted from book to book, and gain credit in the world. One of these is the cry against the evil of luxury. Now the truth is, that luxury produces much good. Take the luxury of building in London. Does it not produce real advantage in the conveniency and elegance of accommodation, and this all from the exertion of industry? People will tell you, with a melancholy face, how many builders are in gaol. It is plain they are in gaol, not for building; for rents are not fallen.—A man gives half-a-guinea for a dish of green peas. How much gardening does this occasion? how many labourers must the competition to have such things early in the market, keep in employment? You will hear it said, very gravely, 'Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury, given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal?' Alas! has it not gone to the *industrious* poor, whom it is better to support than the *idle* poor? You are much surer that you are doing good when you *pay* money to those who work, as the recompense of their labour, than when you *give* money merely in charity. Suppose the ancient luxury of a dish of peacocks' brains were to be revived; how many carcasses would be left to the poor at a cheap rate? And as to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors in gaol; nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too."

The uncommon vivacity of General Oglethorpe's mind, and variety of knowledge, having sometimes made his conversation seem too desultory, Johnson observed: "Oglethorpe, sir, never *completes* what he has to say."

When I complained of having dined at a splendid table

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without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, he said: "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation." BOSWELL: Why then meet at table? JOHNSON: Why, to eat and drink together, and promote kindness; and, sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation; for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour, or some of the company who are not capable of such conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy. It was for this reason, Sir Robert Walpole said, he always talked bawdy at his table, because in that all could join.

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman ask Mr Levett a variety of questions concerning him, when he was sitting by, he broke out: "Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both." "A man," said he, "should not talk of himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take care not to be made a proverb; and, therefore, should avoid having any one topic of which people can say, 'We shall hear him upon it.' There was a Dr Oldfield, who was always talking of the Duke of Marlborough. He came into a coffee-house one day, and told that his Grace had spoken in the House of Lords for half-an-hour. 'Did he indeed speak for half-an-hour?' said Belchier, the surgeon. 'Yes.' 'And what did he say of Dr Oldfield?' 'Nothing.' 'Why then, sir, he was very ungrateful; for Dr Oldfield could not have spoken for a quarter of an hour without saying something of him.'"

"Every man is to take existence on the terms on which it is given to him. To some men it is given on condition of not taking liberties, which other men may take without much harm. One man may drink wine and be nothing the worse for it; on another wine may have effects so inflammatory as to injure him both in body and mind, and perhaps make him commit something for which he may deserve to be hanged."

"Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland* have not that pointed form which is the taste of this age; but it is a book which

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will always sell, it has such a stability of dates, such a certainty of facts, and such a punctuality of citation. I never before read Scotch history with certainty."

I asked him whether he would advise me to read the Bible with a commentary, and what commentaries he would recommend. JOHNSON: To be sure, sir, I would have you read the Bible with a commentary; and I would recommend Lowth and Patrick on the Old Testament, and Hammond on the New.

During my stay in London this spring, I solicited his attention to another law case in which I was engaged. In the course of a contested election for the borough of Dunfermline, which I attended as one of my friend Colonel (now Sir Archibald) Campbell's counsel, a man, one of his political agents, who was charged with having been unfaithful to his employer, and having deserted to the opposite party for a pecuniary reward, attacked very rudely in a newspaper the Reverend Mr James Thomson, one of the ministers of that place, on account of a supposed allusion to him in one of his sermons. Upon this the minister, on a subsequent Sunday, arraigned him by name from the pulpit with some severity; and the agent, after the sermon was over, rose up and asked the minister aloud "what bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the chair of veracity." I was present at this very extraordinary scene. The person arraigned, and his father and brother, who had also had a share both of the reproof from the pulpit, and in the retaliation, brought an action against Mr Thomson, in the Court of Session, for defamation and damages, and I was one of the counsel for the reverend defendant. "The Liberty of the Pulpit" was our great ground of defence; but we argued also on the provocation of the previous attack, and on the instant retaliation. The Court of Session, however, the fifteen judges, who are at the same time the jury, decided against the minister, contrary to my humble opinion; and several of them expressed themselves with indignation against him. He

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was an aged gentleman, formerly a military chaplain, and a man of high spirit and honour. Johnson was satisfied that the judgment was wrong, and dictated to me the following argument in confutation of it :

“ Of the censure pronounced from the pulpit, our determination must be formed, as in other cases, by a consideration of the action itself, and the particular circumstances with which it is invested.

“ The right of censure and rebuke seems necessarily appendant to the pastoral office. He, to whom the care of a congregation is entrusted, is considered as the shepherd of a flock, as the teacher of a school, as the father of a family. As a shepherd tending not his own sheep but those of his master, he is answerable for those that stray, and that lose themselves by straying. But no man can be answerable for losses which he has not power to prevent, or for vagrancy which he has not authority to restrain.

“ As a teacher giving instruction for wages, and liable to reproach if those whom he undertakes to inform make no proficiency, he must have the power of enforcing attendance, of awakening negligence, and repressing contradiction.

“ As a father, he possesses the paternal authority of admonition, rebuke, and punishment. He cannot, without reducing his office to an empty name, be hindered from the exercise of any practice necessary to stimulate the idle, to reform the vicious, to check the petulant, and correct the stubborn.

“ If we inquire into the practice of the primitive Church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the Word exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We shall find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the Church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment of

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sinner was public censure and open penance; penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time while the Church had yet no help from the civil power, while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod of persecution; and when governors were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority.

"That the Church, therefore, had once a power of public censure is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority, is likewise certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.

"The hour came at length, when after three hundred years of struggle and distress, Truth took possession of imperial power, and the civil laws lent their aid to the ecclesiastical constitutions. The magistrate from that time co-operated with the priest, and clerical sentences were made efficacious by secular force. But the State, when it came to the assistance of the Church, had no intention to diminish its authority. Those rebukes and those censures which were lawful before were lawful still. But they had hitherto operated only upon voluntary submission. The refractory and contemptuous were at first in no danger of temporal severities, except what they might suffer from the reproaches of conscience, or the detestation of their fellow-Christians. When religion obtained the support of law, if admonitions and censures had no effect, they were seconded by the magistrates with coercion and punishment.

"It therefore appears from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by public censure has been always considered as inherent in the Church, and that this right was not conferred by the civil power, for it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away; for the Christian magistrate interposed his office not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation; to add pain where shame was insufficient; and

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when men were proclaimed unworthy of the society of the faithful, to restrain them by imprisonment, from spreading abroad the contagion of wickedness.

"It is not improbable that from this acknowledged power of public censure, grew in time the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of public reprehension, were willing to submit themselves to the priest, by a private accusation of themselves; and to obtain a reconciliation with the Church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance—conditions with which the priest would in times of ignorance and corruption easily comply, as they increased his influence, by adding the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconciliation.

"From this bondage the Reformation set us free. The minister has no longer power to press into the retirements of conscience, to torture us by interrogatories, or put himself in possession of our secrets and our lives. But though we have thus controlled his usurpations, his just and original power remains unimpaired. He may still see, though he may not pry; he may yet hear, though he may not question. And that knowledge which his eyes and ears force upon him it is still his duty to use, for the benefit of his flock. A father who lives near a wicked neighbour, may forbid a son to frequent his company. A minister who has in his congregation a man of open and scandalous wickedness, may warn his parishioners to shun his conversation. To warn them is not only lawful, but not to warn them would be criminal. He may warn them one by one in friendly converse, or by a parochial visitation. But if he may warn each man singly, what shall forbid him to warn them all together? Of that which is to be made known to all, how is there any difference whether it be communicated to each singly, or to all together? What is known to all must necessarily be public. Whether it shall be public at once, or public by degrees, is the only

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question. And of a sudden and solemn publication the impression is deeper, and the warning more effectual.

"It may easily be urged, if a minister be thus left at liberty to delate sinners from the pulpit, and to publish at will the crimes of a parishioner, he may often blast the innocent, and distress the timorous. He may be suspicious, and condemn without evidence; he may be rash, and judge without examination; he may be severe, and treat slight offences with too much harshness; he may be malignant and partial, and gratify his private interest or resentment under the shelter of his pastoral character.

"Of all this there is possibility, and of all this there is danger. But if possibility of evil be to exclude good, no good ever can be done. If nothing is to be attempted in which there is danger, we must all sink into hopeless inactivity. The evils that may be feared from this practice arise not from any defect in the institution, but from the infirmities of human nature. Power, in whatever hands it is placed, will be sometimes improperly exerted; yet courts of law must judge, though they will sometimes judge amiss. A father must instruct his children, though he himself may often want instruction. A minister must censure sinners, though his censure may be sometimes erroneous by want of judgment, and sometimes unjust by want of honesty.

"If we examine the circumstances of the present case, we shall find the sentence neither erroneous nor unjust; we shall find no breach of private confidence, no intrusion into secret transactions. The fact was notorious and indubitable; so easy to be proved, that no proof was desired. The act was base and treacherous, the perpetration insolent and open, and the example naturally mischievous. The minister, however, being retired and recluse, had not yet heard what was publicly known throughout the parish; and on occasion of a public election warned his people, according to his duty, against the crimes which public elections frequently produce. His warning was felt by

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one of his parishioners, as pointed particularly at himself. But instead of producing, as might be wished, private compunction and immediate reformation, it kindled only rage and resentment. He charged his minister, in a public paper, with scandal, defamation, and falsehood. The minister, thus reproached, had his own character to vindicate, upon which his pastoral authority must necessarily depend. To be charged with a defamatory lie is an injury which no man patiently endures in common life. To be charged with polluting the pastoral office with scandal and falsehood was a violation of character still more atrocious, as it affected not only his personal but his clerical veracity. His indignation naturally rose in proportion to his honesty, and with all the fortitude of injured honesty he dared this calumniator in the church, and at once exonerated himself from censure, and rescued his flock from deception and from danger. The man whom he accuses pretends not to be innocent; or at least only pretends, for he declines a trial. The crime of which he is accused has frequent opportunities and strong temptations. It has already spread far, with much depravation of private morals, and much injury to public happiness. To warn the people, therefore, against it was not wanton and officious, but necessary and pastoral.

“What then is the fault with which this worthy minister is charged? He has usurped no dominion over conscience. He has exerted no authority in support of doubtful and controverted opinions. He has not dragged into light a bashful and corrigible sinner. His censure was directed against a breach of morality, against an act which no man justifies. The man who appropriated this censure to himself, is evidently and notoriously guilty. His consciousness of his own wickedness incited him to attack his faithful reprover with open insolence and pointed accusations. Such an attack made defence necessary, and we hope it will be at last decided that the means of defence were just and lawful.”

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When I read this to Mr Burke, he was highly pleased, and exclaimed: "Well, he does his work in a workman-like manner."¹

Mr Thomson wished to bring the cause by appeal before the House of Lords, but was dissuaded by the advice of the noble person who now presides so ably in that Most Honourable House, and who was then Attorney-General. As my readers will no doubt be glad also to read the opinion of this eminent man upon the same subject, I shall here insert it.

CASE

"There is herewith laid before you,

"1. Petition for the Reverend Mr James Thomson, minister of Dunfermline.

"2. Answers thereto.

"3. Copy of the judgment of the Court of Session upon both.

"4. Notes of the opinions of the Judges, being the reasons upon which their decree is grounded.

"These papers you will please to peruse, and give your opinion,

"Whether there is a probability of the above decree of the Court of Session's being reversed, if Mr Thomson should appeal from the same?"

"I don't think the appeal advisable; not only because the value of the judgment is in no degree adequate to the expense, but because there are many chances, that, upon the general complexion of the case, the impression will be taken to the disadvantage of the appellant.

¹ As a proof of Dr Johnson's extraordinary powers of composition, it appears from the original manuscript of this excellent dissertation, of which he dictated the first eight paragraphs on the 10th of May, and the remainder on the 13th, that there are in the whole only seven corrections, or rather variations, and those not considerable. Such were at once the vigorous and accurate emanations of his mind.

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"It is impossible to approve the style of that sermon. But the *complaint* was not less ungracious from that man, who had behaved so ill by his original libel, and at the time when he received the reproach he complains of. In the last article all the plaintiffs are equally concerned. It struck me also with some wonder that the judges should think so much fervour apposite to the occasion of reproving the defendant for a little excess.

"Upon the matter, however, I agree with them in condemning the behaviour of the minister, and in thinking it a subject fit for ecclesiastical censure; and even for an action, if any individual could qualify¹ a wrong and a damage arising from it. But this I doubt. The circumstance of publishing the reproach in a pulpit, though extremely indecent, and culpable in another view, does not constitute a different sort of wrong, or any other rule of law, than would have obtained if the same words had been pronounced elsewhere. I don't know whether there be any difference in the law of Scotland, in the definition of slander before the Commissaries, or the Court of Session. The common law of England does not give way to actions for every reproachful word. An action cannot be brought for general damages, upon any words which import less than an offence cognisable by law; consequently no action could have been brought here for the words in question. Both laws admit the truth to be a justification in actions *for words*; and the law of England does the same in actions for libels. The judgment, therefore, seems to me to have been wrong, in that the Court repelled that defence.

"E. THURLOW."

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr Johnson's *Life*, which fell under my own observation;

¹ It is curious to observe that Lord Thurlow has here, perhaps in compliment to North Britain, made use of a term of the Scotch law, which to an English reader may require explanation. To *qualify* a wrong, is to point out and establish it.

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of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out from all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my father's friend," between whom and Dr Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously: "It is not in friendship as in mathematics, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible, so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson, who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr Johnson and Mr Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly, in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, 15th May. "Pray," said I, "let us have Dr Johnson." "What! with Mr Wilkes? not for the world!" said Mr Edward Dilly: "Dr Johnson would never forgive me." "Come," said I, "if you'll let me negotiate

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for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY: Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here.

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal: "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered: "Dine with Jack Wilkes, sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch."¹ I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus: "Mr Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON: Sir, I am obliged to Mr Dilly. I will wait upon him—— BOSWELL: Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you. JOHNSON: What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table? BOSWELL: I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him. JOHNSON: Well, sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotic friends*? Poh! BOSWELL: I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there. JOHNSON: And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally. BOSWELL: Pray forgive me, sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me.—Thus I

¹ This has been circulated as if actually said by Johnson, when the truth is it was only *supposed* by me.

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secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much-expected Wednesday, I called on him about half-an-hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion,¹ covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, sir?" said I. "Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr Dilly's?" JOHNSON: Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs Williams. BOSWELL: But, my dear sir, you know you were engaged to Mr Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come. JOHNSON: You must talk to Mrs Williams about this.

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened downstairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, sir," said she, pretty peevishly, "Dr Johnson is to dine at home." "Madam," said I, "his respect for you is such that I know he will not leave you unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forgo it for a day, as Mr Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr Dilly that Dr Johnson was to come, and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected."

¹ See page 272.

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to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr Johnson, "that all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay"; but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs Williams's consent, he roared: "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon dressed. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr Dilly: "Who is that gentleman, sir?" "Mr Arthur Lee." JOHNSON: Tut, tut, tut (under his breath)—which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the Court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?" "Mr Wilkes, sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he therefore resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, besides Mr

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Wilkes, and Mr Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr (now Sir John) Miller, Dr Lettsom, and Mr Slater, the druggist. Mr Wilkes placed himself next to Dr Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness that he gained upon him insensibly. No man ate more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir.—It is better here.—A little of the brown?—Some fat, sir?—A little of the stuffing?—Some gravy?—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter.—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir, sir, I am obliged to you, sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue,"¹ but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said: "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added: "A merry Andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON: But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands, but he's gone, sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for his wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free. WILKES: Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's. JOHNSON: The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased, and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir,

¹ Johnson's *London, a Poem*, v. 145.

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he was irresistible.¹ He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went downstairs, he told them: "This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer."

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES: Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage, but he will play *Scrub* all his life.—I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick once said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil I said loudly: "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON: Yes, sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I

¹ Foote told me that Johnson said of him: "For loud, obstreperous, broad-faced mirth, I know not his equal."

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am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player : if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy.

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentic information for biography, Johnson told us : "When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the *Life of Dryden*, and in order to get materials I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him ; these were old Swiney and old Cibber. Swiney's information was no more than this : 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair ; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair.' Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL : Yet Cibber was a man of observation ? JOHNSON : I think not. BOSWELL : You will allow his *Apology* to be well done. JOHNSON : Very well done, to be sure, sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark :

"Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand."

BOSWELL : And his plays are good. JOHNSON : Yes ; but that was his trade ; *l'esprit du corps* ; he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then showed me an ode of his

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own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing.¹ I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real.

Mr Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam wood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries." "When I was at Inverary," said he, "on a visit to my old friend, Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said: 'It is then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me; for if I had displeased the Duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

'Off with his head! So much for Aylesbury.'

I was then member for Aylesbury."

Dr Johnson and Mr Wilkes talked of the contested passage in Horace's *Art of Poetry*, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*." Mr Wilkes, according to my note, gave the interpretation thus: "It is difficult to speak with propriety of common things; as, if a poet had to speak of Queen Caroline drinking tea, he must endeavour to avoid the vulgarity of cups and saucers." But upon reading my note, he tells me that he meant to say that "the word *communia*, being a Roman law term, signifies here things *communis juris*, that is to say, what have never yet been treated by anybody; and this appears clearly from what followed:

· Tuque
*Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.*"

¹ See page 264 of Vol. I.

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—You will easier make a tragedy out of *The Iliad* than on any subject not handled before.¹ JOHNSON: He means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done.

WILKES: We have no City Poet now; that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling.

¹ My very pleasant friend himself, as well as others who remember old stories, will no doubt startle, when I observe that John Wilkes here shows himself to be of the Warburtonian School. It is nevertheless true, as appears from Dr Hurd the Bishop of Worcester's very elegant commentary and notes on the *Epistola ad Pisones*.

It is necessary to a fair consideration of the question, that the whole passage in which the words occur should be kept in view:

“*Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis, et audes
Personam formare novam, servetur ad inum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.
Difficile est propriè communia dicere: tuque
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.
Publica materies privati juris erit, si
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem,
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres; nec desilies imitator in artum
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetat aut operis lex.*”

The “Commentary” thus illustrates it: “But the formation of quite new characters is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here there is no generally received and fixed *archetype* to work after, but everyone judges of common right, according to the extent and comprehension of his own idea; therefore he advises to labour and refit old characters and subjects, particularly those made known and authorised by the practice of Homer and the Epic writers.”

The “Note” is:

“*Difficile est propriè communia dicere.*” Lambin's Comment is “*Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata: et ita, quæ cuivis exposita sunt et in medio quodammodo posita, quasi vacua et à nemine occupata.*” And that this is the true meaning of *communis* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque*, which are explanatory of it; so that the sense given it in the commentary, is unquestionably the right one. Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the case, a late critic hath this strange passage: “*Difficile quidem esse propriè communia dicere, hoc est, materiam vulgarem, notam et è medio petitam, ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et scriptori propria*

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Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits. JOHNSON: I suppose, sir, Settle did as well for aldermen in his time, as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?

Mr Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON: Why, sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren.

videatur, ulro concedimus; et maximi procul dubio ponderis ista est observatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficilis, tum venusti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habitâ, major videtur esse gloria formare penitus novam, quam veterem, utcumque mutata, de novo exhibere. (Poet. Præl., v. ii., p. 164.) Where having first put a wrong construction on the word *communia*, he employs it to introduce an impertinent criticism. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old* subjects to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the superior difficulty of the latter, from which he dissuades his countrymen, only in respect of their abilities and inexperience in these matters; and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the Epistle, a spirit of correctness, by sending them to the old subjects, treated by the Greek writers."

For my own part (with all deference for Dr Hurd, who thinks the *case clear*), I consider the passage, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*," to be a *crux* for the critics on Horace.

The explication which my Lord of Worcester treats with so much contempt, is nevertheless countenanced by authority which I find quoted by the learned Baxter, in his edition of Horace: "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere, h. e. res vulgares disertis verbis enarrare, vel humile thema cum dignitate tractare. Difficile est communes res propriis explicare verbis. Vet. Schol.*"

I was much disappointed to find that the great critic, Dr Bentley, has no note upon this very difficult passage, as from his vigorous and illuminated mind I should have expected to receive more satisfaction than I have yet had.

Sanadon thus treats of it: "*Propriè communia dicere; c'est à dire qu'il n'est pas aisé de former à ces personnages d'imagination des caractères particuliers et cependant vraisemblables. Comme l'on a été le maître de les former tels qu'on a voulu, les fautes que l'on fait en cela sont moins pardonnables. C'est pourquoi Horace conseille de prendre toujours des sujets connus tels que sont par exemple ceux que l'on peut tirer des poèmes d'Homère.*"

And Dacier observes upon it: "*Après avoir marqué les deux qualités qu'il faut donner aux personnages qu'on invente, il conseille aux Poètes tragiques, de*

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BOSWELL: Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there. JOHNSON: Why yes, sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home.—All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgment of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of

n'user par trop facilement de cette liberté qu'ils ont d'en inventer, car il est très difficile de réussir dans ces nouveaux caractères. Il est mal aisé, dit Horace, de traiter proprement, c'est à dire convenablement, des sujets communs; c'est à dire, des sujets inventés, et qui n'ont aucun fondement ni dans l'Histoire ni dans la Fable; et il les appelle communs, parce qu'ils sont en disposition à tout le monde, et que tout le monde a le droit de les inventer, et qu'ils sont, comme on dit, au premier occupant." See his observations at large on this expression and the following.

After all, I cannot help entertaining some doubt whether the words, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*" may not have been thrown in by Horace to form a *separate* article in a "choice of difficulties" which a poet has to encounter who chooses a new subject; in which case it must be uncertain which of the various explanations is the true one, and every reader has a right to decide as it may strike his own fancy. And even should the words be understood as they generally are, to be connected both with what goes before and what comes after, the exact sense cannot be absolutely ascertained; for instance, whether *propriè* is meant to signify in an *appropriated manner*, as Dr Johnson here understands it, or, as it is often used by Cicero, with *propriety*, or *elegantly*. In short, it is a rare instance of a defect in perspicuity in an admirable writer who, with almost every species of excellence, is peculiarly remarkable for that quality. The length of this note perhaps requires an apology. Many of my readers, I doubt not, will admit that a critical discussion of a passage in a favourite classic is very engaging.

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the person before judgment is obtained can take place only if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fuge*—WILKES: That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation. JOHNSON (to Mr Wilkes): You must know, sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and showed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London. WILKES: Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me. JOHNSON (smiling): And we ashamed of him.

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction: "You saw Mr Wilkes acquiesced. Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolus Regis*, adding: "I have reason to know something about that officer, for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed*, "a good-humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotic groans somebody (I think the Alderman) said: "Poor Old England is lost." JOHNSON: Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it.¹ WILKES: Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate *Mortimer* to him.

Mr Wilkes held a candle to show a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the

¹ It would not become me to expatiate on this strong and pointed remark, in which a very great deal of meaning is condensed.

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elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards waggishly insisted with me that all the time Johnson showed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who though widely different, had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit, and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*; and pleasantly said, that “there was nothing to equal it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*.”

I attended Dr Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr Wilkes’s company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

I talked a good deal to him of the celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd, whom I had visited, induced by the fame of her talents, address, and irresistible power of fascination. To a lady who disapproved of my visiting her, he said on a former occasion: “Nay, madam, Boswell is in the right; I should have visited her myself, were it not that they have now a trick of putting everything into the newspapers.” This evening he exclaimed: “I envy him his acquaintance with Mrs Rudd.”

I mentioned a scheme which I had of making a tour to the Isle of Man, and giving a full account of it; and that Mr Burke had playfully suggested as a motto:

“The proper study of mankind is MAN.”

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JOHNSON: Sir, you will get more by the book than the jaunt will cost you; so you will have your diversion for nothing, and add to your reputation.

On the evening of the next day I took leave of him, being to set out for Scotland. I thanked him with great warmth for all his kindness. "Sir," said he, "you are very welcome. Nobody repays it with more."

How very false is the notion which has gone round the world of the rough, and passionate, and harsh manners of this great and good man. That he had occasional sallies of heat of temper, and that he was sometimes, perhaps, too "easily provoked" by absurdity and folly, and sometimes too desirous of triumph in colloquial contest, must be allowed. The quickness both of his perception and sensibility disposed him to sudden explosions of satire; to which his extraordinary readiness of wit was a strong and almost irresistible incitement. To adopt one of the finest images in Mr Home's *Douglas*:

On each glance of thought
Decision followed, as the thunderbolt
Pursues the flash! "——

I admit that the beadle within him was often so eager to apply the lash that the judge had not time to consider the case with sufficient deliberation.

That he was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper may be granted: but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand, to knock down everyone who approached him. On the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he was civil, obliging, nay, polite in the true sense of the word; so much so, that many gentlemen, who were long acquainted with him, never received, or even heard, a severe expression from him.

It was, I think, after I had left London this year, that an epitaph, which Dr Johnson had written for the monument of Dr Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey, gave occasion to a

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Remonstrance to the Monarch of Literature, for an account of which I am indebted to Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

That my readers may have the subject more fully and clearly before them, I shall first insert the epitaph :

OLIVARII GOLDSMITH
*Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit :
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator :
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus :
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio
Natus in Hiberniâ Forniæ Longfordiensis
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. M DCC XXXI ;
Eblanæ literis institutus ;
Obiit Londini,
April IV. M DCC LXXXIV.*

Sir William Forbes writes to me thus : “ I enclose the *Round Robin*. This *jeu d’esprit* took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds’s. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance of Dr Goldsmith. The epitaph, written for him by Dr Johnson, became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were suggested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor’s consideration. But the question was, who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*, as the sailors call it, which they make use

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of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to; and Dr Barnard, Dean of Derry, now Bishop of Killaloe, drew up an address to Dr Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing, to which I had the honour to officiate as clerk.

"Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr Johnson, who received it with much good humour,¹ and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen that he would alter the epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it; but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription.*

"I consider this *Round Robin* as a species of literary curiosity worth preserving, as it marks, in a certain degree, Dr Johnson's character."

My readers are presented with a faithful transcript of a paper, which I doubt not of their being desirous to see.

Sir William Forbes's observation is very just. The anecdote now related proves, in the strongest manner, the reverence and awe with which Johnson was regarded by some of the most eminent men of his time in various departments, and even by such of them as lived most with him; while it also confirms what I have again and again inculcated, that he was by no means of that ferocious and irascible character which has been ignorantly imagined.

This hasty composition is also to be remarked as one of a thousand instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Mr Burke; who, while he is equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least; can, with equal facility, embrace

¹ He, however, upon seeing Dr Warton's name to the suggestion that the epitaph should be in English, observed to Sir Joshua: "I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool." Mr Langton, who was one of the company at Sir Joshua's, like a sturdy scholar, resolutely refused to sign the *Round Robin*. The epitaph is engraved upon Dr Goldsmith's monument without any alteration.

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the vast and complicated speculations of politics, or the ingenious topics of literary investigation.

Besides this Latin epitaph, Johnson honoured the memory of his friend Goldsmith with a short one in Greek, which has been obligingly communicated to me by my learned and ingenious friend Dr Percy, the Bishop of Dromore. His lordship procured it from a gentleman in Ireland, who had it from Johnson himself, Mr Archdall, who was educated under Dr Summer, at Harrow :

Τον ταφον εισοράεις Ωλειβεριοιο, κονην
Αφροσι μη σεμνην ξεινε ποδεσσι πατει;
Οισι μεμηλε φυσις, μετρων χαρις, εργα παλαιων
Κλαιετε ποιητην, ιστορικον, φυσικον.

DR JOHNSON to Mrs BOSWELL

MADAM,—You must not think me uncivil in omitting to answer the letter with which you favoured me some time ago. I imagined it to have been written without Mr Boswell's knowledge, and therefore supposed the answer to require, what I could not find, a private conveyance.

The difference with Lord Auchinleck is now over; and since young Alexander has appeared, I hope no more difficulties will arise among you; for I sincerely wish you all happy. Do not teach the young ones to dislike me, as you dislike me yourself; but let me at least have Veronica's kindness, because she is my acquaintance.

You will now have Mr Boswell home; it is well that you have him; he has led a wild life. I have taken him to Lichfield, and he has followed Mr Thrall to Bath. Pray take care of him, and tame him. The only thing in which I have the honour to agree with you is, in loving him; and while we are so much of a mind in a matter of so much importance, our other quarrels will, I hope, produce no great bitterness. I am, Madam, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

May 16, 1776.

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MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, June 25, 1776.

You have formerly complained that my letters were too long. There is no danger of that complaint being made at present; for I find it difficult for me to write to you at all. [Here an account of having been afflicted with a return of melancholy or bad spirits.]

The boxes of books¹ which you sent to me are arrived; but I have not yet examined the contents.

* * * * *

I send you Mr Maclaurin's paper for the negro, who claims his freedom in the Court of Session.

DR JOHNSON to MR BOSWELL

DEAR SIR,—These black fits, of which you complain, perhaps hurt your memory as well as your imagination. When did I complain that your letters were too long?² Your last letter, after a very long delay, brought very bad news. [Here a series of reflections upon melancholy, and—what I could not help thinking strangely unreasonable in him who had suffered so much from it himself—a good deal of severity and reproof, as if it were owing to my own fault, or that I was, perhaps, affecting it from a desire of distinction.]

Read Cheyne's *English Malady*; but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness. * * *

To hear that you have not opened your boxes of books is very offensive. The examination and arrangement of so

¹ Upon a settlement of our account of expenses on our tour to the Hebrides there was a balance due to me, which Dr Johnson chose to discharge by sending books.

² Baretti told me that Johnson complained of my writing very long letters to him when I was upon the Continent, which was most certainly true, but it seems my friend did not remember it.

