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*The life of Samuel Johnson ... including A
journal of his tour to the Hebrides. To ...*

James Boswell

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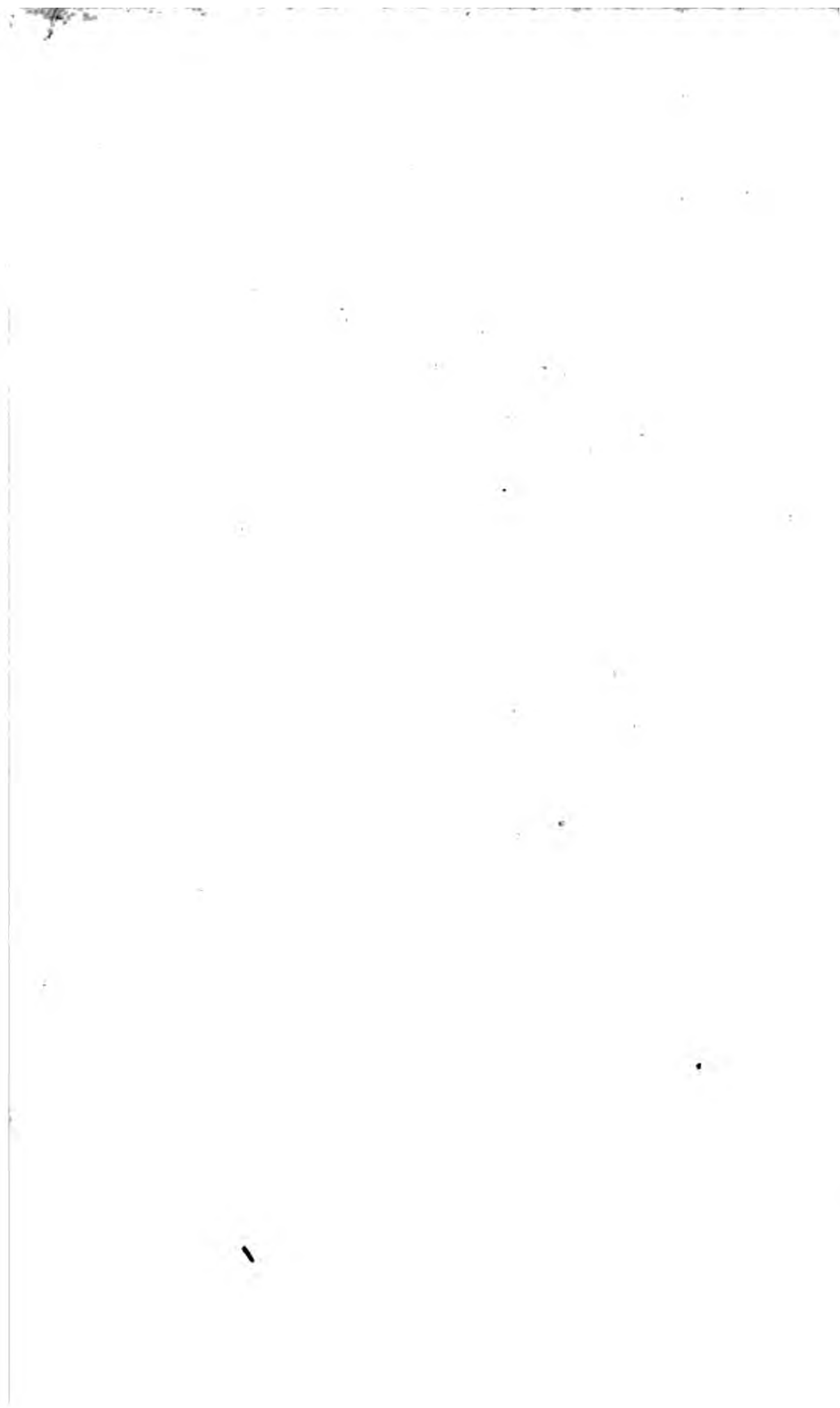
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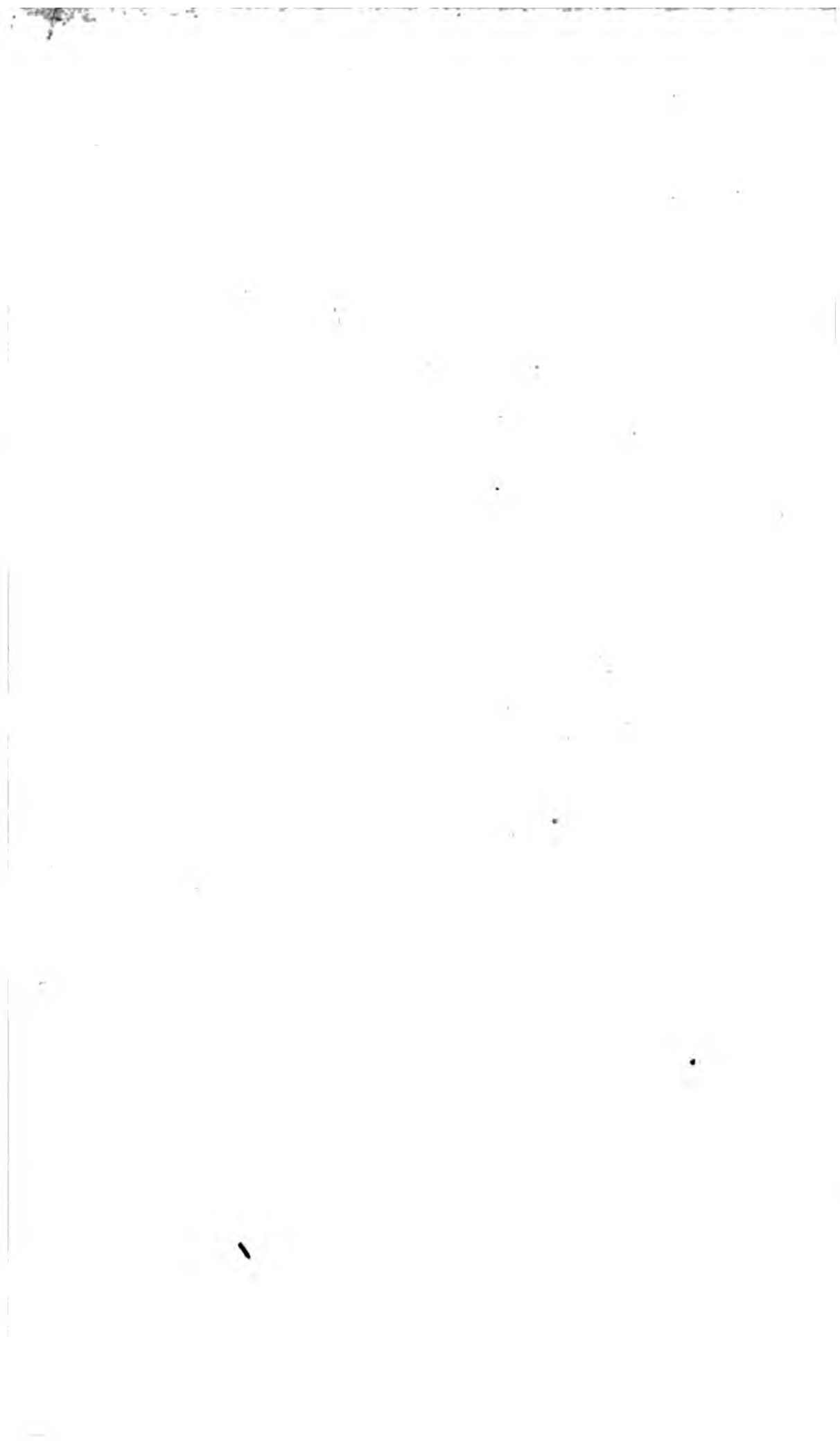
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THE
L I F E
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.
VOL. II.

LONDON :
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

BOSWELL'S LIFE
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D.
VOL. 2.



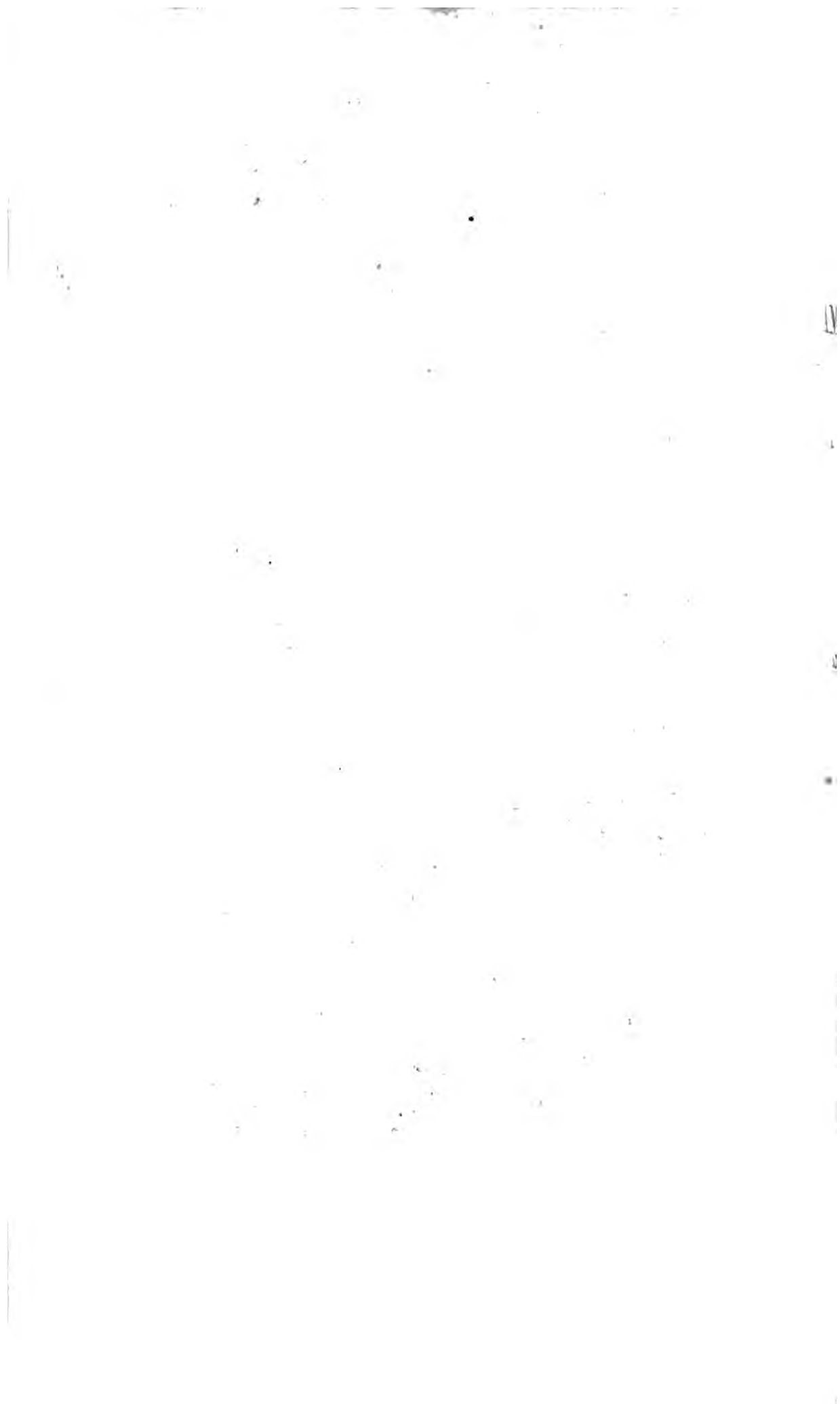
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LONDON.
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1835.



THE
LIFE
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

INCLUDING
A JOURNAL OF HIS TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES;

BY
JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
ANECDOTES BY HAWKINS, PIOZZI, MURPHY
TYERS, REYNOLDS, STEEVENS, &c.

AND NOTES BY VARIOUS HANDS.

..... *Quo fit ut OMNIS*
Votivâ pateat veluti depicta tabellâ
VITA SENIS HOR. 1 Sat. lib. II.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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C O N T E N T S.

CHAPTER I.

1754.

Johnson writes the "Life of Cave." — The Dictionary. — Lord Chesterfield. — His alleged Neglect of Johnson. — His Papers in "The World," in Recommendation of the Dictionary. — Letter to the Earl. — Bolingbroke's Works edited by Mallet. — Johnson visits Oxford for the Purpose of consulting the Libraries. — His Conversations with Mr. Warton, Mr. Wise, and others. — Sir Robert Chambers. — Letters to Warton. — Collins. - Page 1

CHAPTER II.

1755—1758.

Johnson receives the Degree of M. A. by Diploma. — Correspondence with Warton and the Authorities of the University of Oxford. — Publication of the Dictionary of the English Language. — Remarkable Definitions. — Abridgment of the Dictionary. — The Universal Visiter. — The Literary Magazine. — Defence of Tea. — Pulpit Discourses. — Proposals for an Edition of Shakspeare. — Jonas Hanway. — Soame Jenyns. — Charles Burney. 27

CHAPTER III.

1758—1759.

“The Idler.” — Letters to Warton. — Letters to Bennet Langton. — Illness of Johnson’s Mother. — Letters to her, and to Miss Porter. — His Mother’s Death. — “Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.” — Miscellanies. — Excursion to Oxford. — Francis Barber. — John Wilkes. — Smollett. — Letter to Mrs. Montagu. — Mrs. Ogle. — Mylne the Architect. - - - Page 88

CHAPTER IV.

1760—1763.

Miscellaneous Essays. — Origin of Johnson’s Acquaintance with Murphy. — Akenside and Rolt. — Mackenzie and Eccles. — Letters to Baretti. — Painting and Music. — Sir George Staunton. — Letter to a Lady soliciting Church Preferment for her Son. — The King confers on Johnson a Pension of 300*l.* a year. — Letters to Lord Bute. — Visit to Devonshire, with Sir Joshua Reynolds. — Character of Collins. — Dedication of Hoole’s Tasso. 118

CHAPTER V.

1763.

Boswell becomes acquainted with Johnson. — Derrick. — Mr. Thomas Sheridan. — Mrs. Sheridan. — Mr. Thomas Davies. — Mrs. Davies. — First Interview. — His Dress. — Johnson’s Chambers in Temple Lane. — Dr. Blair. — Dr. James Fordyce. — Ossian. — Christopher Smart. — Thomas Johnson, the Equestrian. — Clifton’s Eating-House. — The Mitre. — Colley Cibber’s Odes. — Gray. — Belief in the Appearance of departed Spirits. — Churchill. Cock-Lane Ghost. — Goldsmith. — Mallet’s “Elvira.” — Scotch Landlords. — Plan of Study. - - - 155

CHAPTER VI.

1763.

Graham's "Telemachus, a Mask." — Dr. Oliver Goldsmith.
 — Dr. John Campbell. — "Hermippus Redivivus." —
 Churchill's Poetry. — Bonnell Thornton. — "Ode on St.
 Cecilia's Day." — The Connoisseur. — The World. —
 Miss Williams's Tea Parties. — Anecdotes of Gold-
 smith. - - - - Page 188

CHAPTER VII.

1763.

London. — Miss Porter's Legacy. — Boswell and his Land-
 lord. — Suppers at the Mitre. — "The King can do no
 Wrong." — Historical Composition. — Bayle. — Arbuth-
 not. — The noblest Prospect in Scotland. — Jacobitism. —
 Lord Hailes. — Keeping a Journal. — The King of
 Prussia's Poetry. — Johnson's Library. — "Not at home."
 — Pity. — Style of Hume. — Inequality of Mankind. —
 Constitutional Goodness. — Miracles. — Acquaintance of
 Young People. — Hard Reading. — Melancholy. — Mrs.
 Macaulay. — Warton's Essay on Pope. — Sir James Mac-
 donald. — Projected Tour to the Hebrides. — Schoolboy
 Happiness. - - - - 202

CHAPTER VIII.

1763.

Table-Talk. — Influence of the Weather. — Swift. — Thom-
 son. — Burke. — Sheridan. — Evidences of Christianity. —
 Derrick. — Day at Greenwich. — The Methodists. — John-
 son's "Walk." — The Convocation. — Blacklock. — John-
 son accompanies Boswell to Harwich. — The Journey. —
 "Good Eating." — "Abstinence and Temperance." —
 Johnson's favourite Dishes. — Bishop Berkeley "refuted."
 — Burke. — Boswell sails for Holland. - - - 238

CHAPTER IX.

1763—1765.

Boswell at Utrecht. — Letter from Johnson. — The Frisick Language. — Johnson's Visit to Langton. — Institution of "The Club." — Reynolds. — Garrick. — Dr. Nugent. — Granger's "Sugar Cane." — Hypochondriac Attack. — Days of Abstraction. — Odd Habits. — Visit to Dr. Percy. — Letter to Reynolds. — Visit to Cambridge. — Self-examination. — Letter to, and from, Garrick. — Johnson created L.L.D. by Dublin University. — Letter to Dr. Leland. — Prayer on "Engaging in Politics." — William Gerard Hamilton. - - - Page 265

CHAPTER X.

1765—1766.

Acquaintance with the Thrales. — Publication of the Edition of Shakspeare. — Kenrick. — Letter to Boswell. — Boswell returns to England. — Voltaire on Pope and Dryden. — Goldsmith's "Traveller" and "Deserted Village." — Suppers at the Mitre resumed. — "Equal Happiness." — "Courting great Men." — Convents. — Second Sight. — Corsica. — Rousseau. — Subordination. — Making Verses. — Letters to Langton. - - - 292

APPENDIX.

No. I.	LIST OF THE CLUB	-	-	-	325
No. II.	ACCOUNT OF JOHNSON'S VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE,				
	IN 1765	-	-	-	330
No. III.	PEREGRINE LANGTON	-	-	-	341

THE
L I F E
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SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

1754.

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IN 1754 I can trace nothing published by him, except his numbers of the *Adventurer*, and "The Life of Edward Cave," in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February. In biography there can be no question that he excelled, beyond all who have attempted that species of composition; upon which, indeed, he set the highest value. To the minute

selection of characteristical circumstances, for which the ancients were remarkable, he added a philosophical research, and the most perspicuous and energetic language.⁽¹⁾ Cave was certainly a man of estimable qualities, and was eminently diligent and successful in his own business, which, doubtless, entitled him to respect. But he was peculiarly fortunate in being recorded by Johnson; who, of the narrow life of a printer and publisher, without any digressions or adventitious circumstances, has made an interesting and agreeable narrative.

The Dictionary, we may believe, afforded Johnson full occupation this year. As it approached to its conclusion, he probably worked with redoubled vigour, as seamen increase their exertion and alacrity when they have a near prospect of their haven.

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his lordship the Plan of his Dictionary, had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his lordship's

(1) This is not Johnson's appropriate praise; and, indeed, his want of attention to details is his greatest, if not his only, fault, as a biographer. In the whole *Life of Savage* there is not one date. Several details and corrections of errors, with which he was furnished for his *Lives of the Poets*, were wholly neglected. But in truth Mr. Boswell himself has, more than any other writer, contributed to create the public taste for biographical details; "the minute selection of characteristic circumstances" was neither the style of Johnson, nor the fashion of his day. — CROKER.

antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttelton, who told me he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and, holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield by saying, that "Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the back-stairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes." It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me, that there was not the least foundation for it. (1) He told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him.

When the Dictionary was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to soothe and insinuate himself with the sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold in-

(1) [Mr. Croker observes, that some expressions in Dr. Johnson's celebrated letter (see p. 8. *post*) seem, nevertheless, to give colour to the story of his being detained in the anteroom; and it must be remembered, that, at this period, Hawkins, whose edition of the story is attacked by Boswell, was in constant habits of intercourse with Johnson.]

difference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in "The World," in recommendation of the work: and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified. His Lordship says,

"I think the public in general, and the republic of letters in particular, are greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson for having undertaken and executed so great and desirable a work. Perfection is not to be expected from man; but if we are to judge by the various works of Johnson already published, we have good reason to believe, that he will bring this as near to perfection as any man could do. The Plan of it, which he published some years ago, seems to me to be a proof of it. Nothing can be more rationally imagined, or more accurately and elegantly expressed. I therefore recommend the previous perusal of it to all those who intend to buy the Dictionary, and who, I suppose, are all those who can afford it."

"It must be owned, that our language is, at present, in a state of anarchy, and hitherto, perhaps, it may not have been the worse for it. During our free and open trade, many words and expressions have been imported, adopted, and naturalised from other languages, which have greatly enriched our own. Let it still preserve what real strength and beauty it may have borrowed from others; but let it not, like the Tarpeian maid, be overwhelmed and crushed by unnecessary ornaments. The time for discrimination seems to be

now come. Toleration, adoption, and naturalisation have run their lengths. Good order and authority are now necessary. But where shall we find them, and, at the same time, the obedience due to them? We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of confusion, and choose a dictator. Upon this principle, I give my vote for Mr. Johnson to fill that great and arduous post. And I hereby declare, that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship. Nay, more; I will not only obey him like an old Roman, as my dictator, but, like a modern Roman, I will implicitly believe in him as my Pope, and hold him to be infallible while in the chair, but no longer. More than this he cannot well require; for, I presume, that obedience can never be expected, when there is neither terror to enforce, nor interest to invite it."

"But a Grammar, a Dictionary, and a History of our language through its several stages, were still wanting at home, and importunately called for from abroad. Mr. Johnson's labours will now, I dare say, very fully supply that want, and greatly contribute to the farther spreading of our language in other countries. Learners were discouraged, by finding no standard to resort to; and, consequently, thought it incapable of any. They will now be undeceived and encouraged."

This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that "all was false and hollow," despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should, for a moment, imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, "Sir, after making great

professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my Dictionary was coming out, he fell a scribbling in 'The World' about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

This is that celebrated letter of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified. I for many years solicited Johnson to favour me with a copy of it, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity. He delayed from time to time to give it me ⁽¹⁾; till at last, in 1781, when we were on a visit at Mr. Dilly's, at Southhill in Bedfordshire, he was pleased to dictate it to me from memory. He afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretto, with its title and corrections, in his own hand-writing. This he gave to Mr. Langton; adding, that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy. By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript of what the world has so eagerly desired to see.

(1) Dr. Johnson appeared to have had a remarkable delicacy with respect to the circulation of this letter; for Dr. Douglas, bishop of Salisbury, informs me, that having many years ago pressed him to be allowed to read it to the second Lord Hardwicke, who was very desirous to hear it (promising at the same time that no copy of it should be taken), Johnson seemed much pleased that it had attracted the attention of a nobleman of such a respectable character; but after pausing some time, declined to comply with the request, saying, with a smile, "No, Sir; I have hurt the dog too much already;" or words to that purpose. — BOSWELL.

LETTER 25. TO THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

“ February 7. 1755.

“ MY LORD,—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of ‘The World,’ that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

“ When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; — that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. (1) When I had once addressed your lordship

(1) Johnson’s personal manners and habits, even at a later and more polished period of his life, would probably not have been much to Lord Chesterfield’s taste; but it must be remembered, that Johnson’s introduction to Lord Chesterfield did not take place till his lordship was past *fifty*, and he was soon after attacked by a disease which *estranged him from society*. The neglect lasted, it is charged, from 1748 to 1755: his private letters to his most intimate friends will prove that during that period Lord Chesterfield may be excused for not cultivating Johnson’s society: — *e. g.* 20th Jan. 1749. “ My old disorder in my head hindered me from acknowledging your former letters.” 30th June, 1752. “ I am here in my hermitage, very deaf, and consequently *alone*; but I am *less dejected than most people in my situation would be*.” 10th Oct. 1753. “ I belong *no more to social life*.” 16th Nov. 1753. “ I know my place and form my plan accordingly, for *I strike society out of it*.” 10th July, 1755. “ My deafness is extremely increased, and daily increasing, and cuts me wholly *off from the society of others*, and my other complaints deny me the society of myself,” &c. &c. Johnson, perhaps, knew nothing of all this, and imagined that Lord Chesterfield declined his acquaintance on some opinion derogatory to his personal pretensions. Mr. Tyers, however, suggests a more

in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

“Seven years, my lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance⁽¹⁾, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

precise and probable ground for Johnson's animosity than Boswell gives, by hinting that Johnson expected some *pecuniary assistance* from Lord Chesterfield. He says, “It does not appear that Lord Chesterfield showed any *substantial* proofs of approbation to our philologer. A *small* present Johnson would have disdained, and he was not of a temper to put up with the *affront* of a *disappointment*. He *revenged* himself in a letter to his lordship written with great acrimony. Lord Chesterfield indeed commends and recommends Mr. Johnson's Dictionary in two or three numbers of ‘The World:’ but ‘not *words alone* please him.’” — *Biog. Sketch*, p. 7. — C.

(1) The following note is subjoined by Mr. Langton:—“Dr. Johnson, when he gave me this copy of his letter, desired that I would annex to it his information to me, that whereas it is said in the letter that ‘no assistance has been received,’ he did once receive from Lord Chesterfield the sum of ten pounds; but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find a place in a letter of the kind that this was.” — B.

This surely is an unsatisfactory excuse; for the sum, though now so inconsiderable, was one which, many years before, Johnson tells us, that Paul Whitehead, then a fashionable poet, received for a new work: it was as much as Johnson himself had received for the copyright of his best poetical production; and when Dr. Madden, some years after, gave him the same sum for revising a work of his, Johnson said that the Doctor “was *very generous*; for ten guineas was to me, at that time, a *great sum*” (see *post*, 1756). When Johnson alleged against Lord Chesterfield such a trifle as the *waiting in his anteroom*, he ought not to have omitted a pecuniary obligation, however inconsiderable. — C.

“The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

“Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it⁽¹⁾; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

“Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

MY LORD,

“Your lordship’s most humble, most obedient servant,
“SAM. JOHNSON.”⁽²⁾

(1) In this passage Dr. Johnson evidently alludes to the loss of his wife. We find the same tender recollection recurring to his mind upon innumerable occasions; and, perhaps no man ever more forcibly felt the truth of the sentiment so elegantly expressed by my friend Mr. Malone, in his prologue to Mr. Jephson’s tragedy of “Julia:”—

“Vain — wealth, and fame, and fortune’s fostering care,
If no fond breast the splendid blessings share;
And, each day’s bustling pageantry once past,
There, only there, our bliss is found at last.” — B.

(2) Upon comparing this copy with that which Dr. Johnson dictated to me from recollection, the variations are found to be so slight, that this must be added to the many other proofs which he gave of the wonderful extent and accuracy of his memory. To gratify the curious in composition, I have deposited both the copies in the British Museum. — B.

“ While this was the talk of the town (says Dr. Adams in a letter to me), I happened to visit Dr. Warburton, who, finding that I was acquainted with Johnson, desired me earnestly to carry his compliments to him, and to tell him, that he honoured him for his manly behaviour in rejecting these condescensions of Lord Chesterfield, and for resenting the treatment he had received from him with a proper spirit. Johnson was visibly pleased with this compliment, for he had always a high opinion of Warburton.” (1) Indeed, the force of mind which appeared in this letter, was congenial with that which Warburton himself amply possessed.

There is a curious minute circumstance which struck me, in comparing the various editions of Johnson’s *Imitations of Juvenal*. In the tenth Satire one of the couplets upon the vanity of wishes even for literary distinction stood thus :—

“ Yet think what ills the scholar’s life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the *garret*, and the jail.”

But after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield’s fallacious patronage made him feel,

(1) Soon after Edwards’s “ *Canons of Criticism* ” came out, Johnson was dining at Tonson the bookseller’s, with Hayman the painter and some more company. Hayman related to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the conversation having turned upon Edwards’s book, the gentlemen praised it much, and Johnson allowed its merit. But when they went farther, and appeared to put that author upon a level with Warburton, “ Nay, (said Johnson,) he has given him some smart hits to be sure ; but there is no proportion between the two men ; they must not be named together. A fly, sir, may sting a stately horse and make him wince ; but one is but an insect, and the other is a horse still.” — B.

he dismissed the word *garret* from the sad group, and in all the subsequent editions the line stands

“ Toil, envy, want, the *Patron*, and the jail.”

That Lord Chesterfield must have been mortified by the lofty contempt, and polite, yet keen, satire with which Johnson exhibited him to himself in this letter, it is impossible to doubt. He, however, with that glossy duplicity which was his constant study, affected to be quite unconcerned. Dr. Adams mentioned to Mr. Robert Dodsley that he was sorry Johnson had written his letter to Lord Chesterfield. Dodsley, with the true feelings of trade, said “ he was very sorry too; for that he had a property in the Dictionary, to which his lordship’s patronage might have been of consequence.” He then told Dr. Adams, that Lord Chesterfield had shown him the letter. “ I should have imagined (replied Dr. Adams) that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it.” — “ Poh! (said Dodsley), do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, sir. It lay upon his table, where any body might see it. He read it to me; said, ‘ This man has great powers,’ pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed.” This air of indifference, which imposed upon the worthy Dodsley, was certainly nothing but a specimen of that dissimulation which Lord Chesterfield inculcated as one of the most essential lessons for the conduct of life. (1) His lordship endeavoured to justify him-

(1) Why? If, as may have been the case, Lord Chesterfield felt that Johnson was unjust towards him, he would not have

self to Dodsley from the charges brought against him by Johnson; but we may judge from the flimsiness of his defence, from his having excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying, that “ he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived;” as if there could have been the smallest difficulty to inform himself of that circumstance, by inquiring in the literary circle with which his lordship was well acquainted, and was, indeed, himself, one of its ornaments.

Dr. Adams expostulated with Johnson, and suggested, that his not being admitted when he called on him, was probably not to be imputed to Lord Chesterfield; for his lordship had declared to Dodsley, that “ he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome;” and in confirmation of this, he insisted on Lord Chesterfield’s general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men. “ Sir, (said Johnson,) that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing.”—“ No, (said Dr. Adams,) there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two.”—“ But mine (replied Johnson instantly) was

been mortified — *Il n’y a que la vérité qui blesse.* By Mr. Boswell’s own confession, it appears that Johnson did not give copies of this letter; that for many years Boswell had in vain solicited him to do so, and that he, after the lapse of twenty years, did so reluctantly. With all these admissions, how can Mr. Boswell attribute to any thing but conscious rectitude Lord Chesterfield’s exposure of a letter which the author was so willing to bury in oblivion? — C.

defensive pride.” This, as Dr. Adams well observed, was one of those happy turns ⁽¹⁾ for which he was so remarkably ready.

Johnson having now explicitly avowed his opinion of Lord Chesterfield, did not refrain from expressing himself concerning that nobleman with pointed freedom: “This man (said he) I thought had been a lord among wits: but, I find, he is only a wit among lords!” ⁽²⁾ And when his Letters to his natural son were published, he observed, that “they teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master.” ⁽³⁾

¹ (1) This, like all the rest of the affair, seems discoloured by prejudice. Lord Chesterfield made no *attack* on Johnson, who certainly acted on the offensive, and not the defensive. — C.

(2) Johnson’s character of Chesterfield seems to be imitated from — *inter doctos nobilissimus, inter nobiles doctissimus, inter utrosque optimus*; (ex Apuleio, v. Erasm. — Dedication of Adagies to Lord Mountjoy;) and from *ιδιωτης εν φιλοσοφοις, φιλοσοφος εν ιδιοταις*. Proclus de Critia. — KEARNEY.

(3) That collection of Letters cannot be vindicated from the serious charge of encouraging, in some passages, one of the vices most destructive to the good order and comfort of society, which his lordship represents as mere fashionable gallantry; and, in others, of inculcating the base practice of dissimulation, and recommending, with disproportionate anxiety, a perpetual attention to external elegance of manners. But it must, at the same time, be allowed, that they contain many good precepts of conduct, and much genuine information upon life and manners, very happily expressed; and that there was considerable merit in paying so much attention to the improvement of one who was dependent upon his lordship’s protection: it has, probably, been exceeded in no instance by the most exemplary parent: and though I can by no means approve of confounding the distinction between lawful and illicit offspring, which is, in effect, insulting the civil establishment of our country, to look no higher; I cannot help thinking it laudable to be kindly attentive to those, of whose existence we have, in any way, been the cause. Mr. Stanhope’s character has been unjustly represented as diametrically opposite to what Lord Chesterfield wished him to be. He has been called dull, gross, and awk-

The character of a “respectable Hottentot,” in Lord Chesterfield’s Letters, has been generally understood to be meant for Johnson, and I have no doubt that it was. But I remember when the *Literary Property* of those letters was contested in the court of session in Scotland, and Mr. Henry Dundas (1), one of the counsel for the proprietors, read this character as an exhibition of Johnson, Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, one of the judges, maintained, with some warmth, that it was not intended as a portrait of Johnson, but of a late noble lord (2) distinguished for abstruse science. I have heard Johnson himself talk of the character, and say that it was meant for George Lord Lyttelton, in which I could by no means agree; for his lordship had nothing of that violence which is a conspicuous feature in the composition. Finding that my illustrious friend could bear to have it supposed that it might be meant for him, I said, laughingly, that there was one trait which unquestionably did not belong to him; “he throws his meat anywhere but down his

ward: but I knew him at Dresden, when he was envoy to that court; and though he could not boast of the *graces*, he was, in truth, a sensible, civil, well-behaved man. — B.

[Lord Chesterfield died in 1773. The “Letters” were published the year following, by his son’s widow; but the author appears to have given no authority for such a step.]

(1) [Afterwards Viscount Melville. He died in 1811.]

(2) Probably George, second Earl of Macclesfield, who published, in 1751, a learned pamphlet on the alteration of the style, and was, in 1752, elected President of the Royal Society. Lord Macclesfield’s manner was, no doubt, awkward and embarrassed, but little else in his character resembles that of the “respectable Hottentot,” which more probably was, as the world has supposed, intended for Johnson. — C.

throat.”—“ Sir, (said he,) Lord Chesterfield never saw me eat in his life.” (1)

On the 6th of March came out Lord Bolingbroke's works, published by Mr. David Mallet. The wild and pernicious ravings under the name of “ Philosophy,” which were thus ushered into the world, gave great offence to all well-principled men. Johnson, hearing of their tendency, which nobody disputed, was roused with a just indignation, and pronounced this memorable sentence upon the noble author and his editor:—“ Sir, he was a scoundrel, and a coward: a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had no resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman, to draw the trigger after his death!” Garrick, who I can attest from my own knowledge, had his mind seasoned with pious reverence, and sincerely disapproved of the infidel writings of several, whom in the course of his almost universal gay intercourse with men of eminence he treated with external civility, distinguished himself upon this occasion. Mr. Pelham having died on the very day on which Lord Bolingbroke's works came out, he wrote an elegant Ode on his death, beginning

“ Let others hail the rising sun,
I bow to that whose course is run ;”

(1) Lord Chesterfield's picture, if meant for Johnson, was not overcharged; for what between his blindness, his nervousness, and his eagerness, all his friends describe his mode of eating to have been something worse than awkward. See *post*, 5th Aug. 1763. — C.

in which is the following stanza:—

“ The same sad morn, to Church and State
 (So for our sins 't was fix'd by fate)
 A double stroke was given ;
 Black as the whirlwinds of the North,
 St. John's fell genius issued forth,
 And Pelham's fled to heaven.”

Johnson this year found an interval of leisure to make an excursion to Oxford, for the purpose of consulting the libraries there. Of this, and of many interesting circumstances concerning him, during a part of his life when he conversed but little with the world, I am enabled to give a particular account, by the liberal communications of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Warton, who obligingly furnished me with several of our common friend's letters, which he illustrated with notes. These I shall insert in their proper places.

LETTER 26. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“ [London] July 16. 1754.

“ SIR,— It is but an ill return for the book with which you were pleased to favour me ⁽¹⁾, to have delayed my thanks for it till now. I am too apt to be negligent ; but I can never deliberately show my disrespect to a man of your character : and I now pay you a very honest acknowledgment, for the advancement of the literature of our native country. You have shown to all, who shall hereafter attempt the study of our ancient authors, the way to success ; by directing them to the perusal of the books which those authors had read. Of this me-

(1) Observations on Spenser's Fairy Queen, the first edition of which was now published. — WARTON.

thod, Hughes (1), and men much greater than Hughes, seem never to have thought. The reason why the authors, which are yet read, of the sixteenth century, are so little understood, is, that they are read alone ; and no help is borrowed from those who lived with them, or before them. Some part of this ignorance I hope to remove by my book, [the Dictionary,] which now draws towards its end ; but which I cannot finish to my mind, without visiting the libraries of Oxford, which I therefore hope to see in a fortnight. (2) I know not how long I shall stay, or where I shall lodge : but shall be sure to look for you at my arrival, and we shall easily settle the rest. I am, dear Sir, your most obedient, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Of his conversation while at Oxford at this time, Mr. Warton preserved and communicated to me the following memorial, which, though not written with all the care and attention which that learned and elegant writer bestowed on those compositions which he intended for the public eye, is so happily expressed in an easy style, that I should injure it by any alteration.

“ When Johnson came to Oxford in 1754, the long vacation was beginning, and most people were leaving

(1) [John Hughes, the poet, was born at Marlborough in 1677. In 1715, he published an edition of Spenser, “ a work,” says Johnson, “ for which he was well qualified, as a judge of the beauties of writing, but perhaps wanted an antiquary’s knowledge of the obsolete words.” His tragedy of the “ Siege of Damascus ” was first represented February 17. 1720 ; and on the same day he died. Pope describes him as “ a good humble-spirited man, a great admirer of Addison, and but a poor writer, except his play ; that is very well.”]

(2) He came to Oxford within a fortnight, and stayed about five weeks. He lodged at Kettel Hall. — WARTON. [See p. 41. n.]

the place. This was the first time of his being there, after quitting the University. The next morning after his arrival, he wished to see his old college, *Pembroke*. I went with him. He was highly pleased to find all the college-servants which he had left there still remaining, particularly a very old butler; and expressed great satisfaction at being recognised by them, and conversed with them familiarly. He waited on the master, Dr. Radcliffe, who received him very coldly. Johnson at least expected, that the master would order a copy of his Dictionary, now near publication; but the master did not choose to talk on the subject, never asked Johnson to dine, nor even to visit him, while he staid at Oxford. After we had left the lodgings, Johnson said to me, ‘*There* lives a man, who lives by the revenues of literature, and will not move a finger to support it. (1) If I come to live at Oxford, I shall take up my abode at Trinity.’ We then called on the Reverend Mr. Meeke, one of the fellows, and of Johnson’s standing. Here was a most cordial greeting on both sides. On leaving him, Johnson said, ‘I used to think Meeke had excellent parts, when we were boys together at the college: but, alas!

‘Lost in a convent’s solitary gloom!’—

(1) There is some excuse for Dr. Ratcliff (so he spelt his name) not ordering a copy of the book, for this visit occurred seven or eight months before the Dictionary was published. His *personal* neglect of Johnson is less easily to be accounted for, unless it be by the fact, that he was a great invalid; but the imputation of his living by the revenues of literature, and doing nothing for it, cannot, as Dr. Hall informs me, be justly made against Dr. Ratcliff; for he bequeathed to his college 1000*l.* 4 per cents. for the establishment of an exhibition for the son of a Gloucestershire clergyman—1000*l.* for the improvement of the college buildings—100*l.* worth of books—and 100*l.* for contingent expenses. The residue of his property (except 600*l.* left for the repair of the prebendal house at Gloucester) he left to the old butler mentioned in the text, who had long been his servant: a bequest which Johnson himself imitated in favour of his own servant, Barber. — C.

“ ‘ I remember, at the classical lecture in the Hall, I could not bear Meeke’s superiority, and I tried to sit as far from him as I could, that I might not hear him construe.’

“ As we were leaving the college, he said, ‘ Here I translated Pope’s Messiah. Which do you think is the best line in it? — My own favourite is,

‘ *Vallis aromaticas fundit Saronica nubes.*’

I told him, I thought it a very sonorous hexameter. I did not tell him, it was not in the Virgilian style. He much regretted that his *first* tutor was dead; for whom he seemed to retain the greatest regard. He said, ‘ I once had been a whole morning sliding in Christ-Church meadows, and missed his lecture in logic. After dinner he sent for me to his room. I expected a sharp rebuke for my idleness, and went with a beating heart.⁽¹⁾ When we were seated, he told me he had sent for me to drink a glass of wine with him, and to tell me, he was *not* angry with me for missing his lecture. This was, in fact, a most severe reprimand. Some more of the boys were then sent for, and we spent a very pleasant afternoon.’ Besides Mr. Meeke, there was only one other fellow of Pembroke now resident: from both of whom Johnson received the greatest civilities during this visit, and they pressed him very much to have a room in the college.

“ In the course of this visit Johnson and I walked three or four times to Ellsfield, a village beautifully situ-

(1) This was Johnson’s earliest account of this little event, and probably the most accurate; many years after this he told the story to Boswell and Mrs. Piozzi, and made a parade of his having waited on his tutor, not with a “ *beating heart*,” but with “ *nonchalance* and even *insolence*.” It would seem as if Johnson had been induced, by the too obsequious deference of his later admirers, to assign to his character in youth a little more of sturdy dignity than, when his recollection was fresher and his ear unspoiled by flattery, he assumed to Mr. Warton. (See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 59.) — C.

ated about three miles from Oxford, to see Mr. [Francis] Wise, Radclivian librarian, with whom Johnson was much pleased. At this place, Mr. Wise had fitted up a house and gardens, in a singular manner, but with great taste. Here was an excellent library, particularly a valuable collection of books in Northern literature, with which Johnson was often very busy. One day Mr. Wise read to us a dissertation which he was preparing for the press, intitled "A History and Chronology of the fabulous Ages." (1) Some old divinities of Thrace, related to the Titans, and called the Cabiri, made a very important part of the theory of this piece; and in conversation afterwards, Mr. Wise talked much of his Cabiri. As we returned to Oxford in the evening, I outwalked Johnson, and he cried out *Sufflamina*, a Latin word which came from his mouth with peculiar grace, and was as much as to say, *Put on your drag chain*. Before we got home, I again walked too fast for him; and he now cried out, 'Why, you walk as if you were pursued by all the Cabiri in a body.' In an evening we frequently took long walks from Oxford into the country, returning to supper. Once, in our way home, we viewed the ruins of the abbeys of Oseney and Rewley, near Oxford. After at least half an hour's silence, Johnson said, 'I viewed them with indignation! We had then a long conversation on Gothic buildings; and in talking of the form of old halls, he said, 'In these halls, the fire place was anciently always in the middle of the room, till the Whigs removed it on one side.' (2) About this time

(1) [This work was not published till 1764. The author died in 1767: five years before his death, the following anticipation of it appeared in the London papers: "Dec. 9. 1762, died the Rev. *Solomon Wise*, greatly regretted by the studious part of the university of Oxford. His death was occasioned by a violent cold, contracted by too close attendance in the Bodleian and Radcliffe libraries."]

(2) What can this mean? What had the Whigs to do with removing the smoky hearths from the centre of the great halls to

there had been an execution of two or three criminals at Oxford on a Monday. Soon afterwards, one day at dinner, I was saying that Mr. Swinton⁽¹⁾, the chaplain of the gaol, and also a frequent preacher before the university, a learned man, but often thoughtless and absent, preached the condemnation-sermon on repentance, before the convicts, on the preceding day, Sunday; and that in the close he told his audience, that he should give them the remainder of what he had to say on the subject, the next Lord's Day. Upon which, one of our company, a doctor of divinity, and a plain matter-of-fact man, by way of offering an apology for Mr. Swinton, gravely remarked, that he had probably preached the same sermon before the university: 'Yes, Sir (says Johnson), but the university were not to be hanged the next morning.'

"I forgot to observe before, that when he left Mr. Meeke, (as I have told above,) he added, 'About the same time of life, Meeke was left behind at Oxford to feed on a fellowship, and I went to London to get my living: now, Sir, see the difference of our literary characters!'"⁽²⁾

a more commodious chimney at the side? — C. — [Does it not mean, that, after the Revolution, stoves were so placed, that they warmed only those who got good places near them? — FONNEREAU. It is probably a mere jest against modern improvements.]

(1) [The Rev. John Swinton, B. D. of Ch. Ch., one of the chief writers of the Universal History, died in 1777, aged 79.]

(2) *Curis acuens mortalia corda.* Poverty was the stimulus which made Johnson exert a genius naturally, it may be supposed, more vigorous than Meeke's, and he was now beginning to enjoy the fame, of which so many painful years of distress and penury had laid the foundation. Meeke had lived an easy life of decent competence; and on the whole, perhaps, as little envied Johnson, as Johnson him: the goodness and justice of Providence equalise, to a degree not always visible at first sight, the happiness of mankind — *nec vixit malè qui natus moriensque fefellit.* Meeke died about September, 1743. — C.

The following letter was written by Dr. Johnson to Mr. Chambers, of Lincoln College, afterwards Sir Robert Chambers, one of the judges in India ⁽¹⁾:

LETTER 27. TO MR. CHAMBERS.

“ [London,] Nov. 21. 1754.

“ DEAR SIR, — The commission which I delayed to trouble you with at your departure, I am now obliged to send you ; and beg that you will be so kind as to carry it to Mr. Warton, of Trinity, to whom I should have written immediately, but that I know not if he be yet come back to Oxford.

“ In the catalogue of MSS. of Gr. Brit., see vol. i. page 18. MSS. Bodl. MARTYRIUM XV. *martyrum sub Juliano, auctore Theophylacto.*

“ It is desired that Mr. Warton will inquire, and send word, what will be the cost of transcribing this manuscript.

“ Vol. ii. p. 32. Num. 1022. 58. COLL. NOV. — *Commentaria in Acta Apostol. — Comment. in Septem Epistolas Catholicas.*

“ He is desired to tell what is the age of each of these manuscripts ; and what it will cost to have a transcript of the two first pages of each.

“ If Mr. Warton be not in Oxford, you may try if you can get it done by any body else ; or stay till he comes, according to your own convenience. It is for an Italian *literato.*

(1) Sir Robert Chambers was born in 1737, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and educated at the same school with Lord Stowell and his brother the Earl of Eldon, and afterwards (like them) a member of University College. It was by visiting Chambers, when a fellow of University, that Johnson became acquainted with Lord Stowell ; and when Chambers went to India, Lord Stowell, as he expressed it to me, “ seemed to succeed to his place in Johnson’s friendship.” — C.

“ The answer is to be directed to his Excellency Mr. Zon, Venetian Resident, Soho Square.

“ I hope, dear Sir, that you do not regret the change of London for Oxford. Mr. Baretti is well, and Miss Williams ; and we shall all be glad to hear from you, whenever you shall be so kind as to write to, Sir, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

The degree of Master of Arts, which, it has been observed, could not be obtained for him at an early period of his life, was now considered as an honour of considerable importance, in order to grace the title-page of his Dictionary ; and his character in the literary world being by this time deservedly high, his friends thought that, if proper exertions were made, the University of Oxford would pay him the compliment.

LETTER 28. TO THE REV. T. WARTON.

“ [London,] Nov. 28. 1754.

“ DEAR SIR, — I am extremely obliged to you and to Mr. Wise, for the uncommon care which you have taken of my interest : if you can accomplish your kind design, I shall certainly take me a little habitation among you.

“ The books which I promised to Mr. Wise, I have not been able to procure : but I shall send him a Finnick Dictionary, the only copy, perhaps, in England, which was presented me by a learned Swede : but I keep it back, that it may make a set of my own books ⁽¹⁾ of the new edition, with which I shall accompany it, more welcome. You will assure him of my gratitude.

(1) The Rambler. — C.

“ Poor dear Collins ! (1) — Would a letter give him any pleasure ? I have a mind to write.

“ I am glad of your hindrance in your Spenserian design (2), yet I would not have it delayed. Three hours a day stolen from sleep and amusement will produce it. Let a Servitour (3) transcribe the quotations, and interleave them with references, to save time. This will shorten the work, and lessen the fatigue.

“ Can I do any thing to promoting the diploma ? I would not be wanting to co-operate with your kindness ; of which, whatever be the effect, I shall be, dear Sir, your most obliged, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 29. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] Dec. 21. 1754.

“ DEAR SIR, — I am extremely sensible of the favour done me, both by Mr. Wise and yourself. The book(4) cannot, I think, be printed in less than six weeks, nor probably so soon ; and I will keep back the title-page for such an insertion as you seem to promise me. Be pleased to let me know what money I shall send you, for bearing the expense of the affair ; and I will take care that you may have it ready at your hand.

“ I had lately the favour of a letter from your brother, with some account of poor Collins, for whom I am much concerned. I have a notion, that by very

(1) Collins (the poet) was at this time at Oxford, on a visit to Mr. Warton ; but labouring under the most deplorable languor of body, and dejection of mind. — WARTON. [He died at his native city, Chichester, in 1756. See Johnson's Life of him.]

(2) Of publishing a volume of observations on Spenser. — WARTON.

(3) Young students of the lowest rank are so called. — WARTON.

(4) His Dictionary. — WARTON.

great temperance, or more properly abstinence, he may yet recover.

“ There is an old English and Latin book of poems by Barclay, called “ The Ship of Fools ;” at the end of which are a number of *Eglogues*,—so he writes it, from *Egloga*, — which are probably the first in our language. If you cannot find the book, I will get Mr. Dodsley to send it you.

“ I shall be extremely glad to hear from you again, to know if the affair proceeds. I have mentioned it to none of my friends, for fear of being laughed at for my disappointment.

“ You know poor Mr. Dodsley has lost his wife ; I believe he is much affected. I hope he will not suffer so much as I yet suffer for the loss of mine.

Οἴμοι τι δ' οἴμοι; Θνητὰ γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν. (1)

I have ever since seemed to myself broken off from mankind ; a kind of solitary wanderer in the wild of life, without any direction, or fixed point of view ; a gloomy gazer on the world, to which I have little relation. Yet I would endeavour, by the help of you and your brother, to supply the want of closer union by friendship ; and hope to have long the pleasure of being, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 30. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] Dec. 24. 1754.

“ DEAR SIR, — I am sat down to answer your kind letter, though I know not whether I shall direct it so as that it may reach you ; the miscarriage of it will be no

(1) This verse is from the long lost BELLEROPHON, a tragedy by Euripides. It is preserved by Suidas. — BURNEY. The meaning is, “ Alas ! but why should I say *alas* ? we have only suffered the common lot of mortality ! ” It was the habitual exclamation of the philosopher Crantor. — C.

great matter, as I have nothing to send but thanks, of which I owe you many, yet if a few should be lost, I shall amply find them in my own mind; and professions of respect, of which the profession will easily be renewed while the respect continues: and the same causes which first produced can hardly fail to preserve it. Pray let me know, however, whether my letter finds its way to you.

“ Poor dear Collins! — Let me know whether you think it would give him pleasure if I should write to him. *I have often been near his state* ⁽¹⁾, and therefore have it in great commiseration.

“ I sincerely wish you the usual pleasures of this joyous season, and more than the usual pleasures, those of contemplation on the great event which this festival commemorates. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 29.]

CHAPTER II.

1755 —1758.

Johnson receives the Degree of M. A. by Diploma. — Correspondence with Warton and the Authorities of the University of Oxford. — Publication of the Dictionary of the English Language. — Remarkable Definitions. — Abridgment of the Dictionary. — The Universal Visiter. — The Literary Magazine. — Defence of Tea. — Pulpit Discourses. — Proposals for an Edition of Shakspeare. — Jonas Hanway. — Soame Jenyns. — Charles Burney.

IN 1755 we behold him to great advantage; his degree of Master of Arts conferred upon him, his Dictionary published, his correspondence animated, his benevolence exercised.

LETTER 31. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“ [London,] Feb. 1. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—I wrote to you some weeks ago, but believe did not direct accurately, and therefore know not whether you had my letter. I would, likewise, write to your brother, but know not where to find him. I now begin to see land, after having wandered, according to Mr. Warburton’s phrase, in this vast sea of words. What reception I shall meet with on the shore, I know not: whether the sound of bells, and acclamations of the people, which Ariosto talks of in his last Canto (1),

(1) [“ Sento venir per allegrezza, un tuono
Che fremar l’aria, e rimbombar far l’onde:
Odo di squille,” &c. — ORLANDO FURIOSO, c. xlvi. s. 2.

or a general murmur of dislike, I know not: whether I shall find upon the coast a Calypso that will court, or a Polypheme that will resist. But if Polypheme comes, have at his eye. I hope, however, the critics will let me be at peace; for though I do not much fear their skill and strength, I am a little afraid of myself, and would not willingly feel so much ill-will in my bosom as literary quarrels are apt to excite.

“ Mr. Baretti is about a work for which he is in great want of Crescimbeni, which you may have again when you please.

“ There is nothing considerable done or doing among us here. We are not, perhaps, as innocent as villagers, but most of us seem to be as idle. I hope, however, you are busy; and should be glad to know what you are doing. I am, dearest Sir, your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 32. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] Feb. 4. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—I received your letter this day, with great sense of the favour that has been done me ⁽¹⁾; for which I return my most sincere thanks: and entreat you to pay to Mr. Wise such returns as I ought to make for so much kindness so little deserved.

“ I sent Mr. Wise the Lexicon, and afterwards wrote to him; but know not whether he had either

“ A burst of joy, like thunder to my ear,
Rumbles along the sea and rends the sky:
I chiming bells, I thrilling trumpets hear,
Confounded with the people's cheerful cry;
And now their forms, that swarm on either pier
Of the thick-crowded harbour, I descry.
All seem rejoiced my task is smoothly done,
And I so long a course have safely run.” — ROSE.]

(1) His degree had now past the suffrages of the heads of colleges; but was not yet finally granted by the university. — WARTON.

the book or letter. Be so good as to contrive to inquire.

“ But why does my dear Mr. Warton tell me nothing of himself? Where hangs the new volume? ⁽¹⁾ Can I help? Let not the past labour be lost, for want of a little more: but snatch what time you can from the Hall, and the pupils, and the coffee-house, and the parks ⁽²⁾, and complete your design. I am, dear Sir, &c.,
SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 33. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] Feb. 13. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—I had a letter last week from Mr. Wise, but have yet heard nothing from you, nor know in what state my affair stands; of which I beg you to inform me, if you can, to-morrow, by the return of the post.

“ Mr. Wise sends me word, that he has not had the Finnick Lexicon yet, which I sent some time ago; and if he has it not, you must inquire after it. However, do not let your letter stay for that.

“ Your brother, who is a better correspondent than you, and, not much better, sends me word, that your pupils keep you in College: but do they keep you from writing too? Let them, at least give you time to write to, dear Sir, your most affectionate, &c.,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 34. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] Feb. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—Dr. King ⁽²⁾ was with me a few minutes before your letter; this, however, is the first instance in which your kind intentions to me have ever been frus-

(1) On Spenser. — WARTON.

(2) The walks near Oxford so called. — C.

(3) Principal of Saint Mary Hall at Oxford. He brought

trated. (1) I have now the full effect of your care and benevolence; and am far from thinking it a slight honour or a small advantage; since it will put the enjoyment of your conversation more frequently in the power of, dear Sir, your most obliged and affectionate,
SAM. JOHNSON.

“ P. S. I have enclosed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, which you will read; and, if you like it, seal and give him.”

As the public will doubtless be pleased to see the whole progress of this well-earned academical honour, I shall insert the Chancellor of Oxford's letter to the University, the diploma, and Johnson's letter of thanks to the Vice-Chancellor.

LETTER 35. TO THE REV. DR. HUDDSFORD,

[President of Trinity College,] Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford; to be communicated to the Heads of Houses, and proposed in Convocation.

“ Grosvenor Street, Feb. 4. 1755.

“ MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND GENTLEMEN; —

“ Mr. Samuel Johnson, who was formerly of Pembroke College, having very eminently distinguished

with him the diploma from Oxford. — WARTON. Dr. William King was born in 1685. In 1722, he was a candidate for the representation of the university in parliament, on the Tory interest; but was defeated. He was a wit and a scholar, and, in particular, celebrated for his latinity; highly obnoxious to the Hanoverian party, and the idol of the Jacobites. It appears from his *Anecdotes of his Own Times*, published in 1819, that he was one of those intrusted with the knowledge of the Pretender's being in London in the latter end of the reign of George the Second, where Dr. King was introduced to him. He died in 1763. — C.

(1) I suppose Johnson means, that my *kind intention* of being the *first* to give him the good news of the degree being granted was *frustrated*, because Dr. King brought it before my intelligence arrived. — WARTON. — [Dr. King was secretary to Lord Arran, as Chancellor of Oxford.]

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 is every where maintained by the strongest powers of argument and language ; and who shortly intends to publish a Dictionary of the English tongue, formed on a new plan, and executed with the greatest labour and judgment ; I persuade myself that I shall act agreeable to the sentiments of the whole university, in desiring that it may be proposed in convocation to confer on him the degree of Master of Arts by diploma, to which I readily give my consent ; and am, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and Gentlemen, your affectionate friend and servant, ARRAN.”

Term. Seti.
Hilarii.
1755.

“ DIPLOMA MAGISTRI JOHNSON.

“ *CANCELLARIUS, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis omnibus ad quos hoc presens scriptum pervenerit, salutem in Domino sempiternam.*

“ *Cùm eum in finem gradus academici à majoribus nostris instituti fuerint, ut viri ingenio et doctrinâ præstantes titulis quoque præter ceteros insignirentur; cùmque vir doctissimus Samuel Johnson è Collegio Pembrochiensi, scriptis suis popularium mores informantibus dudum literato orbi innotuerit; quin et linguæ patriæ tum ornandæ tum stabiliendæ (Lexicon scilicet Anglicanum summo studio, summo à se judicio congestum propediem editurus) etiam nunc utilissimam impendat operam; Nos igitur Cancellarius, Magistri, et Scholares antedicti, nè virum de literis humanioribus optimè meritum diutius inhonoratum prætereamus, in solenni Convocatione Doctorum, Magistrorum, Regentium, et non Regentium, decimo die Mensis Februarii Anno Domini Millesimo Septingentesimo Quinquagesimo quinto habitâ, præfatum virum Samuelem Johnson (conspirantibus omnium suffragiis) Magistrum in Artibus 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 sigillum Universitatis Oxoniensis præsentibus apponi fecimus.*

“ *Datum in Domo nostræ Convocationis die 20^o
Mensis Feb. Anno Dom. prædicto.*

“ *Diploma supra scriptum per Registrarium lectum erat, et ex decreto venerabilis Domûs communi Universitatis sigillo munitum.*” (1)

LETTER 36.

“ Londini. 4to Cal. Mart. 1755.

“ VIRO REVERENDO [GEORGIO] HUDDSFORD, S. T. P. Universitatis Oxoniensis Vice-Cancellario Dignissimo, S. P. D.

“ SAMUEL JOHNSON.

