

**THE NEW RAMBLER**



JOURNAL OF  
THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

JANUARY 1967

# The New Rambler

JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

*Editor:* JAMES H. LEICESTER, M.A., BROADMEAD, EYNSFORD ROAD, FARNINGHAM, KENT

Serial No. C.II

JANUARY, 1967

## CONTENTS

### COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

by Ross Wilson, M.A., Th.L. 2

### JOHNSON'S STRICTURES UPON PIOUS POETRY

by The Rev. Canon Adam Fox, D.D. 4

### PEG WOFFINGTON AND HER CIRCLE

by The Rev. Dr. W. S. Scott 14

### DOCTOR JOHNSON AND WINE

by Ross Wilson, M.A., Th.L. 24

### OBITUARY NOTICE

3

### NOTES

13

## Committee of The Johnson Society of London

Chairman: Frederick Nixon, Esq., 5 Palmerston  
Road, London, S.W.14.

Secretary: A. G. Dowdeswell, Esq., 92 St. Paul's  
Road, London, N.1.

Treasurer &

Editor: J. H. Leicester, Esq., M.A.

T. S. Blakeney, Esq., E. M. Bonner, Esq.,  
Mrs. A. G. Dowdeswell, Dr. F. W. M. Draper,  
Victor Halsted, Esq., F. S. A.,  
Dr. R. MacKeith, M.A., D.M., Miss U. M. Pye,  
Mrs. Michael Waterhouse.

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS\*

Ross Wilson, M.A., Th.L.,  
Hon. Schol. Trinity College, Melbourne.

There died a king of England and Scotland in the seventeenth century who was justly described as "the wisest fool in Christendom." I venture to suggest that today, in visiting the last resting place of Dr. Samuel Johnson, we are paying tribute to a man who was for his day the wisest MAN in Christendom. Leaving aside all those whose fate it is in every generation to be born and to die unseen, how strikingly the Doctor stands out above his contemporaries, the politicians, the kings and queens, the rising industrialists, the generals and admirals, all of whom have achieved fame in the history books, and fame for shedding the blood of their opponents, for oppressing those who stood in their way.

I go further and suggest that the Doctor's claim to be the wisest man in Christendom of his day - far from him the cheap taunts of the English and French sceptics who undermined the religion of their lands - lay in his true interpretation of his religion, the Christian religion and his adherence to its commands and admonitions. We must all remember today, if only from the days of our childhood, that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

I suggest that it was exactly that proposition which lay at the root of the Doctor's wisdom. His wisdom was of many forms: the wisdom of accumulated learning enabling a correct judgment and forecast; the wisdom of pioneer cogitation in exploring and making clear a new subject; but above all that deepest wisdom of all which made him constantly recall and act upon the fact that the Lord is the Lord, and though to be loved He is also to be feared, feared because of the fact that we have not always perfectly fulfilled all His commands, have frequently broken His laws, neglected His teachings.

In that virtue of fear of the Lord I suggest the Doctor at least equalled, if not exceeded, any of his contemporaries. And yet his fear of the Lord could pass as he was re-assured, or re-assured himself, that the Lord would receive back the penitent sinner, the man whose fear, whose

\* Address delivered at the Annual Commemoration Service in Westminster Abbey on Saturday, 17 December, 1966, conducted by the Dean of Westminster, Dr. Abbott.

very wisdom, had led him to acknowledge his faults. We are all aware of the working of his mind, his aspirations, his fears, his hopes, on these matters. He has left pages liberally strewn with his remorse, his resolutions, and his amendment as well as back-sliding.

Yes, the Doctor feared little or nothing in the ordinary way of life. He had the sense, the gift of faith, the wisdom, to see there was only one Thing or Person to fear - the Lord, and I believe he ordered his life as well in accord with that principle as any man could - we are all born imperfect - and much better than many others, who may have achieved among their fellows and descendants a greater fame, a meretricious fame. For we must all agree that wisdom is the only guide through the affairs of this world to the only goal there is - the next - and the fear of the Lord is the only beginning to set one on the road of wisdom which will bring us to the one place we all hope to arrive at - Heaven.

However much Dr. Samuel feared the Lord in the course of his life, like all true Christians who have walked in the fear of the Lord his last moments were undisturbed by that fear, and he went happily, lovingly, to receive his reward - the wisest man in Christendom.

#### SIR SYDNEY ROBERTS, 1887 - 1966

Sir Sydney Roberts was a member of this Society almost from its inception. He became a Vice-President in 1931, President from 1940 to 1945, and then held office as Vice-President until his death on July 21st last year.

His obituary in The Times ran to a full column and many letters of appreciation followed. There is no need here to enlarge upon his distinguished career which led to a knighthood and the Mastership of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Full of humour and a master of the apt phrase, he addressed us in 1958 on "The Author of the Rambler", and described the essays as "not for young men in a hurry, but vintage prose, to be sipped slowly". He was always finding new material, and in 1963 addressed us on "The Curious Story of Estimate Brown", which sent us all scurrying to the D.N.B. This season he would have spoken on "Some Reflections on the Idler".

An old and loyal friend of the Society, he was always willing to give a talk or take the chair and we sadly miss him.

A. G. Dowdeswell.



JOHNSON'S STRICTURES UPON PIOUS POETRY\*

The Rev. Canon Adam Fox, D.D.

Not the least delightful among the many delightful things in Johnson's Lives of the Poets are the disquisitions here and there on literary topics which, although they arise from some work of the author he is engaged upon, do not confine themselves to it, but range over more general problems and interests. The most famous and longest of these, and at the present day the most discussed, is the one on the metaphysical poets, as he called them, in the Life of Cowley. In the Life of Ambrose Philips, for another example, there is a good one on Pastoral Poetry, which Johnson disliked, and another in the Life of Roscommon on Literary Academies which he thought useless; there is another, I recollect, on the notion of a Ruling Passion, another on Dedications. I want to draw your attention to the disquisitions on pious poetry in the Life of Waller. I call its subject "pious poetry" because that is the first description Johnson gives of it, but he also calls it "poetical devotion", "metrical devotion", "pious verse", and refers to "contemplative piety" and "pious meditation". This is of some importance, because what he says raises at once the two questions, What kind of poetry has he in mind, and Can what he says possibly be true - does he really mean it? The extract in question does not really suit its context, and I have wondered whether it was perhaps written in less genial years and resuscitated for the Lives:

Let no pious ear be offended, if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and grandeur of nature, the flowers of the Spring, and the harvests of Autumn, the vicissitudes of the Tides, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praise his Maker for his works in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God.

Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and

\* Abridged from a paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 15 October, 1966; The Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Matthews, in the Chair.

the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but, few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel the imagination: but religion must be shown as it is: suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already.

From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy: but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that pious verse can do is to help the memory and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian

Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament: to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere.<sup>1</sup>

Does one not ask at once what kind of poetry it is which Johnson finds so displeasing, and indeed impossible? I say "impossible", because, although he says that "poetical devotion cannot often please", he writes throughout in terms which assert that it can never please. And what is it that he has in mind in this tirade? Keble, the author of the Christian Year, to whom I shall later refer at some length, invited "the reader, as he goes over it, to bear in mind the Psalms of David, and consider whether every one of Johnson's statements and arguments is not there practically refuted".<sup>2</sup> Birkbeck Hill remarks that "In the Latin hymns is to be found the best answer to Johnson's criticisms".<sup>3</sup> At least these two considerable authorities show that the question is worth discussing.

But we must be clear at the outset that Johnson is not objecting to every kind of religious poetry. He expressly excepts "didactic poetry" in which, he says, "the doctrines of religion may be defended: he who has the happy power of arguing in verse will not lose it because his subject is sacred". Johnson will have had Dryden's Religio Laici in mind here, of which he wrote that "the subject is rather argumentative than poetical, but it is a composition of great excellence in its kind." "Of the same kind," he says, "is the Hind and the Panther . . ." And he praised this poem as an example of "poetical ratiocination." Dryden was the first to join argument with poetry.<sup>4</sup> He praised Sir Richard Blackmore also for his ratiocination as exhibited in his poem on the Creation. "He not only reasons in verse," he says, "but he very often reasons poetically. This is a skill which Pope might have condescended to learn from him, when he needed it so much in his Moral Essays."<sup>5</sup>

Johnson also allowed descriptions of Nature, "when," as he wrote, "the subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety, that of the description is not God, but the works of God." Thus he avoids having to exclude the hymn of praise in Book V of Paradise Lost and the end of Thomson's

1 Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. B. Hill (1905), I, 291-3.

2 Occasional Papers and Reviews (1877), p.96.

3 Lives, I, 292.

4 Ibid., I, 469.

5 Ibid., II, 254.

Seasons. These and similar passages would be what he had in mind as "lines which no reader shall lay aside."