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many volumes might have afforded you an amusement very seasonable at present, and useful for the whole of life. I am, I confess, very angry that you manage yourself so ill. * * *

I do not now say any more than that I am, with great kindness and sincerity, dear Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

July 2, 1776.

It was last year determined by Lord Mansfield, in the Court of King's Bench, that a negro cannot be taken out of the kingdom without his own consent.

Dr JOHNSON to Mr BOSWELL

DEAR SIR,—I make haste to write again, lest my last letter should give you too much pain. If you are really oppressed with overpowering and involuntary melancholy, you are to be pitied rather than reproached. * * *

Now, my dear Boszy, let us have done with quarrels and with censure. Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many books among them which you need never read through; but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult. Of these books, of which the use is only occasional, it is often sufficient to know the contents, that, when any question arises, you may know where to look for information.

Since I wrote, I have looked over Mr Maclaurin's plea, and think it excellent. How is the suit carried on? If by subscription, I commission you to contribute, in my name, what is proper. Let nothing be wanting in such a case. Dr Drummond,¹ I see, is superseded. His father would

¹ The son of Johnson's old friend, Mr William Drummond. (See Vol. I., p. 352.) He was a young man of such distinguished merit, that he was nominated to one of the medical professorships in the College of Edinburgh, without solicitation, while he was at Naples. Having other views, he did not accept of the honour, and soon afterwards died.

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have grieved; but he lived to obtain the pleasure of his son's election, and died before that pleasure was abated.

Langton's lady has brought him a girl, and both are well; I dined with him the other day. * * *

It vexes me to tell you that on the evening of the 29th of May I was seized by the gout, and am not quite well. The pain has not been violent, but the weakness and tenderness were very troublesome, and what is said to be very uncommon, it has not alleviated my other disorders. Make use of youth and health while you have them; make my compliments to Mrs Boswell. I am, my dear Sir, your most affectionate

SAM. JOHNSON.

July 6, 1776.

MR BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, July 18, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the second of this month was rather a harsh medicine; but I was delighted with that spontaneous tenderness, which, a few days afterwards, sent forth such balsam as your next brought me. I found myself for some time so ill that all I could do was to preserve a decent appearance, while all within was weakness and distress. Like a reduced garrison that has some spirit left, I hung out flags, and planted all the force I could muster, upon the walls. I am now much better, and I sincerely thank you for your kind attention and friendly counsel.

* * * * *

Count Manucci¹ came here last week from travelling in Ireland. I have shown him what civilities I could on his own account, yours, and on that of Mr and Mrs Thrale. He has had a fall from his horse, and been much hurt. I regret this unlucky accident, for he seems to be a very amiable man.

¹ A Florentine nobleman, mentioned by Johnson in his *Notes of his Tour in France*. I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with him in London, in the spring of this year.

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As the evidence of what I have mentioned at the beginning of this year, I select from his private register the following passage :—

“ July 25, 1776. O God, who hast ordained that whatever is to be desired should be sought by labour, and who, by Thy blessing, bringest honest labour to good effect, look with mercy upon my studies and endeavours. Grant me, O Lord, to design only what is lawful and right; and afford me calmness of mind, and steadiness of purpose, that I may so do Thy will in this short life, as to obtain happiness in the world to come, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”¹

It appears from a note subjoined, that this was composed when he “purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues.”

Such a purpose, so expressed, at the age of sixty-seven, is admirable and encouraging; and it must impress all the thinking part of my readers with a consolatory confidence in habitual devotion, when they see a man of such enlarged intellectual powers as Johnson, thus in the genuine earnestness of secrecy, imploring the aid of that Supreme Being, “from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift.”

MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *August 30, 1776.*

[After giving him an account of my having examined the chests of books which he had sent to me, and which contained what may be truly called a numerous and miscellaneous *Stall Library*, thrown together at random :—]

Lord Hailes was against the decree in the case of my client, the minister, not that he justified the minister, but because the parishioner both provoked and retorted. I sent his lordship your able argument upon the case for his perusal. His observation upon it in a letter to me

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 151.

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was: "Dr Johnson's *Suasorium* is pleasantly¹ and artfully composed. I suspect, however, that he has not convinced himself; for I believe that he is better read in ecclesiastical history than to imagine that a bishop or a presbyter has a right to begin censure or discipline *à cathedrâ*." ²

* * * * *

For the honour of Count Manucci, as well as to observe that exactness of truth which you have taught me, I must correct what I said in a former letter. He did not fall from his horse, which might have been an imputation on his skill as an officer of cavalry; his horse fell with him.

I have, since I saw you, read every word of Granger's *Biographical History*. It has entertained me exceedingly, and I do not think him the *Whig* that you supposed. Horace Walpole's being his patron is, indeed, no good sign of his political principles. But he denied to Lord Mountstuart that he was a Whig, and said he had been accused by both parties of partiality. It seems he was like Pope:

"While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory."

I wish you would look more into his book; and as Lord Mountstuart wishes much to find a proper person to continue the work upon Granger's plan, and has desired I would mention it to you if such a man occurs, please to let me know. His lordship will give him generous encouragement.

I again wrote to Dr Johnson on the 21st of October, informing him that my father had, in the most liberal

¹ Why his lordship uses the epithet *pleasantly*, when speaking of a grave piece of reasoning, I cannot conceive. But different men have different notions of pleasantry. I happened to sit by a gentleman one evening at the Opera House in London, who, at the moment when Medea appeared to be in great agony at the thought of killing her children, turned to me with a smile, and said, "*funny enough*."

² Dr Johnson afterwards told me, that he was of opinion that a clergyman had this right.

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manner, paid a large debt for me, and that I had now the happiness of being upon very good terms with him; to which he returned the following answer:—

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I had great pleasure in hearing that you are at last on good terms with your father. Cultivate his kindness by all honest and manly means. Life is but short; no time can be afforded but for the indulgence of real sorrow, or contests upon questions seriously momentous. Let us not throw any of our days away upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry, and best, in the next place, to be quickly reconciled. May you and your father pass the remainder of your time in reciprocal benevolence!

* * * * *

Do you ever hear from Mr Langton? I visit him sometimes, but he does not talk. I do not like his scheme of life; but, as I am not permitted to understand it, I cannot set anything right that is wrong. His children are sweet babies.

I hope my irreconcilable enemy, Mrs Boswell, is well. Desire her not to transmit her malevolence to the young people. Let me have Alexander, and Veronica, and Euphemia, for my friends.

Mrs Williams, whom you may reckon as one of your well-wishers, is in a feeble and languishing state, with little hope of growing better. She went for some part of the autumn into the country, but is little benefited; and Dr Lawrence confesses that his art is at an end. Death is, however, at a distance; and what more than that can we say of ourselves? I am sorry for her pain, and more sorry for her decay. Mr Levett is sound, wind and limb.

I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmston. The place was very dull, and I was not well: the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever

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made. Such an effort annually would give the world a little diversification.

Every year, however, we cannot wander, and must therefore endeavour to spend our time at home as well as we can. I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his *Treatise of Economy*, that if everything be kept in a certain place, when anything is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it leaves will show what is wanting; so if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement.

I have not practised all this prudence myself, but I have suffered much for want of it; and I would have you, by timely recollection and steady resolution, escape from those evils which have lain heavy upon me. I am, my dearest Boswell, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

BOLT COURT, Nov. 16, 1776.

On the 16th of November I informed him that Mr Strahan had sent me *twelve* copies of the *Journey to the Western Islands*, handsomely bound, instead of the *twenty* copies which were stipulated, but which, I supposed, were to be only in sheets; requested to know how they should be distributed; and mentioned that I had another son born to me, who was named David, and was a sickly infant.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have been for some time ill of a cold, which, perhaps, I made an excuse to myself for not writing, when in reality I knew not what to say.

The books you must at last distribute as you think best, in my name, or your own, as you are inclined, or as you judge most proper. Everybody cannot be obliged, but I wish that nobody may be offended. Do the best you can.

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I congratulate you on the increase of your family, and hope that little David is by this time well, and his mamma perfectly recovered. I am much pleased to hear of the re-establishment of kindness between you and your father. Cultivate his paternal tenderness as much as you can. To live at variance at all is uncomfortable; and variance with a father is still more uncomfortable. Besides that, in the whole dispute you have the wrong side; at least you gave the first provocations, and some of them very offensive. Let it now be all over. As you have no reason to think that your new mother has shown you any foul play, treat her with respect, and with some degree of confidence; this will secure your father. When once a discordant family has felt the pleasure of peace, they will not willingly lose it. If Mrs Boswell would but be friends with me, we might now shut the temple of Janus.

What came of Dr Memis's cause? Is the question about the negro determined? Has Sir Allan any reasonable hopes? What is become of poor Macquarry? Let me know the event of all these litigations. I wish particularly well to the negro and Sir Allan.

Mrs Williams has been much out of order; and though she is something better, is likely, in her physician's opinion, to endure her malady for life, though she may, perhaps, die of some other. Mrs Thrale is big, and fancies that she carries a boy; if it were very reasonable to wish much about it, I should wish her not to be disappointed. The desire of male heirs is not appendant only to feudal tenures. A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune; for what can misses do with a brewhouse? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades.

Baretti went away from Thrale's in some whimsical fit of disgust, or ill-nature, without taking any leave. It is well if he finds in any other place as good a habitation, and as many conveniences. He has got five-and-twenty guineas by translating Sir Joshua's *Discourses* into Italian,

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and Mr Thrale gave him a hundred in the spring ; so that he is yet in no difficulties.

Colman has bought Foote's patent, and is to allow Foote for life sixteen hundred pounds a year, as Reynolds told me, and to allow him to play so often on such terms that he may gain four hundred pounds more. What Colman can get by this bargain, but trouble and hazard, I do not see. I am, dear Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Dec. 21, 1776.

The Reverend Dr Hugh Blair, who had long been admired as a preacher at Edinburgh, thought now of diffusing his excellent sermons more extensively, and increasing his reputation, by publishing a collection of them. He transmitted the manuscript to Mr Strahan, the printer, who, after keeping it for some time, wrote a letter to him, discouraging the publication. Such at first was the unpropitious state of one of the most successful theological books that has ever appeared. Mr Strahan, however, had sent one of the sermons to Dr Johnson for his opinion ; and after his unfavourable letter to Dr Blair had been sent off, he received from Johnson, on Christmas Eve, a note in which was the following paragraph :—

“ I have read over Dr Blair's first sermon with more than approbation ; to say it is good, is to say too little.”

I believe Mr Strahan had very soon after this time a conversation with Dr Johnson concerning them, and then he very candidly wrote again to Dr Blair, enclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing to purchase the volume, for which he and Mr Cadell gave one hundred pounds. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the public so high, that to their honour be it recorded the proprietors made Dr Blair a present first of one sum, and afterwards of another, of fifty pounds, thus voluntarily doubling the stipulated price ; and when he prepared another volume they gave him at once three hundred pounds, being in all

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five hundred pounds, by an agreement to which I am a subscribing witness; and now for a third octavo volume he has received no less than six hundred pounds.

1777. *Ætat.* 68. In 1777, it appears from his *Prayers and Meditations*, that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed," and from that constitutional gloom, which, together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unfavourable a medium. It may be said of him, that he "saw God in clouds." Certain we may be of his injustice to himself in the following lamentable paragraph, which it is painful to think came from the contrite heart of this great man, to whose labours the world is so much indebted: "When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies."¹ But we find his devotions in this year eminently fervent, and we are comforted by observing intervals of quiet, composure and gladness.

On Easter Day we find the following emphatic prayer:—"Almighty and most merciful Father, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me, and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursion of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which Thy providence shall appoint me; and so help me, by Thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve Thee with pure affection and a cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me; years and infirmities oppress me, terror and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me, my Creator and my Judge. In all perplexities relieve and free me; and so help me by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of Thy Son our Saviour Jesus

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 155.

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Christ, as that when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for His sake, be received to everlasting happiness. Amen.”¹

While he was at church the agreeable impressions upon his mind are thus commemorated: “I was for some time much distressed, but at last obtained, I hope from the God of Peace, more quiet than I have enjoyed for a long time. I had made no resolution, but as my heart grew lighter, my hopes revived, and my courage increased; and I wrote with my pencil in my Common Prayer Book:

*‘Vita ordinanda.
Biblia legenda.
Theologiæ opera danda.
Serviendum et letandum.’”*

Mr Steevens, whose generosity is well known, joined Dr Johnson in kind assistance to a female relation of Dr Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentic particulars of the life of her celebrated relation. Concerning her there is the following letter:—

To GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—You will be glad to hear that from Mrs Goldsmith, whom we lamented as drowned, I have received a letter full of gratitude to us all, with promise to make the inquiries which we recommended to her.

I would have had the honour of conveying this intelligence to Miss Caulfield, but that her letter is not at hand, and I know not the direction. You will tell the good news. I am, Sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

February 25, 1777.

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 158.

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MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Feb. 14, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,—My state of epistolary accounts with you at present is extraordinary. The balance, as to number, is on your side. I am indebted to you for two letters: one dated the 16th of November, upon which very day I wrote to you, so that our letters were exactly exchanged; and one dated the 21st of December last.

My heart was warmed with gratitude by the truly kind contents of both of them; and it is amazing and vexing that I have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to you. But delay is inherent in me, by nature or by bad habit. I waited till I should have an opportunity of paying you my compliments on a new year. I have procrastinated till the year is no longer new.

* * * * *

Dr Memis's cause was determined against him, with 40l. costs. The Lord President, and two other of the judges, dissented from the majority upon this ground—that although there may have been no intention to injure him by calling him *Doctor of Medicine*, instead of *Physician*, yet as he remonstrated against the designation before the charter was printed off, and represented that it was disagreeable and even hurtful to him, it was ill-natured to refuse to alter it, and let him have the designation to which he was certainly entitled. My own opinion is, that our court has judged wrong. The defendants were *in malâ fide*, to persist in naming him in a way that he disliked. You remember poor Goldsmith, when he grew important and wished to appear *Doctor Major*, could not bear your calling him *Goldy*. Would it not have been wrong to have named him so in your Preface to Shakspeare, or in any serious permanent writing of any sort? The difficulty is, whether an action should be allowed on such petty wrongs. *De minimis non curat lex*.

The Negro cause is not yet decided. A memorial is

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preparing on the side of slavery. I shall send you a copy as soon as it is printed. Maclaurin is made happy by your approbation of his memorial for the black.

Macquarry was here in the winter, and we passed an evening together. The sale of his estate cannot be prevented.

Sir Allan Maclean's suit against the Duke of Argyle, for recovering the ancient inheritance of his family, is now fairly before all our judges. I spoke for him yesterday, and Maclaurin to-day; Crosbie spoke to-day against him. Three more counsel are to be heard, and next week the cause will be determined. I send you the *Informations* or *Cases* on each side, which I hope you will read. You said to me, when we were under Sir Allan's hospitable roof, "I will help him with my pen." You said it with a generous glow; and though his Grace of Argyle did afterwards mount you upon an excellent horse, upon which "you looked like a bishop," you must not swerve from your purpose at Inchkenneth. I wish you may understand the points at issue, amidst our Scotch law principles and phrases.

[Here followed a full state of the case, in which I endeavoured to make it as clear as I could to an Englishman, who had no knowledge of the formularies and technical language of the law of Scotland.]

I shall inform you how the cause is decided here. But as it may be brought under the review of our judges, and is certainly to be carried by appeal to the House of Lords, the assistance of such a mind as yours will be of consequence. Your paper on *Vicious Intromission* is a noble proof of what you can do even in Scotch law.

* * * * *

I have not yet distributed all your books. Lord Hailes and Lord Monboddo have each received one, and return you thanks. Monboddo dined with me lately, and having drank tea, we were a good while by ourselves, and as I knew that he had read the *Journey* superficially, as he did not talk of it as I wished, I brought it to him, and read aloud several passages, and then he talked so, that I told him he

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was to have a copy *from the author*. He begged *that* might be marked on it.

* * * * *

I ever am, my dear Sir, your most faithful and affectionate humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Sir ALEXANDER DICK to Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

PRESTONFIELD, Feb. 17, 1777.

SIR,—I had yesterday the honour of receiving your book of your *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, which you was so good as to send me, by the hands of our mutual friend, Mr Boswell, of Auchinleck; for which I return you my most hearty thanks; and after carefully reading it over again, shall deposit it in my little collection of choice books, next our worthy friend's *Journey to Corsica*. As there are many things to admire in both performances, I have often wished that no Travels or Journeys should be published but those undertaken by persons of integrity and capacity to judge well, and describe faithfully, and in good language, the situation, condition, and manners of the countries past through. Indeed our country of Scotland, in spite of the union of the crowns, is still in most places so devoid of clothing, or cover from hedges and plantations, that it was well you gave your readers a sound *monitoire* with respect to that circumstance. The truths you have told, and the purity of the language in which they are expressed, as your *Journey* is universally read, may and already appear to have a very good effect. For a man of my acquaintance, who has the largest nursery for trees and hedges in this country, tells me that of late the demand upon him for these articles is doubled, and sometimes tripled. I have, therefore, listed Dr Samuel Johnson in some of my memorandums of the principal planters and favourers of the enclosures, under a name which I took the liberty to invent from the Greek, *Papadendriou*. Lord Auchinleck and some few more are

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of the list. I am told that one gentleman in the shire of Aberdeen, viz. Sir Archibald Grant, has planted above fifty millions of trees on a piece of very wild ground at Monimusk: I must inquire if he has fenced them well, before he enters my list; for that is the soul of enclosing. I began myself to plant a little, our ground being too valuable for much, and that is now fifty years ago; and the trees, now in my seventy-fourth year, I look up to with reverence, and show them to my eldest son, now in his fifteenth year, that they are full the height of my country house here, where I had the pleasure of receiving you, and hope again to have that satisfaction with our mutual friend, Mr Boswell. I shall always continue with the truest esteem, dear Doctor, your much obliged, and obedient humble servant,

ALEXANDER DICK.¹

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—It is so long since I heard anything from you,² that I am not easy about it; write something to me next post. When you sent your last letter everything seemed to be mending; I hope nothing has lately grown worse. I suppose young Alexander continues to thrive, and Veronica is now very pretty company. I do not suppose the lady is yet reconciled to me, yet let her know that I love her very well, and value her very much.

Dr Blair is printing some sermons. If they are all like the first, which I have read, they are *sermones aurei, ac auro magis aurei*. It is excellently written both as to doctrine and language. Mr Watson's book³ seems to be much esteemed.

* * * * *

Poor Beauclerk still continues very ill. Langton lives on

¹ For a character of this very amiable man, see *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 36.

² By the then course of the post, my long letter of the 14th had not yet reached him.

³ *History of Philip the Second*.

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as he is used to do. His children are very pretty, and, I think, his lady loses her Scotch. Paoli I never see.

I have been so distressed by difficulty of breathing that I lost, as was computed, six-and-thirty ounces of blood in a few days. I am better, but not well.

I wish you would be vigilant and get me Graham's *Telemachus* that was printed at Glasgow, a very little book, and *Johnstoni Poemata*, another little book, printed at Middleburg.

Mrs Williams sends her compliments, and promises that when you come hither she will accommodate you as well as ever she can in the old room. She wishes to know whether you sent her book to Sir Alexander Gordon.

My dear Boswell, do not neglect to write to me, for your kindness is one of the pleasures of my life, which I should be very sorry to lose. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Feb. 18, 1777.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Feb. 24, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter dated the 18th instant, I had the pleasure to receive last post. Although my late long neglect, or rather delay, was truly culpable, I am tempted not to regret it, since it has produced me so valuable a proof of your regard. I did, indeed, during that inexcusable silence, sometimes divert the reproaches of my own mind, by fancying that I should hear again from you, inquiring with some anxiety about me, because, for aught you knew, I might have been ill.

You are pleased to show me that my kindness is of some consequence to you. My heart is elated at the thought. Be assured, my dear sir, that my affection and reverence for you are exalted and steady. I do not believe that a more perfect attachment ever existed in the history of mankind.

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And it is a noble attachment, for the attractions are Genius, Learning, and Piety.

Your difficulty of breathing alarms me, and brings into my imagination an event, which although in the natural course of things, I must expect at some period, I cannot view with composure.

* * * * *

My wife is much honoured by what you say of her. She begs you may accept of her best compliments. She is to send you some marmalade of oranges of her own making.

* * * * *

I ever am, my dear Sir, your most obliged and faithful humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have been much pleased with your late letter, and am glad that my old enemy, Mrs Boswell, begins to feel some remorse. As to Miss Veronica's Scotch, I think it cannot be helped. An English maid you might easily have; but she would still imitate the greater number, as they would be likewise those whom she must most respect. Her dialect will not be gross. Her mamma has not much Scotch, and you have yourself very little. I hope she knows my name, and does not call me *Johnston*.

The immediate cause of my writing is this: One Shaw, who seems a modest and a decent man, has written an Erse Grammar, which a very learned Highlander, Macbean, has, at my request, examined and approved.

The book is very little, but Mr Shaw has been persuaded by his friends to set it at half-a-guinea, though I had advised only a crown, and thought myself liberal. You, whom the author considers as a great encourager of ingenious men, will receive a parcel of his proposals and receipts. I have undertaken to give you notice of them, and to solicit your countenance. You must ask no

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poor man, because the price is really too high. Yet such a work deserves patronage.

It is proposed to augment our club from twenty to thirty, of which I am glad; for as we have several in it whom I do not much like to consort with,¹ I am for reducing it to a mere miscellaneous collection of conspicuous men, without any determinate character. * * * I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

SAM. JOHNSON.

March 11, 1777.

My respects to Madam, to Veronica, to Alexander, to Euphemia, to David.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *April 4, 1777.*

[After informing him of the death of my little son David, and that I could not come to London this spring:—]

I think it hard that I should be a whole year without seeing you. May I presume to petition for a meeting with you in the autumn? You have, I believe, seen all the cathedrals in England, except that of Carlisle. If you are to be with Dr Taylor, at Ashbourne, it would not be a great journey to come thither. We may pass a few most agreeable days there by ourselves, and I will accompany you a good part of the way to the southward again. Pray think of this.

You forget that Mr Shaw's Erse Grammar was put into your hands by myself last year. Lord Eglintoune put it into mine. I am glad that Mr Macbean approves of it. I have received Mr Shaw's Proposals for its publication, which I can perceive are written *by the hand of a MASTER.*

* * * * *

Pray get for me all the editions of Walton's *Lives*. I have a notion that the republication of them with Notes will fall upon me, between Dr Horne and Lord Hailes.

¹ On account of their differing from him as to religion and politics.

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Mr Shaw's Proposals † for *An Analysis of the Scotch Celtic Language* were thus illuminated by the pen of Johnson :

“ Though the Erse dialect of the Celtic language has, from the earliest times, been spoken in Britain, and still subsists in the northern parts and adjacent islands, yet, by the negligence of a people rather warlike than lettered, it has hitherto been left to the caprice and judgment of every speaker, and has floated in the living voice, without the steadiness of analogy or direction of rules. An Erse Grammar is an addition to the stores of literature; and its author hopes for the indulgence always shown to those that attempt to do what was never done before. If his work shall be found defective, it is at least all his own: he is not like other grammarians, a compiler or transcriber; what he delivers, he has learned by attentive observation among his countrymen, who perhaps will be themselves surprised to see that speech reduced to principles, which they have used only by imitation.

The use of this book will, however, not be confined to the mountains and islands; it will afford a pleasing and important subject of speculation to those whose studies lead them to trace the affinity of languages, and the migrations of the ancient races of mankind.”

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

GLASGOW, April 24, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,—Our worthy friend Thrale's death having appeared in the newspapers, and been afterwards contradicted, I have been placed in a state of very uneasy uncertainty, from which I hoped to be relieved by you: but my hopes have as yet been vain. How could you omit to write to me on such an occasion? I shall wait with anxiety.

I am going to Auchinleck to stay a fortnight with my father. It is better not to be there very long at one time. But frequent renewals of attention are agreeable to him.

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Pray tell me about this edition of *The English Poets*, "with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each author, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D.," which I see advertised. I am delighted with the prospect of it. Indeed I am happy to feel that I am capable of being so much delighted with literature. But is not the charm of this publication chiefly owing to the *magnum nomen* in the front of it?

What do you say of Lord Chesterfield's *Memoirs* and last *Letters*?

My wife has made marmalade of oranges for you. I left her and my daughters and Alexander all well yesterday. I have taught Veronica to speak of you thus—Dr Johnson, not Johnston. I remain, my dear Sir, your most affectionate and obliged humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—The story of Mr Thrale's death, as he had neither been sick nor in any other danger, made so little impression upon me, that I never thought about obviating its effects on anybody else. It is supposed to have been produced by the English custom of making April fools, that is, of sending one another on some foolish errand on the first of April.

Tell Mrs Boswell that I shall taste her marmalade cautiously at first, *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. Beware, says the Italian proverb, of a reconciled enemy. But when I find it does me no harm, I shall then receive it and be thankful for it, as a pledge of firm, and, I hope, of unalterable kindness. She is, after all, a dear, dear lady.

Please to return Dr Blair thanks for his sermons. The Scotch write English wonderfully well.

* * * * *

Your frequent visits to Auchinleck and your short stay there are very laudable and very judicious. Your present

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concord with your father gives me great pleasure ; it was all that you seemed to want.

My health is very bad, and my nights are very unquiet. What can I do to mend them? I have for this summer nothing better in prospect than a journey into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, perhaps with Oxford and Birmingham in my way.

Make my compliments to Miss Veronica ; I must leave it to *her* philosophy to comfort you for the loss of little David. You must remember that to keep three out of four is more than your share. Mrs Thrale has but four out of eleven.

I am engaged to write little Lives, and little Prefaces, to a little edition of the *English Poets*. I think I have persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson, and if you could give me some information about him, for the *Life* which we have is very scanty, I should be glad. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

May 3, 1777.

To those who delight in tracing the progress of works of literature, it will be an entertainment to compare the limited design with the ample execution of that admirable performance, *The Lives of the English Poets*, which is the richest, most beautiful, and indeed most perfect production of his pen. His notion of it at this time appears in the preceding letter. He has a memorandum in this year, "29 May, Easter Eve, I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long."¹ The bargain was concerning that undertaking, but his tender conscience seems alarmed lest it should have intruded too much on his devout preparation for the solemnity of the ensuing day. But, indeed, very little time was necessary for Johnson's concluding a treaty with the booksellers ; as he had, I believe, less attention to profit from his labours than any man to whom literature has been

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 155.

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*Wm. John Johnson, Wm. Donald of Kingsburgh
James Burnett, John, Wm. Donald Esquires*

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a profession. I shall here insert from a letter to me from my late worthy friend Mr Edward Dilly, though of a later date, an account of this plan so happily conceived; since it was the occasion of procuring for us an elegant collection of the best biography and criticism of which our language can boast.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

SOUTHILL, *Sept.* 26, 1777.

DEAR SIR,—You will find by this letter, that I am still in the same calm retreat, from the noise and bustle of London, as when I wrote to you last. I am happy to find you had such an agreeable meeting with your old friend Dr Johnson; I have no doubt your stock is much increased by the interview: few men, nay, I may say, scarcely any man has got that fund of knowledge and entertainment as Dr Johnson in conversation. When he opens freely, everyone is attentive to what he says, and cannot fail of improvement as well as pleasure.

The edition of the *Poets* now printing will do honour to the English press, and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to anything that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the *Poets*, printing by the Martins, at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell, in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small that many persons could not read them; not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London booksellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion, and, on consulting together,

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agreed that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together; and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of *The English Poets* should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author by Dr Samuel Johnson; and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the Lives, viz. T. Davies, Strahan and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own: he mentioned two hundred guineas: it was immediately agreed to; and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, viz. Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, etc. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, etc., so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authorship, editorship, engravings, etc., etc. My brother will give you a list of the poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them: the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence. I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

EDWARD DILLY.

I shall afterwards have occasion to consider the extensive and varied range which Johnson took when he was once led upon ground which he trod with a peculiar delight, having long been intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of it that could interest and please.

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Dr JOHNSON to CHARLES O'CONOR, Esq.¹

SIR,—Having had the pleasure of conversing with Dr Campbell about your character and your literary undertaking, I am resolved to gratify myself by renewing a correspondence which began and ended a great while ago, and ended, I am afraid, by my fault; a fault which, if you have not forgotten it, you must now forgive.

If I have ever disappointed you, give me leave to tell you that you have likewise disappointed me. I expected great discoveries in Irish antiquity, and large publications in the Irish language; but the world still remains as it was, doubtful and ignorant. What the Irish language is in itself, and to what languages it has affinity, are very interesting questions; which every man wishes to see resolved, that has any philological or historical curiosity. Dr Leland begins his history too late: the ages which deserve an exact inquiry are those times (for such there were) when Ireland was the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects. Set about it, therefore, if you can: do what you can easily do without anxious exactness. Lay the foundation, and leave the superstructure to posterity. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

May 19, 1777.

Early in this year came out, in two volumes quarto, the posthumous works of the learned Dr Zachary Pearce,

¹ Mr Walker, of the Treasury, Dublin, who obligingly communicated to me this and a former letter from Dr Johnson to the same gentleman (for which see Vol. I., pp. 211, 212), writes to me as follows:—"Perhaps it would gratify you to have some account of Mr O'Connor. He is an amiable, learned, venerable old gentleman, of an independent fortune, who lives at Belanagar, in the county of Roscommon; he is an admired writer, and Member of the Irish Academy." The above Letter is alluded to in the Preface to the 2nd edit. of his *Dissert.*, p. 3.