“ *INGRATUS* planè et tibi et mihi videar, nisi quanto me gaudio affecerint, quos nuper mihi honores (te, credo, auctore), decrevit Senatus Academicus, literarum, quo tamen nihil levius, officio, significem : ingratus etiam, nisi comitatem, quâ vir eximius (2) mihi vestri testimonium amoris in manus tradidit, agnoscam et laudem. Si quid est, undè rei tam gratæ accedat gratia, hoc ipso magis mihi placet, quod eo tempore in ordines Academicos denuò cooptatus sim, quo tuam imminuere auctoritatem, famamque Oxonii lædere, omnibus modis conantur homines vafri, nec tamen acuti : quibus ego, prout viro umbratico licuit, semper restiti, semper restiturus. Qui enim, inter has rerum procellas, vel tibi vel Academicæ defuerit, illum virtuti et literis, sibi que et posteris, defuturum existimo. Vale.”

(1) The original is in my possession. — B. [It is now in the collection of Louis Pocock, Esq. 1835.]

(2) We may conceive what a high gratification it must have been to Johnson to receive his diploma from the hands of the great Dr. King, whose principles were so congenial with his own. — B.

LETTER 37. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“ [London,] March 20. 1755.

“DEAR SIR,—After I received my diploma, I wrote you a letter of thanks, with a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, and sent another to Mr. Wise; but have heard from nobody since, and begin to think myself forgotten. It is true, I sent you a double letter, and you may fear an expensive correspondent; but I would have taken it kindly, if you had returned it treble; and what is a double letter to a *petty king*, that having *fellowship and fines*, can sleep without a *Modus in his head*? (1)

“ Dear Mr. Warton, let me hear from you, and tell me something, I care not what, so I hear it but from you. Something, I will tell you: — I hope to see my Dictionary bound and lettered, next week; — *vastâ mole superbus*. And I have a great mind to come to Oxford at Easter; but you will not invite me. Shall I come uninvited, or stay here where nobody perhaps would miss me if I went? A hard choice! But such is the world to, dear Sir, yours, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”(2)

- (1) [“ These fellowships are pretty things;
We live indeed like petty kings,
And every night I went to bed,
Without a Modus in my head.”—

WARTON’S Progress of Discontent.]

(2) The following extract of a letter from Mr. Warton to his brother will show his first sentiments on this great work: — “ 19th April, 1755. The Dictionary is arrived; the preface is noble. There is a grammar prefixed, and the history of the language is pretty full; but you may plainly perceive strokes of laxity and indolence. They are two most unwieldy volumes. I have written him an invitation. I fear his preface will disgust, by the expression of his consciousness of superiority, and of his contempt of patronage. The Rawlinson benefaction *

* By this, I suppose, is meant the Anglo-Saxon professorship which was founded in 1750, but did not take effect before 1795. — HALL.

LETTER 38. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] March 25. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,— Though not to write, when a man can write so well, is an offence sufficiently heinous, yet I shall pass it by. I am very glad that the Vice-Chancellor was pleased with my note. I shall impatiently expect you at London, that we may consider what to do next. I intend in the winter to open a *Bibliothèque*, and remember, that you are to subscribe a sheet a year: let us try, likewise, if we cannot persuade your brother to subscribe another. My book is now coming *in luminis oras*. What will be its fate I know not, nor think much, because thinking is to no purpose. It must stand the censure of the *great vulgar*, and the *small*; of those that understand it, and that understand it not. But in all this, I suffer not alone; every writer has the same difficulties, and, perhaps, every writer talks of them more than he thinks.

“ You will be pleased to make my compliments to all my friends; and be so kind, at every idle hour, as to remember, dear Sir, yours, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Dr. Adams told me, that this scheme of a *Bibliothèque* was a serious one: for upon his visiting him one day, he found his parlour floor covered with parcels of foreign and English literary journals, and he told Dr. Adams he meant to undertake a Review. “ How, sir, (said Dr. Adams,) can you think of

won't do for Johnson, which is this — a professorship of 80*l.* per annum, which is not to take place these forty years; a fellowship to Hertford College, which is too ample for them to receive agreeably to Newton's statutes; and a fellowship to St. John's College. Neither of the last are to take place these forty years.” — C.

doing it alone? All branches of knowledge must be considered in it. Do you know Mathematics? Do you know Natural History?" Johnson answered, "Why, sir, I must do as well as I can. My chief purpose is to give my countrymen a view of what is doing in literature upon the continent; and I shall have, in a good measure, the choice of my subject, for I shall select such books as I best understand." Dr. Adams suggested, that as Dr. Maty had just then finished his *Bibliothèque Britannique*, which was a well executed work, giving foreigners an account of British publications, he might, with great advantage, assume him as an assistant. "He, (said Johnson) the little black dog! I'd throw him into the Thames." (1) The scheme, however, was dropped.

In one of his little memorandum-books I find the following hints for his intended Review or Literary Journal; "*The Annals of Literature, foreign as well as domestic.* Imitate Le Clerc—Bayle—Barbeyrac. Infelicity of Journals in England. Works of the

(1) Matthew Maty, M. D. and F. R. S., was born in Holland in 1718, and educated at Leyden, but he came in 1740 to settle in England. He became secretary to the Royal Society in 1765, and in 1772, principal librarian of the British Museum. Maty being the friend and admirer of Lord Chesterfield, whose works he afterwards published, would, as Dr. Hall observes, particularly at this period, have little recommendation to the good opinion of the lexicographer; but his *Journal Britannique* is mentioned by Mr. Gibbon in a tone very different from Dr. Johnson's. "This humble though useful labour, which had once been dignified by the genius of Bayle and the learning of Le Clerc, was not disgraced by the taste, the knowledge, and the judgment of Maty. His style is pure and eloquent, and in his virtues or even in his defects he may be reckoned as one of the last disciples of the school of Fontenelle." — Gibbon's Misc. Works. Dr. Maty died in 1776. — C.

learned. We cannot take in all. Sometimes copy from foreign Journalists. Always tell."

LETTER 39. TO DR. BIRCH.

" March 29. 1755.

" SIR, — I have sent some parts of my Dictionary, such as were at hand, for your inspection. The favour which I beg is, that if you do not like them, you will say nothing. I am, Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 40. TO MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

" Norfolk-street, April 23. 1755.

" SIR, — The part of your Dictionary which you have favoured me with the sight of, has given me such an idea of the whole, that I must sincerely congratulate the public upon the acquisition of a work long wanted, and now executed with an industry, accuracy, and judgment, equal to the importance of the subject. You might, perhaps, have chosen one in which your genius would have appeared to more advantage, but you could not have fixed upon any other in which your labours would have done such substantial service to the present age and to posterity. I am glad that your health has supported the application necessary to the performance of so vast a task ; and can undertake to promise you as one (though perhaps the only) reward of it, the approbation and thanks of every well-wisher to the honour of the English language. I am, with the greatest regard, Sir, your most faithful and most affectionate humble servant,
" THO. BIRCH."

Mr. Charles Burney, who has since distinguished himself so much in the science of music, and obtained a Doctor's degree from the University of Oxford,

had been driven from the capital by bad health, and was now residing at Lynne Regis in Norfolk. He had been so much delighted with Johnson's Rambler, and the plan of his Dictionary, that when the great work was announced in the news-papers as nearly finished, he wrote to Dr. Johnson, begging to be informed when and in what manner his Dictionary would be published; intreating, if it should be by subscription, or he should have any books at his own disposal, to be favoured with six copies for himself and friends.

In answer to this application, Dr. Johnson wrote the following letter, of which (to use Dr. Burney's own words) "if it be remembered that it was written to an obscure young man, who at this time had not much distinguished himself even in his own profession, but whose name could never have reached the author of *THE RAMBLER*, the politeness and urbanity may be opposed to some of the stories which have been lately circulated of Dr. Johnson's natural rudeness and ferocity."

LETTER 41. TO MR. BURNEY, IN LYNNE REGIS,
NORFOLK.

"Gough Square, Fleet Street, April 8. 1755.

"SIR,—If you imagine that by delaying my answer I intended to shew any neglect of the notice with which you have favoured me, you will neither think justly of yourself nor of me. Your civilities were offered with too much elegance not to engage attention; and I have too much pleasure in pleasing men like you, not to feel very sensibly the distinction which you have bestowed upon me.

“ Few consequences of my endeavours to please or to benefit mankind have delighted me more than your friendship thus voluntarily offered, which now I have it I hope to keep, because I hope to continue to deserve it.

“ I have no Dictionaries to dispose of for myself, but shall be glad to have you direct your friends to Mr. Dodsley, because it was by his recommendation that I was employed in the work.

“ When you have leisure to think again upon me let me be favoured with another letter ; and another yet, when you have looked into my Dictionary. If you find faults, I shall endeavour to mend them ; if you find none, I shall think you blinded by kind partiality : but to have made you partial in his favour, will very much gratify the ambition of, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Mr. Andrew Millar, bookseller in the Strand, (1) took the principal charge of conducting the publication of Johnson's Dictionary ; and as the patience of the proprietors was repeatedly tried and almost exhausted, by their expecting that the work would be completed within the time which Johnson had sanguinely supposed, the learned author was often goaded to dispatch, more especially as he had received all the copy-money, by different drafts, a considerable time before he had finished his task. When the messenger who carried the last sheet to Millar returned, Johnson asked him, “ Well, what did he say ? ” — “ Sir, (answered the messenger) he

(1) [Opposite Catherine Street. In 1767 Millar was succeeded, in the same house, by the late Mr. Alderman Cadell, whose son is the present occupier. 1835.]

said, thank GOD I have done with him." "I am glad (replied Johnson, with a smile,) that he thanks GOD for any thing." (1) It is remarkable, that those with whom Johnson chiefly contracted for his literary labours were Scotchmen, Mr. Millar and Mr. Strahan. Millar, though himself no great judge of literature, had good sense enough to have for his friends very able men to give him their opinion and advice in the purchase of copy-right; the consequence of which was his acquiring a very large fortune, with great liberality. Johnson said of him, "I respect Millar, sir; he has raised the price of literature." The same praise may be justly given to Panckoucke, the eminent bookseller of Paris. (2) Mr. Strahan's liberality, judgment, and success, are well known.

LETTER 42. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton, Lincolnshire.

" May 6. 1755.

" SIR, — It has been long observed, that men do not suspect faults which they do not commit; your own elegance of manners, and punctuality of complaisance,

(1) Sir John Hawkins, p. 342, inserts two notes as having passed formally between Andrew Millar and Johnson, to the above effect. I am assured this was not the case. In the way of incidental remark it was a pleasant play of raillery. To have deliberately written notes in such terms would have been morose.

(2) [Panckoucke edited, for some years, the "Mercure de France," printed splendid editions of the works of Buffon and Voltaire, projected the plan of the "Encyclopédie Méthodique," and, in 1789, established the "Moniteur Universel," which shortly after became the official journal of the French government.]

did not suffer you to impute to me that negligence of which I was guilty, and [for] which I have not since atoned. I received both your letters, and received them with pleasure proportionate to the esteem which so short an acquaintance strongly impressed, and which I hope to confirm by nearer knowledge, though I am afraid that gratification will be for a time withheld.

“ I have, indeed, published my book, (1) of which I beg to know your father’s judgment, and yours ; and I have now staid long enough to watch its progress in the world. It has, you see, no patrons, and, I think, has yet had no opponents, except the critics of the coffee-house, whose outcries are soon dispersed into the air, and are thought on no more : from this, therefore, I am at liberty, and think of taking the opportunity of this interval to make an excursion, and why not then into Lincolnshire ? or, to mention a stronger attraction, why not to dear Mr. Langton ? I will give the true reason, which I know you will approve : — I have a mother more than eighty years old, who has counted the days to the publication of my book, in hopes of seeing me ; and to her, if I can disengage myself here, I resolve to go. (2)

“ As I know, dear Sir, that to delay my visit for a reason like this, will not deprive me of your esteem, I beg it may not lessen your kindness. I have very seldom received an offer of friendship which I so earnestly desire to cultivate and mature. I shall rejoice to hear from you, till I can see you, and will see you as soon as I can ; for when the duty that calls me to Lichfield is discharged, my inclination will carry me to Langton. I shall delight to hear the ocean roar, or see the stars

(1) His Dictionary.

(2) It is to be feared that this duty was not performed : see *post*, January 1759, and July 20. 1762. — C.

twinkle, in the company of men to whom nature does not spread her volumes or utter her voice in vain.

“ Do not, dear Sir, make the slowness of this letter a precedent for delay, or imagine that I approved the in-divility that I have committed ; for I have known you enough to love you, and sincerely to wish a further knowledge ; and I assure you, once more, that to live in a house that contains such a father and such a son, will be accounted a very uncommon degree of pleasure, by, dear Sir, your most obliged, and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 43. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“ [London,] May 13. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—I am grieved that you should think me capable of neglecting your letters ; and beg you will never admit any such suspicion again. I purpose to come down next week, if you shall be there ; or any other week, that shall be more agreeable to you. Therefore let me know. I can stay this visit but a week, but intend to make preparations for a longer stay next time ; being resolved not to lose sight of the University. How goes Apollonius (1) ? Don't let him be forgotten. Some things of this kind must be done, to keep us up. Pay my compliments to Mr. Wise, and all my other friends. I think to come to Kettel-Hall.(2) I am, Sir, your most affectionate, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

(1) A translation of Apollonius Rhodius was now intended by Mr. Warton. — WARTON.

(2) Kettel-Hall is an ancient tenement built about the year 1615, by Dr. Ralph Kettel, President of Trinity College, for the accommodation of commoners of that society. It adjoins the college ; and was a few years ago converted into a private house. — M.

LETTER 44. TO MR. [SAMUEL] RICHARDSON. (1)

“ May 17. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—As you were the first that gave me notice of this paragraph, I send it to you, with a few little notes, which I wish you would read. It is well, when men of learning and penetration busy themselves in these inquiries, but what is their idleness is my business. Help, indeed, now comes too late for me, when a large part of my book has passed the press.

“ I shall be glad if these strictures appear to you not unwarrantable ; for whom should he, who toils in settling a language, desire to please but him who is adorning it ? I hope your new book is printing. *Macte novâ virtute*. I am, dear Sir, most respectfully and most affectionately, your humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 45. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“ [London,] June 10. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—It is strange how many things will happen to intercept every pleasure, though it [be] only that of two friends meeting together. I have promised myself every day to inform you when you might expect me at Oxford, and have not been able to fix a time. The time, however, is, I think, at last come ; and I promise myself to repose in Kettel-Hall, one of the first nights of the next week. I am afraid my stay with you cannot be long ; but what is the inference ? We must endeavour to make it cheerful. I wish your brother could meet us, that we might go and drink tea with Mr. Wise in a body. I hope he will be at Oxford, or at his nest of British and Saxon antiquities. (2) I shall expect to see Spenser finished, and many other things begun.

(1) Communicated by Dr. Harwood. — C.

(2) At Ellsfield. — WARTON.

Dodsley is gone to visit the Dutch. The Dictionary sells well. The rest of the world goes on as it did.
Dear Sir, your most affectionate, &c.

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 46.

TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] June 24. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—To talk of coming to you, and not yet to come, has an air of trifling which I would not willingly have among you ; and which, I believe, you will not willingly impute to me, when I have told you, that since my promise, two of our partners ⁽¹⁾ are dead, and that I was solicited to suspend my excursion till we could recover from our confusion.

“ I have not laid aside my purpose ; for every day makes me more impatient of staying from you. But death, you know, hears not supplications, nor pays any regard to the convenience of mortals. I hope now to see you next week ; but next week is but another name for to-morrow, which has been noted for promising and deceiving. I am, &c. SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 47.

TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] Aug. 7. 1755.

“ DEAR SIR,—I told you that among the manuscripts are some things of Sir Thomas More. I beg you to pass an hour in looking on them, and procure a transcript of the ten or twenty first lines of each, to be compared with what I have ; that I may know whether they are yet published. The manuscripts are these :

“ Catalogue of Bodl. MS. p. 122. f. 3. Sir Thomas More. 1. Fall of angels. 2. Creation and fall of

(1) Booksellers concerned in his Dictionary.—WARTON.
Mr. Paul Knapton died on the 12th, and Mr. Thomas Longman on the 18th June, 1755.—C.

mankind. 3. Determination of the Trinity for the rescue of mankind. 4. Five lectures of our Saviour's passion. 5. Of the institution of the sacrament, three lectures. 6. How to receive the blessed body of our Lord sacramentally. 7. Neomenia, the new moon. 8. *De tristitia, tædio, pavore, et oratione Christi ante captionem ejus.*

“Catalogue, p. 154. Life of Sir Thomas More. *Qu. Whether Roper's?* P. 363. *De resignatione Magni Sigilli in manus Regis per D. Thomam Morum.* Pag. 364. *Mori Defensio Moriæ.*

“If you procure the young gentleman in the library to write out what you think fit to be written, I will send to Mr. Prince the bookseller to pay him what you shall think proper. Be pleased to make my compliments to Mr. Wise, and all my friends. I am, Sir, your affectionate, &c.

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

The Dictionary, with a Grammar and History of the English Language, being now at length published, in two volumes folio, the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work achieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies. Vast as his powers were, I cannot but think that his imagination deceived him, when he supposed that by constant application he might have performed the task in three years. Let the Preface be attentively perused, in which is given, in a clear, strong, and glowing style, a comprehensive, yet particular view of what he had done; and it will be evident, that the time he employed upon it was comparatively short. I am unwilling to swell my book with long quotations from what is in every body's hands, and I believe

there are few prose compositions in the English language that are read with more delight, or are impressed upon the memory, than that preliminary discourse. One of its excellencies has always struck me with peculiar admiration; I mean the perspicuity with which he has expressed abstract scientific notions. As an instance of this, I shall quote the following sentence: "When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their own nature collateral?" We have here an example of what has been often said, and I believe with justice, that there is for every thought a certain nice adaptation of words which none other could equal, and which, when a man has been so fortunate as to hit, he has attained, in that particular case, the perfection of language.

The extensive reading which was absolutely necessary for the accumulation of authorities, and which alone may account for Johnson's retentive mind being enriched with a very large and various store of knowledge and imagery, must have occupied several years. The Preface furnishes an eminent instance of a double talent, of which Johnson was fully conscious. Sir Joshua Reynolds heard him say, "There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction to any literary work, stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner; the other is a conclusion, shewing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to

what the author promised to himself and to the public."

How should puny scribblers be abashed and disappointed, when they find him displaying a perfect theory of lexicographical excellence, yet at the same time candidly and modestly allowing that he "had not satisfied his own expectations." Here was a fair occasion for the exercise of Johnson's modesty, when he was called upon to compare his own arduous performance, not with those of other individuals, (in which case his inflexible regard to truth would have been violated had he affected diffidence,) but with speculative perfection; as he, who can outstrip all his competitors in the race, may yet be sensible of his deficiency when he runs against time. Well might he say, that "the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned;" for he told me, that the only aid which he received was a paper containing twenty etymologies, sent to him by a person then unknown, who he was afterwards informed was Dr. Pearce, ⁽¹⁾ Bishop of Rochester. The etymologies, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not, I think, entitled to the first praise amongst the various parts of this immense work. The definitions have always appeared to me such astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and pre-

(1) [Zachary Pearce, born in 1690, was the son of a distiller in High Holborn: he was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and became Bishop of Rochester in 1756. He died June 29. 1774. Being asked, a few days before his death, how he could live with so little nourishment, he replied, "I live upon the recollection of an innocent and well-spent life, which is my only support." — NICHOLS, vol. iii. p. 107.]

cision of language, as indicate a genius of the highest rank. This it is which marks the superior excellence of Johnson's Dictionary over others equally or even more voluminous, and must have made it a work of much greater mental labour than mere Lexicons, or *Word-Books*, as the Dutch call them. They, who will make the experiment of trying how they can define a few words of whatever nature, will soon be satisfied of the unquestionable justice of this observation, which I can assure my readers is founded upon much study, and upon communication with more minds than my own.

A few of his definitions must be admitted to be erroneous. Thus, *Windward* and *Leeward*, though directly of opposite meaning, are defined identically the same way [*"toward the wind"*]; as to which inconsiderable specks it is enough to observe, that his Preface announces that he was aware that there might be many such in so immense a work; nor was he at all disconcerted when an instance was pointed out to him⁽¹⁾. A lady once asked him how he came to define *Pastern* the *knee* of a horse: instead of making an elaborate defence, as she expected, he at once answered, "Ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance." His definition of *Network* [*"any thing reticulated or decussated at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections"*] has been often quoted with sportive malignity, as obscuring

(1) He owns in his Preface the deficiency of the technical part of his work; and he said, he should be much obliged to me for definitions of musical terms for his next edition, which he did not live to superintend. — BURNEY.

a thing in itself very plain. But to these frivolous censures no other answer is necessary than that with which we are furnished by his own Preface:—

“To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found. For, as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit of definition. Sometimes easy words are changed into harder; as, *burial*, into *sepulture* or *interment*; *dry*, into *desiccative*; *dryness*, into *siccity*, or *aridity*; *fit*, into *paroxysm*; for the *easiest* word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy.”

His introducing his own opinions, and even prejudices under general definitions of words, while at the same time the original meaning of the words is not explained, as his

“**TORY** [*a cant term, derived, I suppose, from an Irish word signifying a savage. One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state and the apostolic hierarchy of the church of England: opposed to a Whig*].

“**WHIG** [*the name of a faction*].

“**PENSION** [*an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country*].

“**PENSIONER** [*a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey his master*].

“**OATS** [*a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people*].

“**EXCISE** [*a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but by WRETCHES hired by those to whom excise is paid. (1)*]”

(1) The commissioners of excise being offended by this

And a few more, cannot be fully defended, and must be placed to the account of capricious and humorous indulgence.

severe reflection, consulted Mr. Murray, then Attorney-General, to know whether redress could be legally obtained. I wished to have procured for my readers a copy of the opinion which he gave, and which may now be justly considered as history: but the mysterious secrecy of office, it seems, would not permit it. I am, however, informed, by very good authority, that its import was, that the passage might be considered as actionable; but that it would be more prudent in the board not to prosecute. Johnson never made the smallest alteration in this passage. We find he still retained his early prejudice against excise; for in "The Idler," No. 65., there is the following very extraordinary paragraph: "The authenticity of Clarendon's History, though printed with the sanction of one of the first universities of the world, had not an unexpected manuscript been happily discovered, would, with the help of factious credulity, have been brought into question, by the two lowest of all human beings, a scribbler for a party, and a commissioner of excise." The persons to whom he alludes were Mr. John Oldmixon, and George Duckett, Esq. — BOSWELL.

I am more fortunate than Mr. Boswell, in being able (through the favour of Sir F. H. Doyle, now deputy-chairman of the excise board) to present the reader with the case submitted to Lord Mansfield, and his opinion:

"CASE for the opinion of Mr. Attorney-General.

"Mr. Samuel Johnson has lately published 'A Dictionary of the English Language,' in which are the following words: —

"'EXCISE, *n. s.* A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.'

"The author's definition being observed by the commissioners of excise, they desire the favour of your opinion. " *Qu.* Whether it will not be considered as a libel, and if so, whether it is not proper to proceed against the author, printers, and publishers thereof, or any and which of them, by information, or how otherwise?"

"I am of opinion that it is a libel. But under all the circumstances, I should think it better to give him an opportunity of altering his definition; and, in case he do not, to threaten him with an information.

"29th Nov. 1755.

"W. MURRAY."

Whether any such step was taken, Sir Francis Doyle has not been able to discover: probably not; but Johnson, in his own

Talking to me upon this subject when we were at Ashbourne in 1777, he mentioned a still stronger instance of the predominance of his private feelings in the composition of this work, than any now to be found in it. “ You know, sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *Renegado*, after telling that it meant ‘ one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,’ I added, *Sometimes we say a GOWER*. Thus it went to the press : but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out.” (1)

Let it, however, be remembered, that this indulgence does not display itself only in sarcasm towards others, but sometimes in playful allusion to the notions commonly entertained of his own laborious task. Thus : “ *Grub Street*, the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, *dictionaries*, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called *Grub Street*.” — “ *Lexicographer*, a writer of dictionaries, a *harmless drudge*.”

At the time when he was concluding his very eloquent Preface, Johnson’s mind appears to have been in such a state of depression, that we cannot contemplate without wonder the vigorous and splendid thoughts which so highly distinguish that performance.

“ I (says he) may surely be contented without the

octavo abridgment of the Dictionary, had the good sense to omit the more offensive parts of the definitions of both *EXCISE* and *PENSION*. We have already seen (*antè*, Vol. I. p. 31.) the probable motive of the attack on the *Excise*. — CROKER.

(1) Lord Gower, after a long opposition to the Whig ministry (which was looked upon as equivalent to Jacobitism), accepted, in 1742, the office of Privy Seal, and was the object of much censure both with Whigs and Tories. — C.

praise of perfection, which if I could obtain in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave; and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."

That this indifference was rather a temporary than an habitual feeling, appears, I think, from his letters to Mr. Warton; and however he may have been affected for the moment, certain it is that the honours which his great work procured him, both at home and abroad, were very grateful to him. His friend the Earl of Corke and Orrery, being at Florence, presented it to the *Accademia della Crusca*. That Academy sent Johnson their *Vocabulario*, and the French Academy sent him their *Dictionnaire*, which Mr. Langton had the pleasure to convey to him.

It must undoubtedly seem strange, that the conclusion of his Preface should be expressed in terms so desponding, when it is considered that the author was then only in his forty-sixth year. But we must ascribe its gloom to that miserable dejection of spirits to which he was constitutionally subject, and which was aggravated by the death of his wife two years before. I have heard it ingeniously observed by a lady of rank and elegance, that "his melancholy was then at its meridian." It pleased God to grant him almost thirty years of life after this time; and once when he was in a placid frame of mind, he was obliged to own to me that he had enjoyed happier days, and had many more friends, since that gloomy hour, than before.

It is a sad saying, that “most of those whom he wished to please had sunk into the grave;” and his case at forty-five was singularly unhappy, unless the circle of his friends was very narrow. I have often thought, that as longevity is generally desired, and I believe, generally expected, it would be wise to be continually adding to the number of our friends, that the loss of some may be supplied by others. Friendship, “the wine of life,” should, like a well stocked cellar, be thus continually renewed; and it is consolatory to think, that although we can seldom add what will equal the generous *first-growths* of our youth, yet friendship becomes insensibly old in much less time than is commonly imagined, and not many years are required to make it very mellow and pleasant. *Warmth* will, no doubt, make a considerable difference. Men of affectionate temper and bright fancy will coalesce a great deal sooner than those who are cold and dull.

The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate was, at a subsequent period of his life, the opinion of Johnson himself. He said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, “If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship *in constant repair*.”

The celebrated Mr. Wilkes, whose notions and habits of life were very opposite to his, but who was ever eminent for literature and vivacity, sallied forth with a little *Jeu d'Esprit* upon the following passage in his Grammar of the English Tongue, prefixed to the Dictionary: “*H* seldom, perhaps never, begins

any but the first syllable." In an essay printed in "The Public Advertiser," this lively writer enumerated many instances in opposition to this remark; for example, "The author of this observation must be a man of a quick *appre-hension*, and of a most *compre-hensive* genius." The position is undoubtedly expressed with too much latitude.

This light sally, we may suppose, made no great impression on our Lexicographer; for we find that he did not alter the passage till many years afterwards. (1)

He had the pleasure of being treated in a very different manner by his old pupil Mr. Garrick, in the following complimentary Epigram:

“ ON JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY.

“ Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance,
That one English soldier will beat ten of France;
Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men:
In the deep mines of science though Frenchmen may
toil,
Can their strength be compar'd to Locke, Newton, and
Boyle?
Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their powers,
Their verse-men and prose-men, then match them with
ours!
First Shakspeare and Milton, like Gods in the fight,
Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;

(1) In the third edition, published in 1773, he left out the words *perhaps never*, and added the following paragraph:—
“ It sometimes begins middle or final syllables in words compounded, as *block-head* or derived from the Latin, as *compre-hended*.”

In satires, epistles, and odes would they cope,
 Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope ;
 And Johnson, well arm'd like a hero of yore,
 Has beat forty French (1), and will beat forty more !”

Johnson this year gave at once a proof of his benevolence, quickness of apprehension, and admirable art of composition, in the assistance which he gave to Mr. Zachariah Williams, father of the blind lady whom he had humanely received under his roof. Mr. Williams had followed the profession of physic in Wales ; but having a very strong propensity to the study of natural philosophy, had made many ingenious advances towards a discovery of the longitude, and repaired to London in hopes of obtaining the great parliamentary reward. (2) He failed of success : but Johnson having made himself master of his principles and experiments, wrote for him a pamphlet (3), published in quarto, with the following title : “ An Account of an Attempt to ascertain the Longitude at Sea, by an exact Theory of the Variation of the Magnetical Needle ; with a Table of the Variations at the most remarkable Cities in Europe, from the year 1660 to 1680.”† To diffuse it more extensively, it was accompanied with an Italian translation on the opposite page, which it is

(1) The number of the French Academy employed in settling their language.

(2) Mr. Williams, as early as 1721, persuaded himself that he had discovered the means of ascertaining the longitude, and he seems to have passed a long life in that delusion. — C.

(3) [This pamphlet bore the name of Z. Williams on the title page ; and Warton has recorded that Johnson, on presenting a copy of it in 1755 to the Bodleian, was careful to insert the title in his own handwriting in the great catalogue.]

supposed was the work of Signor Baretto (1), an Italian of considerable literature, who having come to England a few years before, had been employed in the capacity both of a language master and an author, and formed an intimacy with Dr. Johnson. This pamphlet Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library. On a blank leaf of it is pasted a paragraph cut out of a newspaper, containing an account of the death and character of Williams, plainly written by Johnson. (2)

In July this year he had formed some scheme of mental improvement, the particular purpose of which does not appear. But we find in his "Prayers and Meditations," p. 25., a prayer entitled, "On the Study of Philosophy, as an instrument of living;" and after it follows a note, "This study was not pursued."

On the 13th of the same month he wrote in his Journal the following scheme of life, for Sunday: "Having lived" (as he with tenderness of conscience

(1) This ingenious foreigner, who was a native of Piedmont, came to England about the year 1753, and died in London, May 5. 1789. A very candid and judicious account of him and his works, written, it is believed, by a distinguished dignitary in the church, [Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster,] may be found in the Gentleman's Magazine for that year. — M.

(2) "On Saturday the 12th, [July, 1755] about twelve at night, died Mr. Zachariah Williams, in his eighty-third year, after an illness of eight months, in full possession of his mental faculties. He has been long known to philosophers and seamen for his skill in magnetism, and his proposal to ascertain the longitude by a peculiar system of the variation of the compass. He was a man of industry indefatigable, of conversation inoffensive, patient of adversity and disease, eminently sober, temperate, and pious; and worthy to have ended life with better fortune."

expresses himself) “not without an habitual reverence for the Sabbath, yet without that attention to its religious duties which Christianity requires;”

“1. To rise early, and in order to it, to go to sleep early on Saturday.

“2. To use some extraordinary devotion in the morning.

“3. To examine the tenor of my life, and particularly the last week; and to mark my advances in religion, or recession from it.

“4. To read the Scripture methodically with such helps as are at hand.

“5. To go to church twice.

“6. To read books of divinity, either speculative or practical.

“7. To instruct my family.

“8. To wear off by meditation any worldly soil contracted in the week.”

In 1756 Johnson found that the great fame of his Dictionary had not set him above the necessity of “making provision for the day that was passing over him.”⁽¹⁾ No royal or noble patron extended a

(1) He was so far from being “set above the necessity of making provision for the day that was passing over him,” that he appears to have been in this year in great pecuniary distress, having been arrested for debt; on which occasion his friend Samuel Richardson became his surety. — See Richardson’s Correspondence, vol. v. p. 285.

LETTER 48. *Dr. Johnson to Mr. Richardson.*

“Tuesday, 19th Feb. 1756.

“DEAR SIR, — I return you my sincerest thanks for the favour which you were pleased to do me two nights ago. Be pleased to accept of this little book, which is all that I have published this winter. The inflammation is come again into my eye, so that I can write very little. I am, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

munificent hand to give independence to the man who had conferred stability on the language of his country. We may feel indignant that there should have been such unworthy neglect ; but we must, at the same time, congratulate ourselves, when we consider, that to this very neglect, operating to rouse the natural indolence of his constitution, we owe many valuable productions, which otherwise, perhaps, might never have appeared.

He had spent, during the progress of the work, the money for which he had contracted to write his Dictionary. We have seen that the reward of his labour was only fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds ; and when the expense of amanuenses and paper, and other articles, are deducted, his clear profit was very inconsiderable. I once said to him, " I am sorry, Sir, you did not get more for your Dictionary." His answer was, " I am sorry too. But it was very well. The booksellers are generous, liberal-minded men." He, upon all occasions, did ample justice to their character in this respect. He considered them as the patrons of literature ; and, indeed, although they have eventually been considerable gainers by his Dictionary, it is to them

LETTER 49.

To Mr. Richardson.

" Gough Square, 16th March, 1756.

" SIR, — I am obliged to entreat your assistance ; I am now under an arrest for five pounds eighteen shillings. Mr. Strahan, from whom I should have received the necessary help in this case, is not at home, and I am afraid of not finding Mr. Millar. If you will be so good as to send me this sum, I will very gratefully repay you, and add it to all former obligations. I am, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

" SAM. JOHNSON."

" Sent six guineas.

Witness, WILLIAM RICHARDSON."

— MALONE.

that we owe its having been undertaken and carried through at the risk of great expense, for they were not absolutely sure of being indemnified.

LETTER 50. TO MISS CARTER.

“ Gough-Square, 14th Jan. 1756.

“MADAM,—From the liberty of writing to you, if I have hitherto been deterred from the fear of your understanding, I am now encouraged to it from the confidence of your goodness.

“ I am soliciting a benefit for Miss Williams ⁽¹⁾, and beg that if you can by letters influence any in her favour (and who is there whom you cannot influence?) you will be pleased to patronise her on this occasion. Yet, for the time is short, and as you were not in town, I did not till this day remember that you might help us, and recollect how widely and how rapidly light is diffused.

“ To every joy is appended a sorrow. The name of Miss Carter introduces the memory of Cave. Poor dear Cave! I owed him much; for to him I owe that I have known you. He died, I am afraid, unexpectedly to himself, yet surely unburthened with any great crime, and for the positive duties of religion I have yet no right to condemn him for neglect.

“ I am, with respect, which I neither owe nor pay to any other, madam, your most obedient and most humble servant,
“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

On the first day of this year we find, from his private devotions, that he had then recovered from sickness, and in February that his eye was restored to its use. The pious gratitude with which he

(1) In 1756, Mr. Garrick, ever disposed to help the afflicted, indulged Miss Williams with a benefit-play, that produced her two hundred pounds. — HAWKINS.

acknowledges mercies upon every occasion is very edifying ; as is the humble submission which he breathes, when it is the will of his heavenly Father to try him with afflictions. As such dispositions become the state of man here, and are the true effects of religious discipline, we cannot but venerate in Johnson one of the most exercised minds that our holy religion hath ever formed. If there be any thoughtless enough to suppose such exercise the weakness of a great understanding, let them look up to Johnson, and be convinced that what he so earnestly practised must have a rational foundation.

LETTER 51. TO THE REV. JOSEPH WARTON.

“ 15th April, 1756.

“ DEAR SIR,—Though, when you and your brother were in town, you did not think my humble habitation worth a visit, yet I will not so far give way to sullenness as not to tell you that I have lately seen an octavo book ⁽¹⁾ which I suspect to be yours, though I have not yet read above ten pages. That way of publishing, without acquainting your friends, is a wicked trick. However, I will not so far depend upon a mere conjecture as to charge you with a fraud which I cannot prove you to have committed.

“ I should be glad to hear that you are pleased with your new situation. ⁽²⁾ You have now a kind of royalty, and are to be answerable for your conduct to posterity.

(1) [The first volume of the *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* appeared anonymously in 1756.]

(2) [His appointment of second-master of Winchester School took place in 1755.]

I suppose you care not now to answer a letter, except there be a lucky concurrence of a post-day with a holiday. These restraints are troublesome for a time, but custom makes them easy, with the help of some honour, and a great deal of profit, and I doubt not but your abilities will obtain both.

“ For my part, I have not lately done much. I have been ill in the winter, and my eye has been inflamed ; but I please myself with the hopes of doing many things with which I have long pleased and deceived myself.

“ What becomes of poor dear Collins ? I wrote him a letter which he never answered. I suppose writing is very troublesome to him. That man is no common loss. The moralists all talk of the uncertainty of fortune, and the transitoriness of beauty ; but it is yet more dreadful to consider that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change, that understanding may make its appearance and depart, that it may blaze and expire.

“ Let me not be long without a letter, and I will forgive you the omission of the visit ; and if you can tell me that you are now more happy than before, you will give great pleasure to, dear sir, your most affectionate and most humble servant,

“ SAM.—JOHNSON.”

His works this year were, an abstract or epitome, in octavo, of his folio Dictionary, and a few essays in a monthly publication, entitled “ THE UNIVERSAL VISITER.” Christopher Smart, with whose unhappy vacillation of mind he sincerely sympathised, was one of the stated undertakers of this miscellany ; and it was to assist him that Johnson sometimes employed his pen. All the essays marked with two *asterisks* have been ascribed to him ; but I am confident, from

internal evidence, that of these, neither "The Life of Chaucer," "Reflections on the State of Portugal," nor an "Essay on Architecture," were written by him. I am equally confident, upon the same evidence, that he wrote "Further Thoughts on Agriculture;" † being the sequel of a very inferior essay on the same subject, and which, though carried on as if by the same hand, is both in thinking and expression so far above it, and so strikingly peculiar, as to leave no doubt of its true parent; and that he also wrote "A Dissertation on the State of Literature and Authors," † and "A Dissertation on the Epitaphs written by Pope." * The last of these, indeed, he afterwards added to his "Idler." Why the essays truly written by him are marked in the same manner with some which he did not write, I cannot explain; but, with deference to those who have ascribed to him the three essays which I have rejected, they want all the characteristical marks of Johnsonian composition.

He engaged also to superintend and contribute largely to another monthly publication, entitled "THE LITERARY MAGAZINE, OR UNIVERSAL REVIEW;" * the first number of which came out in May this year. What were his emoluments from this undertaking, and what other writers were employed in it, I have not discovered. He continued to write in it, with intermissions, till the fifteenth number; and I think that he never gave better proofs of the force, acuteness, and vivacity of his mind, than in this miscellany, whether we consider his original essays, or his reviews of the works of others. The

“ Preliminary Address” † to the public, is a proof how this great man could embellish with the graces of superior composition, even so trite a thing as the plan of a magazine.

His original essays are, “ An Introduction to the Political State of Great-Britain ;” † “ Remarks on the Militia Bill ;” † “ Observations on his Britannic Majesty’s Treaties with the Empress of Russia and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel ;” † “ Observations on the Present State of Affairs ;” † and, “ Memoirs of Frederick III. King of Prussia.” † In all these he displays extensive political knowledge and sagacity, expressed with uncommon energy and perspicuity, without any of those words which he sometimes took a pleasure in adopting, in imitation of Sir Thomas Browne ; of whose “ Christian Morals” he this year gave an edition, with his “ Life” * prefixed to it, which is one of Johnson’s best biographical performances. In one instance only in these essays has he indulged his *Brownism*. Dr. Robertson, the historian, mentioned it to me, as having at once convinced him that Johnson was the author of the “ Memoirs of the King of Prussia.” Speaking of the pride which the old King, the father of his hero, took in being master of the tallest regiment in Europe, he says, “ To review this *towering* regiment was his daily pleasure ; and to perpetuate it was so much his care, that when he met a tall woman, he immediately commanded one of his *Titanian* retinue to marry her, that they might *propagate procerity*.” For this Anglo-Latian word *procerity*, Johnson had, however, the authority of Addison.

His reviews are of the following books:—“ Birch’s History of the Royal Society;”† “ Murphy’s Gray’s-Inn Journal;”† “ Warton’s Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, vol. i.;”† “ Hampton’s Translation of Polybius;”† “ Blackwell’s Memoirs of the Court of Augustus;”† “ Russell’s Natural History of Aleppo;”† “ Sir Isaac Newton’s Arguments in Proof of a Deity;”† “ Borlase’s History of the Isles of Scilly;”† “ Holme’s Experiments on Bleaching;”† “ Browne’s Christian Morals;”† “ Hales on distilling Sea-Water, Ventilators in Ships, and curing an ill Taste in Milk;”† “ Lucas’s Essay on Waters;”† “ Keith’s Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops;”† “ Browne’s History of Jamaica;”† “ Philosophical Transactions, vol. xlix. ;”† “ Mrs Lenox’s Translation of Sully’s Memoirs;”* “ Miscellanies, by Elizabeth Harrison;”† “ Evans’s Map and Account of the Middle Colonies in America;”† “ Letter on the Case of Admiral Byng;”* “ Appeal to the People concerning Admiral Byng;”* “ Hanway’s Eight Days Journey, and Essay on Tea;”* “ The Cadet, a Military Treatise;”† “ Some further Particulars in Relation to the Case of Admiral Byng, by a Gentleman of Oxford;”* “ The Conduct of the Ministry relating to the present War impartially examined;”† “ A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.”* All these, from internal evidence, were written by Johnson: some of them I know he avowed, and have marked them with an *asterisk* accordingly. Mr. Thomas Davies, indeed, ascribed to him the Review of Mr. Burke’s “ Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and

Beautiful ;” and Sir John Hawkins, with equal discernment, has inserted it in his collection of Johnson’s works : whereas it has no resemblance to Johnson’s composition, and is well known to have been written by Mr. Murphy, who has acknowledged it to me and many others.

It is worthy of remark, in justice to Johnson’s political character, which has been misrepresented as abjectly submissive to power ⁽¹⁾, that his “ Observations on the present State of Affairs,” glow with as animated a spirit of constitutional liberty as can be found any where. Thus he begins : —

“ The time is now come, in which every Englishman expects to be informed of the national affairs ; and in which he has a right to have that expectation gratified. For, whatever may be urged by ministers, or those whom vanity or interest make the followers of ministers, concerning the necessity of confidence in our governors, and the presumption of prying with profane eyes into the recesses of policy, it is evident that this reverence can be claimed only by counsels yet unexecuted, and projects suspended in deliberation. But when a design has ended in miscarriage or success, when every eye and every ear is witness to general discontent, or general satisfaction, it is then a proper time

(1) Dr. Johnson’s political bias is no where, that I know, represented as having been, *at this date*, “ abjectly submissive to power.” On the contrary, he was supposed, and with some justice, to be adverse to the reigning house and its successive ministers. The charge (which Mr. Boswell thus ingeniously evades) was, that *after the grant of his pension* he became too “ submissive to power ;” but the truth is, that in spite of his party bias, Johnson was always a friend to discipline in the political, as in the social world ; and although he joined in the clamour against Walpole, and hated George the Second, his general disposition was always to support the monarchical part of the constitution. — C.

to disentangle confusion and illustrate obscurity ; to shew by what causes every event was produced, and in what effects it is likely to terminate ; to lay down with distinct particularity what rumour always huddles in general exclamation, or perplexes by indigested narratives ; to shew whence happiness or calamity is derived, and whence it may be expected ; and honestly to lay before the people what inquiry can gather of the past, and conjecture can estimate of the future."

Here we have it assumed as an incontrovertible principle, that in this country the people are the superintendants of the conduct and measures of those by whom government is administered ; of the beneficial effect of which the present reign afforded an illustrious example, when addresses from all parts of the kingdom controuled an audacious attempt to introduce a new power subversive of the crown. (1)

A still stronger proof of his patriotic spirit appears in his review of an " Essay on Waters, by Dr. Lucas," (2) of whom, after describing him as a man well known to the world for his daring defiance of power, when he thought it exerted on the side of wrong, he thus speaks : —

" The Irish ministers drove him from his native country by a proclamation, in which they charge him

(1) Mr. Boswell means Mr. Fox's celebrated India Bill, as an adversary of which he distinguished himself as much as a man in a private station could do. — C.

(2) Dr. Lucas was an apothecary in Dublin, who brought himself into public notice and a high degree of popularity by his writings and speeches against the government. He was elected representative of the city of Dublin in 1761 ; and a marble statue to his honour is erected in the Royal Exchange of that city. He died in Nov. 1771. — C.

with crimes of which they never intended to be called to the proof, and oppressed him by methods equally irresistible by guilt and innocence. Let the man thus driven into exile, for having been the friend of his country, be received in every other place as a confessor of liberty ; and let the tools of power be taught in time, that they may rob, but cannot impoverish."

Some of his reviews in this Magazine are very short accounts of the pieces noticed, and I mention them only that Dr. Johnson's opinion of the works may be known ; but many of them are examples of elaborate criticism, in the most masterly style. In his review of the "Memoirs of the Court of Augustus," he has the resolution to think and speak from his own mind, regardless of the cant transmitted from age to age, in praise of the ancient Romans. Thus: "I know not why any one but a schoolboy in his declamation should whine over the Commonwealth of Rome, which grew great only by the misery of the rest of mankind. The Romans, like others, as soon as they grew rich, grew corrupt ; and in their corruption sold the lives and freedoms of themselves, and of one another." Again: "A people, who while they were poor robbed mankind ; and as soon as they became rich robbed one another." — In his review of the Miscellanies in prose and verse, published by Elizabeth Harrison, but written by many hands, he gives an eminent proof at once of his orthodoxy and candour.

"The authors of the essays in prose seem generally to have imitated, or tried to imitate, the copiousness and luxuriance of Mrs. Rowe. This, however, is not

all their praise ; they have laboured to add to her brightness of imagery, her purity of sentiments. The poets have had Dr. Watts before their eyes ; a writer, who, if he stood not in the first class of genius, compensated that defect by a ready application of his powers to the promotion of piety. The attempt to employ the ornaments of romance in the decoration of religion, was, I think, first made by Mr. Boyle's 'Martyrdom of Theodora ;' but Boyle's philosophical studies did not allow him time for the cultivation of style : and the completion of the great design was reserved for Mrs. Rowe. Dr. Watts was one of the first who taught the Dissenters to write and speak like other men, by shewing them that elegance might consist with piety. They would have both done honour to a better society, for they had that charity which might well make their failings be forgotten, and with which the whole Christian world wish for communion. They were pure from all the heresies of an age, to which every opinion is become a favourite that the universal church has hitherto detested ! This praise the general interest of mankind requires to be given to writers who please and do not corrupt, who instruct and do not weary. But to them all human eulogies are vain, whom I believe applauded by angels, and numbered with the just."

His defence of tea against Mr. Jonas Hanway's violent attack upon that elegant and popular beverage (1), shews how very well a man of genius can

(1) [Hanway's "Essay on Tea and its pernicious Consequences" was appended to his "Journal of Eight Days' Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston upon Thames. In his review of this production, Johnson candidly describes himself as "a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has, for many years, diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant ; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool ; who, with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnights, and with tea welcomes the morning."]

write upon the slightest subject, when he writes, as the Italians say, *con amore*: I suppose no person ever enjoyed with more relish the infusion of that fragrant leaf than Johnson. The quantities which he drank of it at all hours were so great, that his nerves must have been uncommonly strong, not to have been extremely relaxed by such an intemperate use of it. ⁽¹⁾ He assured me, that he never felt the least inconvenience from it; which is a proof that the fault of his constitution was rather a too great tension of fibres, than the contrary. Mr. Hanway wrote an angry answer to Johnson's review of his Essay on Tea, and Johnson, after a full and deliberate pause, made a reply to it; the only instance, I believe in the whole course of his life, when he condescended to oppose any thing that was written against him. I suppose, when he thought of any of his little antagonists, he was ever justly aware of the high sentiment of Ajax in Ovid:

*“Iste tulit pretium jam nunc certaminis hujus,
Qui, cùm victus erit, mecum certasse feretur.”* (2)

But, indeed, the good Mr. Hanway laid himself so open to ridicule, that Johnson's animadversions upon his attack were chiefly to make sport.

(1) Sir John Hawkins calls his addiction to it *unmanly*, and almost gives it the colour of a crime. The Rev. Mr. Parker, of Henley, is in possession of a tea-pot which belonged to Dr. Johnson, and which contains *above two quarts*. — C.

(2) [“Losing, he wins, because his name will be
Ennobled by defeat, who durst contend with me.”
DRYDEN.]

The generosity with which he pleads the cause of Admiral Byng is highly to the honour of his heart and spirit. Though Voltaire affects to be witty upon the fate of that unfortunate officer, observing that he was shot "*pour encourager les autres,*" the nation has long been satisfied that his life was sacrificed to the political fervour of the times. ⁽¹⁾ In the vault belonging to the Torrington family, in the church of Southill, in Bedfordshire, there is the following epitaph upon his monument, which I have transcribed:—

" TO THE PERPETUAL DISGRACE
OF PUBLIC JUSTICE,
THE HONORABLE JOHN BYNG, ESQ.
ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE,
FELL A MARTYR TO POLITICAL
PERSECUTION,
MARCH 14. IN THE YEAR 1757 ;
WHEN BRAVERY AND LOYALTY
WERE INSUFFICIENT SECURITIES
FOR THE LIFE AND HONOUR OF
A NAVAL OFFICER."

Johnson's most exquisite critical essay in the *Literary Magazine*, and indeed any where, is his review of Soame Jenyns's "*Inquiry into the Origin of Evil.*" Jenyns was possessed of lively talents, and a style eminently pure and easy, and could very happily play with a light subject, either in prose or verse: but when he speculated on that most difficult

(1) Nothing can be more unfounded than the assertion that Byng fell a martyr to *political party*. See this subject treated at large in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1832. — C.

and excruciating question, the Origin of Evil, he “ventured far beyond his depth,” and, accordingly, was exposed by Johnson, both with acute argument and brilliant wit. I remember when the late Mr. Bicknell’s humorous performance, entitled “The Musical Travels of Joel Collyer,” in which a slight attempt is made to ridicule Johnson, was ascribed to Soame Jenyns, “Ha! (said Johnson) I thought I had given *him* enough of it.”

His triumph over Jenyns is thus described by my friend Mr. Courtenay, in his “Poetical Review of the literary and moral character of Dr. Johnson;” a performance of such merit, that had I not been honoured with a very kind and partial notice in it, I should echo the sentiments of men of the first taste loudly in its praise:—

“When specious sophists with presumption scan
The source of evil hidden still from man;
Revive Arabian tales, and vainly hope
To rival St. John and his scholar Pope:
Though metaphysics spread the gloom of night,
By reason’s star he guides our aching sight;
The bounds of knowledge marks, and points the way
To pathless wastes, where wilder’d sages stray;
Where, like a farthing link-boy, Jenyns stands,
And the dim torch drops from his feeble hands.” (1)

(1) Some time after Dr. Johnson’s death, there appeared in the newspapers and magazines [the following] illiberal and petulant attack upon him, in the form of an Epitaph, under the name of Mr. Soame Jenyns, very unworthy of that gentleman, who had quietly submitted to the critical lash while Johnson lived. It assumed, as characteristics of him, all the

This year Mr. William Payne, brother of the respectable bookseller of that name, published "An Introduction to the Game of Draughts," to which Johnson contributed a Dedication to the Earl of Rochford,* and a Preface,* both of which are ad-

vulgar circumstances of abuse which had circulated amongst the ignorant —

[“ Here lies poor JOHNSON. Reader, have a care,
Tread lightly, lest you rouse a sleeping bear ;
Religious, moral, generous, and humane
He was — but self-sufficient, rude, and vain :
Ill-bred and overbearing in dispute,
A scholar and a Christian — yet a brute.
Would you know all his wisdom and his folly,
His actions, sayings, mirth, and melancholy,
Boswell and *Thrale*, retailers of his wit,
Will tell you how he wrote, and talk'd, and cough'd, and spit.”
Gent. Mag. 1786.]

This was an unbecoming indulgence of puny resentment, at a time when he himself was at a very advanced age, and had a near prospect of descending to the grave. I was truly sorry for it; for he was then become an avowed and (as my Lord Bishop of London, who had a serious conversation with him on the subject, assures me) a sincere Christian. He could not expect that Johnson's numerous friends would patiently bear to have the memory of their master stigmatized by no mean pen, but that, at least, one would be found to retort. Accordingly, this unjust and sarcastic epitaph was met in the same public field by an answer, in terms by no means soft, and such as wanton provocation only could justify: —

“ EPITAPH

“ *Prepared for a creature not quite dead yet.*

“ Here lies a little ugly nauseous elf,
Who, judging only from its wretched self,
Feebly attempted, petulant and vain,
The ‘ Origin of Evil ’ to explain.
A mighty Genius at this elf displeased,
With a strong critic grasp the urchin squeezed.
For thirty years its coward spleen it kept,
Till in the dust the mighty Genius slept ;
Then stunk and fretted in expiring snuff,
And blink'd at JOHNSON with its last poor puff.”—BOSWELL.

The answer was no doubt by Mr. Boswell himself, and does more credit to his zeal than his poetical talents. — C. — [Soame Jenyns died in 1787.]

mirably adapted to the treatise to which they are prefixed. Johnson, I believe, did not play at draughts after leaving College, by which he suffered; for it would have afforded him an innocent soothing relief from the melancholy which distressed him so often. I have heard him regret that he had not learnt to play at cards; and the game of draughts we know is peculiarly calculated to fix the attention without straining it. There is a composure and gravity in draughts which insensibly tranquillises the mind; and, accordingly, the Dutch are fond of it, as they are of smoking, of the sedative influence of which, though he himself never smoked, he had a high opinion. (1) Besides, there is in draughts some exercise of the faculties; and accordingly, Johnson, wishing to dignify the subject in his Dedication with what is most estimable in it, observes, "Triflers may find or make any thing a trifle: but since it is the great characteristic of a wise man to see events in their causes, to obviate consequences, and ascertain contingencies, your lordship will think nothing a trifle by which the mind is inured to caution, foresight, and circumspection."

As one of the little occasional advantages which he did not disdain to take by his pen, as a man whose profession was literature, he this year accepted of a guinea from Mr. Robert Dodsley, for writing the Introduction to "The London Chronicle," an evening newspaper; and even in so slight a per-

(1) See *post*, August, 19. 1773. I have heard Johnson say, that insanity had grown more frequent since smoking had gone out of fashion. — HAWKINS.

formance exhibited peculiar talents. This Chronicle still subsists (1), and from what I observed, when I was abroad, has a more extensive circulation upon the continent than any of the English newspapers. It was constantly read by Johnson himself; and it is but just to observe, that it has all along been distinguished for good sense, accuracy, moderation, and delicacy.

Another instance of the same nature has been communicated (2) to me by the Reverend Dr. Thomas Campbell, who has done himself considerable credit by his own writings. "Sitting with Dr. Johnson one morning alone, he asked me if I had known Dr. Madden, who was author of the premium-scheme (3) in Ireland. On my answering in the affirmative, and also that I had for some years lived in his neighbourhood, &c., he begged of me that

(1) [The London Chronicle, or Universal Evening Post, was published three times a week. The first number, containing Johnson's Introduction, appeared Jan. 1. 1757. Mr. Boswell often wrote in this journal.]

(2) See *post*, April 6. 1775.

(3) In the College of Dublin, four quarterly examinations of the students are held in each year, in various prescribed branches of literature and science; and premiums, consisting of books impressed with the College Arms, are adjudged by examiners (composed generally of the Junior Fellows), to those who have most distinguished themselves in the several classes, after a very rigid trial, which lasts two days. This regulation, which has subsisted about seventy years, has been attended with the most beneficial effects. Dr. Samuel Madden was the first proposer of premiums in that University. They were instituted about the year 1734. He was also one of the founders of the Dublin Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Agriculture. In addition to the premiums which were and are still annually given by that society for this purpose, Dr. Madden gave others from his own fund. Hence he was usually called "Premium Madden." — M.

when I returned to Ireland, I would endeavour to procure for him a poem of Dr. Madden's called "Boulter's Monument." (1) The reason (said he) why I wish for it, is this: when Dr. Madden came to London, he submitted that work to my castigation; and I remember I blotted a great many lines, and might have blotted many more without making the poem worse. (2) However, the Doctor was very thankful, and very generous, for he gave me ten guineas, *which was to me at that time a great sum.*" (3)

He this year resumed his scheme of giving an edition of Shakspeare with notes. He issued Pro-

(1) Dr. Hugh Boulter, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland. He died Sept. 27. 1742, at which time he was, for the thirteenth time, one of the Lords Justices of that kingdom. Johnson speaks of him in high terms of commendation, in his Life of Ambrose Philips. — J. BOSWELL, JUN.

(2) Dr. Madden wrote very bad verses. See those prefixed to Leland's Life of Philip of Macedon, 4to. 1758. — KEARNEY.

(3) Such casual emoluments as these, Johnson frequently derived from his profession of an author. For the dedication to his present Majesty, of Adams's book on the use of the globes, he was, as himself informed me, gratified with a present of a very curious meteorological instrument, of a new and ingenious construction. About this time, as it is supposed, for sundry beneficed clergymen that requested him, he composed pulpit discourses, and for these, he made no scruple of confessing, he was paid: his price, I am informed, was a moderate one, — a guinea; and such was his notion of justice, that having been paid, he considered them so absolutely the property of the purchaser, as to renounce all claim to them. He reckoned that he had written about forty sermons; but, except as to some, knew not in what hands they were; — "I have," said he, "been paid for them, and have no right to inquire about them." — HAWKINS.

This practice is of very doubtful propriety. In the case of an *elective* chapel, it might, as the Bishop of Ferns observes to me, amount to an absolute fraud, as a person might be chosen for the merits of a sermon not written by himself. — C.

posals of considerable length⁽¹⁾, in which he shewed that he perfectly well knew what a variety of research such an undertaking required; but his indolence prevented him from pursuing it with that diligence which alone can collect those scattered facts, that genius, however acute, penetrating, and luminous, cannot discover by its own force. It is remarkable, that at this time his fancied activity was for the moment so vigorous, that he promised his work should be published before Christmas, 1757. Yet nine years elapsed before it saw the light. His throes in bringing it forth had been severe and remittent; and at last we may almost conclude that the Cæsarian operation was performed by the knife of Churchill, whose upbraiding satire, I dare say, made Johnson's friends urge him to dispatch.

“ He for subscribers baits his hook,
And takes your cash; but where's the book?
No matter where; wise fear, you know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what, to serve our private ends,
Forbids the cheating of our friends?”