And his strictures will certainly not have been aimed at Waller's own poems, though they arise out of the remark that "his Sacred Poems do not please like some of his other works." Johnson begins the two words Sacred Poems with capital letters, and I have no doubt that he was referring specifically to the section of Waller's poetical works to which Waller himself gave the title Divine Poems. Waller's Divine Poems are but a tenth of his whole poetical output, and they consist of about 600 lines entirely in decasyllabic couplets, the greater part of them didactic, and Johnson does not quote a line of them. He says rightly that they do not please like some of his other works. But amongst them there are with one exception the most famous lines Waller ever wrote:

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made:  
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,  
As they draw near to their eternal home.  
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,  
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

Not bad for a poet now 81 years old, and apparently a pious old man at that. Johnson could hardly deny that they please. Or could he perhaps, with his great abhorrence of death? But however that may be, I hope I have now established my first position, which is that by "pious poetry", or whatever he calls it, Johnson does not simply mean "religious poetry". But I am still far from being able to state the corresponding position and say what poetry he does mean. I think he was in difficulties from the start. And here a disquieting thought crosses my mind. Perhaps Johnson does not mean really all he says. He was sometimes over-forcible in his assertions, might generalise without enough instances to support him, or even say things merely to tease. He often teased poor Boswell. But in fact such a notion is quite unthinkable in the present connection. Johnson was extremely sensitive to any loose talk about religion or the Bible; he was on his guard against profanity; he was immensely serious when he talked about God.

No, Johnson means what he says about "pious poetry", and the question still is, What poetry does he mean? I seem to find a clue in the word "pious", to which the word "profane" often stands in opposition. Johnson defines "pious" as

"careful of the duties owed by created beings to God". Let us consider the implications here. The concern of piety is with duty to God. Duty to God is the basic idea, and this has usually been taken, rightly or wrongly, to be the concern of the individual soul. In that case piety is concerned with the individual and is what we now commonly call personal religion. And supposing that Johnson meant this, and I believe he did, he would have had prayer in mind first and foremost. It was certainly one of the things he had in mind, for he refers to "the intercourse between God and the human soul" as "contemplative piety". So what he means is that prayer cannot express itself at all adequately in verse, and taken literally he might even be accused of meaning no more perhaps than that a man at prayer cannot be composing poetry.

But even that cannot be absolutely true. Though it might not be of much value as art, many people at prayer must have expressed their feelings in extempore verse, and if we may regard Tennyson's Crossing the Bar as prayer, he said of it himself, "It came to me in a moment." In any case it is surely possible, and even if it were not, that does not make it impossible to compose at leisure pious verse that should please, especially if Wordsworth is right in saying that the very stuff of which poetry is made is "emotion recollected in tranquillity." It looks as if either Johnson is contending for something which hardly rises to a level of much importance, or he is wrong.

But it is absurdly rash of me to contradict him so briefly and entitles him to a long analysis of his position taken as a whole, which I could not possibly presume to make. Fortunately for me Keble did that very thing long ago. If he had not, I should not have ventured to give this paper. But in the Quarterly Review, for June, 1835, reviewing a book of Poems by Josiah Conder, Keble dismembers what Johnson wrote piece by piece and comments more than just briefly on the items one by one.<sup>6</sup> Conder, a bookseller and author (1789-1855) is now chiefly remembered as the writer of a short hymn beginning "Bread of heaven, on thee we feed", which is still in all the better known hymn-books, and deserves to be. Judged by the specimens Keble gave, the book under review was pious verse, if not indisputably pious poetry. I fear Dr. Johnson would not have been so kind to it as Keble was, but anyway it gave Keble a good opportunity for examining Johnson's assertions in the Life of Waller.

Keble, I feel, has been much over-rated as a poet and

6 Occasional Papers and Reviews (1877), pp. 91-96.

under-rated as a critic. Of his Christian Year half a million copies must have been sold, but I suppose hardly anyone reads it now, and a great deal of it is very tortured and hard to understand, and Keble himself disliked it and would never have it mentioned in his presence. As a critic he is much less well-known. He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford between the years 1831 and 1841, and in that capacity delivered forty lectures all in Latin. They are good lectures, and I hasten to add that there is an excellent translation of them by E. K. Francis, published in 1912 by the Clarendon Press at Oxford, more than seventy years after the last lecture was given. They are worthy of an attention which they have not yet received. There is quite a good summary of them in Walter Lock's book on Keble. The line they take however is found best in a long review of Lockhart's Life of Walter Scott which Keble wrote in 1838, while he was deeply involved in the Lectures, and this contains the following definition of poetry:

Poetry is the indirect expression in words, most appropriately in metrical words, of some overpowering emotion, or ruling taste, or feeling, the direct indulgence whereof is somehow repressed.

This is portentous in the proper sense of the word, for it anticipates by some eighty years the great vogue in England of Benedetto Croce's theory of art as expression and Sigmund Freud's psychology of the repressed sub-conscious. At any rate it governs all Keble's voluminous writing on poetry; it makes his criticism one-sided, but it gives him some remarkable insights. And with this introduction I can come back to the review of Conder.

Johnson introduces his strictures (quoted above) with the words "Let no pious ear be offended, if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please"; Keble opens his counter-attack by admitting that few poets "have been eminent in this branch of their art," but, he says, "we need not have recourse to the disheartening and unsatisfactory solutions which are sometimes given of that circumstance. 'Contemplative piety,' says Dr. Johnson, 'or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.'" Keble denies this and says it is a notion which arises from the not uncommon sentiment that "poetry is in its essence a profane amusement", and here perhaps he is alluding to

Johnson's sensitivity to profanity, which he shares up to a point himself. He allows that "it is unquestionably, by far the safer extreme to be too much afraid of venturing with the imagination upon sacred ground". But he thinks the apprehension about sacred poetry arises out of its abuse, and goes on to Johnson's next argument: "The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few."

Keble's riposte is instant: "It is to be hoped that many men's experience will refute the latter part of this statement. How can the topics of devotion be few, when we are taught to make every part of life, every scene in nature, an occasion - in other words a topic - of devotion? Novelty, therefore, sufficient for all the purposes of poetry we may have on sacred subjects." Keble adduces "connubial love" as a parallel, which he says "is after all only ringing the changes upon one simple affection, which everyone understands. The novelty consists not in the original topic, but in continually bringing ordinary things into new associations with the ruling passion." As a bachelor I can't tell about "ringing the changes", but I suppose Johnson might have answered that he was not denying that sacred subjects are sufficient for the purposes of poetry, but that poetry is not sufficient for the purposes of devotion. He might have added that most love-poetry is not about married love. He might even say that poetry about married love cannot often please. Coventry Patmore is the great exponent of it, and he only pleases a very select few.

Keble passes to the next objection: "Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel the imagination: but religion must be shown as it is: suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already." Before trying to summarize what Keble has to say about this I will recall what Johnson said to Boswell about prayer: "I do not approve of figurative expressions in addressing the Supreme Being, and I never use them." Perhaps Johnson had some such thought in his mind when he spoke of addition to religion; as to its suppression he might be simply objecting to overlooking your sins.

Keble says first that it is not true that poetry exhibits an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford, and he gives as examples "real landscapes" and "the



domestic happiness of family groups". In citing "real landscapes" I think he is on very disputable ground, and a few lines further on he lets himself say that "sacred pictures and sacred songs cannot fail to gratify the mind which is at all exercised in devotion", which is scarcely consistent with his first contention. He might have had doubts, if he had thought of Rubens or Claude, or of Burns's poem The Cottar's Saturday Night, which he praises highly in one of his Prelections. It was perhaps too early for him in 1825 to suspect, as later aesthetic philosophers did, that Art begins where Nature leaves off: so far only artists were thinking that. He might have done better to go straight on to say, as he does say eventually, that Johnson's statements now under review, whether true or not, had led him to a dubious conclusion, namely that "Religion must be shown as it is". Keble questions this, but he makes a distinction. He gives a degree of assent to the view that doctrine must be shown as it is, without suppression or addition, but this is not so, he says, with "the effect of religion upon the human mind and heart", and he argues in the following terms: "Since, probably, no man's condition, in regard to eternal things, is exactly like that of any other man, and yet it is the business of the sacred poet to sympathise with all, his store of subjects is clearly inexhaustible, and his power of discrimination - in other words, of suppression and addition - are kept in continual exercise."

Keble next qualifies his assent to what Johnson has said even about Christian doctrine not being subject to addition or suppression. "The poet," Keble says, "is not by any means so straitly limited in the exhibition of religious doctrine itself, as is supposed in the following statement" - and he quotes Johnson where he says "Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; infinity cannot be amplified; perfection cannot be improved." These staccato platitudes are amongst the sharpest weapons in Johnson's armoury, and Keble admits them. "True," he says, "all perfection is implied in the name of God. But is it not the very office of poetry," he asks, "to develop and display the particulars of such complex ideas?" He goes on to mention as an example Psalm 139, where the omnipresence of God is certainly displayed in very beautiful particulars. Keble gets quite cross: "It is really surprising," he is bold enough to say, "that this great and acute critic did not perceive that his objection applies as strongly against any kind of composition of which the Divine Nature is the subject as against devotional poems," and he adds that "even if the objection were allowed in respect of natural religion, it would not hold against the

devotional compositions of a Christian; the object of whose worship has condescended to become the object of description, affection, and sympathy, in the literal sense of these words."