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Bishop of Rochester; being *A Commentary, with Notes, on the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles*, with other theological pieces. Johnson had now an opportunity of making a grateful return to that excellent prelate, who, we have seen, was the only person who gave him any assistance in the compilation of his *Dictionary*. The Bishop had left some account of his life and character, written by himself. To this Johnson made some valuable additions,† and also furnished to the editor, the Reverend Mr Derby, a Dedication,† which I shall here insert, both because it will appear at this time with peculiar propriety, and because it will tend to propagate and increase that “fervour of *Loyalty*” which in me, who boast of the name of Tory, is not only a principle but a passion.

To THE KING

SIR,—I presume to lay before your Majesty the last labours of a learned Bishop, who died in the toils and duties of his calling. He is now beyond the reach of all earthly honours and rewards; and only the hope of inciting others to imitate him makes it now fit to be remembered that he enjoyed in his life the favour of your Majesty.

The tumultuary life of Princes seldom permits them to survey the wide extent of national interest, without losing sight of private merit, to exhibit qualities which may be imitated by the highest and the humblest of mankind; and to be at once amiable and great.

Such characters, if now and then they appear in history, are contemplated with admiration. May it be the ambition of all your subjects to make haste with their tribute of reverence; and as posterity may learn from your Majesty how Kings should live, may they learn, likewise, from your people, how they should be honoured. I am, may it please your Majesty, with the most profound respect, your Majesty's most dutiful and devoted subject and servant.

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In the summer he wrote a Prologue * which was spoken before *A Word to the Wise*, a comedy by Mr Hugh Kelly, which had been brought upon the stage in 1770; but its design being supposed favourable to the ministry, it fell a sacrifice to popular fury, and, in the playhouse phrase, was *damned*. By the generosity of Mr Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, it was now exhibited for one night, for the benefit of the author's widow and children. To conciliate the favour of the audience was the intention of Johnson's Prologue, which, as it is not long, I shall here insert, as a proof that his poetical talents were in no degree impaired :

“ This night presents a play, which public rage,
Or right or wrong, once hooted from the stage :
From zeal, or malice, now no more we dread,
For English vengeance *wars not with the dead*.
A generous foe regards with pitying eye
The man whom Fate has laid where all must lie.
To wit, reviving from its author's dust,
Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just :
Let no renew'd hostilities invade
Th'oblivious grave's inviolable shade.
Let one great payment every claim appease,
And him who cannot hurt, allow to please ;
To please by scenes, unconscious of offence,
By harmless merriment, or useful sense.
Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
Approve it only—'tis too late to praise.
If want of skill or want of care appear,
Forbear to hiss ;—the poet cannot hear.
By all, like him, must praise and blame be found,
At last, a fleeting gleam, or empty sound.
Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night,
When liberal pity dignified delight ;
When pleasure fir'd her torch at virtue's flame,
And mirth was bounty with an humbler name.”

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A circumstance which could not fail to be very pleasing to Johnson occurred this year. The tragedy of *Sir Thomas Overbury*, written by his early companion in London, Richard Savage, was brought out with alterations at Drury Lane Theatre. The Prologue to it was written by Mr Richard Brinsley Sheridan; in which, after describing very pathetically the wretchedness of

“ Ill-fated Savage, at whose birth was giv’n
No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heav’n,”

he concluded with an elegant compliment to Johnson on his *Dictionary*, that wonderful performance which cannot be too often or too highly praised; of which Mr Harris, in his *Philological Inquiries*,¹ justly and liberally observes: “ Such is its merit, that our language does not possess a more copious, learned, and valuable work.” The concluding lines of this Prologue were these:

“ So pleads the tale * that gives to future times
The son’s misfortunes and the parent’s crimes;
There shall his fame (if own’d to-night) survive,
Fix’d by THE HAND THAT BIDS OUR LANGUAGE LIVE.”

Mr Sheridan here at once did honour to his taste and to his liberality of sentiment, by showing that he was not prejudiced from the unlucky difference which had taken place between his worthy father and Dr Johnson. I have already mentioned, that Johnson was very desirous of reconciliation with old Mr Sheridan. It will, therefore, not seem at all surprising that he was zealous in acknowledging the brilliant merit of his son. While it had as yet been displayed only in the drama, Johnson proposed him as a member of the Literary Club, observing that “ He who has written the two best comedies of his age, is surely a considerable

¹ Part I., chap. iv.

² *Life of Richard Savage*, by Dr Johnson.

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man." And he had, accordingly, the honour to be elected ; for an honour it undoubtedly must be allowed to be, when it is considered of whom that society consists, and that a single black ball excludes a candidate.

MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

June 9, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,—For the health of my wife and children I have taken the little country house at which you visited my uncle, Dr Boswell, who, having lost his wife, is gone to live with his son. We took possession of our villa about a week ago ; we have a garden of three-quarters of an acre, well stocked with fruit-trees and flowers, and gooseberries and currants, and pease and beans, and cabbages, etc., etc., and my children are quite happy. I now write to you in a little study, from the window of which I see around me a verdant grove, and beyond it the lofty mountain, called Arthur's Seat.

Your last letter, in which you desire me to send you some additional information concerning Thomson, reached me very fortunately just as I was going to Lanark, to put my wife's two nephews, the young Campbells, to school there, under the care of Mr Thomson, the master of it, whose wife is sister to the author of *The Seasons*. She is an old woman, but her memory is very good ; and she will with pleasure give me for you every particular that you wish to know, and she can tell. Pray then take the trouble to send me such questions as may lead to biographical materials. You say that the *Life* which we have of Thomson is scanty. Since I received your letter I have read his *Life*, published under the name of Cibber, but, as you told me, really written by a Mr Shiels ; that written by Dr Murdoch ; one prefixed to an edition of *The Seasons*, published at Edinburgh, which is compounded of both, with the addition of an anecdote of Quin's relieving Thomson from prison ; the abridgment of Murdoch's *Life* of him, in the *Biographia Britannica*, and

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another abridgment of it in the *Biographical Dictionary*, enriched with Dr Joseph Warton's critical panegyric on *The Seasons* in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*: from all these it appears to me that we have a pretty full account of this poet. However, you will, I doubt not, show me many blanks, and I shall do what can be done to have them filled up. As Thomson never returned to Scotland (which *you* will think very wise), his sister can speak from her own knowledge only as to the early part of his life. She has some letters from him, which may probably give light as to his more advanced progress, if she will let us see them, which I suppose she will. I believe George Lewis Scott and Dr Armstrong are now his only surviving companions while he lived in and about London; and they, I dare say, can tell more of him than is yet known. My own notion is, that Thomson was a much coarser man than his friends are willing to acknowledge. His *Seasons* are indeed full of elegant and pious sentiments: but a rank soil, nay, a dunghill, will produce beautiful flowers.

Your edition of the *English Poets* will be very valuable, on account of the "Prefaces and Lives." But I have seen a specimen of an edition of the *Poets* at the Apollo press, at Edinburgh, which, for excellence in printing and engraving, highly deserves a liberal encouragement.

Most sincerely do I regret the bad health and bad rest with which you have been afflicted; and I hope you are better. I cannot believe that the Prologue which you generously gave to Mr Kelly's widow and children the other day is the effusion of one in sickness and in disquietude: but external circumstances are never sure indications of the state of man. I send you a letter which I wrote to you two years ago at Wilton; and did not send at the time for fear of being reproved as indulging too much tenderness; and one written to you at the Tomb of Melancthon, which I kept back, lest I should appear at once too superstitious and too enthusiastic. I now imagine that perhaps they may please you.

You do not take the least notice of my proposal for our

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meeting at Carlisle. Though I have meritoriously refrained from visiting London this year, I ask you if it would not be wrong that I should be two years without having the benefit of your conversation, when, if you come down as far as Derbyshire, we may meet at the expense of a few days' journeying, and not many pounds. I wish you to see Carlisle, which made me mention that place. But if you have not a desire to complete your tour of the English cathedrals, I will take a larger share of the road between this place and Ashbourne. So tell me *where* you will fix for our passing a few days by ourselves. Now don't cry "foolish fellow," or "idle dog." Chain your humour, and let your kindness play.

You will rejoice to hear that Miss Macleod, of Rasay, is married to Colonel Mure Campbell, an excellent man, with a pretty good estate of his own, and the prospect of having the Earl of Loudoun's fortune and honours. Is not this a noble lot for our fair Hebridean? How happy am I that she is to be in Ayrshire. We shall have the Laird of Rasay, and old Malcolm, and I know not how many gallant Macleods, and bagpipes, etc., etc., at Auchinleck. Perhaps you may meet them all there.

Without doubt you have read what is called *The Life of David Hume*, written by himself, with the letter from Dr Adam Smith subjoined to it. Is not this an age of daring effrontery? My friend Mr Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow, at whose house you and I supped, and to whose care Mr Windham, of Norfolk, was entrusted at that University, paid me a visit lately; and after we had talked with indignation and contempt of the poisonous productions with which this age is infested, he said there was now an excellent opportunity for Dr Johnson to step forth. I agreed with him that you might knock Hume's and Smith's heads together, and make vain and ostentatious infidelity exceedingly ridiculous. Would it not be worth your while to crush such noxious weeds in the moral garden?

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You have said nothing to me of Dr Dodd. I know not how you think on that subject; though the newspapers give us a saying of yours in favour of mercy to him. But I own I am very desirous that the royal prerogative of remission of punishment, should be employed to exhibit an illustrious instance of the regard which God's Vicegerent will ever show to piety and virtue. If for ten righteous men the Almighty would have spared Sodom, shall not a thousand acts of goodness done by Dr Dodd counterbalance one crime? Such an instance would do more to encourage goodness, than his execution would do to deter from vice. I am not afraid of any bad consequence to society; for who will persevere for a long course of years in a distinguished discharge of religious duties, with a view to commit a forgery with impunity?

Pray make my best compliments acceptable to Mr and Mrs Thrale, by assuring them of my hearty joy that the *Master* as you call him is alive. I hope I shall often taste his Champagne—soberly.

I have not heard from Langton for a long time. I suppose he is as usual,

“Studious the busy moments to deceive.”

* * * * *

I remain, my dear Sir, your most affectionate and faithful humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

On the 23rd of June, I again wrote to Dr Johnson, enclosing a shipmaster's receipt for a jar of marmalade of oranges, and a large packet of Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland*.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have just received your packet from Mr Thrale's, but have not daylight enough to look much into it.

THE LIFE OF DR JOHNSON

I am glad that I have credit enough with Lord Hailes to be trusted with more copy. I hope to take more care of it than of the last. I return Mrs Boswell my affectionate thanks for her present, which I value as a token of reconciliation.

Poor Dodd was put to death yesterday, in opposition to the recommendation of the jury—the petition of the city of London—and a subsequent petition signed by three-and-twenty thousand hands. Surely the voice of the public, when it calls so loudly, and calls only for mercy, ought to be heard.

The saying that was given me in the papers I never spoke ; but I wrote many of his petitions, and some of his letters. He applied to me very often. He was, I am afraid, long flattered with hopes of life ; but I had no part in the dreadful delusion ; for as soon as the King had signed his sentence I obtained from Mr Chamier an account of the disposition of the court towards him, with a declaration that there was *no hope even of a respite*. This letter immediately was laid before Dodd ; but he believed those whom he wished to be right, as it is thought, till within three days of his end. He died with pious composure and resolution. I have just seen the Ordinary that attended him. His Address to his fellow-convicts offended the Methodists ; but he had a Moravian with him much of his time. His moral character is very bad : I hope all is not true that is charged upon him. Of his behaviour in prison an account will be published.

I give you joy of your country house, and your pretty garden ; and hope some time to see you in your felicity. I was much pleased with your two letters that had been kept so long in store¹ ; and rejoice at Miss Rasay's advancement, and wish Sir Allan success.

¹ Since they have been so much honoured by Dr Johnson I shall here insert them :

To Mr SAMUEL JOHNSON

MY EVER DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED SIR,—You know my solemn enthusiasm of mind. You love me for it, and I respect myself for it, because in so far I resemble Mr Johnson. You will be agreeably surprised when you

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I hope to meet you somewhere towards the north, but am loath to come quite to Carlisle. Can we not meet at Manchester? But we will settle it in some other letters.

Mr Seward,¹ a great favourite at Streatham, has been, learn the reason of my writing this letter. I am at Wittemberg in Saxony. I am in the old church where the Reformation was first preached, and where some of the reformers lie interred. I cannot resist the serious pleasure of writing to Mr Johnson from the Tomb of Melancthon. My paper rests upon the grave-stone of that great and good man, who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the reformers. He wished to reform abuses which had been introduced into the Church; but had no private resentment to gratify. So mild was he, that when his aged mother consulted him with anxiety on the perplexing disputes of the times, he advised her "to keep to the old religion." At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend! I vow to thee an eternal attachment. It shall be my study to do what I can to render your life happy; and, if you die before me, I shall endeavour to do honour to your memory; and, elevated by the remembrance of you, persist in noble piety. May God, the Father of all beings, ever bless you! and may you continue to love your most affectionate friend, and devoted servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Sunday, Sept. 30, 1764.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

WILTON HOUSE, April 22, 1775.

MY DEAR SIR,—Every scene of my life confirms the truth of what you have told me—"there is no certain happiness in this state of being." I am here, amidst all that you know is at Lord Pembroke's; and yet I am weary and gloomy. I am just setting out for the house of an old friend in Devonshire, and shall not get back to London for a week yet. You said to me last Good Friday, with a cordiality that warmed my heart, that if I came to settle in London, we should have a day fixed every week, to meet by ourselves and talk freely. To be thought worthy of such a privilege cannot but exalt me. During my present absence from you, while, notwithstanding the gaiety which you allow me to possess, I am darkened by temporary clouds, I beg to have a few lines from you; a few lines merely of kindness, as a *viaticum* till I see you again. In your *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and in Parnell's *Contentment*, I find the only sure means of enjoying happiness; or, at least, the hopes of happiness. I ever am, with reverence and affection, most faithfully yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

¹ William Seward, Esq., well known to a numerous and valuable acquaintance for his literature, love of the fine arts, and social virtues. I am indebted to him for several communications concerning Johnson.

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I think, enkindled by our travels, with a curiosity to see the Highlands. I have given him letters to you and Beattie. He desires that a lodging may be taken for him at Edinburgh, against his arrival. He is just setting out.

Langton has been exercising the militia. Mrs Williams is, I fear, declining. Dr Lawrence says he can do no more. She is gone to summer in the country, with as many conveniences about her as she can expect ; but I have no great hope. We must all die : may we all be prepared !

I suppose Miss Boswell reads her book, and young Alexander takes to his learning. Let me hear about them ; for everything that belongs to you belongs in a more remote degree, and not, I hope, very remote, to, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

SAM. JOHNSON.

June 28, 1777.

To the Same

DEAR SIR,—This gentleman is a great favourite at Streatham, and therefore you will easily believe that he has very valuable qualities. Our narrative has kindled him with a desire of visiting the Highlands, after having already seen a great part of Europe. You must receive him as a friend, and when you have directed him to the curiosities of Edinburgh, give him instructions and recommendations for the rest of his journey. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

June 24, 1777.

Johnson's benevolence to the unfortunate was, I am confident, as steady and active as that of any of those who have been most eminently distinguished for that virtue. Innumerable proofs of it I have no doubt will be for ever concealed from mortal eyes. We may, however, form some judgment of it from the many and very various instances which have been discovered. One which happened in the

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course of this summer is remarkable from the name and connection of the person who was the object of it. The circumstance to which I allude is ascertained by two letters, one to Mr Langton, and another to the Reverend Dr Vyse, Rector of Lambeth, son of the respectable clergyman at Lichfield who was contemporary with Johnson, and in whose father's family Johnson had the happiness of being kindly received in his early years.

Dr JOHNSON *to* BENNET LANGTON, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I have lately been much disordered by a difficulty of breathing, but am now better. I hope your house is well.

You know we have been talking lately of St Cross, at Winchester; I have an old acquaintance whose distress makes him very desirous of a hospital, and I am afraid I have not strength enough to get him into the Chartreux. He is a painter, who never rose higher than to get his immediate living, and from that, at eighty-three, he is disabled by a slight stroke of the palsy, such as does not make him at all helpless on common occasions, though his hand is not steady enough for his art.

My request is, that you will try to obtain a promise of the next vacancy from the Bishop of Chester. It is not a great thing to ask, and I hope we shall obtain it. Dr Warton has promised to favour him with his notice, and I hope he may end his days in peace. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

June 29, 1777.

To the Reverend Dr VYSE, at Lambeth

SIR,—I doubt not but you will readily forgive me for taking the liberty of requesting your assistance in recommending an old friend to his Grace the Archbishop, as Governor of the Charter-house.

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His name is De Groot; he was born at Gloucester; I have known him many years. He has all the common claims to charity, being old, poor, and infirm, in a great degree. He has likewise another claim, to which no scholar can refuse attention; he is by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius; of him, from whom perhaps every man of learning has learned something. Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused. I am, reverend Sir, your most humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON.

July 19, 1777.

Rev. Dr VYSE to Mr BOSWELL

LAMBETH, June 9, 1787.

SIR,—I have searched in vain for the letter which I spoke of, and which I wished, at your desire, to communicate to you. It was from Dr Johnson, to return me thanks for my application to Archbishop Cornwallis in favour of poor De Groot. He rejoices at the success it met with, and is lavish in the praise he bestows upon his favourite, Hugo Grotius. I am really sorry that I cannot find this letter, as it is worthy of the writer. That which I send you enclosed¹ is at your service. It is very short, and will not perhaps be thought of any consequence; unless you should judge proper to consider it as a proof of the very humane part which Dr Johnson took in behalf of a distressed and deserving person. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

W. VYSE.

Dr JOHNSON to Mr EDWARD DILLY

SIR,—To the collection of *English Poets* I have recommended the volume of Dr Watts to be added; his name has long been held by me in veneration, and I would not willingly be reduced to tell of him only that he was born and

¹ The preceding letter.

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died. Yet of his life I know very little, and therefore must pass him in a manner very unworthy of his character, unless some of his friends will favour me with the necessary information; many of them must be known to you; and by your influence perhaps I may obtain some instruction. My plan does not exact much; but I wish to distinguish Watts, a man who never wrote but for a good purpose. Be pleased to do for me what you can. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

BOLT COURT, FLEET STREET,
July 7, 1777.

To DR SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *July 15, 1777.*

MY DEAR SIR,—The fate of Dr Dodd made a dismal impression upon my mind.

* * * * *

I had sagacity enough to divine that you wrote his speech to the Recorder before sentence was pronounced. I am glad you have written so much for him; and I hope to be favoured with an exact list of the several pieces when we meet.

I received Mr Seward as the friend of Mr and Mrs Thrale, and as a gentleman recommended by Dr Johnson to my attention. I have introduced him to Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Mr Nairne. He is gone to the Highlands with Dr Gregory; when he returns I shall do more for him.

Sir Allan Maclean has carried that branch of his cause of which we had good hopes: the President and one other judge only were against him. I wish the House of Lords may do as well as the Court of Session has done. But Sir Allan has not the lands of *Brolas* quite clear by this judgment, till a long account is made up of debts and interests on the one side, and rents on the other. I am, however, not much afraid of the balance.

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Macquarry's estates, Staffa and all, were sold yesterday, and bought by a Campbell. I fear he will have little or nothing left out of the purchase-money.

I send you the case against the negro, by Mr Cullen, son to Dr Cullen, in opposition to Maclaurin's for liberty, of which you have approved. Pray read this; and tell me what you think as a *Politician*, as well as a *Poet*, upon the subject.

Be so kind as to let me know how your time is to be distributed next autumn. I will meet you at Manchester, or where you please; but I wish you would complete your tour of the cathedrals and come to Carlisle, and I will accompany you a part of the way homewards. I am ever, most faithfully yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Your notion of the necessity of a yearly interview is very pleasing to both my vanity and tenderness. I shall, perhaps, come to Carlisle another year; but my money has not held out so well as it used to do. I shall go to Ashbourne, and I purpose to make Dr Taylor invite you. If you live awhile with me at his house, we shall have much time to ourselves, and our stay will be no expense to us or him. I shall leave London the 28th; and after some stay at Oxford and Lichfield, shall probably come to Ashbourne about the end of your session, but of all this you shall have notice. Be satisfied we will meet somewhere.

What passed between me and poor Dr Dodd you shall know more fully when we meet.

Of lawsuits there is no end; poor Sir Allan must have another trial, for which, however, his antagonist cannot be much blamed, having two judges on his side. I am more afraid of the debts than of the House of Lords. It is scarcely to be imagined to what debts will swell, that are daily increasing by small additions, and how carelessly in a state of desperation debts are contracted. Poor Macquarry was far

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from thinking that when he sold his islands he should receive nothing. For what were they sold? And what was their yearly value? The admission of money into the Highlands will soon put an end to the feudal modes of life, by making those men landlords who were not chiefs. I do not know that the people will suffer by the change, but there was in the patriarchal authority something venerable and pleasing. Every eye must look with pain on a *Campbell* turning the *Macquarries* at will out of their *sedes avitæ*, their hereditary island.

Sir Alexander Dick is the only Scotchman liberal enough not to be angry that I could not find trees, where trees were not. I was much delighted by his kind letter.

I remember Rasay with too much pleasure not to partake of the happiness of any part of that amiable family. Our ramble in the islands hangs upon my imagination, I can hardly help imagining that we shall go again. Pennant seems to have seen a great deal which we did not see. When we travel again let us look better about us.

You have done right in taking your uncle's house. Some change in the form of life gives from time to time a new epocha of existence. In a new place there is something new to be done, and a different system of thoughts rises in the mind. I wish I could gather currants in your garden. Now fit up a little study, and have your books ready at hand; do not spare a little money to make your habitation pleasing to yourself.

I have dined lately with poor dear ——. I do not think he goes on well. His table is rather coarse, and he has his children too much about him.¹ But he is a very good man.

¹ This very just remark I hope will be constantly held in remembrance by parents, who are in general too apt to indulge their own fond feelings for their children at the expense of their friends. The common custom of introducing them after dinner is highly injudicious. It is agreeable enough that they should appear at any other time; but they should not be suffered to poison the moments of festivity by attracting the attention of the company, and in a manner compelling them from politeness to say what they do not think.

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Mrs Williams is in the country to try if she can improve her health; she is very ill. Matters have come so about that she is in the country with very good accommodation; but, age and sickness, and pride, have made her so peevish that I was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her, by a secret stipulation of half-a-crown a week over her wages.

Our club ended its session about six weeks ago. We now only meet to dine once a fortnight. Mr Dunning, the great lawyer, is one of our members. The Thrales are well.

I long to know how the Negro's cause will be decided. What is the opinion of Lord Auchinleck, or Lord Hailes, or Lord Monboddo? I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

July 22, 1777.

Dr JOHNSON to Mrs BOSWELL

MADAM,—Though I am well enough pleased with the taste of sweetmeats, very little of the pleasure which I received at the arrival of your jar of marmalade arose from eating it. I received it as a token of friendship, as a proof of reconciliation, things much sweeter than sweetmeats, and upon this consideration I return you, dear madam, my sincerest thanks. By having your kindness I think I have a double security for the continuance of Mr Boswell's, which it is not to be expected that any man can long keep, when the influence of a lady so highly and so justly valued operates against him. Mr Boswell will tell you that I was always faithful to your interest, and always endeavoured to exalt you in his estimation. You must now do the same for me. We must all help one another, and you must now consider me, as, dear Madam, your most obliged and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

July 22, 1777.

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MR BOSWELL to DR JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, July 28, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,—This is the day on which you were to leave London, and I have been amusing myself in the intervals of my law-drudgery with figuring you in the Oxford post-coach. I doubt, however, if you have had so merry a journey as you and I had in that vehicle last year, when you made so much sport with Gwyn, the architect. Incidents upon a journey are recollected with peculiar pleasure; they are preserved in brisk spirits, and come up again in our minds, tintured with that gaiety, or at least that animation, with which we first perceived them.

* * * * *

[I added, that something had occurred which I was afraid might prevent me from meeting him; and that my wife had been affected with complaints which threatened a consumption, but was now better.]

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Do not disturb yourself about our interviews; I hope we shall have many; nor think it anything hard or unusual that your design of meeting me is interrupted. We have both endured greater evils, and have greater evils to expect.

Mrs Boswell's illness makes a more serious distress. Does the blood rise from her lungs or from her stomach? From little vessels broken in the stomach there is no danger. Blood from the lungs is, I believe, always frothy, as mixed with wind. Your physicians know very well what is to be done. The loss of such a lady would, indeed, be very afflictive, and I hope she is in no danger. Take care to keep her mind as easy as is possible.

I have left Langton in London. He has been down with the militia, and is again quiet at home, talking to his little

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people, as, I suppose, you do sometimes. Make my compliments to Miss Veronica. The rest are too young for ceremony.

I cannot but hope that you have taken your country house at a very seasonable time, and that it may conduce to restore or establish Mrs Boswell's health, as well as provide room and exercise for the young ones. That you and your lady may both be happy, and long enjoy your happiness, is the sincere and earnest wish of, dear Sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

OXFORD, *Aug. 4, 1777.*

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

[Informing him that my wife had continued to grow better, so that my alarming apprehensions were relieved; and that I hoped to disengage myself from the other embarrassment which had occurred, and therefore requesting to know particularly when he intended to be at Ashbourne.]

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I am this day come to Ashbourne, and have only to tell you that Dr Taylor says you shall be welcome to him, and you know how welcome you will be to me. Make haste to let me know when you may be expected.

Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, and tell her I hope we shall be at variance no more. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

August 30, 1777.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—On Saturday I wrote a very short letter, immediately upon my arrival hither, to show you that I am not less desirous of the interview than yourself. Life admits not of delays: when pleasure can be had it is fit to catch it.

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Every hour takes away part of the things that please us, and perhaps part of our disposition to be pleased. When I came to Lichfield, I found my old friend Harry Jackson dead. It was a loss, and a loss not to be repaired, as he was one of the companions of my childhood. I hope we may long continue to gain friends, but the friends which merit or usefulness can procure us are not able to supply the place of old acquaintance, with whom the days of youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight. If you and I live to be much older, we shall take great delight in talking over the Hebridean journey.

In the meantime it may not be amiss to contrive some other little adventure, but what it can be I know not; leave it, as Sidney says :

“ To virtue, fortune, wine, and woman’s breast ” ;

for I believe Mrs Boswell must have some part in the consultation.

One thing you will like. The Doctor, so far as I can judge, is likely to leave us enough to ourselves. He was out to-day before I came down, and, I fancy, will stay out till dinner. I have brought the papers about poor Dodd, to show you, but you will soon have dispatched them.

Before I came away I sent poor Mrs Williams into the country, very ill of a pituitous defluxion, which wastes her gradually away, and which her physician declares himself unable to stop. I supplied her as far as could be desired with all conveniences to make her excursion and abode pleasant and useful, but I am afraid she can only linger a short time in a morbid state of weakness and pain.

The Thrales, little and great, are all well, and purpose to go to Brighthelmston at Michaelmas. They will invite me to go with them, and perhaps I may go, but I hardly think I shall like to stay the whole time; but of futurity we know but little.

Mrs Porter is well; but Mrs Aston, one of the ladies at Stowhill, has been struck with a palsy, from which she is

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not likely ever to recover. How soon may such a stroke fall upon us!

Write to me, and let us know when we may expect you.
I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

ASHBOURNE, *Sept. 1, 1777.*

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *Sept. 9, 1777.*

[After informing him that I was to set out next day, in order to meet him at Ashbourne:—]

I have a present for you from Lord Hailes; the fifth book of *Lactantius*, which he has published with Latin notes. He is also to give you a few anecdotes for your *Life of Thomson*, who I find was private tutor to the present Earl of Haddington, Lord Hailes's cousin, a circumstance not mentioned by Dr Murdoch. I have keen expectations of delight from your edition of the *English Poets*.

I am sorry for poor Mrs Williams's situation. You will, however, have the comfort of reflecting on your kindness to her. Mr Jackson's death and Mrs Aston's palsy are gloomy circumstances. Yet surely we should be habituated to the uncertainty of life and health. When my mind is unclouded by melancholy, I consider the temporary distresses of this state of being as light afflictions, by stretching my mental view into that glorious after-existence, when they will appear to be as nothing. But present pleasures and present pains must be felt. I lately read *Rasselas* over again with great satisfaction.

Since you are desirous to hear about Macquarry's sale I shall inform you particularly. The gentleman who purchased Ulva is Mr Campbell, of Auchnabà: our friend Macquarry was proprietor of two-thirds of it, of which the rent was 156l. 5s. 1d.³/₄. This parcel was set up at 4069l. 15s. 1d. but it sold for no less than 5540l. The other third of Ulva, with the island of Staffa, belonged to Macquarry of Ormaig.

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Its rent, including that of Staffa, 83l. 12s. 2d.³—set up at 2178l. 16s. 4d.—sold for no less than 3540l. The Laird of Col wished to purchase Ulva, but he thought the price too high. There may, indeed, be great improvements made there, both in fishing and agriculture; but the interest of the purchase-money exceeds the rents so very much, that I doubt if the bargain will be profitable. There is an island called Little Colonsay, of 10l. yearly rent, which I am informed has belonged to the Macquarrys of Ulva for many ages, but which was lately claimed by the Presbyterian Synod of Argyll, in consequence of a grant made to them by Queen Anne. It is believed that their claim will be dismissed, and that Little Colonsay will also be sold for the advantage of Macquarry's creditors. What think you of purchasing this island, and endowing a school or college there, the master to be a clergyman of the Church of England? How venerable would such an institution make the name of Dr Samuel Johnson in the Hebrides! I have, like yourself, a wonderful pleasure in recollecting our travels in those islands. The pleasure is, I think, greater than it reasonably should be, considering that we had not much either of beauty and elegance to charm our imaginations, or of rude novelty to astonish. Let us, by all means, have another expedition. I shrink a little from our scheme of going up the Baltic.¹ I am sorry you have already been in Wales, for I

¹ It appears that Johnson, now in his sixty-eighth year, was seriously inclined to realise the project of our going up the Baltic, which I had started when we were in the Isle of Sky; for he thus writes to Mrs Thrale: *Letters*, vol. i., p. 366:

ASHBOURNE, Sept. 13, 1777.