About this period he was offered a living of considerable value in Lincolnshire, if he were inclined to enter into holy orders. It was a rectory in the gift of Mr. Langton, the father of his much valued friend. But he did not accept of it; partly I believe from a conscientious motive, being persuaded that his temper and habits rendered him unfit for that assiduous and familiar instruction of

(1) They have been reprinted by Mr. Malone, in the Preface to his edition of Shakspeare.

the vulgar and ignorant, which he held to be an essential duty in a clergyman; and partly because his love of a London life was so strong, that he would have thought himself an exile in any other place, particularly if residing in the country. Whoever would wish to see his thoughts upon that subject displayed in their full force, may peruse the *Adventurer*, Number 126.

In 1757 it does not appear that he published any thing, except some of those articles in the *Literary Magazine*, which have been mentioned. That magazine, after Johnson ceased to write in it, gradually declined, though the popular epithet of *Antigallican* was added to it; and in July, 1758, it expired. He probably prepared a part of his *Shakspeare* this year, and he dictated a speech on the subject of an address to the Throne, after the expedition to Rochfort, which was delivered by one of his friends, I know not in what public meeting. It is printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1785, as his, and bears sufficient marks of authenticity.

By the favour of Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker⁽¹⁾, of the Treasury, Dublin, I have obtained a copy of the following letter from Johnson to the venerable author of "*Dissertations on the History of Ireland.*"

LETTER 52. TO CHARLES O'CONNOR, ESQ.⁽²⁾

"London, April 9. 1757.

"SIR,—I have lately, by the favour of Mr. Faulkner,

(1) [Member of the Royal Irish Academy, author of the "*Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards,*" an "*Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy,*" &c. He died in 1810.]

(2) Of this gentleman, who died at his seat at Ballinegare,

seen your account of Ireland, and cannot forbear to solicit a prosecution of your design. Sir William Temple complains that Ireland is less known than any other country, as to its ancient state. The natives have had little leisure, and little encouragement for inquiry; and strangers, not knowing the language, have had no ability.

“ I have long wished that the Irish literature were cultivated. (1) Ireland is known by tradition to have been once the seat of piety and learning; and surely it would be very acceptable to all those who are curious either in the original of nations, or the affinities of languages, to be further informed of the revolution of a people so ancient, and once so illustrious.

“ What relation there is between the Welsh and Irish language, or between the language of Ireland and that of Biscay, deserves inquiry. Of these provincial and unextended tongues, it seldom happens that more than one are understood by any one man; and, therefore, it seldom happens that a fair comparison can be made. I

in the county of Roscommon, July, 1791, in his eighty-second year, some account may be found in the Gentleman's Magazine of that date. Of the “Dissertations on the History of Ireland” a second and much improved edition was published in 1766.—MALONE.

(1) The celebrated orator, Mr. Flood, [who died, December, 1791,] has shewn himself to be of Dr. Johnson's opinion; having by his will bequeathed his estate, after the death of his wife, Lady Frances, to the University of Dublin; “desiring that immediately after the said estate shall come into their possession, they shall appoint two professors, one for the study of the native Erse or Irish Language, and the other for the study of Irish antiquities and Irish history, and for the study of any other European language illustrative of, or auxiliary to, the study of Irish antiquities or Irish history; and that they shall give yearly two liberal premiums for two compositions, one in verse, and the other in prose, in the Irish language.”—B.—Since the above was written [May, 1793], Mr. Flood's will has been set aside, after a trial at bar, in the Court of Exchequer in Ireland.—M.

hope you will continue to cultivate this kind of learning, which has too long lain neglected, and which, if it be suffered to remain in oblivion for another century, may, perhaps, never be retrieved. As I wish well to all useful undertakings, I would not forbear to let you know how much you deserve, in my opinion, from all lovers of study, and how much pleasure your work has given to, Sir, your most obliged, and most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 53. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“[London,] June 21. 1757.

“DEAR SIR,—Dr. Marsili, of Padua, a learned gentleman, and good Latin poet, has a mind to see Oxford. I have given him a letter to Dr. Huddesford, and shall be glad if you will introduce him, and shew him any thing in Oxford.

“I am printing my new edition of Shakspeare.

“I long to see you all, but cannot conveniently come yet. You might write to me now and then, if you were good for any thing. But ⁽¹⁾ *honores mutant mores*. Professors forget their friends. I shall certainly complain to Miss Jones. ⁽²⁾ I am, your, &c.

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

“Please to make my compliments to Mr. Wise.”

(1) Mr. Warton was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in the preceding year. — WARTON.

(2) Miss Jones lived at Oxford, and was often of our parties. She was a very ingenious poetess, and published a volume of poems; and, on the whole, was a most sensible, agreeable, and amiable woman. She was sister to the Rev. River Jones, Chanter of Christ Church Cathedral at Oxford, and Johnson used to call her the *Chantress*. I have heard him often address her in this passage from “*Il Penseroso* : ” —

“Thee, Chantress, oft the woods among
I woo,” &c.

She died unmarried. — WARTON.

Mr. Burney having enclosed to him an extract from the review of his Dictionary in the *Bibliothèque des Savans* [t. iii. p. 482.] and a list of subscribers to his Shakspeare, which Mr. Burney had procured in Norfolk, he wrote the following answer : —

LETTER 54. TO MR. BURNEY,
in Lynne, Norfolk.

“ Gough Square, Dec. 24. 1757.

“ SIR,—That I may shew myself sensible of your favours, and not commit the same fault a second time, I make haste to answer the letter which I received this morning. The truth is, the other likewise was received, and I wrote an answer ; but being desirous to transmit you some proposals and receipts, I waited till I could find a convenient conveyance, and day was passed after day, till other things drove it from my thoughts ; yet not so, but that I remember with great pleasure your commendation of my Dictionary. Your praise was welcome, not only because I believe it was sincere, but because praise has been very scarce. A man of your candour will be surprised when I tell you, that among all my acquaintance there were only two, who upon the publication of my book did not endeavour to depress me with threats of censure from the public, or with objections learned from those who had learned them from my own preface. Yours is the only letter of good-will that I have received ; though, indeed, I am promised something of that sort from Sweden.

“ How my new edition (1) will be received I know not ; the subscription has not been very successful. I shall publish about March.

“ If you can direct me how to send proposals, I should wish that they were in such hands.

“ I remember, Sir, in some of the first letters with

(1) Of Shakspeare.

which you favoured me, you mentioned your lady. May I inquire after her? In return for the favours which you have shewn me, it is not much to tell you, that I wish you and her all that can conduce to your happiness. I am, Sir, your most obliged, and most humble servant,
“SAM. JOHNSON.”

In 1758 we find him, it should seem, in as easy and pleasant a state of existence, as constitutional unhappiness ever permitted him to enjoy.

LETTER 55. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

at Langton. (1)

“Jan. 9. 1758.

“DEAREST SIR, — I must have indeed slept very fast, not to have been awakened by your letter. None of your suspicions are true; I am not much richer than when you left me; and what is worse, my omission of an answer to your first letter will prove that I am not much wiser. But I go on as I formerly did, designing to be some time or other both rich and wise; and yet cultivate neither mind nor fortune. Do you take notice of my example, and learn the danger of delay. When I was as you are now, towering in [the] confidence of twenty-one, little did I suspect that I should be, at forty-nine, what I now am. (2)

“But you do not seem to need my admonition. You are busy in acquiring and in communicating knowledge, and while you are studying, enjoy the end of study, by

(1) [Mr. Croker is of opinion, that this letter must have been written in January, 1759.]

(2) If the reader will look back to Johnson's deplorable situation when he was about the age of twenty-one, he will be inclined to think that he might rather have prided himself at having attained to the station which he now held in society. — CROKER. — Was not Johnson alluding, *not* to his comparative “station in society,” but to his not being “much richer?” for in this letter he says, “I have left off housekeeping.” — MARK-LAND.

making others wiser and happier. I was much pleased with the tale that you told me of being tutor to your sisters. I, who have no sisters, nor brothers, look with some degree of innocent envy on those who may be said to be born to friends ⁽¹⁾; and cannot see, without wonder, how rarely that native union is afterwards regarded. It sometimes, indeed, happens, that some supervenient cause of discord may overpower this original amity; but it seems to me more frequently thrown away with levity, or lost by negligence, than destroyed by injury or violence. We tell the ladies that good wives make good husbands; I believe it is a more certain position that good brothers make good sisters.

“I am satisfied with your stay at home, as Juvenal with his friend’s retirement to Cumæ: I know that your absence is best, though it be not best for me.

‘Quamvis digressu veteris confusus amici,
Laudo tamen vacuis quod sedem figere Cumis
Destinet, atque unum civem donare Sibyllæ.’ (2)

“Langton is a good Cumæ, but who must be Sibylla? Mrs. Langton is as wise as Sibyl, and as good; and will

(1) See, however, *antè* (p. 3.). Gibbon, in his Memoirs, alludes to this subject with good taste and feeling: — “From my childhood to the present hour, I have deeply and sincerely regretted my sister, whose life was somewhat prolonged, and whom I remember to have seen an amiable infant. The relation of a brother and a sister, particularly if they do not marry, appears to me of a very singular nature. It is a familiar and tender friendship with a female much about our own age; an affection perhaps softened by the secret influence of the sex, but pure from any mixture of sensual desire — the sole species of Platonic love that can be indulged with truth and without danger.” — Mem., p. 25. — CROKER.

(2) [“Grieved though I am to see the man depart,
Who long has shared, and still must share my heart,
Yet (when I call my better judgment home)
I praise his purpose; to retire from Rome
And give on Cumæ’s solitary coast,
The Sibyl — one inhabitant to boast!” — GIFFORD.]

live, if my wishes can prolong life, till she shall in time be as old. But she differs in this, that she has not scattered her precepts in the wind, at least not those which she bestowed upon you.

“The two Wartons just looked into the town, and were taken to see *Cleone*, where, David [Garrick] says, they were starved for want of company to keep them warm. David and Doddy (1) have had a new quarrel, and, I think, cannot conveniently quarrel any more. ‘*Cleone*’ was well acted by all the characters, but *Bellamy* (2) left nothing to be desired. I went the first night, and supported it as well as I might; for Doddy, you know, is my patron, and I would not desert him. The play was very well received. Doddy, after the danger was over, went every night to the stage-side, and cried at the distress of poor *Cleone*.

“I have left off housekeeping, and therefore made presents of the game which you were pleased to send me. The pheasant I gave to Mr. Richardson (3), the bustard to Dr. Lawrence, and the pot I placed with Miss Williams, to be eaten by myself. She desires that her compliments and good wishes may be accepted by the family; and I make the same request for myself.

“Mr. Reynolds has within these few days raised his price to twenty guineas a head (4), and Miss (5) is much

(1) Mr. Dodsley, the author of *Cleone*.

(2) The well-known Miss George Ann Bellamy, who played the heroine. — C. — [An Apology for her very irregular Life, written by Herself, in six volumes, was published in 1785.]

(3) The author of *Clarissa*.

(4) Sir Joshua afterwards greatly advanced his price. I have been informed by Sir Thomas Lawrence, his admirer and rival, that in 1787 his prices were, two hundred guineas for the *whole length*, one hundred for the *half-length*, seventy for the *kit-cat*, and fifty for (what is called) the *three-quarters*. But even on these prices some increase must have been made, as Horace Walpole said, “Sir Joshua, in his old age, becomes avaricious. He had one thousand guineas for my picture of the three ladies *Waldegrave*.” — *Walpoliana*. This picture are *half-lengths* of the three ladies on one canvas. — C.

(5) Miss Reynolds, the sister of Sir Joshua. — C.

employed in miniatures. I know not any body [else] whose prosperity has increased since you left them.

“ Murphy is to have his ‘ Orphan of China ’ acted next month ; and is therefore, I suppose, happy. I wish I could tell you of any great good to which I was approaching, but at present my prospects do not much delight me ; however, I am always pleased when I find that you, dear Sir, remember your affectionate, humble servant,
 “ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 56.

TO MR. BURNEY,

At Lynne, Norfolk.

“ London, March 1. 1758.

“ SIR,—Your kindness is so great, and my claim to any particular regard from you so little, that I am at a loss how to express my sense of your favours (1) ; but I am, indeed, much pleased to be thus distinguished by you.

“ I am ashamed to tell you that my Shakspeare will not be out so soon as I promised my subscribers ; but I did not promise them more than I promised myself. It will, however, be published before summer.

“ I have sent you a bundle of proposals, which, I think, do not profess more than I have hitherto performed. I have printed many of the plays, and have hitherto left very few passages unexplained ; where I am quite at loss, I confess my ignorance, which is seldom done by commentators.

“ I have, likewise, enclosed twelve receipts ; not that I mean to impose upon you the trouble of pushing them with more importunity than may seem proper, but that you may rather have more than fewer than you shall want. The proposals you will disseminate as there shall be an opportunity. I once printed them at

(1) This letter was an answer to one, in which was enclosed a draft for the payment of some subscriptions to his Shakspeare.

length in the Chronicle, and some of my friends (I believe Mr. Murphy, who formerly wrote the Gray's-Inn Journal) introduced them with a splendid encomium.

“ Since the Life of Browne, I have been a little engaged, from time to time, in the Literary Magazine, but not very lately. I have not the collection by me, and therefore cannot draw out a catalogue of my own parts, but will do it, and send it. Do not buy them, for I will gather all those that have anything of mine in them, and send them to Mrs. Burney, as a small token of gratitude for the regard which she is pleased to bestow upon me.

“ I am, Sir, your most obliged, and most humble servant,
“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Dr. Burney has kindly favoured me with the following memorandum, which I take the liberty to insert in his own genuine easy style. I love to exhibit sketches of my illustrious friend by various eminent hands.

“ Soon after this, Mr. Burney, during a visit to the capital, had an interview with him in Gough Square, where he dined and drank tea with him, and was introduced to the acquaintance of Mrs. Williams. After dinner, Mr. Johnson proposed to Mr. Burney to go up with him into his garret, which being accepted, he there found about five or six Greek folios, a deal writing-desk, and a chair and a half. Johnson giving to his guest the entire seat, tottered himself on one with only three legs and one arm. Here he gave Mr. Burney Mrs. Williams's history, and showed him some volumes of his Shakspeare already printed, to prove that he was in earnest. Upon Mr. Burney's opening the first volume, at the Merchant of Venice, he observed to him that he seemed to be more severe on Warburton than Theobald. ‘ O poor Tib. ! (said Johnson) he was

ready knocked down to my hands ; Warburton stands between me and him.' — ' But, Sir, (said Mr. Burney,) you'll have Warburton upon your bones, won't you ? ' ' No, Sir ; he'll not come out : he'll only growl in his den.' — ' But you think, Sir, that Warburton is a superior critic to Theobald ? ' — ' O, Sir, he'd make two-and-fifty Theobalds, cut into slices ! The worst of Warburton is, that he has a rage for saying something, when there's nothing to be said.' — Mr. Burney then asked him whether he had seen the letter which Warburton had written in answer to a pamphlet, addressed ' To the most impudent man alive.' He answered in the negative. Mr. Burney told him it was supposed to be written by Mallet. The controversy now raged between the friends of Pope and Bolingbroke ; and Warburton and Mallet were the leaders of the several parties. Mr. Burney asked him then if he had seen Warburton's book against Bolingbroke's Philosophy ? — ' No, Sir ; I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety, and therefore am not interested about its confutation.' "

On the fifteenth of April he began a new periodical paper, entitled " THE IDLER,"* which came out every Saturday in a weekly newspaper, called " The Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette," published by Newbery.(1) These essays were continued till April 5. 1760. Of one hundred and three, their total number, twelve were contributed by his friends ; of which, Nos. 33. 93. and 96. were written by Mr. Thomas Warton ; No. 67. by Mr. Langton ; and

(1) This is a slight mistake. The first number of " The Idler " appeared on the 15th of April, 1758, in No. 2. of the Universal Chronicle, &c., which was published by J. Payne, for whom also the Rambler had been printed. On the 29th of April this newspaper assumed the title of " Payne's Universal Chronicle," &c. — M.

Nos. 76. 79. and 82. by Sir Joshua Reynolds ; the concluding words of No. 82.,—“ and pollute his canvas with deformity,”⁽¹⁾—being added by Johnson, as Sir Joshua informed me.⁽²⁾

(1) [“ To conclude, then, by way of corollary : if it has been proved, that the painter, by attending to the invariable and general ideas of nature, produces beauty, he must, by regarding minute particularities and accidental discriminations, deviate from the universal rule, *and pollute his canvas with deformity.*”]

(2) About the year 1756, time had produced a change in the situation of many of Johnson’s friends, who were used to meet him in Ivy Lane. Death had taken from them M’Ghie ; Barker went to settle as a practising physician at Trowbridge ; Dyer went abroad ; Hawkesworth was busied in forming new connections ; and I had lately made one that removed from me all temptations to pass my evenings from home. The consequence was, that our symposium at the King’s Head broke up, and he who had first formed it into a society was left with fewer around him than were able to support it. All this while, the booksellers, who, by his own confession, were his best friends, had their eyes upon Johnson, and reflected with some concern on what seemed to them a misapplication of his talents. The furnishing magazines, reviews, and even newspapers, with literary intelligence, and the authors of books, who could not write them for themselves, with dedications and prefaces, they looked on as employments beneath him, who had attained to such eminence as a writer : they, therefore, in the year 1756, found out for him such a one as seemed to afford a prospect both of amusement and profit : this was an edition of Shakspeare’s dramatic works, which, by a concurrence of circumstances, was now become necessary, to answer the increasing demand of the public. A stranger to Johnson’s character and temper would have thought, that the study of an author, whose skill in the science of human life was so deep, and whose perfections were so many and various as to be above the reach of all praise, must have been the most pleasing employment that his imagination could suggest, but it was not so : in a visit that he one morning made to me, I congratulated him on his being now engaged in a work that suited his genius, and that, requiring none of that severe application which his Dictionary had condemned him to, would, no doubt, be executed *con amore*. His answer was, “ I look upon this as I did upon the Dictionary : it is all work, and my inducement to it is not love or desire of fame, but the want of money, which is the only motive to writing that I know of.” — And the event was evidence to me, that in this speech he declared his genuine sentiments ; for neither

did he set himself to collect early editions of his author, old plays, translations of histories, and of the classics, and other materials necessary for his purpose, nor could he be prevailed on to enter into that course of reading, without which it seemed impossible to come at the sense of his author. It was provoking to all his friends to see him waste his days, his weeks, and his months so long, that they feared a mental lethargy had seized him, out of which he would never recover. In this, however, they were happily deceived, for, after two years' inactivity, they find him roused to action, and engaged — not in the prosecution of the work, for the completion whereof he stood doubly bound, but — in a new one, the furnishing a series of periodical essays, entitled, and it may be thought not improperly, "THE IDLER," as his motive to the employment was aversion to a labour he had undertaken, though in the execution, it must be owned, it merited a better name. — HAWKINS.

CHAPTER III.

1758—1759.

“The Idler.” — Letters to Warton. — Letters to Bennet Langton. — Illness of Johnson’s Mother. — Letters to her, and to Miss Porter. — His Mother’s Death. — “Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.” — Miscellanies. — Excursion to Oxford. — Francis Barber. — John Wilkes. — Smollett. — Letter to Mrs. Montagu. — Mrs. Ogle. — Mylne the Architect.

THE IDLER is evidently the work of the same mind which produced the Rambler, but has less body and more spirit. It has more variety of real life, and greater facility of language. He describes the miseries of idleness, with the lively sensations of one who has felt them; and in his private memorandums while engaged in it, we find “This year I hope to learn diligence.”⁽¹⁾ Many of these excellent essays were written as hastily as an ordinary letter. Mr. Langton remembers Johnson, when on a visit at Oxford, asking him one evening how long it was till the post went out; and on being told about half an hour, he exclaimed, “then we shall do very well.” He upon this instantly sat down and finished an Idler, which it was necessary should be in London the next

(1) Prayers and Meditations, p. 30.

day. Mr. Langton having signified a wish to read it, "Sir, (said he) you shall not do more than I have done myself." He then folded it up, and sent it off.

Yet there are in the *Idler* several papers which show as much profundity of thought, and labour of language, as any of this great man's writings. No. 14. "Robbery of time;" No. 24. "Thinking;" No. 41. "Death of a friend;" No. 43. "Flight of time;" No. 51. "Domestic greatness unattainable;" No. 52. "Self-denial;" No. 58. "Actual, how short of fancied, excellence;" No. 89. "Physical evil moral good;" and his concluding paper on "The horror of the last," will prove this assertion. I know not why a motto, the usual trapping of periodical papers, is prefixed to very few of the *Idlers*, as I have heard Johnson commend the custom: and he never could be at a loss for one, his memory being stored with innumerable passages of the classics. In this series of essays he exhibits admirable instances of grave humour, of which he had an uncommon share. Nor on some occasions has he repressed that power of sophistry which he possessed in so eminent a degree. In No. 11., he treats with the utmost contempt the opinion that our mental faculties depend, in some degree, upon the weather; an opinion, which they who have never experienced its truth are not to be envied, and of which he himself could not but be sensible, as the effects of weather upon him were very visible. Yet thus he declaims:—

"Surely, nothing is more reproachful to a being endowed with reason, than to resign its powers to the in-

fluence of the air, and live in dependence on the weather and the wind for the only blessings which nature has put into our power, tranquillity and benevolence. This distinction of seasons is produced only by imagination operating on luxury. To temperance, every day is bright ; and every hour is propitious to diligence. He that shall resolutely excite his faculties, or exert his virtues, will soon make himself superior to the seasons ; and may set at defiance the morning mist and the evening damp, the blasts of the east, and the clouds of the south."

Alas ! it is too certain, that where the frame has delicate fibres, and there is a fine sensibility, such influences of the air are irresistible. He might as well have bid defiance to the ague, the palsy, and all other bodily disorders. Such boasting of the mind is false elevation.

" I think the Romans call it Stoicism."

But in this number of his Idler his spirits seem to run riot ⁽¹⁾ ; for in the wantonness of his disquisition he forgets, for a moment, even the reverence for that which he held in high respect ; and describes " the attendant on a Court ⁽²⁾," as one " whose business is to watch the looks of a being, weak and foolish as himself."

His unqualified ridicule of rhetorical gesture or action is not, surely, a test of truth ; yet we cannot

(1) This doctrine of the little influence of the weather, however, seems to have been his fixed opinion : he often repeated it in conversation. See *post*, July 9. 1763. — C.

(2) See *antè*, p. 64. Mr. Boswell seems resolved to forget that Johnson's reverence for the *court* had not yet commenced. George II. was still alive, whom Johnson always abused, and sometimes very indecently. See *antè*, p. 164., and *post*, April 6. 1775. — C.

help admiring how well it is adapted to produce the effect which he wished :—

“ Neither the judges of our laws, nor the representatives of our people, would be much affected by labour-ed gesticulations, or believe any man the more because he rolled his eyes, or puffed his cheeks, or spread abroad his arms, or stamped the ground, or thumped his breast ; or turned his eyes sometimes to the ceiling, and sometimes to the floor.”

A casual coincidence with other writers, or an adoption of a sentiment or image which has been found in the writings of another, and afterwards appears in the mind as one’s own, is not unfrequent. The richness of Johnson’s fancy, which could supply his page abundantly on all occasions, and the strength of his memory, which at once detected the real owner of any thought, made him less liable to the imputation of plagiarism than, perhaps, any of our writers. In the *Idler*, however, there is a paper, in which conversation is assimilated to a bowl of punch, where there is the same train of comparison as in a poem by Blacklock, in his collection published in 1756 ; in which a parallel is ingeniously drawn between human life and that liquor. It ends, —

“ Say, then, physicians of each kind,
Who cure the body or the mind,
What harm in drinking can there be,
Since punch and life so well agree ?”

To the *Idler* (1), when collected in volumes, he

(1) The profits accruing from the sale of this paper, and the subscriptions which, from the year 1756, he was receiving for the edition of Shakspeare by him proposed, were the only known

added, beside the Essay on Epitaphs, and the Dissertation on those of Pope, an Essay on the Bravery of the English common Soldiers. He, however, omitted one of the original papers, which in the folio copy is No. 22. (1)

LETTER 57. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

“ [London,] April 14. 1758.

“ DEAR SIR,—Your notes upon my poet were very acceptable. I beg that you will be so kind as to continue your searches. It will be reputable to my work, and suitable to your professorship, to have something of yours in the notes. As you have given no directions about your name, I shall therefore put it. I wish your brother would take the same trouble. A commentary must arise from the fortuitous discoveries of many men in devious walks of literature. Some of your remarks are on plays already printed : but I purpose to add an Appendix of Notes, so that nothing comes too late.

means of his subsistence for a period of near four years, and we may suppose them hardly adequate to his wants, for, upon finding the balance of the account for the Dictionary against him, he quitted his house in Gough Square, and took chambers in Gray's Inn ; and Mrs. Williams, upon this removal, fixed herself in lodgings at a boarding-school, in the neighbourhood of their former dwelling. — HAWKINS.

He retired to Gray's Inn, and soon removed to chambers in the Inner Temple Lane, where he lived in poverty, total idleness, and the pride of literature. Mr. Fitzherbert (the father of Lord St. Helen's), a man distinguished through life for his benevolence and other amiable qualities, used to say, that he paid a morning visit to Johnson, intending from his chambers to send a letter into the city ; but, to his great surprise, he found an author by profession without pen, ink, or paper. The present Bishop of Salisbury was also among those who endeavoured, by constant attention, to soothe the cares of a mind which he knew to be afflicted with gloomy apprehensions. — MURPHY.

(1) This paper may be found in Stockdale's supplemental volume of Johnson's Miscellaneous Pieces.

“ You give yourself too much uneasiness, dear Sir, about the loss of the papers. ⁽¹⁾ The loss is nothing, if nobody has found them ; nor even then, perhaps, if the numbers be known. You are not the only friend that has had the same mischance. You may repair your want out of a stock, which is deposited with Mr. Allen, of Magdalen Hall ; or out of a parcel which I have just sent to Mr. Chambers, for the use of any body that will be so kind as to want them. Mr. Langtons are well ; and Miss Roberts, whom I have at last brought to speak, upon the information which you gave me, that she had something to say. I am, &c.

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 58. TO THE SAME.

“ [London,] June 1. 1758.

“ DEAR SIR,—You will receive this by Mr. Baretti, a gentleman particularly entitled to the notice and kindness of the professor of poesy. He has time but for a short stay, and will be glad to have it filled up with as much as he can hear and see.

“ In recommending another to your favour, I ought not to omit thanks for the kindness which you have shown to myself. Have you any more notes on Shakspeare ? I shall be glad of them.

“ I see your pupil sometimes ⁽²⁾ ; his mind is as exalted as his stature. I am half afraid of him ; but he is no less amiable than formidable. He will, if the forwardness of his spring be not blasted, be a credit to you, and to the University. He brings some of my plays ⁽³⁾ with him, which he has my permission to

(1) Receipts for Shakspeare. — WARTON.

(2) Mr. Langton. — WARTON.

(3) Part of the impression of the Shakspeare, which Dr. Johnson conducted alone, and published by subscription. This edition came out in 1765. — WARTON.

show you, on condition you will hide them from every body else. I am, dear Sir, &c.,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 59. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

Of Trinity College, Oxford.

“June 28. 1758. (1)”

“DEAR SIR,—Though I might have expected to hear from you, upon your entrance into a new state of life at a new place, yet recollecting, (not without some degree of shame,) that I owe you a letter upon an old account, I think it my part to write first. This, indeed, I do not only from complaisance but from interest; for living on in the old way, I am very glad of a correspondent so capable as yourself to diversify the hours. You have, at present, too many novelties about you to need any help from me to drive along your time.

“I know not any thing more pleasant, or more instructive, than to compare experience with expectation, or to register from time to time the difference between idea and reality. It is by this kind of observation that we grow daily less liable to be disappointed. You, who are very capable of anticipating futurity, and raising phantoms before your own eyes, must often have imagined to yourself an academical life, and have conceived what would be the manners, the views, and the conversation, of men devoted to letters; how they would choose their companions, how they would direct their studies, and how they would regulate their lives. Let me know what you expected, and what you have found. At least record it to yourself, before custom has reconciled you to the scenes before you, and the disparity of

(1) This letter is dated June 28. 1758; but it is evident that this must be a mistake; for it is written on Mr. Langton's first entrance into college life; and we see in the letter dated June 1. 1758 (p. 93.), that Langton had been already some time the pupil of Warton. The true date, therefore, of this letter, was, probably, June, 1757. — C.

your discoveries to your hopes has vanished from your mind. It is a rule never to be forgotten, that whatever strikes strongly, should be described while the first impression remains fresh upon the mind.

“ I love, dear Sir, to think on you, and therefore, should willingly write more to you, but that the post will not now give me leave to do more than send my compliments to Mr. Warton, and tell you that I am, dear Sir, most affectionately, your very humble servant,
 “ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 60. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton.

“ Sept. 21. 1758.

“ DEAR SIR,—I should be sorry to think that what engrosses the attention of my friend, should have no part of mine. Your mind is now full of the fate of Dury (1); but his fate is past, and nothing remains but to try what reflection will suggest to mitigate the terrors of a violent death, which is more formidable at the first glance, than on a nearer and more steady view. A violent death is never very painful; the only danger is, lest it should be unprovided. But if a man can be supposed to make no provision for death in war, what can be the state that would have awakened him to the care of futurity? When would that man have prepared himself to die, who went to seek death without preparation? What then can be the reason why we lament more him that dies of a wound, than him that dies of a fever? A man that languishes with disease, ends his life with more pain, but with less virtue: he leaves no example to his friends, nor bequeaths any

(1) Major-General Alexander Dury, of the First Regiment of Foot Guards, who fell in the gallant discharge of his duty, near St. Cas, in the well-known unfortunate expedition against France, in 1758. His lady and Mr. Langton's mother were sisters. He left an only son, Lieutenant-Colonel Dury, who has a company in the same regiment.

honour to his descendants. The only reason why we lament a soldier's death, is, that we think he might have lived longer ; yet this cause of grief is common to many other kinds of death, which are not so passionately bewailed. The truth is, that every death is violent which is the effect of accident ; every death which is not gradually brought on by the miseries of age, or when life is extinguished for any other reason than that it is burnt out. He that dies before sixty, of a cold or consumption, dies, in reality, by a violent death ; yet his death is borne with patience, only because the cause of his untimely end is silent and invisible. Let us endeavour to see things as they are, and then inquire whether we ought to complain. Whether to see life as it is, will give us much consolation, I know not ; but the consolation which is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable : that which may be derived from error, must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive. I am, dear, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

" SAM. JOHNSON."

In 1759, in the month of January, his mother died, at the great age of ninety, an event which deeply affected him ; not that " his mind had acquired no firmness by the contemplation of mortality⁽¹⁾ ;" but that his reverential affection for her was not abated by years, as indeed he retained all his tender feelings even to the latest period of his life. I have been told, that he regretted much his not having gone to visit his mother, for several years previous to her death. But he was constantly en-

(1) Hawkins, p. 395. Mr. Boswell contradicts Hawkins, for the mere pleasure, as it would seem, of doing so. The reader must observe that Mr. Boswell's work is full of anecdotes of Johnson's want of firmness in contemplating mortality. — C.

gaged in literary labours, which confined him to London; and though he had not the comfort of seeing his aged parent, he contributed liberally to her support.

LETTER 61. TO MRS. JOHNSON,

In Lichfield. (1)

“ Jan. 13. 1758.(2)

“ HONOURED MADAM, — The account which Miss [Porter] gives me of your health, pierces my heart. God comfort, and preserve you, and save you, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

“ I would have Miss read to you from time to time the Passion of our Saviour, and sometimes the sentences in the Communion Service, beginning—‘ *Come unto me, all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*’

“ I have just now read a physical book, which inclines me to think that a strong infusion of the bark would do you good. Do, dear mother, try it.

“ Pray, send me your blessing, and forgive all that I have done amiss to you. And whatever you would have done, and what debts you would have paid first, or anything else that you would direct, let Miss put it down; I shall endeavour to obey you.

(1) Since the publication of the third edition of this work, the following letters of Dr. Johnson, occasioned by the last illness of his mother, were obligingly communicated to Mr. Malone by the Rev. Dr. Vyse. They are placed here agreeably to the chronological order almost uniformly observed by the author; and so strongly evince Dr. Johnson’s piety, and tenderness of heart, that every reader must be gratified by their insertion. — M., 1804.

(2) Written by mistake for 1759, as the subsequent letters show. In the next letter, he had inadvertently fallen into the same error, but corrected it. On the outside of the letter of the 13th was written by another hand, — “ Pray acknowledge the receipt of this by return of post, without fail.” — M.

“ I have got twelve guineas ⁽¹⁾ to send you, but unhappily am at a loss how to send it to-night. If I cannot send it to-night, it will come by the next post.

“ Pray do not omit anything mentioned in this letter. God bless you for ever and ever. I am, your dutiful son,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 62. TO MISS PORTER,

At Mrs. Johnson's, in Lichfield.

“ Jan. 16. 1759.

“ MY DEAR MISS,—I think myself obliged to you beyond all expression of gratitude for your care of my dear mother. God grant it may not be without success. Tell Kitty ⁽²⁾, that I shall never forget her tenderness for her mistress. Whatever you can do, continue to do. My heart is very full.

“ I hope you received twelve guineas on Monday. I found a way of sending them by means of the post-master, after I had written my letter, and hope they came safe. I will send you more in a few days. God bless you all. I am, my dear, your most obliged and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ Over the leaf is a letter to my mother.”

(1) I find in Johnson's diary a note of the payment to Mr. Allen, the printer, of six guineas, which he had borrowed of him, and sent to his dying mother. — HAWKINS, p. 366.

(2) Catharine Chambers, Mrs. Johnson's maid-servant. She died in October, 1767. See *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 71.: “ Sunday, Oct. 18. 1767. Yesterday, Oct. 17., I took my leave for ever of my dear old friend, Catharine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.” — M.

LETTER 63. TO MRS. JOHNSON.

“ Jan 16. 1759.

“ DEAR HONOURED MOTHER, — Your weakness afflicts me beyond what I am willing to communicate to you. I do not think you unfit to face death, but I know not how to bear the thought of losing you. Endeavour to do all you [can] for yourself. Eat as much as you can.

“ I pray often for you ; do you pray for me. I have nothing to add to my last letter. I am, dear, dear mother, your dutiful son,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 64. TO MRS. JOHNSON,

In Lichfield.

“ Jan. 18. 1759.

“ DEAR HONOURED MOTHER, — I fear you are too ill for long letters ; therefore I will only tell you, you have from me all the regard that can possibly subsist in the heart. I pray God to bless you for evermore, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

“ Let Miss write to me every post, however short. I am, dear mother, your dutiful son,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 65. TO MISS PORTER,

At Mrs. Johnson’s, in Lichfield.

“ Jan. 20. 1759.

“ DEAR MISS,—I will, if it be possible, come down to you. God grant I may yet [find] my dear mother breathing and sensible. Do not tell her, lest I disappoint her. If I miss to write next post, I am on the road. I am, my dearest Miss, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.

“ *On the other side.*”

LETTER 66. TO MRS. JOHNSON.

" Jan. 20. 1759.(1)

" DEAR HONOURED MOTHER,—Neither your condition nor your character make it fit for me to say much. You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and all that I have omitted to do well. (2) God grant you His Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit. Amen. I am, dear, dear mother, your dutiful son,

" SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 67. TO MISS PORTER.

In Lichfield.

" Jan. 23. 1759. (3)

" YOU will conceive my sorrow for the loss of my mother, of the best mother. If she were to live again, surely I should behave better to her. But she is happy, and what is passed is nothing to her; and for me, since I cannot repair my faults to her, I hope repentance will efface them. I return you and all those that have been good to her my sincerest thanks, and pray God to repay you all with infinite advantage. Write to me, and comfort me, dear child. I shall be glad likewise, if Kitty will write to me. I shall send a bill of twenty pounds in a few days, which I thought to have brought to my mother; but God suffered it not. I have not

(1) This letter was written on the second leaf of the preceding, addressed to Miss Porter.

(2) So, in the prayer which he composed on this occasion: — "Almighty God, merciful Father, in whose hands are life and death, sanctify unto me the sorrow which I now feel. *Forgive me whatever I have done unkindly to my mother, and whatever I have omitted to do kindly.* Make me to remember her good precepts and good example, and to reform my life according to thy holy word," &c. *Prayers, &c.*, p. 31. — M.

(3) Mrs. Johnson probably died on the 20th or 21st of January, and was buried on the day this letter was written. — M.

power or composure to say much more. God bless you, and bless us all. I am, dear Miss, your affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 68. TO MISS LUCY PORTER. (1)

“Jan. 25. 1759. (2)

[The beginning of the writing torn and lost.]

“You will forgive me if I am not yet so composed as to give any directions about any thing. But you are wiser and better than I, and I shall be pleased with all that you shall do. It is not of any use for me now to come down (3); nor can I bear the place. If you want any directions, Mr. Howard (4) will advise you. The twenty pounds I could not get a bill for to-night, but will send it on Saturday. I am, my dear, your affectionate servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 69. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

“Feb. 6. 1759.

“DEAR MISS,—I have no reason to forbear writing, but that it makes my heart heavy, and I had nothing

(1) No. 41. of the *Idler* (Jan. 27.), though it takes the character of a letter to the author, was written by Johnson himself on his mother's death, and may be supposed to describe as truly as pathetically his sentiments on the separation of friends and relations. — HAWKINS.

(2) [This and the two following letters are from the Pearson MSS., first communicated to Mr. Croker.]

(3) Mr. Murphy states: — “With this supply (the price of *Rasselas*) Johnson set out for Lichfield; but did not arrive in time to close the eyes of a parent whom he loved. He attended the funeral.” It is clear, from all these letters, that he did not attend on that occasion. *Rasselas* was not *written*, nor of course, it may be presumed, *sold*, till two months later. — C.

(4) Mr. Howard was in the law, and resided in the Close. — HARWOOD.

particular to say which might not be delayed to the next post ; but had no thoughts of ceasing to correspond with my dear Lucy, the only person now left in the world with whom I think myself connected. There needed not my dear mother's desire, for every heart must lean to somebody, and I have nobody but you ; in whom I put all my little affairs with too much confidence to desire you to keep receipts, as you prudently proposed.

“ If you and Kitty will keep the house, I think I shall like it best. Kitty may carry on the trade for herself, keeping her own stock apart, and laying aside any money that she receives for any of the goods which her good mistress has left behind her. I do not see, if this scheme be followed, any need of appraising the books. My mother's debts, dear mother, I suppose I may pay with little difficulty ; and the little trade may go silently forward. I fancy Kitty can do nothing better ; and I shall not want to put her out of a house, where she has lived so long, and with so much virtue. I am very sorry that she is ill, and earnestly hope that she will soon recover ; let her know that I have the highest value for her, and would do any thing for her advantage. Let her think of this proposal. I do not see any likelier method by which she may pass the remaining part of her life in quietness and competence.

“ You must have what part of the house you please, while you are inclined to stay in it ; but I flatter myself with the hope that you and I shall some time pass our days together. I am very solitary and comfortless, but will not invite you to come hither till I can have hope of making you live here so as not to dislike your situation.

“ Pray, my dearest, write to me as often as you can. I am, dear madam, your affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 70. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

“ March 1. 1759. ”

“ DEAR MADAM,—I thought your last letter long in coming ; and did not require or expect such an inventory of little things as you have sent me. I could have taken your word for a matter of much greater value. I am glad that Kitty is better ; let her be paid first, as my dear, dear mother ordered, and then let me know at once the sum necessary to discharge her other debts, and I will find it you very soon.

“ I beg, my dear, that you would act for me without the least scruple ; for I can repose myself very confidently upon your prudence, and hope we shall never have reason to love each other less. I shall take it very kindly if you make it a rule to write to me once at least every week ; for I am now very desolate, and am loth to be universally forgotten. I am, dear sweet, your affectionate servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Soon after this event, he wrote his “ RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA (1) ;” concerning the publication of which Sir John Hawkins guesses vaguely

(1) *Rasselas* was published in April 1759. [Does not Johnson express his own feelings, when he so beautifully describes the dejection of the Princess at the loss of Pekuah? — “ She sunk into silent pensiveness and gloomy tranquillity. She sat from morning to evening, recollecting all that had been done or said by her Pekuah, treasured up, with care, every trifle on which Pekuah had set an accidental value, and which might recall to mind any little incident or careless conversation. The sentiments of her, whom she now expected to see no more, were treasured in her memory as rules of life, and she deliberated to no other end, than to conjecture, on any occasion, what would have been the opinion and counsel of Pekuah.” Chap. 35. Again, in chap. 45. Johnson pathetically remarks, in the character of the sage, “ I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband.” — MARKLAND,]

and idly, instead of having taken the trouble to inform himself with authentic precision. Not to trouble my readers with a repetition of the knight's reveries, I have to mention, that the late Mr. Strahan the printer told me, that Johnson wrote it, that with the profits he might defray the expense of his mother's funeral, and pay some little debts which she had left. He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he composed it in the evenings of one week; sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over. (1) Mr. Strahan, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Dodsley, purchased it for a hundred pounds; but afterwards paid him twenty-five pounds more, when it came to a second edition.

Considering the large sums which have been received for compilations, and works requiring not much more genius than compilations, we cannot but wonder at the very low price which he was content to receive for this admirable performance; which, though he had written nothing else, would have rendered his name immortal in the world of literature. None of his writings has been so extensively diffused over Europe; for it has been translated into most, if not all, of the modern languages. This Tale, with all the charms of Oriental imagery, and all the force and beauty of which the English language is capable, leads us through the most important scenes of human life, and shows us that this stage of our

(1) See under June 2. 1781. Finding it then accidentally in a chaise with Mr. Boswell, he read it eagerly. This was, doubtless long after his declaration to Sir Joshua Reynolds. — M.

being is full of "vanity and vexation of spirit." To those who look no further than the present life, or who maintain that human nature has not fallen from the state in which it was created, the instruction of this sublime story will be of no avail. But they who think justly, and feel with strong sensibility, will listen with eagerness and admiration to its truth and wisdom. Voltaire's *CANDIDE*, written to refute the system of Optimism, which it has accomplished with brilliant success, is wonderfully similar in its plan and conduct to Johnson's *RASSELAS*; insomuch, that I have heard Johnson say, that if they had not been published so closely one after the other that there was not time for imitation, it would have been in vain to deny that the scheme of that which came latest was taken from the other. Though the proposition illustrated by both these works was the same, namely, that in our present state there is more evil than good, the intention of the writers was very different. Voltaire, I am afraid, meant only by wanton profaneness to obtain a sportive victory over religion, and to discredit the belief of a superintending Providence: Johnson meant, by showing the unsatisfactory nature of things temporal, to direct the hopes of man to things eternal. "Rasselas," as was observed to me by a very accomplished lady, may be considered as a more enlarged and more deeply philosophical discourse in prose, upon the interesting truth, which in his "Vanity of Human Wishes" he had so successfully enforced in verse.

The fund of thinking which this work contains is such, that almost every sentence of it may furnish a

subject of long meditation. I am not satisfied if a year passes without my having read it through ; and at every perusal, my admiration of the mind which produced it is so highly raised, that I can scarcely believe that I had the honour of enjoying the intimacy of such a man.

I restrain myself from quoting passages from this excellent work, or even referring to them; because I should not know what to select, or, rather, what to omit. I shall, however, transcribe one, as it shows how well he could state the arguments of those who believe in the appearance of departed spirits; a doctrine which it is a mistake to suppose that he himself ever positively held : —

“ If all your fear be of apparitions (said the Prince), I will promise you safety : there is no danger from the dead ; he that is once buried will be seen no more.

“ That the dead are seen no more (said Imlac), I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth ; those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence ; and some who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears.”

Notwithstanding my high admiration of *Rasselas*, I will not maintain that the “ morbid melancholy ” in Johnson’s constitution may not, perhaps, have made life appear to him more insipid and unhappy

than it generally is ; for I am sure that he had less enjoyment from it than I have. Yet, whatever additional shade his own particular sensations may have thrown on his representation of life, attentive observation and close inquiry have convinced me, that there is too much reality in the gloomy picture. The truth, however, is, that we judge of the happiness and misery of life differently at different times, according to the state of our changeable frame. I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France :— “ *Ma foi, Monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule.* ” This have I learnt from a pretty hard course of experience ; and would, from sincere benevolence, impress upon all who honour this book with a perusal, that until a steady conviction is obtained, that the present life is an imperfect state, and only a passage to a better, if we comply with the divine scheme of progressive improvement ; and also that it is a part of the mysterious plan of Providence, that intellectual beings must “ be made perfect through suffering ; ” there will be a continual recurrence of disappointment and uneasiness. But if we walk with hope in “ the mid-day sun ” of revelation, our temper and disposition will be such, that the comforts and enjoyments in our way will be relished, while we patiently support the inconveniences and pains. After much speculation and various reasonings, I acknowledge myself convinced of the truth of Voltaire’s conclusion, “ *Après tout c’est un monde passable.* ” But we must not think too deeply :

“——— where ignorance is bliss,
'T is folly to be wise,”

is, in many respects, more than poetically just. Let us cultivate, under the command of good principles, “*la théorie des sensations agréables* ;” and, as Mr. Burke once admirably counselled a grave and anxious gentleman, “live pleasant.”

The effect of *Rasselas*, and of Johnson's other moral tales, is thus beautifully illustrated by Mr. Courtenay : —

“ Impressive truth, in splendid fiction dress'd,
Checks the vain wish, and calms the troubled breast ;
O'er the dark mind a light celestial throws,
And soothes the angry passions to repose ;
As oil effused illumines and smooths the deep,
When round the bark the swelling surges sweep.”

It will be recollected, that during all this year he carried on his *IDLER* (1), and, no doubt, was pro-

(1) This paper was, in such high estimation before it was collected into volumes, that it was seized on with avidity by various publishers of newspapers and magazines, to enrich their publications. Johnson, to put a stop to this unfair proceeding, wrote for the *Universal Chronicle* the following advertisement; in which there is, perhaps, more pomp of words than the occasion demanded : —

“ London, Jan. 5. 1759. ADVERTISEMENT. The proprietors of the paper entitled ‘*The Idler*,’ having found that those essays are inserted in the newspapers and magazines with so little regard to justice or decency, that the *Universal Chronicle*, in which they first appear, is not always mentioned, think it necessary to declare to the publishers of those collections, that however patiently they have hitherto endured these injuries, made yet more injurious by contempt, they have now determined to endure them no longer. They have already seen essays, for which a very large price is paid, transferred, with the most shameless rapacity, into the weekly or monthly compilations, and their right, at least for the present, alienated from them, before they could themselves be said to enjoy it. But they would not willingly be thought to want tenderness, even for men by whom no tenderness hath been shown. The past is without remedy, and shall be without resentment. But those who have been thus busy with their sickles in the fields of their neighbours, are henceforward to take notice that the time of impunity is at an end. Whoever shall, without our leave, lay the hand of rapine upon our papers, is to expect that we

ceeding, though slowly, in his edition of Shakspeare. He, however, from that liberality which never failed when called upon to assist other labourers in literature, found time to translate for Mrs. Lenox's English version of Brumoy, "A Dissertation on the Greek Comedy," † and "The General Conclusion of the Book." †

An inquiry into the state of foreign countries was an object that seems at all times to have interested Johnson. Hence Mr. Newbery found no great difficulty in persuading him to write the Introduction* to a collection of voyages and travels published by him under the title of "The World Displayed:" the first volume of which appeared this year, and the remaining volumes in subsequent years.

I would ascribe to this year the following letter to a son of one of his early friends at Lichfield, Mr. Joseph Simpson, Barrister, and author of a tract entitled "Reflections on the Study of the Law." (1)

shall vindicate our due, by the means which justice prescribes, and which are warranted by the im memorial prescriptions of honourable trade. We shall lay hold, in our turn, on their copies, degrade them from the pomp of wide margin and diffuse typography, contract them into a narrow space, and sell them at an humble price; yet not with a view of growing rich by confiscations, for we think not much better of money got by punishment than by crimes. We shall therefore, when our losses are repaid, give what profit shall remain to the *Magdalens*; for we know not who can be more properly taxed for the support of penitent prostitutes, than prostitutes in whom there yet appears neither penitence nor shame."

(1) [Published anonymously in 1765, under the title of "Reflections on the Natural and Acquired Endowments requisite for the Study of the Law," and afterwards republished, with notes and a commentary, by Matthew Dawes, Esq.]

LETTER 71. TO JOSEPH SIMPSON, ESQ.

“DEAR SIR, — Your father’s inexorability not only grieves but amazes me : he is your father ; he was always accounted a wise man ; nor do I remember any thing to the disadvantage of his good-nature ; but in his refusal to assist you there is neither good-nature, fatherhood, nor wisdom. It is the practice of good-nature to overlook faults which have already, by the consequences, punished the delinquent. It is natural for a father to think more favourably than others of his children ; and it is always wise to give assistance, while a little help will prevent the necessity of greater.

“If you married imprudently, you miscarried at your own hazard, at an age when you had a right of choice. It would be hard if the man might not choose his own wife, who has a right to plead before the judges of his country.

“If your imprudence has ended in difficulties and inconveniencies, you are yourself to support them ; and, with the help of a little better health, you would support them and conquer them. Surely, that want which accident and sickness produces, is to be supported in every region of humanity, though there were neither friends nor fathers in the world. You have certainly from your father the highest claim of charity, though none of right ; and therefore I would counsel you to omit no decent nor manly degree of importunity. Your debts in the whole are not large, and of the whole but a small part is troublesome. Small debts are like small shot ; they are rattling on every side, and can scarcely be escaped without a wound : great debts are like cannon ; of loud noise, but little danger. You must, therefore, be enabled to discharge petty debts, that you may have leisure, with security, to struggle with the rest. Neither the great nor little debts disgrace you. I am sure you have my esteem for the courage with which

you contracted them, and the spirit with which you endure them. I wish my esteem could be of more use. I have been invited, or have invited myself, to several parts of the kingdom ; and will not incommode my dear Lucy by coming to Lichfield, while her present lodging is of any use to her. I hope, in a few days, to be at leisure, and to make visits. Whither I shall fly is matter of no importance. A man unconnected is at home every where ; unless he may be said to be at home no where. I am sorry, dear Sir, that where you have parents, a man of your merits should not have a home. I wish I could give it you. I am, my dear Sir, affectionately yours,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

He now refreshed himself by an excursion to Oxford, of which the following short characteristical notice, in his own words, is preserved ⁽¹⁾ :—

“ ——— is now making tea for me. I have been in my gown ever since I came here. ⁽²⁾ It was, at my first coming, quite new and handsome. I have swum thrice, which I had disused for many years. I have proposed to Vansittart ⁽³⁾ climbing over the wall, but he has refused me. And I have clapped my hands till they are sore, at Dr. King’s speech.” ⁽⁴⁾

His negro servant, Francis Barber, having left him, and been some time at sea, not pressed as has

(1) *Gent. Mag.* 1785, p. 288.

(2) Lord Stowell informs me that he prided himself in being, during his visits to Oxford, accurately academic in all points ; and he wore his gown almost *ostentatiously*. — C.

(3) Dr. Robert Vansittart, of the ancient and respectable family of that name in Berkshire. He was eminent for learning and worth, and much esteemed by Dr. Johnson.

(4) [At the installation of John, Earl of Westmoreland, as Chancellor of the University, July 7. 1759.]

been supposed, but with his own consent, it appears from a letter to John Wilkes, Esq. from Dr. Smollett, that his master kindly interested himself in procuring his release from a state of life of which Johnson always expressed the utmost abhorrence. He said, "No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned." [Aug. 31. 1773.] And at another time, "A man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company." [Sep. 23. 1773.] The letter was as follows:—

LETTER 72. TO JOHN WILKES, ESQ.

"Chelsea, March 16. 1759.

"DEAR SIR,—I am again your petitioner, in behalf of that great CHAM⁽¹⁾ of literature, Samuel Johnson. His black servant, whose name is Francis Barber, has been pressed on board the Stag frigate, Captain Angel,

(1) In my first edition this word was printed *Chum*, as it appears in one of Mr. Wilkes's Miscellanies, and I animadverted on Dr. Smollett's ignorance; for which let me propitiate the *manes* of that ingenious and benevolent gentleman. CHUM was certainly a mistaken reading for CHAM, the title of the sovereign of Tartary, which is well applied to Johnson, the monarch of literature: and was an epithet familiar to Smollett. See "Roderick Random," chap. 56. For this correction I am indebted to Lord Palmerston, whose talents and literary acquirements accord well with his respectable pedigree of Temple.—B.

After the publication of the second edition of this work, the author was furnished by Mr. Abercrombie of Philadelphia, with the copy of a letter written by Dr. John Armstrong, the poet, to Dr. Smollett, at Leghorn, containing the following paragraph:— "As to the K. Bench patriot, it is hard to say from what motive he published a letter of yours asking some trifling favour of him in behalf of somebody for whom the great CHAM of literature, Mr. Johnson, had interested himself."—M.

and our lexicographer is in great distress. He says the boy is a sickly lad, of a delicate frame, and particularly subject to a malady in his throat, which renders him very unfit for his Majesty's service. You know what matter of animosity the said Johnson has against you ; and I dare say you desire no other opportunity of resenting it, than that of laying him under an obligation. He was humble enough to desire my assistance on this occasion, though he and I were never cater-cousins ; and I gave him to understand that I would make application to my friend Mr. Wilkes, who, perhaps, by his interest with Dr. Hay and Mr. Elliot, might be able to procure the discharge of his lacquey. It would be superfluous to say more on this subject, which I leave to your own consideration ; but I cannot let slip this opportunity of declaring that I am, with the most inviolable esteem and attachment, dear Sir, your affectionate, obliged humble servant,

“ T. SMOLLETT.” (1)

Mr. Wilkes, who upon all occasions has acted, as a private gentleman, with most polite liberality, applied to his friend Sir George Hay, then one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty ; and Francis Barber was discharged, as he has told me, without

(1) Dr. Johnson's acquaintance with Mrs. Montagu probably began about this period. We find, in this year, the first of the many applications which he made to the extensive and unwearied charity of that excellent woman : —

To Mrs. Montagu.

“ June 9. 1759.

“ MADAM, — I am desired by Mrs. Williams to sign receipts with her name for the subscribers which you have been pleased to procure, and to return her humble thanks for your favour, which was conferred with all the grace that elegance can add to beneficence. I am, madam, your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

It is necessary to request the attention of the reader to the warm terms in which Johnson so frequently expresses his admiration and esteem for Mrs. Montagu, as we shall see that he afterwards took another tone. — C.

any wish of his own. He found his old master in Chambers in the Inner Temple, and returned to his service.

What particular new scheme of life Johnson had in view this year, I have not discovered; but that he meditated one of some sort, is clear from his private devotions, in which we find [24th March], “the change of outward things which I am now to make;” and, “Grant me the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that the course which I am now beginning may proceed according to thy laws, and end in the enjoyment of thy favour.” But he did not, in fact, make any external or visible change. ⁽¹⁾

LETTER 73. TO MISS LUCY PORTER.

“May 10. 1759.

“DEAR MADAM,—I am almost ashamed to tell you that all your letters came safe, and that I have been always very well, but hindered, I hardly know how, from writing. I sent, last week, some of my works, one for you, one for your aunt Hunter, who was with

(1) “The change of life,” says Mr. Croker, “was probably the breaking up his establishment in Gough Square, where he had resided for ten years, and retiring to chambers in Staple Inn; while Mrs. Williams went into lodgings.” This economical arrangement, as we learn from the following note, communicated by Mrs. Pearson through Dr. Harwood, took place just at this period:—

To Mrs. Lucy Porter.

“March 23. 1759.

“DEAR MADAM,—I beg your pardon for having so long omitted to write. One thing or other has put me off. I have this day moved my things, and you are now to direct to me at Staple Inn, London. I hope, my dear, you are well, and Kitty mends. I wish her success in her trade, I am going to publish a little story book [Rasselas], which I will send you when it is out. Write to me, my dearest girl, for I am always glad to hear from you. I am, my dear, your humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

my poor dear mother when she died, one for Mr. Howard, and one for Kitty.

“ I beg you, my dear, to write often to me, and tell me how you like my little book. I am, dear love, your affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 74. TO MRS. MONTAGU. (1)

“ Gray’s Inn, Dec. 17. 1759.

“ MADAM,—Goodness so conspicuous as yours will be often solicited, and perhaps sometimes solicited by those who have little pretension to your favour. It is now my turn to introduce a petitioner, but such as I have reason to believe you will think worthy of your notice. Mrs. Ogle, who kept the music-room in Soho Square, a woman who struggles with great industry for the support of eight children, hopes by a benefit concert to set herself free from a few debts, which she cannot otherwise discharge. She has, I know not why, so high an opinion of me as to believe that you will pay less regard to her application than to mine. You know, madam, I am sure you know, how hard it is to deny, and therefore would not wonder at my compliance, though I were to suppress a motive which you know not, the vanity of being supposed to be of any importance to Mrs. Montagu. But though I may be willing to see the world deceived for my advantage, I am not deceived myself, for I know that Mrs. Ogle will owe whatever favours she shall receive from the patronage which we humbly entreat on this occasion, much more to your compassion for honesty in distress, than to the request of, Madam, your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

At this time there being a competition among the architects of London to be employed in the

(1) [From the Montagu MSS. communicated to Mr. Croker.]

building of Blackfriars' Bridge, a question was very warmly agitated whether semicircular or elliptical arches were preferable. In the design offered by Mr. Mylne the elliptical form was adopted, and therefore it was the great object of his rivals to attack it. Johnson's regard for his friend Mr. Gwyn induced him to engage in this controversy against Mr. Mylne (1); and after being at considerable pains to study the subject, he wrote three several letters in the Gazetteer, in opposition to his plan.

If it should be remarked that this was a con-

(1) Sir John Hawkins has given a long detail of it, in that manner vulgarly, but significantly, called *rigmarole*; in which, amidst an ostentatious exhibition of arts and artists, he talks of "proportions of a column being taken from that of the human figure, and *adjusted by nature* — masculine and feminine — in a man, *sesquioctave* of the head, and in a woman *sesquinonal*; nor has he failed to introduce a jargon of musical terms, which do not seem much to correspond with the subject, but serve to make up the heterogeneous mass. To follow the knight through all this, would be an useless fatigue to myself, and not a little disgusting to my readers. I shall, therefore, only make a few remarks upon his statement.