"We pass on," as he says, "to the concluding passage of the statement under consideration, in which the writer turns his view downwards, and argues against sacred poetry from the nature of man, as he had before from the nature of God." He quotes again from Johnson: "The employments of pious meditation are faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by Fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed."

Keble delays the completion of the paragraph to say that he apprehends that what he has said of the devout affections, as they exist in various persons, is sufficient to answer this, but the rest of the paragraph, he says, requires some additional reflection. It runs as follows: "Repentance, trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets." Keble thinks this is rather "invidiously" put, "grudgingly" he might have said, because cadences and epithets, though a distinctive part, are only a secondary part of poetry. He thinks the truth of what Johnson says may very well be questioned, and he continues: "many of the more refined passions, it is certain, express themselves in poetical language. But repentance is not merely a passion, nor is its only office to tremble in the presence of a judge. So far from it, that one great business of sacred poetry, as of sacred music, is to quiet and sober the feelings of the penitent - to make his compunction as much of 'a reasonable service' as possible."

And so finally to the last quotation from Johnson: "Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion: but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." "Certainly this would be true," says Keble, "if the abstract notion of the Deity were alone considered." But he turns to the sacred Volume (I wish he would call it "the Bible"), and there, he says, "we are furnished with inspired precedents for addressing ourselves to God in all the various tones, and by all the various topics, which we should use to a good and wise man standing in the highest and nearest relation to us"; and in this connection he addresses the Book of Psalms as a whole. This ends Keble's analysis of Johnson's strictures upon pious poetry, and I feel myself that we must allow that Keble on the

whole had the better of the argument. And he has one overwhelming authority on his side, the authority of experience, which does seem to show that poetry of this kind which Johnson so much dislikes and even fears has been written and can please.

Canon Fox concluded his paper by confessing that the question as to what pious poetry Dr. Johnson had in mind still remained unanswered, and he could not answer it; he could only suggest two or three thoughts that might contribute to an answer. He pointed out that Johnson thought of poetry objectively as an art and an art not appropriate to religious devotion. Johnson also seems to have thought there were states of mind induced by religion which tended to inhibit poetical composition; he had not much awareness and no opinion of hymns of the kind our age is so familiar with - they would have given him pause - nor had he much interest in Spenser who is named by Keble as the great English sacred poet. Canon Fox, concurring with Keble in this, quoted twenty-one lines of the Hymn of Heavenly Love, and concluded by advancing in opposition to the great Doctor himself, that pious poetry often pleases most of all.

BOOK NOTICE - A new work on William Cowper.

Professor Paul Fargeix is the author of a recently published work entitled William Cowper: La Vie et L'Oeuvre. It is a two-volume study of the poet and was submitted in 1964 as a thesis for the Doctor of Letters degree at the University of Paris. In the first volume, which is concerned with the life, the author leans towards a psychological interpretation of Cowper. In the second volume Fargeix translates much of the verse into French and discusses it under such captions as, religion, nature, and politics. Although much of the material has been dealt with by earlier biographers, readers will find many fresh insights in this compendious and well-documented study.

Maurice J. Quinlan.

THE TOLERABLE INN

A brass tablet, situated at the north-east gable of No. 14, Argyll Square, Oban, states: "On this site stood The 'Tolerable Inn' where Dr. Samuel Johnson and his friend and biographer James Boswell spent the night on their return from the Tour of the Hebrides on Friday, 22nd October, 1773." Any information as to the origin, date of erection, personnel involved, etc., would be of interest to Mr. Ross Wilson, 51A, Canfield Gardens, London, N.W.6.

PEG WOFFINGTON AND HER CIRCLE\*

The Rev. Dr. W. S. Scott

It is a frequent claim that during the age of reason - the great Augustan age - the arts, religion, philosophy and learning in general rose to a pinnacle to which no form of culture has since attained; a claim which cannot lightly be dismissed. Certain it is that England has never since seen such masters of their respective crafts as Pope and Swift in the realm of satire, Berkeley in that of philosophy, Hogarth in that of engraving. To recall the members of Dr. Johnson's circle alone is to bring to mind a galaxy of brilliance which has never been equalled.

In any discussion of the figures who flit to and fro on the candle-lit stage of this era, one fact stands out in remarkable prominence - a fact of which but little has been made in the past; that it is to her neighbour country of Ireland that England owes the great majority of the outstanding figures of the eighteenth-century theatre. To this generalisation there are a number of great and well-known exceptions, of course, but as a generalisation it is true. Whether we go back to the earliest days of the century and count among the dramatists, and find Congreve and D'Urfey, or come to its close with Sheridan; or search among the stars of the period and note Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive, Barry and John Moody, James Aickin and George Frederick Cooke - wherever we search we find Irish men and Irish women occupying many of the chief places in our theatrical history.

You will of course say that I as an Irishman cannot but hold that point of view. True enough - but there is one statement that I would make in all sincerity, and I hope that you will acquit me of any racial bias when I say unequivocally that I am sure that the most fascinating of all the actresses of her time was the lovely Peg Woffington. She was one of the two daughters of a bricklayer in Dublin, who died in 1720, leaving a widow and these two tiny children. Whether it were on account of a predilection for Ireland's national drink, or whatever the reason was, he left his family entirely destitute, and Mrs.

\* Abridged from a paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 19 November, 1966; the Rev. Canon A. R. Winnett, B.D., Ph.D., in the Chair.

Woffington set up in business as a huckster on Ormonde Quay. Having no capital whatever, the business did not prosper, and the poor woman was reduced to hawking fruit and watercress in the streets, in the manner of the legendary Molly Malone in "Dublin's fair city".

In a booth near the College in Dublin, a certain Italian woman used to exhibit feats of strength and agility, one of which was to cross the stage on a tightrope, with a basket hanging from each foot, each basket containing a small child. One of the infants who undertook this perilous journey for the sake of the few pence reward was the little Peg.

Mercifully, for the sake of the human cargo carried in this dangerous trick, the show was not greatly patronised and soon came to an end; presumably the Dublin public did not care to see babies take such risks, even in the callous days of the 1700s, or maybe the supply of suitable children ran out; whatever it was, Peg was soon back on the ground again, earning her living by helping her mother as a hawker of watercress.

When she reached the age of ten, she was offered another engagement by the same enterprising manageress, Signora Violante, who after the failure of her tight-rope acts had started a theatrical company of children, presumably in imitation of Rich's company in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in which Harry Woodward made his first success. Signora Violante was the wife of the Italian who on June 1st 1727 had descended head foremost by a rope, with his arms and legs extended, from the top of the steeple of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields to the farthest side of the Mews, in half a minute!

In this Lilliputian Company Peg starred in the part of Polly in the Beggar's Opera, as well as playing Nell in The Devil to Pay. Their success in Dublin was such that Signora Violante decided to take them to play the Beggar's Opera in London for a short season, which was announced in the press as follows:

At the New Theatre in the Haymarket, on Monday next, being the 4th day of September (1732), will be presented ... the BEGGAR'S OPERA, after the Irish manner, which was performed 96 times in Dublin with great applause. The part of Macheath by the celebrated Miss Woffington ... Polly Peachum, Miss Jenny; Mrs Peachum, Miss Woffington; Miss Lucy Lockit, Miss Corbally; Mrs Diana Trapes, Miss Woffington.

The remarkable ability that Peg had shown at her tender age attracted the attention of Thomas Elrington, who was manager of the Aungier Street Theatre, from whom she received an engagement to play various adult parts, as well as to entertain the audience by dancing between the acts. For some seven or eight years she remained a member of one or other of the Dublin companies, making herself popular with Dublin audiences not only at Aungier Street, but also at Rainsford Street and the famous Smock Alley house.

At the latter theatre she made her first considerable success in a tragedy part, that of Ophelia, which she first played in April 1737. Three years later she appeared for the first time in what to the end of her life was considered her finest part, in which she excelled all others - that of Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's Constant Couple.

Rumours of her exquisite performance as Wildair reached Rich in London, who wasted no time in offering her an engagement at Covent Garden, which she at once accepted. Her meeting with Rich on her arrival at the theatre, surrounded by the twenty-seven cats by which he was invariably accompanied, is immortalized in the famous picture of the scene.

Peg made her first appearance at Covent Garden as Silvia in The Recruiting Officer. In this part she had to appear dressed as a boy, and her bewitching appearance and consummate ability took the town by storm. Later in the month she played the part in which she had been so successful in Dublin, that of Sir Harry Wildair, in which she gave so superb a performance that, though the part was written for a male actor, it was a long time before any man dared appear in the part. Even Garrick, when he played Wildair, was hissed - the audience would not accept him, after seeing Woffington.

It is interesting to note that during the last war so great an authority on Restoration drama as the late Montague Summers went to see The Constant Couple at the Arts Theatre. He wrote to Leslie Staples afterwards: "It was quite like the old days and I can say nothing better ... Alec Clunes as Sir Harry was excellent. How ever a woman could have attempted the part I can't imagine. Not even Peg Woffington. It is, it must have been all wrong."