Boswell, I believe, is coming. He talks of being here to-day: I shall be glad to see him: but he shrinks from the Baltic expedition, which, I think, is the best scheme in our power: what we shall substitute I know not. He wants to see Wales; but, except the woods of *Bachycraigh*, what is there in Wales, that can fill the hunger of ignorance, or quench the thirst of curiosity? We may, perhaps, form some scheme or other; but, in the phrase of *Hockley in the Hole*, it is pity he has not a *better bottom*.

Such an ardour of mind and vigour of enterprise is admirable at any age;

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wish to see it. Shall we go to Ireland, of which I have seen but little? We shall try to strike out a plan when we are at Ashbourne. I am ever your most faithful humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—I write to be left at Carlisle, as you direct me, but you cannot have it. Your letter, dated Sept. 6, was not at this place till this day, Thursday, Sept. 11; and I hope you will be here before this is at Carlisle.¹ However, what you have not going, you may have returning; and as I believe I shall not love you less after our interview, it will then be as true as it is now, that I set a very high value upon your friendship, and count your kindness as one of the chief felicities of my life. Do not fancy that an intermission of writing is a decay of kindness. No man is always in a disposition to write; nor has any man at all times something to say.

That distrust which intrudes so often on your mind is a mode of melancholy, which, if it be the business of a wise man to be happy, it is foolish to indulge; and if it be a duty to preserve our faculties entire for their proper use, it is criminal. Suspicion is very often a useless pain. From that, and all other pains, I wish you free and safe; for I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

SAM. JOHNSON.

ASHBOURNE, *Sept. 11, 1777.*

but more particularly so at the advanced period at which Johnson was then arrived. I am sorry now that I did not insist on our executing that scheme. Besides the other objects of curiosity and observation, to have seen my illustrious friend received, as he probably would have been, by a Prince so eminently distinguished for his variety of talents and acquisitions as the King of Sweden; and by the Empress of Russia, whose extraordinary abilities, information and magnanimity astonish the world, would have afforded a noble subject for contemplation and record. This reflection may possibly be thought too visionary by the more sedate and cold-blooded part of my readers; yet I own, I frequently indulge it with an earnest, unavailing regret.

¹ It so happened. The letter was forwarded to my house at Edinburgh.

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On Sunday evening, 14th September, I arrived at Ashbourne, and drove directly up to Dr Taylor's door. Dr Johnson and he appeared before I had got out of the post-chaise, and welcomed me cordially.

I told them that I had travelled all the preceding night, and gone to bed at Leek, in Staffordshire; and that when I rose to go to church in the afternoon, I was informed there had been an earthquake, of which, it seems, the shock had been felt, in some degree, at Ashbourne. JOHNSON: Sir, it will be much exaggerated in popular talk: for, in the first place, the common people do not accurately adapt their thoughts to the objects; nor, secondly, do they accurately adapt their words to their thoughts: they do not mean to lie; but, taking no pains to be exact, they give you very false accounts. A great part of their language is proverbial. If anything rocks at all, they say *it rocks like a cradle*; and in this way they go on.

The subject of grief for the loss of relations and friends being introduced, I observed that it was strange to consider how soon it in general wears away. Dr Taylor mentioned a gentleman of the neighbourhood as the only instance he had ever known of a person who had endeavoured to *retain* grief. He told Dr Taylor, that after his lady's death, which affected him deeply, he *resolved* that the grief, which he cherished with a kind of sacred fondness, should be lasting; but that he found he could not keep it long. JOHNSON: All grief for what cannot in the course of nature be helped, soon wears away; in some sooner, indeed, in some later; but it never continues very long, unless where there is madness, such as will make a man have pride so fixed in his mind as to imagine himself a king; or any other passion in an unreasonable way: for all unnecessary grief is unwise, and therefore will not be long retained by a sound mind. If, indeed, the cause of our grief is occasioned by our own misconduct, if grief is mingled with remorse of conscience, it should be lasting. BOSWELL: But, sir, we do not approve of a man who very soon forgets the loss of a wife or a friend.

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JOHNSON: Sir, we disapprove of him, not because he soon forgets his grief, for the sooner it is forgotten the better, but because we suppose that if he forgets his wife or his friend soon, he has not had much affection for them.

I was somewhat disappointed in finding that the edition of the *English Poets*, for which he was to write Prefaces and Lives, was not an undertaking directed by him; but that he was to furnish a Preface and Life to any poet the booksellers pleased. I asked him if he would do this to any dunce's works, if they should ask him. JOHNSON: Yes, sir; and say he was a dunce.—My friend seemed now not much to relish talking of this edition.

On Monday, 15th September, Dr Johnson observed, that everybody commended such parts of his *Journey to the Western Islands* as were in their own way. "For instance," said he, "Mr Jackson (the all-knowing) told me there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke. Jones commended the part which treats of language; Burke that which describes the inhabitants of mountainous countries."

After breakfast, Johnson carried me to see the garden belonging to the school of Ashbourne, which is very prettily formed upon a bank, rising gradually behind the house. The Reverend Mr Langley, the headmaster, accompanied us.

While we sat basking in the sun upon a seat here, I introduced a common subject of complaint, the very small salaries which many curates have, and I maintained "that no man should be invested with the character of a clergyman unless he has a security for such an income as will enable him to appear respectable; that, therefore, a clergyman should not be allowed to have a curate unless he gives him a hundred pounds a year; if he cannot do that, let him perform the duty himself. JOHNSON: To be sure, sir, it is wrong that any clergyman should be without a reasonable income; but as the Church revenues were sadly diminished at the Reformation, the clergy who have livings cannot afford,

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in many instances, to give good salaries to curates, without leaving themselves too little; and if no curate were to be permitted unless he had a hundred pounds a year, their number would be very small, which would be a disadvantage, as then there would not be such choice in the nursery for the Church, curates being candidates for the higher ecclesiastical offices, according to their merit and good behaviour.—He explained the system of the English Hierarchy exceedingly well. “It is not thought fit,” said he, “to trust a man with the care of a parish, till he has given proof as a curate that he shall deserve such a trust.” This is an excellent *theory*; and if the *practice* were according to it, the Church of England would be admirable indeed. However, as I have heard Dr Johnson observe as to the universities, bad practice does not infer that the *constitution* is bad.

We had with us at dinner several of Dr Taylor’s neighbours, good civil gentlemen, who seemed to understand Dr Johnson very well, and not to consider him in the light that a certain person did, who being struck, or rather stunned, by his voice and manner, when he was afterwards asked what he thought of him, answered: “He’s a tremendous companion.”

Johnson told me, that “Taylor was a very sensible acute man, and had a strong mind; that he had great activity in some respects, and yet such a sort of indolence that if you should put a pebble upon his chimney-piece, you would find it there, in the same state, a year afterwards.”

And here is the proper place to give an account of Johnson’s humane and zealous interference in behalf of the Reverend Dr William Dodd, formerly Prebendary of Brecon, and chaplain-in-ordinary to his Majesty; celebrated as a very popular preacher, an encourager of charitable institutions, and author of a variety of works, chiefly theological. Having unhappily contracted expensive habits of living, partly occasioned by licentiousness of manners, he in an evil hour, when pressed by want of money, and dreading an exposure of his circumstances, forged a bond of which

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he attempted to avail himself to support his credit, flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected. The person whose name he thus rashly and criminally presumed to falsify was the Earl of Chesterfield, to whom he had been tutor, and who he, perhaps, in the warmth of his feelings, flattered himself would have paid the money in case of an alarm being taken, rather than suffer him to fall a victim to the dreadful consequences of violating the law against forgery, the most dangerous crime in a commercial country; but the unfortunate divine had the mortification to find that he was mistaken. His noble pupil appeared against him, and he was capitally convicted.

Johnson told me that Dr Dodd was very little acquainted with him, having been but once in his company, many years previous to this period (which was precisely the state of my own acquaintance with Dodd); but in his distress he bethought himself of Johnson's persuasive power of writing, if haply it might avail to obtain for him the royal mercy. He did not apply to him directly, but, extraordinary as it may seem, through the late Countess of Harrington, who wrote a letter to Johnson, asking him to employ his pen in favour of Dodd. Mr Allen, the printer, who was Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt Court, and for whom he had much kindness, was one of Dodd's friends, of whom, to the credit of humanity be it recorded, that he had many who did not desert him, even after his infringement of the law had reduced him to the state of a man under sentence of death. Mr Allen told me that he carried Lady Harrington's letter to Johnson, that Johnson read it walking up and down his chamber, and seemed much agitated, after which he said: "I will do what I can"; and certainly he did make extraordinary exertions.

He this evening, as he had obligingly promised in one of his letters, put into my hands the whole series of his writings upon this melancholy occasion, and I shall present my readers with the abstract which I made from the collection;

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in doing which I studied to avoid copying what had appeared in print, and now make part of the edition of *Johnson's Works*, published by the booksellers of London, but taking care to mark Johnson's variations in some of the pieces there exhibited.

Dr Johnson wrote, in the first place, Dr Dodd's "Speech to the Recorder of London," at the Old Bailey, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him.

He wrote also "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren," a sermon delivered by Dr Dodd in the chapel of Newgate. According to Johnson's manuscript it began thus after the text, *What shall I do to be saved?*—"These were the words with which the keeper, to whose custody Paul and Silas were committed by their prosecutors, addressed his prisoners, when he saw them freed from their bonds by the perceptible agency of divine favour, and was, therefore, irresistibly convinced that they were not offenders against the laws, but martyrs to the truth."

Dr Johnson was so good as to mark for me with his own hand, on a copy of this sermon which is now in my possession, such passages as were added by Dr Dodd. They are not many. Whoever will take the trouble to look at the printed copy and attend to what I mention, will be satisfied of this.

There is a short introduction by Dr Dodd, and he also inserted this sentence: "You see with what confusion and dishonour I now stand before you;—no more in the pulpit of instruction, but on this humble seat with yourselves." The *notes* are entirely Dodd's own, and Johnson's writing ends at the words, "the thief whom He pardoned on the cross." What follows was supplied by Dr Dodd himself.

The other pieces written by Johnson in the above-mentioned collection are two letters, one to the Lord Chancellor Bathurst (not Lord North, as is erroneously supposed) and one to Lord Mansfield; A Petition from Dr Dodd to the King; A Petition from Mrs Dodd to the Queen; Observations of some length inserted in the

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newspapers, on occasion of Earl Percy's having presented to his Majesty a petition for mercy to Dodd, signed by twenty thousand people, but all in vain. He told me that he had also written a petition from the city of London; "but," said he, with a significant smile, "*they mended it.*"

The last of these articles which Johnson wrote is "Dr Dodd's last solemn Declaration," which he left with the sheriff at the place of execution. Here also my friend marked the variations on a copy of that piece now in my possession. Dodd inserted: "I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful economy"; and in the next sentence he introduced the words which I distinguish by italics: "My life for some *few unhappy* years past has been *dreadfully erroneous.*" Johnson's expression was *hypocritical*; but his remark on the margin is "With this he said he could not charge himself."

Having thus authentically settled what part of the "Occasional Papers," concerning Dr Dodd's miserable situation, came from the pen of Johnson, I shall proceed to present my readers with my record of the unpublished writings relating to that extraordinary and interesting matter.

I found a letter to Dr Johnson from Dr Dodd, 23rd May 1777, in which "The Convict's Address" seems clearly to be meant:

"I am so penetrated, my ever dear sir, with a sense of your extreme benevolence towards me, that I cannot find words equal to the sentiments of my heart. * * *

"You are too conversant in the world to need the slightest hint from me, of what infinite utility the Speech¹ on the awful day has been to me. I experience, every hour, some good effect from it. I am sure that effects still more salutary and important, must follow from *your kind and intended favour.* I will labour—God being my helper—to do justice to it from the pulpit. I am sure, had I your sentiments constantly to deliver from thence, in all their mighty force

¹ His Speech at the Old Bailey, when found guilty.

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and power, not a soul could be left unconvinced and unpersuaded. * * *

He added, " May God Almighty bless and reward, with His choicest comforts, your philanthropic actions, and enable me at all times to express what I feel of the high and uncommon obligations which I owe to the *first man* in our times."

On Sunday, 22nd June, he writes, begging Dr Johnson's assistance in framing a supplicatory letter to his Majesty :

" If his Majesty could be moved of his royal clemency to spare me and my family the horrors and ignominy of a *public death*, which the *public* itself is solicitous to wave, and to grant me in some silent distant corner of the globe to pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer, I would bless his clemency and be humbled."

This letter was brought to Dr Johnson when in church. He stooped down and read it, and wrote, when he went home, the following letter for Dr Dodd to the King :—

SIR,—May it not offend your Majesty, that the most miserable of men applies himself to your clemency, as his last hope and his last refuge; that your mercy is most earnestly and humbly implored by a clergyman, whom your Laws and Judges have condemned to the horror and ignominy of a public execution.

I confess the crime, and own the enormity of its consequences, and the danger of its example. Nor have I the confidence to petition for impunity; but humbly hope that public security may be established, without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets, to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane; and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

My life, Sir, has not been useless to mankind. I have benefited many. But my offences against God are numberless, and I have had little time for repentance. Preserve me, Sir, by your prerogative of mercy, from the necessity

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of appearing unprepared at that tribunal before which Kings and Subjects must stand at last together. Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where, if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude for the life and happiness of your Majesty. I am, Sir, your Majesty's, etc.

Subjoined to it was written as follows :—

To Dr DODD

SIR,—I most seriously enjoin you not to let it be at all known that I have written this letter, and to return the copy to Mr Allen in a cover to me. I hope I need not tell you that I wish it success.—But do not indulge hope.—Tell nobody.

It happened luckily that Mr Allen was pitched on to assist in this melancholy office, for he was a great friend of Mr Akerman, the keeper of Newgate. Dr Johnson never went to see Dr Dodd. He said to me, it would have done *him* more harm than good to Dodd, who once expressed a desire to see him, but not earnestly.

Dr Johnson, on the 20th of June, wrote the following letter :—

To the Right Honourable CHARLES JENKINSON

SIR,—Since the conviction and condemnation of Dr Dodd, I have had, by the intervention of a friend, some intercourse with him, and I am sure I shall lose nothing in your opinion by tenderness and commiseration. Whatever be the crime, it is not easy to have any knowledge of the delinquent without a wish that his life may be spared, at least when no life has been taken away by him. I will, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting some reasons for which I wish this unhappy being to escape the utmost rigour of his sentence.

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He is, so far as I can recollect, the first clergyman of our Church who has suffered public execution for immorality ; and I know not whether it would not be more for the interest of religion to bury such an offender in the obscurity of perpetual exile, than to expose him in a cart, and on the gallows, to all who for any reason are enemies to the clergy.

The supreme power has, in all ages, paid some attention to the voice of the people ; and that voice does not least deserve to be heard when it calls out for mercy. There is now a very general desire that Dodd's life should be spared. More is not wished ; and, perhaps, this is not too much to be granted.

If you, sir, have any opportunity of enforcing these reasons, you may, perhaps, think them worthy of consideration : but whatever you determine, I most respectfully entreat that you will be pleased to pardon for this intrusion, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

It has been confidently circulated, with invidious remarks, that to this letter no attention whatever was paid by Mr Jenkinson, now Lord Hawkesbury ; and that he did not even deign to show the common civility of owning the receipt of it. I could not but wonder at such conduct in the noble lord, whose own character and just elevation in life, I thought, must have impressed him with all due regard for great abilities and attainments. As the story had been much talked of, and apparently from good authority, I could not but have animadverted upon it in this work, had it been as was alleged ; but from my earnest love of truth, and having found reason to think that there might be a mistake, I presumed to write to his lordship, requesting an explanation ; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I am enabled to assure the world that there is no foundation for it, the fact being, that owing to some neglect, or accident, Johnson's letter never came to Lord Hawkesbury's hands. I should

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have thought it strange indeed if that noble lord had undervalued my illustrious friend; but instead of this being the case, his lordship, in the very polite answer with which he was pleased immediately to honour me, thus expresses himself: "I have always respected the memory of Dr Johnson, and admire his writings; and I frequently read many parts of them with pleasure and great improvement."

All applications for the Royal Mercy having failed, Dr Dodd prepared himself for death; and, with a warmth of gratitude, wrote to Dr Johnson as follows:—

June 25. Midnight.

Accept, thou *great* and *good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts in my behalf.—Oh! Dr Johnson! as I sought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man!—I pray God most sincerely to bless you with the highest transports—the infelt satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions!—And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail *your* arrival there with transport, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my Comforter, my Advocate, and my *Friend*! God *be ever* with *you*!

Dr Johnson lastly wrote to Dr Dodd this solemn and soothing letter:

To the Reverend Dr DODD

DEAR SIR,—That which is appointed to all men is now coming upon you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles; it attacked

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no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent; and may God, who knoweth our frailty and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

In requital of those well-intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

June 26, 1777.

Under the copy of this letter I found written, in Johnson's own hand, "Next day, June 27, he was executed."

To conclude this interesting episode with a useful application, let us now attend to the reflections of Johnson at the end of the "Occasional Papers," concerning the unfortunate Dr Dodd: "Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in popularity, and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his public ministry the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction. Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others; but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

"Let those who are tempted to his faults, tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments, endeavour to confirm them by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude."

Johnson gave us this evening, in his happy discriminative manner, a portrait of the late Mr Fitzherbert, of Derbyshire. "There was," said he, "no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally

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acceptable. He made everybody quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Everybody liked him; but he had no friend, as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate thoughts. People were willing to think well of everything about him. A gentleman was making an affected rant, as many people do, of great feelings about 'his dear son,' who was at school near London; how anxious he was lest he might be ill, and what he would give to see him. 'Can't you,' said Fitzherbert, 'take a post-chaise and go to him?' This, to be sure, *finished* the affected man, but there was not much in it. However, this was circulated as wit for a whole winter, and I believe part of a summer too; a proof that he was no very witty man. He was an instance of the truth of the observation that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive; by never offending, than by giving a great deal of delight. In the first place, men hate more steadily than they love; and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying many things to please him."

Tuesday, 16th September, Dr Johnson having mentioned to me the extraordinary size and price of some cattle reared by Dr Taylor, I rode out with our host, surveyed his farm, and was shown one cow which he had sold for a hundred and twenty guineas, and another for which he had been offered a hundred and thirty. Taylor thus described to me his old schoolfellow and friend, Johnson: "He is a man of a very clear head, great power of words, and a very gay imagination; but there is no disputing with him. He will not hear you, and having a louder voice than you must roar you down."

In the afternoon I tried to get Dr Johnson to like the *Poems* of Mr Hamilton of Bangour, which I had brought with me: I had been much pleased with them at a very

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early age; the impression still remained on my mind: it was confirmed by the opinion of my friend the Honourable Andrew Erskine, himself both a good poet and a good critic, who thought Hamilton as true a poet as ever wrote, and that his not having fame was unaccountable. Johnson upon repeated occasions, while I was at Ashbourne, talked slightly of Hamilton. He said there was no power of thinking in his verses, nothing that strikes one, nothing better than what you generally find in magazines; and that the highest praise they deserved was that they were very well for a gentleman to hand about among his friends. He said the imitation of *Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor*, etc., was too solemn; he read part of it at the beginning. He read the beautiful pathetic song, "Ah the poor shepherd's mournful fate," and did not seem to give attention to what I had been used to think tender elegant strains, but laughed at the rhyme, in Scotch pronunciation, *wishes* and *blushes*, reading *wushes*—and there he stopped. He owned that the epitaph on Lord Newhall was pretty well done. He read the "Inscription in a Summer-house," and a little of the imitations of Horace's *Epistles*; but said he found nothing to make him desire to read on. When I urged that there were some good poetical passages in the book—"Where," said he, "will you find so large a collection without some?" I thought the description of winter might obtain his approbation:

"See Winter, from the frozen north,
Drives his iron chariot forth!
His grisly hand in icy chains
Fair Tweeda's silver flood constrains," etc.

He asked why an "*iron chariot*"; and said "*icy chains*" was an old image. I was struck with the uncertainty of taste, and somewhat sorry that a poet whom I had long read with fondness was not approved by Dr Johnson. I comforted myself with thinking that the beauties were too delicate

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for his robust perceptions. Garrick maintained that he had not a taste for the finest productions of genius; but I was sensible, that when he took the trouble to analyse critically, he generally convinced us that he was right.

In the evening, the Reverend Mr Seward, of Lichfield, who was passing through Ashbourne in his way home, drank tea with us. Johnson described him thus: "Sir, his ambition is to be a fine talker; so he goes to Buxton, and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him. And, sir, he is a valetudinarian, one of those who are always mending themselves. I do not know a more disagreeable character than a valetudinarian, who thinks he may do anything that is for his ease, and indulges himself in the grossest freedoms: sir, he brings himself to the state of a hog in a sty."

Dr Taylor's nose happening to bleed, he said, it was because he had omitted to have himself blooded four days after a quarter of a year's interval. Dr Johnson, who was a great dabbler in physic, disapproved much of periodical bleeding. "For," said he, "you accustom yourself to an evacuation which Nature cannot perform of herself, and therefore she cannot help you, should you, from forgetfulness or any other cause, omit it; so you may be suddenly suffocated. You may accustom yourself to other periodical evacuations, because, should you omit them, Nature can supply the omission; but Nature cannot open a vein to blood you." "I do not like to take an emetic," said Taylor, "for fear of breaking some small vessels." "Pooh!" said Johnson, "if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels" (blowing with high derision).

I mentioned to Dr Johnson, that David Hume's persisting in his infidelity when he was dying, shocked me much. JOHNSON: Why should it shock you, sir? Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into

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the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death would alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right.—I said I had reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain. JOHNSON: It was not so, sir. He had a vanity in being thought easy. It is more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease than that so very improbable a thing should be, as a man not afraid of going (as, in spite of his delusive theory, he cannot be sure but he may go) into an unknown state, and not being uneasy at leaving all he knew. And you are to consider, that upon his own principle of annihilation he had no motive to speak the truth.—The horror of death which I had always observed in Dr Johnson appeared strong to-night. I ventured to tell him that I had been, for moments of my life, not afraid of death; therefore I could suppose another man in that state of mind for a considerable space of time. He said, “he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him.” He added, that it had been observed, that almost no man dies in public, but with apparent resolution; from that desire of praise which never quits us. I said, Dr Dodd seemed to be willing to die, and full of hopes of happiness. “Sir,” said he, “Dr Dodd would have given both his hands and both his legs to have lived. The better a man is, the more afraid is he of death, having a clearer view of infinite purity.” He owned, that our being in an unhappy uncertainty as to our salvation was mysterious; and said: “Ah! we must wait till we are in another state of being, to have many things explained to us.” Even the powerful mind of Johnson seemed foiled by futurity. But I thought, that the gloom of uncertainty in solemn religious speculation, being mingled with hope, was yet more consolatory than the emptiness of infidelity. A man can live in thick air, but perishes in an exhausted receiver.

Dr Johnson was much pleased with a remark which I told him was made to me by General Paoli: “That it is



THE REV. DR. DODD

THE REV. DR. DODD

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impossible not to be afraid of death ; and that those who at the time of dying are not afraid, are not thinking of death, but of applause, or something else, which keeps death out of their sight : so that all men are equally afraid of death when they see it ; only some have a power of turning their sight away from it better than others."

On Wednesday, 17th September, Dr Butter, physician at Derby, drank tea with us ; and it was settled that Dr Johnson and I should go on Friday to dine with him. Johnson said : " I'm glad of this." He seemed weary of the uniformity of life at Dr Taylor's.

Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life a man's peculiarities should be mentioned, because they mark his character. JOHNSON : Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities : the question is whether a man's vices should be mentioned ; for instance, whether it should be mentioned that Addison and Parnell drank too freely : for people will probably more easily indulge in drinking from knowing this ; so that more ill may be done by the example, than good by telling the whole truth.—Here was an instance of his varying from himself in talk ; for when Lord Hailes and he sat one morning calmly conversing in my house at Edinburgh, I well remember that Dr Johnson maintained, that " if a man is to write *A Panegyric*, he may keep vices out of sight ; but if he professes to write *A Life*, he must represent it really as it was." And when I objected to the danger of telling that Parnell drank to excess, he said, that " it would produce an instructive caution to avoid drinking, when it was seen that even the learning and genius of Parnell could be debased by it." And in the Hebrides he maintained, as appears from my *Journal*,¹ that a man's intimate friend should mention his faults if he writes his life.

He had this evening, partly, I suppose, from the spirit of contradiction to his Whig friend, a violent argument with Dr Taylor as to the inclinations of the people of

¹ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 240.

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England at this time towards the Royal Family of Stuart. He grew so outrageous as to say, "that, if England were fairly polled, the present King would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow." Taylor, who was as violent a Whig as Johnson was a Tory, was roused by this to a pitch of bellowing. He denied, loudly, what Johnson said; and maintained, that there was an abhorrence against the Stuart family, though he admitted that the people were not much attached to the present King.¹ JOHNSON: Sir, the state of the country is this: the people knowing it to be agreed on all hands that this King has not the hereditary right to the crown, and there being no hope that he who has it can be restored, have grown cold and indifferent upon the subject of loyalty, and have no warm attachment to any King. They would not, therefore, risk anything to restore the exiled family. They would not give twenty shillings apiece to bring it about. But if a mere vote could do it, there would be twenty to one; at least, there would be a very great majority of voices for it. For, sir, you are to consider, that all those who think a king has a right to his crown, as a man has to his estate, which is the just opinion, would be for restoring the King who certainly has the hereditary right, could he be trusted with it; in which there would be no danger now, when laws and everything else are so much advanced, and every King will govern by the laws. And you must also consider, sir, that there is nothing on the other side to oppose to this; for it is not alleged by anyone that the present family has any inherent right: so that the Whigs could not have a contest between two rights.

Dr Taylor admitted, that if the question as to hereditary right were to be tried by a poll of the people of England,

¹ Dr Taylor was very ready to make this admission, because the party with which he was connected was not in power. There was then some truth in it, owing to the pertinacity of factious clamour. Had he lived till now, it would have been impossible for him to deny that his Majesty possesses the warmest affection of his people.

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to be sure the abstract doctrine would be given in favour of the family of Stuart; but he said, the conduct of that family, which occasioned their expulsion, was so fresh in the minds of the people, that they would not vote for a restoration. Dr Johnson, I think, was contented with the admission as to the hereditary right, leaving the original point in dispute, viz. what the people upon the whole would do, taking in right and affection; for he said people were afraid of a change, even when they thought it right. Dr Taylor said something of the slight foundation of the hereditary right of the House of Stuart. "Sir," said Johnson, "the House of Stuart succeeded to the full right of both the houses of York and Lancaster, whose common source had the undisputed right. A right to a throne is like a right to anything else. Possession is sufficient where no better right can be shown. This was the case with the Royal Family of England, as it is now with the King of France: for as to the first beginning of the right, we are in the dark."

Thursday, 18th September. Last night Dr Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr Taylor's large room, should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well," said I, "for it is Dr Johnson's birthday." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birthday. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly) "he would *not* have the lustre lighted the next night."

Some ladies, who had been present yesterday when I mentioned his birthday, came to dinner to-day, and plagued him unintentionally, by wishing him joy. I know not why he disliked having his birthday mentioned, unless it were that it reminded him of his approaching nearer to death, of which he had a constant dread.

I mentioned to him a friend of mine who was formerly gloomy from low spirits, and much distressed by the fear of death, but was now uniformly placid, and contemplated

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his dissolution without any perturbation. "Sir," said Johnson, "this is only a disordered imagination taking a different turn."

We talked of a collection being made of all the English poets who had published a volume of poems. Johnson told me, "that a Mr Coxeter, whom he knew, had gone the greatest length towards this; having collected, I think, about five hundred volumes of poets whose works were little known, but that upon his death Tom Osborne bought them, and they were dispersed, which he thought a pity, as it was curious to see any series complete; and in every volume of poems something good may be found."

He observed, that a gentleman of eminence in literature had got into a bad style of poetry of late. "He puts," said he, "a very common thing in a strange dress till he does not know it himself, and thinks other people do not know it." BOSWELL: That is owing to his being so much versant in old English poetry. JOHNSON: What is that to the purpose, sir? If I say a man is drunk, and you tell me it is owing to his taking much drink, the matter is not mended. No, sir, — has taken to an odd mode. For example, he'd write thus:

" Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray."

Gray evening is common enough; but *evening gray* he'd think fine.—Stay—we'll make out the stanza:

" Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray;
Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
What is bliss? and which the way? "

BOSWELL: But why smite his bosom, sir? JOHNSON: Why, to show he was in earnest (smiling).—He at an after-period added the following stanza:

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"Thus I spoke; and speaking sigh'd;
—Scarce repress'd the starting tear;—
When the smiling sage reply'd—
—Come, my lad, and drink some beer."¹

I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the three first lines of the second. Its last line is an excellent burlesque surprise on gloomy sentimental inquirers. And perhaps the advice is as good as can be given to a low-spirited dissatisfied being: "Don't trouble your head with sickly thinking: take a cup, and be merry."