He seems to exult in having detected Johnson in procuring, "from a person eminently skilled in mathematics and the principles of architecture, answers to a string of questions drawn up by himself, touching the comparative strength of semicircular and elliptical arches." Now I cannot conceive how Johnson could have acted more wisely. Sir John complains that the opinion of that excellent mathematician, Mr. Thomas Simpson, did not preponderate in favour of the semicircular arch. But he should have known, that however eminent Mr. Simpson was in the higher parts of abstract mathematical science, he was little versed in mixed and practical mechanics. Mr. Muller, of Woolwich Academy, the scholastic father of all the great engineers which this country has employed for forty years, decided the question by declaring clearly in favour of the elliptical arch. — It is ungraciously suggested, that Johnson's motive for opposing Mr. Mylne's scheme may have been his prejudice against him as a native of North Britain; when, in truth, as has been stated, he gave the aid of his able pen to a friend, who was one of the candidates; and so

troversy which lay quite out of Johnson's way, let it be remembered, that after all, his employing his powers of reasoning and eloquence upon a subject which he had studied on the moment, is not more strange than what we often observe in lawyers, who, as *Quicquid agunt homines* is the matter of lawsuits, are sometimes obliged to pick up a temporary knowledge of an art or science, of which they understood nothing till their brief was delivered, and appear to be much masters of it. In like manner, members of the legislature frequently introduce and expatiate upon subjects of which they have informed themselves for the occasion.

far was he from having any illiberal antipathy to Mr. Mylne, that he afterwards lived with that gentleman upon very agreeable terms of acquaintance, and dined with him at his house. Sir John Hawkins, indeed, gives full vent to his own prejudice in abusing Blackfriars' Bridge, calling it "an edifice, in which beauty and symmetry are in vain sought for; by which the citizens of London have perpetuated their own disgrace, and subjected a whole nation to the reproach of foreigners." Whoever has contemplated, *placido lumine*, this stately, elegant, and airy structure, which has so fine an effect, especially on approaching the capital on that quarter, must wonder at such unjust and ill-tempered censure; and I appeal to all foreigners of good taste, whether this bridge be not one of the most distinguished ornaments of London. As to the stability of the fabric, it is certain that the city of London took every precaution to have the best Portland stone for it; but as this is to be found in the quarries belonging to the public, under the direction of the Lords of the Treasury, it so happened that parliamentary interest, which is often the bane of fair pursuits, thwarted their endeavours. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, it is well known that not only has Blackfriars Bridge never sunk either in its foundation or in its arches, which were so much the subject of contest, but any injuries which it has suffered from the effects of severe frosts have been already, in some measure, repaired with sounder stone, and every necessary renewal can be completed at a moderate expense.

CHAPTER IV.

1760—1763.

Miscellaneous Essays. — Origin of Johnson's Acquaintance with Murphy. — Akenside and Rolt. — Mackenzie and Eccles. — Letters to Baretti. — Painting and Music. — Sir George Staunton. — Letter to a Lady soliciting Church Preferment for her Son. — The King confers on Johnson a Pension of 300l. a Year. — Letters to Lord Bute. — Visit to Devonshire, with Sir Joshua Reynolds. — Character of Collins. — Dedication of Hoole's Tasso.

IN 1760 he wrote "An Address of the Painters to George III. on his Accession to the Throne of these Kingdoms," † which no monarch ever ascended with more sincere congratulations from his people. Two generations of foreign princes had prepared their minds to rejoice in having again a King, who gloried in being "born a Briton." (1) He also wrote for Mr. Baretti the Dedication † of his Italian and English Dictionary, to the Marquis of Abreu, then Envoy-Extraordinary from Spain at the Court of Great Britain.

Johnson was now either very idle, or very busy with his Shakspeare; for I can find no other public composition by him except an Introduction to the Proceedings of the Committee for Clothing the French

(1) ["Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton." — GEORGE III.'s first Speech to his Parliament.]

Prisoners ;* one of the many proofs that he was ever awake to the calls of humanity ; and an account which he gave in the Gentleman's Magazine of Mr. Tytler's acute and able vindication of Mary Queen of Scots.* The generosity of Johnson's feelings shines forth in the following sentence : —

“ It has now been fashionable, for near half a century, to defame and vilify the house of Stuart, and to exalt and magnify the reign of Elizabeth. The Stuarts have found few apologists, for the dead cannot pay for praise ; and who will, without reward, oppose the tide of popularity ? Yet there remains still among us, not wholly extinguished, a zeal for truth, a desire of establishing right in opposition to fashion.”

In this year I have not discovered a single private letter written by him to any of his friends. It should seem, however, that he had at this period a floating intention of writing a history of the recent and wonderful successes of the British arms in all quarters of the globe ; for among his resolutions or memorandums, September 18., there is, “ Send for books for Hist. of War.” (1) How much is it to be

(1) The following memorandum, made on his birthday in this year, may be quoted as an example of the rules and resolutions which he was in the habit of making, for the guidance of his moral conduct and literary studies : —

“ Sept. 18. Resolved, D (eo) j (uvante),

To combat notions of obligation :

To apply to study :

To reclaim imaginations :

To consult the resolves on Tetty's coffin :

To rise early :

To study religion :

To go to church :

To drink less strong liquors :

To keep a journal :

To oppose laziness, by doing what is to be done to-morrow :

regretted that this intention was not fulfilled. His majestic expression would have carried down to the latest posterity the glorious achievements of his country, with the same fervent glow which they produced on the mind at the time. He would have been under no temptation to deviate in any degree from truth, which he held very sacred, or to take a licence, which a learned divine told me he once seemed, in a conversation, jocularly to allow to historians. "There are (said he) inexcusable lies, and consecrated lies. For instance, we are told that on the arrival of the news of the unfortunate battle of Fontenoy, every heart beat, and every eye was in tears. Now we know that no man eat his dinner the worse, but there *should* have been all this concern; and to say there *was* (smiling), may be reckoned a consecrated lie."

This year Mr. Murphy, having thought himself ill-treated by the Rev. Dr. Francklin⁽¹⁾, who was one of the writers of "The Critical Review," published an indignant vindication in "A Poetical Epistle to Samuel Johnson, A. M." in which he compliments Johnson in a just and elegant manner: —

Rise as early as I can:
 Send for books for Hist. of War:
 Put books in order:
 Scheme of life."

The fourth item seems obscure and strange. — C. — [Possibly certain resolutions he had committed to writing, after contemplating his wife's coffin, and which he had not consulted for some time. — MARKLAND.]

(1) [Dr. Thomas Francklin, the translator of Sophocles and Lucian. He died in 1784.]

“ Transcendent Genius! whose prolific vein
Ne'er knew the frigid poet's toil and pain;
To whom APOLLO opens all his store,
And every Muse presents her sacred lore;
Say, powerful JOHNSON, whence thy verse is fraught
With so much grace, such energy of thought;
Whether thy JUVENAL instructs the age
In chaster numbers, and new-points his rage;
Or fair IRENE sees, alas! too late,
Her innocence exchanged for guilty state;
Whate'er you write, in every golden line
Sublimity and elegance combine;
Thy nervous phrase impresses every soul,
While harmony gives rapture to the whole.”

Again, towards the conclusion;

“ Thou then, my friend, who see'st the dang'rous strife
In which some demon bids me plunge my life,
To the Aonian fount direct my feet,
Say, where the Nine thy lonely musings meet?
Where warbles to thy ear the sacred throng,
Thy moral sense, thy dignity of song?
Tell, for you can, by what unerring art
You wake to finer feelings every heart;
In each bright page some truth important give,
And bid to future times thy RAMBLER live.”

I take this opportunity to relate the manner in which an acquaintance first commenced between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Murphy. During the publication of “The Gray's Inn Journal,” a periodical paper which was successfully carried on by Mr. Murphy alone, when a very young man, he happened to be in the country with Mr. Foote; and having mentioned that he was obliged to go to London in order to get ready for the press one of the numbers of that journal, Foote said to him, “You need not go on that account. Here is a French magazine, in which

you will find a very pretty oriental tale ; translate that, and send it to your printer." Mr. Murphy having read the tale, was highly pleased with it, and followed Foote's advice. When he returned to town, this tale was pointed out to him in "The Rambler," from whence it had been translated into the French magazine. (1) Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnson, to explain this curious incident. His talents, literature, and gentleman-like manners, were soon perceived by Johnson, and a friendship was formed which was never broken.

LETTER 75. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton.

" October 18. 1760.

" DEAR SIR,—You that travel about the world, have more materials for letters, than I who stay at home ; and should, therefore, write with frequency equal to your opportunities. I should be glad to have all England surveyed by you, if you would impart your observations in narratives as agreeable as your last. Knowledge is always to be wished to those who can communicate it well. While you have been riding and running, and seeing the tombs of the learned, and the camps of the valiant, I have only staid at home, and intended to do great things, which I have not done. Beau (2) went away to Cheshire, and has not yet found his way back. Chambers passed the vacation at Oxford.

(1) When Mr. Murphy first became acquainted with Dr. Johnson he was about thirty-one years old. He died at Knightsbridge, June 18. 1805, in his eighty-second year. The extraordinary paper mentioned in the text is No. 38. of the second series [of the Gray's Inn Journal], published on June 15. 1754 ; which is a retranslation from the French version of the Rambler, No. 190. — M. [The History of Abouzaid, the Son of Morad.]

(2) Topham Beauclerk, Esq.

“ I am very sincerely solicitous for the preservation or curing of Mr. Langton’s sight, and am glad that the chirurgeon at Coventry gives him so much hope. Mr. Sharp is of opinion that the tedious maturation of the cataract is a vulgar error ⁽¹⁾, and that it may be removed as soon as it is formed. This notion deserves to be considered ; I doubt whether it be universally true ; but if it be true in some cases, and those cases can be distinguished, it may save a long and uncomfortable delay.

“ Of dear Mrs. Langton you give me no account ; which is the less friendly, as you know how highly I think of her, and how much I interest myself in her health. I suppose you told her of my opinion, and likewise suppose it was not followed ; however I still believe it to be right.

“ Let me hear from you again, wherever you are, or whatever you are doing ; whether you wander or sit still, plant trees or make *Rustics* ⁽²⁾, play with your sisters or muse alone ; and in return I will tell you the success of Sheridan, who at this instant is playing Cato, and has already played Richard twice. He had more company the second than the first night, and will make I believe a good figure in the whole, though his faults seem to be very many ; some of natural deficiency, and some of laborious affectation. He has, I think, no power of assuming either that dignity or elegance which some men, who have little of either in common life, can exhibit on the stage. His voice when strained is unpleasant, and when low is not always heard. He seems to think too much on the audience, and turns his face too often to the galleries.

(1) Mr. Sharp seems to have once been of a different opinion on this point. See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 274. n. — C.

(2) Essays with that title, written about this time by Mr. Langton, but not published.

“ However, I wish him well ; and among other reasons, because I like his wife. ⁽¹⁾ Make haste to write to, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.” ⁽²⁾

In 1761 Johnson appears to have done little. He was still, no doubt, proceeding in his edition of Shakspeare ; but what advances he made in it cannot be ascertained. He certainly was at this time not active ; for in his scrupulous examination of himself on Easter eve, he laments, in his too rigorous mode of censuring his own conduct, that his life, since the communion of the preceding Easter, had been “ dissipated and useless.” ⁽³⁾ He, however, contributed this year the Preface * to “ Rolt’s Dic-

(1) Mrs. Sheridan was author of “Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph,” a novel of great merit, and of some other pieces. — BOSWELL.—Her last work is, perhaps, her best —Nourjahad, an eastern tale : in which a pure morality is inculcated, with a great deal of fancy and considerable force. No wonder that Dr. Johnson should have *liked* her ! Dr. Parr, in a letter to Mr. Moore, published in his Life of R. B. Sheridan (vol. i. p. 11.), thus mentions her : — “ I once or twice met his mother, — she was *quite celestial* ! both her virtues and her genius were highly esteemed.” This amiable and accomplished woman died at Blois, in September, 1766, as Mr. Moore states, and as is proved by a letter of Mr. Sheridan’s, deploring that event, dated in October 1766 ; though the Biographical Dictionary, and other authorities, placed her death in 1767. — C.

(2) [Sir Frederick Madden has favoured me with the following interesting extract from a letter of Birch to Lord Royston, dated London, October 25. 1760 : — “ Sam. Johnson is in treaty with certain booksellers to supply three papers a week, in the nature of Essays, like the Rambler, at the unusual rate (if the fact be true), it is said, of three guineas a paper. But I question whether the temptation of even so liberal a reward will awaken him from his natural indolence ; for while his Rambler was publishing, which came out but twice a week, the proprietor of it, Cave, told me that copy was seldom sent to the press till late in the night before the day of publication.” — MARKLAND.]

(3) Prayers and Meditations, p. 44.

tionary of Trade and Commerce," in which he displays such a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the subject, as might lead the reader to think that its author had devoted all his life to it. I asked him, whether he knew much of Rolt, and of his work. "Sir, (said he) I never saw the man, and never read the book. The booksellers wanted a Preface to a Dictionary of Trade and Commerce. I knew very well what such a Dictionary should be, and I wrote a Preface accordingly." Rolt, who wrote a great deal for the booksellers, was, as Johnson told me, a singular character. Though not in the least acquainted with him, he used to say, "I am just come from Sam. Johnson. This was a sufficient specimen of his vanity and impudence. But he gave a more eminent proof of it in our sister kingdom, as Dr. Johnson informed me. When Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination" first came out, he did not put his name to the poem. Rolt went over to Dublin, published an edition of it, and put his own name to it. Upon the fame of this he lived for several months, being entertained at the best tables as "the ingenious Mr. Rolt." (1) His conversation, indeed, did not dis-

(1) I have had enquiry made in Ireland as to this story, but do not find it recollected there. I give it on the authority of Dr. Johnson, to which may be added, that of the "Biographical Dictionary," and "Biographia Dramatica;" in both of which it has stood many years. Mr. Malone observes, that the truth probably is, not that an edition was published with Rolt's name in the title-page, but, that the poem being then anonymous, Rolt acquiesced in its being attributed to him in conversation.—BOSWELL.—In the late edition of Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary, the foregoing story is indeed noticed, but with an observation that it has been *completely refuted*. Richard Rolt died in March, 1770. — C.

cover much of the fire of a poet ; but it was recollected, that both Addison and Thomson were equally dull till excited by wine. Akenside having been informed of this imposition, vindicated his right by publishing the poem with its real author's name. Several instances of such literary fraud have been detected. The Rev. Dr. Campbell, of St. Andrew's, wrote "An Enquiry into the original of Moral Virtue," the manuscript of which he sent to Mr. Innes, a clergyman in England, who was his countryman and acquaintance. Innes published it with his own name to it ; and before the imposition was discovered, obtained considerable promotion, as a reward of his merit. (1) The celebrated Dr. Hugh Blair, and his cousin Mr. George Bannatine, when students in divinity, wrote a poem, entitled "The Resurrection," copies of which were handed about in manuscript. They were, at length, very much surprized to see a pompous edition of it in folio, dedicated to the Princess Dowager of Wales, by a Dr. Douglas, as his own. Some years ago a little novel, entitled "The Man of Feeling," was assumed by Mr. Eccles, a young Irish clergyman, who was afterwards drowned near Bath. (2) He had been at

(1) I have both the books. Innes was the clergyman who brought Psalmanazar to England, and was an accomplice in his extraordinary fiction.

(2) "Died, the Rev. Mr. Eccles, at Bath. In attempting to save a boy, whom he saw sinking in the Avon, he, together with the youth, were both drowned." — *Gent. Mag.* Aug. 15. 1777. And in the magazine for the next month are some verses on this event, with an epitaph, of which the first line is,

"Beneath this stone the "*Man of Feeling*" lies. — C.

the pains to transcribe the whole book, with blottings, interlineations, and corrections, that it might be shown to several people as an original. It was, in truth, the production of Mr. Henry Mackenzie, an attorney in the Exchequer at Edinburgh, who is the author of several other ingenious pieces ⁽¹⁾; but the belief with regard to Mr. Eccles became so general, that it was thought necessary for Messieurs Strahan and Cadell to publish an advertisement in the newspapers, contradicting the report, and mentioning that they purchased the copy-right of Mr. Mackenzie. I can conceive this kind of fraud to be very easily practised with successful effrontery. The *filiation* of a literary performance is difficult of proof; seldom is there any witness present at its birth. A man, either in confidence or by improper means, obtains possession of a copy of it in manuscript, and boldly publishes it as his own. The true author, in many cases, may not be able to make his title clear. Johnson, indeed, from the peculiar features of his literary offspring, might bid defiance to any attempt to appropriate them to others :

“ But Shakspeare’s magic could not copied be ;
Within that circle none durst walk but he ! ”

LETTER 76. TO MISS LUCY PORTER.

“ Inner Temple Lane, Jan. 13. 1761.

“ DEAREST MADAM,—I ought to have begun the new year with repairing the omissions of the last, and to

(1) [Henry Mackenzie, Esq. died at Edinburgh, Jan. 14. 1831, in his eighty-sixth year. See his Life in Sir Walter Scott’s *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, edition 1834, vol. v.]

have told you sooner, what I can always tell you with truth, that I wish you long life and happiness, always increasing till it shall end at last in the happiness of heaven.

“I hope, my dear, you are well; I am at present pretty much disordered by a cold and cough; I have just been blooded, and hope I shall be better.

“Pray give my love to Kitty. I should be glad to hear that she goes on well. I am, my dearest dear, your most affectionate servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

He this year lent his friendly assistance to correct and improve a pamphlet written by Mr. Gwyn, the architect, entitled “Thoughts on the Coronation of George III.”*

Johnson had now for some years admitted Mr. Baretto to his intimacy; nor did their friendship cease upon their being separated by Baretto's re-visiting his native country, as appears from Johnson's letters to him.

LETTER 77. TO MR. JOSEPH BARETTI,

At Milan. (1)

“London, June 10. 1761.

“You reproach me very often with parsimony of writing; but you may discover, by the extent of my paper, that I design to recompense rarity by length. A short letter to a distant friend is, in my opinion, an insult like that of a slight bow or cursory salutation;—

(1) The originals of Dr. Johnson's three letters to Mr. Baretto, which are among the very best he ever wrote, were communicated to the proprietors of that instructive and elegant monthly miscellany, “The European Magazine,” in which they first appeared.

a proof of unwillingness to do much, even where there is a necessity of doing something. Yet it must be remembered, that he who continues the same course of life in the same place, will have little to tell. One week and one year are very like one another. The silent changes made by him are not always perceived ; and if they are not perceived, cannot be recounted. I have risen and lain down, talked and mused, while you have roved over a considerable part of Europe ; yet I have not envied my Baretti any of his pleasures, though, perhaps, I have envied others his company : and I am glad to have other nations made acquainted with the character of the English, by a traveller who has so nicely inspected our manners, and so successfully studied our literature. I received your kind letter from Falmouth, in which you gave me notice of your departure for Lisbon ; and another from Lisbon, in which you told me that you were to leave Portugal in a few days. To either of these how could any answer be returned ? I have had a third from Turin, complaining that I have not answered the former. Your English style still continues in its purity and vigour. With vigour your genius will supply it ; but its purity must be continued by close attention. To use two languages familiarly, and without contaminating one by the other, is very difficult : and to use more than two, is hardly to be hoped. The praises which some have received for their multiplicity of languages, may be sufficient to excite industry, but can hardly generate confidence.

“ I know not whether I can heartily rejoice at the kind reception which you have found, or at the popularity to which you are exalted. I am willing that your merit should be distinguished ; but cannot wish that your affections may be gained. I would have you happy wherever you are : yet I would have you wish to return to England. If ever you visit us again, you will find the kindness of your friends undiminished.

To tell you how many inquiries are made after you, would be tedious, or if not tedious, would be vain ; because you may be told in a very few words, that all who knew you wish you well ; and that all that you embraced at your departure, will caress you at your return : therefore do not let Italian academicians nor Italian ladies drive us from your thoughts. You may find among us what you will leave behind, soft smiles and easy sonnets. Yet I shall not wonder if all our invitations should be rejected : for there is a pleasure in being considerable at home, which is not easily resisted.

“ By conducting Mr. Southwell ⁽¹⁾ to Venice, you fulfilled, I know, the original contract : yet I would wish you not wholly to lose him from your notice, but to recommend him to such acquaintance as may best secure him from suffering by his own follies, and to take such general care both of his safety and his interest as may come within your power. His relations will thank you for any such gratuitous attention : at least, they will not blame you for any evil that may happen, whether they thank you or not for any good.

“ You know that we have a new king and a new parliament. Of the new parliament Fitzherbert is a member. We were so weary of our old king, that we are much pleased with his successor ; of whom we are so much inclined to hope great things, that most of us begin already to believe them. The young man is hitherto blameless ; but it would be unreasonable to expect much from the immaturity of juvenile years, and the ignorance of princely education. He has been long in the hands of the Scots, and has already favoured them more than the English will contentedly endure. But, perhaps, he scarcely knows whom he has distinguished, or whom he has disgusted.

(1) Probably the Hon. Thomas Arthur Southwell, afterwards second Viscount Southwell, who was born in 1742, and succeeded his father in 1780. — C.

“The artists have instituted a yearly Exhibition of pictures and statues, in imitation, as I am told, of foreign academies. This year was the second Exhibition. They please themselves much with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English school will rise in reputation. Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands, which he deserves, among other excellencies, by retaining his kindness for Baretti. This Exhibition has filled the heads of the artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious, since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time, — of that time which never can return.”⁽¹⁾

“I know my Baretti will not be satisfied with a

(1) Of the beauties of painting, notwithstanding the many eulogiums on that art which, after the commencement of his friendship with Sir Joshua Reynolds, he inserted in his writings, Johnson had not the least conception; and the notice of this defect led me to mention the following fact. One evening, at the club, I came in with a small roll of prints, which, in the afternoon, I had picked up: I think they were landscapes of Perelle, and laying it down with my hat, Johnson's curiosity prompted him to take it up and unroll it: he viewed the prints severally with great attention, and asked me what sort of pleasure such things could afford me: I replied that, as representations of nature, containing an assemblage of such particulars as render rural scenes delightful, they presented to my mind the objects themselves, and that my imagination realised the prospect before me. He said, that was more than his would do, for that in his whole life he was never capable of discerning the least resemblance of any kind between a picture and the subject it was intended to represent. To the delights of music, he was equally insensible: neither voice nor instrument, nor the harmony of concordant sounds, had power over his affections, or even to engage his attention. Of music in general, he has been heard to say, “it excites in my mind no ideas, and hinders me from contemplating my own;” and of a fine singer, or instrumental performer, that “he had the merit of a Canary-bird.” Not that his hearing was so defective as to account for this insensibility, but he laboured under the misfortune which he has noted in the Life of Barretier, and is common to more persons than in this musical age are willing to confess it, of wanting that additional sense or faculty, which renders music grateful to the human ear. — HAWKINS.

letter in which I give him no account of myself: yet what account shall I give him? I have not, since the day of our separation, suffered or done any thing considerable. The only change in my way of life is, that I have frequented the theatre more than in former seasons. But I have gone thither only to escape from myself. We have had many new farces, and the comedy called 'The Jealous Wife,' (1) which, though not written with much genius, was yet so well adapted to the stage, and so well exhibited by the actors, that it was crowded for near twenty nights. I am digressing from myself to the playhouse; but a barren plan must be filled with episodes. Of myself I have nothing to say, but that I have hitherto lived without the concurrence of my own judgment; yet I continue to flatter myself, that, when you return, you will find me mended. I do not wonder that, where the monastic life is permitted, every order finds votaries, and every monastery inhabitants. Men will submit to any rule, by which they may be exempted from the tyranny of caprice and of chance. They are glad to supply by external authority their own want of constancy and resolution, and court the government of others, when long experience has convinced them of their own inability to govern themselves. If I were to visit Italy, my curiosity would be more attracted by convents than by palaces; though I am afraid that I should find expectation in both places equally disappointed, and life in both places supported with impatience and quitted with reluctance. That it must be so soon quitted, is a powerful remedy against impatience; but what shall free us from reluctance? Those who have endeavoured to teach us to die well, have taught few to die willingly:

(1) [Colman's comedy of the Jealous Wife came out in January, 1761. The characters of Major and Mrs. Oakly were performed by Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Clive was the Lady Freeloze.]

yet I cannot but hope that a good life might end at last in a contented death.

“ You see to what a train of thought I am drawn by the mention of myself. Let me now turn my attention upon you. I hope you take care to keep an exact journal, and to register all occurrences and observations; for your friends here expect such a book of travels as has not been often seen. You have given us good specimens in your letters from Lisbon. I wish you had staid longer in Spain, for no country is less known to the rest of Europe; but the quickness of your discernment must make amends for the celerity of your motions. He that knows which way to direct his view, sees much in a little time.

“ Write to me very often, and I will not neglect to write to you; and I may, perhaps, in time, get something to write: at least, you will know by my letters, whatever else they may have or want, that I continue to be, your most affectionate friend,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

In 1762 he wrote for the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, rector of Bradley in Derbyshire, in a strain of very courtly elegance, a Dedication to the King* of that gentleman's work, entitled “ A complete System of Astronomical Chronology, unfolding the Scriptures.” He had certainly looked at this work before it was printed; for the concluding paragraph is undoubtedly of his composition, of which let my readers judge:—

“ Thus have I endeavoured to free religion and history from the darkness of a disputed and uncertain chronology; from difficulties which have hitherto appeared insuperable, and darkness which no luminary of learning has hitherto been able to dissipate. I have

established the truth of the Mosaical account, by evidence which no transcription can corrupt, no negligence can lose, and no interest can pervert. I have shewn that the universe bears witness to the inspiration of its historian, by the revolution of its orbs and the succession of its seasons ; *that the stars in their courses fight against* incredulity, that the works of God give hourly confirmation to the *law*, the *prophets*, and the *gospel*, of which *one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another* ; and that the validity of the sacred writings never can be denied, while the moon shall increase and wane, and the sun shall know his going down."

He this year wrote also the Dedication † to the Earl of Middlesex of Mrs. Lennox's "Female Quixote," and the Preface to the "Catalogue of the Artists' Exhibition." †

The following letter, which, on account of its intrinsic merit, it would have been unjust both to Johnson and the public to have withheld, was obtained for me by the solicitation of my friend Mr. Seward :—

LETTER 78. TO DR. (NOW SIR GEORGE)
STAUNTON. (1)

"June 1. 1762.

"DEAR SIR, — I make haste to answer your kind letter, in hope of hearing again from you before you

(1) George Leonard Staunton was born in Galway, in Ireland, in 1737, and having adopted the profession of medicine, which he studied in France, he came to London in 1760, where he wrote for the periodical publications of the day, and formed an acquaintance with Dr. Johnson. In 1762 he went to the West Indies, where he practised as a physician for a short time, and by that and some civil offices, accumulated a competent fortune, which he invested in estates in the island of Granada. He

leave us. I cannot but regret that a man of your qualifications should find it necessary to seek an establishment in Guadaloupe, which if a peace should restore to the French, I shall think it some alleviation of the loss, that it must restore likewise Dr. Staunton to the English.

“ It is a melancholy consideration, that so much of our time is necessarily to be spent upon the care of living, and that we can seldom obtain ease in one respect but by resigning it in another ; yet I suppose we are by this dispensation not less happy in the whole, than if the spontaneous bounty of Nature poured all that we want into our hands. A few, if they were left thus to themselves, would, perhaps, spend their time in laudable pursuits ; but the greater part would prey upon the quiet of each other, or, in the want of other objects, would prey upon themselves.

“ This, however, is our condition, which we must improve and solace as we can : and though we cannot choose always our place of residence, we may in every place find rational amusements, and possess in every place the comforts of piety and a pure conscience.

“ In America there is little to be observed, except

returned to England in 1770 ; but, in 1772, again went to Granada, where he was appointed attorney-general, and made the valuable acquaintance of Lord Macartney, who became governor of that island in 1774. By the capture of Granada by the French, in 1779, Lord Macartney lost his government, and Staunton his property. He returned to England with, it is supposed, little of the wreck of his fortune. He, however, had acquired Lord Macartney's friendship, and he accompanied his lordship to Madras in 1781 ; and for his distinguished services during his official residence there had a pension of 500*l.* per annum settled on him, in 1784, by the East India Company, and was created a baronet. When Lord Macartney was selected for the celebrated embassy to China, Sir George was named to accompany him as secretary and minister plenipotentiary. His splendid account of that embassy is well known. He died in London, January 14. 1801, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. — C.

natural curiosities. The new world must have many vegetables and animals with which philosophers are but little acquainted. I hope you will furnish yourself with some books of natural history, and some glasses and other instruments of observation. Trust as little as you can to report ; examine all you can by your own senses. I do not doubt but you will be able to add much to knowledge, and, perhaps, to medicine. Wild nations trust to simples ; and, perhaps, the Peruvian bark is not the only specific which those extensive regions may afford us.

“ Wherever you are, and whatever be your fortune, be certain, dear Sir, that you carry with you my kind wishes ; and that whether you return hither, or stay in the other hemisphere, to hear that you are happy will give pleasure to, Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

A lady having at this time solicited him to obtain the Archbishop of Canterbury's patronage to have her son sent to the University,—one of those solicitations which are too frequent, where people, anxious for a particular object, do not consider propriety, or the opportunity which the persons whom they solicit have to assist them, — he wrote to her the following answer ; with a copy of which I am favoured by the Rev. Dr. Farmer ⁽¹⁾, Master of Emanuel College, Cambridge.

(1) [Dr. Richard Farmer was born at Leicester, in 1735, and educated at Emanuel College, Cambridge, of which he became Master in 1775. In 1766 he published his celebrated “ Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare ; ” a work by which, as Dr. Warton emphatically expresses it, “ an end is put for ever to the dispute concerning the Learning of Shakspeare.” He died Sept. 6. 1797.]

LETTER 79. TO MRS. ———.

“ June 8. 1762.

“ MADAM, — I hope you will believe that my delay in answering your letter could proceed only from my unwillingness to destroy any hope that you had formed. Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords: but, like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain; and expectations improperly indulged, must end in disappointment. If it be asked, what is the improper expectation which it is dangerous to indulge, experience will quickly answer, that it is such expectation as is dictated, not by reason, but by desire; expectation raised, not by the common occurrences of life, but by the wants of the expectant; an expectation that requires the common course of things to be changed, and the general rules of action to be broken.

“ When you made your request to me, you should have considered, Madam, what you were asking. You ask me to solicit a great man, to whom I never spoke, for a young person whom I had never seen, upon a supposition which I had no means of knowing to be true. There is no reason why, amongst all the great, I should choose to supplicate the Archbishop, nor why, among all the possible objects of his bounty, the Archbishop should choose your son. I know, Madam, how unwillingly conviction is admitted, when interest opposes it; but surely, Madam, you must allow, that there is no reason why that should be done by me, which every other man may do with equal reason, and which, indeed, no man can do properly, without some very particular relation both to the Archbishop and to you. If I could help you in this exigence by any proper means, it would give me pleasure; but this proposal is so very remote from usual methods, that I can-

not comply with it, but at the risk of such answer and suspicions as I believe you do not wish me to undergo.

“ I have seen your son this morning ; he seems a pretty youth, and will, perhaps, find some better friend than I can procure him ; but though he should at last miss the university, he may still be wise, useful, and happy. I am, Madam, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 80. TO MR. JOSEPH BARETTI,

At Milan.

“ London, July 20. 1762.

“ SIR, — However justly you may accuse me for want of punctuality in correspondence, I am not so far lost in negligence as to omit the opportunity of writing to you, which Mr. Beauclerk’s passage through Milan affords me.

“ I suppose you received the *Idlers*, and I intend that you shall soon receive *Shakspeare*, that you may explain his works to the ladies of Italy, and tell them the story of the editor, among the other strange narratives with which your long residence in this unknown region has supplied you.

“ As you have now been long away, I suppose your curiosity may pant for some news of your old friends. Miss Williams and I live much as we did. Miss Cotterel still continues to cling to Mrs. Porter ⁽¹⁾, and Charlotte is now big of the fourth child. Mr. Reynolds gets six thousands a year. Levet is lately married, not without much suspicion that he has been wretchedly cheated in his match. ⁽²⁾ Mr. Chambers is

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 291. n. Miss Charlotte Cotterel appears to have married the Rev. John Lewis, who became Dean of Ossory in 1755. — C.

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 290. n. “ Levet married, when he was near sixty, a woman of the town, who had persuaded him (notwithstanding their place of congress was a small coal-shed

gone this day, for the first time, the circuit with the Judges. Mr. Richardson ⁽¹⁾ is dead of an apoplexy, and his second daughter ⁽²⁾ has married a merchant.

“My vanity, or my kindness, makes me flatter myself, that you would rather hear of me than of those whom I have mentioned; but of myself I have very little which I care to tell. Last winter I went down to my native town, where I found the streets much narrower and shorter than I thought I had left them, inhabited by a new race of people, to whom I was very little known. My play-fellows were grown old, and forced me to suspect that I was no longer young. My only remaining friend has changed his principles, and was become the tool of the predominant faction. My daughter-in-law, from whom I expected most, and whom I met with sincere benevolence, has lost the beauty and gaiety of youth, without having gained much of the wisdom of age. I wandered about for five days, and took the first convenient opportunity of returning to a place, where, if there is not much happiness, there is, at least, such a diversity of good and evil, that slight vexations do not fix upon the heart.

in Fetter Lane) that she was nearly related to a man of fortune, but was kept by him out of large possessions. Johnson used to say that, compared with the marvels of this transaction, the Arabian Nights seemed familiar occurrences. Never was hero more completely duped. He had not been married four months before a writ was taken out against him, for debts contracted by his wife. He was secreted, and his friend then procured him a protection from a foreign minister. In a short time afterwards she ran away from him, and was tried for picking pockets at the Old Bailey. She pleaded her own cause, and was acquitted; a separation took place; and Johnson then took Levett home, where he continued till his death.” — STEEVENS.]

(1) Samuel Richardson, the author of *Clarissa*, &c. died July 4. 1761, aged 72. — M.

(2) Martha, his chief amanuensis, married Edward Bridgen, April, 1762. — C.

“ I think in a few weeks to try another excursion ; though to what end ? Let me know, my Baretti, what has been the result of your return to your own country : whether time has made any alteration for the better, and whether, when the first raptures of salutation were over, you did not find your thoughts confessed their disappointment.

“ Moral sentences appear ostentatious and tumid, when they have no greater occasions than the journey of a wit to his own town : yet such pleasures and such pains make up the general mass of life ; and as nothing is little to him that feels it with great sensibility, a mind able to see common incidents in their real state, is disposed by very common incidents to very serious contemplations. Let us trust that a time will come, when the present moment shall be no longer irksome ; when we shall not borrow all our happiness from hope, which at last is to end in disappointment.

“ I beg that you will shew Mr. Beauclerk all the civilities which you have in your power ; for he has always been kind to me.

“ I have lately seen Mr. Stratico, Professor of Padua, who has told me of your quarrel with an Abbot of the Celestine order ; but had not the particulars very ready in his memory. When you write to Mr. Marsili, let him know that I remember him with kindness.

“ May you, my Baretti, be very happy at Milan, or some other place nearer to, Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

The accession of George the Third to the throne of these kingdoms, opened a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit, who had been honoured with no mark of royal favour in the preceding reign. His present Majesty's education in this

country, as well as his taste and beneficence, prompted him to be the patron of science and the arts; and early this year Johnson having been represented to him as a very learned and good man, without any certain provision, his Majesty was pleased to grant him a pension of three hundred pounds a year. The Earl of Bute, who was then Prime Minister, had the honour to announce this instance of his Sovereign's bounty, concerning which, many and various stories, all equally erroneous, have been propagated; maliciously representing it as a political bribe to Johnson, to desert his avowed principles, and become the tool of a government which he held to be founded in usurpation. I have taken care to have it in my power to refute them from the most authentic information. Lord Bute told me, that Mr. Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, was the person who first mentioned this subject to him. Lord Loughborough told me, that the pension was granted to Johnson solely as the reward of his literary merit, without any stipulation whatever, or even tacit understanding that he should write for administration. His Lordship added, that he was confident the political tracts which Johnson afterwards did write, as they were entirely consonant with his own opinions, would have been written by him, though no pension had been granted to him. (1)

(1) This seems hardly consistent with some admitted facts. One, at least, of these pamphlets, *The Patriot*, was "called for" by his political friends (see *post*, letter to Mr. Boswell, Nov. 26. 1774); and two of the others were (see *post*, letter to Langton, March 20. 1771, and March 21. 1775) submitted to the revision and correction of ministers. — C.

Mr. Thomas Sheridan and Mr. Murphy, who then lived a good deal both with him and Mr. Wedderburne, told me, that they previously talked with Johnson upon this matter, and that it was perfectly understood by all parties that the pension was merely honorary. Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, that Johnson called on him after his Majesty's intention had been notified to him, and said he wished to consult his friends as to the propriety of his accepting this mark of the royal favour, after the definitions which he had given in his Dictionary of *pension* and *pensioners*. He said he should not have Sir Joshua's answer till next day, when he would call again, and desired he might think of it. Sir Joshua answered that he was clear to give his opinion then, that there could be no objection to his receiving from the King a reward for literary merit; and that certainly the definitions in his Dictionary were not applicable to him. Johnson, it should seem, was satisfied, for he did not call again till he had accepted the pension, and had waited on Lord Bute to thank him. He then told Sir Joshua that Lord Bute said to him expressly, "It is not given you for any thing you are to do, but for what you have done." (1) His Lordship, he said, behaved in the handsomest manner. He repeated the words twice, that he might be sure Johnson heard them, and thus set his mind perfectly at ease. This nobleman, who has been so virulently

(1) This was said by Lord Bute, as Dr. Burney was informed by Johnson himself, in answer to a question which he put, previously to his acceptance of the intended bounty: — "Pray, my lord, what am I expected to do for this pension?" — M.

abused, acted with great honour in this instance, and displayed a mind truly liberal. A minister of a more narrow and selfish disposition would have availed himself of such an opportunity to fix an implied obligation on a man of Johnson's powerful talents to give him his support. (1)

Mr. Murphy (2) and the late Mr. Sheridan severally contended for the distinction of having been the first who mentioned to Mr. Wedderburne that Johnson ought to have a pension. When I spoke of this to Lord Loughborough, wishing to know if

(1) Such favours are never conferred under *express* conditions of future servility, — the phrases used on this occasion have been employed in all similar cases, and they are here insisted on by Mr. Boswell, in order to reconcile Johnson's conduct on this occasion, with his definitions of *pension* and *pensioner*. — C.

(2) This is not correct. Mr. Murphy did not "contest *this* distinction" with Mr. Sheridan. He claimed, we see, not the first suggestion *to* Lord Loughborough, but the first notice *from* his lordship to Johnson. — C. — [Mr. Murphy's words are: — "Lord Loughborough, who, perhaps, was originally a mover in the business, had authority to mention it. He was well acquainted with Johnson; but, having heard much of his independent spirit, and of the downfall of Osborne, the bookseller, he did not know but his benevolence might be rewarded with a folio on his head. He desired the author of these memoirs to undertake the task. This writer thought the opportunity of doing so much good the most happy incident in his life. He went, without delay, to the chambers in the Inner Temple Lane, which, in fact, were the abode of wretchedness. By slow and studied approaches the message was disclosed. Johnson made a long pause: he asked if it was seriously intended? He fell into a profound meditation, and his own definition of a pensioner occurred to him. He was told, 'that he, at least, did not come within the definition.' He desired to meet next day, and dine at the Mitre Tavern. At that meeting he gave up all his scruples. On the following day Lord Loughborough conducted him to the Earl of Bute." — *Essay*, p. 92.]

he recollected the prime mover in the business, he said, "All his friends assisted:" and when I told him that Mr. Sheridan strenuously asserted his claim to it, his Lordship said, "He rang the bell." And it is but just to add, that Mr. Sheridan told me, that when he communicated to Dr. Johnson that a pension was to be granted him, he replied in a fervour of gratitude, "The English language does not afford me terms adequate to my feelings on this occasion. I must have recourse to the French. I am *pénétré* with his Majesty's goodness." When I repeated this to Dr. Johnson, he did not contradict it.

His definitions of *pension* and *pensioner*, partly founded on the satirical verses of Pope (¹), which he quotes, may be generally true; and yet every body must allow, that there may be, and have been, instances of pensions given and received upon liberal and honourable terms. Thus, then, it is clear, that there was nothing inconsistent or humiliating in Johnson's accepting of a pension so unconditionally and so honourably offered to him.

But I shall not detain my readers longer by any words of my own, on a subject on which I am happily enabled, by the favour of the Earl of Bute, to present them with what Johnson himself wrote; his Lordship having been pleased to communicate to me a copy of the following letter to his late father, which

(1) ["The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
One knighted Blackmore, and one *pension'd* Quarles."]]

does great honour both to the writer, and to the noble person to whom it is addressed : —

LETTER 81. TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BUTE.

“ July 20. 1762.

“ MY LORD,—When the bills ⁽¹⁾ were yesterday delivered to me by Mr. Wedderburne, I was informed by him of the future favours which his Majesty has, by your Lordship’s recommendation, been induced to intend for me.

“ Bounty always receives part of its value from the manner in which it is bestowed : your Lordship’s kindness includes every circumstance that can gratify delicacy, or enforce obligation. You have conferred your favours on a man who has neither alliance nor interest, who has not merited them by services, nor courted them by officiousness ; you have spared him the shame of solicitation, and the anxiety of suspense.

“ What has been thus elegantly given, will, I hope, not be reproachfully enjoyed ; I shall endeavour to give your Lordship the only recompence which generosity desires,—the gratification of finding that your benefits are not improperly bestowed. I am, my Lord, your Lordship’s most obliged, most obedient, and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.” ⁽²⁾

(1) It does not appear what *bills* these were ; evidently something distinct from the pension, yet probably of the same nature, as the words “*future favours*” seem to imply that there had been some *present* favour. — C.

(2) The addition of three hundred pounds a year, to what Johnson was able to earn by the ordinary exercise of his talents, raised him to a state of comparative affluence, and afforded him the means of assisting many whose real or pretended wants had formerly excited his compassion. He now practised a rule which he often recommended to his friends, always to go abroad with some loose money to give to beggars, imitating therein,

This year his friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, paid a visit of some weeks to his native country Devonshire, in which he was accompanied by Johnson, who was much pleased with this jaunt, and declared he had derived from it a great accession of new ideas. He was entertained at the seats of several noblemen and gentlemen in the west of England (1); but the greatest part of this time was passed at Plymouth, where the magnificence of the navy, the ship-building and all its circumstances, afforded him

though certainly without intending it, that good but weak man, old Mr. Whiston, whom I have seen distributing, in the streets, money to beggars on each hand of him, till his pocket was nearly exhausted. — HAWKINS. He loved the poor as I never yet saw any one else do, with an earnest desire to make them happy. What signifies, says some one, giving halfpence to common beggars? they only lay it out in gin or tobacco. “And why (says Johnson) should they be denied such sweeteners of their existence? it is surely very savage to refuse them every possible avenue to pleasure, reckoned too coarse for our own acceptance. Life is a pill which none of us can bear to swallow without gilding; yet for the poor we delight in stripping it still barer, and are not ashamed to show even visible displeasure, if ever the bitter taste is taken from their mouths.” In pursuance of these principles he nursed whole nests of people in his house, where the lame, the blind, the sick, and the sorrowful found a sure retreat from all the evils whence his little income could secure them. — PIOZZI. When visiting Lichfield, towards the latter part of his life, he was accustomed, on his arrival, to deposit with Miss Porter as much cash as would pay his expenses back to London. He could not trust himself with his own money, as he felt himself unable to resist the importunity of the numerous claimants on his benevolence. — HARWOOD.

(1) At one of these seats Dr. Amyat, physician in London, told me he happened to meet him. In order to amuse him till dinner should be ready, he was taken out to walk in the garden. The master of the house, thinking it proper to introduce something scientific into the conversation, addressed him thus: “Are you a botanist, Dr. Johnson?” — “No, Sir (answered Johnson), I am not a botanist; and, (alluding, no doubt, to his near-sightedness,) should I wish to become a botanist, I must first turn myself into a reptile.”

a grand subject of contemplation. The Commissioner of the Dock-yard [Captain Francis Rogers] paid him the compliment of ordering the yacht to convey him and his friend to the Eddystone, to which they accordingly sailed. But the weather was so tempestuous that they could not land.

Reynolds and he were at this time the guests of Dr. Mudge, the celebrated surgeon, and now physician of that place, not more distinguished for quickness of parts and variety of knowledge, than loved and esteemed for his amiable manners ⁽¹⁾; and here Johnson formed an acquaintance with Dr. Mudge's father ⁽²⁾, that very eminent divine, the Rev. Zachariah Mudge, Prebendary of Exeter, who was idolised in the west, both for his excellence as a preacher and the uniform perfect propriety of his private conduct. He preached a sermon purposely that Johnson might hear him; and we shall see afterwards that Johnson honoured his memory by drawing his character. ⁽³⁾ While Johnson was at Plymouth, he saw a great many of its inhabitants, and was not sparing of his very entertaining convers-

(1) [Dr. John Mudge died in 1791. He was the father of Colonel William Mudge, distinguished by his trigonometrical survey of England and Wales, carried on by order of the Ordnance.]

(2) Thomas Mudge, the celebrated watch-maker in Fleet Street, who made considerable improvements in time-keepers, and wrote several pamphlets on that subject, was another son of Mr. Zachariah Mudge. — HALL. [He died in 1794.]

(3) [See *post*, March, 1781. "I have heard Sir Joshua declare, that Mr. Z. Mudge was, in his opinion, the wisest man he ever met with, and that he had intended to have republished his Sermons, and written a sketch of his life and character." — NORTHCOTE.]

ation. It was here that he made that frank and truly original confession, that "ignorance, pure ignorance," was the cause of a wrong definition in his Dictionary of the word *pastern*, to the no small surprise of the lady who put the question to him; who having the most profound reverence for his character, so as almost to suppose him endowed with infallibility, expected to hear an explanation (of what, to be sure, seemed strange to a common reader,) drawn from some deep-learned source with which she was unacquainted.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom I was obliged for my information concerning this excursion, mentions a very characteristical anecdote of Johnson while at Plymouth. Having observed, that in consequence of the Dock-yard a new town had arisen about two miles off as a rival to the old; and knowing from his sagacity, and just observation of human nature, that it is certain, if a man hates at all, he will hate his next neighbour; he concluded that this new and rising town could not but excite the envy and jealousy of the old, in which conjecture he was very soon confirmed; he therefore set himself resolutely on the side of the old town, the *established* town, in which his lot was cast, considering it as a kind of duty to *stand by* it. He accordingly entered warmly into its interests, and upon every occasion talked of the *Dockers*, as the inhabitants of the new town were called, as upstarts and aliens. Plymouth is very plentifully supplied with water by a river brought into it from a great distance, which is so abundant that it runs to waste in the town. The Dock, or

New-town, being totally destitute of water, petitioned Plymouth that a small portion of the conduit might be permitted to go to them, and this was now under consideration. Johnson, affecting to entertain the passions of the place, was violent in opposition; and half-laughing at himself for his pretended zeal, where he had no concern, exclaimed, “No, no! I am against the *Dockers*; I am a Plymouth-man. Rogues! let them die of thirst. They shall not have a drop!” (1)

Lord Macartney obligingly favoured me with a copy of the following letter, in his own hand-writing, from the original, which was found, by the present Earl of Bute, among his father’s papers.

LETTER 82. TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BUTE.

“ Temple Lane, Nov. 3. 1762.

“ MY LORD,—That generosity, by which I was recommended to the favour of his Majesty, will not be offended at a solicitation necessary to make that favour permanent and effectual.

(1) A friend of mine once heard him, during this visit, exclaim with the utmost vehemence, “ I HATE a Docker.” — BLAKEWAY. This feud happily subsided, but the *Dockers* continued to our own days dissatisfied with being considered as a mere appendage to *Plymouth*; and they solicited and obtained, in 1823, the king’s royal licence that the town of *Plymouth-dock* should be hereafter called *Devonport*—a name singularly ill-chosen on the part of the *Dockers*—for it happens, ludicrously enough, that the *port* of *Plymouth* is wholly within the county of *Devon*; while *Hamoaze*, the port of *Dock*, is equally in *Devon* and *Cornwall*. So that the *Dockers* have assumed a name which could properly belong only to the antagonist town; and, to crown the blunder, the *separate* name was given just when the increase of buildings had completed the *union* of the two towns. — CROKER.

“ The pension appointed to be paid me at Michaelmas I have not received, and know not where or from whom I am to ask it. I beg, therefore, that your Lordship will be pleased to supply Mr. Wedderburne with such directions as may be necessary, which, I believe, his friendship will make him think it no trouble to convey to me.

“ To interrupt your Lordship, at a time like this, with such petty difficulties, is improper and unseasonable ; but your knowledge of the world has long since taught you, that every man’s affairs, however little, are important to himself. Every man hopes that he shall escape neglect ; and, with reason, may every man, whose vices do not preclude his claim, expect favour from that beneficence which has been extended to, my Lord, your Lordship’s most obliged, and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 83. TO MR. JOSEPH BARETTI,

At Milan.

“ London, Dec. 21. 1762.

“ SIR,—You are not to suppose, with all your conviction of my idleness, that I have passed all this time without writing to my Baretti. I gave a letter to Mr. Beauclerk, who in my opinion, and in his own, was hastening to Naples for the recovery of his health ; but he has stopped at Paris, and I know not when he will proceed. Langton is with him.

“ I will not trouble you with speculations about peace and war. The good or ill success of battles and embassies extends itself to a very small part of domestic life : we all have good and evil, which we feel more sensibly than our petty part of public miscarriage or prosperity. I am sorry for your disappointment, with which you seem more touched than I should expect a man of your resolution and experience to have been, did I not know that general truths are seldom applied to particular occasions ; and that the fallacy of our self-

love extends itself as wide as our interest or affections. Every man believes that mistresses are unfaithful, and patrons capricious ; but he excepts his own mistress, and his own patron. We have all learned that greatness is negligent and contemptuous, and that in courts life is often languished away in ungratified expectation ; but he that approaches greatness, or glitters in a court, imagines that destiny has at last exempted him from the common lot.

“ Do not let such evils overwhelm you as thousands have suffered, and thousands have surmounted ; but turn your thoughts with vigour to some other plan of life, and keep always in your mind, that, with due submission to Providence, a man of genius has been seldom ruined but by himself. Your patron’s weakness or insensibility will finally do you little hurt, if he is not assisted by your own passions. Of your love I know not the propriety, nor can estimate the power ; but in love, as in every other passion of which hope is the essence, we ought always to remember the uncertainty of events. There is, indeed, nothing that so much seduces reason from vigilance, as the thought of passing life with an amiable woman ; and if all would happen that a lover fancies, I know not what other terrestrial happiness would deserve pursuit. But love and marriage are different states. Those who are to suffer the evils together, and to suffer often for the sake of one another, soon lose that tenderness of look, and that benevolence of mind, which arose from the participation of unmingled pleasure and successive amusement. A woman, we are sure, will not be always fair ; we are not sure she will always be virtuous : and man cannot retain through life that respect and assiduity by which he pleases for a day or for a month. I do not, however, pretend to have discovered that life has any thing more to be desired than a prudent and virtuous marriage ; therefore know not what counsel to give you.

“If you can quit your imagination of love and greatness, and leave your hopes of preferment and bridal raptures to try once more the fortune of literature and industry, the way through France is now open. We flatter ourselves that we shall cultivate, with great diligence, the arts of peace; and every man will be welcome among us who can teach us any thing we do not know. For your part, you will find all your old friends willing to receive you.

“Reynolds still continues to increase in reputation and in riches. Miss Williams, who very much loves you, goes on in the old way. Miss Cotterel is still with Mrs. Porter. Miss Charlotte is married to Dean Lewis, and has three children. Mr. Levet has married a street-walker. But the gazette of my narration must now arrive to tell you, that Bathurst went physician to the army, and died at the Havannah.

“I know not whether I have not sent you word that Huggins⁽¹⁾ and Richardson are both dead. When we see our enemies and friends gliding away before us, let

(1) Huggins, the translator of Ariosto. His enmity to Baretti and Johnson will be explained by the following extract from a MS. letter of Dr. Warton to his brother, dated Winslade, April 28. 1755: —

“He (Huggins) abuses Baretti infernally, and says that he one day lent Baretti a *gold* watch and could never get it afterwards; that after many excuses Baretti skulked, and then got *Johnson* to write to Mr. Huggins a suppliant letter; that this letter stopped Huggins awhile, while Baretti got a *protection* from the Sardinian ambassador; and that, at last, with great difficulty, the watch was got from a pawnbroker's, to whom Baretti had sold it. What a strange story, and how difficult to be believed! Huggins wanted to get an approbation of his translation from Johnson; but Johnson would not, though Huggins says 't was only to get money from him. To crown all, he says that Baretti wanted to poison Croker. By some means or other, Johnson must know this story of Huggins.”

Baretti had been employed by Huggins to revise his translation. The person whom Huggins accused Baretti of an attempt to poison, was the Rev. Temple Henry Croker, the author of several works, and amongst others of a translation of Ariosto's *Orlando*, published in 1755, and of his *Satires*, in 1759. — C.

us not forget that we are subject to the general law of mortality, and shall soon be where our doom will be fixed for ever. I pray God to bless you, and am, Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.

“Write soon.”

LETTER 84. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER,
In Lichfield.

“April 12. 1763.

“MY DEAR, — The newspaper has informed me of the death of Captain Porter. I know not what to say to you, condolent or consolatory, beyond the common considerations which I suppose you have proposed to others, and know how to apply to yourself. In all afflictions the first relief is to be asked of God.

“I wish to be informed in what condition your brother’s death has left your fortune; if he has bequeathed you competence or plenty, I shall sincerely rejoice; if you are in any distress or difficulty, I will endeavour to make what I have, or what I can get, sufficient for us both. I am, Madam, yours affectionately,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

In 1763 he furnished to “The Poetical Calendar,” published by Fawkes and Woty, a character of Collins*, which he afterwards ingrafted into his entire Life of that admirable poet, in the collection of Lives which he wrote for the body of English poetry, formed and published by the booksellers of London. His account of the melancholy depression with which Collins was severely afflicted, and which brought him to his grave, is, I think, one of the most tender and interesting passages in the whole series

of his writings. He also favoured Mr. Hoole with the Dedication of his translation of Tasso to the Queen*, which is so happily conceived and elegantly expressed, that I cannot but point it out to the peculiar notice of my readers.

TO THE QUEEN.

“MADAM,—To approach the high and illustrious has been in all ages the privilege of poets; and though translators cannot justly claim the same honour, yet they naturally follow their authors as attendants; and I hope that in return for having enabled Tasso to diffuse his fame through the British dominions, I may be introduced by him to the presence of your Majesty.

“Tasso has a peculiar claim to your Majesty’s favour, as follower and panegyrist of the house of Este, which has one common ancestor with the house of Hanover; and in reviewing his life, it is not easy to forbear a wish that he had lived in a happier time, when he might among the descendants of that illustrious family have found a more liberal and potent patronage.

“I cannot but observe, Madam, how unequally reward is proportioned to merit, when I reflect that the happiness which was withheld from Tasso is reserved for me; and that the poem which once hardly procured to its author the countenance of the princes of Ferrara, has attracted to its translator the favourable notice of a British queen.

“Had this been the fate of Tasso, he would have been able to have celebrated the condescension of your Majesty in nobler language, but could not have felt it with more ardent gratitude than, Madam, your Majesty’s most faithful and devoted servant.”

CHAPTER V.

1763.

Boswell becomes acquainted with Johnson.—Derrick.—Mr. Thomas Sheridan.—Mrs. Sheridan.—Mr. Thomas Davies.—Mrs. Davies.—First Interview.—His Dress.—Johnson's Chambers in Temple Lane.—Dr. Blair.—Dr. James Fordyce.—Ossian.—Christopher Smart.—Thomas Johnson, the Equestrian.—Clifton's Eating House.—The Mitre.—Colley Cibber's Odes.—Gray.—Belief in the Appearance of departed Spirits.—Churchill.—Cock-Lane Ghost.—Goldsmith.—Mallet's "Elvira."—Scotch Landlords.—Plan of Study.

THIS is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two and twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman ⁽¹⁾, a

(1) Francis Gentleman was born in 1728, and educated in Dublin. His father was an officer in the army, and he, at the age of fifteen, obtained a commission in the same regiment;

native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of **DICTIONARY JOHNSON!** as he was then generally called ⁽¹⁾; and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet ⁽²⁾, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, — an honour of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, "Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead."

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan ⁽³⁾ was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the

on the reduction, at the peace of 1748, he lost this profession, and adopted that of the stage, both as an author and an actor; in neither of which did he attain any eminence. He died in December, 1784; having, in the later course of his life, experienced "all the hardships of a wandering actor, and all the disappointments of a friendless author." — C.

(1) As great men of antiquity, such as Scipio *Africanus*, had an epithet added to their names, in consequence of some celebrated action, so my illustrious friend was often called **DICTIONARY JOHNSON**, from that wonderful achievement of genius and labour, his "Dictionary of the English Language;" the merit of which I contemplate with more and more admiration. — B. — Boswell himself was at one time anxious to be called *Corsica* Boswell. See *post*, September, 1769. — C.

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 136.]

(3) [Thomas Sheridan, son of the friend of Swift, and father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was born at Quilca, in Ireland, in 1721, and died in 1788.]

English Language and Public Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine." Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him, not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753.⁽¹⁾ And it must

(1) Boswell, in his tenderness to the *amour propre* of Dr. Johnson, cannot bear to admit that Sheridan's *literary* character had any thing to do with the pension, and no doubt he endeavoured to soften Johnson's resentment by giving, as he does in the above passage, this favour a *political* colour; but there

also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Besides, Johnson should have recollected that Mr. Sheridan taught pronunciation to Mr. Alexander Wedderburne, whose sister was married to Sir Harry Erskine, an intimate friend of Lord Bute, who was the favourite of the king; and surely the most outrageous Whig will not maintain, that, whatever ought to be the principle in the disposal of *offices*, a *pension* ought never to be granted from any bias of court connection. Mr. Macklin, indeed, shared with Mr. Sheridan the honour of instructing Mr. Wedderburne ⁽¹⁾; and though it was too late in life

seems no reason to believe that Sheridan's pension was given to him as a sufferer by a playhouse riot. It was probably granted (*et hinc illæ lacrymæ*) on the same motive as Johnson's own, namely, the desire of the King and Lord Bute to distinguish the commencement of the new reign by the patronage of literature. Indeed, this is rendered almost certain by various passages of the letters of Mrs. Sheridan to Mr. Whyte: *e. g.* "London, Nov. 29. 1762.—Mr. Sheridan is now, as I mentioned to you formerly, busied in the English Dictionary, which he is encouraged to pursue with the more alacrity as his Majesty has vouchsafed him such a mark of royal favour. I suppose you have heard that he has granted him a pension of 200*l.* a year, merely as an encouragement to his undertaking, and this without solicitation, which makes it the more valuable."—White's Misc. Nova, p. 104. 107. 111. — CROKER. [Perhaps Johnson may have been a little annoyed at the notion of Sheridan's *Dictionary* being encouraged in the same way in which his own had been rewarded.]