Deferring as I must to Mr. Summers' opinion, and admiring as I do Mr. Clunes' histrionic ability, I still ask

myself what would I not give to hear Woffington sing Wildair's charming and improper song? One can imagine the wild applause with which it must have been greeted, sung by so charming a girl, in the habiliments of a boy.

Thus Damon knocked at Celia's door,  
He sighed and begged and wept and swore:  
The sign was so  
She answered 'no,  
No, no, no.'

Again he sighed, again he prayed:  
'No, Damon, no, I am a maid;  
Consider, no, I am a maid,  
No, no, no.'

At last his sighs and tears made way;  
She rose and softly turned the key:  
'Come in,' said she, 'but do not stay;  
I may conclude  
You will be rude:  
But, if you are, you may.'

After playing a number of other parts in the same season under Rich's management, she was engaged for the next year at Drury Lane, where she began the season with the same parts as those she had played the year before at Covent Garden - Silvia in The Recruiting Officer, followed by Sir Harry Wildair. Her previous success was repeated, and she added a number of other roles to her repertoire, among them that of Helena in A Midsummer Night's Dream (in which, through illness, she broke down), and Cordelia, which she played to David Garrick's Lear.

It was at this time that Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams fell in love with Woffington, and composed several poems addressed to her, one of which, Lovely Peggy, is a charming example of the love verse of the period. I quote some of its stanzas:

The sun first rising in the morn,  
That paints the dew-bespangled thorn,  
Does not so much the day adorn  
As does my lovely Peggy.  
And when in Thetis' lap to rest,  
He streaks with gold the ruddy west,  
He's not so beauteous as undressed  
Appears my lovely Peggy.



The zephyr air the violet blows,  
Or breathes upon the damask rose,  
He does not half the sweets disclose  
That does my lovely Peggy.  
I stole a kiss the other day,  
And trust me, nought but truth I say,  
The fragrant breath of blooming may  
Was not so sweet as Peggy.

While bees from flower to flower shall rove,  
And linnets warble through the grove,  
Or stately swans the waters love,  
So long shall I love Peggy.  
And when death, with his pointed dart  
Shall strike the blow that rives my heart,  
My words shall be, when I depart,  
Adieu, my lovely Peggy.

Despite the poet's adoration of his "fair", it is only right to mention that he was by no means unaware of her chief weakness. You will remember the concluding lines of his delightful verses on "Peggy's charms", in which he makes a somewhat delicate reference to her generous temperament:

But I'm in love with Peggy's mind,  
Where every virtue is combin'd,  
That can adorn the fair,  
Excepting one you scarce can miss,  
So trifling that you would not wish  
That virtue had been there.

She who possesses all the rest  
Must sure excel the prude whose breast  
That virtue shares alone;  
To seek perfection is a jest;  
They who have fewest faults are best;  
And Peggy has but one.

In the early part of the year 1742, accompanied by Garrick, Woffington returned to her native city, where she found that her reputation had already attained to heights of fame hitherto unknown on the Irish stage. They were engaged to appear together at the Smock Alley Theatre, where Peg once more played the part of Wildair, following it by her first appearance as Lady Anne, to the Richard III of Garrick.

The previous October he had first played Richard at Goodman's Fields, where his success had been immediate and enormous. It had led to such large audiences making their way to this little theatre that the managers of the Patent Theatres began to fear for their rights, so the law was set in motion and Goodman's Fields Theatre was closed.

It was during this Irish visit that Woffington made the acquaintance of Francis Andrews, later to become Provost of Trinity College, who greatly admired her. It was afterwards said that he owed his advance in his profession largely to her influence. This indeed is quite possible - even probable - but I must admit I have been unable to find any definite proof of it.

This remarkable season at Dublin, where they played consistently to packed houses - the "Garrick Fever", as it was called - ended in August, when Garrick returned to London to prepare for their season at Drury Lane in September.

Peg remained behind in Dublin for a short while, in order to make arrangements to have her younger sister Polly educated abroad, as well as to find suitable accommodation for her mother. O'Keefe tells us that many years later he still remembered her in Dublin, "a respectable old lady in a velvet cloak, with a diamond ring and an agate snuff-box, going the round of the Roman Catholic chapels, and chatting with her neighbours, no doubt upon the favourite topic of her famous daughter."

On Peg's return to London she set up a curious joint establishment with Macklin and Garrick at number 6 Bow Street, a house that had been built by the actor Robert Wilks, next door but one to the Theatre. Here they took it in turns to keep house, and it was here that Dr. Johnson heard Garrick blame Peg's extravagance in having made the tea "as red as blood".

On April 15th 1748 Woffington played her last performance at Drury Lane in the role of Phillis in Steele's Conscious Lovers, and set off for Paris to study the methods of the great tragedienne, Marie-Francoise Dumesnil, the actress to whom Garrick gave the praise, so often given to him, of being and not acting the character played.

On her return from Paris Woffington appeared under Rich's management at Covent Garden, playing Oldfield's famous part of Andromache in The Distressed Mother, as well as Venturia

in Thomson's Coriolanus. It was then that she found a rival in George Ann Bellamy, with whom she had her famous sumptuary dispute. Fortunately Bellamy was soon carried off by an admirer, and Peg was able to reign alone until Mrs. Cibber returned from Drury Lane, and discord again began.

Horace Walpole, with the somewhat vulgar superiority which characterized everything he said or did, in a letter to his friend Sir Horace Mann, said: "I have been two or three times at the play, very unwillingly; for nothing was ever as bad as the actors, except the company. There is much in vogue a Mrs. Woffington, a bad actress; but she has life."

To swim against the stream seems to have been a family characteristic, for we find his nineteen-year-old cousin, Henry Conway (afterwards to become a Field-Marshal) writing to Walpole and presuming from the standpoint of his great experience to judge the greatest actress of the day in the words: "So you cannot bear Mrs Woffington; yet all the town is in love with her. To say the truth, I am glad to find somebody to keep me in countenance, for I think she is an impudent Irish-faced girl."

Walpole was indeed unfortunate - in his own estimation - in his connection with Peg's family, for his nephew Robert Cholmondely finally prevailed on her sister Polly to marry him. Walpole wrote yet another of his interminable letters to Horace Mann, complaining of the alliance: "I have been unfortunate in my own family; my nephew, Captain Cholmondely, has married a player's sister."

At the beginning of the season of 1752 Sheridan engaged Woffington at the then enormous salary of eight hundred pounds. The season began on October 8th, with Peg playing the part of Lady Betty Modish in Colley Cibber's famous comedy, The Careless Husband. A week later she appeared as Belvidera in Venice Preserved, by command of the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Dorset.

During this season in Dublin Peg Woffington made the acquaintance of the beautiful sisters, Maria and Elizabeth Gunning. They lived in Capel Street, just opposite to the house in which she had taken rooms. They were so poor that when they were to be presented at the Viceregal Court they could not afford to have suitable dresses made so, having heard of the kindness of the famous actress, they called on Woffington, explained that they were neighbours, and asked her if she would

be good enough to lend them dresses from her wardrobe for the occasion, which she gladly did.

"It was at this time," Macklin wrote, "that Woffington might have been said to have reached the acme of her fame; she was then in the bloom of her person, accomplishments and profession; highly distinguished for her wit and vivacity; with a charm of conversation that at once attracted the admiration of the men and the envy of the women. Her company off was equally sought for as on the stage; and though she did not much admire the frivolity of her own sex, and consequently did not mix much with them, she was the delight of some of the gravest and most scientific characters in Church and State."

For a time all went well, but before long both Sheridan and Woffington suffered the extreme of unpopularity for political reasons - something that has happened only too often in the social history of Ireland. The immediate cause was the establishment in Dublin of the Beefsteak Club.

Just as various Beefsteak Clubs had been formed in London attached to the various theatres, so Thomas Sheridan had formed one in Dublin, which met at his house. Weekly dinners were given to which all the most important people in Dublin were invited. No women however were allowed - with the exception of Peg Woffington. As Constantia Maxwell wrote: "It is said that she frankly declared that she preferred the society of men to that of women, because she had found that her own sex talked of nothing but silks and scandal." She was elected President of the Club, and sat in the great Chair at the head of the table, which her intelligence, her humour and her wit made her very competent to fill.

As a result of the supposed interference of the Beefsteak Club in political matters, there were riots in the theatre, but even Woffington herself, in attempting to calm the audience, was not listened to, and the theatre was wrecked. Peg returned to London and appeared again at Covent Garden, where she had her usual success.

Of her acting at this time an anonymous contemporary wrote: "She first steals your heart, and then laughs at you, as secure of your applause. There is such a prepossession arises from her form; such a witchcraft in her beauty, and to those who are personally acquainted with her, such an absolute command, from the sweetness of her disposition, that it is almost impossible

to criticize upon her."