Friday, 19th September, after breakfast, Dr Johnson and I set out in Dr Taylor's chaise to go to Derby. The day was fine, and we resolved to go by Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, that I might see his lordship's fine house. I was struck with the magnificence of the building; and the extensive park, with the finest verdure, covered with deer, and cattle, and sheep, delighted me. The number of old oaks, of an immense size, filled me with a sort of respectful admiration: for one of them sixty pounds was offered. The excellent smooth gravel roads; the large piece of water formed by his lordship from some small brooks, with a handsome barge upon it; the venerable Gothic church, now

¹ As some of my readers may be gratified by reading the precise progress of this little composition, I shall insert it from my notes: "When Dr Johnson and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* at the Mitre tavern, May 9, 1778, he said, '*Where is bliss,*' would be better. He then added a ludicrous stanza, but would not repeat it, lest I should take it down. It was somewhat as follows; the last line I am sure I remember:

'While I thus	cried,
	seer;
The hoary	reply'd,
Come, my lad, and drink some beer.'	

"In spring, 1779, when in better humour, he made the second stanza, as in the text. There was only one variation afterwards made on my suggestion, which was, changing *hoary* in the third line to *smiling*, both to avoid a sameness with the epithet in the first line, and to describe the hermit in his pleasantry. He was then very well pleased that I should preserve it."

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the family chapel, just by the house; in short, the grand group of objects agitated and distended my mind in a most agreeable manner. "One should think," said I, "that the proprietor of all this *must* be happy." "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "all this excludes but one evil—poverty."¹

Our names were sent up, and a well-drest elderly house-keeper, a most distinct articulator, showed us the house; which I need not describe, as it is published in Adams's *Works in Architecture*. Dr Johnson thought better of it to-day than when he saw it before; for the other night he attacked it violently, saying: "It would do excellently for a town hall. The large room with the pillars," said he, "would do for the judges to sit in at the assizes; the circular room for a jury chamber; and the rooms above for prisoners." Still he thought the large room ill lighted, and of no use but for dancing in; and the bed-chambers but indifferent rooms; and that the immense sum which it cost was injudiciously laid out. Dr Taylor had put him in mind of his *appearing* pleased with the house. "But," said he, "that was when Lord Scarsdale was present. Politeness obliges us to appear pleased with a man's works when he is present. No man will be so ill bred as to question you. You may therefore pay compliments without saying what is not true. I should say to Lord Scarsdale of his large room: 'My Lord, this is the most *costly* room that I ever saw'; which is true."

Dr Manningham, physician in London, who was visiting at Lord Scarsdale's, accompanied us through many of the rooms, and soon afterwards my Lord himself, to whom Dr Johnson was known, appeared, and did the honours of the house. We talked of Mr Langton. Johnson, with a warm vehemence of affectionate regard, exclaimed: "The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton." We saw a good many fine pictures, which I think are described

¹ When I mentioned Dr Johnson's remark to a lady of admirable good sense and quickness of understanding, she observed, "It is true all this excludes only one evil; but how much good does it let in?"

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in one of Young's *Tours*. There is a printed catalogue of them which the housekeeper put into my hand; I should like to view them at leisure. I was much struck with *Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*, by Rembrandt. We were shown a pretty large library. In his lordship's dressing-room lay Johnson's small *Dictionary*: he showed it to me, with some eagerness, saying: "Look ye! *Quæ terra nostri non plena laboris*." He observed, also, Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*; and said: "Here's our friend! The poor Doctor would have been happy to hear of this."

In our way, Johnson strongly expressed his love of driving fast in a post-chaise. "If," said he, "I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation." I observed, that we were this day to stop just where the Highland army did in 1745. JOHNSON: It was a noble attempt. BOSWELL: I wish we could have an authentic history of it. JOHNSON: If you were not an idle dog you might write it, by collecting from everybody what they can tell, and putting down your authorities. BOSWELL: But I could not have the advantage of it in my lifetime. JOHNSON: You might have the satisfaction of its fame, by printing it in Holland; and as to profit, consider how long it was before writing came to be considered in a pecuniary view. Baretti says, he is the first man that ever received copy money in Italy.—I said that I would endeavour to do what Dr Johnson suggested; and I thought that I might write so as to venture to publish my *History of the Civil War in Great Britain in 1745 and 1746* without being obliged to go to a foreign press.¹

When we arrived at Derby, Dr Butter accompanied us to see the manufacture of china there. I admired the

¹ I am now happy to understand, that Mr John Home, who was himself gallantly in the field for the reigning family, in that interesting warfare, but is generous enough to do justice to the other side, is preparing an account of it for the press.

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ingenuity and delicate art with which a man fashioned clay into a cup, a saucer, or a teapot, while a boy turned round a wheel to give the mass rotundity. I thought this as excellent in its species of power, as making good verses in *its* species. Yet I had no respect for this potter. Neither, indeed, has a man of any extent of thinking for a mere verse-maker, in whose numbers, however perfect, there is no poetry, no mind. The china was beautiful; but Dr Johnson justly observed it was too dear, for that he could have vessels of silver, of the same size, as cheap as what were here made of porcelain.

I felt a pleasure in walking about Derby, such as I always have in walking about any town to which I am not accustomed. There is an immediate sensation of novelty; and one speculates on the way in which life is passed in it, which, although there is a sameness everywhere upon the whole, is yet minutely diversified. The minute diversities in everything are wonderful. Talking of shaving the other night at Dr Taylor's, Dr Johnson said: "Sir, of a thousand shavers, two do not shave so much alike as not to be distinguished." I thought this not possible, till he specified so many of the varieties in shaving—holding the razor more or less perpendicular—drawing long or short strokes—beginning at the upper part of the face, or the under—at the right side or the left side. Indeed, when one considers what variety of sounds can be uttered by the windpipe, in the compass of a very small aperture, we may be convinced how many degrees of difference there may be in the application of a razor.

We dined with Dr Butter, whose lady is daughter of my cousin Sir John Douglas, whose grandson is now presumptive heir of the noble family of Queensberry. Johnson and he had a good deal of medical conversation. Johnson said he had somewhere or other given an account of Dr Nichols's discourse *De Animâ Medicâ*. He told us, "that whatever a man's distemper was, Dr Nichols would not attend him as a physician, if his mind was not at ease; for he believed that



ASHBURN CHURCH, DERBYSHIRE

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no medicines would have any influence. He once attended a man in trade, upon whom he found none of the medicines he prescribed had any effect; he asked the man's wife privately whether his affairs were not in a bad way. She said 'No.' He continued his attendance some time, still without success. At length the man's wife told him she had discovered that her husband's affairs *were* in a bad way. When Goldsmith was dying, Dr Turton said to him: 'Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have: is your mind at ease?' Goldsmith answered it was not."

After dinner, Mrs Butter went with me to see the silk-mill which Sir Thomas Lambe had a patent for, having brought away the contrivance from Italy. I am not very conversant with mechanics; but the simplicity of this machine, and its multiplied operations, struck me with an agreeable surprise. I had learnt from Dr Johnson, during this interview, not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short; but to consider such indifference as a failure of reason, a morbidness of mind; for happiness should be cultivated as much as we can, and the objects which are instrumental to it should be steadily considered as of importance, with a reference not only to ourselves, but to multitudes in successive ages. Though it is proper to value small parts, as

"Sands make the mountain, moments make the year"¹;

yet we must contemplate, collectively, to have a just estimation of objects. One moment's being uneasy or not seems of no consequence; yet this may be thought of the next, and the next, and so on, till there is a large portion of misery. In the same way one must think of happiness, of learning, of friendship. We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop there is at last a drop which makes it run over; so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run

¹ Young.

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over. We must not divide objects of our attention into minute parts, and think separately of each part. It is by contemplating a large mass of human existence, that a man, while he sets a just value on his own life, does not think of his death as annihilating all that is great and pleasing in the world, as if actually *contained in his mind*, according to Berkeley's reverie. If his imagination be not sickly and feeble, it "wings its distant way" far beyond himself, and views the world in unceasing activity of every sort. It must be acknowledged, however, that Pope's plaintive reflection, that all things would be as gay as ever on the day of his death, is natural and common. We are apt to transfer to all around us our own gloom, without considering that at any given point of time there is, perhaps, as much youth and gaiety in the world as at another. Before I came into this life, in which I have had so many pleasant scenes, have not thousands and ten thousands of deaths and funerals happened, and have not families been in grief for their nearest relations? But have those dismal circumstances at all affected *me*? Why then should the gloomy scenes which I experience, or which I know, affect others? Let us guard against imagining that there is an end of felicity upon earth, when we ourselves grow old, or are unhappy.

Dr Johnson told us at tea, that when some of Dr Dodd's pious friends were trying to console him by saying that he was going to leave "a wretched world," he had honesty enough not to join in the cant: "No, no," said he, "it has been a very agreeable world to me." Johnson added: "I respect Dodd for thus speaking the truth; for, to be sure, he had for several years enjoyed a life of great voluptuousness."

He told us, that Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler if he would let him escape. He added, that he knew a friend of Dodd's who walked about Newgate for some time on the evening before the day of his execution, with five hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be paid to any of the turnkeys

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who could get him out; but it was too late, for he was watched with much circumspection. He said, Dodd's friends had an image of him made of wax, which was to have been left in his place; and he believed it was carried into the prison.

Johnson disapproved of Dr Dodd's leaving the world persuaded that "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren" was of his own writing. "But, sir," said I, "you contributed to the deception; for when Mr Seward expressed a doubt to you that it was not Dodd's own, because it had a great deal more force of mind in it than anything known to be his, you answered: 'Why should you think so? Depend upon it, sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.'"

JOHNSON: Sir, as Dodd got it from me to pass as his own, while that could do him any good, there was an *implied promise* that I should not own it. To own it, therefore, would have been telling a lie, with the addition of breach of promise, which was worse than simply telling a lie to make it be believed it was Dodd's. Besides, sir, I did not *directly* tell a lie: I left the matter uncertain. Perhaps I thought that Seward would not believe it the less to be mine for what I said; but I would not put it in his power to say I had owned it.

He praised Blair's sermons: "Yet," said he (willing to let us see he was aware that fashionable fame, however deserved, is not always the most lasting), "perhaps they may not be reprinted after seven years; at least not after Blair's death."

He said: "Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young; though when he had got high in fame, one of his friends began to recollect something of his being distinguished at college. Goldsmith in the same manner recollected more of that friend's early years, as he grew a greater man."

I mentioned that Lord Monboddo told me he awoke every morning at four, and then for his health got up and

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walked in his room naked, with the window open, which he called taking *an air bath* ; after which he went to bed again, and slept two hours more. Johnson, who was always ready to beat down anything that seemed to be exhibited with disproportionate importance, thus observed : “ I suppose, sir, there is no more in it than this : he awakes at four, and cannot sleep till he chills himself, and makes the warmth of the bed a grateful sensation.”

I talked of the difficulty of rising in the morning. Dr Johnson told me, “ that the learned Mrs Carter, at that period when she was eager in study, did not awake as early as she wished, and she therefore had a contrivance, that, at a certain hour, her chamber-light should burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell with a strong sudden noise ; this roused her from sleep, and then she had no difficulty in getting up.” But I said that was my difficulty, and wished there could be some medicine invented which would make one rise without pain, which I never did, unless after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there may be something in the stores of Nature which can do this. I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually ; but that would give me pain, as it would counteract my internal inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the *vis inertia*, and give elasticity to the muscles. As I imagine that the human body may be put, by the operation of other substances, into any state in which it has ever been ; and as I have experienced a state in which rising from bed was not disagreeable but easy, nay, sometimes agreeable ; I suppose that this state may be produced, if we knew by what. We can heat the body, we can cool it ; we can give it tension or relaxation ; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain.

Johnson observed, “ that a man should take a sufficient quantity of sleep, which Dr Mead says is between seven and nine hours.” I told him, that Dr Cullen said to me, that a man should not take more sleep than he can take at once.

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JOHNSON: This rule, sir, cannot hold in all cases; for many people have their sleep broken by sickness; and surely Cullen would not have a man to get up, after having slept but an hour. Such a regimen would soon end in a *long sleep*.¹ Dr Taylor remarked, I think very justly, "that a man who does not feel an inclination to sleep at the ordinary time, instead of being stronger than other people, must not be well; for a man in health has all the natural inclinations to eat, drink, and sleep, in a strong degree."

Johnson advised me to-night not to *refine* in the education of my children. "Life," said he, "will not bear refinement: you must do as other people do."

As we drove back to Ashbourne, Dr Johnson recommended to me, as he had often done, to drink water only: "For," said he, "you are then sure not to get drunk; whereas if you drink wine you are never sure." I said, drinking wine was a pleasure which I was unwilling to give up. "Why, sir," said he, "there is no doubt that not to drink wine is a great deduction from life; but it may be necessary." He however owned, that in his opinion, a free use of wine did not shorten life; and said, he would not give less for the life of a certain Scotch lord (whom he named), celebrated for hard drinking, than for that of a sober man. "But stay," said he, with his usual intelligence, and accuracy of inquiry, "does it take much wine to make him drunk?"

¹ This regimen was, however, practised by Bishop Ken, of whom Hawkins (not Sir John), in his *Life* of that venerable prelate, p. 4, tells us, "And that neither his study might be the aggressor on his hours of instruction, or what he judged his duty prevent his improvements; or both, his closet addresses to his God; he strictly accustomed himself to but one sleep, which often obliged him to rise at one or two of the clock in the morning, and sometimes sooner; and grew so habitual, that it continued with him almost till his last illness. And so lively and cheerful was his temper, that he would be very facetious and entertaining to his friends in the evening, even when it was perceived that with difficulty he kept his eyes open; and then seemed to go to rest with no other purpose than the refreshing and enabling him with more vigour and cheerfulness to sing his morning hymn, as he then used to do to his lute, before he put on his clothes."

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I answered, "A great deal either of wine or strong punch." "Then," said he, "that is the worse." I presume to illustrate my friend's observation thus: "A fortress which soon surrenders has its walls less shattered than when a long and obstinate resistance is made."

I ventured to mention a person who was as violent a Scotsman as he was an Englishman; and literally had the same contempt for an Englishman compared with a Scotsman, that he had for a Scotsman compared with an Englishman; and that he would say of Dr Johnson: "Damned rascal! to talk as he does of the Scotch." This seemed, for a moment, "to give him pause." It, perhaps, presented his extreme prejudice against the Scotch in a point of view somewhat new to him, by the effect of *contrast*.

By the time when we returned to Ashbourne, Dr Taylor was gone to bed. Johnson and I sat up a long time by ourselves.

He was much diverted with an article which I showed him in *The Critical Review* of this year, giving an account of a curious publication, entitled, *A Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies*, by John Rutty, M.D. Dr Rutty was one of the people called Quakers, a physician of some eminence in Dublin, and author of several works. This *Diary*, which was kept from 1753 to 1775, the year in which he died, and was now published in two volumes, octavo, exhibited, in the simplicity of his heart, a minute and honest register of the state of his mind; which, though frequently laughable enough, was not more so than the history of many men would be, if recorded with equal fairness.

The following specimens were extracted by the reviewers:—

"Tenth month, 1753.

"23. Indulgence in bed an hour too long.

"Twelfth month, 17. An hypochondriac obnubilation from wind and indigestion.

"Ninth month, 28. An overdose of whisky.

"29. A dull, cross, choleric day.

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" First month, 1757-22. A little swinish at dinner and repast.

" 31. Dogged on provocation.

" Second month, 5. Very dogged or snappish.

" 14. Snappish on fasting.

" 26. Cursed snappishness to those under me, on a bodily indisposition.

" Third month, 11. On a provocation, exercised a dumb resentment for two days, instead of scolding.

" 22. Scolded too vehemently.

" 23. Dogged again.

" Fourth month, 29. Mechanically and sinfully dogged."

Johnson laughed heartily at this good Quietist's self-condemning minutes; particularly at his mentioning, with such a serious regret, occasional instances of "*swinishness* in eating, and *doggedness of temper*." He thought the observations of the Critical Reviewers upon the importance of a man to himself so ingenious and so well expressed, that I shall here introduce them.

After observing, that " There are few writers who have gained any reputation by recording their own actions," they say :

" We may reduce the egotists to four classes. In the *first* we have Julius Cæsar : he relates his own transactions ; but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements. In the *second* class we have Marcus Antoninus : this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life ; but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the *third* class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes, and the occurrences of their own times : the celebrated Huetius has published an entertaining volume upon this plan, *De rebus ad eum pertinentibus*. In the *fourth* class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual : Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, George Whitefield,

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John Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatic writers of memoirs and meditations."

I mentioned to him that Dr Hugh Blair, in his lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, which I heard him deliver at Edinburgh, had animadverted on the Johnsonian style as too pompous; and attempted to imitate it, by giving a sentence of Addison in *The Spectator*, No. 411, in the manner of Johnson. When treating of the utility of the pleasures of imagination in preserving us from vice, it is observed of those "who know not how to be idle and innocent," that their very first step out of business is into vice or folly; which Dr Blair supposed would have been expressed in *The Rambler* thus: "Their very first step out of the regions of business is into the perturbation of vice, or the vacuity of folly."¹ JOHNSON: Sir, these are not the words I should have used. No, sir; the imitators of my style have not hit it. Miss Aikin has done it the best; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction.

I intend, before this work is concluded, to exhibit specimens of imitation of my friend's style in various modes; some caricaturing or mimicking it, and some formed upon it, whether intentionally or with a degree of similarity to it, of which, perhaps, the writers were not conscious.

In Baretti's review, which he published in Italy, under the title of *Frusta Letteraria*, it is observed that Dr Robertson, the historian, had formed his style upon that of "*Il celebre Samuele Johnson*." My friend himself was of that opinion; for he once said to me, in a pleasant humour: "Sir, if Robertson's style be faulty, he owes it to me; that is, having too many words, and those too big ones."

I read to him a letter which Lord Monboddo had written

¹ When Dr Blair published his *Lectures*, he was invidiously attacked for having omitted his censure on Johnson's style, and, on the contrary, praising it highly. But before that time Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* had appeared, in which his style was considerably easier than when he wrote *The Rambler*. It would, therefore, have been uncandid in Blair, even supposing his criticism to have been just, to have preserved it.

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to me, containing some critical remarks upon the style of his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. His lordship praised the very fine passage upon landing at Icolmkill¹; but his own style being exceedingly dry and hard, he disapproved of the richness of Johnson's language, and of his frequent use of metaphorical expressions. JOHNSON: Why, sir, this criticism would be just, if in my style superfluous words, or words too big for the thoughts, could be pointed out; but this I do not believe can be done. For instance, in the passage which Lord Monboddo admires, "We were now treading that illustrious region," the word *illustrious* contributes nothing to the mere narration; for the fact might be told without it: but it is not, therefore, superfluous; for it wakes the mind to peculiar attention, where something of more than usual importance is to be presented. "Illustrious!"—for what? and then the sentence proceeds to expand the circumstances connected with Iona. And, sir, as to metaphorical expression, that is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for one—conveys the meaning more luminously, and generally with a perception of delight.

He told me, that he had been asked to undertake the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, but had declined it;

¹ "We were now treading that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us, indifferent and unmoved, over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

Had our tour produced nothing else but this sublime passage, the world must have acknowledged that it was not made in vain. The present respectable President of the Royal Society was so much struck on reading it, that he clasped his hands together, and remained for some time in an attitude of silent admiration.

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which he afterwards said to me he regretted. In this regret many will join, because it would have procured us more of Johnson's most delightful species of writing. And although my friend Dr Kippis has hitherto discharged the task judiciously, distinctly, and with more impartiality than might have been expected from a Separatist, it were to have been wished that the superintendence of this literary Temple of Fame, had been assigned to "a friend to the constitution in Church and State." We should not then have had it too much crowded with obscure dissenting teachers, doubtless men of merit and worth, but not quite to be numbered amongst "the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland."

On Saturday, 20th September, after breakfast, when Taylor was gone out to his farm, Dr Johnson and I had a serious conversation by ourselves on melancholy and madness; which he was, I always thought, erroneously inclined to confound together. Melancholy, like "great wit," may be "near allied to madness"; but there is, in my opinion, a distinct separation between them. When he talked of madness, he was to be understood as speaking of those who were in any great degree disturbed, or, as it is commonly expressed, "troubled in mind." Some of the ancient philosophers held that all deviations from right reason were madness; and whoever wishes to see the opinions both of ancients and moderns upon this subject, collected and illustrated with a variety of curious facts, may read Dr Arnold's very entertaining work.¹

Johnson said: "A madman loves to be with people whom he fears; not as a dog fears the lash, but of whom he stands in awe." I was struck with the justice of this observation. To be with those of whom a person, whose mind is wavering and dejected, stands in awe, represses and composes an uneasy tumult of spirits, and consoles him with the contemplation of something steady, and at least comparatively great.

¹ *Observations on Insanity*, by Thomas Arnold, M.D., London, 1782.

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He added : " Madmen are all sensual in the lower stages of the distemper. They are eager for gratifications to soothe their minds and divert their attention from the misery which they suffer : but when they grow very ill, pleasure is too weak for them, and they seek for pain.¹ Employment, sir, and hardships, prevent melancholy. I suppose in all our army in America there was not one man who went mad."

We entered seriously upon a question of much importance to me, which Johnson was pleased to consider with friendly attention. I had long complained to him that I felt myself discontented in Scotland, as too narrow a sphere, and that I wished to make my chief residence in London, the great scene of ambition, instruction, and amusement ; a scene, which was to me, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. JOHNSON : Why, sir, I never knew anyone who had such a *gust* for London as you have ; and I cannot blame you for your wish to live there : yet, sir, were I in your father's place, I should not consent to your settling there ; for I have the old feudal notions, and I should be afraid that Auchinleck would be deserted, as you would soon find it more desirable to have a country seat in a better climate. I own, however, that to consider it as a *duty* to reside on a family estate is a prejudice ; for we must consider that working people get employment equally, and the produce of land is sold equally, whether a great family resides

¹ We read in the Gospels, that those unfortunate persons who were possessed with evil spirits (which, after all, I think is the most probable cause of madness, as was first suggested to me by my respectable friend, Sir John Pringle), had recourse to pain, tearing themselves, and jumping sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water. Mr Seward has furnished me with a remarkable anecdote in confirmation of Dr Johnson's observation. A tradesman, who had acquired a large fortune in London, retired from business, and went to live at Worcester. His mind, being without its usual occupation, and having nothing else to supply its place, preyed upon itself, so that existence was a torment to him. At last he was seized with the stone ; and a friend who found him in one of its severest fits, having expressed his concern—"No, no, sir," said he, "don't pity me : what I now feel is ease, compared with that torture of mind from which it relieves me."

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at home or not; and if the rents of an estate be carried to London, they return again in the circulation of commerce: nay, sir, we must perhaps allow that carrying the rents to a distance is a good, because it contributes to that circulation. We must, however, allow that a well-regulated great family may improve a neighbourhood in civility and elegance, and give an example of good order, virtue, and piety; and so its residence at home may be of much advantage. But if a great family be disorderly and vicious, its residence at home is very pernicious to a neighbourhood. There is not now the same inducement to live in the country as formerly; the pleasures of social life are much better enjoyed in town, and there is no longer in the country that power and influence in proprietors of land which they had in old times, and which made the country so agreeable to them. The Laird of Auchinleck now is not near so great a man as the Laird of Auchinleck was a hundred years ago.

I told him, that one of my ancestors never went from home without being attended by thirty men on horseback. Johnson's shrewdness and spirit of inquiry were exerted upon every occasion. "Pray," said he, "how did your ancestor support his thirty men and thirty horses, when he went at a distance from home, in an age when there was hardly any money in circulation?" I suggested the same difficulty to a friend, who mentioned Douglas's going to the Holy Land with a numerous train of followers. "Douglas could, no doubt, maintain followers enough while living upon his own lands, the produce of which supplied them with food; but he could not carry that food to the Holy Land; and as there was no commerce by which he could be supplied with money, how could he maintain them in foreign countries?"

I suggested a doubt, that if I were to reside in London, the exquisite zest with which I relished it in occasional visits might go off, and I might grow tired of it. JOHNSON: Why, sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, sir; when a man is tired of London,

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he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.

To obviate his apprehension, that by settling in London I might desert the seat of my ancestors, I assured him, that I had old feudal principles to a degree of enthusiasm, and that I felt all the *dulcedo* of the *natale solum*. I reminded him, that the Laird of Auchinleck had an elegant house, in front of which he could ride ten miles forward upon his own territories, upon which he had upwards of six hundred people attached to him; that the family seat was rich in natural, romantic beauties of rock, wood, and water; and that in my "morn of life" I had appropriated the finest descriptions in the ancient Classics to certain scenes there, which were thus associated in my mind. That when all this was considered, I should certainly pass a part of the year at home, and enjoy it the more from variety, and from bringing with me a share of the intellectual stores of the metropolis. He listened to all this, and kindly "hoped it might be as I now supposed."

He said: "A country gentleman should bring his lady to visit London as soon as he can, that they may have agreeable topics for conversation when they are by themselves."

As I meditated trying my fortune in Westminster Hall, our conversation turned upon the profession of the law in England. JOHNSON: You must not indulge too sanguine hopes, should you be called to our bar. I was told, by a very sensible lawyer, that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law; the candidates are so numerous, and those who get large practice so few. He said, it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though he, indeed, allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known, and he would get forward; but that the great risk was, that a man might pass half a lifetime in the courts, and never have an opportunity of showing his abilities.

We talked of employment being absolutely necessary to

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preserve the mind from wearying and growing fretful, especially in those who have a tendency to melancholy; and I mentioned to him a saying which somebody had related of an American savage, who, when a European was expatiating on all the advantages of money, put this question: "Will it purchase *occupation*?" JOHNSON: Depend upon it, sir, this saying is too refined for a savage. And, sir, money *will* purchase occupation; it will purchase all the conveniencies of life; it will purchase variety of company; it will purchase all sorts of entertainment.

I talked to him of Forster's *Voyage to the South Seas*, which pleased me; but I found he did not like it. "Sir," said he, "there is a great affectation of fine writing in it." BOSWELL: But he carries you along with him. JOHNSON: No, sir; he does not carry *me* along with him: he leaves me behind him; or rather, indeed, he sets me before him, for he makes me turn over many leaves at a time.

On Sunday, 12th September, we went to the church of Ashbourne, which is one of the largest and most luminous that I have seen in any town of the same size. I felt great satisfaction in considering that I was supported in my fondness of solemn public worship by the general concurrence and munificence of mankind.

Johnson and Taylor were so different from each other that I wondered at their preserving such an intimacy. Their having been at school and college together might, in some degree, account for this; but Sir Joshua Reynolds has furnished me with a stronger reason, for Johnson mentioned to him, that he had been told by Taylor he was to be his heir. I shall not take upon me to animadvert upon this; but certain it is, that Johnson paid great attention to Taylor. He now, however, said to me: "Sir, I love him, but I do not love him more; my regard for him does not increase. As it is said in the Apocrypha, 'his talk is of bullocks.'¹

¹ Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxviii. v. 25. The whole chapter may be read as an admirable illustration of the superiority of cultivated minds over the gross and illiterate.

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I do not suppose he is very fond of my company. His habits are by no means sufficiently clerical: this he knows that I see; and no man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation."

I have no doubt that a good many sermons were composed for Taylor by Johnson. At this time I found, upon his table, a part of one which he had newly begun to write; and *Concio pro Taylora* appears in one of his diaries. When to these circumstances we add the internal evidence from the power of thinking and style, in the collection which the Reverend Mr Hayes has published, with the *significant* title of "*Sermons left for publication* by the Reverend John Taylor, LL.D.," our conviction will be complete.

I, however, would not have it thought that Dr Taylor, though he could not write like Johnson (as, indeed, who could?), did not sometimes compose sermons as good as those which we generally have from very respectable divines. He showed me one with notes on the margin in Johnson's handwriting; and I was present when he read another to Johnson, that he might have his opinion of it, and Johnson said it was "very well." These, we may be sure, were not Johnson's; for he was above little arts, or tricks of deception.

Johnson was by no means of opinion that every man of a learned profession should consider it as incumbent upon him, or as necessary to his credit, to appear as an author. When in the ardour of ambition for literary fame, I regretted to him one day that an eminent judge had nothing of it, and therefore would leave no perpetual monument of himself to posterity—"Alas, sir," said Johnson, "what a mass of confusion should we have if every bishop and every judge, every lawyer, physician, and divine, were to write books!"

I mentioned to Johnson a respectable person of a very strong mind who had little of that tenderness which is common to human nature; as an instance of which, when I suggested to him that he should invite his son, who had

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been settled ten years in foreign parts, to come home and pay him a visit, his answer was : "No, no ; let him mind his business." JOHNSON : I do not agree with him, sir, in this. Getting money is not all a man's business : to cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life.

In the evening, Johnson being in very good spirits, entertained us with several characteristical portraits. I regret that any of them escaped my retention and diligence. I found, from experience, that to collect my friend's conversation so as to exhibit it with any degree of its original flavour, it was necessary to write it down without delay. To record his sayings, after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long-kept and faded fruits or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh.

I shall present my readers with a series of what I gathered this evening from the Johnsonian garden.

"My friend, the late Earl of Corke, had a great desire to maintain the literary character of his family : he was a genteel man, but did not keep up the dignity of his rank. He was so generally civil, that nobody thanked him for it."

"Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole as the phoenix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always been *at me* : but I would do Jack a kindness, rather than not. The contest is now over."

"Garrick's gaiety of conversation has delicacy and elegance : Foote makes you laugh more ; but Foote has the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company. He, indeed, well deserves his hire."