(1) This is an odd coincidence. A *Scotchman* who wishes to learn a pure *English* pronunciation, employs one preceptor who happens to be an *Irishman*, and afterwards *another*, likewise an *Irishman*—and this Irish-taught Scot becomes—and mainly by his oratory—one of the chief ornaments of the English senate, and the first subject in the British empire. — C.

for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburne's instructors, and his own unabating endeavours, that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of the "native wood-note wild," as to mark his country; which, if any Scotchman should affect to forget, I should heartily despise him. Notwithstanding the difficulties which are to be encountered by those who have not had the advantage of an English education, he by degrees formed a mode of speaking, to which Englishmen do not deny the praise of elegance. Hence his distinguished oratory, which he exerted in his own country as an advocate in the Court of Session, and a ruling elder of the *Kirk*, has had its fame and ample reward, in much higher spheres. When I look back on this noble person at Edinburgh, in situations so unworthy of his brilliant powers, and behold LORD LOUGHBOROUGH at London, the change seems almost like one of the metamorphoses in Ovid; and as his two preceptors, by refining his utterance, gave currency to his talents, we may say in the words of that poet, "*Nam vos mutastis.*"

I have dwelt the longer upon this remarkable instance of successful parts and assiduity: because it affords animating encouragement to other gentlemen of North Britain to try their fortunes in the southern part of the island, where they may hope to gratify their utmost ambition; and now that we are one people by the Union, it would surely be illiberal to maintain, that they have not an equal title with

the natives of any other part of his Majesty's dominions.

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added, "However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man." Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. I have no sympathetic feeling with such persevering resentment. It is painful when there is a breach between those who have lived together socially and cordially; and I wonder that there is not, in all such cases, a mutual wish that it should be healed. I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan, was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man. That could not soothe his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe Sheridan, in the *Life of Swift*, which he afterwards published, attempting in the writhings of his resentment to depreciate Johnson, by characterising him as "A writer of gigantic fame, in these days of little men;" that very Johnson whom he once so highly admired and venerated. (1)

(1) Dr. Johnson had depreciated the talents and character of Dr. Swift, not merely in conversation, but in his "*Lives of the*

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. (1) She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled "Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph," contains an excellent moral, while it inculcates a future state of retribution (2); and what it teaches is impressed upon the

Poets." Sheridan, in his "Life of Swift," advocated the cause of the dean, for whom he had a natural and hereditary veneration; and though he observed on Johnson's criticisms and censures with a severity sharpened probably by his personal feelings, he treated him on all other points with moderation and respect. — C.

(1) [See *antè*, p. 124.]

(2) My position has been very well illustrated by Mr. Belsham of Bedford, in his Essay on Dramatic Poetry: —

"The fashionable doctrine (says he) both of moralists and critics in these times is, that virtue and happiness are constant concomitants; and it is regarded as a kind of dramatic impiety to maintain that virtue should not be rewarded, nor vice punished in the last scene of the last act of every tragedy. This conduct in our modern poets is, however, in my opinion, extremely injudicious; for it labours in vain to inculcate a doctrine in theory, which every one knows to be false in fact, viz. that virtue in real life is always productive of happiness; and vice of misery. Thus Congreve concludes the tragedy of 'The Mourning Bride' with the following foolish couplet: —

'For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And, though a late, a sure reward succeeds.'

"When a man eminently virtuous, a Brutus, a Cato, or a Socrates, finally sink under the pressure of accumulated misfortune, we are not only led to entertain a more indignant hatred of vice, than if he rose from his distress, but we are inevitably induced to cherish the sublime idea that a day of future retribution will arrive, when he shall receive not

mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of "heaven's mercy." Johnson paid her this high compliment upon it: "I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much."

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden⁽¹⁾, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary perform-

merely poetical, but real and substantial justice." — *Essays Philosophical, Historical, and Literary*, London, 1791, 8vo., vol. ii. p. 317.

This is well reasoned and well expressed. I wish, indeed, that the ingenious author had not thought it necessary to introduce any *instance* of "a man eminently virtuous;" as he would then have avoided mentioning such a ruffian as Brutus under that description. Mr. Belsham discovers in his "Essays" so much reading and thinking, and good composition, that I regret his not having been fortunate enough to be educated a member of our excellent national establishment. Had he not been nursed in nonconformity, he probably would not have been tainted with those heresies (as I sincerely and on no slight investigation, think them) both in religion and politics, which, while I read, I am sure, with candour, I cannot read without offence.

(1) No. 8. — The very place where I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the illustrious subject of this work, deserves to be particularly marked. I never pass by it without feeling reverence and regret.

ances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated⁽¹⁾ for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday, the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop⁽²⁾; and Mr. Davies

(1) By Churchill, in the *Rosciad*, where, rather in contempt of Davies than out of compliment to his wife, he exclaims,

“ ——— on my life,
That Davies has a very pretty wife.”

Davies's pompous manner of reciting his part, the satirist describes with more force than delicacy: —

“ He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone.”

This sarcasm drove, it is said, (*post*, April 7. 1778,) poor Davies from the stage. — C.

(2) Mr. Murphy, in his “*Essay on the Life and Genius of Dr. Johnson*,” [first published in 1793,] has given an account of this meeting considerably different from mine, I am persuaded without any consciousness of error. His memory, at the end of near thirty years, has undoubtedly deceived him, and he supposes himself to have been present at a scene, which he has probably heard inaccurately described by others. In my note *taken on the very day*, in which I am confident I marked every thing material that passed, no mention is made of this gentle-

having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing toward us, — he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." — "From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the

man; and I am sure, that I should not have omitted one so well known in the literary world. It may easily be imagined that this my first interview with Dr. Johnson, with all its circumstances, made a strong impression on my mind, and would be registered with peculiar attention.

expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country: and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," said he, with a stern look, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. (1) I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtain-

(1) That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, "It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it." Johnson (smiling): "Why, Sir, that is true."—B.—These *sallies* are of too frequent recurrence to allow us to receive Boswell's apologetical assertion that they were *momentary*.—C.

ing his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

“People,” he remarked, “may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.

“In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do every thing for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men’s attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind.”

“Sir, this book (‘The Elements of Criticism⁽¹⁾,’ which he had taken up) is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical.”

Speaking of one ⁽²⁾ who with more than ordinary

(1) By Henry Home, Lord Kames; published in 1762. — C.

(2) Mr. Wilkes, no doubt. Boswell was a friend and, *personally*, an admirer of Wilkes, and therefore concealed the name. — C.

boldness attacked public measures and the royal family, he said, "I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked."

"The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tædium vitæ*. When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country*, he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling."

"Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory. Ridicule has gone down before him, and, I doubt, Derrick is his enemy. (1)

"Derrick may do very well, as long as he can outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over."

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, "Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from."

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I com-

(1) Mr. Sheridan was then reading lectures upon Oratory at Bath, where Derrick was Master of the Ceremonies; or, as the phrase is, KING.

plained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton⁽¹⁾, Wilkes, Churchill, and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1., Inner Temple Lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Rev. Dr. Blair of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to me not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den;" an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair⁽²⁾ had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce.⁽³⁾ At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of Ossian, was at its height.

(1) [Bonnell Thornton, John Wilkes, Charles Churchill the satirist, and Robert Lloyd the poet.]

(2) [Dr. Hugh Blair, the celebrated professor and minister of Edinburgh; born in 1718, died in 1800. The Doctor's "Dissertation on Ossian" appeared in 1762.]

(3) Dr. James Fordyce, the eloquent dissenting minister, author of "Sermons to Young Women," &c., was born at Aberdeen in 1720, and died at Bath in 1796.]

Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a Dissertation, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of Homer and Virgil; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book, when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go."—"Sir,"

said I, "I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me."—I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day.

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a mad-house (1), he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney. — BURNAY. "How does poor Smart do, Sir? is he likely to recover?" JOHNSON. "It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it." BURNAY. "Perhaps, Sir, that may be from want of exercise." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the ale-house; but he was *carried* back

(1) [Smart was born in 1722. He composed, while confined as a lunatic, his "Song to David," a poem which contains some truly sublime verses, and must always, therefore, be considered as one of the greatest curiosities in literature. Being debarred from the use of pen and paper, he indented it on the walls of his cell with a key. He died in 1770.]

again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen: and I have no passion for it."

Johnson continued. "Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labour⁽¹⁾; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it."

"The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, 'Verily they have their reward.'

"The Christian religion has very strong evidences. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, in reasoning *à priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them: but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius, — Dr. Pearson, — and Dr. Clarke."

(1) See *post*, July 30. 1763, an opinion somewhat different.
—C.

Talking of Garrick, he said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

I did not visit him again till Monday, June 13., at which time I recollect no part of his conversation, except that when I told him I had been to see Johnson ride upon three horses, he said, "Such a man, Sir, should be encouraged; for his performances

shew the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shews what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although perhaps he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue." (1)

(1) "In the year 1762 one Johnson, an Irishman, exhibited many feats of activity in horsemanship, and was, it is believed, the first performer, in that time, in or about London. He was an active clever fellow in his way, and seemed to be patronised by Mr. Burke, then a student in the Temple." — Prior's *Life of Burke*, vol. i. p. 124. — C.— [In the *Public Advertiser*, July 25. 1758, this equestrian is thus noticed: — "The famous Thomas Johnson rode round the course on Durham Downs on two horses, with one foot on each saddle, and likewise rode an hundred yards, standing upon his head on the saddle." The following sketch of the latter period of his life, which is taken from *Freeman's Dublin Journal*, Dec. 13. 1785, does not confirm Dr. Johnson's dictum in the text: —

"It is not unworthy of remark, that it falls to the share of those who attain celebrity at one time of life, to experience misery and neglect at another. The fate of *Johnson*, who introduced the largest breed of rams in Ireland, will furnish a singular instance of this. About twenty-six years ago, Johnson was servant to Mr. Bloomfield of Redwood, in the King's County, and, with him, was the first that ever attempted the dexterity in riding, for which he was afterwards so famous, and which gave rise to those numerous troops who have since amused the public under the conduct of Astley, Hughes, Jones, and others. Having, by his feats of horsemanship, secured to himself the sum of 2600*l.* he returned to this kingdom, and commenced farmer, about eighteen years since. The thought about this time struck him of embarking in the smuggling of large rams into Ireland, to the great injury of our natural fleece, and, we may add, the deliciousness of our mutton. The enormous prices he brought at the fair of Ballinaslea for this breed, did not compensate him for some losses he experienced by his itch for smuggling in general; insomuch that, in the year 1779, he was constrained to give up house and residence at Riesk, and being well known to almost every person of consequence in this kingdom, he went about soliciting subscriptions for an 'Improved System of Farming,' which he promised to publish. But this temporary expedient proving unsuccessful, he was reduced to the extreme of poverty, and about nine months since died, for want of the common necessaries of life, in the solitary corner of a cellar in Arran Street. He was a man of strong natural sense and intrepidity; but he became the martyr of his latter projects, without advantage to himself or his country."

A scarce engraving, representing him "*standing on one, two, and three horses, in full speed,*" is in Mr. Upcott's collection.]

He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered, that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. "Poh poh!" said he, with a complacent smile, "never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you."

I had learnt that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre Tavern in Fleet Street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there soon, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards I met him near Temple Bar, about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. "Sir," said he, it is "too late; they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night with all my heart."

A revolution of some importance in my plan of life had just taken place; for instead of procuring a commission in the foot-guards, which was my own inclination, I had, in compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the law, and was soon to set out for Utrecht, to hear the lectures of an excellent civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels. Though very desirous of obtaining Dr. Johnson's advice and instructions on the mode of pursuing my studies, I was at this time so occupied, shall I call it? or so dissipated, by the amusements of London, that our next meeting was not till Saturday, June 25., when, happening to dine

at Clifton's eating-house, in Butcher Row, I was surprised to perceive Johnson come in and take his seat at another table. The mode of dining, or rather being fed, at such houses in London, is well known to many to be particularly unsocial, as there is no Ordinary, or united company, but each person has his own mess, and is under no obligation to hold any intercourse with any one. A liberal and full-minded man, however, who loves to talk, will break through this churlish and unsocial restraint. Johnson and an Irish gentleman got into a dispute concerning the cause of some part of mankind being black. "Why, Sir," said Johnson, "it has been accounted for in three ways: either by supposing that they are the posterity of Ham, who was cursed; or that God at first created two kinds of men, one black and another white; or that by the heat of the sun the skin is scorched, and so acquires a sooty hue. This matter has been much canvassed among naturalists, but has never been brought to any certain issue." What the Irishman said is totally obliterated from my mind; but I remember that he became very warm and intemperate in his expressions: upon which Johnson rose, and quietly walked away. When he had retired, his antagonist took his revenge, as he thought, by saying, "He has a most ungainly figure, and an affectation of pomposity, unworthy of a man of genius."

Johnson had not observed that I was in the room. I followed him, however, and he agreed to meet me in the evening at the Mitre. I called on him, and

we went thither at nine. We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of The MITRE, —the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON,—the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced. I find in my Journal the following minute of our conversation, which, though it will give but a very faint notion of what passed, is, in some degree, a valuable record ; and it will be curious in this view, as shewing how habitual to his mind were some opinions which appear in his works.

“ Colley Cibber ⁽¹⁾, Sir, was by no means a block-head : but by arrogating to himself too much, he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his birth-day Odes should be bad : but that was not the case, Sir ; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit.

(1) Colley Cibber was born in 1671, bore arms in favour of the revolution, and soon after went on the stage as an actor. In 1695 he appeared as a writer of comedies with great and deserved success. He quitted the stage in 1730, on being appointed poet laureate, and died in 1757. His *Memoirs of his own Life*, under the modest title of an “Apology,” is not only a very amusing collection of theatrical anecdotes, but shows considerable power of observation and delineation of character. — C.

I remember the following couplet in allusion to the King and himself:—

‘ Perch’d on the eagle’s soaring wing,
The lowly linnet loves to sing.’

Sir, he had heard something of the fabulous tale of the wren sitting upon the eagle’s wing, and he had applied it to a linnet. Cibber’s familiar style, however, was better than that which Whitehead has assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable. Whitehead is but a little man to inscribe verses to players.” (1)

I did not presume to controvert this censure, which was tinged with his prejudice against players; but I could not help thinking that a dramatic poet might with propriety pay a compliment to an eminent performer, as Whitehead has very happily done in his verses to Mr. Garrick.

“ Sir, I do not think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime. His *Elegy in a Churchyard* has a happy selection of images (2), but I don’t like what are called his great things. His ode which begins—

(1) This was a sneer aimed, it is to be feared, more at Garrick (to whom the verses were inscribed) than at Whitehead. William Whitehead, born about 1715, was the fashionable poet of a day, when Horace’s exclusion of *mediocrity* was forgotten. He succeeded Cibber as laureate in 1757. He died in 1785. He must not be confounded with *Paul* Whitehead, no better poet, and a much less estimable man. — C.

(2) And surely a happy selection of *expressions*. What does it then want? As to the criticism and quotations which follow—

‘Ruin seize thee, ruthless King,
Confusion on thy banners wait!’

has been celebrated for its abruptness, and plunging into the subject all at once. But such arts as these have no merit, unless when they are original. We admire them only once; and this abruptness has nothing new in it. We have had it often before. Nay, we have it in the old song of Johnny Armstrong:—

‘Is there ever a man in all Scotland
From the highest estate to the lowest degree, &c.’

And then, Sir,

‘Yes, there is a man in Westmoreland,
And Johnny Armstrong they do him call.’

There, now, you plunge at once into the subject. You have no previous narration to lead you to it.—The two next lines in that Ode are, I think, very good:—

‘Though fann’d by conquest’s crimson’d wing,
They mock the air with idle state.’ ” (1)

Here let it be observed, that although his opinion of Gray’s poetry was widely different from mine, and, I believe, from that of most men of taste, by whom it is with justice highly admired, there is certainly much absurdity in the clamour which has been

they might be pardonable in loose conversation; but Johnson, unluckily for his own reputation, has preserved them in his criticism on Gray, in the *Lives of the Poets*.—C.

(1) My friend Mr. Malone, in his valuable comments on Shakspeare, has traced in that great poet the *disjecta membra* of these lines.

raised, as if he had been culpably injurious to the merit of that bard, and had been actuated by envy. Alas ! ye little short-sighted critics, could Johnson be envious of the talents of any of his contemporaries ? That his opinion on this subject was what in private and in public he uniformly expressed, regardless of what others might think, we may wonder, and perhaps regret ; but it is shallow and unjust to charge him with expressing what he did not think.

Finding him in a placid humour, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived, in the ardour of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands ;—I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention.

I acknowledged, that though educated very strictly in the principles of religion, I had for some time been misled into a certain degree of infidelity ; but that I was come now to a better way of thinking, and was fully satisfied of the truth of the Christian revelation, though I was not clear as to every point considered to be orthodox. Being at all times a curious examiner of the human mind, and pleased with an undisguised display of what had passed in it, he called to me with warmth. “ Give me your hand ; I have taken a liking to you.” He then began to descant upon the force of testimony, and the little we could know of final causes ; so that the objec-

tions of, Why was it so? or, Why was it not so? ought not to disturb us: adding, that he himself had at one period been guilty of a temporary neglect of religion; but that it was not the result of argument, but mere absence of thought.

After having given credit to reports of his bigotry, I was agreeably surprised when he expressed the following very liberal sentiment, which has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves:—“For my part, Sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious.”

We talked of belief in ghosts. He said, “Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice cry ‘Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished:’ my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should in that case be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me.”

Here it is proper, once for all, to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question, whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain, and treat with silent contempt, so foolish a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet, as I find it has gained ground, it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed, he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it. Churchill, in his poem entitled "The Ghost," availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of "POMPOSO," representing him as one of the believers of the story of a ghost in Cock-lane, which, in the year 1762, had gained very general credit in London. (1) Many of my readers,

(1) [As I suppose you read the newspapers, you will see mention of the ghost; but, without you were here upon the spot, you could never conceive that the most bungling performance of the silliest imposture could take up the attention and con-

I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprise them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority, that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected.⁽¹⁾ The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated; and in this research he was assisted by the Rev. Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures; who informs me, that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and Gentleman's Magazine, and undeceived the world.⁽²⁾

versation of all the fine world. And as the ways of the *beau-monde* are always in contradiction to the Gospel, they are determined to show that, though they do not believe in Moses and the prophets, they would believe if one were to come from the dead, though it was only to play tricks like a rat behind a wainscot! You must not, indeed, regret being absent, while this farce is going on. There will be an Elizabeth Canning, or a man in a bottle, or some other folly, for the amusement of this frivolous generation, at all times! — MRS. MONTAGUE TO MRS. ROBINSON, Feb. 26. 1762.]

(1) No rational man doubted that inquiry would lead to detection; men only wondered that Dr. Johnson should so far give countenance to this flimsy imposition as to think a solemn inquiry necessary. — C.

(2) The account was as follows: — “On the night of the 1st of February, many gentlemen, eminent for their rank and character, were, by the invitation of the Rev. Mr. Aldrich, of Clerkenwell, assembled at his house, for the examination of the noises supposed to be made by a departed spirit, for the detection of some enormous crime. — About ten at night the gentlemen met in the chamber in which the girl, supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, had, with proper caution, been put to bed by several

Our conversation proceeded. "Sir," said he, "I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society. There is a reciprocal pleasure in governing and being governed."

ladies. They sat rather more than an hour, and hearing nothing, went down stairs, when they interrogated the father of the girl, who denied, in the strongest terms, any knowledge or belief of fraud. — The supposed spirit had before publicly promised, by an affirmative knock, that it would attend one of the gentlemen into the vault under the church of St. John, Clerkenwell, where the body is deposited, and give a token of her presence there, by a knock upon her coffin; it was therefore determined to make this trial of the existence or veracity of the supposed spirit. — While they were inquiring and deliberating, they were summoned into the girl's chamber by some ladies who were near her bed, and who had heard knocks and scratches. When the gentlemen entered, the girl declared that she felt the spirit like a mouse upon her back, and was required to hold her hands out of bed. From that time, though the spirit was very solemnly required to manifest its existence by appearance, by impression on the hand or body of any present, by scratches, knocks, or any other agency, no evidence of any preternatural power was exhibited. — "The spirit was then very seriously advertised, that the person to whom the promise was made of striking the coffin was then about to visit the vault, and that the performance of the promise was then claimed. The company at one o'clock went into the church, and the gentleman to whom the promise was made went with another into the vault. The spirit was solemnly required to perform its promise, but nothing more than silence ensued: the person supposed to be accused by the spirit then went down with several others, but no effect was perceived. Upon their return they examined the girl, but could draw no confession from her. Between two and three she desired and was permitted to go home with her father. — It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no agency of any higher cause." — BOSWELL.

Mr. Saunders Welch, Johnson's intimate friend, would have dissuaded him from his purpose of visiting the place, urging that it would expose him to ridicule; but all his arguments had no effect. What Mr. Welch foretold, was verified; he was censured for his credulity, his wisdom was arraigned, and his religious opinions resolved into superstition. — Nor was this all: that facetious gentleman, Foote, who had assumed the name of

“ Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an author, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right.”

I mentioned Mallet's tragedy of “ Elvira,” which had been acted the preceding winter at Drury-lane, and that the Hon. Andrew Erskine ⁽¹⁾, Mr. Dempster ⁽²⁾, and myself, had joined in writing a pam-

the modern Aristophanes, and at his theatre had long entertained the town with caricatures of living persons, thought that at this time a drama, in which himself should represent Johnson, and in his mien, his garb, and his speech, should display all his comic powers, would yield him a golden harvest. Johnson was apprised of his intention; and gave Mr. Foote to understand, that the licence under which he was permitted to entertain the town would not justify the liberties he was accustomed to take with private characters, and that if he persisted in his design, he would, by a severe chastisement of his representative on the stage, and in the face of the whole audience, convince the world, that, whatever were his infirmities, or even his foibles, they should not be made the sport of the public, or the means of gain to any one of his profession. Foote, upon this intimation, had discretion enough to desist from his purpose. Johnson entertained no resentment against him, and they were ever after friends. — HAWKINS.

(1) Third son of the fifth Earl of Kellie, born in 1736. He published [in 1763] some letters and poems addressed to Mr. Boswell. — C.

(2) George Dempster, of Dunnichen, secretary to the Order of the Thistle, and long M. P. for Fife, &c. He was a man of talents and very agreeable manners. Burns mentions him more than once with eulogy. As Mr. Dempster lived a good deal in Johnson's society, the reader may be glad to see the following slipshod but characteristic epitaph (communicated to me by Sir Walter Scott), which he made on himself: —

“ Pray for the soul of deceased George Dempster,
In his youth a great fool, in his old age a gamester.*

* *Gamester*, *Scotticè*, [may rhyme with *Dempster*. He, however, only played for trifles; indeed the whole is a mere *badinage*. — W. SCOTT.]

phlet, entitled "Critical Strictures," against it. (1) That the mildness of Dempster's disposition had, however, relented; and he had candidly said, "We have hardly a right to abuse this tragedy; for, bad as it is, how vain should either of us be to write one not near so good!" JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; this is not just reasoning. You *may* abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables."

When I talked to him of the paternal estate to which I was heir, he said, "Sir, let me tell you, that to be a Scotch landlord, where you have a number of families dependent upon you, and attached to you, is, perhaps, as high a situation as humanity can arrive at. A merchant upon the

What you're curious to know, on this tomb you shall see: —
 Life's thread he let go, when just ninety-three.
 So sound was his bottom, his acquaintance all wondered
 How old Nick had got him, till he lived out the hundred.
 To his money concerns, he paid little attention,
 First selling his land, then pawning his pension.
 But his precious time, he much better did manage; —
 To the end of his line, from his earliest nonage,
 He divided his hours into two equal parts,
 And spent one half in sleeping, the other at *cartes*."* — C.

[In 1790, Mr. Dempster retired from parliament, and devoted himself to the improvement of agriculture and the fisheries. He died in 1818, aged 82.] — B.

(1) The Critical Review, in which Mallet himself sometimes wrote, characterised this pamphlet as "the crude efforts of envy, petulance, and self-conceit." There being thus three epithets, we, the three authors, had a humorous contention how each should be appropriated. — B.

* The Scotch, in familiar life, retain many French words (tokens of their early intercourse with France), and among others *cartes* for *cards*.
 C.

"Change of London, with a hundred thousand pounds, is nothing; an English Duke, with an immense fortune, is nothing: he has no tenants who consider themselves as under his patriarchal care, and who will follow him to the field upon an emergency."

His notion of the dignity of a Scotch landlord had been formed upon what he had heard of the Highland chiefs; for it is long since a lowland landlord has been so curtailed in his feudal authority, that he has little more influence over his tenants than an English landlord; and of late years most of the Highland chiefs have destroyed, by means too well known, the princely power which they once enjoyed.

He proceeded:—"Your going abroad, Sir, and breaking off idle habits, may be of great importance to you. I would go where there are courts and learned men. There is a good deal of Spain that has not been persambulated. I would have you go thither. A man of inferior talents to yours may furnish us with useful observations upon that country." His suggesting me, at that period of life, capable of writing an account of my travels that would deserve to be read, elated me not a little.

I appeal to every impartial reader of this work of his frankness, comp.

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kindness to a young man, a stranger, and a Scotchman, does not refute the unjust opinion of the harshness of his general demeanour. His occasional reproofs of folly, impudence, or impiety, and even the sudden sallies of his constitutional irritability of temper, which have been preserved for the poignancy of their wit, have produced that opinion among those who have not considered that such instances, though collected by Mrs. Piozzi into a small volume, and read over in a few hours, were, in fact, scattered through a long series of years: years, in which his time was chiefly spent in instructing and delighting mankind by his writings and conversation, in acts of piety to God, and good-will to men.

I complained to him that I had not yet acquired much knowledge, and asked his advice as to my studies. He said, "Don't talk of study now. I will give you a plan; but it will require some time to consider of it." "It is very good in you," I replied, "to allow me to be with you thus. Had it been foretold to me some years ago that I should pass an evening with the author of the RAMBLER, how should I have exulted!" What I then expressed, he said, came from the heart. He was satisfied that I was sincere. He answered, "Sir, I am glad we shall pass many evenings together." We finished a bottle of wine between one

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I appeal to every impartial reader whether this faithful detail of his frankness, complacency, and

(1) [Boswell alludes, principally at least, to the substitution of sheep farming for the old black-cattle system in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, in consequence of which, fewer hands being required on the chiefs' estates, a large portion of their clansmen were driven into exile in America. We shall hear more of these affairs in the course of the Hebridean journal, *post.*]

kindness to a young man, a stranger, and a Scotchman, does not refute the unjust opinion of the harshness of his general demeanour. His occasional reproofs of folly, impudence, or impiety, and even the sudden sallies of his constitutional irritability of temper, which have been preserved for the poignancy of their wit, have produced that opinion among those who have not considered that such instances, though collected by Mrs. Piozzi into a small volume, and read over in a few hours, were, in fact, scattered through a long series of years : years, in which his time was chiefly spent in instructing and delighting mankind by his writings and conversation, in acts of piety to GOD, and good-will to men.

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CHAPTER VI.

1763.

Graham's "Telemachus, a Mask." — Dr. Oliver Goldsmith. — Dr. John Campbell. — "Hermippus Redivivus." — Churchill's Poetry. — Bonnell Thornton. — "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day." — The Connoisseur. — The World. — Miss Williams's Tea Parties. — Anecdotes of Goldsmith.

HE wrote this year in the Critical Review the account of "Telemachus, a Mask," by the Rev. George Graham, of Eton College. The subject of this beautiful poem was particularly interesting to Johnson, who had much experience of "the conflict of opposite principles," which he describes as "The contention between pleasure and virtue; a struggle which will always be continued while the present system of nature shall subsist; nor can history or poetry exhibit more than pleasure triumphing over virtue, and virtue subjugating pleasure."

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavour to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke, at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future cele-

brity. (1) He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physic at Edinburgh, and upon the continent; and, I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing

(1) Goldsmith got a premium at a Christmas examination in Trinity College, Dublin, which I have seen. — KEARNEY. A premium obtained at the Christmas examination is generally more honourable than any other; because it ascertains the person who receives it to be the first in literary merit. At the other examinations, the person thus distinguished may be only the second in merit; he who has previously obtained the same honorary reward, sometimes receiving a written certificate that *he* was the best answerer, it being a rule that not more than one premium should be adjudged to the same person in one year. See *antè*, p. 73. — M.

with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the author of "An Inquiry into the present State of Polite Learning in Europe," and of "The Citizen of the World," a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. (1) No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. "*Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.*" (2) His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation (3); but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no

(1) He had also published in 1759, "The Bee; being, Essays on the most interesting Subjects." — M.

(2) See his Epitaph in Westminster Abbey, written by Dr. Johnson.

(3) In allusion to this, Mr. Horace Walpole, who admired his writings, said he was "an inspired idiot;" and Garrick described him as one

————— "for shortness call'd Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, and talk'd like poor Poll."

Sir Joshua Reynolds mentioned to me, that he frequently heard Goldsmith talk warmly of the pleasure of being liked, and observe how hard it would be if literary excellence should preclude a man from that satisfaction, which he perceived it often did, from the envy which attended it; and therefore Sir Joshua was convinced that he was intentionally more absurd, in order to lessen himself in social intercourse, trusting that his character would be sufficiently supported by his works. If it indeed was his intention to appear absurd in company, he was often very successful. But, with due deference to Sir Joshua's ingenuity, I think the conjecture too refined.

doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*; and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies ⁽¹⁾ with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once, at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, “Pshaw! I can do it better myself.” ⁽²⁾

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinised; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated

(1) Miss Hornecks, one of whom is now married to Henry Bunbury, Esq., and the other to Colonel Gwyn.

(2) He went home with Mr. Burke to supper; and broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets.

over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham (1); a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his "Vicar of Wakefield." But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, Sir," said he, "a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his 'Traveller;' and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after the 'Traveller' had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins(2) have strangely mis-stated the history of Goldsmith's situation and

(1) I am willing to hope that there may have been some mistake as to this anecdote, though I had it from a dignitary of the church. Dr. Isaac Goldsmith, his near relation, was Dean of Cloyne in 1747.

(2) Anecdotes, p. 119. Life, 420. How Mr. Boswell, who affects such extreme accuracy, should say that Hawkins has *strangely mis-stated* this affair is very surprising; what Hawkins says (Life, p. 420.), is merely that, under a pressing necessity, he wrote the Vicar of Wakefield, and sold it to Newberry for 40*l.* Hawkins's account is not in any respect inconsistent with Boswell's; and the difference between the prices stated, even if Hawkins be in error, is surely not sufficient to justify the charge of a *strange mis-statement*. — C.

Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:—

“ I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return; and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.” (1)

(1) It may not be improper to annex here Mrs. Piozzi's account of this transaction, in her own words, as a specimen of the extreme inaccuracy with which all her anecdotes of Dr. Johnson are related, or rather discoloured and distorted:—

“ I have forgotten the year, but it could scarcely, I think, be later than 1765 or 1766, that he was called abruptly from our house after dinner, and, returning in about three hours, said he had been with an enraged author, whose landlady pressed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beset him without; that he was drinking himself drunk with Madeira, to drown care, and fretting over a novel, which, when finished, was to be his whole fortune; but he could not get it done for distraction, nor could he step out of doors to offer it for sale. Mr. Johnson, therefore, sent away the bottle, and went to the bookseller, recommending the perform-

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Johnsonian school. ⁽¹⁾ Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height; for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation; such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, "He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson;" and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson."

Goldsmith attempting this evening to maintain, I suppose from an affectation of paradox, "that knowledge was not desirable on its own account, for it often was a source of unhappiness." JOHNSON.

ance, and *desiring some immediate relief*; which, when he brought back to the writer, *he called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch, and pass their time in merriment.*" Anecdotes, p. 119. — BOSWELL.

The greatest discrepancy between the two stories is the *time* of the day at which it happened; and, unluckily, the admitted fact of the *bottle of Madeira* seems to render Mrs. Piozzi's version the more probable of the two. If, according to Mr. Boswell's account, Goldsmith had, *in the morning*, changed Johnson's charitable guinea for the purpose of getting a bottle of Madeira, we cannot complain that Mrs. Piozzi represents him as "*drinking himself drunk with Madeira*;" which Mr. Boswell thinks so violently inaccurate, as to deserve being marked in italics. — CROKER.

(1) [See the note at the end of this chapter.]

“ Why, Sir, that knowledge may in some cases produce unhappiness, I allow. But, upon the whole, knowledge, *per se*, is certainly an object which every man would wish to attain, although, perhaps, he may not take the trouble necessary for attaining it.”

Dr. John Campbell, the celebrated political and biographical writer, being mentioned, Johnson said, “ Campbell is a man of much knowledge, and has a good share of imagination. His ‘Hermippus Redivivus’ is very entertaining, as an account of the Hermetic philosophy, and as furnishing a curious history of the extravagancies of the human mind. If it were merely imaginary, it would be nothing at all. Campbell is not always rigidly careful of truth in his conversation; but I do not believe there is any thing of this carelessness in his books. Campbell is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years (1); but he never passes a church without

(1) I am inclined to think that he was misinformed as to this circumstance. I own I am jealous for my worthy friend Dr. John Campbell. For though Milton could without remorse absent himself from public worship, I cannot. On the contrary, I have the same habitual impressions upon my mind, with those of a truly venerable judge, who said to Mr. Langton, “ Friend Langton, if I have not been at church on Sunday, I do not feel myself easy.” Dr. Campbell was a sincerely religious man. Lord Macartney, who is eminent for his variety of knowledge, and attention to men of talents, and knew him well, told me, that when he called on him in a morning, he found him reading a chapter in the Greek New Testament, which he informed his lordship was his constant practice. The quantity of Dr. Campbell’s composition is almost incredible, and his labours brought him large profits. Dr. Joseph Warton told me that Johnson said of him, “ He is the richest author that ever grazed the common of literature.”— B.

pulling off his hat. This shews that he has good principles. I used to go pretty often to Campbell's on a Sunday evening, till I began to consider that the shoals of Scotchmen who flocked about him might probably say, when any thing of mine was well done, 'Ay, ay, he has learnt this of CAWMELL!'"

He talked very contemptuously of Churchill's poetry, observing, that "it had a temporary currency, only from its audacity of abuse, and being filled with living names, and that it would sink into oblivion." I ventured to hint that he was not quite a fair judge, as Churchill had attacked him violently. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I am a very fair judge. He did not attack me violently till he found I did not like his poetry; and his attack on me shall not prevent me from continuing to say what I think of him, from an apprehension that it may be ascribed to resentment. No, Sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now than I once had; for he has shewn more fertility than I expected. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, Sir, a tree that produces a great

Mr. Boswell quotes this *dictum* as if it was evidence only of Dr. Campbell's *wealth*; he probably did not see that it characterised his *celebrated* friend, by no very complimentary allusion, as *grazing the common* of literature. His "Lives of the Admirals" is the only one of his almost innumerable publications that is now called for. He was born in 1708, and died in 1775.
— C.

many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few."

In this depreciation of Churchill's poetry I could not agree with him. It is very true that the greatest part of it is upon the topics of the day, on which account, as it brought him great fame and profit at the time, it must proportionably slide out of the public attention as other occasional objects succeed. But Churchill had extraordinary vigour both of thought and expression. His portraits of the players will ever be valuable to the true lovers of the drama; and his strong caricatures of several eminent men of his age, will not be forgotten by the curious. Let me add, that there is in his works many passages which are of a general nature; and his "Prophecy of Famine" is a poem of no ordinary merit. It is, indeed, falsely injurious to Scotland; but therefore may be allowed a greater share of invention.

Bonnell Thornton had just published a burlesque "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," adapted to the ancient British music, viz. the salt-box, the Jew's harp, the marrow-bones and cleaver, the hum-strum or hurdy-gurdy, &c. Johnson praised its humour, and seemed much diverted with it. He repeated the following passage:—

"In strains more exalted the salt-box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine;
With a rap and a tap, while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling rebounds."(1)

(1) In 1769 I set for Smart and Newbery, Thornton's burlesque Ode on St. Cecilia's day. It was performed at Ranelag-

I mentioned the periodical paper called "THE CONNOISSEUR." He said it wanted matter. — No doubt it had not the deep thinking of Johnson's writings; but surely it has just views of the surface of life, and a very sprightly manner. His opinion of "THE WORLD" was not much higher than of the Connoisseur.

Let me here apologise for the imperfect manner in which I am obliged to exhibit Johnson's conversation at this period. In the early part of my acquaintance with him, I was so wrapt in admiration of his extraordinary colloquial talents, and so little accustomed to his peculiar mode of expression, that I found it extremely difficult to recollect and record his conversation with its genuine vigour and vivacity. In progress of time, when my mind was, as it were, *strongly impregnated with the Johnsonian æther*, I could, with much more facility and exactness, carry in my memory and commit to paper the exuberant variety of his wisdom and wit.

At this time *Miss Williams*, as she was then called, though she did not reside with him in the Temple under his roof, but had lodgings in Bolt-court, Fleet-street, had so much of his attention,

in masks, to a very crowded audience, as I was told; for I then resided in Norfolk. Beard sang the salt-box song, which was admirably accompanied on that instrument by Brent, the fencing-master and father of Miss Brent, the celebrated singer; Skeggs on the broomstick, as bassoon; and a remarkable performer on the Jew's harp. — "Buzzing twangs the iron lyre." Cleavers were cast in bell-metal for this entertainment. All the performers of the old woman's Oratory, employed by Foote, were, I believe, employed at Ranelagh, on this occasion. — BURNET.

that he every night drank tea with her before he went home, however late it might be, and she always sat up for him. This, it may be fairly conjectured, was not alone a proof of his regard for *her*; but of his own unwillingness to go into solitude, before that unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose. Dr. Goldsmith, being a privileged man, went with him this night, strutting away, and calling to me with an air of superiority, like that of an esoteric over an exoteric disciple of a sage of antiquity (1), “I go to Miss Williams.” I confess, I then envied him this mighty privilege, of which he seemed so proud; but it was not long before I obtained the same mark of distinction. (2)

(1) The ancient philosophers were supposed to have two sets of tenets — one, the *exoteric*, external, or *public* doctrines — the other, the *esoteric*, the internal, or *secret* doctrines, which were reserved for the more favoured few. — C.

(2) Goldsmith affected Johnson’s style and manner of conversation; and, when he had uttered, as he often would, a laboured sentence, so tumid as to be scarce intelligible, would ask, if that was not truly Johnsonian; yet he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for his parts; and once entreated a friend to desist from praising him; ‘for in doing so,’ said he, ‘you harrow up my very soul.’ He had some wit, but no humour, and never told a story but he spoiled it.

The following anecdotes will convey some idea of the style and manner of his conversation: — He was used to say he could play on the German flute as well as most men; at other times, as well as any man living; and, in his poem of the ‘Traveller,’ has hinted at this attainment; but, in truth, he understood not the character in which music is written, and played on that instrument, as many of the vulgar do, merely by ear. Roubiliac, the sculptor, a merry fellow, once heard him play; and minding to put a trick on him, pretended to be so charmed with his performance, that he entreated him to repeat the air, that he might write it down. Goldsmith readily consenting, Roubiliac called for paper, and scored thereon a few five-lined staves, which having done, Goldsmith proceeded to

play, and Roubiliac to write; but his writing was only such random notes on the lines and spaces as any one might set down who had ever inspected a page of music. When they had both done, Roubiliac showed the paper to Goldsmith, who, looking it over with seeming great attention, said it was very correct, and that if he had not seen him do it, he never could have believed his friend capable of writing music after him.

He would frequently preface a story thus: — ‘I’ll now tell you a story of myself, which some people laugh at, and some do not.’ At the breaking up of an evening at a tavern, he entreated the company to sit down, and told them if they would call for another bottle, they should hear one of his *bon mots*. They agreed, and he began thus: — ‘I was once told that Sheridan, the player, in order to improve himself in stage gestures, had looking glasses, to the number of ten, hung about his room, and that he practised before them; upon which I said, Then there were ten ugly fellows together.’ The company were all silent. He asked, why they did not laugh? which they not doing, he, without tasting the wine, left the room in anger. He once complained to a friend in these words: — ‘Mr. Martinelli is a rude man; I said, in his hearing, that there were no good writers among the Italians; and he said to one that sat near him, that I was very ignorant.’ ‘People,’ said he, ‘are greatly mistaken in me. A notion goes about, that when I am silent, I mean to be impudent; but I assure you, gentlemen, my silence arises from bashfulness.’

Having one day a call to wait on the late Duke (then Earl) of Northumberland, I found Goldsmith waiting for an audience in an outer room. I asked what had brought him there: he replied, an invitation from his lordship. I made my business as short as I could; and, as a reason, mentioned, that Dr. Goldsmith was waiting without. The earl asked me, if I was acquainted with him. I told him I was, adding what I thought likely to recommend him. I retired, and stayed in the outer room to take Goldsmith home. Upon his coming out, I asked him the result of his conversation. ‘His lordship,’ says he, ‘told me he had read my poem (meaning the ‘Traveller’), and was much delighted with it; that he was going Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and that, hearing that I was a native of that country, he should be glad to do me any kindness.’ ‘And what did you answer,’ asked I, ‘to this gracious offer?’ ‘Why,’ said he, ‘I could say nothing, but that I had a brother there, a clergyman, that stood in need of help: as for myself, I have no dependence on the promises of great men; I look to the booksellers for support; they are my best friends, and I am not inclined to forsake them for others.’

Other offers of a like kind he either rejected or failed to improve, contenting himself with the patronage of one nobleman [Nugent, Lord Clare], whose mansion afforded him the delights of a splendid table, and a retreat for a few days from

the metropolis. His poems are replete with fine moral sentiments, and bespeak a great dignity of mind; yet he had no sense of the shame, nor dread of the evils, of poverty. — HAWKINS.

Colonel O'Moore, of Cloghan Castle in Ireland, told me an amusing instance of the mingled vanity and simplicity of Goldsmith, which (though, perhaps, coloured a little, as *anecdotes* too often are) is characteristic at least of the opinion which his best friends entertained of Goldsmith. One afternoon, as Colonel O'Moore and Mr. Burke were going to dine with Sir Joshua Reynolds, they observed Goldsmith (also on his way to Sir Joshua's) standing near a crowd of people, who were staring and shouting at some foreign women in the windows of one of the houses in Leicester-square. "Observe Goldsmith," said Mr. Burke to O'Moore, "and mark what passes between him and me by-and-by at Sir Joshua's." They passed on, and arrived before Goldsmith, who came soon after, and Mr. Burke affected to receive him very coolly. This seemed to vex poor Goldsmith, who begged Mr. Burke would tell him how he had had the misfortune to offend him. Burke appeared very reluctant to speak; but, after a good deal of pressing, said, "that he was really ashamed to keep up an intimacy with one who could be guilty of such monstrous indiscretions as Goldsmith had just exhibited in the square." Goldsmith, with great earnestness, protested he was unconscious of what was meant. "Why," said Burke, "did you not exclaim, as you were looking up at those women, what stupid beasts the crowd must be for staring with such admiration at those *painted jzebels*; while a man of your talents passed by unnoticed?" Goldsmith was horror-struck, and said, "Surely, surely, my dear friend, I did not say so?" "Nay," replied Burke, "if you had not said so, how should I have known it?" "That's true," answered Goldsmith, with great humility: "I am very sorry — it was very foolish: *I do recollect that something of the kind passed through my mind, but I did not think I had uttered it.*" — CROKER.

CHAPTER VII.

1763.

London. — Miss Porter's Legacy. — Boswell and his Landlord. — Suppers at the Mitre. — "The King can do no Wrong." — Historical Composition. — Bayle. — Arbuthnot. — The noblest Prospect in Scotland. — Jacobitism. — Lord Hailes. — Keeping a Journal. — The King of Prussia's Poetry. — Johnson's Library. — "Not at Home." — Pity. — Style of Hume. — Inequality of Mankind. — Constitutional Goodness. — Miracles. — Acquaintance of Young People. — Hard Reading. — Melancholy. — Mrs. Macaulay. — Warton's Essay on Pope. — Sir James Macdonald. — Projected Tour to the Hebrides. — School-boy Happiness.

ON Tuesday the 5th of July, I again visited Johnson. He told me he had looked into the poems of a pretty voluminous writer, Mr. (now Dr.) John Ogilvie, one of the Presbyterian ministers of Scotland, which had lately come out, but could find nothing in them. BOSWELL. "Is there not imagination in them, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there is in them, what *was* imagination, but it is no more imagination in *him*, than sound is sound in the echo. And his diction, too, is not his own. We have long ago seen *white-robed innocence, and flower-bespangled meads.*"

Talking of London, he observed, "Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great

streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists." — I have often amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people. They, whose narrow minds are contracted to the consideration of some one particular pursuit, view it only through that medium. A politician thinks of it merely as the seat of government in its different departments ; a grazier, as a vast market for cattle ; a mercantile man, as a place where a prodigious deal of business is done upon 'Change ; a dramatic enthusiast, as the grand scene of theatrical entertainments ; a man of pleasure, as an assemblage of taverns, and the great emporium for ladies of easy virtue. But the intellectual man is struck with it, as comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible.

LETTER 85. TO MISS LUCY PORTER.

" July 5. 1763.

" MY DEAREST DEAR,—I am extremely glad that so much prudence and virtue as yours is at last awarded with so large a fortune (1), and doubt not but that the excellence which you have shown in circumstances of difficulty will continue the same in the convenience of wealth.

" I have not written to you sooner, having nothing to say, which you would not easily suppose — nothing

(1) Miss Porter had just received a legacy of ten thousand pounds, by the death of her brother. — C.

but that I love you and wish you happy, of which you may be always assured, whether I write or not.

“ I have had an inflammation in my eyes ; but it is much better, and will be I hope, soon quite well.

“ Be so good as to let me know whether you design to stay at Lichfield this summer ; if you do, I purpose to come down. I shall bring Frank with me ; so that Kitty must contrive to make two beds, or get a servant’s bed at the Three Crowns, which may be as well. As I suppose she may want sheets and table-linen, and such things, I have sent ten pounds, which she may lay out in conveniences. I will pay her for her board what you think proper ; I think a guinea a week for me and the boy.

“ Be pleased to give my love to Kitty.—I am, my dearest love, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

On Wednesday, July 6., he was engaged to sup with me at my lodgings in Downing-street, Westminster. But on the preceding night my landlord having behaved very rudely to me and some company who were with me, I had resolved not to remain another night in his house. I was exceedingly uneasy at the awkward appearance I supposed I should make to Johnson and the other gentlemen whom I had invited, not being able to receive them at home, and being obliged to order supper at the Mitre. I went to Johnson in the morning, and talked of it as of a serious distress. He laughed, and said, “ Consider, Sir, how insignificant this will appear a twelvemonth hence.” Were this consideration to be applied to most of the little vexatious incidents of life, by which our quiet is too often disturbed, it would prevent many painful

sensations. I have tried it frequently with good effect. "There is nothing," continued he, "in this mighty misfortune; nay, we shall be better at the Mitre." I told him that I had been at Sir John Fielding's office, complaining of my landlord, and had been informed that, though I had taken my lodgings for a year, I might, upon proof of his bad behaviour, quit them when I pleased, without being under an obligation to pay rent for any longer time than while I possessed them. The fertility of Johnson's mind could shew itself even upon so small a matter as this. "Why, Sir," said he, "I suppose this must be the law, since you have been told so in Bow-street. But, if your landlord could hold you to your bargain, and the lodgings should be yours for a year, you may certainly use them as you think fit. (1) So, Sir, you may quarter two life-guardmen upon him; or you may send the greatest scoundrel you can find into your apartments; or you may say that you want to make some experiments in natural philosophy, and may burn a large quantity of assa-fœtida in his house."

I had as my guests this evening at the Mitre tavern, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Eccles (2), an Irish gentleman, for whose

(1) Certainly not; you must use them according to the contract, expressed or implied, under which you have hired them. If a landlord breaks his part of the contract, the law will relieve the other party; but the latter is not at liberty to take such violent and illegal steps as Johnson suggests. — C.

(2) Isaac Ambrose Eccles, Esq., of Cronroe, in the county of Wicklow: he published one or two plays of Shakspeare, with notes. — C.

agreeable company I was obliged to Mr. Davies, and the Rev. Mr. John Ogilvie (1), who was desirous of being in company with my illustrious friend; while I, in my turn, was proud to have the honour of showing one of my countrymen upon what easy terms Johnson permitted me to live with him.

Goldsmith, as usual, endeavoured, with too much eagerness, to *shine*, and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, "the king can do no wrong;" affirming, that "what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the king might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the king is the head, he is supreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore it is, Sir, that we hold the king can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty. Redress is

(1) The northern bard mentioned page 202. When I asked Dr. Johnson's permission to introduce him, he obligingly agreed; adding, however, with a sly pleasantry, "but he must give us none of his poetry." It is *remarkable* that Johnson and Churchill, however much they differed in other points, agreed on this subject. See Churchill's "Journey." It is, however, but justice to Dr. Ogilvie to observe, that his "Day of Judgment" has no inconsiderable share of merit. — B.

Boswell's *naïveté* in thinking it *remarkable* that two persons should agree in disliking the poetry of his *northern bard* is amusing: it might have been more remarkable if two had agreed in *liking* it. — C.

always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The king, though he should command, cannot force a judge to condemn a man unjustly ; therefore it is the judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up; and, claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*" I mark this animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers ; because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government.

This generous sentiment, which he uttered with great fervour, struck me exceedingly, and stirred my blood to that pitch of fancied resistance, the possibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which I trust I never shall be forced.

"Great abilities" said he, "are not requisite for an historian ; for in historical composition all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand ; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in

any high degree ; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and colouring, will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary."

" Bayle's Dictionary is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most." (1)

Talking of the eminent writers in Queen Anne's reign, he observed, " I think Dr. Arbuthnot the first man among them. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humour. Mr. Addison was, to be sure, a great man : his learning was not profound ; but his morality, his humour, and his elegance of writing, set him very high."

Mr. Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for the topic of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying, that there was very rich land around Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physic there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe ; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. JOHNSON. " I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects ; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which

(1) [" Somebody speaking of Bayle's manner in his Dictionary, Mr. Pope said : — ' Ay, he is the only man that ever collected with so much judgment, and wrote with so much spirit, at the same time.' " — SPENCE.]

a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!" (1) This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those who admire the rude grandeur of Nature cannot deny it to Caledonia.

On Saturday, July 9., I found Johnson surrounded with a numerous levée, but have not preserved any part of his conversation.

LETTER 86. TO MISS LUCY PORTER.

" July 12. 1763.

" MY DEAREST LOVE, — I had forgot my debt to poor Kitty ; pray let her have the note, and do what you can for her, for she has been always very good. I will help her to a little more money if she wants

(1) Mrs. Brooke* received an answer not unlike this, when expatiating on the accumulation of sublime and beautiful objects, which form the fine prospect up the river St. Lawrence in North America: "Come, madam, (says Dr. Johnson,) confess that nothing ever equalled your pleasure in seeing that sight reversed; and finding yourself looking at the happy prospect down the river St. Lawrence." The truth is, he hated to hear about prospects and views, and laying out ground, and taste in gardening:—"That was the best garden (he said), which produced most roots and fruits; and that water was most to be prized which contained most fish." He used to laugh at Shenstone most unmercifully for not caring whether there was any thing good to *eat* in the streams he was so fond of. Walking in a wood when it rained was, I think, the only rural image which pleased his fancy. He loved the sight of fine forest-trees, however, and detested Brighthelmstone Downs, "because it was a country so truly desolate (he said), that if one had a mind to hang one's self for desperation at being obliged to live there, it would be difficult to find a tree on which to fasten the rope." — PIOZZI.

* Frances Moore, wife of the Rev. Mr. Brooke, Chaplain to the Forces in Canada, whither she accompanied him. She wrote two novels called "Emily Montague," and "Lady Julia Mandeville." She afterwards produced several dramatic pieces, one of which, "Rosina," still keeps the stage. She is said to have been much esteemed by Johnson. She died in 1789. — C.

it, and will write. I intend that she shall have the use of the house as long as she and I live.

“ That there should not be room for me at the house is some disappointment to me, but the matter is not very great. I am sorry you have had your head filled with building⁽¹⁾, for many reasons. It was not necessary to settle immediately for life at any one place; you might have staid and seen more of the world. You will not have your work done, as you do not understand it, but at twice the value. You might have hired a house at half the interest of the money for which you build it, if your house cost you a thousand pounds. You might have the Palace for twenty pounds, and make forty of your thousand pounds; so in twenty years you would have saved forty [four hundred?] pounds, and still have had your thousand. I am, dear dear, yours, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.”

On the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some common-place observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned⁽²⁾; adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation. Johnson, who, as we have already seen, denied that the temperature of the air had any influence on the human frame, answered, with a smile of ridicule, “ Why, yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals.”⁽³⁾ This observation of his

(1) Miss Porter laid out nearly one third of her legacy in building a handsome house at Lichfield. — C.

(2) Johnson would suffer none of his friends to fill up chasms in conversation with remarks on the weather: — “ Let us not talk of the weather.” — BURNEY.

(3) [See *antè*, p. 89.]

aptly enough introduced a good supper ; and I soon forgot, in Johnson's company, the influence of a moist atmosphere. (1)

Feeling myself now quite at ease as his companion, though I had all possible reverence for him, I expressed a regret that I could not be so easy with my father, though he was not much older than Johnson, and certainly, however respectable, had not more learning and greater abilities to depress me. I asked him the reason of this. JOHNSON. " Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and I take, in some degree, the colour of the world as it moves along. Your father is a judge in a remote part of the island, and all his notions are taken from the old world. Besides, Sir, there must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence." I said, I was afraid my father would force me to be a lawyer. JOHNSON. " Sir, you need not be afraid of his forcing you to be a laborious practising lawyer; that is not in his power. For, as the proverb says, ' One man may lead a horse to the water, but twenty cannot make him drink.' He may be displeased that you are not what he wishes you to be ; but that displeasure will not go far. If he insists only on your having as much law as is necessary for a man of pro-

(1) Though Dr. Johnson owed his very life to air and exercise given him when his organs of respiration could scarcely play, in the year 1766, yet he ever persisted in the notion, that neither of them had any thing to do with health. " People live as long," said he, " in Pepper Alley as on Salisbury Plain ; and they live so much happier, that an inhabitant of the first would, if he turned cottager, starve his understanding for want of conversation, and perish in a state of mental inferiority." — PIZZI.

perty, and then endeavours to get you into parliament, he is quite in the right."

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him in the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. JOHNSON. "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have HUGGED him."

Talking of those who denied the truth of Christianity, he said, "It is always easy to be on the negative side. If a man were now to deny that there is salt upon the table, you could not reduce him to an absurdity. Come, let us try this a little further. I deny that Canada is taken, and I can support my denial by pretty good arguments. The French are a much more numerous people than we; and it is not likely that they would allow us to take it. 'But the ministry have assured us, in all the formality of the Gazette, that it is taken.'—Very true. But the ministry have put us to an enormous expense by the war in America, and it is their interest to persuade us that we have got something for our money.—'But the fact is confirmed by thousands of men who were at the taking of it.'—Ay, but these men have still more interest in deceiving us. They don't want that you should think the French have beat them, but that they have beat

the French. Now suppose you should go over and find that it really is taken; that would only satisfy yourself; for when you come home we will not believe you. We will say, you have been bribed. — Yet, Sir, notwithstanding all these plausible objections, we have no doubt that Canada is really ours. Such is the weight of common testimony. How much stronger are the evidences of the Christian religion !”

“ Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. ⁽¹⁾ I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in the day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge.”

To a man of vigorous intellect and ardent curiosity like his own, reading without a regular plan may be beneficial; though even such a man must submit to it, if he would attain a full understanding of any of the sciences.

To such a degree of unrestrained frankness had he now accustomed me, that in the course of this evening I talked of the numerous reflections which had been thrown out against him on account of his having accepted a pension from his present Majesty. “ Why, Sir, (said he, with a hearty laugh,) it is a

(1) See *post*, p. 286., his letter to Mr. George Strahan, May 25. 1765. — C.

mighty foolish noise that they make. (1) I have accepted of a pension as a reward which has been thought due to my literary merit; and now that I have this pension, I am the same man in every respect that I have ever been; I retain the same principles. It is true, that I cannot now curse (smiling) the house of Hanover; nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me money to pay for. But, Sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the house of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year."

There was here, most certainly, an affectation of more Jacobitism than he really had; and indeed an intention of admitting, for the moment, in a much greater extent than it really existed, the charge of disaffection imputed to him by the world, merely for the purpose of showing how dexterously he could repel an attack, even though he were placed in the most disadvantageous position; for I have heard him declare, that if holding up his right hand would have secured victory at Culloden to Prince Charles's army, he was not sure he would have held it up; so little confidence had he in the right claimed by the house of Stuart, and so fearful was he of the consequences of another revolution on the throne of Great Britain; and Mr. Topham Beauclerk assured me, he had heard him say this before he had his pension. At another

(1) When I mentioned the same idle clamour to him several years afterwards, he said, with a smile, "I wish my pension were twice as large, that they might make twice as much noise."

time he said to Mr. Langton, "Nothing has ever offered that has made it worth my while to consider the question fully." He, however, also said to the same gentleman, talking of King James the Second, "It was become impossible for him to reign any longer in this country." He no doubt had an early attachment to the house of Stuart; but his zeal had cooled as his reason strengthened. Indeed, I heard him once say, "that after the death of a violent Whig, with whom he used to contend with great eagerness, he felt his Toryism much abated." I suppose he meant Mr. Walmesley.

Yet there is no doubt that at earlier periods he was wont often to exercise both his pleasantry and ingenuity in talking Jacobitism. My much respected friend, Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, has favoured me with the following admirable instance from his Lordship's own recollection. One day when dining at old Mr. Langton's, where Miss Roberts, his niece, was one of the company, Johnson, with his usual complacent attention to the fair sex, took her by the hand and said, "My dear, I hope you are a Jacobite." Old Mr. Langton, who, though a high and steady Tory, was attached to the present royal family, seemed offended, and asked Johnson with great warmth, what he could mean by putting such a question to his niece? "Why, Sir," said Johnson, "I meant no offence to your niece; I meant her a great compliment. A Jacobite, Sir, believes in the divine right of kings. He that believes in the divine right of kings believes in a Divinity. A Jacobite believes in the divine right

of bishops. He that believes in the divine right of bishops believes in the divine authority of the Christian religion. Therefore, Sir, a Jacobite is neither an atheist nor a deist. That cannot be said of a Whig; for *Whiggism is a negation of all principle.*"(1)

He advised me, when abroad, to be as much as I could with the professors in the universities, and with the clergy; for from their conversation I might expect the best accounts of every thing, in whatever country I should be, with the additional advantage of keeping my learning alive.