On May 17, 1757, at a benefit performance at Covent Garden there occurred the tragic happening which ended Peg's professional career. As You Like It was being played, for the benefit of two minor actors and a French dancer, and Woffington had arranged to appear as Rosalind. As Hitchcock said of her: "She always remained the same gay, affable, obliging, good-natured Woffington to everyone around her. Not the lowest performer in the theatre did she refuse playing for. Out of twenty-six benefits in one season, she acted in twenty-four."

During the last act she complained of feeling extremely unwell, but got through her first entrance. She came off to change her dress, saying she felt very ill indeed but hoped she would be able to finish the play. This she did manage to do, and began to speak the epilogue, but when she came to the line "If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me" her voice broke. She endeavoured to continue, but her voice failed; again she tried, but could not get her voice to speak the line; another pause, and with a scream of "O God!" she staggered to the wings and fell.

For three years she lingered, living sometimes in London and sometimes at Teddington, where she had a villa. Colonel Caesar, who had lived with her for some time, spent a certain amount of time with her during her last illness. It was generally believed that she was his mistress, and indeed she may have been so, though many people believed that they were married. No less a person than Kitty Clive said quite categorically that Caesar had procured the marriage licence "when Colonel Mostyn did his"

In yet another of his acidulous pieces of gossip with his crony, Mann, Walpole wrote just after Woffington's last performance: "Somebody asked me at the play the other night what was become of Mrs W.; I replied, she is taken off by Colonel Caesar. Lord Trawley said, 'I suppose she was reduced to aut Caesar aut nullus.'"

During the last three years of her life, she had for companion in her house at Teddington a Mrs. Barrington, widow of the John Barrington who as a boy had acted with her in the Beggar's Opera in long-ago days in Dublin, and filled her days with works of charity. It is on record that she used to knit stockings, which she distributed periodically to the poor of the village.

Peg Woffington died on March 28, 1760, in a house - probably her sister's - in Queen's Square, now the western end of Queen Anne's Gate. She was buried in the old parish church of Teddington, where there is a monument on the east wall of the north aisle. Under a shield of arms - or, three leopard's faces gules - are the words "Near this monument lies the body of Margaret Woffington, spinster, born Oct. 18, 1720, who departed this life Mar. 28, 1760, aged 39 years." On the lower compartment are the words "In the same grave lies the body of Master Horace Cholmondely, son of the Honourable Robert Cholmondely and of Mary Cholmondely, sister of the said Margaret Woffington, aged six months."

In her will, she left an annuity to her mother, and everything else she possessed to her sister, thus (to quote Macklin's somewhat cynical remark) "disappointing Colonel Caesar, as he perhaps might have disappointed her had it been his turn to go first."

One of the most interesting things about Peg Woffington is the impression that she left behind - stamped, indeed, upon many persons in every generation since her death - from Robert Wilkinson, the author of Londina Illustrata, who, although he could never have seen her, undoubtedly heard stories of her from many who had both seen and loved her, and who called her "the most beautiful woman that ever adorned a theatre", to Charles Reade, who wrote not only the earliest play about her but also her first biography, and who said of her "I am in love with Peg Woffington ... I love her, and hope to make many love her."

One finds her referred to as "witty", "brilliant", "generous", "charitable", "witching" and "enchanted" - and I have found it impossible (even in the course of preparing this paper) to read of her and to endeavour to understand her character, without in some degree myself falling in love with her. The fascination that she exerted on almost everyone with whom she came into contact during her life is still so strong that one cannot think of her without loving her.

In her day it was a frequent custom to end a piece of prose writing with a classical tag. May I today follow the same custom and choose one which describes in a few words the lasting effect of the personality of the lovely creature of whom we have been thinking this afternoon - words of Horace from one of his odes:

Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam.

Woffington has indeed avoided Libitina.

DOCTOR JOHNSON AND WINE\*

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

We must begin at Dr. Johnson's famous alcoholic trinity, the passage recorded by Boswell as occurring at a dinner given by Sir Joshua Reynolds on the 7th April, 1779:

Johnson harangued upon the qualities of different liquors and spoke with great contempt of claret, as so weak, that 'a man would be drowned by it before it made him drunk.' He was persuaded to drink one glass of it, that he might judge, not from recollection, which might be dim, but from immediate sensation. He shook his head, and said, 'Poor stuff! No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling) must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavour of brandy is most grateful to the palate; and then brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking can do for him. There are, indeed, few who can drink brandy. That is a power rather to be wished for than attained.'

The year before, when dining with Dr. Robertson and others at Allan Ramsay's, according to Boswell:

Johnson harangued against drinking wine. 'A man may choose (said he) whether he will have abstemiousness and knowledge, or claret and ignorance.' Dr. Robertson ... was beginning to dissent as to the prescription of claret. Johnson: (with a placid smile) 'Nay, Sir, you shall not differ with me; as I have said that the man is most perfect who takes in most things, I am for knowledge and claret.'

There, in brief, is the crux: Dr. Johnson, the High Tory, rejecting and despising the Tory party wine, claret, advocating the Whig wine, port, and maintaining that a man drank to get drunk. Let me remind you of the words again: "Then brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking can do for him. There are, indeed, few who can drink brandy. That is a power rather to be wished for than attained."

There lie the three main threads of our enquiries: the

\* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London, on 17 December, 1966; Mrs. A. G. Dowdeswell in the Chair.



doctor's own use - and non-use - of wine; his academic recordings on various wines and their production; and finally the historical setting of the wine trade in the eighteenth century.

First, his own use of it. One of the best summaries of his use of wine he gave to his old Oxford collegiate friend, Edwards, in 1778. "I now drink no wine, Sir," said the doctor. "Early in life I drank wine: for many years I drank none. I then for some years drank a good deal ... I then had a severe illness, and left it off, and I have never begun it again." But we find that in 1781 he had returned to it, and Boswell records that Mr. Thrale told him he "might now have the pleasure to see Dr. Johnson drink wine again." Johnson confirmed this, telling Boswell: "I drink it now sometimes, but not socially."

This passage gives Boswell the opportunity to draw on past experience with the doctor and his drinking habits - habits which coincide with his eating habits on many occasions.

The first evening that I was with him at Thrale's, I observed he poured a large quantity of it (wine) into a glass, and swallowed it greedily. Every thing about his character and manners was forcible and violent; there was never any moderation; many a day did he fast, many a year did he refrain from wine; but when he did eat, it was voraciously; when he did drink wine, it was copiously. He could practise abstinence, but not temperance.

That voracity can, of course, be understood, too, as one of the effects of his years of grinding poverty and incessant toil. It helps explain his correlation of brandy's producing most quickly what drinking can do for a man.

Remember how, at Dunvegan, during the doctor's and Boswell's tour of the Hebrides, the doctor had a cold and Miss M'Leod persuaded him to drink some brandy when going to bed. The occasion served to draw from Boswell the revealing comment that the sage "has great virtue in not drinking wine or any fermented liquor, because, as he acknowledged to us, he could not do it in moderation." Or, as Hannah More wrote in April, 1782: "Poor Dr. Johnson is in a bad state of health; I fear his constitution is broken up." Yet in one week, about this time, the Doctor dined out four times. At one of these dinners, Hannah More continues: "I urged him to take a little wine. He replied, 'I can't drink a little, child; therefore, I never

touch it. Abstinence is as easy to me as temperance would be difficult.' He was very good humoured and gay."

Let us now retrace our steps to earlier years. Boswell recalls the comment of a companion of the doctor's young manhood who said that "though he loved to exhilarate himself with wine, he never knew him (Johnson) intoxicated but once." Now when Johnson arrived in London he "abstained entirely from fermented liquors", a fact we can appreciate the better when we recall his dire poverty at the time.

I must here make an aside on the subject of his London escort, David Garrick. Garrick had an uncle David who was a wine merchant at Lisbon, and David junior visited him at the age of eleven. David's father died about a month after the son's London arrival, and as uncle David had left nephew David a sum of £1,000 young David and his brother George entered the wine trade as merchants of London and Lichfield, David taking up the London business. The concern was not prosperous - though Samuel Foote's assertion that he had known Garrick with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar calling himself a wine merchant need not be taken literally - and before the end of 1741 he had spent nearly half of his capital. This would be all well known to Johnson, of course, and would be registered by him as but another example of the indigence of life - an indigence he shared with Savage for some years and which, Boswell opines, may have led him "imperceptibly ... into some indulgences which occasioned much distress to his virtuous mind."

Now we are all aware of the doctor's devotion to the tavern, and it was only a little after his death that the word "tavern" was applied indiscriminately to ale-houses, public houses and bars. It had originated, and long continued, as a term denoting a wine shop, or establishment. The doctor with his encyclopaedic knowledge would be well aware of this fact, and we have instances of his drinking wine at - and taking it away with him from - taverns. Boswell was privileged to visit the Mitre Tavern with his hero where, he records: "We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he sometimes then drank a bottle." That was a long drawn-out supper; it finished between one and two in the morning and they drank a couple of bottles of port - a wine we shall consider later.