"Colley Cibber once consulted me as to one of his birthday odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages. Cibber lost patience, and would

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not read his ode to an end. When we had done with criticism we walked over to Richardson's, the author of *Clarissa*, and I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I 'did not treat Cibber with more *respect*.' Now, sir, to talk of *respect* for a *player*!" (smiling disdainfully). BOSWELL: There, sir, you are always heretical: you never will allow merit to a player. JOHNSON: Merit, sir! what merit? Do you respect a rope-dancer, or a ballad-singer? BOSWELL: No, sir: but we respect a great player, as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments, and can express them gracefully. JOHNSON: What, sir! a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries: "*I am Richard the Third!*"? Nay, sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things; he repeats and he sings: there is both recitation and music in his performance: the player only recites. BOSWELL: My dear sir! you may turn anything into ridicule. I allow that a player of farce is not entitled to respect; he does a little thing: but he who can represent exalted characters, and touch the noblest passions, has very respectable powers: and mankind have agreed in admiring great talents for the stage. We must consider, too, that a great player does what very few are capable to do: his art is a very rare faculty. *Who* can repeat Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be, or not to be," as Garrick does it? JOHNSON: Anybody may. Jemmy, there (a boy about eight years old, who was in the room), will do it as well in a week. BOSWELL: No, no, sir: and as a proof of the merit of great acting, and of the value which mankind set upon it, Garrick has got a hundred thousand pounds. JOHNSON: Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary.

This was most fallacious reasoning. I was *sure*, for once, that I had the best side of the argument. I boldly maintained the just distinction between a tragedian and a mere theatrical droll; between those who rouse our terror and pity, and those who only make us laugh. "If," said I, "Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect

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Betterton much more than Foote." JOHNSON: If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, sir, *quatenus* Foote, has powers superior to them all.

On Monday, 22nd September, when at breakfast, I unguardedly said to Dr Johnson: "I wish I saw you and Mrs Macaulay together." He grew very angry; and, after a pause, while a cloud gathered on his brow, he burst out: "No, sir; you would not see us quarrel, to make you sport. Don't you know that it is very uncivil to *pit* two people against one another?" Then, checking himself, and wishing to be more gentle, he added: "I do not say you should be hanged or drowned for this; but it *is* very uncivil." Dr Taylor thought him in the wrong, and spoke to him privately of it; but I afterwards acknowledged to Johnson that I was to blame, for I candidly owned that I meant to express a desire to see a contest between Mrs Macaulay and him; but then I knew how the contest would end, so that I was to see him triumph. JOHNSON: Sir, you cannot be sure how a contest will end; and no man has a right to engage two people in a dispute by which their passions may be inflamed, and they may part with bitter resentment against each other. I would sooner keep company with a man from whom I must guard my pockets, than with a man who contrives to bring me into a dispute with somebody that he may hear it. This is the great fault of — (naming one of our friends), endeavouring to introduce a subject upon which he knows two people in the company differ. BOSWELL: But he told me, sir, he does it for instruction. JOHNSON: Whatever the motive be, sir, the man who does so, does very wrong. He has no more right to instruct himself at such a risk, than he has to make two people fight a duel that he may learn how to defend himself.

He found great fault with a gentleman of our acquaintance for keeping a bad table. "Sir," said he, "when a man is invited to dinner, he is disappointed if he does not get something good. I advised Mrs Thrale, who has no card-

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parties at her house, to give sweetmeats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her; for everybody loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation." Such was his attention to the *minutiæ* of life and manners.

He thus characterised the Duke of Devonshire, grandfather of the present representative of that very respectable family: "He was not a man of superior abilities, but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year in his woods, he would not have contented himself with that excuse; he would have sent to Denmark for it. So unconditional was he in keeping his word; so high as to the point of honour." This was a liberal testimony from the Tory Johnson to the virtue of a great Whig nobleman.

Mr Burke's *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, on the Affairs of America*, being mentioned, Johnson censured the composition much, and he ridiculed the definition of a free government, viz. "For any practical purpose, it is what the people think so."¹ "I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions," said he, "for it is to be governed just as I please." And when Dr Taylor talked of a girl being sent to a parish workhouse, and asked how much she could be obliged to work—"Why," said Johnson, "as much as is reasonable: and what is that? as much as *she thinks* reasonable."

Dr Johnson obligingly proposed to carry me to see Islam, a romantic scene, now belonging to a family of the name of Port, but formerly the seat of the Congreves. I suppose it is well described in some of the tours. Johnson described it distinctly and vividly, at which I could not but express to him my wonder; because, though my eyes, as he observed, were better than his, I could not by any means equal him in representing visible objects. I said the difference between us in this respect was as that between

¹ 2nd edit., p. 53.

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a man who has a bad instrument, but plays well on it, and a man who has a good instrument, on which he can play very imperfectly.

I recollect a very fine amphitheatre, surrounded with hills covered with wood, and walks neatly formed along the side of a rocky steep, on the quarter next the house, with recesses under projections of rock, overshadowed with trees; in one of which recesses, we were told, Congreve wrote his *Old Bachelor*. We viewed a remarkable natural curiosity at Islam: two rivers bursting near each other from the rock, not from immediate springs, but after having run for many miles underground. Plott, in his *History of Staffordshire*,¹ gives an account of this curiosity; but Johnson would not believe it, though we had the attestation of the gardener, who said he had put in corks where the River Manyfold sinks into the ground, and had caught them in a net, placed before one of the openings where the water bursts out. Indeed such subterraneous courses of water are found in various parts of our globe.²

Talking of Dr Johnson's unwillingness to believe extraordinary things, I ventured to say: "Sir, you come near Hume's argument against miracles, 'That it is more probable witnesses should lie, or be mistaken, than that they should happen.'" JOHNSON: Why, sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right. But the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought.

He repeated his observation, that the differences among Christians are really of no consequence. "For instance," said he, "if a Protestant objects to a Papist: 'You worship images'; the Papist can answer: 'I do not insist on *your* doing it; you may be a very good Papist without it: I do it only as a help to my devotion.'" I said, the great article

¹ Page 89.

² See Plott's *History of Staffordshire*, p. 88, and the authorities referred to by him.

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of Christianity is the revelation of immortality. Johnson admitted it was.

In the evening, a gentleman-farmer, who was on a visit at Dr Taylor's, attempted to dispute with Johnson in favour of Mungo Campbell, who shot Alexander, Earl of Eglintoune, upon his having fallen, when retreating from his lordship, who he believed was about to seize his gun, as he had threatened to do. He said he should have done just as Campbell did. JOHNSON: Whoever would do as Campbell did deserves to be hanged; not that I could, as a juryman, have found him legally guilty of murder, but I am glad they found means to convict him.—The gentleman-farmer said: "A poor man has as much honour as a rich man; and Campbell had *that* to defend." Johnson exclaimed: "A poor man has no honour." The English yeoman, not dismayed, proceeded: "Lord Eglintoune was a damned fool to run on upon Campbell, after being warned that Campbell would shoot him if he did." Johnson, who could not bear anything like swearing, angrily replied: "He was *not* a *damned* fool: he only thought too well of Campbell. He did not believe Campbell would be such a *damned* scoundrel as to do so *damned* a thing." His emphasis on *damned*, accompanied with frowning looks, reproved his opponent's want of decorum in *his* presence.

Talking of the danger of being mortified by rejection, when making approaches to the acquaintance of the great, I observed: "I am, however, generally for trying, 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'" JOHNSON: Very true, sir; but I have always been more afraid of failing than hopeful of success.—And, indeed, though he had all just respect for rank, no man ever less courted the favour of the great.

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson seemed to be more uniformly social, cheerful, and alert, than I had almost ever seen him. He was prompt on great occasions and on small. Taylor, who praised everything of his own to excess, in short, "whose geese were all swans," as the proverb says, expatiated on the excellence of his bull-dog, which

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he told us was "perfectly well shaped." Johnson, after examining the animal attentively, thus repressed the vain-glory of our host: "No, sir, he is *not* well shaped; for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind, which a bull-dog ought to have." This *tenuity* was the only *hard word* that I heard him use during this interview, and it will be observed he instantly put another expression in its place. Taylor said a small bull-dog was as good as a large one. JOHNSON: No, sir; for, in proportion to his size, he has strength: and your argument would prove that a good bull-dog may be as small as a mouse.—It was amazing how he entered with perspicuity and keenness upon everything that occurred in conversation. Most men whom I know would no more think of discussing a question about a bull-dog, than of attacking a bull.

I cannot allow any fragment whatever that floats in my memory concerning the great subject of this work to be lost. Though a small particular may appear trifling to some, it will be relished by others; while every little spark adds something to the general blaze: and to please the true, candid, warm admirers of Johnson, and in any degree increase the splendour of his reputation, I bid defiance to the shafts of ridicule, or even of malignity. Showers of them have been discharged at my *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*; yet it still sails unhurt along the stream of time, and, as an attendant upon Johnson,

"Pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale."

One morning after breakfast, when the sun shone bright, we walked out together, and "pored" for some time with placid indolence upon an artificial waterfall which Dr Taylor had made by building a strong dyke of stone across the river behind his garden. It was now somewhat obstructed by branches of trees and other rubbish which had come down the river and settled close to it. Johnson, partly from a

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desire to see it play more freely, and partly from that inclination to activity which will animate, at times, the most inert and sluggish mortal, took a long pole which was lying on the bank and pushed down several parcels of this wreck with painful assiduity, while I stood quietly by, wondering to behold the sage thus curiously employed, and smiling with a humorous satisfaction each time when he carried his point. He worked till he was quite out of breath; and having found a large dead cat so heavy that he could not move it after several efforts: "Come," said he, throwing down the pole, "*you* shall take it now"; which I accordingly did, and being a fresh man, soon made the cat tumble over the cascade. This may be laughed at as too trifling to record, but it is a small characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I give of my friend, and in which, therefore, I mark the most minute particulars. And let it be remembered that "*Æsop at play*" is one of the instructive apologues of antiquity.

I mentioned an old gentleman of our acquaintance whose memory was beginning to fail. JOHNSON: There must be a diseased mind where there is a failure of memory at seventy. A man's head, sir, must be morbid if he fails so soon.—My friend, being now himself sixty-eight, might think thus: but I imagine that *threescore and ten*, the Psalmist's period of sound human life, in later ages may have a failure, though there be no disease in the constitution.

Talking of Rochester's *Poems*, he said, he had given them to Mr Steevens to castrate for the edition of the *Poets*, to which he was to write Prefaces. Dr Taylor (the only time I ever heard him say anything witty¹) observed, that "if Rochester had been castrated himself his exceptional poems would not have been written." I asked if Burnet had not given a good *Life* of Rochester. JOHNSON: We have a good *Death*: there is not much *Life*. I asked whether Prior's *Poems* were to be printed entire: Johnson said they

¹ I am told, that the Honourable Horace Walpole has a collection of *bon mots* by persons who never said but one.

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were. I mentioned Lord Hailes's censure of Prior in his Preface to a collection of *Sacred Poems*, by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions "those impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious author." JOHNSON: Sir, Lord Hailes has forgot. There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. If Lord Hailes thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people.—I instanced the tale of "Paulo Purganti and his Wife." JOHNSON: Sir, there is nothing there but that his wife wanted to be kissed when poor Paulo was out of pocket. No, sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library.

The hypochondriac disorder being mentioned, Dr Johnson did not think it so common as I supposed. "Dr Taylor," said he, "is the same one day as another. Burke and Reynolds are the same. Beauclerk, except when in pain, is the same. I am not so myself; but this I do not mention commonly."

I complained of a wretched changefulness, so that I could not preserve, for any long continuance, the same views of anything. It was most comfortable to me to experience, in Dr Johnson's company, a relief from this uneasiness. His steady vigorous mind held firm before me those objects which my own feeble and tremulous imagination frequently presented, in such a wavering state that my reason could not judge well of them.

Dr Johnson advised me to-day, to have as many books about me as I could, that I might read upon any subject upon which I had a desire for instruction at the time. "What you read *then*," said he, "you will remember; but if you have not a book immediately ready, and the subject moulds in your mind, it is a chance if you again have a desire to study it." He added: "If a man never has an eager desire for instruction, he should prescribe a task for himself. But it is better when a man reads from immediate inclination."

He repeated a good many lines of Horace's *Odes*, while

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we were in the chaise. I remember particularly the ode "*Eheu fugaces.*"

He said, the dispute as to the comparative excellence of Homer or Virgil¹ was inaccurate. "We must consider," said he, "whether Homer was not the greatest poet, though Virgil may have produced the finest poem. Virgil was indebted to Homer for the whole invention of the structure of an epic poem, and for many of his beauties."

He told me, that Bacon was a favourite author with him; but he had never read his works till he was compiling the *English Dictionary*, in which, he said, I might see Bacon very often quoted. Mr Seward recollects his having mentioned that a dictionary of the English language might be compiled from Bacon's writings alone, and that he had once an intention of giving an edition of Bacon, at least of his English works, and writing the *Life* of that great man. Had he executed this intention, there can be no doubt that he would have done it in a most masterly manner. Mallet's *Life of Bacon* has no inconsiderable merit as an acute and elegant dissertation relative to its subject; but Mallet's mind was not comprehensive enough to embrace the vast extent of Lord Verulam's genius and research. Dr Warburton therefore observed, with witty justness, "that Mallet in his *Life of Bacon* had forgotten that he was a philosopher; and if he should write the *Life of the Duke of Marlborough*, which he had undertaken to do, he would probably forget that he was a General."

Wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and mine had told me to his disadvantage, I mentioned it to him in direct terms; and it was to this effect: that a gentleman who had lived in great intimacy with him, shown him much kindness, and

¹ I am informed by Mr Langton, that a great many years ago he was present when this question was agitated between Dr Johnson and Mr Burke; and, to use Johnson's phrase, they "talked their best"; Johnson for Homer, Burke for Virgil. It may well be supposed to have been one of the ablest and most brilliant contests that ever was exhibited. How much must we regret that it has not been preserved.

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even relieved him from a spunging house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison; that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking; upon which the gentleman's sister, who was present, could not suppress her indignation: "What, sir!" said she, "are you so unfeeling as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress; you who have been so much obliged to him?" And that Johnson answered: "Madam, I owe him no obligation; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

Johnson assured me, that the story was absolutely false; but like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus: "Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest; but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much; yet, in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did so, that as his generosity proceeded from no principle, but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend: but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much, or an equally large sum, to relieve a friend, it cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman; and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a sally as might escape one when painting a man highly."

On Tuesday, 23rd September, Johnson was remarkably cordial to me. It being necessary for me to return to Scotland

THE LIFE OF DR JOHNSON

soon, I had fixed on the next day for my setting out, and I felt a tender concern at the thought of parting with him. He had, at this time, frankly communicated to me many particulars, which are inserted in this work in their proper places; and once, when I happened to mention that the expense of my jaunt would come to much more than I had computed, he said: "Why, sir, if the expense were to be an inconvenience, you would have reason to regret it; but if you have had the money to spend, I know not that you could have purchased as much pleasure with it in any other way."

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson and I frequently talked with wonderful pleasure of mere trifles which had occurred in our tour to the Hebrides; for it had left a most agreeable and lasting impression upon his mind.

He found fault with me for using the phrase to *make* money. "Don't you see," said he, "the impropriety of it? To *make* money is to *coin* it: you should say *get* money." The phrase, however, is, I think, pretty current. But Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms; such as, *pledging myself*, for *undertaking*; *line*, for *department* or *branch*, as, the *civil line*, the *banking line*. He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea* in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building; but we cannot surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law "delivering their *ideas* upon the question under consideration"; and the first speakers in Parliament "entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member"—or "reprobating an *idea* unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country." Johnson called this "modern cant."

I perceived that he pronounced the word *heard* as if

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spelt with a double *e*, *heerd*, instead of sounding it *herd*, as is most usually done. He said, his reason was, that if it were pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.

He praised Granger's *Ode on Solitude*, in Dodsley's collection, and repeated, with great energy, the exordium :

“ O Solitude, romantic maid,
Whether by nodding towers you tread ;
Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb ;
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,
Or by the Nile's coy source abide ;
Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,
From Hecla view the thawing deep ;
Or, at the purple dawn of day,
Tadnor's marble wastes survey.”

observing, “ This, sir, is very noble.”

In the evening our gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle. Johnson desired to have *Let ambition fire thy mind* played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it; though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the power of music. I told him, that it affected me to such a degree as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears, and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of a battle. “ Sir,” said he, “ I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool.”

Much of the effect of music, I am satisfied, is owing to association of ideas. That air which instantly and irresistibly excites in the Swiss, when in a foreign land, the *maladie du pais*, has, I am told, no intrinsic power of sound. And I know from my own experience that Scotch reels, though

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brisk, make me melancholy, because I used to hear them in my early years, at a time when Mr Pitt called for soldiers "from the mountains of the north," and numbers of brave Highlanders were going abroad, never to return. Whereas the airs in *The Beggar's Opera*, many of which are very soft, never fail to render me gay, because they are associated with the warm sensations and high spirits of London. This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr Johnson, as my preceptor and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him: "My dear sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON: Nay, sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not choose to be always repeating it: write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again.

I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man," in this life, as displayed in his *Vanity of Human Wishes*. Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness: grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of public amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON: Alas, sir, these are all only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh, it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced anywhere else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual there, would be distressing when alone. This reflection was experimentally just. The feeling of

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languor¹ which succeeds the animation of gaiety is itself a very severe pain; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and ex-cruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true?

I suggested, that being in love, and flattered with hopes of success, or having some favourite scheme in view for the next day, might prevent that wretchedness of which we had been talking. JOHNSON: Why, sir, it may sometimes be so as you suppose; but my conclusion is in general but too true.

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr Taylor's garden, at a pretty late hour, in a serene autumn night, looking up to the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame. "Sir," said he, "I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually." I ventured to ask him whether, although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrine of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative, and would not literally be executed. JOHNSON: Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security; nay, we know that some of them have fallen. It may therefore perhaps be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a state of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have

¹ Pope mentions,

"Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair."

But I recollect a couplet quite apposite to my subject in *Virtue, an Ethic Epistle*, a beautiful and instructive poem, by an anonymous writer, in 1758; who, treating of pleasure in excess, says,

"Till languor, suffering on the rack of bliss,
Confess that man was never made for this."

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deviated from it; but we may hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are, as you observe, indeed strong; but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation.—He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

After supper I accompanied him to his apartment, and at my request he dictated to me an argument in favour of the negro who was then claiming his liberty, in an action in the Court of Session in Scotland.¹ He had always been very zealous against slavery in every form, in which I with all deference thought that he discovered “a zeal without knowledge.” Upon one occasion, when in company with some very grave men at Oxford, his toast was: “Here’s to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies!” His violent prejudice against our West Indian and American settlers appeared whenever there was an opportunity. Towards the conclusion of his *Taxation no Tyranny*, he says: “How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?” And in his conversation with Mr Wilkes,² he asked: “Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?” That Trecothick could both speak and write good English is well known. I myself was favoured with his correspondence concerning the brave Corsicans. And that Beckford could speak it with a spirit of honest resolution even to his Majesty, as his “faithful Lord Mayor of London,” is commemorated by the noble monument erected to him in Guildhall.

When I said now to Johnson, that I was afraid I kept him too late up—“No, sir,” said he, “I don’t care though I sit all night with you.” This was an animated speech from a man in his sixty-ninth year.

Had I been as attentive not to displease him as I ought

¹ This being laid up somewhere amidst my multiplicity of papers at Auchinleck, has escaped my search for this work; but, when found, I shall take care that my readers shall have it.

² See p. 324 of this volume.

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to have been, I know not but this vigil might have been fulfilled; but I unluckily entered upon the controversy concerning the right of Great Britain to tax America, and attempted to argue in favour of our fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantic. I insisted that America might be very well governed, and made to yield a sufficient revenue by the means of *influence*, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives, without whose consent money could not be exacted from them. Johnson could not bear my thus opposing his avowed opinion, which he had exerted himself with an extreme degree of heat to enforce; and the violent agitation into which he was thrown while answering, or rather reprimanding me, alarmed me, so that I heartily repented of my having unthinkingly introduced the subject. I myself however grew warm, and the change was great, from the calm state of philosophical discussion in which we had a little before been pleasingly employed.

I talked of the corruption of the British Parliament, in which I alleged that any question, however unreasonable or unjust, might be carried by a venal majority; and I spoke with high admiration of the Roman Senate, as if composed of men sincerely desirous to resolve what they should think best for their country. My friend would allow no such character to the Roman Senate; and he maintained that the British Parliament was not corrupt, and that there was no occasion to corrupt its members, asserting that there was hardly ever any question of great importance before Parliament, any question in which a man might not very well vote either upon one side or the other. He said there had been none in his time except that respecting America.

We were fatigued by the contest, which was produced by my want of caution; and he was not then in the humour to slide into easy and cheerful talk. It therefore so happened, that we were after an hour or two very willing to separate and go to bed.

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On Wednesday, 24th September, I went into Dr Johnson's room before he got up, and finding that the storm of the preceding night was quite laid, I sat down upon his bedside, and he talked with as much readiness and good humour as ever. He recommended to me to plant a considerable part of a large moorish farm which I had purchased, and he made several calculations of the expense and profit, for he delighted in exercising his mind on the science of numbers. He pressed upon me the importance of planting at the first in a very sufficient manner, quoting the saying, "*In bello non licet bis errare*"; and adding, "this is equally true in planting."

I spoke with gratitude of Dr Taylor's hospitality; and as evidence that it was not on account of his good table alone that Johnson visited him often, I mentioned a little anecdote which had escaped my friend's recollection, and at hearing which repeated he smiled. One evening when I was sitting with him, Frank delivered this message: "Sir, Dr Taylor sends his compliments to you, and begs you will dine with him to-morrow. He has got a hare." "My compliments," said Johnson, "and I'll dine with him, hare or rabbit."

After breakfast I departed, and pursued my journey northwards. I took my post-chaise from the Green Man, a very good inn at Ashbourne, the mistress of which, a mighty civil gentlewoman, curtseying very low, presented me with an engraving of the sign of her house; to which she had subjoined, in her own handwriting, an address in such singular simplicity of style that I have preserved it pasted upon one of the boards of my original Journal at this time, and shall here insert it for the amusement of my readers:

"M. KILLINGLEY'S duty waits upon Mr Boswell, is exceedingly obliged to him for this favour; whenever he comes this way, hopes for a continuance of the same. Would Mr Boswell name the house to his extensive acquaintance, it would

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be a singular favour confer'd on one who has it not in her power to make any other return but her most grateful thanks, and sincerest prayers for his happiness in time, and in a blessed eternity.

"Tuesday morn."

From this meeting at Ashbourne I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store. I communicated my original Journal to Sir William Forbes, in whom I have always placed deserved confidence; and what he wrote to me concerning it is so much to my credit as the biographer of Johnson, that my readers will, I hope, grant me their indulgence for here inserting it: "It is not once or twice going over it," says Sir William, "that will satisfy me; for I find in it a high degree of instruction as well as entertainment; and I derive more benefit from Dr Johnson's admirable discussions than I should be able to draw from his personal conversation; for, I suppose, there is not a man in the world to whom he discloses his sentiments so freely as to yourself."

I cannot omit a curious circumstance which occurred at Edensor Inn, close by Chatsworth, to survey the magnificence of which I had gone a considerable way out of my road to Scotland. The inn was then kept by a very jolly landlord, whose name I think was Malton. He happened to mention that "the celebrated Dr Johnson had been in his house." I inquired *who* this Dr Johnson was, that I might hear mine host's notion of him. "Sir," said he, "Johnson, the great writer; *Oddity*, as they call him. He's the greatest writer in England; he writes for the ministry; he has a correspondence abroad, and lets them know what's going on."

My friend, who had a thorough dependence upon the authenticity of my relation without any *embellishment*, as *falsehood* or *fiction* is too gently called, laughed a good deal at this representation of himself.

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Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, *Sept. 29, 1777.*

MY DEAR SIR,—By the first post I inform you of my safe arrival at my own house, and that I had the comfort of finding my wife and children all in good health.

When I look back upon our late interview, it appears to me to have answered expectation better than almost any scheme of happiness that I ever put in execution. My Journal is stored with wisdom and wit; and my memory is filled with the recollection of lively and affectionate feelings, which now, I think, yield me more satisfaction than at the time when they were first excited. I have experienced this upon other occasions. I will be obliged to you if you will explain it to me; for it seems wonderful that pleasure should be more vivid at a distance than when near. I wish you may find yourself in the humour to do me this favour; but I flatter myself with no strong hope of it; for I have observed, that unless upon very serious occasions, your letters to me are not *answers* to those which I write.

[I then expressed to him much uneasiness that I had mentioned to him the name of the gentleman who had told me the story so much to his disadvantage, the truth of which he had completely refuted; for that my having done so might be interpreted as a breach of confidence, and offend one whose society I valued—therefore earnestly requesting that no notice might be taken of it to anybody, till I should be in London, and have an opportunity to talk it over with the gentleman.]

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—You will wonder, or you have wondered, why no letter has come from me. What you wrote at your return, had in it such a strain of cowardly caution as gave

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me no pleasure. I could not well do what you wished ; I had no need to vex you with a refusal. I have seen Mr ———, and as to him have set all right, without any inconvenience, so far as I know, to you. Mrs Thrale had forgot the story. You may now be at ease.

And at ease I certainly wish you, for the kindness that you showed in coming so long a journey to see me. It was pity to keep you so long in pain, but, upon reviewing the matter, I do not see what I could have done better than as I did.

I hope you found at your return my dear enemy and all her little people quite well, and had no reason to repent your journey. I think on it with great gratitude.

I was not well when you left me at the Doctor's, and I grew worse ; yet I stayed on, and at Lichfield was very ill. Travelling, however, did not make me worse ; and when I came to London I complied with a summons to go to Brighthelmston, where I saw Beauclerk, and stayed three days.

Our club has recommenced last Friday, but I was not there. Langton has another wench.¹ Mrs Thrale is in hopes of a young brewer. They got by their trade last year a very large sum, and their expenses are proportionate.

Mrs Williams's health is very bad. And I have had for some time a very difficult and laborious respiration, but I am better by purges, abstinence, and other methods. I am yet, however, much behindhand in my health and rest.

Dr Blair's *Sermons* are now universally commended, but let him think that I had the honour of first finding and first praising his excellencies. I did not stay to add my voice to that of the public.

My dear friend, let me thank you once more for your visit ; you did me great honour, and I hope met with nothing that displeased you. I stayed long at Ashbourne, not much pleased, yet awkward at departing. I then went to Lichfield, where I found my friend at Stowhill² very dangerously

¹ A daughter born to him.

² Mrs Aston.

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diseased. Such is life. Let us try to pass it well, whatever it be, for there is surely something beyond it.

Well, now I hope all is well, write as soon as you can to, dear Sir, your affectionate servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

LONDON, Nov. 25, 1777.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Nov. 29, 1777.

MY DEAR SIR,—This day's post has at length relieved me from much uneasiness, by bringing me a letter from you. I was, indeed, doubly uneasy—on my own account and yours. I was very anxious to be secured against any bad consequences from my imprudence in mentioning the gentleman's name who had told me a story to your disadvantage; and as I could hardly suppose it possible that you would delay so long to make me easy, unless you was ill, I was not a little apprehensive about you. You must not be offended when I venture to tell you that you appear to me to have been too rigid upon this occasion. The "*cowardly caution which gave you no pleasure*," was suggested to me by a friend here, to whom I mentioned the strange story and the detection of its falsity, as an instance how one may be deceived by what is apparently very good authority. But, as I am still persuaded, that as I might have obtained the truth, without mentioning the gentleman's name, it was wrong in me to do it, I cannot see that you are just in blaming my caution. But if you were ever so just in your disapprobation, might you not have dealt more tenderly with me?

I went to Auchinleck about the middle of October, and passed some time with my father very comfortably.

* * * * *

I am engaged in a criminal prosecution against a country schoolmaster, for indecent behaviour to his female scholars. There is no statute against such abominable conduct; but

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it is punishable at common law. I will be obliged to you for your assistance in this extraordinary trial. I ever am, my dear Sir, your faithful humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

About this time I wrote to Johnson, giving him an account of the decision of the Negro cause, by the Court of Session, which by those who hold even the mildest and best regulated slavery in abomination (of which number I do not hesitate to declare that I am none) should be remembered with high respect, and to the credit of Scotland; for it went upon a much broader ground than the case of Somerset which was decided in England¹; being truly the general question, whether a perpetual obligation of service to one master in any mode should be sanctioned by the law of a free country. A negro, then, called Joseph Knight, a native of Africa, who having been brought to Jamaica in the usual course of the slave trade, and purchased by a Scotch gentleman in that island, had attended his master to Scotland, where it was officiously suggested to him that he would be found entitled to his liberty without any limitation. He accordingly brought his action, in the course of which the advocates on both sides did themselves great honour. Mr Maclaurin has had the praise of Johnson, for his argument² in favour of the negro, and Mr Macconochie distinguished himself on the same side, by his ingenuity and extraordinary research. Mr Cullen, on the part of the master, discovered good information and sound reasoning; in which he was well supported by Mr James Fergusson, a man remarkable for a manly understanding and a knowledge both of books

¹ See *State Trials*, vol. xi., p. 339, and Mr Hargrave's argument.

² The motto to it was happily chosen:

“——*Nimium ne crede colori.*”

I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance no less strange than true, that a brother advocate in considerable practice, but of whom it certainly cannot be said, *Ingenuas didicit fideliter artes*, asked Mr Maclaurin, with a face of flippant assurance, “Are those words your own?”