It will be observed, that when giving me advice as to my travels, Dr. Johnson did not dwell upon cities, and palaces, and pictures, and shows, and Arcadian scenes. He was of Lord Essex's opinion, who advises his kinsman Roger Earl of Rutland, "rather to go a hundred miles to speak with one wise man, than five miles to see a fair town."(2)

I described to him an impudent fellow from Scotland, who affected to be a savage, and railed at all established systems. JOHNSON. "There is nothing surprising in this, Sir. He wants to make himself conspicuous. He would tumble in a hogsty, as

(1) He used to tell, with great humour, from my relation to him, the following little story of my early years, which was literally true:—"Boswell, in the year 1745, was a fine boy, wore a white cockade, and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles (General Cochran) gave him a shilling on condition that he would pray for King George, which he accordingly did. So you see (says Boswell) that *Whigs of all ages are made the same way.*"

(2) Letter to Rutland on Travel, 16mo, 1596.

long as you looked at him and called to him to come out. But let him alone, never mind him, and he'll soon give it over."

I added, that the same person maintained that there was no distinction between virtue and vice. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I see not what honour he can propose to himself from having the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons."

Sir David Dalrymple⁽¹⁾, now one of the Judges of Scotland by the title of Lord Hailes, had contributed much to increase my high opinion of Johnson, on account of his writings, long before I attained to a personal acquaintance with him: I, in return, had informed Johnson of Sir David's eminent character for learning and religion; and Johnson was so much pleased, that at one of our evening meetings he gave him for his toast. I at this time kept up a very frequent correspondence with Sir David; and I read to Dr. Johnson to-night the following passage from the letter which I had last received from him:—

"It gives me pleasure to think that you have obtained the friendship of Mr. Samuel Johnson. He is one of the best moral writers which England has pro-

(1) This learned and excellent person was born in 1726; educated at Eton, and afterwards at Utrecht; called to the Scotch bar in 1748; a lord of session in 1766. He died in 1792. He wrote some papers in the *World* and *Mirror*, and published several original tracts on religious, historical, and antiquarian subjects, and republished a great many more. — C.

duced. At the same time, I envy you the free and undisguised converse with such a man. May I beg you to present my best respects to him, and to assure him of the veneration which I entertain for the author of the Rambler and of Rasselas? Let me recommend this last work to you; with the Rambler you certainly are acquainted. In Rasselas you will see a tender-hearted operator, who probes the wound only to heal it. Swift, on the contrary, mangles human nature. He cuts and slashes, as if he took pleasure in the operation, like the tyrant who said, *Ita feri ut se sentiat emori.*"

Johnson seemed to be much gratified by this just and well-turned compliment.

He recommended to me to keep a journal of my life, full and unreserved. He said it would be a very good exercise, and would yield me great satisfaction when the particulars were faded from my remembrance. I was uncommonly fortunate in having had a previous coincidence of opinion with him upon this subject, for I had kept such a journal for some time; and it was no small pleasure to me to have this to tell him, and to receive his approbation. He counselled me to keep it private, and said I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death. From this habit I have been enabled to give the world so many anecdotes, which would otherwise have been lost to posterity. I mentioned that I was afraid I put into my journals too many little incidents. JOHNSON. "There is nothing, Sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things, that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible."

Next morning Mr. Dempster happened to call on me, and was so much struck even with the imperfect account which I gave him of Dr. Johnson's conversation, that to his honour be it recorded, when I complained that drinking port and sitting up late with him, affected my nerves for some time after, he said, "One had better be palsied at eighteen than not keep company with such a man."

On Tuesday, July 19., I found *tall* Sir Thomas Robinson⁽¹⁾ sitting with Johnson. Sir Thomas said, that the King of Prussia valued himself upon three things: — upon being a hero, a musician, and an author. JOHNSON. "Pretty well, Sir, for one man. As to his being an author, I have not looked at his poetry; but his prose is poor stuff. He writes just as you may suppose Voltaire's footboy to do, who has been his amanuensis. He has such parts as the valet might have, and about as much of the colouring of the style as might be got by transcribing his works." When I was at Ferney, I repeated this to Voltaire, in order to reconcile him somewhat to Johnson, whom he, in affecting the English mode of expression, had previously characterised as "a superstitious dog;" but after hearing such a criticism on Frederick the Great, with whom he was then on bad terms, he exclaimed, "An honest fellow!"

But I think the criticism much too severe; for

(1) The elder brother of the first Lord Rokeby, called *long* Sir Thomas Robinson, on account of his height, and to distinguish him from Sir Thomas Robinson, first Lord Grantham. He died in 1777. — C.

the "Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg" are written as well as many works of that kind. His poetry, for the style of which he himself makes a frank apology, "*jargonnant un François barbare*," though fraught with pernicious ravings of infidelity, has, in many places, great animation, and in some a pathetic tenderness.

Upon this contemptuous animadversion on the King of Prussia, I observed to Johnson, "It would seem then, Sir, that much less parts are necessary to make a king, than to make an author; for the king of Prussia is confessedly the greatest king now in Europe, yet you think he makes a very poor figure as an author."

Mr. Levett this day showed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his chambers, where Lintot, son of the celebrated bookseller of that name, had formerly his warehouse. I found a number of good books, but very dusty and in great confusion. The floor was strewed with manuscript leaves, in Johnson's own handwriting, which I beheld with a degree of veneration, supposing they perhaps might contain portions of the Rambler, or of Rasselas. I observed an apparatus for chemical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond. The place seemed to be very favourable for retirement and meditation. Johnson told me, that he went up thither without mentioning it to his servant when he wanted to study, secure from interruption; for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. "A servant's strict regard for truth," said he, "must be

weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial ; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for *me*, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for *himself*?" I am, however, satisfied that every servant, of any degree of intelligence, understands saying his master is not at home, not at all as the affirmation of a fact, but as customary words, intimating that his master wishes not to be seen ; so that there can be no bad effect from it.

Mr. Temple, now vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall, who had been my intimate friend for many years, had at this time chambers in Farrar's Buildings, at the bottom of Inner Temple Lane, which he kindly lent me upon my quitting my lodgings, he being to return to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I found them particularly convenient for me, as they were so near Dr. Johnson's.

On Wednesday, July 20., Dr. Johnson, Mr. Dempster, and my uncle Dr. Boswell, who happened to be now in London, supped with me at these chambers. JOHNSON. "Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. (1) We may have uneasy sensations from see-

(1) Johnson's antithesis between pity and cruelty is not exact, and the argument (such as it is) drawn from it, is therefore inconclusive. Pity is as natural to man as any other emotion of the mind. The Bishop of Ferns observes, that children are said to be *cruel*, when it would be more just to say that they are *ignorant*—they do not know that they give pain. Nor are savages cruel in the sense here used, for cruelty's sake ; they use cruel means to attain an object, because they know no other

ing a creature in distress, without pity ; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and finding it late, have bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist: no, Sir, I wish him to drive on."

Mr. Alexander Donaldson, bookseller of Edinburgh, had for some time opened a shop in London, and sold his cheap editions of the most popular English books, in defiance of the supposed common-law right of *Literary Property*. Johnson, though he concurred in the opinion which was afterwards sanctioned by a judgment of the House of Lords, that there was no such right, was at this time very angry that the booksellers of London, for whom he uniformly professed much regard, should suffer from an invasion of what they had ever considered to be secure ; and he was loud and violent against Mr. Donaldson. "He is a fellow who takes advantage of the law to injure his brethren ; for notwithstanding that the statute secures only fourteen years of exclusive right, it has always been understood by *the trade*, that he, who buys the copyright of a book

mode of accomplishing the object: and so far is pity from being acquired solely by the cultivation of reason, that reason is one of the checks upon the pity natural to mankind.—C. ["We are surprised that neither Johnson nor his commentators should have called to mind Aristotle's definition of pity, which gives, in a few words, the whole *rationale* of the matter: 'Pity is a painful feeling, excited by the contemplation of some distress, the like of which we know may befall ourselves.'" — Quart. Rev. vol. xlvi. p. 367.]

from the author, obtains a perpetual property ; and upon that belief, numberless bargains are made to transfer that property after the expiration of the statutory term. Now Donaldson, I say, takes advantage here, of people who have really an equitable title from usage ; and if we consider how few of the books, of which they buy the property, succeed so well as to bring profit, we should be of opinion that the term of fourteen years is too short ; it should be sixty years." DEMPSTER. " Donaldson, Sir, is anxious for the encouragement of literature. He reduces the price of books, so that poor students may buy them." JOHNSON (laughing). " Well, Sir, allowing that to be his motive, he is no better than Robin Hood, who robbed the rich in order to give to the poor."

It is remarkable, that when the great question concerning literary property came to be ultimately tried before the supreme tribunal of this country, in consequence of the very spirited exertions ⁽¹⁾ of Mr. Donaldson, Dr. Johnson was zealous against a perpetuity ; but he thought that the term of the exclusive right of authors should be considerably enlarged. He was then for granting a hundred years.

The conversation now turned upon Mr. David Hume's style. JOHNSON. " Why, Sir, his style is not English ; the structure of his sentences is French. Now the French structure and the English structure

(1) It savours of that nationality which Mr. Boswell was so anxious to disclaim, to talk thus eulogistically of "the very spirited exertions" of a piratical bookseller. — C.

may, in the nature of things, be equally good. But if you allow that the English language is established, he is wrong. My name might originally have been Nicholson, as well as Johnson ; but were you to call me Nicholson now, you would call me very absurdly."

Rousseau's treatise on the inequality of mankind was at this time a fashionable topic. It gave rise to an observation by Mr. Dempster, that the advantages of fortune and rank were nothing to a wise man, who ought to value only merit. JOHNSON. "If man were a savage, living in the woods by himself, this might be true ; but in civilised society we all depend upon each other, and our happiness is very much owing to the good opinion of mankind. Now, Sir, in civilised society, external advantages make us more respected. A man with a good coat upon his back meets with a better reception than he who has a bad one. Sir, you may analyse this, and say, What is there in it ? But that will avail you nothing, for it is a part of a general system. Pound St. Paul's church into atoms, and consider any single atom ; it is, to be sure, good for nothing : but, put all these atoms together, and you have St. Paul's church. So it is with human felicity, which is made up of many ingredients, each of which may be shown to be very insignificant. In civilised society, personal merit will not serve you so much as money will. Sir, you may make the experiment. Go into the street, and give one man a lecture on morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you most. If you wish only to support nature, Sir,

William Petty fixes your allowance at three pounds a year (1); but as times are much altered, let us call it six pounds. This sum will fill your belly, shelter you from the weather, and even get you a strong lasting coat, supposing it to be made of good bull's hide. Now, Sir, all beyond this is artificial, and is desired in order to obtain a greater degree of respect from our fellow creatures. And, Sir, if six hundred pounds a year procure a man more consequence, and, of course, more happiness, than six pounds a year, the same proportion will hold as to six thousand, and so on, as far as opulence can be carried. Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having the large fortune: for, *cæteris paribus*, he who is rich, in civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used, (and it is a man's own fault if they are not,) must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. Rousseau, and all those who deal in paradoxes, are led away by a childish desire of novelty. (2) When I was a boy, I used always to choose the wrong side of a debate (3), because most

(1) [See his "Quantulumque concerning Money."]

(2) Johnson told Dr. Burney, that Goldsmith said, when he first began to write, he determined to commit to paper nothing but what was *new*; but he afterwards found that what was *new* was generally false, and from that time was no longer solicitous about novelty. — BURNÉY.

(3) This boyish practice appears to have adhered, in some degree, to the man. — C.

ingenious things, that is to say, most new things, could be said upon it. Sir, there is nothing for which you may not muster up more plausible arguments, than those which are urged against wealth and other external advantages. Why, now, there is stealing; why should it be thought a crime? When we consider by what unjust methods property has been often acquired, and that what was unjustly got it must be unjust to keep, where is the harm in one man's taking the property of another from him? Besides, Sir, when we consider the bad use that many people make of their property, and how much better use the thief may make of it, it may be defended as a very allowable practice. Yet, Sir, the experience of mankind has discovered stealing to be so very bad a thing, that they make no scruple to hang a man for it. When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a greater arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil, shew it to be evidently a great evil. You never find people labouring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune. So you hear people talking how miserable a king must be; and yet they all wish to be in his place."

It was suggested, that kings must be unhappy, because they are deprived of the greatest of all satisfactions, easy and unreserved society. JOHNSON. "That is an ill-founded notion. Being a king does not exclude a man from such society. Great kings have always been social. The king of Prussia,

the only great king at present, is very social. Charles the Second, the last king of England who was a man of parts, was social ; and our Henrys and Edwards were all social." (1)

Mr. Dempster having endeavoured to maintain that intrinsic merit *ought* to make the only distinction amongst mankind. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavour to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank ; or his being appointed to certain offices gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure."

I said, I consider distinction of rank to be of so much importance in civilized society, that if I were asked on the same day to dine with the first Duke in England, and with the first man in Britain for genius, I should hesitate which to prefer. JOHN-

(1) This opinion has received strong confirmation from his late majesty George the Fourth, whose natural abilities were undoubtedly very considerable, whose reign was eminently glorious, and whose private life was amiable and social. — C.

son. "To be sure, Sir, if you were to dine only once, and it were never to be known where you dined, you would choose rather to dine with the first man for genius ; but to gain most respect, you should dine with the first duke in England. For nine people in ten that you meet with, would have a higher opinion of you for having dined with a duke ; and the great genius himself would receive you better, because you had been with the great duke."

He took care to guard himself against any possible suspicion that his settled principles of reverence for rank, and respect for wealth, were at all owing to mean or interested motives ; for he asserted his own independence as a literary man. "No man," said he, "who ever lived by literature, has lived more independently than I have done." He said he had taken longer time than he needed to have done in composing his Dictionary. He received our compliments upon that great work with complacency, and told us that the Academy *della Crusca* could scarcely believe that it was done by one man.

Next morning I found him alone, and have preserved the following fragments of his conversation. Of a gentleman⁽¹⁾ who was mentioned, he said, "I have not met with any man for a long time who has given me such general displeasure. He is totally unfixed in his principles, and wants to puzzle other

(1) Probably Mr. Dempster, whose share in the preceding conversation was very likely to have displeased Johnson. The "infidel writer" is no doubt Dempster's countryman, Mr. Hume. — C.

people." I said his principles had been poisoned by a noted infidel writer, but that he was, nevertheless, a benevolent good man. JOHNSON. "We can have no dependence upon that instinctive, that constitutional goodness which is not founded upon principle. I grant you that such a man may be a very amiable member of society. I can conceive him placed in such a situation that he is not much tempted to deviate from what is right; and as every man prefers virtue, when there is not some strong incitement to transgress its precepts, I can conceive him doing nothing wrong. But if such a man stood in need of money, I should not like to trust him; and I should certainly not trust him with young ladies, for *there* there is always temptation. Hume, and other sceptical innovators, are vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expense. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull. If I could have allowed myself to gratify my vanity at the expense of truth, what fame might I have acquired! Every thing which Hume has advanced against Christianity had passed through my mind long before he wrote. Always remember this, that after a system is well settled upon positive evidence, a few partial objections ought not to shake it. The human mind is so limited, that it cannot take in all the parts of a subject, so that there may be objections raised against any thing. There are objections against a *plenum*,

and objections against a *vacuum* ; yet one of them must certainly be true."

I mentioned Hume's argument against the belief of miracles, that it is more probable that the witnesses to the truth of them are mistaken, or speak falsely, than that the miracles should be true. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the great difficulty of proving miracles should make us very cautious in believing them. But let us consider ; although GOD has made Nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think that he may suspend those laws, in order to establish a system highly advantageous to mankind. Now the Christian religion is a most beneficial system, as it gives us light and certainty where we were before in darkness and doubt. The miracles which prove it are attested by men who had no interest in deceiving us ; but who, on the contrary, were told that they should suffer persecution, and did actually lay down their lives in confirmation of the truth of the facts which they asserted. Indeed, for some centuries the heathens did not pretend to deny the miracles ; but said they were performed by the aid of evil spirits. This is a circumstance of great weight. Then, Sir, when we take the proofs derived from prophecies which have been so exactly fulfilled, we have most satisfactory evidence. Supposing a miracle possible, as to which, in my opinion, there can be no doubt, we have as strong evidence for the miracles in support of Christianity as the nature of the thing admits."

At night, Mr. Johnson and I supped in a private room at the Turk's Head coffee-house, in the

Strand. "I encourage this house," said he, "for the mistress of it is a good civil woman, and has not much business."

"Sir, I love the acquaintance of young people; because, in the first place, I don't like to think myself growing old. In the next place, young acquaintances must last longest, if they do last; and then, Sir, young men have more virtue than old men; they have more generous sentiments in every respect. I love the young dogs of this age, they have more wit and humour and knowledge of life than we had (1); but then the dogs are not so good scholars. Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. (2) My judgment, to be sure, was not so good; but, I had all the facts. I remember very well, when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to me, 'Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come unto you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.'"

This account of his reading, given by himself in plain words, sufficiently confirms what I have al-

(1) The justice of this assertion may be doubted. Johnson was comparing men of such a rank and station as he now met, with the narrow, provincial, and inferior society in which his own youth was spent. — C.

(2) His great period of study was from the age of twelve to that of eighteen; as he told Mr. Langton, who gave me this information. — M. — He went to Oxford in his nineteenth year, and seems to have translated the Messiah when he had been there not quite three months. — C.

ready advanced upon the disputed question as to his application. It reconciles any seeming inconsistency in his way of talking upon it at different times; and shows that idleness and reading hard were with him relative terms, the import of which, as used by him, must be gathered from a comparison with what scholars of different degrees of ardour and assiduity have been known to do. And let it be remembered, that he was now talking spontaneously, and expressing his genuine sentiments; whereas at other times he might be induced from his spirit of contradiction, or more properly from his love of argumentative contest, to speak lightly of his own application to study. It is pleasing to consider that the old gentleman's gloomy prophecy as to the irksomeness of books to men of an advanced age, which is too often fulfilled, was so far from being verified in Johnson, that his ardour for literature never failed, and his last writings had more ease and vivacity than any of his earlier productions.

He mentioned it to me now, for the first time, that he had been distressed by melancholy, and for that reason had been obliged to fly from study and meditation, to the dissipating variety of life. Against melancholy he recommended constant occupation of mind, a great deal of exercise, moderation in eating and drinking, and especially to shun drinking at night. ⁽¹⁾ He said melancholy people were apt to fly to intemperance for relief, but that it sunk them much deeper in misery. He observed, that labour-

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 113. n.

ing men, who work hard, and live sparingly, are seldom or never troubled with low spirits.

He again insisted on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank. "Sir, I would no more deprive a nobleman of his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he Sam. Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay (1), in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, Sir, shewed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?" I mentioned a certain author (2) who disgusted me by his forwardness, and by shewing no deference to

(1) This "one Mrs. Macaulay" was the same personage, who afterwards made herself so much known as "the celebrated female historian." See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 289. — C.

(2) Something of this kind has been imputed to Goldsmith. — C.

noblemen into whose company he was admitted. JOHNSON. "Suppose a shoemaker should claim an equality with him, as he does with a lord: how he would stare. 'Why, Sir, do you stare? (says the shoemaker,) I do great service to society. 'Tis true, I am paid for doing it; but so are you Sir: and I am sorry to say it, better paid than I am, for doing something not so necessary. For mankind could do better without your books, than without my shoes.' Thus, Sir, there would be a perpetual struggle for precedence, were there no fixed invariable rules for the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy, as it is allowed to be accidental."

He said, Dr. Joseph Warton was a very agreeable man, and his "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope," a very pleasing book. I wondered that he delayed so long to give us the continuation of it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I suppose he finds himself a little disappointed, in not having been able to persuade the world to be of his opinion as to Pope."

We have now been favoured with the concluding volume, in which, to use a parliamentary expression, he has *explained*, so as not to appear quite so adverse to the opinion of the world, concerning Pope, as was at first thought; and we must all agree, that his work is a most valuable accession to English literature.

A writer of deserved eminence (1) being men-

(1) It is not easy to say who was here meant. Murphy, who was born poor, was distinguished for elegance of manners and conversation; and Fielding, who could not have been spoken

tioned, Johnson said, "Why, Sir, he is a man of good parts, but being originally poor, he has got a love of mean company, and low jocularities; a very bad thing, Sir. To laugh is good, as to talk is good. But you ought no more to think it enough if you laugh, than you are to think it enough if you talk. You may laugh in as many ways as you talk; and surely *every* way of talking that is practised cannot be esteemed."

I spoke of a Sir James Macdonald⁽¹⁾ as a young man of most distinguished merit, who united the highest reputation at Eton and Oxford, with the patriarchal spirit of a great Highland chieftain. I mentioned that Sir James had said to me, that he had never seen Mr. Johnson, but he had a great respect for him, though at the same time it was mixed with some degree of terror. JOHNSON. "Sir, if he were to be acquainted with me, it might lessen both."

The mention of this gentleman led us to talk of the Western Islands of Scotland, to visit which he expressed a wish that then appeared to me a very

of as alive in 1763, was born to better prospects, though he kept low company; and had it been Goldsmith, Boswell would probably have had no scruple in naming him.—C. 1830. The neighbouring mention of the name of *Warton*, and the allusion to "a fondness for low company," with which he has been often reproached (though Dr. Mant says unjustly), inclines me to suspect that *he* is the person meant. — C. 1835. [Will the editor allow us to suggest the name of *Smollett*; who had left London for Italy, the month before this conversation occurs, and might naturally be talked of. — Quart. Rev. 1831.]

(1) See *post*, March 27. 1772, and September 5. 1773. — C. [See also Mrs. Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montague, for a notice of this gentleman's premature death, vol. i. 316. 320.]

romantic fancy, which I little thought would be afterwards realised. He told me, that his father had put Martin's account of those islands into his hands when he was very young, and that he was highly pleased with it; that he was particularly struck with the St. Kilda man's notion that the high church of Glasgow had been hollowed out of a rock ⁽¹⁾; a circumstance to which old Mr. Johnson had directed his attention. He said, he would go to the Hebrides with me, when I returned from my travels, unless some very good companion should offer when I was absent, which he did not think probable; adding, "There are few people to whom I take so much to as to you." And when I talked of my leaving England, he said with a very affectionate air, "My dear Boswell, I should be very unhappy at parting, did I think we were not to meet again." — I cannot too often remind my readers, that although such instances of his kindness are doubtless very flattering to me, yet I hope my recording them will be ascribed to a better motive than to vanity; for they afford unquestionable evidence of his tenderness and complacency, which some, while they were forced to acknowledge his great powers, have been so strenuous to deny.

He maintained, that a boy at school was the happiest of human beings. I supported a different opinion, from which I have never yet varied, that a man is happier: and I enlarged upon the anxiety and sufferings which are endured at school. JOHNSON.

(1) Addison in the Spectator, No. 50., makes the Indian king suppose that St. Paul's was carved out of a rock. — C.

“ Ah! Sir, a boy’s being flogged is not so severe as a man’s having the hiss of the world against him. Men have a solicitude about fame ; and the greater share they have of it, the more afraid they are of losing it.” I silently asked myself, “ Is it possible that the great SAMUEL JOHNSON really entertains any such apprehension, and is not confident that his exalted fame is established upon a foundation never to be shaken?”

He this evening drank a bumper to Sir David Dalrymple, “ as a man of worth, a scholar, and a wit.” “ I have,” said he, “ never heard of him, except from you ; but let him know my opinion of him : for, as he does not shew himself much in the world, he should have the praise of the few who hear of him.”

CHAPTER VIII.

1763.

Table-Talk. — Influence of the Weather. — Swift. — Thomson. — Burke. — Sheridan. — Evidences of Christianity. — Derrick. — Day at Greenwich. — The Methodists. — Johnson's "Walk." — The Convocation. — Blacklock. — Johnson accompanies Boswell to Harwich. — The Journey. — "Good Eating." — "Abstinence and Temperance." — Johnson's favourite Dishes. — Bishop Berkeley "refuted." — Burke. — Boswell sails for Holland.

ON Tuesday, July 26., I found Mr. Johnson alone. It was a very wet day, and I again complained of the disagreeable effects of such weather. JOHNSON. "Sir, this is all imagination, which physicians encourage; for man lives in air, as a fish lives in water; so that, if the atmosphere press heavy from above, there is an equal resistance from below. To be sure, bad weather is hard upon people who are obliged to be abroad; and men cannot labour so well in the open air in bad weather, as in good: but, Sir, a smith or tailor, whose work is within doors, will surely do as much in rainy weather as in fair. Some very delicate frames indeed may be affected by wet weather; but not common constitutions."

We talked of the education of children ; and I asked him what he thought was best to teach them first. JOHNSON. “ Sir, it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the mean time your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt them both.”

On Thursday, July 28., we again supped in private at the Turk’s Head coffee-house. JOHNSON. “ Swift has a higher reputation than he deserves. His excellence is strong sense ; for, his humour though very well, is not remarkably good. I doubt whether the ‘ Tale of a Tub ’ be his ; for he never owned it, and it is much above his usual manner.⁽¹⁾

“ Thomson, I think, had as much of the poet about him as most writers. Every thing appeared to him through the medium of his favourite pursuit. He could not have viewed those two candles burning but with a poetical eye.”

“ Has not — ⁽²⁾ a great deal of wit, Sir ? ”
JOHNSON. “ I do not think so, Sir. He is, indeed, continually attempting wit, but he fails. And I

(1) This opinion was given by him more at large at a subsequent period. See *post*, Aug. 16. 1773. — B. — How could Johnson doubt that Swift was the author of the Tale of a Tub, when, as he himself relates in his Life of Swift, “ No other claimants can be produced ; and when Archbishop Sharpe and the Duchess of Somerset, by showing it to Queen Anne, debarred Swift of a bishoprick, *he did not deny it?* ” We have, moreover, Swift’s own acknowledgment of it, in his letter to Ben. Tooke the printer, June 29. 1710. — C.

(2) There is no doubt that this blank must be filled with the name of Mr. Burke. See *post*, Aug. 15. and Sept. 15. 1773, and April 25. 1778. — C.

have no more pleasure in hearing a man attempting wit and failing, than in seeing a man trying to leap over a ditch and tumbling into it."

He laughed heartily when I mentioned to him a saying of his concerning Mr. Thomas Sheridan, which Foote took a wicked pleasure to circulate. "Why, Sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an access of stupidity, Sir, is not in Nature."—"So," said he, "I allowed him all his own merit."

He now added, "Sheridan cannot bear me. I bring his declamation to a point. I ask him a plain question, 'What do you mean to teach?' Besides, Sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country, by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover, to show light at Calais."

Talking of a young man ⁽¹⁾ who was uneasy from thinking that he was very deficient in learning and knowledge, he said, "A man has no reason to complain who holds a middle place, and has many below him; and perhaps he has not six of his years above him;—perhaps not one. Though he may know any thing perfectly, the general mass of knowledge that he has acquired is considerable. Time will do for him all that is wanting."

The conversation then took a philosophical turn. JOHNSON. "Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth. A

(1) [No doubt Boswell himself.]

system, built upon the discoveries of a great many minds, is always of more strength, than what is produced by the mere workings of any one mind, which, of itself, can do little. There is not so poor a book in the world that would not be a prodigious effort were it wrought out entirely by a single mind, without the aid of prior investigators. The French writers are superficial, because they are not scholars, and so proceed upon the mere power of their own minds; and we see how very little power they have.”

“As to the Christian religion, Sir, besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favour from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth, after a serious consideration of the question. Grotius was an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who certainly had no bias to the side of religion. Sir Isaac Newton set out an infidel, and came to be a very firm believer.” (1)

He this evening again recommended to me to

(1) Where, the Bishop of Ferns asks, did Johnson learn this? It is true that Dr. Horsley declined publishing some papers on religious subjects which Newton left behind him — some have suspected that they were tainted with Unitarianism; others (probably from a consideration of his work on the Revelations) believed that they were in a strain of mysticism not (in the opinion of his friends) worthy of so great a genius; and the recent publication of his two letters to Locke, in a style of infantine simplicity (see Lord King's Life of Locke), gives additional colour to this latter opinion: but for Johnson's assertion that he *set out* an infidel, there appears no authority, and all the inferences are the other way. — C.

perambulate Spain. (1) I said it would amuse him to get a letter from me dated at Salamanca. JOHNSON. "I love the university of Salamanca; for when the Spaniards were in doubt as to the lawfulness of their conquering America, the university of Salamanca gave it as their opinion that it was not lawful." He spoke this with great emotion, and with that generous warmth which dictated the lines in his "London," against Spanish encroachment. (2)

I expressed my opinion of my friend Derrick as but a poor writer. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, he is: but you are to consider that his being a literary man has got for him all that he has. It has made him King of Bath. (3) Sir, he has nothing to say for himself but that he is a writer. Had he not been a writer, he must have been sweeping the crossings in the streets, and asking halfpence from every body that passed."

In justice, however, to the memory of Mr. Derrick, who was my first tutor in the ways of London, and shewed me the town in all its variety of departments, both literary and sportive, the particulars of which Dr. Johnson advised me to put in writing, it is proper to mention what Johnson, at a subsequent

(1) I fully intended to have followed advice of such weight; but having staid much longer both in Germany and Italy than I proposed to do, and having also visited Corsica, I found that I had exceeded the time allowed me by my father, and hastened to France in my way homewards. — B.

(2) ["Has Heaven reserved, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert yet unclaim'd by Spain?"]

(3) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 136.]

period, said of him both as a writer and an editor :
 “ Sir, I have often said, that if Derrick’s letters had
 been written by one of a more established name,
 they would have been thought very pretty letters.”
 And, “ I sent Derrick to Dryden’s relations to gather
 materials for his life ; and I believe he got all that I
 myself should have got.” (1)

Poor Derrick ! I remember him with kindness.
 Yet I cannot withhold from my readers a pleasant
 humorous sally which could not have hurt him had
 he been alive, and now is perfectly harmless. In his
 collection of poems, there is one upon entering
 the harbour of Dublin, his native city, after a long
 absence. It begins thus : —

“ Eblana ! much loved city, hail !
 Where first I saw the light of day.”

And after a solemn reflection on his being “ num-
 bered with forgotten dead,” there is the following
 stanza :

“ Unless my lines protract my fame,
 And those, who chance to read them, cry,
 I knew him ! Derrick was his name,
 In yonder tomb his ashes lie : ” —

which was thus happily parodied by Mr. John Home,
 to whom we owe the beautiful and pathetic tragedy
 of “ Douglas : ”

“ Unless my *deeds* protract my fame
 And he who passes sadly sings,
 I knew him ! Derrick was his name,
 On yonder tree his carcase swings ! ”

I doubt much whether the amiable and ingenious

(1) [See *post*, Aug. 27. and Sept. 22. 1773.]

author of these burlesque lines will recollect them ; for they were produced extempore one evening while he and I were walking together in the dining-room at Eglington Castle, in 1760, and I have never mentioned them to him since.

Johnson said once to me, " Sir, I honour Derrick for his presence of mind. One night, when Floyd, ⁽¹⁾ another poor author, was wandering about the streets in the night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk : upon being suddenly waked, Derrick started up, ' My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state : will you go home with me to *my lodgings* ? ' "

I again begged his advice as to my method of study at Utrecht. " Come," said he, " let us make a day of it. Let us go down to Greenwich and dine, and talk of it there." The following Saturday was fixed for this excursion.

As we walked along the Strand to-night, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us, in the usual enticing manner. " No, no, my girl," said Johnson, " it won't do." He, however, did not treat her with harshness ; and we talked of the wretched life of such women, and agreed, that much more misery than happiness, upon the whole, is produced by illicit commerce between the sexes.

On Saturday, July 30., Dr. Johnson and I took a sculler at the Temple-stairs, and set out for Green-

(1) [Thomas Floyd published, in 1760, " Bibliotheca Biographica ; a Synopsis of Universal Biography," in three volumes, 8vo, and in 1760, a Translation of Du Fresnay's Chronological Tables of Universal History.]

wich. I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education. JOHNSON. "Most certainly, Sir; for those who know them have a very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, Sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life, which does not appear to be much connected with it." "And yet," said I, "people go through the world very well, and carry on the business of life to good advantage, without learning." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that may be true in cases where learning cannot possibly be of any use; for instance, this boy rows us as well without learning as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts, who were the first sailors." He then called to the boy, "What would you give, my lad, to know about the Argonauts?" "Sir," said the boy, "I would give what I have." Johnson was much pleased with his answer, and we gave him a double fare. Dr. Johnson then turning to me, "Sir," said he, "a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has, to get knowledge."

We landed at the Old Swan⁽¹⁾, and walked

(1) The erection of a new London Bridge may render it useful to observe that, with the ebb-tide, it was dangerous to pass through, or *shoot*, the arches of the old bridge: passengers, therefore, landed above the bridge, and walked to some wharf below it. — C.

[“ ‘*Shoot we the bridge!*’ — the vent’rous boatmen cry —
‘*Shoot we the bridge!*’ — th’ exulting fare reply.

to Billingsgate, where we took oars and moved smoothly along the silver Thames. It was a very fine day. We were entertained with the immense number and variety of ships that were lying at anchor, and with the beautiful country on each side of the river.

I talked of preaching, and of the great success which those called methodists⁽¹⁾ have. JOHNSON.

Down the steep fall the headlong waters go,
 Curls the white foam, the breakers roar below ;
 The veering helm the dext'rous steersman stops,
 Shifts the thin oar, the fluttering canvas drops ;
 Then, with closed eyes, clench'd hands, and quick-drawn
 breath,

* Darts at the central arch, nor heeds the gulf beneath."
 Canning's Loves of the Triangles.]

(1) All who are acquainted with the history of religion, (the most important, surely, that concerns the human mind,) know that the appellation of *Methodists* was first given to a society of students in the University of Oxford, who, about the year 1730, were distinguished by an earnest and *methodical* attention to devout exercises. This disposition of mind is not a novelty, or peculiar to any sect, but has been, and still may be, found in many Christians of every denomination. Johnson himself was, in a dignified manner, a methodist. In his *Rambler*, No. 110., he mentions with respect "the whole discipline of regulated piety;" and in his "*Prayers and Meditations*," many instances occur of his anxious examination into his spiritual state. That this religious earnestness, and in particular an observation of the influence of the Holy Spirit, has sometimes degenerated into folly, and sometimes been counterfeited for base purposes, cannot be denied. But it is not, therefore, fair to decry it when genuine. The principal argument, in reason and good sense, against methodism is, that it tends to debase human nature, and prevent the generous exertions of goodness, by an unworthy supposition that God will pay no regard to them; although it is positively said in the scriptures, that he "will regard every man according to his works." But I am happy to have it in my power to do justice to those whom it is the fashion to ridicule, without any knowledge of their tenets; and this I can do by quoting a passage from one of their best apologists, Mr. Milner, who thus expresses their doctrine upon this subject: — "Justified by faith, renewed in his faculties, and constrained by the

“ Sir, it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people, and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations; a practice, for which they will be praised by men of sense. To insist against drunkenness as a crime, because it debases reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people: but to tell them that they may die in a fit of drunkenness, and shew them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression. Sir, when your Scotch clergy give up their homely manner, religion will soon decay in that country.” Let this observation, as Johnson meant it, be ever remembered.

I was much pleased to find myself with Johnson at Greenwich, which he celebrates in his “ London ” as a favourite scene. I had the poem in my pocket, and read the lines aloud with enthusiasm :

“ On Thames’s banks in silent thought we stood,
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood:
Pleased with the seat which gave ELIZA birth,
We kneel and kiss the consecrated earth.”

love of Christ, the believer moves in the sphere of love and gratitude, and all his *duties* flow more or less from this principle. And though *they are accumulating for him in heaven a treasure of bliss proportioned to his faithfulness and activity, and it is by no means inconsistent with his principles to feel the force of this consideration, yet love itself sweetens every duty to his mind; and he thinks there is no absurdity in his feeling the love of God as the grand commanding principle of his life.* — *Essays on religious Subjects, &c., by Joseph Milner, A.M., Master of the Grammar School of Kingston-upon-Hull, 1789, p. 11.* — B. — Joseph Milner was brother of Dr. Isaac Milner, who died Dean of Carlisle. — C.

He remarked that the structure of Greenwich Hospital was too magnificent for a place of charity, and that its parts were too much detached, to make one great whole.

Buchanan, he said, was a very fine poet ⁽¹⁾; and observed, that he was the first who complimented a lady, by ascribing to her the different perfections of the heathen goddesses ⁽²⁾; but that Johnstone ⁽³⁾ improved upon this, by making his lady, at the same time, free from their defects.

He dwelt upon Buchanan's elegant verses to Mary Queen of Scots, *Nympha Caledoniæ* ⁽⁴⁾, &c. and spoke with enthusiasm of the beauty of Latin verse. "All the modern languages," said he, "cannot furnish so melodious a line as —

‘*Formosam resonare doces Amarillida silvas.*’ ”

Afterwards he entered upon the business of the day, which was to give me his advice as to a course of study. And here I am to mention, with much regret, that my record of what he said is miserably scanty. I recollect with admiration an animating

(1) See *post*, sub March 30. 1783. — C.

(2) Epigram, Lib. II. "In Elizabeth, Angliæ Reg." — I suspect that the author's memory here deceived him, and that Johnson said, "the first *modern* poet;" for there is a well-known Epigram in the "Anthologia," containing this kind of eulogy. — M.

(3) Arthur Johnstone, born near Aberdeen in 1587, an elegant Latin poet. His principal works are a volume of epigrams (in which is to be found that to which Dr. Johnson alludes,) and a Latin paraphrase of the Psalms. He died at Oxford in 1641. — C.

(4) ["*Nympha Caledoniæ quæ nunc feliciter oræ
Missa per innumeros sceptrâ tueris avos,*" &c.]

blaze of eloquence, which roused every intellectual power in me to the highest pitch, but must have dazzled me so much, that my memory could not preserve the substance of his discourse ; for the note which I find of it is no more than this :—“ He ran over the grand scale of human knowledge ; advised me to select some particular branch to excel in, but to acquire a little of every kind.” The defect of my minutes will be fully supplied by a long letter upon the subject, which he favoured me with, after I had been some time at Utrecht, and which my readers will have the pleasure to peruse in its proper place.

We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me, I suppose by way of trying my disposition, “ Is not this very fine ?” Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of nature, and being more delighted with “ the busy hum of men,” I answered, “ Yes, Sir ; but not equal to Fleet-street.” JOHNSON. “ You are right, Sir.”

I am aware that many of my readers may censure my want of taste. Let me, however, shelter myself under the authority of a very fashionable baronet ⁽¹⁾ in the brilliant world, who, on his attention being

(1) My friend Sir Michael Le Fleming. This gentleman, with all his experience of sprightly and elegant life, inherits, with the beautiful family domain, no inconsiderable share of that love of literature, which distinguished his venerable grandfather the Bishop of Carlisle. He one day observed to me, of Dr. Johnson, in a felicity of phrase, “ There is a blunt dignity about him on every occasion.” — B. — Sir Michael Le Fleming [of Rydall in Westmoreland] died of an apoplectic fit, May 19. 1806, while conversing, at the Admiralty, with Lord Howick, [now the Earl Grey]. — M. & C.

called to the fragrance of a May evening in the country, observed, "This may be very well; but, for my part, I prefer the smell of a flambeau at the playhouse."

We staid so long at Greenwich, that our sail up the river, in our return to London, was by no means so pleasant as in the morning; for the night air was so cold that it made me shiver. I was the more sensible of it from having sat up all the night before recollecting and writing in my Journal what I thought worthy of preservation; an exertion, which, during the first part of my acquaintance with Johnson, I frequently made. I remember having sat up four nights in one week, without being much incommoded in the daytime.

Johnson, whose robust frame was not in the least affected by the cold, scolded me, as if my shivering had been a paltry effeminacy, saying, "Why do you shiver?" Sir William Scott⁽¹⁾, of the Commons, told me, that when he complained of a headach in the post-chaise, as they were travelling together to Scotland, Johnson treated him in the same manner: "At your age, Sir, I had no headach." It is not easy to make allowance for sensations in others, which we ourselves have not at the time. We must all have experienced how very differently we are affected by the complaints of our neighbours, when we are well and when we are ill. In full health, we can scarcely believe that they suffer much; so faint is the image

(1) Now Lord Stowell, who accompanied Dr. Johnson from Newcastle to Edinburgh in 1773. — C.

of pain upon our imagination: when softened by sickness, we readily sympathise with the sufferings of others.

We concluded the day at the Turk's Head coffee-house very socially. He was pleased to listen to a particular account which I gave him of my family, and of its hereditary estate, as to the extent and population of which he asked questions, and made calculations; recommending, at the same time, a liberal kindness to the tenantry, as people over whom the proprietor was placed by Providence. He took delight in hearing my description of the romantic seat of my ancestors. "I must be there, Sir," said he, "and we will live in the old castle; and if there is not a room in it remaining, we will build one." I was highly flattered, but could scarcely indulge a hope that Auchinleck would indeed be honoured by his presence, and celebrated by a description, as it afterwards was, in his "Journey to the Western Islands."

After we had again talked of my setting out for Holland, he said, "I must see thee out of England; I will accompany you to Harwich." I could not find words to express what I felt upon this unexpected and very great mark of his affectionate regard. (1)

Next day, Sunday, July 31., I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON. "Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog's

(1) [Boswell had first met Johnson only ten weeks before this time, viz. on the 16th of May. — MARKLAND.]

walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

On Tuesday, August 2., (the day of my departure from London having been fixed for the 5th,) Dr. Johnson did me the honour to pass a part of the morning with me at my chambers. He said, that "he always felt an inclination to do nothing." I observed, that it was strange to think that the most indolent man in Britain had written the most laborious work, *THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY*.

I mentioned an imprudent publication, by a certain friend of his, at an early period of life, and asked him if he thought it would hurt him. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; not much. It may, perhaps, be mentioned at an election." (1)

I had now made good my title to be a privileged man, and was carried by him in the evening to drink tea with Miss Williams, whom, though under the misfortune of having lost her sight, I found to be agreeable in conversation; for she had a variety of literature, and expressed herself well; but her peculiar value was the intimacy in which she had long

(1) This probably alludes to Mr. Burke's "Vindication of Natural Society," a work published in 1756, in a happy imitation of Lord Bolingbroke's style, and in an ironical adoption of his principles: the whole was so well done, that it at first passed as a genuine work of Lord Bolingbroke's, and subsequently as a serious and (as in style and imagery it certainly is) splendid exposition of the principles of one of his disciples. Lord Chesterfield and Bishop Warburton are stated to have been so deceived; and it would seem, from the passage in the text, that Johnson and Boswell were in the same error. In 1765, Mr. Burke reprinted this piece, with a preface, in which he throws off altogether the mask of irony. Mr. Boswell calls him a *friend of Johnson's*, for he himself had not yet met Mr. Burke.

— C.

lived with Johnson, by which she was well acquainted with his habits, and knew how to lead him on to talk.

After tea he carried me to what he called his walk, which was a long narrow paved court in the neighbourhood, overshadowed by some trees. There we sauntered a considerable time; and I complained to him that my love of London and of his company was such, that I shrunk almost from the thought of going away even to travel, which is generally so much desired by young men. He roused me by manly and spirited conversation. He advised me, when settled in any place abroad, to study with an eagerness after knowledge, and to apply to Greek an hour every day; and when I was moving about, to read diligently the great book of mankind.

On Wednesday, August 3., we had our last social evening at the Turk's Head coffee-house, before my setting out for foreign parts. I had the misfortune, before we parted, to irritate him unintentionally. I mentioned to him how common it was in the world to tell absurd stories of him, and to ascribe to him very strange sayings. JOHNSON. "What do they make me say, Sir?" BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, as an instance very strange indeed, (laughing heartily as I spoke,) David Hume told me, you said that you would stand before a battery of cannon to restore the Convocation to its full powers." Little did I apprehend that he had actually said this: but I was soon convinced of my error; for, with a determined look, he thundered out, "And would I not, Sir? Shall the Presby-

terian *kirk* of Scotland have its General Assembly, and the Church of England be denied its Convocation?" He was walking up and down the room, while I told him the anecdote; but when he uttered this explosion of high-church zeal, he had come close to my chair, and his eyes flashed with indignation. I bowed to the storm, and diverted the force of it, by leading him to expatiate on the influence which religion derived from maintaining the church with great external respectability.

I must not omit to mention that he this year wrote "The Life of Ascham," † and the Dedication to the Earl of Shaftesbury, † prefixed to the edition of that writer's English works, published by Mr. Bennet. (1)

On Friday, August 5., we set out early in the morning in the Harwich stage-coach. A fat elderly gentlewoman, and a young Dutchman, seemed the most inclined among us to conversation. At the inn where we dined, the gentlewoman said that she had done her best to educate her children; and particularly, that she had never suffered them to be a moment idle. JOHNSON. "I wish, Madam, you would educate me too: for I have been an idle fellow all my life." "I am sure, Sir," said she, "you have not been idle." JOHNSON. "Nay, madam, it is very

(1) Johnson was, in fact, the editor of this work, as appears from a letter of Mr. T. Davies to the Rev. Edm. Bettesworth: — "Reverend Sir, — I take the liberty to send you Roger Ascham's works in English. Though Mr. Bennet's name is in the title, the editor was in reality Mr. Johnson, the author of the Rambler, who wrote the life of the author, and added several notes. Mr. Johnson gave it to Mr. Bennet, for his advantage," &c. — C.

true ; and that gentleman there," pointing to me, "has been idle. He was idle at Edinburgh. His father sent him to Glasgow, where he continued to be idle. He then came to London, where he has been very idle ; and now he is going to Utrecht, where he will be as idle as ever." I asked him privately how he could expose me so. JOHNSON. "Poh, poh !" said he, "they knew nothing about you, and will think of it no more." In the afternoon the gentlewoman talked violently against the Roman Catholics, and of the horrors of the Inquisition. To the utter astonishment of all the passengers but myself, who knew that he could talk upon any side of a question, he defended the Inquisition, and maintained, that "false doctrine should be checked on its first appearance ; that the civil power should unite with the church in punishing those who dare to attack the established religion, and that such only were punished by the Inquisition." He had in his pocket "*Pomponius Mela de Situ Orbis*," in which he read occasionally, and seemed very intent upon ancient geography. Though by no means niggardly, his attention to what was generally right was so minute, that having observed at one of the stages that I ostentatiously gave a shilling to the coachman, when the custom was for each passenger to give only sixpence, he took me aside and scolded me, saying that what I had done would make the coachman dissatisfied with all the rest of the passengers, who gave him no more than his due. This was a just reprimand ; for in whatever way a man may indulge his generosity or his vanity in spend-

ing his money, for the sake of others he ought not to raise the price of any article for which there is a constant demand.

He talked of Mr. Blacklock's ⁽¹⁾ poetry, so far as it was descriptive of visible objects; and observed, that, "as its author had the misfortune to be blind, we may be absolutely sure that such passages are combinations of what he has remembered of the works of other writers who could see. That foolish fellow, Spence, has laboured to explain philosophically how Blacklock may have done, by means of his own faculties, what it is impossible he should do. The solution, as I have given it, is plain. Suppose, I know a man to be so lame that he is absolutely incapable to move himself, and I find him in a different room from that in which I left him; shall I puzzle myself with idle conjectures, that, perhaps, his nerves have by some unknown change all at once become effective? No, Sir, it is clear how he got into a different room; he was *carried*."

Having stopped a night at Colchester, Johnson talked of that town with veneration, for having stood

(1) Dr. Thomas Blacklock was born in 1721: he totally lost his sight by the small-pox at the age of six years, but was, nevertheless, a descriptive poet. He died in 1791. "We may conclude," says his biographer, "with Denina, in his 'Discorso della Letteratura,' that Blacklock will appear to posterity a fable, as to us he is a *prodigy*. It will be thought a fiction, that a man blind from his infancy, besides having made himself master of various foreign languages, should be a great poet in his own, and without having hardly seen the light, should be so remarkably happy in description." Johnson, no doubt, gives the true solution of Blacklock's power, which was *memory* and not *miracle*; and, mark the result! who now *quotes*, nay, who *reads* a line of Blacklock? — C.

a siege for Charles the First. The Dutchman alone now remained with us. He spoke English tolerably well; and, thinking to recommend himself to us by expatiating on the superiority of the criminal jurisprudence of this country over that of Holland, he inveighed against the barbarity of putting an accused person to the torture, in order to force a confession. But Johnson was as ready for this, as for the inquisition. “Why, Sir, you do not, I find, understand the law of your own country. To torture in Holland is considered as a favour to an accused person; for no man is put to the torture there, unless there is as much evidence against him as would amount to conviction in England. An accused person among you, therefore, has one chance more to escape punishment, than those who are tried among us.” (1)

At supper this night he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. “Some people,” said he, “have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look

(1) [“By a law of Holland, the criminal’s confession is essential to a capital punishment; no other evidence being held sufficient, and yet if he insists on his innocence, he is tortured till he pronounces the words of confession.”—KAMES’S *Hist. of Man*, b. iii. sec. 12.

It has, in several systems of law, been the practice not to execute a criminal, till his confession was obtained in some way or other. It was so with the inquisition; and it is remarked, I think, in Ellis’s *Collection of Letters*, that almost all those who were executed in Henry VIII.’s reign, acknowledged on the scaffold the justice of their sentences. We trace the remains of this in the silly practice now in use, of endeavouring to prevail on convicts to confess, — a practice which, as long as the least hope of pardon remains, is productive of nothing but accumulated falsehood. — FONNEREAU.]

upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind any thing else." He now appeared to me *Jean Bull philosophe*, and he was for the moment, not only serious, but vehement. Yet I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates; and the 206th number of his *Rambler* is a masterly essay against gulosity. His practice, indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this subject; for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table, he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment: his looks seemed riveted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite; which was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that, while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned, that Johnson, though he could be rigidly *abstemious*, was not a *temperate* man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain⁽¹⁾, but he could not

(1) If hypercritically examined, *refrain* is not, perhaps, the word which exactly gives Mr. Boswell's meaning. The late Mr. Richard Warton, Secretary of the Treasury, and author of the poem of "Roncesvalles," used to express the idea with more verbal accuracy, by saying that he could *abstain*, but found it hard to *refrain*.—C.—[The most simple expression is the most forcible:— "Abstinence is easier than temperance."—FONNREAU.]

use moderately. (1) He told me, that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once. They who beheld with wonder how much he eat upon all occasions, when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he eat, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked. I remember when he was in Scotland, his praising *Gordon's palates* (a dish of palates at the Honourable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have done honour to more important subjects. (2) "As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish*, it was a wretched attempt." He about the same time was so much displeased with the performances of a nobleman's French cook, that he exclaimed with vehemence, "I'd throw such a rascal into the river;" and he then proceeded to alarm a lady at whose house he was to sup, by the following manifesto of his skill: "I, Madam, who live at a

(1) [This illustrates the truth of Ogden's valuable advice quoted by Paley (*Moral Philosophy*, i. 291.): "The most easy, as well as the most excellent, way of being virtuous, is to be so entirely." (OGDEN, SERMONS, xvi.)—MARKLAND.]

(2) On returning to Edinburgh, after the tour to the Hebrides, he dined one day at Mr. Maclaurin's, and supped at the Honourable Alexander Gordon's: the former was son of the celebrated mathematician, and, in 1787, became a Lord of Session, by the title of Lord Dreghorn; the latter was third son of the second Earl of Aberdeen, and, in 1788, he also was made a Lord of Session, and took the title of Lord Rockville.—C.

variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery, than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook; whereas, Madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleased if something better than a plain dinner was not prepared for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, "This was a good dinner enough, to be sure; but it was not a dinner to *ask* a man to." On the other hand, he was wont to express, with great glee, his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind. One day when he had dined with his neighbour and landlord in Bolt Court, Mr. Allen⁽¹⁾, the printer, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste in every thing, he pronounced this eulogy: "Sir, we could not have had a better dinner, had there been a *Synod of Cooks.*"⁽²⁾

(1) [Edward Allen was a very excellent printer in Bolt Court. His office united to Johnson's dwelling. He died in 1780.—NICHOLS.]

(2) Johnson's notions about eating, however, were nothing less than delicate: a leg of pork boiled till it dropped from the bone, a veal pie with plums and sugar, or the outside cut of a salt buttock of beef, were his favourite dainties: with regard to drink, his liking was for the strongest, as it was not the flavour, but the effect he sought for, and professed to desire; and when I first knew him, he used to pour capillaire into his port wine. For the last twelve years, however, he left off all fermented liquors. To make himself some amends, indeed, he took his chocolate liberally, pouring in large quantities of cream, or even melted butter; and was so fond of fruit, that though he would eat seven or eight large peaches of a morning before breakfast began, and treated them with proportionate attention after dinner again, yet I have heard him protest, that he never had quite as much as he wished of wall-fruit, except

While we were left by ourselves, after the Dutchman had gone to bed, Dr. Johnson talked of that studied behaviour which many have recommended and practised. He disapproved of it; and said, "I never considered whether I should be a grave man, or a merry man, but just let inclination, for the time, have its course."

He flattered me with some hopes that he would, in the course of the following summer, come over to Holland, and accompany me in a tour through the Netherlands.

I teased him with fanciful apprehensions of unhappiness. A moth having fluttered round the candle, and burnt itself, he laid hold of this little incident to admonish me; saying, with a sly look, and in a solemn but a quiet tone, "That creature

once in his life, and that was when we were all together at Ombersley, the seat of my Lord Sandys; and yet, when his Irish friend Grierson, hearing him enumerate the qualities necessary to the formation of a poet, began a comical parody upon his ornamented harangue in praise of a cook, concluding with this observation, that he who dressed a good dinner was a more excellent and a more useful member of society than he who wrote a good poem. "And in this opinion," said Mr. Johnson, in reply, "all the dogs in the town will join you." — He loved his dinner exceedingly, and has often said in my hearing, perhaps for my edification, "that wherever the dinner is ill got up there is poverty, or there is avarice, or there is stupidity; in short, the family is somehow grossly wrong: for," continued he, "a man seldom thinks with more earnestness of any thing than he does of his dinner; and if he cannot get that well dressed, he should be suspected of inaccuracy in other things." One day, when he was speaking upon the subject, I asked him, if he ever huffed his wife about his dinner? "So often," replied he, "that at last she called to me, when about to say grace, and said, 'Nay, hold, Mr. Johnson, and do not make a farce of thanking God for a dinner which, in a few minutes, you will pronounce not eatable.'" — P10ZZI.

was its own tormentor, and I believe its name was BOSWELL."

Next day we got to Harwich to dinner; and my passage in the packet-boat to Helvoetsluys being secured, and my baggage put on board, we dined at our inn by ourselves. I happened to say, it would be terrible if he should not find a speedy opportunity of returning to London, and be confined in so dull a place. JOHNSON. "Don't, Sir, accustom yourself to use big words for little matters.⁽¹⁾ It would *not* be *terrible*, though I *were* to be detained some time here." The practice of using words of disproportionate magnitude is, no doubt, too frequent every where; but, I think, most remarkable among the French, of which, all who have travelled in France must have been struck with innumerable instances.

We went and looked at the church, and having gone into it and walked up to the altar, Johnson, whose piety was constant and fervent, sent me to my knees, saying, "Now that you are going to leave your native country, recommend yourself to the protection of your CREATOR and REDEEMER."

After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's

(1) This advice comes drolly from the writer, who makes a young lady talk of "the *cosmetic discipline*," "a regular *lustration* with bean-flower water, and the use of a pommade to *discuss* pimples and clear *discoloration*" (Rambler, No. 130.); while a young gentleman tells us of "the *flaccid* sides of a football having swelled out into stiffness and extension." (No. 117.) And it is equally amusing to find Mr. Boswell, after his various defences of Johnson's *grandiloquence*, attacking the little inflations of French conversation; straining at a gnat, after having swallowed a camel. — C,

ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, "I refute it *thus*." (1) This was a stout exemplification of the *first truths* of *Père Bouffier*, or the *original principles* of Reid and of Beattie; without admitting which, we can no more argue in metaphysics, than we can argue in mathematics without axioms. To me it is not conceivable how Berkeley can be answered by pure reasoning; but I know that the nice and difficult task was to have been undertaken by one of the most luminous minds (2) of the present age, had not politics "turned him from calm philosophy aside." What an admirable display of subtlety, united with brilliance, might his contending with Berkeley have afforded us! How must we, when we reflect on the loss of such an intellectual feast, regret that he should be characterised as the man, —

(1) Dr. Johnson seems to have been imperfectly acquainted with Berkeley's doctrine; as his experiment only proves that we have the sensation of solidity, which Berkeley did not deny. He admitted that we had sensations or ideas that are usually called sensible qualities, one of which is solidity: he only denied the existence of *matter*, i. e. an inert senseless substance, in which they are supposed to subsist. Johnson's exemplification concurs with the vulgar notion, that solidity is matter. — KEARNEY. — [When Zeno argued, that there was no such thing as motion, Diogenes walked across the room. Johnson's argument is in the same style, but not so satisfactory. — FONNEREAU.]

(2) Mr. Burke. — C.

“ Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind?” (1)

My revered friend walked down with me to the beach, where we embraced and parted with tenderness, and engaged to correspond by letters. I said, “ I hope, Sir, you will not forget me in my absence.” JOHNSON. “ Nay, Sir, it is more likely you should forget me, than that I should forget you.” As the vessel put out to sea, I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner; and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared.

(1) In the latter years of his life, Mr. Burke reversed the conduct which Goldsmith so elegantly reprehends, and *gave up party* for what he conceived to be the good of *mankind*. — C

CHAPTER IX.

1763—1765.

Boswell at Utrecht. — Letter from Johnson. — The Frisick Language. — Johnson's Visit to Langton. — Institution of "The Club." — Reynolds. — Garrick. — Dr. Nugent. — Granger's "Sugar Cane." — Hypochondriac Attack. — Days of Abstraction. — Odd Habits. — Visit to Dr. Percy. — Letter to Reynolds. — Visit to Cambridge. — Self-examination. — Letter to, and from, Garrick. — Johnson created LL.D. by Dublin University. — Letter to Dr. Leland. — Prayer on "Engaging in Politics." — William Gerard Hamilton.