Shortly afterwards, Boswell was away on his continental junketings and on his return in February, 1766, supped with the doctor at the Mitre, but, he records, "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." Thus a few days later, when Boswell and Goldsmith wanted the doctor to accompany them to the Mitre and he felt indisposed, he then called for a bottle of port wine which his two guests drank while Johnson sat by.

We may there see another cause of the doctor's addiction to tea! If he was to deny himself the social glass of wine, his well established fondness for tea would only be nourished and supported. Or, as he put it: "Few people had intellectual resources sufficient to forego the pleasures of wine. They could not otherwise contrive how to fill up the interval between dinner and supper."

It is to be noted that consequent on his illness and denial of wine, Johnson became more broadly philosophic in his treatment of wine drinking. Of course he loved an argument for its own sake and as an opportunity to triumph - as he always made sure of doing. It was in 1772 that Boswell tried to draw him out on the subject, finally having recourse to the maxim in vino veritas - "a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth." To which Dictionary Johnson made reply: "Why, Sir, that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, Sir, I would not keep company with a fellow, who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him." We can skip the incident of a few days later when he retorted to the argument of drinking to forget what is disagreeable by saying: "Yes, Sir, if he sat next you."

It is another Johnsonian curiosity that his notes on his Paris visit of 1775 contain no references to wine, yet explicit notes on Parisian brewing - of course he was with the Thrales, brewers themselves. But even when he spoke to Boswell about the visit, again he made no recorded reference to wine.

The following year, 1776, and puzzled by Johnson's continued abstinence from wine, Boswell drew him out on the subject in the broader manner:

Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return

to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it.

Bozzy then enlarges, with a concrete example provided, on the doctor's forgivingness and understanding of those who got drunk, and notes another enlargement of the doctor's view of wine-drinking: the mixture of drinkers with non-drinkers. "A man who has been drinking wine at all freely," said Johnson, "should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people."

At a supper at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, with a distinguished company, the subject of drunkenness came up again - largely, I think, because of Boswell's persistence. Does drinking improve conversation and benevolence? Johnson: "No, Sir: before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding; and those who are conscious of their inferiority have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous: but he is not improved: he is only not sensible of his defects." An argument developed between Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds, with the former hammering home the truths of experience: "No, Sir; wine gives not light, gay ideal hilarity; but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment. I have heard none of those drunken - nay, drunken is a coarse word -, none of those vinous flights."

The argument is recorded at length, and I can only refer you to it, under April, 1776. Johnson admitted, in brief, that spirits are raised by drinking, as by other communal pleasures; that some sluggish men are improved by it; a very few men of talents were likewise improved by drinking, subject to the fact that every generalisation had its exceptions. Johnson then summed up:

Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine, I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself; in the first place, because I had a need of it to raise my spirits: in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me.

There we have it: an avowal, in line with the earlier quotation about brandy, that drinking is for what drinking can achieve: intoxication. A sad and distressing sidelight on the doctor, but a matter which, by sheer force of character, he was able to take in hand and cure himself. Indeed, it may be truly said that Johnson was a compulsive alcoholic - who cured himself, with the combined aid of willpower and prayer.

The following year, 1777, when touring with Boswell, the doctor took up the same theme, this time in relation to Bozzy's own drunken tendencies which were later to help kill him. Johnson recommended him to drink water only - it was the early days of the incipient temperance movement occasioned by heavy spirits consumption in Great Britain and the United States - adding: "For you are then sure not to get drunk; whereas if you drink wine, you are never sure." When Boswell protested the pleasures of wine, the doctor agreed: "Why, Sir, there is no doubt that not to drink wine is a great deduction from life: but it may be necessary." The voice of personal experience. Bozzy at least got the doctor to agree that "a free use of wine did not shorten life."

Johnson's own abstinence came up again the next year in connection with a society's obtaining a hogshead of claret from the Dean, when the doctor was voted secretary. Then he said, simply: "I am only to write for wine; and I am quite disinterested, as I drink none."

With his usual skill, Boswell later drew Johnson out on the subject of wine drinking: "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it," said the doctor; "I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this." Pressed, he went on about abstaining: "Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again until I grow old, and want it." He was then aged sixty-nine years.

He most clearly defined his continued abstinence by saying later that "I now no more think of drinking wine than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me, than for the dog that is under the table." A remarkable testimony of self-control and abnegation from an avowed former tippler and inebriate. And again, in April, 1778, Boswell records the doctor as saying: "I require wine, only when I am alone. I have then often wished for it, and often taken it." A remarkable insight

into his psychology: one seeking refuge in drink, in short. Yet of such a remarkable stamina of a man, it is truly amazing in its ramifications. He was pushed into elaboration and explanation:

To get rid of myself, to send myself away. Wine gives great pleasure; and every pleasure is of itself a good. It is a good, unless counterbalanced by evil. A man may have a strong reason not to drink wine; and that may be greater than the pleasure. Wine makes a man better pleased with himself.

That is Johnson's own personal experience; it is not true in every case. But now wine is giving us a fresh insight into the recesses of Johnson's mind.

His slightly confused attitude to wine continues: "But the danger is, that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others. Wine gives a man nothing." He had just said it gave him pleasure, a good in itself, with reservations, but to continue: "It neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. It only puts in motion what has been locked up in frost. But this may be good, or it may be bad." One hardly imagined that the doctor himself ever needed wine to free him from inhibitions in company; he must here in this particular case be speaking from observation.

Spottiswoode pressed him on the simile of wine being a key to open a box, to which the doctor replied: "Nay, Sir, conversation is the key; wine is a picklock, which forces open the box, and injures it. A man," he advised, "should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine, which wine gives." We may note in this connection that in Waller's Life, in the Biographia Britannica, the doctor drank only water, and when in company with people who were drinking wine, "He had the dexterity to accommodate his discourse to the pitch of theirs as it sunk."

As to the social pleasures and benevolence of drinking in company, Johnson dismissed them as shibboleths. As to wine twenty years old, for instance - three say it for something to say; three are liars; three would rather save the wine, and maybe one cares. The double-trend persisted. "After a man has brought himself to relinquish the great personal pleasure

which arises from drinking wine, any other consideration is a trifle." Again, "But yet we must do justice to wine; we must allow it the power it possesses. To make a man pleased with himself, let me tell you, is doing a very great thing."

A dispute ensued then between the doctor and Reynolds, with Johnson returning to the attack by saying: "This is one of the disadvantages of wine, it makes a man mistake words for thoughts." In any case, social equanimity was restored - the passage well deserves re-reading; I order it as Christmas homework. It all ended up with Boswell citing the case of a nobleman who made his guests drink, and Johnson retaliating that "They who submit to drink as another pleases, make themselves his slaves."

Something more of his own former habits emerged the next year under Boswell's interrogation, which confirms our assessment of Johnson's having been drunk on occasion, and as a relief: "A man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated, has not the art of getting drunk ... I used to slink home when I had drunk too much. A man accustomed to self-examination" - as Johnson himself was, as we all well know - "will be conscious when he is drunk, though an habitual drunkard will not be conscious of it." And he gave an instance of a bookseller whose friends never noticed if he was more sober at one time or another. I fear he would pick on a bookseller - named - as the perpetually drunken example.

Enough has been said about Johnson's own relationship to wine, but in a drunken age - the poorer drunk on gin and the wealthy on smuggled brandy and wine - we should remember that despite his occasional temptation, and acquiescence in over-drinking Johnson was remarkably self-controlled and restrained. Even his adventures with his dissolute friend Savage did not distract him from the path, mostly, of correct behaviour, did not lead him into habits of sinfulness.

On leaving this brief résumé of his vinous experiences, it is worth recalling the words of the doctor to Boswell at St. Andrew's, which rather contradict his regard for wine as intoxicating. "Dr. Johnson observed, that our drinking less than our ancestors was owing to the change from ale to wine. 'I remember, (said he) when all the decent people in Lichfield got drunk every night, and were not the worse thought of. Ale was cheap, so you pressed strongly. When a man must drink a bottle of wine (the compulsive is of interest) he is not in such haste. Smoking has gone out ...'"



Now we must examine his more technical treatment of wine. It is obviously quite impossible, in the space allowed, to collate and quote everything the doctor wrote on alcoholic beverages and related subjects. We all remember how he considered he found it easier to be abstemious than temperate in the matter of wine. We get the first clue to that attitude in his London published in 1738:

Yet ev'n these Heroes, mischievously gay,  
Lords of the Street, and Terrors of the Way;  
Flush'd as they are with Folly, Youth and Wine,  
Their prudent Insults to the Poor confine;  
Afar they mark the Flambeau's bright Approach,  
And shun the shining Train, the golden Coach.

The same attitude comes out in his life of John Wilmot, earl of Rochester, where he wrote: "As he excelled in that noisy and licentious merriment which wine incites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in excess, and he willingly indulged in it." So much so, notes the doctor, that Rochester "was for five years together continually drunk, or so much inflamed by frequent inebriety as in no interval to be master of himself."