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and of the world. But I cannot too highly praise the speech which Mr Henry Dundas generously contributed to the cause of the sooty stranger. Mr Dundas's Scottish accent, which has been so often in vain obtruded as an objection to his powerful abilities in Parliament, was no disadvantage to him in his own country. And I do declare that upon this memorable question he impressed me, and I believe all his audience, with such feelings as were produced by some of the most eminent orations of antiquity. This testimony I liberally give to the excellence of an old friend, with whom it has been my lot to differ very widely upon many political topics; yet I persuade myself without malice. A great majority of the Lords of Session decided for the negro. But four of their number, the Lord President, Lord Ellick, Lord Monboddo, and Lord Covington, resolutely maintained the lawfulness of a *status*, which has been acknowledged in all ages and countries, and that when freedom flourished, as in old Greece and Rome.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—This is the time of the year in which all express their good wishes to their friends, and I send mine to you and your family. May your lives be long, happy, and good. I have been much out of order, but, I hope, do not grow worse.

The crime of the schoolmaster whom you are engaged to prosecute is very great, and may be suspected to be too common. In our law it would be a breach of the peace, and a misdemeanour; that is, a kind of indefinite crime, not capital, but punishable at the discretion of the Court. You cannot want matter: all that needs to be said will easily occur.

Mr Shaw, the author of the *Gaelic Grammar*, desires me to make a request for him to Lord Eglintoune, that he may be appointed Chaplain to one of the new-raised regiments.

All our friends are as they were; little has happened to

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them of either good or bad. Mrs Thrale ran a great black hair-dressing pin into her eye; but by great evacuation she kept it from inflaming, and it is almost well. Miss Reynolds has been out of order, but is better. Mrs Williams is in a very poor state of health.

If I should write on, I should, perhaps, write only complaints, and therefore I will content myself with telling you that I love to think on you, and to hear from you; and that I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

SAM. JOHNSON.

December 27, 1777.

1778. *Ætat.* 69. In 1778 Johnson gave the world a luminous proof that the vigour of his mind in all its faculties, whether memory, judgment, or imagination, was not in the least abated; for this year came out the first four volumes of his *Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets*,* published by the booksellers of London. The remaining volumes came out in the year 1780. The poets were selected by the several booksellers who had the honorary copyright, which is still preserved among them by mutual compact, notwithstanding the decision of the House of Lords against the perpetuity of Literary Property. We have his own authority,¹ that by his recommendation the poems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were added to the collection. Of this work I shall speak more particularly hereafter.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Jan. 8, 1778.

DEAR SIR,—Your congratulations upon a new year are mixed with complaint: mine must be so too. My wife has for some time been very ill, having been confined to the house these three months by a severe cold, attended with alarming symptoms.

¹ *Life of Watts.*

P R E F A C E S,
B I O G R A P H I C A L
A N D
C R I T I C A L,
T O T H E
W O R K S
O F T H E
E N G L I S H P O E T S
B Y S A M U E L J O H N S O N.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED BY J. NICHOLS;

FOR C. BATHURST, J. BUCKLAND, W. STRAHAN, J. RIVINGTON AND SONS, T. DAVIES, T. PAYNE, L. DAVIS, W. OWEN,
S. WHITE, S. CROWDER, T. CASLON, T. LONOMAN,
H. LAW, E. AND C. DILLY, J. DODSLEY, H. BALDWIN,
J. WILKIE, J. ROSSON, J. JOHNSON, T. LOWNDEN,
T. BECKET, G. ROBINSON, T. CADELL, W. DAVIS,
J. NICHOLS, P. NEWBERRY, T. EVANS, J. HINDLEY,
R. BALDWIN, G. NICOL, LEIGH AND
SOTHERBY, J. BEW, N. CONANT,
J. MURRAY, W. FOX, J. BOWEN.

M DCC LXXIX.

TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE "PREFACES"

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THE LIFE OF DR JOHNSON

[Here I gave a particular account of the distress which the person, upon every account most dear to me, suffered ; and of the dismal state of apprehension in which I now was. Adding, that I never stood more in need of his consoling philosophy.]

Did you ever look at a book written by Wilson, a Scotchman, under the Latin name of *Volusenus*, according to the custom of literary men at a certain period? It is entitled *De Animi Tranquillitate*. I earnestly desire tranquillity. *Bona res quies* ; but I fear I shall never attain it : for, when unoccupied, I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness.

* * * * *

I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,
JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—To a letter so interesting as your last, it is proper to return some answer, however little I may be disposed to write.

Your alarm at your lady's illness was reasonable, and not disproportionate to the appearance of the disorder. I hope your physical friend's conjecture is now verified, and all fear of a consumption at an end : a little care and exercise will then restore her. London is a good air for ladies ; and if you bring her hither, I will do for her what she did for me—I will retire from my apartments, for her accommodation. Behave kindly to her, and keep her cheerful.

You always seem to call for tenderness. Know then, that in the first month of the present year I very highly esteem and very cordially love you. I hope to tell you this at the beginning of every year as long as we live ; and why should we trouble ourselves to tell or hear it oftener?

Tell Veronica, Euphemia, and Alexander, that I wish them, as well as their parents, many happy years.

You have ended the negro's cause much to my mind.

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Lord Auchinleck and dear Lord Hailes were on the side of liberty. Lord Hailes's name reproaches me ; but if he saw my languid neglect of my own affairs, he would rather pity than resent my neglect of his. I hope to mend, *ut et mihi vivam et amicis*. I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

SAM. JOHNSON.

January 24, 1778.

My service to my fellow-traveller, Joseph.

To DR SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDINBURGH, Feb. 26, 1778.

MY DEAR SIR,—Why I have delayed, for near a month, to thank you for your last affectionate letter, I cannot say ; for my mind has been in better health these three weeks than for some years past. I believe I have evaded till I could send you a copy of Lord Hailes's opinion on the negro's cause, which he wishes you to read, and correct any errors that there may be in the language ; “for,” says he, “we live in a critical though not a learned age ; and I seek to screen myself under the shield of Ajax.” I communicated to him your apology for keeping the sheets of his *Annals* so long. He says : “I am sorry to see that Dr Johnson is in a state of languor. Why should a sober Christian, neither an enthusiast nor a fanatic, be very merry or very sad ?” I envy his lordship's comfortable constitution : but well do I know that languor and dejection will afflict the best, however excellent their principles. I am in possession of Lord Hailes's opinion in his own handwriting, and have had it for some time. My excuse then for procrastination must be, that I wanted to have it copied ; and I have now put that off so long, that it will be better to bring it with me than send it, as I shall probably get you to look at it sooner when I solicit you in person.

My wife, who is, I thank God, a good deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment : but, if she goes to London, it will

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be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde Park. I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis, for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling; and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have them with her.

I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the House of Lords as one of Douglas's counsel, in the great and last competition between Duke Hamilton and him.

* * * * *

I am sorry poor Mrs Williams is so ill: though her temper is unpleasant, she has always been polite and obliging to me. I wish many happy years to good Mr Levett, who I suppose holds his usual place at your breakfast-table.¹

I ever am, my dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,
JAMES BOSWELL.

To the Same

EDINBURGH, Feb. 28, 1778.

MY DEAR SIR,—You are at present busy amongst the English poets, preparing, for the public instruction and entertainment, Prefaces, biographical and critical. It will not, therefore, be out of season to appeal to you for the decision of a controversy which has arisen between a lady and me concerning a passage in Parnell. That poet tells us, that his Hermit quitted his cell

“————— to know the world by sight,
To find if *books* or *swains* report it right;
(For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew).”

¹ Dr Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, humorously observed, that Levett used to breakfast on the crust of a roll, which Johnson, after tearing out the crumb for himself, threw to his humble friend.

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I maintain, that there is an inconsistency here; for as the Hermit's notions of the world were formed from the reports both of *books* and *swains*, he could not justly be said to know by *swains alone*. Be pleased to judge between us, and let us have your reasons.

What do you say to *Taxation no Tyranny* now, after Lord North's declaration, or confession, or whatever else his conciliatory speech should be called? I never differed from you on politics but upon two points—the Middlesex Election, and the Taxation of the Americans by the British *Houses of Representatives*. There is a *charm* in the word *Parliament*, so I avoid it. As I am a steady and a warm Tory, I regret that the King does not see it to be better for him to receive constitutional supplies from his American subjects by the voice of their own assemblies, where his Royal Person is represented, than through the medium of his British subjects. I am persuaded that the power of the Crown, which I wish to increase, would be greater when in contact with all its dominions than if "the rays of regal bounty"¹ were to "shine" upon America, through that dense and troubled body—a modern British Parliament. But, enough of this subject; for your angry voice at Ashbourne upon it still sounds awful "in my mind's ears." I ever am, my dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To the Same

EDINBURGH, *March 12, 1778.*

MY DEAR SIR,—The alarm of your late illness distressed me but for a few hours; for on the evening of the day that it reached me I found it contradicted in *The London Chronicle*, which I could depend upon as authentic concerning you, Mr Strahan being the printer of it. I did not see the paper

¹ Alluding to a line in his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, when describing Cardinal Wolsey in his state of elevation,

"Through him the rays of regal bounty shine."

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in which "the approaching extinction of a bright luminary" was announced. Sir William Forbes told me of it; and he says, he saw me so uneasy, that he did not give me the report in such strong terms as he had read it. He afterwards sent me a letter from Mr Langton to him, which relieved me much. I am, however, not quite easy, as I have not heard from you; and now I shall not have that comfort before I see you, for I set out for London to-morrow before the post comes in. I hope to be with you on Wednesday morning; and I ever am, with the highest veneration, my dear Sir, your much obliged faithful and affectionate humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

On Wednesday, 18th March, I arrived in London, and was informed by good Mr Francis that his master was better, and was gone to Mr Thrale's at Streatham, to which place I wrote to him, begging to know when he would be in town. He was not expected for some time; but next day having called on Dr Taylor, in Dean's Yard, Westminster, I found him there, and was told he had come to town for a few hours. He met me with his usual kindness, but instantly returned to the writing of something on which he was employed when I came in, and on which he seemed much intent. Finding him thus engaged, I made my visit very short, and had no more of his conversation, except his expressing a serious regret that a friend of ours was living at too much expense, considering how poor an appearance he made. "If," said he, "a man has splendour from his expense, if he spends his money in pride or in pleasure, he has value; but if he lets others spend it for him, which is most commonly the case, he has no advantage from it."

On Friday, 20th March, I found him at his own house, sitting with Mrs Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose, Mrs Desmoulins,¹ and I think her daughter, and

¹ Daughter of Dr Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, and widow of Mr Desmoulins, a writing-master.

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a Miss Carmichael, being all lodged in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity, that Mrs Desmoulins herself told me he allowed her half-a-guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension.

His liberality, indeed, was at all periods of his life very remarkable. Mr Howard, of Lichfield, at whose father's house Johnson had in his early years been kindly received, told me, that when he was a boy at the Charter-house his father wrote to him to go and pay a visit to Mr Samuel Johnson, which he accordingly did, and found him in an upper room, of poor appearance. Johnson received him with much courteousness, and talked a great deal to him, as to a schoolboy, of the course of his education, and other particulars. When he afterwards came to know and understand the high character of this great man, he recollected his condescension with wonder. He added, that when he was going away, Mr Johnson presented him with half-a-guinea; and this, said Mr Howard, was at a time when he probably had not another.

We retired from Mrs Williams to another room. Tom Davies soon after joined us. He had now unfortunately failed in his circumstances, and was much indebted to Dr Johnson's kindness for obtaining for him many alleviations of his distress. After he went away, Johnson blamed his folly in quitting the stage, by which he and his wife got five hundred pounds a year. I said, I believed it was owing to Churchill's attack upon him:

“He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone.”

JOHNSON: I believe so too, sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line? Another line would have driven him from his shop.

I told him, that I was engaged as counsel at the bar of the House of Commons to oppose a Road Bill in the county of Stirling, and asked him what mode he would advise me to follow in addressing such an audience. JOHNSON: Why,

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sir, you must provide yourself with a good deal of extraneous matter, which you are to produce occasionally, so as to fill up the time; for you must consider that they do not listen much. If you begin with the strength of your cause, it may be lost before they begin to listen. When you catch a moment of attention, press the merits of the question upon them.—He said, as to one point of the merits, that he thought “it would be a wrong thing to deprive the small landholders of the privilege of assessing themselves for making and repairing the high roads; *it was destroying so much liberty, without a good reason, which was always a bad thing.*” When I mentioned this observation next day to Mr Wilkes, he pleasantly said: “What! does *he* talk of liberty? *Liberty* is as ridiculous in *his* mouth as *Religion* in *mine.*” Mr Wilkes’s advice, as to the best mode of speaking at the bar of the House of Commons, was not more respectful towards the senate than that of Dr Johnson. “Be as impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee is the best heard there of any counsel; and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us.”

In my interview with Dr Johnson this evening, I was quite easy, quite as his companion; upon which I find in my Journal the following reflection: “So ready is my mind to suggest matter for dissatisfaction, that I felt a sort of regret that I was so easy. I missed that awful reverence with which I used to contemplate *Mr Samuel Johnson*, in the complex magnitude of his literary, moral, and religious character. I have a wonderful superstitious love of *mystery*; when, perhaps, the truth is, that it is owing to the cloudy darkness of my own mind. I should be glad that I am more advanced in my progress of being, so that I can view Dr Johnson with a steadier and clearer eye. My dissatisfaction to-night was foolish. Would it not be foolish to regret that we shall have less mystery in a future state? That we ‘now see in a glass darkly,’ but shall ‘then see face to face’”? This reflection, which I thus freely communicate, will be

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valued by the thinking part of my readers, who may have themselves experienced similar states of mind.

He returned next day to Streatham, to Mr Thrale's; where, as Mr Strahan once complained to me, "he was in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends." I was kept in London by business, and wrote to him on the 27th, that "a separation from him for a week, when we were so near, was equal to a separation for a year, when we were at four hundred miles distance." I went to Streatham on Monday, 30th March. Before he appeared, Mrs Thrale made a very characteristic remark: "I do not know for certain what will please Dr Johnson: but I know for certain that it will displease him to praise anything, even what he likes, extravagantly."

At dinner, he laughed at querulous declamations against the age, on account of luxury—increase of London—scarcity of provisions—and other such topics. "Houses," said he, "will be built till rents fall; and corn is more plentiful now than ever it was."

I had before dinner repeated a ridiculous story told me by an old man who had been a passenger with me in the stage-coach to-day. Mrs Thrale, having taken occasion to allude to it in talking to me, called it "The story told you by the old *woman*." "Now, madam," said I, "give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this." I presumed to take an opportunity, in presence of Johnson, of showing this lively lady how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration.

"Thomas à Kempis," he observed, "must be a good book, as the world has opened its arms to receive it. It is said to have been printed, in one language or other, as many times as there have been months since it first came out. I always was struck with this sentence in it: 'Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.'"

He said: "I was angry with Hurd about Cowley, for

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having published a selection of his works : but, upon better consideration, I think there is no impropriety in a man's publishing as much as he chooses of any author, if he does not put the rest out of the way. A man, for instance, may print the *Odes* of Horace alone." He seemed to be in a more indulgent humour than when this subject was discussed between him and Mr Murphy.¹

When we were at tea and coffee, there came in Lord Trimblestown, in whose family was an ancient Irish peerage, but it suffered by taking the generous side in the troubles of the last century. He was a man of pleasing conversation, and was accompanied by a young gentleman, his son.

I mentioned that I had in my possession the Life of Sir Robert Sibbald, the celebrated Scottish antiquary, and founder of the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh, in the original manuscript in his own handwriting ; and that it was, I believed, the most natural and candid account of himself that ever was given by any man. As an instance, he tells that the Duke of Perth, then Chancellor of Scotland, pressed him very much to come over to the Roman Catholic faith ; that he resisted all his Grace's arguments for a considerable time, till one day he felt himself, as it were, instantaneously convinced, and with tears in his eyes ran into the Duke's arms, and embraced the ancient religion ; that he continued very steady in it for some time, and accompanied his Grace to London one winter, and lived in his household ; that there he found the rigid fasting prescribed by the Church very severe upon him ; that this disposed him to reconsider the controversy, and having then seen that he was in the wrong, he returned to Protestantism. I talked of some time or other publishing this curious Life. MRS THRALE : I think you had as well let alone that publication. To discover such weakness exposes a man when he is gone. JOHNSON : Nay, it is an honest picture of human nature. How often are the primary motives of our greatest actions as small as Sibbald's, for his re-conversion ? MRS THRALE :

¹ See p. 287 of this volume.

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But may they not as well be forgotten? JOHNSON: No, madam; a man loves to review his own mind. That is the use of a diary, or journal. LORD TRIMBLESTOWN: True, sir. As the ladies love to see themselves in a glass, so a man likes to see himself in his journal. BOSWELL: A very pretty allusion. JOHNSON: Yes, indeed. BOSWELL: And as a lady adjusts her dress before a mirror, a man adjusts his character by looking at his journal.—I next year found the very same thought in Atterbury's *Sermon on Lady Cutts*: "In this glass she every day dressed her mind." This is a proof of coincidence, and not of plagiarism; for I had never read that sermon before.

Next morning, while we were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars. "Accustom your children," said he, "constantly to this; if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end." BOSWELL: It may come to the door; and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened.—Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say: "Nay, this is too much. If Mr Johnson should forbid me to drink tea I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching." JOHNSON: Well, madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying that there is so much falsehood in the world.

In his review of Dr Warton's *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, Johnson has given the following salutary caution upon this subject: "Nothing but experience could evince the frequency of false information, or enable any man to conceive that so many groundless reports should be

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propagated, as every man of eminence may hear of himself. Some men relate what they think as what they know; some men of confused memories and habitual inaccuracy ascribe to one man what belongs to another; and some talk on, without thought or care. A few men are sufficient to broach falsehoods, which are afterwards innocently diffused by successive relaters."¹ Had he lived to read what Sir John Hawkins and Mrs Piozzi have related concerning himself, how much would he have found his observation illustrated. He was, indeed, so much impressed with the prevalence of falsehood, voluntary or unintentional, that I never knew any person who, upon hearing an extraordinary circumstance told, discovered more of the *incredulus odi*. He would say with a significant look and decisive tone: "It is not so. Do not tell this again." He inculcated upon all his friends the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degrees of falsehood, the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been, that all who were of his school are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree if they had not been known to Johnson.

Talking of ghosts, he said: "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it."

He said: "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."

On Friday, 3rd April, I dined with him in London, in a company where were present several eminent men, whom I shall not name, but distinguish their parts in the conversation by different letters.

F.: I have been looking at this famous antique marble

¹ *Literary Magazine*, 1756, p. 37.

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dog of Mr Jennings, valued at a thousand guineas, said to be Alcibiades's dog. JOHNSON: His tail then must be docked. That was the mark of Alcibiades's dog. E.: A thousand guineas! The representation of no animal whatever is worth so much. At this rate a dead dog would indeed be better than a living lion. JOHNSON: Sir, it is not the worth of the thing, but of the skill in forming it which is so highly estimated. Everything that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable. The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose; Johnston who rode upon three horses at a time; in short, all such men deserved the applause of mankind, not on account of the use of what they did, but of the dexterity which they exhibited. BOSWELL: Yet a misapplication of time and assiduity is not to be encouraged. Addison, in one of his *Spectators*, commends the judgment of a king, who, as a suitable reward to a man that by long perseverance had attained to the art of throwing a barley-corn through the eye of a needle, gave him a bushel of barley. JOHNSON: He has been a King of Scotland, where barley is scarce. F.: One of the most remarkable antique figures of an animal is the boar at Florence. JOHNSON: The first boar that is well made in marble should be preserved as a wonder. When men arrive at a facility of making boars well, then the workmanship is not of such value, but they should however be preserved as examples, and as a greater security for the restoration of the art, should it be lost.

E.: We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous. J.: That sounds very much like a paradox. E.: Exportation of men, like exportation of all other commodities, makes more be produced. JOHNSON: But there would be more people were there not emigration, provided there were food for more. E.: No; leave a few breeders, and you'll have more people than if there were no emigration. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, it is plain there will be more people if there are

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more breeders. Thirty cows in good pasture will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good bulls. E.: There are bulls enough in Ireland. JOHNSON (smiling): So, sir, I should think from your argument. BOSWELL: You said exportation of men, like exportation of other commodities, makes more be produced. But a bounty is given to encourage the exportation of corn, and no bounty is given for the exportation of men; though, indeed, those who go gain by it. R.: But the bounty on the exportation of corn is paid at home. E.: That's the same thing. JOHNSON: No, sir. R.: A man who stays at home gains nothing by his neighbour's emigrating. BOSWELL: I can understand that emigration may be the cause that more people may be produced in a country; but the country will not therefore be from that the more populous, for the people issue from it. It can only be said that there is a flow of people. It is an encouragement to have children, to know that they can get a living by emigration. R.: Yes, if there were an emigration of children under six years of age. But they don't emigrate till they could earn their livelihood in some way at home. C.: It is remarkable that the most unhealthy countries, where there are the most destructive diseases, such as Egypt and Bengal, are the most populous. JOHNSON: Countries which are the most populous have the most destructive diseases. *That* is the true state of the proposition. C.: Holland is very unhealthy, yet it is exceedingly populous. JOHNSON: I know not that Holland is unhealthy. But its populousness is owing to an influx of people from all other countries. Disease cannot be the cause of populousness, for it not only carries off a great proportion of the people, but those who are left are weakened, and unfit for the purposes of increase.

R.: Mr E. I don't mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in Parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it. E.: Waving your compliment to

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me, I shall say in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in Parliament. A man who has vanity speaks to display his talents ; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which, sooner or later, will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an Act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we see plainly the minister has been told that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered. JOHNSON : And, sir, there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong without its being shown both to themselves and to the world. E. : The House of Commons is a mixed body. (I except the minority, which I hold to be pure [smiling], but I take the whole House.) It is a mass by no means pure ; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in Parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence. JOHNSON : We are all more or less governed by interest. But interest will not make us do everything. In a case which admits of doubt we try to think on the side which is for our interest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must admit of diversity of colouring ; it must receive a colour on that side. In the House of Commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly unjust or absurd. No, sir, there must always be right enough, or appearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance. BOSWELL : There is surely always a majority in Parliament who have places, or who want to have them, and who therefore will be generally ready to support Government

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without requiring any pretext. E. : True, sir ; that majority will always follow

“ *Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.*”

BOSWELL : Well now, let us take the common phrase, Place-hunters. I thought they had hunted without regard to anything, just as their huntsman, the minister, leads, looking only to the prey.¹ J. : But taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting there are few so desperately keen as to follow without reserve. Some do not choose to leap ditches and hedges and risk their necks, or gallop over steeps, or even to dirty themselves in bogs and mire. BOSWELL : I am glad there are some good, quiet, moderate political hunters. E. : I believe in any body of men in England I should have been in the minority ; I have always been in the minority. P. : The House of Commons resembles a private company. How seldom is any man convinced by another's argument ; passion and pride rise against it. R. : What would be the consequence if a minister, sure of a majority in the House of Commons, should resolve that there should be no speaking at all upon his side ? E. : He must soon go out. That has been tried ; but it was found it would not do.

E. : The Irish language is not primitive ; it is Teutonic, a mixture of the northern tongues : it has much English in it. JOHNSON : It may have been radically Teutonic ; but English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same. Once, when looking into Low Dutch, I found, in a whole page, only one word similar to English ; *stroem*, like *stream*, and it signified *tide*. E. : I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet, in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would, at first, think that this

¹ Lord Bolingbroke, who, however detestable as a metaphysician, must be allowed to have had admirable talents as a political writer, thus describes the House of Commons in his “ Letter to Sir William Windham ” : “ You know the nature of that assembly ; they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged.”

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could be English ; but, when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, knob ; so we have *rose-buds*.

JOHNSON : I have been reading Thickness's travels, which I think are entertaining. BOSWELL : What, sir ! a good book ?

JOHNSON : Yes, sir, to read once. I do not say you are to make a study of it, and digest it ; and I believe it to be a true book in his intention. All travellers generally mean to tell truth ; though Thickness observes, upon Smollet's account of his alarming a whole town in France by firing a blunderbuss, and frightening a French nobleman till he made him tie on his portmanteau, that he would be loath to say Smollet had told two lies in one page ; but he had found the only town in France where these things could have happened. Travellers must often be mistaken. In everything, except where mensuration can be applied, they may honestly differ. There has been, of late, a strange turn in travellers to be displeased.

E. : From the experience which I have had—and I have had a great deal—I have learnt to think better of mankind.

JOHNSON : From my experience I have found them worse in commercial dealings, more disposed to cheat, than I had any notion of ; but more disposed to do one another good than I had conceived. J. : Less just and more beneficent.

JOHNSON : And really it is wonderful, considering how much attention is necessary for men to take care of themselves, and ward off immediate evils which press upon them, it is wonderful how much they do for others. As it is said of the greatest liar that he tells more truth than falsehood ; so it may be said of the worst man that he does more good than evil.

BOSWELL : Perhaps from experience men may be found happier than we suppose. JOHNSON : No, sir : the more we inquire we shall find men the less happy.

P. : As to thinking better or worse of mankind from experience, some cunning people will not be satisfied unless they have put men to the test, as they think. There is a very good story told of Sir Godfrey Kneller, in his character of a justice of the peace. A gentleman brought his servant before him,

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upon an accusation of having stolen some money from him ; but it having come out that he had laid it purposely in the servant's way, in order to try his honesty, Sir Godfrey sent the master to prison. JOHNSON : To resist temptation once is not a sufficient proof of honesty. If a servant, indeed, were to resist the continued temptation of silver lying in a window, as some people let it lie, when he is sure his master does not know how much there is of it, he would give a strong proof of honesty. But this is a proof to which you have no right to put a man. You know, humanly speaking, there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. Now, in so far as you approach temptation to a man, you do him an injury ; and if he is overcome, you share his guilt. P. : And, when once overcome, it is easier for him to be got the better of again. BOSWELL : Yes, you are his seducer ; you have debauched him. I have known a man resolve to put friendship to the test by asking a friend to lend him money merely with that view, when he did not want it. JOHNSON : That is very wrong, sir. Your friend may be a narrow man, and yet have many good qualities : narrowness may be his only fault. Now you are trying his general character as a friend by one particular singly, in which he happens to be defective, when, in truth, his character is composed of many particulars.

E. : I understand the hogshead of claret, which this society was favoured with by our friend the Dean, is nearly out ; I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending *it* also as a present. JOHNSON : I am willing to offer my services as secretary on this occasion. P. : As many as are for Dr Johnson being secretary hold up your hands.—Carried unanimously. BOSWELL : He will be our dictator. JOHNSON : No, the company is to dictate to me. I am only to write for wine ; and I am quite disinterested, as I drink none ; I shall not be suspected of having forged the application. I am no more than humble *scribe*. E. : Then you shall

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prescribe. BOSWELL: Very well. The first play of words to-day. J.: No, no; the *bulls* in Ireland. JOHNSON: Were I your dictator you should have no wine. It would be my business *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury (smiling). E.: If you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for your master of horse.

On Saturday, 4th April, I drank tea with Johnson at Dr Taylor's, where he had dined. He entertained us with an account of a tragedy written by a Dr Kennedy (not the Lisbon physician). "The catastrophe of it," said he, "was that a King, who was jealous of his Queen with his Prime Minister, castrated himself. This tragedy was actually shown about in manuscript to several people, and amongst others, to Mr Fitzherbert, who repeated to me two lines of the Prologue:

'Our hero's fate we have but gently touch'd;
The fair might blame us if it were less couch'd.'

It is hardly to be believed what absurd and indecent images men will introduce into their writings, without being sensible of the absurdity and indecency. I remember Lord Orrery told me that there was a pamphlet written against Sir Robert Walpole, the whole of which was an allegory on the PHALDIC OBSCENITY. The Duchess of Buckingham asked Lord Orrery *who* this person was? He answered he did not know. She said, she would send to Mr Pulteney, who, she supposed, could inform her. So then, to prevent her from making herself ridiculous, Lord Orrery sent her Grace a note, in which he gave her to understand what was meant."

He was very silent this evening, and read in a variety of books, suddenly throwing down one, and taking up another.

He talked of going to Streatham that night. TAYLOR: You'll be robbed if you do; or you must shoot a highwayman. Now I would rather be robbed than do that: I would

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not shoot a highwayman. JOHNSON: But I would rather shoot him in the instant when he is attempting to rob me than afterwards swear against him at the Old Bailey to take away his life, after he has robbed me. I am surer I am right in the one case than in the other. I may be mistaken as to the man when I swear: I cannot be mistaken if I shoot him in the act. Besides, we feel less reluctance to take away a man's life when we are heated by the injury, than to do it at a distance of time by an oath after we have cooled. BOSWELL: So, sir, you would rather act from the motive of private passion, than that of public advantage? JOHNSON: Nay, sir, when I shoot the highwayman I act from both. BOSWELL: Very well, very well. There is no catching him. JOHNSON: At the same time one does not know what to say. For perhaps one may, a year after, hang himself from uneasiness for having shot a man.¹ Few minds are fit to be trusted with so great a thing. BOSWELL: Then, sir, you would not shoot him? JOHNSON: But I might be vexed afterwards for that too.

Thrale's carriage not having come for him, as he expected, I accompanied him some part of the way home to his own house. I told him, that I had talked of him to Mr Dunning a few days before, and had said, that in his company we did not so much interchange conversation as listen to him; and that Dunning observed upon this: "One is always willing to listen to Dr Johnson": to which I answered: "That is a great deal from you, sir." "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "a great deal indeed. Here is a man willing to

¹ The late Duke of Montrose was generally said to have been uneasy on that account; but I can contradict the report from his Grace's own authority. As he used to admit me to very easy conversation with him, I took the liberty to introduce the subject. His Grace told me, that when riding one night near London, he was attacked by two highwaymen on horseback, and that he instantly shot one of them, upon which the other galloped off; that his servant, who was very well mounted, proposed to pursue him and take him, but that his Grace said, "No, we have had blood enough: I hope the man may live to repent." His Grace, upon my presuming to put the question, assured me that his mind was not all clouded by what he had thus done in self-defence.