UTRECHT seeming at first very dull to me, after the animated scenes of London, my spirits were grievously affected; and I wrote to Johnson a plaintive and desponding letter, to which he paid no regard. Afterwards, when I had acquired a firmer tone of mind, I wrote him a second letter, expressing much anxiety to hear from him. At length I received the following epistle, which was of important service to me, and, I trust, will be so to many others.

LETTER 87. À M. M. BOSWELL,
A la Cour de l'Empéreur, Utrecht.

"London, Dec. 8. 1763.

"DEAR SIR,—You are not to think yourself forgotten, or criminally neglected, that you have had yet no

letter from me. I love to see my friends, to hear from them, to talk to them, and to talk of them ; but it is not without a considerable effort of resolution that I prevail upon myself to write. I would not, however, gratify my own indolence by the omission of any important duty, or any office of real kindness.

“ To tell you that I am or am not well, that I have or have not been in the country, that I drank your health in the room in which we last sat together, and that your acquaintance continue to speak of you with their former kindness, topics with which those letters are commonly filled which are written only for the sake of writing, I seldom shall think worth communicating ; but if I can have it in my power to calm any harassing disquiet, to excite any virtuous desire, to rectify any important opinion, or fortify any generous resolution, you need not doubt but I shall at least wish to prefer the pleasure of gratifying a friend much less esteemed than yourself, before the gloomy calm of idle vacancy. Whether I shall easily arrive at an exact punctuality of correspondence, I cannot tell. I shall, at present, expect that you will receive this in return for two which I have had from you. The first, indeed, gave me an account so hopeless of the state of your mind, that it hardly admitted or deserved an answer ; by the second I was much better pleased ; and the pleasure will still be increased by such a narrative of the progress of your studies, as may evince the continuance of an equal and rational application of your mind to some useful inquiry.

“ You will, perhaps, wish to ask, what study I would recommend. I shall not speak of theology, because it ought not to be considered as a question whether you shall endeavour to know the will of God.

“ I shall, therefore, consider only such studies as we are at liberty to pursue or to neglect ; and of these I know not how you will make a better choice, than by

studying the civil law as your father advises, and the ancient languages as you had determined for yourself : at least resolve, while you remain in any settled residence, to spend a certain number of hours every day amongst your books. The dissipation of thought of which you complain, is nothing more than the vacillation of a mind suspended between different motives, and changing its direction as any motive gains or loses strength. If you can but kindle in your mind any strong desire, if you can but keep predominant any wish for some particular excellence or attainment, the gusts of imagination will break away, without any effect upon your conduct, and commonly without any traces left upon the memory.

“ There lurks, perhaps, in every human heart a desire of distinction, which inclines every man first to hope, and then to believe, that nature has given him something peculiar to himself. This vanity makes one mind nurse aversion, and another actuate desires, till they rise by art much above their original state of power ; and, as affectation in time improves to habit, they at last tyrannise over him who at first encouraged them only for show. Every desire is a viper in the bosom, who, while he was chill, was harmless ; but when warmth gave him strength, exerted it in poison. You know a gentleman ⁽¹⁾, who, when first he set his foot in the gay world, as he prepared himself to whirl in the vortex of pleasure, imagined a total indifference and universal negligence to be the most agreeable concomitants of youth, and the strongest indication of an airy temper and a quick apprehension. Vacant to every object, and sensible of every impulse, he thought that all appearance of diligence would deduct something from the reputation of genius ; and hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness, and

(1) [Perhaps Boswell himself. The following sentences seem to favour this conjecture. — C. 1835.]

all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments which mortals of the common fabric obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life awhile, was made weary of it by his sense and his virtue ; he then wished to return to his studies ; and finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected, still willing to retain his claim to some extraordinary prerogatives, resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable decree of destiny, and concluded that Nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment.

“ Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive, be banished henceforward from your thoughts for ever. Resolve, and keep your resolution ; choose, and pursue your choice. If you spend this day in study, you will find yourself still more able to study to-morrow ; not that you are to expect that you shall at once obtain a complete victory. Depravity is not very easily overcome. Resolution will sometimes relax, and diligence will sometimes be interrupted ; but let no accidental surprise or deviation, whether short or long, dispose you to despondency. Consider these failings as incident to all mankind. Begin again where you left off, and endeavour to avoid the seducements that prevailed over you before.

“ This, my dear Boswell, is advice which, perhaps, has been often given you, and given you without effect. But this advice, if you will not take from others, you must take from your own reflections, if you purpose to do the duties of the station to which the bounty of Providence has called you.

“ Let me have a long letter from you as soon as you can. I hope you continue your journal, and enrich it with many observations upon the country in which you reside. It will be a favour if you can get me any books in the Frisick language, and can inquire how the poor

are maintained in the Seven Provinces. I am, dear Sir,
your most affectionate servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

I am sorry to observe, that neither in my own minutes, nor in my letters to Johnson which have been preserved by him, can I find any information how the poor are maintained in the Seven Provinces. But I shall extract from one of my letters what I learnt concerning the other subject of his curiosity.

“I have made all possible inquiry with respect to the Frisick language, and find that it has been less cultivated than any other of the northern dialects; a certain proof of which is their deficiency of books. Of the old Frisick there are no remains, except some ancient laws preserved by *Schotanus* in his ‘*Beschryvinge van die Heerlykheid van Friesland* ;’ and his ‘*Historia Frisica*.’ I have not yet been able to find these books, Professor Trotz, who formerly was of the University of Vranjken in Friesland, and is at present preparing an edition of all the Frisick laws, gave me this information. Of the modern Frisick, or what is spoken by the boors of this day, I have procured a specimen. It is ‘*Gisbert Japix’s Rymelerie*,’ which is the only book that they have. It is amazing that they have no translation of the bible, no treatises of devotion, nor even any of the ballads and story-books which are so agreeable to country people. You shall have *Japix* by the first convenient opportunity. I doubt not to pick up *Schotanus*. Mynheer Trotz has promised me his assistance.”

Early in 1764, Johnson paid a visit to the Langton family, at their seat of Langton in Lincolnshire, where he passed some time much to his satisfaction. His friend Bennet Langton, it will not be doubted, did every thing in his power to make the place

agreeable to so illustrious a guest; and the elder Mr. Langton and his lady, being fully capable of understanding his value, were not wanting in attention. He, however, told me, that old Mr. Langton, though a man of considerable learning, had so little allowance to make for his occasional "laxity of talk," that because in the course of discussion he sometimes mentioned what might be said in favour of the peculiar tenets of the Romish church, he went to his grave believing him to be of that communion.

Johnson, during his stay at Langton, had the advantage of a good library, and saw several gentlemen of the neighbourhood. I have obtained from Mr. Langton the following particulars of this period.

He was now fully convinced that he could not have been satisfied with a country living; for talking of a respectable clergyman in Lincolnshire, he observed, "This man, Sir, fills up the duties of his life well. I approve of him, but could not imitate him."

To a lady who endeavoured to vindicate herself from blame for neglecting social attention to worthy neighbours, by saying "I would go to them if it would do them any good;" he said, "What good, Madam, do you expect to have in your power to do them? It is shewing them respect, and that is doing them good."

So socially accommodating was he, that once, when Mr. Langton and he were driving together in a coach, and Mr. Langton complained of being sick, he insisted that they should go out, and sit on the

back of it in the open air, which they did. And being sensible how strange the appearance must be, observed, that a countryman whom they saw in a field would probably be thinking, " If these two madmen should come down, what would become of me ? "

Soon after his return to London, which was in February, was founded that CLUB which existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of THE LITERARY CLUB. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first proposer of it (1), to which Johnson acceded, and the original members were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Edmund Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins. They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho, one evening in every week, at seven, and generally continued their conversation till a pretty late hour. (2) This

(1) Johnson called Sir Joshua their *Romulus*. — P10ZZI.

(2) It was Johnson's original intention, that the number of this club should not exceed nine, but Mr. Dyer, a member of that in Ivy Lane before spoken of, and who for some years had been abroad, made his appearance among them, and was cordially received. The hours which Johnson spent in this society seemed to be the happiest of his life. He would often applaud his own sagacity in the selection of it, and was so constant at its meetings as never to absent himself. It is true, he came late, but then he stayed late, for, as has been already said of him, he little regarded hours. Our evening toast was the motto of Padre Paolo, " *Esto perpetua*." A lady [probably Mrs. Montagu], distinguished by her beauty, and taste for literature, invited us, two successive years, to a dinner at her house. Curiosity was her motive, and possibly a desire of intermingling with our conversation the charms of her own. She affected to consider us as a set of literary men, and perhaps gave the first occasion for distinguishing the society by the name of the

club has been gradually increased to its present [1791] number, thirty-five. After about ten years, instead of supping weekly ⁽¹⁾, it was resolved to dine together once a fortnight during the meeting of Parliament. Their original tavern having been converted into a private house, they moved first to Prince's in Sackville Street, then to Le Telier's in Dover Street, and now meet at Parsloe's, St. James's Street. ⁽²⁾ Between the time of its formation, and the time at which this work is passing through the press, (June, 1792) the following persons, now dead, were

"Literary Club," an appellation which it never assumed to itself.—At these meetings, Johnson, as indeed he did every where, led the conversation, yet was he far from arrogating to himself that superiority, which, some years before, he was disposed to contend for. He had seen enough of the world to know, that respect was not to be extorted, and began now to be satisfied with that degree of eminence to which his writings had exalted him. This change in his behaviour was remarked by those who were best acquainted with his character, and it rendered him an easy and delightful companion. Our discourse was miscellaneous, but chiefly literary. Politics were alone excluded.—**HAWKINS.**

(1) It was a supper-meeting then, on a Friday night, and I fancy Dr. Nugent [who was a Roman Catholic], ordered an omelet; and Johnson felt very painful sensations at the sight of that dish soon after his death, and cried, "Ah, my poor dear friend, I shall never eat omelet with *thee* again!" quite in an agony. The truth is, nobody suffered more from pungent sorrow at a friend's death than Johnson, though he would suffer no one to complain of their losses in the same way. "For," says he, "we must either outlive our friends, you know, or our friends must outlive us: and I see no man that would hesitate about the choice."—**PIOZZI.**

(2) The Club, some years after Mr. Boswell's death, removed (in 1799) from Parsloe's to the Thatched House in St. James's Street, where they still continue to meet.—**M.**—[A full List of the Club down to the present time (*March, 1835*), will be found in the **APPENDIX, No. I.**]

members of it: Mr. Dunning, (afterwards Lord Ashburton,) Mr. Samuel Dyer, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Shipley Bishop of St. Asaph, Mr. Vesey, Mr. Thomas Warton, and Dr. Adam Smith. The present members are, Mr. Burke, Mr. Langton, Lord Charlemont, Sir Robert Chambers, Dr. Percy Bishop of Dromore, Dr. Barnard Bishop of Killaloe, Dr. Marlay Bishop of Clonfert, Mr. Fox, Dr. George Fordyce, Sir William Scott, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Charles Bunbury, Mr. Windham of Norfolk, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Gibbon, Sir William Jones, Mr. Colman, Mr. Steevens, Dr. Burney, Dr. Joseph Warton, Mr. Malone, Lord Ossory, Lord Spencer, Lord Lucan, Lord Palmerston, Lord Eliot, Lord Macartney, Mr. Richard Burke junior, Sir William Hamilton, Dr. Warren, Mr. Courtenay, Dr. Hinchliffe Bishop of Peterborough, the Duke of Leeds, Dr. Douglas Bishop of Salisbury, and the writer of this account.

Sir John Hawkins represents himself [Life, p. 425.] as a "*seceder*" from this society, and assigns as the reason of his "*withdrawing*" himself from it, that its late hours were inconsistent with his domestic arrangements. In this he is not accurate; for the fact was, that he one evening attacked Mr. Burke in so rude a manner, that all the company testified their displeasure; and at their next meeting their reception was such, that he never came again." (1)

(1) From Sir Joshua Reynolds. — BOSWELL. — The knight having refused to pay his portion of the reckoning for supper, because he usually eat no supper at home, Johnson observed, "Sir John, Sir, is a very *unclubable* man." — BURNEY. — Hawkins was not knighted till October, 1772, long after he had left the club. Burney, in relating the story, puts the *nunc pro tunc*. — C.

He is equally inaccurate with respect to Mr. Garrick, of whom he says, "He trusted that the least intimation of a desire to come among us, would procure him a ready admission;" but in this he was mistaken. Johnson consulted me upon it; and when I could find no objection to receiving him, exclaimed, 'He will disturb us by his buffoonery;'—and afterwards so managed matters, that he was never formally proposed, and, by consequence, never admitted." (1)

In justice both to Mr. Garrick and Dr. Johnson, I think it necessary to rectify this mis-statement. The truth is, that not very long after the institution of our club, Sir Joshua Reynolds was speaking of it to Garrick. "I like it much," said he; "I think I shall be of you." When Sir Joshua mentioned this to Dr. Johnson, he was much displeased with the actor's conceit. "*He'll be of us,*" said Johnson, "how does he know we will *permit* him? the first duke in England has no right to hold such language." However, when Garrick was regularly proposed some time afterwards, Johnson, though he had taken a momentary offence at his arrogance, warmly and kindly supported him, and he was accordingly elected, was a most agreeable member, and continued to attend our meetings to the time of his death.

Mrs. Piozzi (2) has also given a similar misrepre-

(1) Hawkins probably meant "never" *while he himself belonged to the Club.*—C. — [Mr. Garrick was elected in March, 1773.]

(2) Letters to and from Dr. Johnson, vol. ii. p. 387.

sentation of Johnson's treatment of Garrick in this particular, as if he had used these contemptuous expressions: "If Garrick *does* apply, I'll blackball him. — Surely, one ought to sit in a society like ours,

"Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or player." (1)

I am happy to be enabled by such unquestionable authority as that of Sir Joshua Reynolds (2), as well as from my own knowledge, to vindicate at once the heart of Johnson and the social merit of Garrick.

In this year, except what he may have done in revising Shakspeare, we do not find that he laboured much in literature. He wrote a review of Grainger's "Sugar Cane," a poem, in the London Chronicle. He told me, that Dr. Percy wrote the greatest part of this review; but, I imagine, he did not recollect it distinctly, for it appears to be mostly, if not altogether, his own. He also wrote, in the Critical Review, an account † of Goldsmith's excellent poem, "The Traveller." (3)

The ease and independence to which he had at last attained by royal munificence, increased his

(1) ["Is there a lord, who knows a cheerful noon
Without a fiddler, flatt'rer, or buffoon?
Whose table, wit, or modest merit share,
Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or play'r?"—POPE.]

(2) It does not appear how Sir Joshua Reynolds's authority can be made available in this case. The expression is stated to have been used to *Mr. Thrale*; and the *fact*, that Garrick was for near *ten* years excluded from the Club, seems to give but too much colour to this story. — C.

(3) ["The Traveller" was published in December, 1764.]

natural indolence. In his "Meditations," [p. 53.], he thus accuses himself: —

"GOOD FRIDAY, April 20. 1764.—I have made no reformation; I have lived totally useless, more sensual in thought, and more addicted to wine and meat."

And next morning he thus feelingly complains: —

"My indolence, since my last reception of the sacrament, has sunk into grosser sluggishness, and my dissipation spread into wilder negligence. My thoughts have been clouded with sensuality; and, except that from the beginning of this year I have, in some measure, forborne excess of strong drink, my appetites have predominated over my reason. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year; and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me without leaving any impression."

He then solemnly says, "This is not the life to which heaven is promised;" and he earnestly resolves an amendment.

"Easter-day, April 22. 1764. Having, before I went to bed, composed the foregoing meditation, and the following prayer; I tried to compose myself, but slept unquietly. I rose, took tea, and prayed for resolution and perseverance. Thought on Tetty, dear poor Tetty, with my eyes full. I went to church; came in at the first of the Psalms, and endeavoured to attend the service, which I went through without perturbation. After sermon, I recommended Tetty in a prayer by herself; and my father, mother, brother, and Bathurst, in another. I did it only once, so far as it might be lawful for me.

“ I then prayed for resolution and perseverance to amend my life. I received soon : the communicants were many. At the altar, it occurred to me that I ought to form some resolutions. I resolved, in the presence of God, but without a vow, to repel sinful thoughts, to study eight hours daily, and, I think, to go to church every Sunday, and read the Scriptures. I gave a shilling ; and seeing a poor girl at the sacrament in a bedgown, gave her privately a crown, though I saw Hart’s Hymns ⁽¹⁾ in her hand. I prayed earnestly for amendment, and repeated my prayer at home. Dined with Miss W[illiams] ; went to prayers at church ; went to —— ⁽²⁾, spent the evening not pleasantly. Avoided wine, and tempered a very few glasses with sherbet. Came home and prayed. I saw at the sacrament a man meanly dressed, whom I have always seen there at Easter.”

It was his custom to observe certain days with a pious abstraction : viz. New-year’s-day, the day of his wife’s death, Good Friday, Easter-day, and his own birth-day. He this year, [on his birth-day,] says,

“ I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving ; having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O God, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.”

(1) [“ Hymns composed on various Subjects, by the Rev. John Hart, of the Grey Friars’ Church, Edinburgh ; with a Brief Account of the Author’s Experience,” 12mo. 1759.]

(2) In the original MS., instead of this blank are the letters *Davi*, followed by some other letters which are illegible. They, no doubt, meant either Davies, the bookseller, or David Gerrick ; most likely the former. — HALL.

Such a tenderness of conscience, such a fervent desire of improvement, will rarely be found. It is, surely, not decent in those who are hardened in indifference to spiritual improvement, to treat this pious anxiety of Johnson with contempt.

About this time he was afflicted with a very severe return of the hypochondriac disorder, which was ever lurking about him. He was so ill, as, notwithstanding his remarkable love of company, to be entirely averse to society, the most fatal symptom of that malady. Dr. Adams told me, that, as an old friend he was admitted to visit him, and that he found him in a deplorable state, sighing, groaning, talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room. He then used this emphatical expression of the misery which he felt: "I would consent to have a limb amputated to recover my spirits."

Talking to himself was, indeed, one of his singularities ever since I knew him. I was certain that he was frequently uttering pious ejaculations; for fragments of the Lord's Prayer have been distinctly overheard. (1) His friend Mr. Thomas Davies, of whom Churchill says,

"That Davies hath a very pretty wife;"

(1) It used to be imagined at Mr. Thrale's, when Johnson retired to a window or corner of the room, by perceiving his lips in motion, and hearing a murmur without audible articulation, that he was praying; but this was not *always* the case, for I was once, perhaps unperceived by him, writing at a table, so near the place of his retreat, that I heard him repeating some lines in an ode of Horace, over and over again, as if by iteration

when Dr. Johnson muttered “lead us not into temptation”—used with waggish and gallant humour to whisper Mrs. Davies, “You, my dear, are the cause of this.”

He had another particularity, of which none of his friends ever ventured to ask an explanation. It appeared to me some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early, and from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so as that either his right or his left foot (I am not certain which) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture: for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion. A strange instance of something of this nature, even when on

to exercise the organs of speech, and fix the ode in his memory:—

“Audiet cives accuisse ferrum
Quo graves *Persæ* melius perirent,
Audiet pugnas”*

It was during the American war.—BURNEY.

* [“Our sons shall hear, shall hear to latest times,
Of Roman arms with civil gore imbued,
Which better had the Persian foe subdued.”—FRANCIS.]

horseback, happened when he was in the Isle of Sky [12th October, 1773]. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed him to go a good way about, rather than cross a particular alley in Leicester Fields ; but this Sir Joshua imputed to his having had some disagreeable recollection associated with it. ⁽¹⁾

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that, while talking, or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and

(1) "Mr. Sheridan at one time lived in Bedford Street, opposite Henrietta Street, which ranges with the south side of Covent Garden, so that the prospect lies open the whole way, free of interruption. We were standing together at the drawing-room, expecting Johnson, who was to dine there. Mr. Sheridan asked me, could I see the length of the Garden? 'No, Sir.' [Mr. Whyte was short-sighted.] 'Take out your opera-glass, Johnson is coming; you may know him by his gait.' I perceived him at a good distance, working along with a peculiar solemnity of deportment, and an awkward sort of measured step. At that time the broad flagging at each side the streets was not universally adopted, and stone posts were in fashion, to prevent the annoyance of carriages. Upon every post, as he passed along, I could observe, he deliberately laid his hand; but missing one of them when he had got at some distance, he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, and immediately returning back, carefully performed the accustomed ceremony, and resumed his former course, not omitting one till he gained the crossing. This, Mr. Sheridan assured me, however odd it might appear, was his constant practice; but why or wherefore he could not inform me." — WHYTE, *Miscell. Nova*, p. 49.

See (*antè*, Vol. I. p. 160.) his conduct at Mr. Bankes's, which seems something of the same kind. Dr. Fisher, Master of the Charter House, tells me, that in walking on the quadrangle of University College, he would not step on the juncture of the stones, but carefully on the centre: but this is a trick which many persons have when sauntering on any kind of tessellation. Dr. Fisher adds, that he would sometimes go to the college pump, and alternately fill and empty it, without any object that Dr. Fisher could discern. — CROKER.

shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly, under his breath, *too, too, too* : all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used to blow out his breath like a whale. This I suppose was a relief to his lungs ; and seemed in him to be a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had made the arguments of his opponent fly like chaff before the wind.

I am fully aware how very obvious an occasion I here give for the sneering jocularities of such as have no relish of [an exact likeness ; which, to render complete, he who draws it must not disdain the slightest strokes. But if witlings should be inclined to attack this account, let them have the candour to quote what I have offered in my defence.

LETTER 88. TO MISS LUCY PORTER.

“ London, Jan. 10. 1764.

“ MY DEAR,—I was in hopes that you would have written to me before this time, to tell me that your

house was finished, and that you were happy in it. I am sure I wish you happy. By the carrier of this week you will receive a box, in which I have put some books, most of which were your poor dear mamma's, and a diamond ring ⁽¹⁾, which I hope you will wear as my new year's gift. If you receive it with as much kindness as I send it, you will not slight it; you will be very fond of it.

“Pray give my service to Kitty, who, I hope, keeps pretty well. I know not now when I shall come down; I believe it will not be very soon. But I shall be glad to hear of you from time to time.

“I wish you, my dearest, many happy years; take what care you can of your health. I am, my dear, your affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

He was for some time in the summer at Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire, on a visit to the Rev. Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore. ⁽²⁾ Whatever dissatisfaction he felt at what he considered as a slow progress in intellectual improvement, we find that his heart was tender, and his affections warm, as appears from the following very kind letter: —

LETTER 89. TO JOSHUA REYNOLDS, ESQ.,

In Leicester Fields.

“DEAR SIR,—I did not hear of your sickness till I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escape that part of your pain, which every man must feel, to whom you are known as you are known to me.

(1) This ring is now [1830] in the possession of Mrs. Pearson. — HARWOOD.

(2) [He spent parts of the months of June, July, and August with me, accompanied by his friend, Mrs. Williams, whom Mrs. Percy found a very agreeable companion. — PERCY.]

“ Having had no particular account of your disorder, I know not in what state it has left you. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you ; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, or my own interest as by preserving you, in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call a friend.

“ Pray, let me hear of you from yourself, or from dear Miss Reynolds. ⁽¹⁾ Make my compliments to Mr. Mudge. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

“ At the Rev. Mr. Percy’s, at Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire, (by Castle Ashby,) Aug. 19. 1764.”

Early in the year 1765 he paid a short visit to the University of Cambridge, with his friend Mr. Beauclerk. There is a lively picturesque account of his behaviour on this visit, in the Gentleman’s Magazine for March, 1785, being an extract of a letter from the late Dr. John Sharp. ⁽²⁾ The two following sentences are very characteristical:—“ He drank his large potations of tea with me, interrupted by

(1) Sir Joshua’s sister, for whom Johnson had a particular affection, and to whom he wrote many letters which I have seen, and which I am sorry her too nice delicacy will not permit to be published. — BOSWELL. — One will be found added by Mr. Malone, *post*, July 21. 1781, and several others communicated to me in the course of the work. Of Miss Reynolds, Johnson thought so highly, that he once said to Mrs. Piozzi, “ I never knew but one mind which would bear a microscopical examination, and that is dear Miss Reynolds’s, and hers is very near to purity itself.” (ANECDOTES, p. 68.) — CROKER.

(2) Dr. John Sharp, grandson of Sharp, Archbishop of York, and son of the Archdeacon of Durham, in which preferment he succeeded his father. He was a member of Trinity College, Cambridge. He died in 1792, aged 69. — C.

many an indignant contradiction, and many a noble sentiment." — "Several persons got into his company the last evening at Trinity, where, about twelve, he began to be very great; stripped poor Mrs. Macaulay to the very skin, then gave her for his toast, and drank her in two bumpers." (1)

The strictness of his self-examination, and scrupulous Christian humility, appear in his pious meditation on Easter-day this year.

"I purpose again to partake of the blessed sacrament; yet when I consider how vainly I have hitherto

(1) [For some anecdotes of Johnson, comprising an account of the visit to Cambridge in 1765, by the Rev. Baptist Noel Turner, see the APPENDIX, No. II. Mr. Sharp's letter, of which Boswell quotes only two fragments, is as follows: —

"Cambridge, March 1. 1765. — As to Johnson, you will be surprised to hear that I have had him in the chair in which I am now writing. He has ascended my aerial citadel. He came down on a Saturday evening, with a Mr. Beauclerk, who has a friend at Trinity [Mr. Lister]. *Caliban*, you may be sure, was not roused from his lair before next day noon, and his breakfast probably kept him till night. I saw nothing of him, nor was he heard of by any one, till Monday afternoon, when I was sent for home to two gentlemen unknown. In conversation I made a strange *faux pas* about Barnaby Greene's poem*, in which Johnson is drawn at full length. He drank his large potation of tea with me, interrupted by many an indignant contradiction, and many a noble sentiment. He had on a better wig than usual, but one whose curls were not, like Sir Cloudesley's, formed for 'eternal buckle.' Our conversation was chiefly on books, you may be sure. He was much pleased with a small Milton of mine, published in the author's lifetime, and with the Greek epigram on his own effigy, of its being the picture, not of him, but of a bad painter. There are many manuscript stanzas, for aught I know, in Milton's own handwriting, and several interlined hints and fragments. We were puzzled about one of the sonnets, which we thought was not to be found in Newton's edition, and differed from all the printed ones. But Johnson cried, 'No, no!' repeated the whole sonnet instantly, *memoriter*, and showed it us in Newton's book. After which he learnedly harangued on sonnet-writing, and its different numbers. He tells me he will come hither again quickly, and is promised 'an habitation in Emanuel College.' [With Dr. Farmer.] He went back to town next morning; but as it began to be known that he was in the university, several persons got into his company the last evening at Trinity, where, about twelve, he began to be very great; stripped poor Mrs. Macaulay to the very skin, then gave her for his toast, and drank her in two bumpers."]

* Edward Barnaby, who took the name of Greene, published in 1756 an imitation of the 10th Ep. of the First Book of Horace. He died in 1788. — C.

resolved, at this annual commemoration of my Saviour's death, to regulate my life by his laws, I am almost afraid to renew my resolutions." [p. 61.]

The concluding words are very remarkable, and shew that he laboured under a severe depression of spirits.

"Since the last Easter I have reformed no evil habit; my time has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. *My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me.* Good Lord, deliver me!"

He proceeds:—

"I purpose to rise at eight, because, though I shall not yet rise early, it will be much earlier than I now rise, for I often lie till two, and will gain me much time, and tend to a conquest over idleness, and give time for other duties. I hope to rise yet earlier."

"I invited home with me the man whose pious behaviour I had for several years observed on this day (1), and found him a kind of Methodist, full of texts, but ill-instructed. I talked to him with temper, and offered him twice wine, which he refused. I suffered him to go without the dinner which I had purposed to give him. I thought this day that there was something irregular and particular in his look and gesture; but having intended to invite him to acquaintance, and having a fit opportunity by finding him near my own seat after I had missed him, I did what I at first designed, and am sorry to have been so much disappointed. Let me not be prejudiced hereafter against the appearance of piety in mean persons, who, with indeterminate notions, and perverse or inelegant conversation, perhaps are doing all they can."

(1) [See *ante* p. 27.]

[LETTER 90. TO DAVID GARRICK, ESQ. (1)]

“ May 18. 1765.

“ DEAR SIR, — I know that great regard will be had to your opinion of an Edition of Shakspeare. I desire, therefore, to secure an honest prejudice in my favour by securing your suffrage, and that this prejudice may really be honest, I wish you would name such plays as you would see, and they shall be sent you by, Sir, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 91. FROM MR. GARRICK.

“ May 31. 1765.

“ DEAR SIR, — My brother greatly astonished me this morning, by asking me ‘if I was a subscriber to your Shakspeare?’ I told him, yes, that I was one of the first, and as soon as I had heard of your intention ; and that I gave you, at the same time, some other names, among which were the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Beighton, &c. I cannot immediately have recourse to my memorandum, though I remember to have seen it just before I left England. I hope that you will recollect it, and not think me capable of neglecting to make you so trifling a compliment, which was doubly due from me, not only on account of the respect I have always had for your abilities, but from the sincere regard I shall ever pay to your friendship. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

“ DAVID GARRICK.”]

LETTER 92. TO MR. G. STRAHAN,

University College, Oxford. (2)

“ May 25. 1765.

“ DEAR SIR, — That I have answered neither of your letters you must not impute to any declension of good

(1) [This and the following letter are from the originals in the possession of Mr. Upcott.]

(2) This young man, son of his friend, the printer, was afterwards Prebendary of Rochester, and edited Johnson’s “Prayers and Meditations.” — C.

will, but merely to the want of something to say. I suppose you pursue your studies diligently, and diligence will seldom fail of success. Do not tire yourself so much with Greek one day as to be afraid of looking on it the next; but give it a certain portion of time, suppose four hours, and pass the rest of the day in Latin or English. I would have you learn French, and take in a literary journal once a month, which will accustom you to various subjects, and inform you what learning is going forward in the world. Do not omit to mingle some lighter books with those of more importance; that which is read *remisso animo* is often of great use, and takes great hold of the remembrance. However, take what course you will, if you be diligent you will be a scholar. I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

“SAM. JOHNSON.” (1)

No man was more gratefully sensible of any kindness done to him than Johnson. There is a little circumstance in his diary this year, which shews him in a very amiable light.

“July 2. I paid Mr. Simpson ten guineas, which he had formerly lent me in my necessity, and for which Tetty expressed her gratitude.”

“July 8. I lent Mr. Simpson ten guineas more.”

Here he had a pleasing opportunity of doing the same kindness to an old friend, which he had formerly received from him. Indeed his liberality as to money was very remarkable. The next article in his diary is, “July 16th, I received seventy-five pounds. Lent Mr. Davies twenty-five.”

(1) This letter has been communicated to Dr. Hall, for the use of this edition, by the Rev. Charles Rose, fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.—C.

Trinity College, Dublin, at this time surprised Johnson with a spontaneous compliment of the highest academical honours, by creating him Doctor of Laws. The diploma, which is in my possession, is as follows : —

“ OMNIBUS ad quos præsentēs literæ pervenerint, salutem. Nos Præpositus et Socii Seniores Collegii sacrosanctæ et individue Trinitatis Reginæ Elizabethæ juxta Dublin, testamur, Samueli Johnson, Armigero, ob egregiam scriptorum elegantiam et utilitatem, gratiam concessam fuisse pro gradu Doctoratûs in utroque Jure, octavo die Julii, Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo sexagesimo-quinto. In cujus rei testimonium singulorum manus et sigillum quo in hisce utimur apposuimus; vicesimo tertio die Julii, Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo sexagesimo-quinto.

GUL. CLEMENT.	FRAN. ANDREWS.	R. MURRAY.
THO. WILSON.	Præps.	ROBTUS. LAW.
THO. LELAND. (1)		MICH. KEARNEY.”(2)

This unsolicited mark of distinction, conferred on so great a literary character, did much honour to the judgment and liberal spirit of that learned body. Johnson acknowledged the favour in a letter to Dr. Leland, one of their number.

LETTER 93. TO THE REV. DR. LELAND.

“ Johnson’s Court, Fleet Street, London,
“ Oct. 17. 1765.

“ SIR, — Among the names subscribed to the degree which I have had the honour of receiving from the University of Dublin, I find none of which I have any personal knowledge but those of Dr. Andrews and yourself.

(1) [Dr. Thomas Leland, the translator of Demosthenes, and author of the History of Ireland, was born at Dublin, in 1722, and died in 1785.]

(2) The same who has contributed some notes to this work.
—C.

“ Men can be estimated by those who know them not, only as they are represented by those who know them ; and therefore I flatter myself that I owe much of the pleasure which this distinction gives me, to your concurrence with Dr. Andrews in recommending me to the learned society.

“ Having desired the Provost to return my general thanks to the University, I beg that you, Sir, will accept my particular and immediate acknowledgments. I am, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.” (1)

He appears this year to have been seized with a temporary fit of ambition, for he had thoughts both of studying law, and of engaging in politics. His “ Prayer [p. 67.] before the Study of Law ” is truly admirable : —

“ Sept. 26. 1765. Almighty God, the giver of wisdom, without whose help resolutions are vain, without whose blessing study is ineffectual ; enable me, if it be thy will, to attain such knowledge as may qualify me to direct the doubtful, and instruct the ignorant ; to prevent wrongs and terminate contentions ; and grant that I may use that knowledge which I shall attain, to thy glory and my own salvation, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.”

(1) His great affection for our own universities, and particularly his attachment to Oxford, prevented Johnson from receiving this honour as it was intended, and he never assumed the title which it conferred. He was as little pleased to be called *Doctor* in consequence of it, as he was with the title of *Domine*, which a friend of his once incautiously addressed him by. He thought it alluded to his having been a schoolmaster ; and, though he has ably vindicated Milton from the reproach that Salmasius meant to fix on him, by saying that he was of that profession, he wished to have it forgotten, that himself had ever been driven to it as the means of subsistence, and had failed in the attempt. — HAWKINS.

His prayer in the view of becoming a politician is entitled, "Engaging in politics with H — n," no doubt, his friend, the Right Hon. William Gerard Hamilton (¹), for whom, during a long acquaintance, he had a great esteem, and to whose conversation he once paid this high compliment: "I am very unwilling to be left alone, Sir, and therefore I go with my company down the first pair of stairs, in some hopes that they may, perhaps, return again; I go with you, Sir, as far as the street-door." In what particular department he intended to engage (²) does not appear, nor can Mr. Hamil-

(1) Mr. Hamilton had been secretary to Lord Halifax, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and remained a short time with his successor, Lord Northumberland, but he resigned in 1764. Though he never spoke in parliament after this, his biographer informs us (perhaps on the authority of this passage), that he meditated taking an active part in political life: he, however, did not, and his alliance with Johnson, whatever it was intended to be, seems to have produced little or nothing. He died in 1796.— C.

(2) In the preface to a late collection of Mr. Hamilton's Pieces, it has been observed that our author was, by the generality of Johnson's words, "led to suppose that he was seized with a temporary fit of ambition, and that hence he was induced to apply his thoughts to law and politics. But Mr. Boswell was certainly mistaken in this respect: and these words merely allude to Johnson's having at that time entered into some engagement with Mr. Hamilton occasionally to furnish him with his sentiments on the great political topics which should be considered in parliament." In consequence of this engagement, Johnson, in November, 1766, wrote a very valuable tract, entitled "Considerations on Corn," which is printed as an appendix to the works of Mr. Hamilton, published by T. Payne in 1808.— M. — It seems very improbable that so solemn a "*prayer, on engaging in politics,*" should have had no meaning. It were perhaps vain now to inquire after what Mr. Hamilton *professed* not to be able to explain; but we may be sure that it was, in Johnson's opinion, no such trivial and casual assistance as is suggested in Mr. Malone's note. From a letter to Miss Porter

ton explain. His prayer is in general terms :
“ Enlighten my understanding with knowledge of
right, and govern my will by thy laws, that no deceit
may mislead me, nor temptation corrupt me ; that I
may always endeavour to do good, and hinder evil.”
There is nothing upon the subject in his diary.

(*post*, January 14. 1766), it may be guessed, that this engage-
ment was in some way connected with the parliamentary session,
and it may have been an alliance to write pamphlets or para-
graphs in favour of a particular line of politics. — C.

CHAPTER X.

1765—1766.

Acquaintance with the Thrals. — Publication of the Edition of Shakspeare. — Kenrick. — Letter to Boswell. — Boswell returns to England. — Voltaire on Pope and Dryden. — Goldsmith's " Traveller," and " Deserted Village." — Suppers at the Mitre resumed. — " Equal Happiness." — " Courting great Men." — Convents. — Second Sight. — Corsica. — Rousseau. — Subordination. — " Making Verses." — Letters to Langton.

THIS year was distinguished by his being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and member of parliament for the borough of Southwark. Foreigners are not a little amazed when they hear of brewers, distillers, and men in similar departments of trade, held forth as persons of considerable consequence. In this great commercial country it is natural that a situation which produces much wealth should be considered as very respectable ; and, no doubt, honest industry is entitled to esteem. But, perhaps, the too rapid advances of men of low extraction tends to lessen the value of that distinction by birth and gentility, which has ever been found beneficial to the grand scheme of subordination. Johnson used to give this account of the rise of Mr. Thrale's father :

“ He worked at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery, which afterwards was his own. The proprietor of it (1) had an only daughter, who was married to a nobleman. It was not fit that a peer should continue the business. On the old man’s death, therefore, the brewery was to be sold. To find a purchaser for so large a property was a difficult matter ; and, after some time, it was suggested, that it would be advisable to treat with Thrale, a sensible, active, honest man, who had been employed in the house, and to transfer the whole to him for thirty thousand pounds, security being taken upon the property. This was accordingly settled. In eleven years Thrale paid the purchase-money. He acquired a large fortune, and lived to be a member of parliament for Southwark. (2) But what was most remarkable was the liberality with which he used his riches. He gave his son and daughters the best education. The esteem which his good conduct procured him from the nobleman who had married his master’s

(1) The predecessor of old Thrale was Edmund Halsey, Esq. ; the nobleman who married his daughter was Lord Cobham, great uncle of the Marquis of Buckingham. But I believe Dr. Johnson was mistaken in assigning so very low an origin to Mr. Thrale. The clerk of St. Albans, a very aged man, told me, that he (the elder Thrale) married a sister of Mr. Halsey. It is at least certain that the family of Thrale was of some consideration in that town : in the abbey church is a handsome monument to the memory of Mr. John Thrale, late of London, merchant, who died in 1704, aged 54, Margaret his wife, and three of their children who died young, between the years 1676 and 1690. The arms upon this monument are, paly of eight, *gules* and *or*, impaling, *ermine*, on a chief indented *vert*, three wolves’ (or gryphons’) heads, *or*, couped at the neck : — Crest on a ducal coronet, a tree, *vert*. — BLAKEWAY.

(2) In 1733 he served the office of high sheriff for Surrey. He died April 9. 1758. — C.

daughter, made him be treated with much attention ; and his son, both at school and at the university of Oxford, associated with young men of the first rank. His allowance from his father, after he left college, was splendid ; not less than a thousand a year. This, in a man who had risen as old Thrale did, was a very extraordinary instance of generosity. He used to say, " If this young dog does not find so much after I am gone as he expects, let him remember that he has had a great deal in my own time."

The son, though in affluent circumstances, had good sense enough to carry on his father's trade, which was of such extent, that I remember he once told me, he would not quit it for an annuity of ten thousand a year : " Not," said he, " that I get ten thousand a year by it, but it is an estate to a family." Having left daughters only, the property was sold for the immense sum of one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds ; a magnificent proof of what may be done by fair trade in a long period of time.

There may be some who think that a new system of gentility (1) might be established, upon principles

(1) Mrs. Burney informs me that she heard Dr. Johnson say, " An English merchant is a new species of gentleman." He, perhaps, had in his mind the following ingenious passage in " The Conscious Lovers," Act iv. Scene 2., where Mr. Sealand thus addresses Sir John Bevil : — " Give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honourable, and almost as useful, as you landed-folks, that have always thought yourselves so much above us ; for your trading, forsooth, is extended no farther than a load of hay, or a fat ox. You are pleasant people indeed ! because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore, I warrant you, industry is dishonourable." — B.

If, indeed, Johnson called merchants a *new species of gentlemen*, he must have forgotten not only the merchants of Tyre,

totally different from what have hitherto prevailed. Our present heraldry, it may be said, is suited to the barbarous times in which it had its origin. It is chiefly founded upon ferocious merit, upon military excellence. Why, in civilised times, we may be asked, should there not be rank and honours, upon principles which, independent of long custom, are certainly not less worthy, and which, when once allowed to be connected with elevation and precedence, would obtain the same dignity in our imagination? Why should not the knowledge, the skill, the expertness, the assiduity, and the spirited hazards of trade and commerce, when crowned with success, be entitled to give those flattering distinctions by which mankind are so universally captivated?

Such are the specious, but false arguments for a proposition which always will find numerous advocates, in a nation where men are every day starting up from obscurity to wealth. To refute them is needless. The general sense of mankind cries out, with irresistible force, “*Un gentilhomme est toujours gentilhomme.*”

Mr. Thrale had married Miss Hesther Lynch Salusbury, of good Welsh extraction, a lady of lively talents, improved by education. That Johnson's introduction into Mr. Thrale's family, which contributed so much to the happiness of his life, was owing to her desire for his conversation, is a very probable

who were “princes,” and the Medici of Florence, but the Greshams, Cranfields, Osbornes, Duncombes, and so many others, of England. — C.

and the general supposition : but it is not the truth. Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having spoken very highly of Dr. Johnson, he was requested to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception, both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house were more and more frequent, till at last he became one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him, both in their house at Southwark and in their villa at Streatham. (1)

Johnson had a very sincere esteem for Mr. Thrale, as a man of excellent principles, a good scholar, well skilled in trade, of a sound understanding, and of

(1) The first time I ever saw this extraordinary man was in the year 1764, when Mr. Murphy, who had long been the friend and confidential intimate of Mr. Thrale, persuaded him to wish for Johnson's conversation, extolling it in terms which that of no other person could have deserved, till we were only in doubt how to obtain his company, and find an excuse for the invitation. The celebrity of Mr. Woodhouse*, a shoemaker, whose verses were at that time the subject of common discourse, soon afforded a pretence, and Mr. Murphy brought Johnson to meet him, giving me general cautions not to be surprised at his figure, dress, or behaviour. What I recollect best of the day's talk was his earnestly recommending Addison's works to Mr. Woodhouse as a model for imitation. 'Give nights and days, Sir,' said he, 'to the study of Addison, if you mean either to be a good writer, or, what is more worth, an honest man.' When I saw something like the same expression in his criticism on that author, lately published [in the *Lives of the Poets*], I put him in mind of his past injunctions to the young poet, to which he replied, 'That he wished the shoemaker might have remembered them as well.' Mr. Johnson liked his new acquaintance so much, however, that from that time he dined with us every Thursday through the winter. — PROZZI.

* [See an account of Wodehouse, in Southey's "Essay on the Lives of Uneducated Poets," 1831. p. 114.]

manners such as presented the character of a plain independent English 'squire. As this family will frequently be mentioned in the course of the following pages, and as a false notion has prevailed that Mr. Thrale was inferior, and in some degree insignificant, compared with Mrs. Thrale, it may be proper to give a true state of the case from the authority of Johnson himself in his own words.

"I know no man," said he, "who is more master of his wife and family than Thrale. If he but holds up a finger, he is obeyed. It is a great mistake to suppose that she is above him in literary attainments. She is more flippant; but he has ten times her learning: he is a regular scholar; but her learning is that of a schoolboy in one of the lower forms." My readers may naturally wish for some representation of the figures of this couple. Mr. Thrale was tall, well proportioned, and stately. As for *Madam*, or *my Mistress*, by which epithets Johnson used to mention Mrs. Thrale, she was short, plump, and brisk.⁽¹⁾ She has herself given us a lively view of the idea which Johnson had of her person, on her appearing before him in a dark-coloured gown: "You little creatures should never wear those sort of clothes, however; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?"⁽²⁾ Mr. Thrale gave his wife a liberal indulgence, both in the choice of their company, and in the mode of enter-

(1) Mrs. Thrale was about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, when this acquaintance commenced; it not being quite clear whether she was born in January 1740, or 1741. — C.

(2) Mrs. Piozzi's Anecdotes, p. 279.

taining them. He understood and valued Johnson, without remission, from their first acquaintance to the day of his death. Mrs. Thrale was enchanted with Johnson's conversation for its own sake, and had also a very allowable vanity in appearing to be honoured with the attention of so celebrated a man.

Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnson than this connection. He had at Mr. Thrale's all the comforts and even luxuries of life; his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits lessened by association with an agreeable and well-ordered family. He was treated with the utmost respect, and even affection. The vivacity of Mrs. Thrale's literary talk roused him to cheerfulness and exertion, even when they were alone. But this was not often the case; for he found here a constant succession of what gave him the highest enjoyment, the society of the learned, the witty, and the eminent in every way; who were assembled in numerous companies, called forth his wonderful powers, and gratified him with admiration, to which no man could be insensible.

In the October of this year he at length gave to the world his edition of Shakspeare, which, if it had no other merit but that of producing his Preface, in which the excellences and defects of that immortal bard are displayed with a masterly hand, the nation would have had no reason to complain.⁽¹⁾ A blind

(1) Johnson was insensible to Churchill's abuse; but the poem before mentioned had brought to remembrance that his edition of Shakspeare had long been due. His friends took the alarm, and, by all the arts of reasoning and persuasion, laboured

indiscriminate admiration of Shakspeare had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners. Johnson, by candidly admitting the faults of his poet, had the more credit in bestowing on him deserved and indisputable praise; and doubtless none of all his panegyrists have done him half so much honour. Their praise was like that of a counsel, upon his own side of the cause: Johnson's was like the grave, well-considered, and impartial opinion of the judge, which falls from his lips with weight, and is received with reverence. What he did as a commentator has no small share of merit, though his researches were not so ample, and his investigations so acute, as they might have been; which we now certainly know from the labours of other able and ingenious critics who have followed him. He has

to convince him that, having taken subscriptions for a work in which he had made no progress, his credit was at stake. He confessed he was culpable, and promised from time to time to begin a course of such reading as was necessary to qualify him for the work: this was no more than he had formerly done in an engagement with Coxeter*, to whom he had bound himself to write the Life of Shakspeare, but he never could be prevailed on to begin it, so that even now it was questioned whether his promises were to be relied on. For this reason Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some other of his friends, who were more concerned for his reputation than himself seemed to be, contrived to entangle him by a wager, or some other pecuniary engagement, to perform his task by a certain time. — HAWKINS.

* Thomas Coxeter, Esq., who had also made a large collection of Plays, and from whose manuscript notes the "Lives of the English Poets," by Shiels and Cibber, were principally compiled. Mr. Coxeter was bred at Trinity College, Oxford, and died in London, April 17. 1747, in his fifty-ninth year. A particular account of him may be found in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1781, p. 173. — MALONE.

With regard to Cibber's or Shiel's Lives of the Poets, see *antè*, vol. i. p. 216., and *post*, April 10. 1776, where the subject is resumed. — C.

enriched his edition with a concise account of each play, and of its characteristic excellence. Many of his notes have illustrated obscurities in the text, and placed passages eminent for beauty in a more conspicuous light ; and he has, in general, exhibited such a mode of annotation, as may be beneficial to all subsequent editors.

His Shakspeare was virulently attacked by Mr. William Kenrick, who obtained the degree of LL.D. from a Scotch university, and wrote for the booksellers in a great variety of branches. Though he certainly was not without considerable merit, he wrote with so little regard to decency, and principles, and decorum, and in so hasty a manner, that his reputation was neither extensive nor lasting. I remember one evening, when some of his works were mentioned, Dr. Goldsmith said, he had never heard of them ; upon which Dr. Johnson observed, “ Sir, he is one of the many who have made themselves *public*, without making themselves *known*.” (1)

A young student of Oxford, of the name of Barclay, wrote an answer to Kenrick’s review of John-

(1) [Kenrick was born at Watford, Herts, and was brought up to the business of a rule-maker, which he quitted for literature. He began his career with poetry, and next turned critic in the Monthly Review. Of this “ attack,” entitled “ A Review of Dr. Johnson’s new edition of Shakspeare ; in which the Ignorance or Inattention of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators,” Dr. Johnson only said, “ He did not think himself bound by Kenrick’s *rules*. He wrote two plays without success, and in 1772 was involved in a lawsuit with Garrick. In 1774 he delivered Lectures on Shakspeare, and the next year commenced the London Review, which he continued to his death, June 10. 1779.]

son's Shakspeare. Johnson was at first angry that Kenrick's attack should have the credit of an answer. But afterwards, considering the young man's good intention, he kindly noticed him, and probably would have done more, had not the young man died.

In his Preface to Shakspeare, Johnson treated Voltaire very contemptuously, observing, upon some of his remarks, "These are the petty cavils of petty minds." Voltaire, in revenge, made an attack upon Johnson, in one of his numerous literary sallies which I remember to have read; but there being no general index to his voluminous works, have searched in vain, and therefore cannot quote it.⁽¹⁾

Voltaire was an antagonist with whom I thought Johnson should not disdain to contend. I pressed him to answer. He said, he perhaps might; but he never did.

LETTER 94. TO DR. JOSEPH WARTON.

"Oct. 9. 1765.

"DEAR SIR,—Mrs. Warton uses me hardly in supposing that I could forget so much kindness and civility as she showed me at Winchester. I remember, likewise, our conversation about St. Cross.⁽²⁾ The desire

(1) ["Je ne veux point soupçonner le sieur Jonson d'être un mauvais plaisant, et d'aimer trop le vin: mais je trouve un peu singulier qu'il compte la bouffonnerie et l'ivrognerie parmi les beautés du théâtre tragique;" &c. &c. — Dictionnaire Philosophique, art. "Art Dramatique." Voltaire, édit. 1784, vol. xxxviii. p. 10.]

(2) The hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester, endowed formerly for the maintenance of seventy resident members, clergy and laity, with one hundred out-pensioners; but, since the *dissolution*, reduced to ten residents, with the master and chaplain, and three out-pensioners. — C.

of seeing her again will be one of the motives that will bring me into Hampshire.

“ I have taken care of your book ; being so far from doubting your subscription, that I think you have subscribed twice : you once paid your guinea into my own hand in the garret in Gough Square. When you light on your receipt, throw it on the fire ; if you find a second receipt, you may have a second book.

“ To tell the truth, as I felt no solicitude about this work, I receive no great comfort from its conclusion ; but yet am well enough pleased that the public has no farther claim upon me. I wish you would write more frequently to, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Mr. Burney having occasion to write to Johnson for some receipts for subscriptions to his Shakspeare, which Johnson had omitted to deliver when the money was paid, he availed himself of that opportunity of thanking Johnson for the great pleasure which he had received from the perusal of his Preface to Shakspeare ; which, although it excited much clamour against him at first, is now justly ranked among the most excellent of his writings. To this letter Johnson returned the following answer : —

LETTER 95. TO CHARES BURNEY, ESQ.

In Poland Street.

“ Oct. 16. 1765.

“ SIR,—I am sorry that your kindness to me has brought upon you so much trouble, though you have taken care to abate that sorrow, by the pleasure which I receive from your approbation. I defend my criticism in the same manner with you. We must confess the faults of our favourite, to gain credit to our praise of his excellencies. He that claims, either in himself or

for another, the honours of perfection, will surely injure the reputation which he designs to assist. Be pleased to make my compliments to your family. I am, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

From one of his Journals I transcribed what follows:—

“At church, Oct. — 65.

“To avoid all singularity: *Bonaventura*.⁽¹⁾

“To come in before service, and compose my mind by meditation, or by reading some portions of scripture. *Tetty*.

“If I can hear the sermon, to attend it, unless attention be more troublesome than useful.

“To consider the act of prayer as a reposal of myself upon God, and a resignation of all into his holy hand.”

In 1764 and 1765 it should seem that Dr. Johnson was so busily employed with his edition of Shakespeare, as to have had little leisure for any other literary exertion, or, indeed, even for private correspondence. He did not favour me with a single letter for more than two years, for which it will appear that he afterwards apologised.

He was, however, at all times ready to give assistance to his friends, and others, in revising their works, and in writing for them, or greatly improving, their Dedications. In that courtly species of composition no man excelled Dr. Johnson. Though

(1) He was probably proposing to himself the model of this excellent person, who for his piety was named the *Seraphic Doctor*.

the loftiness of his mind prevented him from ever dedicating in his own person, he wrote a very great number of Dedications for others. Some of these, the persons who were favoured with them, are unwilling should be mentioned, from a too anxious apprehension, as I think, that they might be suspected of having received larger assistance; and some, after all the diligence I have bestowed, have escaped my inquiries. He told me, a great many years ago, "he believed he had dedicated to all the Royal Family round;" and it was indifferent to him what was the subject of the work dedicated, provided it were innocent. He once dedicated some music for the German Flute to Edward, Duke of York. In writing Dedications for others, he considered himself as by no means speaking his own sentiments.

Notwithstanding his long silence, I never omitted to write to him, when I had any thing worthy of communicating. I generally kept copies of my letters to him, that I might have a full view of our correspondence, and never be at a loss to understand any reference in his letters. He kept the greater part of mine very carefully; and a short time before his death was attentive enough to seal them up in bundles, and ordered them to be delivered to me, which was accordingly done. Amongst them I found one, of which I had not made a copy, and which I own I read with pleasure at the distance of almost twenty years. It is dated November, 1765, at the palace of Pascal Paoli, in Corte, the capital of Corsica, and is full of generous enthusiasm.

After giving a sketch of what I had seen and heard in that island, it proceeded thus: "I dare to call this a spirited tour. I dare to challenge your approbation."

This letter produced the following answer, which I found on my arrival at Paris.

LETTER 96. À M. M. BOSWELL,
Chez Mr. Waters, Banquier, à Paris.

"Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, Jan. 14. 1766.

"DEAR SIR,—Apologies are seldom of any use. We will delay till your arrival the reasons, good or bad, which have made me such a sparing and ungrateful correspondent. Be assured, for the present, that nothing has lessened either the esteem or love with which I dismissed you at Harwich. Both have been increased by all that I have been told of you by yourself or others; and when you return, you will return to an unaltered, and, I hope, unalterable friend.

"All that you have to fear from me is the vexation of disappointing me. No man loves to frustrate expectations which have been formed in his favour; and the pleasure which I promise myself from your journals and remarks is so great, that perhaps no degree of attention or discernment will be sufficient to afford it.

"Come home, however, and take your chance. I long to see you, and to hear you; and hope that we shall not be so long separated again. Come home, and expect such welcome as is due to him, whom a wise and noble curiosity has led, where perhaps no native of this country ever was before.

"I have no news to tell you that can deserve your notice; nor would I willingly lessen the pleasure that any novelty may give you at your return. I am afraid we shall find it difficult to keep among us a mind which

has been so long feasted with variety. But let us try what esteem and kindness can effect.

“As your father’s liberality has indulged you with so long a ramble, I doubt not but you will think his sickness, or even his desire to see you, a sufficient reason for hastening your return. The longer we live, and the more we think, the higher value we learn to put on the friendship and tenderness of parents and of friends. Parents we can have but once ; and he promises himself too much, who enters life with the expectation of finding many friends. Upon some motive, I hope, that you will be here soon ; and am willing to think that it will be an inducement to your return, that it is sincerely desired by, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 97. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

“Johnson’s Court, Fleet Street, Jan. 14. 1766.

“DEAR MADAM,—The reason why I did not answer your letters was that I can please myself with no answer. I was loth that Kitty should leave the house till I had seen it once more, and yet for some reasons I cannot well come during the session of parliament. I am unwilling to sell it, yet hardly know why. If it can be let, it should be repaired, and I purpose to let Kitty have part of the rent while we both live ; and wish that you would get it surveyed, and let me know how much money will be necessary to fit it for a tenant. I would not have you stay longer than is convenient, and I thank you for your care of Kitty.

“Do not take my omission amiss. I am sorry for it, but know not what to say. You must act by your own prudence, and I shall be pleased. Write to me again ; I do not design to neglect you any more. It is great pleasure for me to hear from you ; but this whole affair

is painful to me. I wish you, my dear, many happy years. Give my respects to Kitty. I am, dear madam, your most affectionate humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.” (1)

I returned to London in February, and found Dr. Johnson in a good house in Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, in which he had accommodated Miss Williams with an apartment on the ground floor, while Mr. Levett occupied his post in the garret: his faithful Francis was still attending upon him. He received me with much kindness. The fragments of our first conversation, which I have preserved, are these: I told him that Voltaire, in a conversation with me, had distinguished Pope and Dryden thus:—“Pope drives a handsome chariot, with a couple of neat trim nags; Dryden a coach, and six stately horses.” (2)

(1) In the Memoirs of Dr. Warton, p. 312., we find a letter (dated Jan. 22. 1766) from him to his brother, giving some account of Johnson and his society at this period:—“I only dined with Johnson, who seemed cold and indifferent, and scarce said any thing to me; perhaps he has heard what I said of his Shakspeare, or rather was offended at what I wrote to him—as he pleases. Of all solemn coxcombs, Goldsmith is the first; yet sensible—but affects to use Johnson's hard words in conversation. We had a Mr. Dyer, who is a scholar and a gentleman. Garrick is entirely off from Johnson, and cannot, he says, forgive him his insinuating that he withheld his old editions, which always were open to him, nor I suppose his never mentioning him in all his works.”—C.

(2) It is remarkable that Mr. Gray has employed somewhat the same image to characterise Dryden. He, indeed, furnishes his car with but two horses; but they are of “ethereal race:”—

“Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long resounding pace.”

JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the truth is, they both drive coaches and six ; but Dryden's horses are either galloping or stumbling : Pope's go at a steady even trot." (1) He said of Goldsmith's "Traveller," which had been published in my absence, "There has not been so fine a poem since Pope's time."

And here it is proper to settle, with authentic precision, what has long floated in public report, as to Johnson's being himself the author of a considerable part of that poem. Much, no doubt, both of the sentiments and expression, were derived from conversation with him ; and it was certainly submitted to his friendly revision : but, in the year 1783, he, at my request, marked with a pencil the lines which he had furnished, which are only line 420th : —

"To stop too fearful, and too faint to go ;"

and the concluding ten lines, except the last couplet but one, which I distinguish by the *Italic* character :

"How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which kings or laws can cause or cure !
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find :
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
To men remote from power, but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own."

(1) ["The style of Dryden is capacious and varied ; that of Pope is cautious and uniform : Dryden observes the motions of his own mind ; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition," &c. &c. — JOHNSON, *Life of Pope.*]

He added, "These are all of which I can be sure." They bear a small proportion to the whole, which consists of four hundred and thirty-eight verses. Goldsmith, in the couplet which he inserted, mentions *Luke* as a person well known, and superficial readers have passed it over quite smoothly; while those of more attention have been as much perplexed by *Luke*, as by *Lydiat*, in "The Vanity of Human Wishes." The truth is, that Goldsmith himself was in a mistake. In the "*Respublica Hungarica*," there is an account of a desperate rebellion in the year 1514, headed by two brothers, of the name of *Zeck*, George and Luke. When it was quelled, *George*, not *Luke*, was punished, by his head being encircled with a red-hot iron crown; "*coronâ candescente ferreâ coronatur.*" The same severity of torture was exercised on the Earl of Athol, one of the murderers of King James I. of Scotland! (1)

Dr. Johnson at the same time favoured me by marking the lines which he furnished to Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," which are only the last four:—

"That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away:
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

Talking of education, "People have now a-days," said he, "got a strange opinion that every thing should be taught by lectures. Now, I cannot see

(1) On the iron crown, see Mr. Steevens's note 7. on Act iv. sc. 1. of Richard III. It seems to be alluded to in Macbeth, act iv. sc. 1.: "Thy crown does sear," &c. See also Gough's Camden, vol. iii. p. 396. — BLAKEWAY.

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*The lifted axe, the agoni
Luke's iron crown, and L
To men remote from pow
Leave reason, faith, and co*

(1) ["The style of Dryden is capac
Pope is cautious and uniform: Dryden
his own mind; Pope constrains his mind
composition," &c. &c. — JOHNSON, Life of

"The
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See also
See also
&c. &c. &c. &c.
The

that lectures can do so much good as reading the
books from which the lectures are taken. I know
nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except
where experiments are to be shewn. You may teach
chymistry by lectures: — you might teach making
of shoes by lectures!"

At night I supped with him at the Mitre tavern,
that we might renew our social intimacy at the origi-
nal place of meeting. But there was now a con-
siderable difference in his way of living. Having had
an illness, in which he was advised to leave off wine,
he had, from that period, continued to abstain from
it and drank only water, or lemonade.

I told him that a foreign friend of his (1), whom
I had met with abroad, was so wretchedly per-
verted to infidelity, that he treated the hopes of
immortality with brutal levity; and said, "As man
is like a dog, let him lie like a dog." JOHNSON. "If

is like a dog, let him lie like a dog." I added, that
I had said to me, "I hate
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that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except where experiments are to be shewn. You may teach chymistry by lectures:— you might teach making of shoes by lectures !”

At night I supped with him at the Mitre tavern, that we might renew our social intimacy at the original place of meeting. But there was now a considerable difference in his way of living. Having had an illness, in which he was advised to leave off wine, he had, from that period, continued to abstain from it, and drank only water, or lemonade.

I told him that a foreign friend of his ⁽¹⁾, whom I had met with abroad, was so wretchedly perverted to infidelity, that he treated the hopes of immortality with brutal levity; and said, “As man dies like a dog, let him lie like a dog.” JOHNSON. “*If* he dies like a dog, *let* him lie like a dog.” I added, that this man said to me, “I hate mankind, for I think myself one of the best of them, and I know how bad I am.” JOHNSON. “Sir, he must be very singular in his opinion, if he thinks himself one of the best of men; for none of his friends think him so.”— He said, “No honest man could be a Deist; for no man could be so after a fair examination of the proofs of Christianity.” I named Hume. JOHNSON. “No, Sir; Hume owned to a clergyman in the bishopric of Durham, that he had never read the New Testament with attention.”— I mentioned

(1) Probably Baretti. — C.

Hume's notion, that all who are happy are equally happy; a little miss with a new gown at a dancing-school ball, a general at the head of a victorious army, and an orator after having made an eloquent speech in a great assembly. JOHNSON. "Sir, that all who are happy, are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally *satisfied*, but not equally *happy*. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher." I remember this very question very happily illustrated, in opposition to Hume, by the Rev. Mr. Robert Brown, at Utrecht. "A small drinking-glass and a large one," said he, "may be equally full; but the large one holds more than the small." (1)

Dr. Johnson was very kind this evening, and said to me, "You have now lived five-and-twenty years, and you have employed them well." "Alas, Sir,"

(1) Bishop Hall, in discussing this subject, has the same image: "Yet so conceive of these heavenly degrees, that the least is glorious. *So do these vessels differ, that all are full.*"—*Epistles*, Dec. iii. cap. 6. This most learned and ingenious writer, however, was not the first who suggested this image; for it is found also in "A Work worth the Reading," by Charles Gibbon, 4to. 1591. In the fifth dialogue of this work, in which the question debated is, "whether there be degrees of glorie in heaven, or difference of paines in hell," one of the speakers observes, that "no doubt in the world to come (where the least pleasure is unspeakable), it cannot be but that he which hath bin most afflicted here shall conceive and receive more exceeding joy than he which hath bin touched with lesse tribulation; and yet the joyes of heaven are fitlie compared to *vessels filled with licour, of all quantities*; for everie man shall have his full measure there." By "*all quantities*," this writer (who seems to refer to a still more ancient author than himself,) I suppose, means *different quantities*. — MALONE.

said I, "I fear not. Do I know history? Do I know mathematics? Do I know law?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, though you may know no science so well as to be able to teach it, and no profession so well as to be able to follow it, your general mass of knowledge of books and men renders you very capable to make yourself master of any science, or fit yourself for any profession." I mentioned, that a gay friend had advised me against being a lawyer, because I should be excelled by plodding blockheads. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, in the formulary and statutory part of law, a plodding blockhead may excel; but in the ingenious and rational part of it, a plodding blockhead can never excel."

I talked of the mode adopted by some to rise in the world, by courting great men, and asked him whether he had ever submitted to it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I never was near enough to great men; to court them. You may be prudently attached to great men, and yet independent. You are not to do what you think wrong; and, Sir, you are to calculate, and not pay too dear for what you get. You must not give a shilling's worth of court for sixpence worth of good. But if you can get a shilling's worth of good for sixpence worth of court, you are a fool if you do not pay court."

He said, "If convents should be allowed at all, they should only be retreats for persons unable to serve the public, or who have served it. It is our first duty to serve society ⁽¹⁾, and, after we have

(1) This observation has given offence, as if it seemed to sanction the postponement of the care of our salvation, until

done that, we may attend wholly to the salvation of our own souls. A youthful passion for abstracted devotion should not be encouraged.”

I introduced the subject of second sight, and other mysterious manifestations; the fulfilment of which, I suggested, might happen by chance. JOHNSON. “Yes, Sir, but they have happened so often ⁽¹⁾ that mankind have agreed to think them not fortuitous.”

I talked to him a great deal of what I had seen in Corsica, and of my intention to publish an account of it. He encouraged me by saying, “You cannot go to the bottom of the subject; but all that you tell us will be new to us. Give us as many anecdotes as you can.”

we should have performed all our duties to society; which would be, in fact, an adjournment *sine die*. But Dr. Johnson was talking of monastic retirement, and from the context, as well as from his own practice, it is clear that he must have meant, that an *entire abstraction* from the world, and an *exclusive* dedication to *recluse* devotion, was not justifiable, as long as any of our duties to society were unperformed. Bishop Taylor, who will not be suspected of worldliness, has a sentiment not dissimilar: — “If our youth be chaste and temperate, moderate and industrious, proceeding, through a prudent and sober manhood, to a *religious* old age, then we have lived our whole duration, and shall never die.” — Holy Dying, c. i. s. 3. Neither the Bishop nor Dr. Johnson could mean that *youth* and *manhood* should not be *religious*, but that they should not be religious to the *exclusion* of the social duties of industry, prudence, &c. See *post*, Aug. 19. 1773, where Johnson quotes from Hesiod, a line which Bishop Taylor had probably in his mind. — C.

(1) The fact seems rather to be, that they have happened so *seldom* that (however general *superstition* may be) there does not seem to be on record, in the profane history of the world, one single well-authenticated instance of such a manifestation — not one such instance as could command the full belief of rational men. Although Dr. Johnson generally leaned to the superstitious side of this question, it will be seen that he occasionally took a more rational view of it. — C.

Our next meeting at the Mitre was on Saturday the 15th of February, when I presented to him my old and most intimate friend, the Rev. Mr. Temple⁽¹⁾, then of Cambridge. I having mentioned that I had passed some time with Rousseau in his wild retreat, and having quoted some remark made by Mr. Wilkes, with whom I had spent many pleasant hours in Italy, Johnson said, sarcastically, "It seems, Sir, you have kept very good company abroad, — Rousseau and Wilkes!" Thinking it enough to defend one at a time, I said nothing as to my gay friend, but answered with a smile, "My dear Sir, you don't call Rousseau bad company. Do you really think *him* a bad man?" JOHNSON. "Sir, if you are talking jestingly of this, I don't talk with you. If you mean to be serious, I think him one of the worst of men; a rascal, who ought to be hunted out of society, as he has been. Three or four nations have expelled him: and it is a shame that he is protected in this country." BOSWELL. "I don't deny, Sir, but that his novel⁽²⁾ may, perhaps, do harm; but I cannot think his intention was bad." JOHNSON. "Sir, that will not do. We cannot prove any man's intention to be bad. You may shoot a man through the head, and say you intended to miss him;

(1) [Boswell had formed an intimacy with this gentleman at the University of Glasgow. Temple's sketch of Gray's character, adopted both by Mason and Johnson, has transmitted his name to posterity. For some particulars of his preferment and works, see Mitford's "Gray," p. liv. — MARKLAND.]

(2) "La Nouvelle Héloïse," published in 1761. — C.

but the judge will order you to be hanged. An alleged want of intention, when evil is committed, will not be allowed in a court of justice. Rousseau, Sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation, than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." BOSWELL. "Sir, do you think him as bad a man as Voltaire?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them."

This violence seemed very strange to me, who had read many of Rousseau's animated writings with great pleasure, and even edification; had been much pleased with his society, and was just come from the continent, where he was very generally admired. Nor can I yet allow that he deserves the very severe censure which Johnson pronounced upon him. His absurd preference of savage to civilised life, and other singularities, are proofs rather of a defect in his understanding, than of any depravity in his heart. (1) And notwithstanding the unfavourable opinion which many worthy men have expressed of his "*Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard*," I cannot help admiring it as the performance of a man full of sincere reverential submission to Divine Mystery, though beset with perplexing doubts: a

(1) The "Confessions" of this miserable man had not been at this time published. If we are to admit Mr. Boswell's distinction between the *understanding* and the *heart*, it would seem that his judgment on this point should be reversed, for Rousseau's *understanding* was sound enough when the folly and turpitude of his *heart* did not disorder it. — C.

state of mind to be viewed with pity rather than with anger.

On his favourite subject of subordination, Johnson said, "So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together, but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other." (1)

I mentioned the advice given us by philosophers, to console ourselves, when distressed or embarrassed, by thinking of those who are in a worse situation than ourselves. This, I observed, could not apply to all, for there must be some who have nobody worse than they are. JOHNSON. "Why, to be sure, Sir, there are; but they don't know it. There is no being so poor and so contemptible, who does not think there is somebody still poorer, and still more contemptible."

As my stay in London at this time was very short, I had not many opportunities of being with Dr. Johnson; but I felt my veneration for him in no degree lessened, by my having seen *multorum hominum mores et urbes*. (2) On the contrary, by having it in my power to compare him with many of the most celebrated persons of other countries, my admir-

(1) No mistake was ever greater, in terms or in substance, than that which affirms the *natural* equality of mankind. Men, on the contrary, are born so very unequal in capacities and powers, mental and corporeal, that it requires laws and the institutions of civil society to bring them to a state of *moral* equality. *Social* equality — that is, equality in property, power, rank, and respect — if it were miraculously established, could not maintain itself a week. — C.

(2) [See the opening lines of the *Odyssey*: —

"Wandering from clime to clime, observant stray'd,
Their manners noted, and their states survey'd. — POPE."]

ation of his extraordinary mind was increased and confirmed.

The roughness, indeed, which sometimes appeared in his manners, was more striking to me now, from my having been accustomed to the studied smooth complying habits of the continent; and I clearly recognised in him, not without respect for his honest conscientious zeal, the same indignant and sarcastical mode of treating every attempt to unhinge or weaken good principles.

One evening, when a young gentleman teased him with an account of the infidelity of his servant, who, he said, would not believe the scriptures, because he could not read them in the original tongues, and be sure that they were not invented. “Why, foolish fellow,” said Johnson, “has he any better authority for almost every thing that he believes?”—BOSWELL. “Then the vulgar, Sir, never can know they are right, but must submit themselves to the learned.”—JOHNSON. “To be sure, Sir. The vulgar are the children of the State, and must be taught like children.—BOSWELL. “Then, Sir, a poor Turk must be a Mahometan, just as a poor Englishman must be a Christian?”—JOHNSON. “Why, yes, Sir; and what then? This now is such stuff⁽¹⁾ as I used to

(1) It may be suspected that Dr. Johnson called this “*childish stuff*” somewhat hastily, and from a desire of evading the subject; for, no doubt, the principle involved in Mr. Boswell’s inquiries is one of very high importance, and of very great difficulty—difficulty so great, that Johnson himself, though, indeed, (as we shall see, *post*, May 7. 1773), sometimes led to talk seriously, and even warmly, on the subject, seems unable to maintain the full extent of his principles by solid reason, and, therefore, ends the discussion either by ridicule or violence.—C.

talk to my mother, when I first began to think myself a clever fellow ; and she ought to have whipt me for it."

Another evening Dr. Goldsmith and I called on him, with the hope of prevailing on him to sup with us at the Mitre. We found him indisposed, and resolved not to go abroad. "Come then," said Goldsmith, "we will not go to the Mitre to-night, since we cannot have the big man ⁽¹⁾ with us." Johnson then called for a bottle of port, of which Goldsmith and I partook, while our friend, now a water-drinker, sat by us. GOLDSMITH. "I think, Mr. Johnson, you don't go near the theatres now. You give yourself no more concern about a new play, than if you had never had any thing to do with the stage." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, our tastes greatly alter. The lad does not care for the child's rattle, and the old man does not care for the young man's whore." GOLDSMITH. "Nay, Sir; but your Muse was not a whore." JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not think she was. But as we advance in the journey of life we drop some of the things which have pleased us; whether it be that we are fatigued and don't choose to carry so many things any farther, or that we find other things which we like better." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, why don't you give us something in some other way?" GOLDSMITH. "Ay, Sir, we have a claim upon you." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I am not obliged to do any more. No man is obliged to

(1) These two little words may be observed as marks of Mr. Boswell's accuracy in reporting the expressions of his personages. It is a jocular Irish phrase, which, of all Johnson's acquaintances, no one, probably, but Goldsmith, *could* have used. — C.

do as much as he can do. A man is to have part of his life to himself. If a soldier has fought a good many campaigns, he is not to be blamed if he retires to ease and tranquillity. A physician, who has practised long in a great city, may be excused if he retires to a small town, and takes less practice. Now, Sir, the good I can do by my conversation bears the same proportion to the good I can do by my writings, that the practice of a physician, retired to a small town, does to his practice in a great city." BOSWELL. "But I wonder, Sir, you have not more pleasure in writing than in not writing." JOHNSON. "Sir, you *may* wonder." (1)

He talked of making verses, and observed, "The great difficulty is, to know when you have made good ones. When composing, I have generally had them in my mind, perhaps fifty at a time, walking up and down in my room; and then I have written them down, and often, from laziness, have written only half lines. I have written a hundred lines in a day. I remember I wrote a hundred lines of 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' in a day. Doctor," turning to Goldsmith, "I am not quite idle; I made one line t'other day; but I made no more." GOLDSMITH.

(1) This is another amusing trait of Mr. Boswell's accuracy and *bonne foi*. Can any thing be more comic than Johnson's affectation of superiority, even to the degree of supposing that Boswell would not dare to wonder without his special sanction, and the deference with which Boswell receives and records such gracious condescension? — C.

[After all, Johnson was at this time the great established author of fifty seven, and Boswell the enthusiastic but humble aspirant of twenty-five.]

Let us hear it ; we'll put a bad one to it." JOHN-
SON. "No, Sir ; I have forgot it."

Such specimens of the easy and playful conversation of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson are, I think, to be prized ; as exhibiting the little varieties of a mind so enlarged and so powerful when objects of consequence required its exertions, and as giving us a minute knowledge of his character and modes of thinking.

LETTER 98. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton.

"Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, March 9. 1766.

"DEAR SIR, — What your friends have done, that from your departure till now nothing has been heard of you, none of us are able to inform the rest ; but as we are all neglected alike, no one thinks himself entitled to the privilege of complaint.

"I should have known nothing of you or of Langton, from the time that dear Miss Langton ⁽¹⁾ left us, had not I met Mr. Simpson, of Lincoln, one day in the street, by whom I was informed that Mr. Langton, your mamma, and yourself, had been all ill, but that you were all recovered.

"That sickness should suspend your correspondence, I did not wonder ; but hoped that it would be renewed at your recovery.

"Since you will not inform us where you are, or how you live, I know not whether you desire to know any thing of us. However, I will tell you that **THE CLUB** subsists ; but we have the loss of Burke's company since he has been engaged in public business ⁽²⁾, in which he has

(1) Mr. Langton's eldest sister.

(2) Mr. Burke came into Parliament under the auspices of the Marquess of Rockingham, in the year 1765.

gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his [first] appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder.

“Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness. I am grown greater too, for I have maintained the newspapers these many weeks ⁽¹⁾; and what is greater still, I have risen every morning since New-year’s day, at about eight: when I was up, I have, indeed, done but little; yet it is no slight advancement to obtain, for so many hours more, the consciousness of being.

“I wish you were in my new study; I am now writing the first letter in it. I think it looks very pretty about me.

“Dyer ⁽²⁾ is constant at THE CLUB; Hawkins is remiss; I am not over diligent; Dr. Nugent, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Reynolds are very constant. Mr. Lye ⁽³⁾ is printing his Saxon and Gothic Dictionary: all THE CLUB subscribes.

“You will pay my respects to all my Lincolnshire friends. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

(1) Probably with criticisms on his Shakspeare. — C.

(2) Samuel Dyer, Esq., a most learned and ingenious member of the “Literary Club,” for whose understanding and attainments Dr. Johnson had great respect. He died Sept. 14. 1772. A more particular account of this gentleman may be found in a Note on the Life of Dryden, p. 186., prefixed to the edition of that great writer’s Prose Works, in four volumes, 8vo. 1800: in which his character is vindicated, and the very unfavourable representation of it, given by Sir John Hawkins in his Life of Johnson, pp. 222. 232., is minutely examined. — M.

(3) Edward Lye was born in 1704. He published the Etymologicum Anglicanum of Junius. His great work is that referred to above, which he was printing; but he did not live to see the publication. He died in 1767, and the Dictionary was published, in 1772, by the Rev. Owen Manning, author of the History and Antiquities of Surrey. — C.

LETTER 99. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton.

“Johnson’s Court, Fleet Street, May 10. 1766.

“DEAR SIR,— In supposing that I should be more than commonly affected by the death of Peregrine Langton (1), you were not mistaken; he was one of those whom I loved at once by instinct and by reason. I have seldom indulged more hope of any thing than of being able to improve our acquaintance to friendship. Many a time have I placed myself again at Langton, and imagined the pleasure with which I should walk to Partney (2) in a summer morning; but this is no longer possible. We must now endeavour to preserve what is left us, — his example of piety and economy. I hope you make what inquiries you can, and write down what is told you. The little things which distinguish domestic characters are soon forgotten: if you delay to inquire, you will have no information; if you neglect to write, information will be vain. (3)

“His art of life certainly deserves to be known and studied. He lived in plenty and elegance upon an income which, to many, would appear indigent, and to most, scanty. How he lived, therefore, every man has an interest in knowing. His death, I hope, was peaceful; it was surely happy.

“I wish I had written sooner, lest, writing now, I should renew your grief; but I would not forbear saying what I have now said.

“This loss is, I hope, the only misfortune of a family to whom no misfortune at all should happen, if my wishes could avert it. Let me know how you all go on. Has Mr. Langton got him the little horse that I

(1) Mr. Langton’s uncle.

(2) The place of residence of Mr. Peregrine Langton.

(3) See APPENDIX, No. III.

recommended? It would do him good to ride about his estate in fine weather.

“Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Langton, and to dear Miss Langton, and Miss Di, and Miss Juliet, and to every body else.

“THE CLUB holds very well together. Monday is my night. ⁽¹⁾ I continue to rise tolerably well, and read more than I did. I hope something will yet come on it. I am, Sir, your most affectionate servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

(1) Of his being in the chair of the Literary Club, which at this time met once a week in the evening.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I. — THE CLUB.

THE following complete list of THE CLUB, (*referred to in p. 272.*), with the dates of the elections of all the members, and of the deaths of those deceased, from its foundation to the present time, and the observations prefixed and annexed, have been obligingly furnished by Mr. Hatchett, the present treasurer.

“ THE CLUB was founded in 1764, by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Samuel Johnson, and for some years met on Monday evenings. In 1772, the day of meeting was changed to Friday; and about that time, instead of supping, they agreed to dine together once in every fortnight, during the sitting of parliament.

“ In 1773, the Club, which, soon after its foundation, consisted of twelve members, was enlarged to twenty; March 11. 1777, to twenty-six; November 27. 1778, to thirty; May 9. 1780, to thirty-five; and it was then resolved that it never should exceed forty.

“ It met originally at the Turk’s Head, in Gerrard Street, and continued to meet there till 1783, when their landlord died, and the house was soon afterwards shut up. They then

removed to Prince's, in Sackville Street; and on his house being soon afterwards shut up, they removed to Baxter's, which afterwards became Thomas's, in Dover Street. In January, 1792, they removed to Parsloe's, in St. James's Street; and, on February 26. 1799, to the Thatched House in the same street.

“ From the original foundation to this time, the total number of members is one hundred and eleven. *Esto perpetua.*
C. H.

“ Belle Vue House, Chelsea, March 10. 1835.

<i>Original.</i>	<i>Members.</i>	<i>Died.</i>
1.—1764 - -	Sir Joshua Reynolds - -	Feb. 23. 1792
2.— - - -	Dr. Samuel Johnson - -	Dec. 13. 1784
3.— - - -	Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke - -	July 9. 1797.
4.— - - -	Christopher Nugent, M.D. - -	Nov. 12. 1775.
5.— - - -	Bennet Langton, Esq. - -	Dec. 18. 1801.
6.— - - -	Topham Beauclerk, Esq. - -	Mar. 11. 1780.
7.— - - -	Oliver Goldsmith, M. D. - -	Apr. 4. 1774.
8.— - - -	Anthony Chamier, Esq. - -	Oct. 12. 1780.
9.— - - -	Sir John Hawkins, who soon with- drew - - - -	May 21. 1789.
<i>Novels.</i>	<i>Members.</i>	<i>Died.</i>
10.—1768 - -	Samuel Dyer, Esq. - -	Sept. 14. 1772.
11.—1768 - -	Dr. Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dro- more - - - -	Sept. 30. 1811.
12.—1768 - -	Sir Robert Chambers - -	May 9. 1803.
13.—1768 Mar.	George Colman, Esq. - -	Aug. 14. 1794.
14.—1773 Mar.	Earl of Charlemont - -	Aug. 4. 1794.
15.—1773 Mar.	David Garrick, Esq. - -	Jan. 20. 1779.
16.—1773 Apr. 2.	Sir William Jones - -	Apr. 17. 1794.
17.—1773 - -	Agmondesham Vesey, Esq. - -	Aug. 11. 1785.
18.—1773 Apr. 30.	James Boswell, Esq. - -	May 19. 1795.
19.—1774 Feb.	Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox - -	Sept. 13. 1806.
20.— - - Feb.	Sir Charles Bunbury, Bart. - -	Mar. 31. 1821.
21.— - - Feb.	Dr. George Fordyce - -	May 27. 1802.
22.— - - Mar. 4.	George Steevens, Esq. - -	Jan. 22. 1800.
23.— - - - -	Edward Gibbon, Esq. - -	Jan. 26. 1794.
24.—1775 Dec. -	Adam Smith, Esq. - -	July 17. 1790.
25.— - - - -	Dr. Thomas Bernard, Bishop of Limerick - - - -	July 7. 1806.
26.—1777 Jan. -	Rev. Dr. Joseph Warton - -	Feb. 23. 1800.
27.— - - Mar. -	Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. - -	July 7. 1816.
28.— - - - -	Earl of Upper Ossory - -	Feb. 1. 1818.

<i>Elected.</i>	<i>Members.</i>	<i>Died.</i>
29.— - - -	Rt. Rev. Dr. Richard Marlay, Bishop of Waterford - - -	July 2. 1802.
30.— - - -	John Dunning, Lord Ashburton -	Aug. 28. 1783.
31.—1778, Dec. -	Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Banks, P.R.S.	June 19. 1820.
32.— - - -	Rt. Hon. William Windham	June 4. 1810.
33.— - - -	Rt. Hon. Sir William Scott, Lord Stowell - - -	
34.— - - -	The Earl Spencer - - -	Nov. 10. 1834.
35.—1780, Nov. -	Dr. J. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph	Dec. 9. 1783.
36.—1782, Jan. 22.	Lord Eliot - - -	Feb. 17. 1804.
37.— - Feb. 5.	Edmond Malone, Esq. - - -	May 25. 1812.
38.— - Mar. 5.	Rev. Thomas Warton - - -	May 21. 1790.
39.— - Apr. 2.	The Earl of Lucan - - -	Mar. 29. 1799.
40.— - Apr. 16.	Richard Burke, Esq. - - -	Aug. 2. 1794.
41.—1784, Feb. 10.	Sir William Hamilton - - -	Apr. 6. 1803.
42.— - Feb.	Viscount Palmerston - - -	Apr. 16. 1802.
43.— - Feb. 17.	Charles Burney, Mus. D. - - -	Apr. 12. 1814.
44.— - Dec. 23.	Richard Warren, M.D., - - -	June 22. 1797.
45.—1786, May 9.	The Earl of Macartney - - -	Mar. 31. 1806.
46.—1788, Dec. 22.	John Courtenay, Esq. - - -	Mar. 24. 1816.
47.—1792, Mar. 27.	Dr. J. Hinchliffe, Bishop of Peterborough - - -	Jan. 11. 1794.
48.— - May 8.	Duke of Leeds - - -	Jan. 31. 1799.
49.— - May 22.	Dr. John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury - - -	May 19. 1807.
50.—1794, Mar. 18.	Sir Charles Blagden - - -	Mar. 27. 1820.
51.—1795, Jan. 22.	Major Rennell - - -	Mar. 29. 1830.
52.— - Feb. 3.	Rev. Dr. Richard Farmer - - -	Sept. 8. 1797.
53.— - June 9.	The Marquess of Bath - - -	Nov. 20. 1796.
54.—1797, Jan. 21.	Frederick North, Earl of Guilford -	Oct. 14. 1827.
55.—1799, Feb. 12.	The Rt. Hon. George Canning -	Aug. 8. 1827.
56.— - Feb. 26.	William Marsden, Esq. - - -	
57.—1800, Feb. 4.	Rt. Hon. John Hookham Frere -	
58.— - Mar. 4.	Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville -	
59.— - Mar. 18.	Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster	Dec. 21. 1815.
60.—1800, June 10.	William Lock, jun. Esq. - - -	
61.—1801, Mar. 17.	George Ellis, Esq. - - -	Apr. 10. 1815.
62.—1802, Dec. 7.	Gilbert Lord Minto - - -	June 24. 1814.
63.— - Dec. 21.	Dr. French Lawrence - - -	Feb. 27. 1809.
64.—1803, Jan. 25.	Rt. Hon. Sir William Grant -	May 25. 1832.
65.— - Feb. 28.	Sir George Staunton, Bart. - - -	
66.—1804, Mar. 20.	Dr. S. Horsley, Bishop of St. Asaph	Oct. 4. 1806
67.—1806, Jan. 21.	Charles Wilkins, Esq. - - -	
68.— - May 13.	Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Drummond -	Mar. 29. 1828.
69.— - May 27.	Sir Henry Halford, Bart. - - -	
70.—1808, Mar. 22.	Sir H. C. Englefield, Bart. - - -	Mar. 21. 1822.
71.— - May 3.	The Lord Holland - - -	
72.— - May 31.	The Earl of Aberdeen - - -	

<i>Elected.</i>	<i>Members.</i>	<i>Died.</i>
73.—1809, Feb. 21.	Charles Hatchett, Esq. - -	
74.— - Mar. 7.	Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Vaughan - -	
75.— - Mar. 21.	Sir Humphry Davy, Bart. - -	May 29. 1829.
76.—1810, Feb. 27.	The Rev. Dr. Charles Burney - -	Dec. 28. 1817.
77.—1811, June 4.	Sir William Gell - - -	
78.—1813, Mar. 2.	Rt. Hon. Wm. Elliot - - -	Oct. 26. 1818.
79.— - Mar. 2.	Richard Heber, Esq. - - -	Oct. 4. 1833.
80.—1814, June 7.	Thomas Phillips, Esq. R.A. - -	
81.— - July 19.	Rt. Hon. Sir James Mackintosh - -	May 30. 1832.
82.— - Aug. 2.	Lord Chief Justice Gibbs - -	Feb. 8. 1820.
83.—1815, Feb. 21.	The Marquess of Lansdowne - -	
84.— - Apr. 4.	The Lord Lyttelton - - -	
85.—1816, Mar. 26.	Dr. William Howley, Bishop of London.* - - -	
86.—1817, Apr. 8.	Roger Wilbraham, Esq. - - -	Jan. 6. 1829.
87.—1818, Jan. 27.	The Lord Glenbervie - - -	May 2. 1823.
88.— - Apr. 7.	Dr. William Hyde Wollaston - -	Dec. 22. 1828.
89.— - Apr. 21.	Sir Walter Scott, Bart. - - -	Sept. 21. 1832.
90.—1820, Jan. 25.	The Earl of Liverpool - - -	Dec. 4. 1828.
91.— - - -	Charles Butler, Esq. - - -	June 2. 1832.
92.—1821, Mar. 20.	Dr. C. J. Blomfield, Bishop of London - - -	
3.—1822, Apr. 16.	Rt. Hon. W. C. Plunket, Lord Plunket - - -	
94.—1823, May 27.	Francis Chantrey, Esq. R.A. - -	
95.— - - -	Henry Hallam, Esq. - - -	
96.—1826, Dec. 12.	Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A. - -	Jan. 14. 1830.
97.—1828, May 6.	Lieut.-Col. W. M. Leake - - -	
98.— - May 20.	Thomas Young, M.D. - - -	May 10. 1829.
99.— - - -	Rev. William Buckland, D.D. - -	
100.—1829, Apr. 7.	J. N. Fazakerley, Esq. - - -	
101.— - - -	Dr. Edward Copleston, Bishop of Landaff - - -	
102.—1829, May 19.	Davies Gilbert, Esq. P.R.S. - -	
103.—1830, Mar. 9.	Lord Brougham and Vaux - - -	
104.—1830, May 4.	Henry Gally Knight, Esq. - - -	
105.—1830, May 4.	The Hon. Mount Stuart Elphinstone - -	
106.—1832, Apr. 3.	Lord Dover - - -	July 10. 1833.
107.—1832, July 3.	Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A. - -	
108.—1833, May 14.	Viscount Mahon - - -	
109.—1834, Apr. 15.	Hudson Gurney, Esq. - - -	
110.—1834, Apr. 29.	Rev. Dr. Charles Parr Burney - -	
111.—1834, Apr. 29.	The Earl of Carnarvon - - -	

* Dr. William Howley withdrew from the Club on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, Feb. 1829.

THE CLUB, as it stood MARCH 10. 1835.

The Earl of Aberdeen, P.S.A.
 Lord Brougham and Vaux.
 Rev. Dr. Buckland.
 Rev. Dr. Charles Parr Burney.
 The Earl of Carnarvon.
 Francis Chantrey, Esq. R. A.
 The Hon. Mount Stuart Elphinstone.
 J. N. Fazakerley, Esq.
 The Rt. Hon. John Hookham Frere.
 Sir William Gell.
 Davies Gilbert, Esq. P.R.S.
 Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville.
 Hudson Gurney, Esq.
 Sir Henry Halford, Bart.
 Henry Hallam, Esq.
 Charles Hatchett, Esq. (Treasurer.)
 Lord Holland.
 Henry Gally Knight, Esq.
 The Bishop of Llandaff (Dr. Edward Copleston).
 The Marquis of Lansdowne.
 Lieut.-Col. Leake.
 William Lock, Esq.
 The Bishop of London (Dr. C. J. Blomfield).
 Lord Lyttelton.
 Viscount Mahon.
 William Marsden, Esq.
 Thomas Phillips, Esq. R. A.
 Lord Plunket.
 Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R. A.
 Sir George Thomas Staunton, Bart.
 Lord Stowell (senior member of the Club).
 The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Vaughan.
 Sir Charles Wilkins.

At the meetings of the club the chair is taken in rotation by the members, according to the alphabetical arrangement of their names; the only permanent officer being the treasurer.

Mr. Malone was the first treasurer; and upon his decease, in 1812, Sir Henry Charles Englefield was elected to that office, which however, on account of weakness of sight, he resigned in 1814; when the Rev. Dr. Charles Burney was chosen, and continued to be treasurer until his death, which took place in December, 1817; and on the 10th of March 1818, Mr. Hatchett, the present treasurer, was elected.

[No. II. — CAMBRIDGE.]

ACCOUNT OF JOHNSON'S VISIT TO
CAMBRIDGE, IN 1765.

[See p. 284. *antè*. This little narrative was first published in the New Monthly Magazine for December 1818.]

AFTER despairing for some time of being able to send you a narrative of Johnson's journey to Cambridge, worthy of your acceptance, I now hope, through the assistance of a dear and very old friend, to transmit you something not derogatory to its illustrious subject. The gentleman here alluded to is the Rev. J. Lettice, then Fellow of Sidney College (since rector of Peasmarsh, Sussex), of whose merits, as a writer, the public is already well apprized, and whom, in the following narrative, I shall always mention as *my friend*.

My first introduction to Dr. Johnson was owing to the following circumstance. My friend and I had agreed upon attempting a new translation of Plutarch's Lives; but previously, as I was just then going to town, my friend wished me to consult Johnson about it, with whom he himself was well acquainted. In consequence, when in town, I procured an interview with Levett, who willingly next morning introduced me to breakfast with the great man. His residence was then in some old-fashioned rooms called, I think, Inner Temple Lane, No. 1. At the top of a few steps the door opened into a dark and dingy-looking old wainscoted ante-room, through which was the study, and into which, a little before noon, came rolling, as if just roused from his cabin, the truly uncouth figure of our literary Colossus, in a strange black wig, too little for him by half, but which, before our next interview, was exchanged for that very respectable brown one in which his friend, Sir Joshua, so faithfully depicted him. I am glad, however, I saw the queer black bob, as his biographers have noticed it, and as it proved that the lustre of native genius can

break through the most disfiguring habiliments. He seemed pleased to see a young Cantab in his rooms, and on my acquainting him with the business on which I had taken the liberty of consulting him, he rather encouraged our undertaking than otherwise; though, after working at it for a few months, we found the work too tedious and incompatible with other pursuits, and were obliged to relinquish it. After this, the great man questioned me about Cambridge, and whatever regarded literature, and attended to my answers with great complacency. The situation of these apartments I well remember. I called once more before I left town, but the Doctor was absent, and when Francis Barber, his black servant, opened the door to tell me so, a group of his African countrymen were sitting round a fire in the gloomy ante-room; and on their all turning their sooty faces at once to stare at me, they presented a curious spectacle. I repeatedly afterwards visited him, both in Johnson's Court and Bolt Court.

Though I meant at first to confine myself solely to his Cambridge excursion, yet, that we may not lose, as Garrick says, "one drop of this immortal man," permit me to say a few words respecting these different calls. When alone, he sometimes asked me to take tea with him; and I can truly say, that I never found him morose or overbearing, though I freely contradicted him, with which he seemed pleased, and, in order to lead a young man into a sort of controversy or discussion, he would now and then advance what he did not think. He has been aptly compared to a ghost, as he would seldom speak first, but would sit librating in his chair till a question was asked, upon which he would promptly and fluently dilate. The reason for this seems, as a first-rate genius, who feels himself equally prepared to discuss whatever subject may be started, must deem it more to his own honour that he should not choose the topic himself. When I saw the Doctor again, after we had given up Plutarch, I told him that my friend and Professor Martyn⁽¹⁾ had undertaken to give an edition in English, with

(1) The Rev. Thomas Martyn, Fellow of Sidney College, and Botanical Professor, at Cambridge.

the plates, of the Herculaneum Antiquities. JOHNSON. "They don't know what they have undertaken; the engravers will drive them mad, Sir." And this, perhaps, with other reasons, might prevent their executing more than one volume. At another time, he said, "that Mr. Farmer, of your College, is a very clever man, indeed, Sir." And on my asking him whether he knew the fact with respect to the learning of Shakspeare, before that gentleman's publication? JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, I knew in general that the fact was as he represents it; but I did not know it, as Mr. Farmer has now taught it me, by *detail*, Sir." I was several times the bearer of messages between them; and my suggesting and expressing a hope that we should some time or other have the pleasure of seeing him at Cambridge, when I should be most happy to introduce them to each other, might somewhat conduce to his taking the journey I am about to describe.

The last time I called upon him was long after the Cambridge visit, and I found with him Mr. Strahan, his son the Vicar of Islington, and two or three other gentlemen, one of whom was upon his legs taking leave, and saying, "Well, Doctor, as you know I shall set off to-morrow, what shall I say for you to Mrs. Thrale, when I see her?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you may tell her how I am: but no, Sir, no, she knows that already; and so when you see Mrs. Thrale, you will say to her what it is predestined that you are to say to her, Sir." Amidst the general laugh occasioned by this sally, the gentleman retired; and the Doctor, joining in the merriment, proceeded, "for you know, Sir, when a person has said or done any thing, it was plainly predestinated that he was to say or do that particular thing, Sir." I recollect but one more interview with him in town; but to describe that would lead me so far out of my way at present, that I believe I must defer this to some future communication.

Of the journey I principally intended to describe, there is, as I observed, a short account, by Dr. Sharp, in the Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1785, in which he there addresses his friend, "I have had Johnson in the chair in which I am

now writing. He came down on Saturday with a Mr. Beauclerk, who has a friend at Trinity (a Mr. Lester, or Leicester). Caliban, you may be sure, was not roused from his lair till next day noon. He was not heard of till Monday afternoon, when I was sent for home to two gentlemen unknown. He drank his large potations of tea with me, interrupted by many an indignant contradiction, and many a noble sentiment, &c. He had a better wig than usual, but one whose curls were not, like Sir Cloudesley's, formed for 'eternal buckle.' He went to town next morning; but as it began to be known that he was in the University, several persons got into his company the last evening at Trinity." And then his conclusion is equally foolish and indecent: "where about twelve he began to be very great, stripped poor Mrs. Macaulay to the skin, then gave her for a toast, and drank her in two bumpers." Who these several persons were, will appear in the sequel.

When I mentioned a wish to introduce him to our common friend Farmer, the Doctor did not seem disinclined to the proposal; and it was on a Saturday in the beginning of March, 1765, that, having accepted the offer of Topham Beauclerk, Esq. to drive him down in his phaeton, they arrived at the Rose Inn, Cambridge. My friend, of Sidney, had the honour to be the only gownsman sent for by the great man to spend the first evening with him, though Mr. Beauclerk had probably also his friend from Trinity. Next morning, though Caliban, as Sharp saucily calls him, might have been time enough out of his lair, yet I admire his prudence and good sense in not appearing that day at St. Mary's, to be the general gaze during the whole service. Such an appearance at such a time and place might have turned, as it were, a Christian church into an idol temple; but vanity consorts not with real excellence. He was, however, heard of that day, for he was with the above party, with the addition, perhaps, of another friend of his, our respectable Greek Professor, Dr. Lort; but whether or not I was myself of my friend's Sunday party, we can neither of us clearly recollect. To my inquiries concerning this Sidney symposium, my friend has returned the following

short but lively description of it:—“Our distinguished visiter shone gloriously in his style of dissertation on a great variety of subjects. I recollect his condescending to as earnest a care of the animal as of the intellectual man, and, after doing all justice to my College bill of fare, and without neglecting the glass after dinner, he drank sixteen dishes of tea. I was idly curious enough to count them, from what I had remarked, and heard Levett mention of his extraordinary devotion to the teapot.”

On this subject Boswell observes, that “Johnson’s nerves must have been uncommonly strong, not to have been extremely relaxed by such an intemperate use of the infusion of this fragrant leaf. He assured me that he never felt the least inconvenience from it.” It is remarkable, that the only controversy Johnson ever was engaged in, was with the truly amiable Jonas Hanway, about his *Essay on Tea*. I have several times met with that eminently *good*, which is better than *great*, man, Mr. Hanway, at the house of Mrs. Penny, or Penné, in Bloomsbury Square, a lady who, in 1771, dedicated to him a volume of Poetry, calling him “The second Man of Ross.” Once he was unluckily introduced in the very midst of a large tea-drinking party, which made the Philanthropist look grave, and rather disconcerted our elegant and accomplished hostess. At the same house, too, I once heard him mention Johnson and his criticism with a warmth that I did not expect from the meek and gentle Hanway. “The man,” said he, “abuses my work upon tea; and he sits in this manner,” mimicking the shaking of the Doctor’s hands and head, “and then he wonders what I can mean by writing against so wholesome a beverage; while, as he is unable to keep a nerve of him still, he is all the while slopping half of it upon his breeches’ knees.” When I told this anecdote to Dr. Percy, he was much diverted, and observed, “Ay, ay; and yet, in spite of all his tea-bibbing, the gigantic Johnson could have seized with both hands upon the puny Hanway, and *discerped* him.”

Before I close my account of the Sidney dinner, let me observe, that though my friend could not recollect any of the

Doctor's bon-mots at that time, yet the inquiry brought to his mind a former one of our literary hero, so well authenticated, and, perhaps, so little known, that, though it has no reference to our present story, I shall take this opportunity of recording it. From the year 1768 to 1771, my friend was Chaplain to his Majesty's Minister at the court of Denmark, Sir R. Gunning, and tutor to his children. One of the latter, a very accomplished young lady, became in process of time the Hon. Mrs. Digby, who related to her former tutor the following anecdote. This lady was present at the introduction of Dr. Johnson at one of the late Mrs. Montagu's literary parties, when Mrs. Digby herself, with several still younger ladies, almost immediately surrounded our Colossus of literature (an odd figure sure enough) with more wonder than politeness, and while contemplating him, as if he had been some monster from the deserts of Africa, Johnson said to them—"Ladies, I am tame; you may stroke me."—"A happier, or more deserved reproof," Mrs. D. said, "could not have been given!"

I now hasten to redeem my pledge by describing the first meeting of our two great luminaries, Johnson and Farmer. On Monday morning I met the former at Sidney, with the view of conducting him to the latter at Emmanuel. As the Doctor was a stranger at Cambridge, we took a circuitous route to give him a cursory glimpse of some of the colleges. We passed through Trinity, which he admired in course, and then said to me, "And what is this next?"—Trinity Hall."—I like that college."—"Why so, Doctor?"—"Because I like the science that they study there." Hence he walked, or rather, perhaps, rolled or waddled, in a manner not much unlike Pope's idea of

— "a dabchick waddling through the copse,"

either by or through Clare Hall, King's College, Catherine Hall, Queen's, Pembroke, Peterhouse, to the place of our destination.

The long-wished-for interview of these unknown friends was uncommonly joyous on both sides. After the salutations, said

Johnson: "Mr. Farmer, I understand you have a large collection of very rare and curious books." FARMER. "Why yes, Sir, to be sure I have plenty of all such reading as was never read." JOHNSON. "Will you favour me with a specimen, Sir?" Farmer, considering for a moment, reached down "Markham's Booke of Armorie," and turning to a particular page, presented it to the Doctor, who, with rolling head, attentively perused it. The passage having been previously pointed out to myself, I am luckily enabled to lay it before the reader, because I find it quoted, *totidem verbis*, as a great curiosity, which it certainly is, at line 101. of the first part of "The Pursuits of Literature." The words in question are said to be the conclusion of the first chapter of "Markham's Booke," entitled, "The difference between Churles and Gentlemen," and is as follows:—"From the offspring of gentlemanly Japhet came Abraham, Moses, Aaron, and the Prophets, &c. &c. ; and also the king of the right line of Mary, of whom that only absolute gentleman Jesus was born, Gentleman by his mother Mary, Princesse of Coat Armorie," &c. Towards the conclusion of which unaccountable and almost incredible folly, the Doctor's features began most forcibly to remind me of Homer's *μειδιων βλοσυροισι προσωπασι*; and if you can conceive a cast of countenance expressive at once of both pleasantry and horror, that was the one which our sage assumed when he exclaimed, "Now I am shocked, Sir—now I am shocked!"—which was only answered by Farmer with his usual ha! ha! ha! for even blasphemy, where it is unintentional, may be so thoroughly ridiculous as merely to excite the laugh of pity!

What I have next to relate occurred during the visit, but at what period of it is uncertain. If the great man left us on Tuesday morning, as Sharp asserts, and I think correctly, then it must have been on Sunday afternoon, which will prove that I *was* of the Sidney party, and went with the rest, conducted by Mr. Leicester, into Trinity library. On our first entering, Johnson took up, on the right-hand side, not far from the door, a folio, which proved to be the Polyhistor of Morhof, a German genius of great celebrity in the 17th century. On

opening this he exclaimed, "Here is the book upon which all my fame was originally founded: when I had read this book I could teach my tutors!" — "And now that you have acquired such fame, Doctor," said Mr. Leicester, "you must feel exquisite delight in your own mind." JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir, no, I have no such feeling on that account, as you have attributed to me, Sir." Whether the sincerity of Johnson's declaration be allowed or not, the anecdote may, perhaps, supply a useful hint to future aspiring geniuses ambitious of emulating so great a man.

Monday, then, we may say, was probably that *last evening* on which the symposium took place, of which Sharp has attempted to give so ridiculous an account. That some strangers crowded about him was the absurd notion of Sharp; but the plain truth is, that on this *last evening* there was assembled at the chambers of Mr. Leicester, in Nevell's Court, Trinity College, the very same company as before; viz. Mr. L. the entertainer, Mr. Beauclerk, Drs. Johnson and Lort, my friend, and myself, with the addition only of Farmer, on whose account principally the journey was undertaken.

During our conviviality nothing occurred that was at all like an *indignant contradiction*, though the Doctor was himself sometimes purposely contradicted to elicit the sparks of his genius by collision. There was, however, no lack of *noble sentiments*; and on any subject being started, he would instantly give a sort of treatise upon it in miniature. Long before 12 o'clock our hero *began to be very great*; for on his entering the room, having a pain in his face he bent it down to the fire, archly observing, with a smile, "This minority cheek of mine is warring against the general constitution." — "Nay, Doctor," said Beauclerk, who well knew how to manage him, "you mustn't talk against the minority, for they tell you, you know, that they are your friends, and wish to support your *liberties*, and save you from oppression." JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir, just as wisely, and just as necessarily as if they were to build up the interstices of the cloisters at the bottom of this court, for fear the library should fall upon our heads, Sir."

He was brilliant, therefore, from the very first: and might not the above be accepted as a lively and decisive answer to minority politics in general, during the whole of the present reign?

Kit Smart happening to be mentioned, and that he had broken out of a house of confinement: "He was a fool for that," said Beauclerk, "for within two days they meant to have released him." JOHNSON. "Whenever poor Kit could make his escape, Sir, it would always have been within two days of his intended liberation." He then proceeded to speak highly of the parts and scholarship of poor Kit; and, to our great surprise, recited a number of lines out of one of Smart's Latin Triposes; and added, "Kit Smart was mad, Sir." BEAUCLERK. "What do you mean by mad, Doctor?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he could not walk the streets without the boys running after him." Soon after this, on Johnson's leaving the room, Beauclerk said to us, "What he says of Smart is true of himself;" which well agrees with my observations during the walk I took with him that very morning. Beauclerk also took the same opportunity to tell us of that most astonishing, and scarcely credible effort of genius, his writing *Rasselas* in two days and a night, and then travelling down with the price to support his sick mother! But Boswell says this was done after her decease, to pay her debts and funeral expenses. In either case, what parts! — what piety!

On the Doctor's return, Beauclerk said to him, "Doctor, why do you keep that blind woman in your house?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, she was a friend to my poor wife, and was in the house with her when she died. And so, Sir, as I could not find in my heart to desire her to quit my house, poor thing! she has remained in it ever since, Sir." It appears, however, that the friendship and conversation of the intelligent Anna Williams proved in general highly gratifying to him, and he feelingly lamented her loss, in 1783.

A question was then asked him respecting Sterne. JOHNSON. "In a company where I lately was, Tristram Shandy introduced himself; and Tristram Shandy had scarcely sat

down, when he informed us that he had been writing a dedication to Lord Spencer; and *sponte suâ* he pulled it out of his pocket; and *sponte suâ*, for nobody desired him, he began to read it; and before he had read half a dozen lines, *sponte meâ*, Sir, I told him it was not English, Sir." This trifle is prefixed to vol. v. and may be fairly said to justify the censure of the critic, even supposing it contained no other error previously to the giving of the above broad hint. It will scarcely be regarded as a forced digression, if I here relate what Farmer observed to me, a year or two before this period, respecting the ill-judging Sterne. "My good friend," said he, one day in the parlour at Emmanuel, "you young men seem very fond of this Tristram Shandy: but mark my words, and remember what I say to you; however much it may be talked about at present, yet, depend upon it, in the course of twenty years, should any one wish to refer to the book in question, he will be obliged to go to an antiquary to inquire for it." This has proved truly prophetic; and it affords a strong confirmation of that poetical adage, generally, though falsely, attributed to Pope, while it belongs to Lord Roscommon, viz.—

"That want of decency is want of sense."

In the height of our convivial hilarity, our great man exclaimed, "Come, now, I'll give you a test: now I'll try who is a true antiquary amongst you. Has any one of this company ever met with the History of Glorianus and Gloriana?" Farmer, drawing the pipe out of his mouth, followed by a cloud of smoke, instantly said, "I've got the book." — "Gi' me your hand, gi' me your hand," said Johnson; "you are the man after my own heart." And the shaking of two such hands, with two such happy faces attached to them, could hardly, I think, be matched in the whole annals of literature!

As to politics, it is well known that the Doctor was a firm and strenuous defender of the monarchical form of government, as approaching the nearest, that human wisdom is capable of doing, to the divine model, by placing over the nation a prince who shall be clearly above and unconnected with the very highest

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ranks of his subjects. This must be the most natural form of a community ; the safest, and the freest, because the most impartial. Why then should mortals wish for a different one? — why covet the rule of factious nobles or burgomasters? — or destroy millions of their fellow-creatures, to establish that most horrible of tyrannies, the power of *Le Peuple Souverain*, or a lawless and infuriate mob? Being, therefore, himself a true patriot, he was naturally much amused by facetiously exposing and ridiculing sham patriots or reformers ; and on being asked for a toast, his answer was, “ If you wish for a gentleman, I shall always give you Mr. Hollis ⁽¹⁾ : if for a lady, Mrs. Macaulay, Sir.” .

After much of the Doctor’s sportiveness and play of wit, at the lady’s expense, it must be owned, Beauclerk called out — “ Come, come, Doctor, take care what you say, and don’t be too saucy about Mrs. Macaulay ; for if you do, I shall find means of setting her upon you as soon as we return, and she will comb your wig for you pretty handsomely.” JOHNSON. “ Well, Sir, and pray by what means do you propose to achieve this notable exploit of yours, Mr. Beauclerk ?” BEAUCLERK. “ Oh ! I’ll soon tell you that, Doctor. You can’t deny that it’s now a full fortnight since Mrs. M. made you a present of her *History* ; and to my certain knowledge it still remains in your study without one of the leaves being cut open ; which is such a contempt of the lady’s genius and abilities, that, should I acquaint her with it, as perhaps I shall, I wouldn’t be in your place, Doctor, for a good deal, I assure you.” JOHNSON (sub-laughing all the while at this threat). “ Why, in the first place, Sir, I am so far from denying your allegations, that I freely confess, before this company, that they are perfectly true and correct. The work of Mrs. Macaulay is indeed in the situation that you have described. But, in the second place, Sir, I may safely, I believe, defy all your oratorical powers so far to work upon that lady’s vanity as to induce her to believe

(1) Thomas Hollis was born in London in 1720, and died suddenly while walking in his grounds at Corscombe, in Dorsetshire, in 1774. He reprinted many of the political works of Milton, Algernon Sydney, Harrington, and other republican writers, at a great expense.

it possible that I could have suffered her writings to lie by me so long, without once gratifying myself by a perusal of them. However, pray try, Mr. Beauclerk : I beg you will try, Sir, as soon as you think proper : and then we shall see whether you will soonest bring the lady about my ears, or about your own, Sir."

Such was the rapid appearance and disappearance, the very transient visit, of this great man, to an university supereminently famous in itself for the production of great men. It was a visit, however, of which he spoke afterwards in town, to the writer of this account, with very pleasing recollections. Though he must have been well known to many of the heads and doctors at this seat of learning, yet he seemed studious to preserve a strict incognito ; his only aim being an introduction to his favourite scholar — his brother patriot, and antiquary, who was then Mr. (but afterwards Dr.) Farmer, and master of his college, and who finally declined episcopacy. Merit like Johnson's seeks not publicity ; it follows not fame, but leaves fame to follow it. Had he visited Cambridge at the commencement, or on some public occasion, he would doubtless have met with the honours due to the bright luminary of a sister university ; and yet, even these honours, however genuine and desirable, the modesty of conscious excellence seems rather to have prompted him to avoid.

B. N. TURNER.]

Denton, Lincolnshire,
Oct. 17. 1818.

No. III. — PEREGRINE LANGTON.

(See p. 322.)

MR. Langton did not disregard the counsel given by Dr. Johnson, but wrote the following Account, which he has been pleased to communicate to me : —

“ The circumstances of Mr. Peregrine Langton were these. He had an annuity for life of two hundred pounds *per annum*. He resided in a village in Lincolnshire : the rent of his house,

with two or three small fields, was twenty-eight pounds; the county he lived in was not more than moderately cheap; his family consisted of a sister, who paid him eighteen pounds annually for her board, and a niece. The servants were two maids, and two men in livery. His common way of living, at his table, was three or four dishes; the appurtenances to his table were neat and handsome; he frequently entertained company at dinner, and then his table was well served with as many dishes as were usual at the tables of the other gentlemen in the neighbourhood. His own appearance, as to clothes, was genteelly neat and plain. He had always a post-chaise, and kept three horses.

“ Such, with the resources I have mentioned, was his way of living, which he did not suffer to employ his whole income: for he had always a sum of money lying by him for any extraordinary expenses that might arise. Some money he put into the stocks; at his death, the sum he had there amounted to one hundred and fifty pounds. He purchased out of his income his household furniture and linen, of which latter he had a very ample store; and, as I am assured by those that had very good means of knowing, not less than the tenth part of his income was set apart for charity: at the time of his death, the sum of twenty-five pounds was found, with a direction to be employed in such uses.

“ He had laid down a plan of living proportioned to his income, and did not practise any extraordinary degree of parsimony, but endeavoured that in his family there should be plenty without waste. As an instance that this was his endeavour, it may be worth while to mention a method he took in regulating a proper allowance of malt liquor to be drunk in his family, that there might not be a deficiency, or any intemperate profusion. On a complaint made that his allowance of a hogshead in a month was not enough for his own family, he ordered the quantity of a hogshead to be put into bottles, had it locked up from the servants, and distributed out, every day, eight quarts, which is the quantity each day at one hogshead in a month; and told his servants, that if that did not suffice,

he would allow them more ; but, by this method, it appeared at once that the allowance was much more than sufficient for his small family ; and this proved a clear conviction, that could not be answered, and saved all future dispute. He was, in general, very diligently and punctually attended and obeyed by his servants ; he was very considerate as to the injunctions he gave, and explained them distinctly ; and, at their first coming to his service, steadily exacted a close compliance with them, without any remission ; and the servants, finding this to be the case, soon grew habitually accustomed to the practice of their business, and then very little further attention was necessary. On extraordinary instances of good behaviour, or diligent service, he was not wanting in particular encouragements and presents above their wages : it is remarkable that he would permit their relations to visit them, and stay at his house two or three days at a time.

“ The wonder, with most that hear an account of his economy, will be, how he was able, with such an income, to do so much, especially when it is considered that he paid for every thing he had. He had no land, except the two or three small fields which I have said he rented ; and, instead of gaining any thing by their produce, I have reason to think he lost by them ; however, they furnished him with no further assistance towards his housekeeping, than grass for his horses (not hay, for that I know he bought), and for two cows. Every Monday morning he settled his family accounts, and so kept up a constant attention to the confining his expenses within his income ; and to do it more exactly, compared those expenses with a computation he had made, how much that income would afford him every week and day of the year. One of his economical practices was, as soon as any repair was wanting in or about his house, to have it immediately performed. When he had money to spare, he chose to lay in a provision of linen or clothes, or any other necessaries ; as then, he said, he could afford it, which he might not be so well able to do when the actual want came ; in consequence of which method, he had a considerable supply of necessary articles lying by him, beside what was in use.

“ But the main particular that seems to have enabled him to do so much with his income, was, that he paid for every thing as soon as he had it, except, alone, what were current accounts, such as rent for his house, and servants’ wages; and these he paid at the stated times with the utmost exactness. He gave notice to the tradesmen of the neighbouring market towns, that they should no longer have his custom, if they let any of his servants have any thing without their paying for it. Thus he put it out of his power to commit those imprudences to which those are liable, that defer their payments by using their money some other way than where it ought to go. And whatever money he had by him, he knew that it was not demanded elsewhere, but that he might safely employ it as he pleased.

“ His example was confined, by the sequestered place of his abode, to the observation of few, though his prudence and virtue would have made it valuable to all who could have known it. These few particulars, which I knew myself, or have obtained from those who lived with him, may afford instruction, and be an incentive to that wise art of living, which he so successfully practised.”—BOSWELL.

With all our respect for Mr. Bennet Langton’s acknowledged character for accuracy and veracity, there seems something, in the foregoing relation, absolutely incomprehensible—a house, a good table, frequent company, four servants (two of them men in livery), a carriage and three horses on two hundred pounds a year! Economy and ready-money payments will do much to diminish current expenses, but what effect can they have had on rent, taxes, wages, and other *permanent* charges of a respectable domestic establishment? — CROKER.

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