His reportage on wine in the Dictionary is, as we shall see later, remarkably correct, and so it must be taken that the quotations with which he opens are consistent with the writings just quoted. His second verse quotation is:

Do not fall in love with me;  
For I am falser than vows made in wine.

The fourth is even more to the point:

Be not amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters.

While the tenth is:

Shall I, to please another wine-sprung mind,  
Lose all mine own? God hath given me a measure  
Short of his canne and body: must I find  
A pain in that, wherein he finds a pleasure?

It is a commonplace that Johnson loved the tavern - the chair there he described as "the throne of human felicity" - but his accuracy defines it in the Dictionary as "A house where wine is sold, and drinkers are entertained," in accord with the then

dying meaning of the word itself and its original connection with wine, as apart from alehouses and inns. Yet the three quotations he gives after the definition are from Shakespeare's Richard II and frequenting in taverns "with unrestrained loose companions"; the Cymbeline passage on tavern bills being "often the sadness of parting, as the procuring of mirth," and one from Swift that "To reform the vices of this town, all taverns and alehouses should be obliged to dismiss their company by twelve at night, and no woman suffered to enter any tavern or alehouse." We all know only too well the results of Boswell's meeting them there on occasion.

To reflect the opposite, his first definition of Temperance is: "1. Moderation: opposed to gluttony and drunkenness," with this as one of the quotes: "Make temperance thy companion; so shall health sit on thy brow." But his first definition of Drunk is "Intoxicated with strong liquor; inebriated," the second being simply saturated with moisture. See which has the precedence in his mind! A similar emphasis is repeated in definitions of Drunkard, Drunken, Drunkenly and Drunkenness, with frequent use of the word Ebriety, itself defined as "Drunkenness; intoxication by strong liquors," and illustrated by two quotes. First, "Bitter almonds, as an antidote against ebriety, hath commonly failed." The voice, too, of experience? Secondly, "When Noah planted the vine, Satan attended, and sacrificed a sheep, a lion, an ape, and a sow. These animals were to symbolise the gradations of ebriety." Satan: the doctor did not choose these things haphazardly!

It is a minor curiosity that ebriate and inebriate are given such similar interpretations: Inebriate is defined as "To intoxicate; to make drunk." The first quotation is from Bacon: "Wine sugared inebriateth less than wine pure: sops in wine, quantity for quantity, inebriate more than wine of itself." True or false it is Johnson's choice of quotation that is of interest as illuminating his own attitude.

We know his classification of Claret in conversation, and the Dictionary definition is simply, "French wine, of a clear pale-red colour," with a quote from Boyle that "Red and white wine are in a trice confounded into claret." That interpretation goes back beyond Chaucer, and reflects also the original French meaning of the word, now quite changed in its English adoption. Although the Tory drink, mostly denied entry by disproportionate duties under the Whigs, Johnson never bothered with it and the curt dismissal in the Dictionary is on a

par with his other remarks on it, including that fine comparison he gave Mrs. Thrale that "like light French wines you so often hear commended, but having no body, they never keep." That mixing of wines, indeed, under the entry of "vintner", comes in for a truly Elizabethan lambasting. The vintner is described as "One who sells wine" and the quotation is appended: "The Vintner, by mixing poison with his wines, destroys more lives than any malignant disease."

The eighteenth-century excess in Port - and the consequent gout - we all know, but in view of the doctor's preference for the Whig curse, he was still most restrained in the Dictionary, and listed it as number five of the meanings of "Port", saying in all simplicity: "A kind of wine; from Oporto, in Portugal." He gives only one quotation, from Prior:

Our warlike men  
Might drink thick Port for fine champagne.

At least the doctor may be said to insist on the geographical origin and uniqueness of Port, centuries before the treaty of World War I made it part of English law. The cask measure Pipe is indissolubly associated with Port, and that receives its recognition in the Dictionary, though the direct and still continuing relationship is not made. He simply writes: "A liquid measure containing two hogsheads." Actually the word Pipe has been in use in English since the fourteenth century, being derived from the old French word of the same spelling, and meaning a large cask of more or less definite capacity used for wine, and formerly for other liquids and provisions. Currently, the standard cask, or pipe, of Port holds 115 gallons, of Madeira 92 and of Marsala 93 gallons.

Neither of these latter receives a mention in the Dictionary, if only because Marsala, for instance, was only initiated as we know it after the work was published. But on that other famous wine from the Iberian peninsula, Sack, the doctor ascribes it chiefly to the Canaries and names it as "A kind of sweet wine." But he makes amends for this in a measure by listing under Sherris, Sherris Sack, and Sherry, "A kind of Spanish wine." This is illustrated by the two usual Shakespearean quotations, in brief, "warms the blood," etc., "ascends me into the brain," etc. and a third quote which makes amends for the previous note on Sack and links his interpretation:

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

As but one other small indication of his deep awareness of wines, he later explains that word for those who might not understand it, and connotes it correctly: "A species of wine deeply red, chiefly from Gallicia in Spain." And if he does omit Madeira as a wine, he does note the wine of the island by its, then, more usual name, and one still to be encountered: "Malmsey 1. A sort of grape. 2. A kind of wine," quoting Chaucer, whose father, be it remembered, was a London vintner:

With him he brought a jubbe of Malvesie

And eke another ful of fine Vernage.

As the doctor observed, the name was and is applicable to both grape and wine, and Malmsey, Malvasia, etc., were all applicable. Brandy, Johnson's drink for heroes, is not taking us too far afield from our subject of the doctor and wines, for he - correctly - defined it as "A strong liquor distilled from wine." The next entry makes the relationship even closer. It is Brandy-wine. "The same with brandy." The quotations supplied need not detain us; they are, I think, unbiased, though that for brandy-wine does refer to "a hair of the same dog" and the thought that "brandy-wine is a common relief to such."

His famous "Poonch" he did not confuse with wine. "A liquor made by mixing spirit with water, sugar, and the juice of lemons; and formerly with spice," he knowingly wrote on that one.

On the subject of spirits, the doctor does definitely come down on the side of those who saw wine as the origin of obtaining drinkable spirits. He quite correctly defines alcohol as "An Arabic term used by chymists for a high rectified dephlegmated spirit of wine, or for anything reduced into an impalpable powder." And on Alcoholization: "The act of alcoholizing or rectifying spirits; or of reducing bodies to an impalpable powder." The Arabic terms were in fact, al, the substantive, and kohl, the impalpable powder - the fine powder made in the east for painting the eyes.

It is to be noted, too, that Johnson's accuracy extended to measures, a subject of most pertinent interest as new regulations of the Weights and Measures Act came into force in July 1966, as concerned with drinks. For instance, the butt: "A vessel; a barrel containing one hundred and twenty-six gallons of beer; and from fifteen to twenty-two hundredweight is a butt of currants." Of course, he was then working in terms of the now displaced Queen Anne's gallon, five-sixths of the current Imperial gallon. Or hogshead: "A measure of liquids containing sixty gallons." Or quart: "The vessel in which

strong drink is commonly retailed." Perhaps we may now more exactly realize why it was such a drunken age! Or tun: "1. A large cask. 2. A pipe; the measure of two hogsheads. 3. Any large quantity proverbially. 4. A drunkard. In burlesque

'Here's a tun of midnight work to come,  
Og from a treason-tavern rolling home.'

In point of fact, the tun, derived from the French tonneau, is, more particularly, four hogsheads, especially of the Bordeaux variety. Again we notice the direction of drunkenness, and even with the word drink the initial emphasis is on drinking liquors, wines, drinking to excess, even, "To be an habitual drunkard."

Were the Dictionary to be newly published today, it would, I think, receive the approval of the wine Trade. Wine he defines as "The fermented juice of the grape." And he adds, as a secondary thought: "Preparations of vegetables by fermentation, called by the general name of wines, have quite different qualities from the plant; for no fruit, taken crude, has the intoxicating quality of wine."

That latter point fits in with Mrs. Thrales's declaration: "With regard to drink his liking is for the strongest, as it is not the flavour but the effect of the Wine which he ever professes to desire, as he used often to pour Capillaire into his glass of Port when it was his custom to drink Wine." (Capillaire is a syrup flavoured with orange flower water and used in olden times to sweeten punches and even Port.)

Johnson's thoroughness, and awareness of what he was writing, appears in unrivalled form in his Dictionary entry under "Vine". "The plant that bears the grape," he begins, and continues with a long dissertation from Philip Miller (Gardener's Dictionary) listing thirty-four varieties and closing with the remark that "the late duke of Tuscany, who was very curious in collecting all the sorts of Italian and Greek grapes into his vineyards, was possessed of upwards of three hundred several varieties." Which implies, of course, that those listed are by no means all there are, or were then, in existence.

Curiously, we get in the first species tabulated a hint of the doctor's anti-Claret prejudice: "1. The wild vine, commonly called the claret grape." Some other interesting

historical sidelights are also to be found in the list. For instance: "5. The miller's grape. This is called the Burgundy in England: the leaves of this sort are very much powdered with white in the spring, from whence it had the name of miller's grape." And this is still correct: "6. Is what is called in Burgundy Pineau, and at Orleans, Auverna; it makes a very good wine."

For the whole of the eighteenth century, with extensions before and after, France and England were at each other's throats. Of course, it affected the wine pattern. As early as 1679 the import of French wines in Great Britain was prohibited, a bar which was lifted in 1686, only to be reimposed as the Dutchman William led us into war with France in furtherance of his Continental schemes. With peace in 1693 it was lifted again, but with heavy differential duties placed on the French as against the Portuguese. It is about here that we may place the real beginning of the Oporto trade.

French wine imports began to rise again, however, but when war was resumed in 1702, the supplies diminished and to complete their exclusion, the Methuen treaty was signed in December, 1703. Now the Whig ministry sent John Methuen to Lisbon to negotiate a commercial agreement and the treaty he signed there on the 27th of the month detached Portugal effectively from the French alliance, made her for more than 150 years a commercial and political satellite of this country, and, most important, admitted Portuguese wines to the British market at one-third less duty than the wines of France, in return for a corresponding preference for British textiles. The "Whig curse", the admission and encouragement of Portuguese wines, had nothing to do with the gout and drunkenness of that day. It disrupted the Portuguese economy for a period extending into this century. The demand for Port and Madeira wines was so artificially stimulated that almost the whole productive energy of Portugal was concentrated upon the wine and cork trades. Other industries, including agriculture, were neglected, and even foodstuffs were imported from Britain. In 1709, the year of Johnson's birth, nearly 8,000 tuns of Portuguese wines were imported into Britain; by 1739, when he was well settled in London, the figure had risen to nearly 12,000, where in the closing years of the previous century they had been numbered in their few hundreds. French wines did the reverse; they fell to negligible proportions. Even after the peace of 1713, the penalization of French wines continued, as evidenced by the figures just mentioned. In 1749, the Portuguese wine gallonage

had risen to over 13,000 gallons, and if it wavered occasionally it rarely fell below five figures and was generally about the 12 - 14,000 mark.

Another figure emerges about this time, the man later to become Marquess de Pombal, born ten years before the doctor, in 1699. He became Portuguese ambassador in London in 1739 and remained there until 1745. In 1750 he became virtually unquestioned administrator and ruler of his country, a position he held for twenty-seven years. His really complete ascendancy over the king dates from the 1755 Lisbon earthquake.

The interest to Port as drunk in England over these years is this. Pombal sought to undo the worst consequences of the Methuen treaty and to re-invigorate his country. One of his measures was the formation in 1756 of the Alto Douro Company - the company of the upper Douro, the stream from by which Port wine comes - in order to control the Port wine trade and to break the monopoly enjoyed by a syndicate of British wine merchants. The company met with strong opposition, culminating in a rising at Oporto - February, 1757 - which was savagely suppressed.

Now for much of the duration of Johnson's life, the Port then drunk was more of the nature of a table wine, of a rough Burgundy, than the excellent fortified wine we know today. But it went through many vicissitudes during his lifetime. About 1715 the Portuguese, and their English vintner masters, began adding a little brandy, very little to the wine from Oporto, and as an example of the artificial stimulation of the English market the duty then on the wine was £7. 5s. 3d. a tun. That on French wines was £55. 5s. per tun. That was the beginning of the rot. The vintage might be a poor one, the demand might be in excess of supply. So all sorts of wines were mingled together; elderberries and their juice were added to it to give a rich dark colouring. Now some of the Alto Douro Company's regulations to repress this kind of interference were to the good to begin with but, the company being a monopoly with power also to fix prices, it was not long before the rot set in again. The period between the formation of the company and the death of the doctor saw unbridled decoction of the Port wine of Oporto, under the guidance of merchants of England.

It was only long after his death, around the eve of the amendment of the company's charter in 1823, that Port as we know it today began to emerge. But even after that date voices were



raised, powerful voices, wishing to relieve it of the brandy with which it was being increasingly impregnated. Now we know that the doctor liked a strong wine; no light wine rubbish for him! It is just in that gradually increasing addition of brandy to the Port - to cover its defects and malformation, as much as to make an appeal to those who liked "strong drinks" - that we see the reason for Johnson's preference for Port over Claret.

But it must be borne in mind that much counterfeiting then went into the making of Port: wines from southern France were often added at Oporto itself; the elderberries were constantly in use; poor brandy could be used to mask other inadequacies; the wine might well be further adulterated after arrival in England. No wonder so many then developed gout!

Between 1750 and 1755, a pipe of the best Oporto wine could be bought in the country of origin for £2. 16s.; upwards of 10,000 tuns were imported into Britain and in 1753 nearly 13,000. Then the old company was formed in 1756 - and prices were never again allowed to fall so low! They soon rose to £12 a pipe and then to £18 in Britain. After their high-water mark towards the end of the Johnsonian century and the beginning of the last when nearly 30,000 tuns were imported each year, prices rose to between £48 and £50 per tun. But even in 1775, Sir Edward Barry, in a treatise upon wine, was remarking that those of Portugal were becoming more heavy and heating than formerly and took much longer to mature. He particularly pointed the finger at the current practices. Johnson's decision to abstain, taken about the time of Boswell's Continental Tour, was, no doubt, medicinally correct. A contemporary recipe gives us an idea of the kind of additions made: to the brandy added during fermentation of the grape juice was also thrown in a mixture of geropiga, a substance made of dried elderberries, coarse brown sugar and treacle, unfermented grape juice - generally of the black, deep-coloured Souzao grape - more brandy and sometimes logwood.

This will help us better appreciate what the doctor, Boswell, Mrs. Thrale and others were getting at when they spoke of thick London port, and how in the earlier days it was possible to drink, as Johnson admitted himself so doing, three bottles at a time. That was before the real adulteration set in after the publication of the Dictionary and mostly during the years of his comparative abstinence. We now appreciate better what was meant by the phrase of the times "muddy port". Yet Blackstone, we are told, composed his "Commentaries" - on the laws of

England - with the aid of a bottle of Port always before him. Most of that composition was done, of course, in the earlier days of Port's being imported, before it reached its later deterioration.

So much for the Port wine of Doctor Johnson's times, and after. Rhenish wines as well as French took a severe beating at the hands of the Portuguese tariff preference, but Claret bears a curious history. As a French wine it bore a heavy duty right up to 1831, when duties were largely equalised between French and Portuguese wines, but by one of those curiosities of history it was omitted from the Treaty of Union between the rival kingdoms of England and Scotland in 1707.

One result was to reinforce the standing of the royal and ancient port of Leith as a wine port: it flowed in unchecked duty free. We can understand how it became so popular in Scotland! And why Boswell - and others - have recorded drinking so much of it. It became a commonplace for many of the gentry and landed folk in England to import Claret for themselves through Leith, or at least to buy it direct from Leith merchants.

Now Johnson could never be accused of belonging to the gentry or landed classes. Furthermore his initial poverty would have precluded any such large scale operation, and - at least until Boswell had done something to reconcile him - there was his antipathy to things Scottish. I fear that having begun with an anti-Scottish feeling induced, no doubt, by the harshest of experiences, he never quite relinquished it and extended it naturally to Claret, so long and so widely regarded as a particular favourite in Scotland. Indeed, Claret continued to enjoy its anomalous tariff position if imported via Scotland - in effect, Leith - almost up to the doctor's death, until Pitt the Younger initiated his tariff reforms which incorporated the enforcement of Customs duties on Claret.

In 1784 there were imported into England from France 385 tuns of wine, and from Portugal 11,434 tuns. It was not that everyone in the country followed that rumbustious cry of the doctor's of Claret for boys, Port for men, and Brandy for heroes, but simply some of those external influences throughout this country and the European continent which I have attempted to sketch in. They form part of the historical pattern in which was lived the life of an outstanding man who but for sheer force of character, and the selection of the worthwhile as objectives, might himself have succumbed to the level of so many of his countrymen in that century under the Hanoverian rule with its preliminary of a gin craze, and strong drink at any price.

Doctor Johnson strides through the pages of  
this exciting novel for young people:



## At the Seven Stars

John & Patricia Beatty

18s

Illustrated from eighteenth-century prints

Gough Square, Fleet Street, Drury Lane, Hogarth's House and Burlington's villa are described with dazzling vividness in a fast-moving story of intrigue based on the Elibank plot. John Beatty, Associate Professor of History and the Humanities at the University of California, and his wife Patricia, combine scholarship with consummate narrative skill.

CHATTO AND WINDUS LTD. 40, WILLIAM IV STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.



### The writings of Daniel Defoe

With the co-operation of several libraries in Britain and America, and the collaboration of Professor J. R. Moore, a microfilm collection of Defoe has been formed, using Moore's "Checklist" as a guide.

The complete set on microfilm costs £200. For convenience, subject reels have been made and can be purchased separately. Xerographic copies of most of the individual items can be supplied.

### University Microfilms

LIMITED

Remax House, 31-32 Alfred Place, London W.C.1.  
Telephone: MUS 4935.