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listen, to whom the world is listening all the rest of the year."

BOSWELL: I think, sir, it is right to tell one man of such a handsome thing which has been said of him by another. It tends to increase benevolence. JOHNSON: Undoubtedly it is right, sir.

On Tuesday, 7th April, I breakfasted with him at his house. He said "nobody was content." I mentioned to him a respectable person in Scotland whom he knew; and I asserted that I really believed he was always content. JOHNSON: No, sir, he is not content with the present; he has always some new scheme, some new plantation, something which is future. You know he was not content as a widower; for he married again. BOSWELL: But he is not restless. JOHNSON: Sir, he is only locally at rest. A chemist is locally at rest; but his mind is hard at work. This gentleman has done with external exertions. It is too late for him to engage in distant projects. BOSWELL: He seems to amuse himself quite well; to have his attention fixed and his tranquillity preserved by very small matters. I have tried this, but it would not do with me. JOHNSON (laughing): No, sir; it must be born with a man to be contented to take up with little things. Women have a great advantage that they may take up with little things, without disgracing themselves: a man cannot, except with fiddling. Had I learnt to fiddle, I should have done nothing else. BOSWELL: Pray, sir, did you ever play on any musical instrument? JOHNSON: No, sir. I once bought me a flagelet; but I never made out a tune. BOSWELL: A flagelet, sir!—so small an instrument?¹ I should have liked to hear you play on the violoncello. *That* should have been *your* instrument. JOHNSON: Sir, I might as well have played on the violoncello as another; but I should have done nothing else. No, sir; a man would never undertake great things could he be amused

¹ When I told this to Miss Seward, she smiled, and repeated, with admirable readiness, from *Acis and Galatea*:

"Bring me a hundred reeds of ample growth,
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth."

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with small. I once tried knotting. Dempster's sister undertook to teach me; but I could not learn it. BOSWELL: So, sir, it will be related in pompous narrative: "Once for his amusement he tried knotting; nor did this Hercules disdain the distaff. Once for his amusement he tried knotting."

JOHNSON: Knitting of stockings is a good amusement. As a freeman of Aberdeen I should be a knitter of stockings.

He asked me to go down with him and dine at Mr Thrale's at Streatham, to which I agreed. I had lent him *An Account of Scotland, in 1702*, written by a man of various inquiry, an English chaplain to a regiment stationed there. JOHNSON: It is sad stuff, sir, miserably written, as books in general then were. There is now an elegance of style universally diffused. No man now writes so ill as Martin's *Account of the Hebrides* is written. A man could not write so ill, if he should try. Set a merchant's clerk now to write, and he'll do better.

He talked to me with serious concern of a certain female friend's "laxity of narration, and inattention to truth." "I am as much vexed," said he, "at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself. I told her: 'Madam, you are contented to hear every day said to you what the highest of mankind have died for, rather than bear.' You know, sir, the highest of mankind have died rather than bear to be told they had uttered a falsehood. Do talk to her of it: I am weary."

BOSWELL: Was not Dr John Campbell a very inaccurate man in his narrative, sir? He once told me that he drank thirteen bottles of port at a sitting. JOHNSON: Why, sir, I do not know that Campbell ever lied with pen and ink; but you could not entirely depend on anything he told you in conversation, if there was fact mixed with it. However, I loved Campbell: he was a solid orthodox man: he had a reverence for religion. Though defective in practice, he was religious in principle; and he did nothing grossly wrong that I have heard.

I told him, that I had been present the day before when

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Mrs Montagu, the literary lady, sat to Miss Reynolds for her picture; and that she said "she had bound up Mr Gibbon's *History* without the last two offensive chapters; for that she thought the book so far good as it gave, in an elegant manner, the substance of the bad writers *medii ævi*, which the late Lord Lyttelton advised her to read." JOHNSON: Sir, she has not read them: she shows none of this impetuosity to me: she does not know Greek, and, I fancy, knows little Latin. She is willing you should think she knows them; but she does not say she does. BOSWELL: Mr Harris, who was present, agreed with her. JOHNSON: Harris was laughing at her, sir. Harris is a sound sullen scholar; he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig.¹ I looked into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system. BOSWELL: He says plain things in a formal and abstract way, to be sure; but his method is good; for to have clear notions upon any subject we must have recourse to analytic arrangement. JOHNSON: Sir, it is what everybody does, whether they will or no. But sometimes things may be made darker by definition. I see a cow. I define her, *Animal quadrupes ruminans cornutum*. But a goat ruminates, and a cow may have no horns. Cow is plainer. BOSWELL: I think Dr Franklin's definition of *Man* a good one—"A tool-making animal." JOHNSON: But many a man never made a tool: and suppose a man without arms, he could not make a tool.

Talking of drinking wine, he said: "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it: I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this." BOSWELL: Why then, sir, did you leave it off? JOHNSON: Why, sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old, and want it. BOSWELL: I think, sir, you once said to me that not to drink wine was

¹ What my friend meant by these words concerning the amiable philosopher of Salisbury, I am at a loss to understand.

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a great deduction from life.¹ JOHNSON : It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure ; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational. BOSWELL : But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy ? The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure. JOHNSON : Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross. BOSWELL : I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed ; I assure you I have. JOHNSON : When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. When a man says he had pleasure with a woman, he does not mean conversation, but something of a very different nature. Philosophers tell you that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now what a wretch must he be who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages ! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get her back from savage life. BOSWELL : She must have been an animal, a beast. JOHNSON : Sir, she was a speaking cat.

I mentioned to him that I had become very weary in a company where I heard not a single intellectual sentence, except that "a man who had been settled ten years in Minorca was become a much inferior man to what he was in London, because a man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place." JOHNSON : A man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place, whose mind is enlarged only because he has lived in a large place : but what is got by books and thinking is preserved in a narrow place as well as in a large place. A man cannot know modes of life as well in Minorca as in London ; but he may study mathematics as well in Minorca. BOSWELL : I don't know, sir : if you had remained ten years in the Isle

¹ See p. 405 of this volume.

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of Col, you would not have been the man that you now are. JOHNSON: Yes, sir, if I had been there from fifteen to twenty-five; but not if from twenty-five to thirty-five. BOSWELL: I own, sir, the spirits which I have in London make me do everything with more readiness and vigour. I can talk twice as much in London as anywhere else.

Of Goldsmith he said: "He was not an agreeable companion, for he talked always for fame. A man who does so never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburden his mind is the man to delight you. An eminent friend of ours is not so agreeable as the variety of his knowledge would otherwise make him, because he talks partly from ostentation."

Soon after our arrival at Thrale's, I heard one of the maids calling eagerly on another to go to Dr Johnson. I wondered what this could mean. I afterwards learnt that it was to give her a Bible which he had brought from London as a present to her.

He was for a considerable time occupied in reading *Memoires de Fontenelle*, leaning and swinging upon the low gate into the court, without his hat.

I looked into Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man*, and mentioned to Dr Johnson his censure of Charles V., for celebrating his funeral obsequies in his lifetime, which, I told him, I had been used to think a solemn and affecting act. JOHNSON: Why, sir, a man may dispose his mind to think so of that act of Charles; but it is so liable to ridicule, that if one man out of ten thousand laughs at it, he'll make the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine laugh too.—I could not agree with him in this.

Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity to-day of mentioning several to him. Atterbury? JOHNSON: Yes, sir, one of the best. BOSWELL: Tillotson? JOHNSON: Why not now? I should not advise a preacher at this day to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of objecting to what has been applauded by so many suffrages. South is one

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of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language. Seed has a very fine style; but he is not very theological. Jortin's sermons are very elegant. Sherlock's style too is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study. And you may add Smallridge. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed nobody now talks much of style. Everybody composes pretty well. There are no such unharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago. I should recommend Dr Clarke's sermons, were he orthodox. However, it is very well known *where* he was not orthodox, which was upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to which he is a condemned heretic; so one is aware of it. BOSWELL: I like Ogden's sermons on prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtlety of reasoning. JOHNSON: I should like to read all that Ogden has written. BOSWELL: What I wish to know is, what sermons afford the best specimen of English pulpit eloquence? JOHNSON: We have no sermons addressed to the passions that are good for anything; if you mean that kind of eloquence. A CLERGYMAN (whose name I do not recollect): Were not Dodd's sermons addressed to the passions? JOHNSON: They were nothing, sir, be they addressed to what they may.

At dinner, Mrs Thrale expressed a wish to go to see Scotland. JOHNSON: Seeing Scotland, madam, is only seeing a worse England. It is seeing the flower gradually fade away to the naked stalk. Seeing the Hebrides, indeed, is seeing quite a different scene.

Our poor friend, Mr Thomas Davies, was soon to have a benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, as some relief to his unfortunate circumstances. We were all warmly interested for his success, and had contributed to it. However, we thought there was no harm in having our joke when he could not be hurt by it. I proposed that he should be brought on to speak a Prologue upon the occasion; and I began to mutter fragments of what it might be: as, that when now grown *old*, he was obliged to cry: "Poor Tom's *a-cold*"; that he

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owned he had been driven from the stage by a Churchill, but that this was no disgrace, for a Churchill had beat the French ; that he had been satirised as “ mouthing a sentence as curs mouth a bone,” but he was now glad of a bone to pick. “ Nay,” said Johnson, “ I would have him to say,

‘ Mad Tom is come to see the world again.’ ”

He and I returned to town in the evening. Upon the road I endeavoured to maintain, in argument, that a landed gentleman is not under any obligation to reside upon his estate ; and that by living in London he does no injury to his country. JOHNSON : Why, sir, he does no injury to his country in general, because the money which he draws from it gets back again in circulation ; but to his particular district, his particular parish, he does an injury. All that he has to give away is not given to those who have the first claim to it. And though I have said that the money circulates back, it is a long time before that happens. Then, sir, a man of family and estate ought to consider himself as having the charge of a district, over which he is to diffuse civility and happiness.

Next day I found him at home in the forenoon. He praised Delaney’s *Observations on Swift* ; said that his book and Lord Orrery’s might both be true, though one viewed Swift more and the other less favourably ; and that between both we might have a complete notion of Swift.

Talking of a man’s resolving to deny himself the use of wine, from moral and religious considerations, he said : “ He must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine, than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me, than for the dog that is under the table.”

On Thursday, 9th April, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds’s, with the Bishop of St Asaph (Dr Shipley), Mr Allan Ramsay, Mr Gibbon, Mr Cambridge, and Mr Langton.

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Mr Ramsay had lately returned from Italy, and entertained us with his observations upon Horace's villa, which he had examined with great care. I relished this much, as it brought fresh into my mind what I had viewed with great pleasure thirteen years before. The Bishop, Dr Johnson, and Mr Cambridge, joined with Mr Ramsay, in recollecting the various lines in Horace relating to the subject.

Horace's journey to Brundisium being mentioned, Johnson observed that the brook which he describes is to be seen now, exactly as at that time; and that he had often wondered how it happened, that small brooks, such as this, kept the same situation for ages, notwithstanding earthquakes, by which even mountains have been changed, and agriculture, which produces such a variation upon the surface of the earth. CAMBRIDGE: A Spanish writer has this thought in a poetical conceit. After observing that most of the solid structures of Rome are totally perished, while the Tiber remains the same, he adds:

*"Lo que era Firme huió i solamente,
Lo Fugitivo permanece i dura."*

JOHNSON: Sir, that is taken from *Janus Vitalis*:

*"————— immota labescunt;
Et quæ perpetuò sunt agitata manent."*

The Bishop said, it appeared from Horace's writings that he was a cheerful contented man. JOHNSON: We have no reason to believe that, my Lord. Are we to think Pope was happy because he says so in his writings? We see in his writings what he wished the state of his mind to appear. Dr Young, who pined for preferment, talks with contempt of it in his writings, and affects to despise everything that he did not despise. BISHOP OF ST ASAPH: He was like other chaplains, looking for vacancies: but that is not peculiar to the clergy. I remember when I was with the army, after

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the battle of Lafeldt, the officers seriously grumbled that no General was killed. CAMBRIDGE: We may believe Horace more when he says :

“*Romæ Tibur amem ventosus Tibure Romam.*”

BOSWELL: How hard is it that man can never be at rest. RAMSAY: It is not in his nature to be at rest. When he is at rest he is in the worst state that he can be in, for he has nothing to agitate him. He is then like the man in the Irish song :

“There was an old fellow at Ballanacrazy,
Who wanted a wife for to make him unaisy.”

Goldsmith being mentioned, Johnson observed that it was long before his merit came to be acknowledged. That he once complained to him, in ludicrous terms of distress : “Whenever I write anything, the public *make a point* to know nothing about it”: but that his *Traveller* brought him into high reputation. LANGTON: There is not one bad line in that poem; not one of Dryden’s careless verses. SIR JOSHUA: I was glad to hear Charles Fox say it was one of the finest poems in the English language. LANGTON: Why were you glad? You surely had no doubt of this before. JOHNSON: No; the merit of *The Traveller* is so well established that Mr Fox’s praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it. SIR JOSHUA: But his friends may suspect they had a too great partiality for him. JOHNSON: Nay, sir, the partiality of his friends was all against him. It was with difficulty we could give him a hearing. Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject; so he talked always at random. It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and see what would become of it. He was angry too when caught in an absurdity; but it did not prevent him from falling into another the next minute. I remember Chamier, after talking with him for some time, said: “Well, I do believe he wrote this poem himself:

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and, let me tell you, that is believing a great deal." Chamier once asked him what he meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of *The Traveller* :

" Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow."

Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered : " Yes." I was sitting by, and said : " No, sir ; you do not mean tardiness of locomotion ; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude." Chamier believed then that I had written the line, as much as if he had seen me write it. Goldsmith, however, was a man who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do. He deserved a place in Westminster Abbey, and every year he lived would have deserved it better. He had, indeed, been at no pains to fill his mind with knowledge. He transplanted it from one place to another ; and it did not settle in his mind ; so he could not tell what was in his own books.

We talked of living in the country. JOHNSON : No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance : if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields than to an opposite wall. Then, if a man walks out in the country, there is nobody to keep him from walking in again : but if a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again. A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life ; and " The proper study of mankind is man," as Pope observes. BOSWELL : I fancy London is the best place in the world for society ; though I have heard that the very first society of Paris is still beyond anything that we have here. JOHNSON : Sir, I question if in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half-a-year. They talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together : the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women ; they know no more than women do, and

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they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of women. RAMSAY: Literature is upon the growth, it is in its spring in France. Here it is rather *passée*. JOHNSON: Literature was in France long before we had it. Paris was the second city for the revival of letters: Italy had it first, to be sure. What have we done for literature, equal to what was done by the Stephani and others in France? Our literature came to us through France. Caxton printed only two books, Chaucer and Gower, that were not translations from the French; and Chaucer, we know, took much from the Italians. No, sir; if literature be in its spring in France, it is a second spring; it is after a winter. We are now before the French in literature; but we had it long after them. In England, any man who wears a sword and a powdered wig is ashamed to be illiterate. I believe it is not so in France. Yet there is probably a great deal of learning in France, because they have such a number of religious establishments; so many men who have nothing else to do but to study. I do not know this; but I take it upon the common principles of chance. Where there are many shooters, some will hit.

We talked of old age. Johnson (now in his seventieth year) said: "It is a man's own fault, it is from want of use, if his mind grows torpid in old age." The Bishop asked, if an old man does not lose faster than he gets. JOHNSON: I think not, my Lord, if he exerts himself.—One of the company rashly observed, that he thought it was happy for an old man that insensibility comes upon him. JOHNSON (with a noble elevation and disdain): No, sir, I should never be happy by being less rational. BISHOP OF ST ASAPH: Your wish then, sir, is *γερασκειν διδασκομενος*. JOHNSON: Yes, my Lord.

His lordship mentioned a charitable establishment in Wales, where people were maintained, and supplied with everything, upon the condition of their contributing the weekly produce of their labour; and he said, they grew quite torpid for want of property. JOHNSON: They have no object for hope. Their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port.

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One of the company asked him the meaning of the expression in Juvenal, *unius lacertæ*. JOHNSON: I think it clear enough; as much ground as one may have a chance to find a lizard upon.

Commentators have differed as to the exact meaning of the expression by which the poet intended to enforce the sentiment contained in the passage where these words occur. It is enough that they mean to denote even a very small possession, provided it be a man's own.

*"Est aliquid quocunque loco quocunque recessu,
Unius sese dominum fecisse lacertæ."*

This season there was a whimsical fashion in the newspapers of applying Shakspeare's words to describe living people well known in the world; which was done under the title of *Modern Characters from Shakspeare*, many of which were admirably adapted. The fancy took so much, that they were afterwards collected into a pamphlet. Somebody said to Johnson, across the table, that he had not been in those characters. "Yes," said he, "I have. I should have been sorry to be left out." He then repeated what had been applied to him:

"I must borrow Garagantua's mouth."

Miss Reynolds not perceiving at once the meaning of this, he was obliged to explain it to her, which had something of an awkward and ludicrous effect. "Why, madam, it has a reference to me as using big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them. Garagantua is the name of a giant in Rabelais." BOSWELL: But, sir, there is another amongst them for you:

"He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder."

JOHNSON: There is nothing marked in that. No, sir, Garagantua is the best.—Notwithstanding this ease and good

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humour, when I, a little while afterwards, repeated his sarcasm on Kenrick,¹ which was received with applause, he asked: "*Who* said that?" and on my suddenly answering, *Garagantua*, he looked serious, which was a sufficient indication that he did not wish it to be kept up.

When we went to the drawing-room there was a rich assemblage. Besides the company who had been at dinner, there were Mr Garrick, Mr Harris of Salisbury, Dr Percy, Dr Burney, Honourable Mrs Cholmondeley, Miss Hannah More, etc., etc.

After wandering about in a kind of pleasing distraction for some time, I got into a corner with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris. GARRICK (to Harris): Pray, sir, have you read Potter's *Æschylus*? HARRIS: Yes; and think it pretty. GARRICK (to Johnson): And what think you, sir, of it? JOHNSON: I thought what I read of it *verbiage*: but upon Mr Harris's recommendation I will read a play. (To Mr Harris.) Don't prescribe two.—Mr Harris suggested one; I do not remember which. JOHNSON: We must try its effect as an English poem; that is the way to judge of the merit of a translation. Translations are, in general, for people who cannot read the original.—I mentioned the vulgar saying, that Pope's Homer was not a good representation of the original. JOHNSON: Sir, it is the greatest work of the kind that has ever been produced. BOSWELL: The truth is, it is impossible perfectly to translate poetry. In a different language it may be the same tune, but it has not the same tone. Homer plays it on a bassoon; Pope on a flagelet. HARRIS: I think heroic poetry is best in blank verse; yet it appears that rhyme is essential to English poetry, from our deficiency in metrical quantities. In my opinion, the chief excellence of our language is numerous prose. JOHNSON: Sir William Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose. Before his time they were careless of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant

¹ See p. 333 of Vol I.

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word, or with what part of speech it was concluded.—Mr Langton, who now had joined us, commended Clarendon. JOHNSON: He is objected to for his parentheses, his involved clauses, and his want of harmony. But he is supported by his matter. It is, indeed, owing to a plethora of matter that his style is so faulty. Every *substance* (smiling to Mr Harris) has so many *accidents*. To be distinct, we must talk *analytically*. If we analyse language, we must speak of it grammatically; if we analyse argument, we must speak of it logically. GARRICK: Of all the translations that ever were attempted, I think Elphinston's Martial the most extraordinary. He consulted me upon it, who am a little of an epigrammatist myself, you know. I told him freely: "You don't seem to have that turn." I asked him if he was serious; and finding he was, I advised him against publishing. Why, his translation is more difficult to understand than the original! I thought him a man of some talents; but he seems crazy in this. JOHNSON: Sir, you have done what I had not courage to do. But he did not ask my advice, and I did not force it upon him, to make him angry with me. GARRICK: But as a friend, sir—— JOHNSON: Why, such a friend as I am with him—no. GARRICK: But if you see a friend going to tumble over a precipice? JOHNSON: That is an extravagant case, sir. You are sure a friend will thank you for hindering him from tumbling over a precipice; but, in the other case, I should hurt his vanity, and do him no good. He would not take my advice. His brother-in-law, Strahan, sent him a subscription of fifty pounds, and said he would send him fifty more, if he would not publish. GARRICK: What! eh! is Strahan a good judge of an epigram? Is not he rather an *obtruse* man, eh? JOHNSON: Why, sir, he may not be a judge of an epigram: but you see he is a judge of what is *not* an epigram. BOSWELL: It is easy for you, Mr Garrick, to talk to an author as you talked to Elphinston: you, who have been so long the manager of a theatre, rejecting the plays of poor authors. You are an old judge, who have often pronounced sentence of death. You

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are a practised surgeon, who have often amputated limbs; and though this may have been for the good of your patients, they cannot like you. Those who have undergone a dreadful operation are not very fond of seeing the operator again.

GARRICK: Yes, I know enough of that. There was a reverend gentleman (Mr Hawkins) who wrote a tragedy, the siege of something, which I refused. HARRIS: So the siege was raised. JOHNSON: Aye, he came to me and complained; and told me that Garrick said his play was wrong in the *concoction*. Now, what is the concoction of a play?—(Here Garrick started, and twisted himself, and seemed sorely vexed; for Johnson told me he believed the story was true.) GARRICK: I—I—I—said *first* concoction. JOHNSON (smiling): Well, he left out *first*. And Rich, he said, refused him in *false English*: he could show it under his hand. GARRICK: He wrote to me in violent wrath for having refused his play: "Sir, this is growing a very serious and terrible affair. I am resolved to publish my play. I will appeal to the world; and how will your judgment appear?" I answered: "Sir, notwithstanding all the seriousness, and all the terrors, I have no objection to your publishing your play; and as you live at a great distance (Devonshire, I believe), if you will send me it, I will convey it to the press." I never heard more of it. Ha! ha! ha!

On Friday, 10th April, I found Johnson at home in the forenoon. We resumed the conversation of yesterday. He put me in mind of some of it which had escaped my memory, and enabled me to record it more perfectly than I otherwise could have done. He was much pleased with my paying so great attention to his recommendation in 1763, the beginning of our acquaintance, to keep a journal; and I could perceive he was secretly pleased to find so much of the fruit of his mind preserved; and as he had been used to imagine and say that he always laboured when he said a good thing, it delighted him, on a review, to find that his conversation teemed with point and imagery.

I said to him: "You were yesterday, sir, in remarkably

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good humour; but there was nothing to offend you, nothing to produce irritation or violence. There was no bold offender. There was not one capital conviction. It was a maiden assize. You had on your white gloves."

He found fault with our friend Langton for having been too silent. "Sir," said I, "you will recollect, that he very properly took up Sir Joshua for being glad that Charles Fox had praised Goldsmith's *Traveller*, and you joined him." JOHNSON: Yes, sir; I knocked Fox on the head without ceremony. Reynolds is too much under Fox and Burke at present. He is under the *Fox star* and the *Irish constellation*. He is always under some planet. BOSWELL: There is no Fox star. JOHNSON: But there is a dog star. BOSWELL: They say, indeed, a fox and a dog are the same animal.

I reminded him of a gentleman who, Mrs Cholmondeley said, was first talkative from affectation, and then silent from the same cause; that he first thought: "I shall be celebrated as the liveliest man in every company," and then, all at once: "Oh! it is much more respectable to be grave and look wise." "He has reversed the Pythagorean discipline, by being first talkative and then silent. He reverses the course of Nature too: he was first the gay butterfly, and then the creeping worm." Johnson laughed loud and long at this expansion and illustration of what he himself had told me.

We dined together with Mr Scott (now Sir William Scott, his Majesty's Advocate) at his chambers in the Temple, nobody else there. The company being small, Johnson was not in such spirits as he had been yesterday, and for a considerable time little was said. At last he burst forth: "Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had—except a gaoler. No master has it over his servants: it is diminished in our colleges; nay, in our grammar schools." BOSWELL: What is the cause of this, sir? JOHNSON: Why, the coming in of the Scotch (laughing sarcastically). BOSWELL: That is to say, things have been turned topsy-turvy. But your serious

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cause. JOHNSON: Why, sir, there are many causes, the chief of which is, I think, the great increase of money. No man now depends upon the lord of a manor, when he can send to another country and fetch provisions. The shoe-black at the entry of my court does not depend on me. I can deprive him but of a penny a day, which he hopes somebody else will bring him; and that penny I must carry to another shoe-black, so the trade suffers nothing. I have explained, in my *Journey to the Hebrides*, how gold and silver destroy feudal subordination. But, besides, there is a general relaxation of reverence. No son now depends upon his father as in former times. Paternity used to be considered as of itself a great thing, which had a right to many claims. That is, in general, reduced to very small bounds. My hope is, that as anarchy produces tyranny, this extreme relaxation will produce *freni strictio*.

Talking of fame, for which there is so great a desire, I observed how little there is of it in reality, compared with the other objects of human attention. "Let every man recollect, and he will be sensible how small a part of his time is employed in talking or thinking of Shakspeare, Voltaire, or any of the most celebrated men that have ever lived, or are now supposed to occupy the attention and admiration of the world. Let this be extracted and compressed; into what a narrow space will it go!" I then slyly introduced Mr Garrick's fame, and his assuming the airs of a great man. JOHNSON: Sir, it is wonderful how *little* Garrick assumes. No, sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet*. Consider, sir: celebrated men, such as you have mentioned, have had their applause at a distance; but Garrick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his *cranium*. Then, sir, Garrick did not *find*, but *made*, his way to the tables, the levees, and almost the bed-chambers, of the great. Then, sir, Garrick had under him a numerous body of people, who, from fear of his power, and hopes of his favour, and admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And

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here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character. SCOTT: And he is a very sprightly writer too. JOHNSON: Yes, sir; and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down everybody that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to *us* (smiling). BOSWELL: And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man. JOHNSON: Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed; but he has shown that money is not his first object. BOSWELL: Yet Foote used to say of him, that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action; but, turning the corner of a street, he met with the ghost of a halfpenny, which frightened him. JOHNSON: Why, sir, that is very true, too; for I never knew a man of whom it could be said with less certainty to-day, what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick; it depends so much on his humour at the time. SCOTT: I am glad to hear of his liberality. He has been represented as very saving. JOHNSON: With his domestic saving we have nothing to do. I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong.¹ He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it.

On the subject of wealth, the proper use of it, and the effects of that art which is called economy, he observed: "It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly income, but are often actually in want of money. It is clear they have not value for what they spend. Lord Shelburne told me that a man of high rank, who looks into his own affairs, may have all that he

¹ When Johnson told this little anecdote to Sir Joshua Reynolds, he mentioned a circumstance which he omitted to-day: "Why," said Garrick, "it is as red as blood."

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ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year. Therefore a great proportion must go in waste ; and, indeed, this is the case with most people, whatever their fortune is." BOSWELL : I have no doubt, sir, of this. But how is it? What is waste? JOHNSON : Why, sir, breaking bottles and a thousand other things. Waste cannot be accurately told, though we are sensible how destructive it is. Economy on the one hand, by which a certain income is made to maintain a man genteelly, and waste on the other, by which, on the same income, another man lives shabbily, cannot be defined. It is a very nice thing : as one man wears his coat out much sooner than another, we cannot tell how.

We talked of war. JOHNSON : Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea. BOSWELL : Lord Mansfield does not. JOHNSON : Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of general officers and admirals who have been in service, he would shrink ; he'd wish to creep under the table. BOSWELL : No ; he'd think he could *try* them all. JOHNSON : Yes, if he could catch them : but they'd try him much sooner. No, sir ; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say : " Follow me, and hear a lecture in philosophy " ; and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say : " Follow me, and dethrone the Czar," a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal : yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery : such crowding, such filth, such stench ! BOSWELL : Yet sailors are happy. JOHNSON : They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat, with the grossest sensuality. But, sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness. SCOTT : But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired? JOHNSON : Why yes, sir, in a collective sense. Soldiers consider themselves only as

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parts of a great machine. SCOTT: We find people fond of being sailors. JOHNSON: I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination.

His abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent; but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier. And yet I have, in my large and various collection of his writings, a letter to an eminent friend, in which he expresses himself thus: "My godson called on me lately. He is weary, and rationally weary, of a military life. If you can place him in some other state, I think you may increase his happiness and secure his virtue. A soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption." Such was his cool reflection in his study; but whenever he was warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers, whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown.

He talked of Mr Charles Fox, of whose abilities he thought highly, but observed that he did not talk much at our club. I have heard Mr Gibbon remark, "that Mr Fox could not be afraid of Dr Johnson; yet he certainly was very shy of saying anything in Dr Johnson's presence." Mr Scott now quoted what was said of Alcibiades by a Greek poet, to which Johnson assented.

He told us, that he had given Mrs Montagu a catalogue of all Daniel Defoe's works of imagination; most, if not all of which, as well as of his other works, he now enumerated, allowing a considerable share of merit to a man, who, bred a silversmith, had written so variously and so well. Indeed his *Robinson Crusoe* is enough of itself to establish his reputation.

He expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cock Lane Ghost, and related, with much satisfaction, how he had assisted in detecting the cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers. Upon this subject I incautiously offended him, by pressing him with too many

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questions, and he showed his displeasure. I apologised, saying that "I asked questions in order to be instructed and entertained; I repaired eagerly to the fountain; but that the moment he gave me a hint, the moment he put a lock upon the well, I desisted." "But, sir," said he, "that is forcing one to do a disagreeable thing"; and he continued to rate me. "Nay, sir," said I, "when you have put a lock upon the well, so that I can no longer drink, do not make the fountain of your wit play upon me and wet me."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME

