

THE NEW RAMBLER



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The New Rambler

JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

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WILKES AND JOHNSON*

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There can scarcely have been two more dissimilar men in the whole of the 18th century London than Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes. In almost every respect, they were the complete antithesis of each other. As James Boswell said "Two men more different could not perhaps be selected out of all mankind."¹ Wilkes, if not quite such a debauchee as his political enemies liked to make out, was, never the less, an accomplished wit and very much the man-about-town. Macaulay's stern words sum up the conventional, nineteenth-century view of this remarkable demagogue: "One of the most profane, licentious and agreeable rakes, the delight of green rooms and taverns."² We, in the twentieth century, may perhaps look on his foibles and appreciate his real talents with less jaundiced eyes than did our ancestors.

Never the less, although Wilkes himself, in his easy, cynical, good-humoured fashion, did much to perpetuate his own legend of double-dyed villainy, it must be confessed that he had been, from his youth upwards, an inveterate womaniser and, of course, Dr. Johnson strongly disapproved of such goings on. Wilkes was a born politician, sensing by instinct the political climate of the day and ready to take instant and, at times, unscrupulous advantage of any sudden change in public opinion. Wilkes, of course, lacked the great doctor's high seriousness and strength of character, his profound intellect and calm devotion to his duty as he understood it, though himself no mean scholar and, but for his inveterate laziness, one who might well have done much more in the field of scholarship. Moderate both in food and drink, he never gambled, at a time when gambling was the ruling passion of every class. A journalist of great ability, he lacked the necessary self-discipline to undertake such sustained work as Johnson was able to achieve. Again, Wilkes, almost to the end of his life and in some respects to the very end, was a dedicated Whig, devoted to the principles of the Revolution Settlement and was, moreover, the inspiration of many of the tenets of late 18th century radicalism. Johnson, a strong Tory, in youth a Jacobite, had a natural reverence

* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 20th December, 1969. Chairman: Mrs. A. G. Dowdeswell.

for authority; for what Shakespeare called "degree". Wilkes, on the other hand, was a born rebel, for whom all authority, in both church and state, must always be tempered by reasoned criticism or else it would surely degenerate into tyranny. Of a naturally irreverent outlook, he hated pomposity and cant and delighted to attack it, often with the utmost savagery. Of a sunny cheerful disposition, the prospect of imminent death in a duel failed to ruffle his calm and even temper and he faced the hazards of an eventful life with a courageous equanimity. He seems to have had little of his great adversary's profound melancholia and introspection. Wilkes lived for the day and let the morrow take care of itself. If ever a man was that elusive creature, l'homme moyen sensuel, it was that very modern man, John Wilkes.

Both Wilkes and Johnson were men of great personal courage, whether physical or moral and, each in their own way, despite the sneers and innuendoes of their contemporaries, of complete integrity. Wilkes, for all his easy manner, would never compromise nor move a step from what he regarded as the path of duty, despite threats, proffered bribes, treachery or base ingratitude.

Johnson, himself, despite his instinctive repulsion for Wilkes' wild ways, felt the attraction of this strange character, when he exclaimed "Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman ... He has always been at me: but I would do Jack a kindness rather than not",³ even if the great Cham considered Wilkes' own wit and table talk to be somewhat over-praised.

It is surely not without significance that John Wilkes was always known as Jack or Johnny. The imagination boggles at Sammy Johnson! It is not for me to expound the details of Dr. Johnson's career within the pages of the New Rambler but that of Wilkes may be less familiar.

John Wilkes was a Londoner and all his life closely associated with that city which his great adversary loved so well, becoming, in due course, its highly competent and successful Lord Mayor. He was born in Clerkenwell in 1725 and was thus sixteen years younger than Johnson. Like Johnson, Wilkes too was of middle-class stock, but had suffered none of the hardships that the former had had to endure. He was the son of a prosperous distiller, determined to make his second and favourite son into a grand gentleman.

The Wilkes family being non-conformists, young Wilkes did not go to Eton, that nursery of future Whigs, nor to either of the ancient universities. Instead, he was educated privately and then went to the great University of Leyden in the Netherlands and then at twenty-one provided with a rich heiress for a wife, Mary Meade, the daughter of another prosperous dissenting family from Aylesbury. From the start the marriage was a disaster. The two were utterly incompatible and Wilkes' increasing dissipation and political ambitions horrified his pious, narrow-minded wife and soon led to a permanent break between them. All Wilkes' love and affection were bestowed on his daughter, Polly, whom he idolised and who in her turn idolised her wayward, but intensely human father.

Wilkes was now M.P. for Aylesbury and a humble follower of the great William Pitt. More important for the future was the fact that he was now a prominent member of the "Monks of Medmenham", that collection of aristocratic debauchees and their followers, who celebrated their noisy and bibulous rites under the presidency of Sir Francis Dashwood in a ruined abbey by the banks of the Thames. Wilkes' association with the "Monks" was long to be remembered against him, a connection which he himself, of course, delighted to make all too much of.

It was at this time, too, that Wilkes had his first public brush with Johnson. On 15th March 1755 was published the great Dictionary. In the preface Johnson had written "The letter H seldom perhaps never begins any but the first syllable", a most rash statement. Wilkes, who already identified himself with the more extreme Whigs to whom Johnson was, of course, anathema, seized on the opportunity to make fun of the great Tory. He compiled the following travesty of the lexicographers style which duly appeared in the popular newspaper The Public Advertiser:

The author of this remark must be a man of a quick apprehension and comprehensive genius; but I can never forgive his un-handsome be-haviour to the poor knight-hood, priest-hood, and widow-hood, nor his in-humanity to all man-hood.⁴

That Wilkes at this time, or indeed ever, bore Johnson any personal illwill is denied by his action four years later in rescuing from the Navy, into which he had been

pressed, Francis Barber, Johnson's black servant. Tobias Smollet, the novelist, who had been instrumental in bringing Barber's plight to Wilkes' notice, wrote "Your generosity with respect for Johnson shall be the theme of our applause and thanksgiving."⁵ The next contact Johnson was to have with Wilkes, however, was to be of a less pleasant nature.

Wilkes had by now become a firm supporter of the elder Pitt, the brother-in-law of his friend, patron and neighbour, Lord Temple and had reasonable hopes of securing an embassy or a minor government office. However, on 5th October 1761 Pitt and Temple resigned from the government and Wilkes was henceforth to be in perpetual opposition, a thorn of peculiar sharpness in the sides of successive administrations. His attacks on the ministry became even more violent when the hated Lord Bute, the young King's "dearest friend", became Prime Minister. Bute, both as a Scot and as a reputed Jacobite, was fair game for the vitriolic attacks of Wilkes. It was again Wilkes, who, in the Fall of Mortimer, an old play, which he had reissued, with a sarcastic dedication to Bute himself, now gave the widest possible publicity to the rumour that the favourite and the Princess of Wales, the young King's mother, were lovers, a theme repeated ad nauseam in the political cartoons and squibs of the day and which went far to explain the bitter animosity with which for so long George regarded his mother's traducer.

The government was now bent on making peace, a peace that Wilkes and his friends regarded as a betrayal of the victories won by the genius of Pitt during the previous two years. "It is certainly the peace of God," laughed Wilkes, "for it passeth all understanding",⁶ and did his utmost to discredit its authors.

Wilkes had for sometime now been bitterly attacking the government and his other pet hates, such as the Scots, Bute, the Princess of Wales, the painter Hogarth and even "pensioner Johnson" himself, his Dictionary and his "steady attachment to the present royal family", a hit at the Doctor's alleged Jacobitism, in the periodical the North Briton. As Wilkes said to James Boswell with his usual frankness a few years later when they were in Italy together:

I make it a rule to abuse him who is against me or any of my friends pointblank. If I find two or three faults he's good for nothing ... I abuse Johnson as an impudent

pretender to literature which I don't think, but 'tis all one.⁷

This brilliantly sustained vehicle of political journalism was run by Wilkes with the assistance of his bosom companion, the reprobate clergyman Charles Churchill, whom Boswell considered to be "a rough blunt fellow, very clever!", with the occasional assistance of other contributors. Unlike its government rival, The Briton, The North Briton was a great success. Boswell read it "with vast relish". "There is a poignant acrimony in it," he noted, "that is very refreshing";⁸ others found it somewhat less refreshing. The King was incensed at the continual attacks on his mother and favourite; the government at the constant exposure of their mistakes and the general ridicule to which they were subjected. Action against Wilkes and the printers had several times been contemplated, but the law officers advised caution and little was done.

Now, when in The North Briton, No. 45 of 23rd April 1763, an attack was made on the King's speech of 19th April in the course of which both King and ministry were held up to open ridicule, the government considered that the time had come, once and for all, to deal with John Wilkes. In No. 45, Wilkes, careful to disassociate, at least ostensibly, the person of the King from his strictures had vehemently attacked his ministers for their "effrontery" in concluding an unworthy peace with France and for the alleged betrayal of their allies.

George was furious and forced the government to issue a "General Warrant" for the arrest of the "authors, printers and publishers of a treasonable paper entitled the North Briton, No. 45".⁹ In due course Wilkes, along with some 40 others, was arrested and taken before the Secretaries of State. Despite the grant of a writ of Habeas Corpus, which Temple quickly procured, Wilkes was sent off to the Tower, only to be released a few days later when Lord Chief Justice Pratt ruled that his arrest and detention were contrary to his privileges as an M.P. Released, the hero and Lord Temple were escorted back to his house in Great George Street by cheering crowds, uttering the soon to be famous cry of "Wilkes and Liberty".

Johnson for one was not amused. The very first time Boswell met him, the great man remarked contemptuously of Wilkes. "He is safe from the law. But he is an abusive scoundrel and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to

punish him, I would send a parcel of footmen and have him well ducked".¹⁰ Had this threat been indeed carried out Wilkes would probably have made short work of such footmen, for he was both an excellent swordsman and an excellent shot. The drastic solution was, however, not to be adopted. Instead the government pursued a more devious, though no less unscrupulous course to ruin Wilkes and to discredit him in the eyes of his followers. In the Commons on 15th November 1763 it was resolved after a long and stormy debate that No. 45 was "a false scandalous and seditious libel" - whilst in the Lords a mine was being sprung which, it was hoped, would settle that "devil Wilkes" forever.

Some years before Wilkes had produced, probably in conjunction with Thomas Potter, the scapegoat son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, a bawdy and blasphemous parody of Pope's Essay on Man entitled An Essay on Woman. It would seem that Wilkes had recently brought up to date the even more obscene footnotes which he gaily attributed to the pious Bishop of Gloucester, Dr. Warburton, the commentator on Pope. Wilkes, against Temple's advice, decided to run off twelve copies of this masterpiece together with some similar obscene parodies on his private press at home for circulation among his own friends.

Possibly when his rooms were searched at the time of his arrest or later, the government got word of Wilkes' latest exploit and their agents, by bribing his foreman printer, managed to get hold of some twelve pages of proof of the Essay. This was carried off in triumph to Lord Sandwich, the new Secretary of State, a former fellow "monk" of Wilkes, but who now waged an increasingly bitter vendetta against his old friend. It was to Sandwich that Wilkes made his well-known reply, when that noble lord considered whether Jack would die of the pox or on the gallows, "It depends my Lord" said Wilkes "whether I embrace your mistress or your principles".¹¹ Now in the House of Lords, at the very time when Wilkes was valiantly defending himself in the lower house, Sandwich rose, and to the delight of his fellow peers, proceeded to read out slowly and lovingly every verse of the Essay on Woman. Suitably shocked, the Lords condemned the Essay as a "most scandalous, obscene and impious libel".¹² Wilkes was now in real danger. The next morning he fought a duel with a government supporter, in Hyde Park, a duel which many of his friends considered to be an attempt at assassination, and was dangerously wounded. Though most of his followers

remained loyal and condemned only the ministry, and especially Sandwich for his treachery, the government, urged on by the King, were clearly out to destroy "that unfortunate gentleman", as the Annual Register called him. Flight was the only answer, so flee he did, to Paris to join his daughter. Although now no more than a ruined bankrupt, Wilkes none the less enjoyed himself there enormously. Polly Wilkes was sent to an expensive finishing school, whilst her father paraded through France and Italy with a succession of pretty mistresses. It was whilst abroad that he again met Boswell and the two men became firm friends. At home he was condemned by the courts and declared an outlaw and both government and many of his fellow countrymen devoutly hoped they had seen the last of "that devil Wilkes," as the King called him.

How mistaken they were! With his instinctive knowledge of popular feeling Wilkes now realised that the political climate had changed. More and more people were disturbed at successive governments' mishandling of the country's affairs and the worsening economic situation was hitting very hard the very classes those "middling and inferior set of people who stand most in need of protection",¹³ who were Wilkes' main supporters.

Having vainly attempted to obtain some compensation for his services to the Party from successive Whig leaders, who treated him coldly, and with scarcely concealed contempt (Wilkes obtaining his revenge in a marvellously sustained piece of invective, his Letter to the Duke of Grafton which at once brought his name and his fortunes before the public), he returned to England, daring the government to arrest him and boldly stood for Parliament for the City of London. Although coming bottom of the poll, the tumultuous welcome he had received and the new and ever increasing shouts of "Wilkes and Liberty" made him determined to pursue once more a Parliamentary career. "I must raise a dust or starve in gaol",¹⁴ he exclaimed, and announced his intention to stand for Middlesex. Despite every effort of the government, he was triumphantly returned, the result, not only of popular enthusiasm, but of a highly efficient electoral machine.

At the news, London went mad. Every house from Hyde Park Corner to Temple Bar was illuminated or got its windows broken; the Wilkite colours of blue and yellow flew everywhere and teapots, snuff-boxes, a whole list of souvenirs were produced to the greater glory of "Liberty's favourite son",

and on which depicted the hideous grinning visage of the cross-eyed patriot or the mystic number 45 for the delight and edification of his numerous admirers.

Wilkes had now surrendered to his outlawry and received from the Court of King's Bench a fine of £1,000 and imprisonment for twenty-two months for his two crimes of republishing The North Briton, No. 45 and publishing the Essay on Woman. Off he went to prison, escorted by cheering crowds, his coach pulled in triumph through the city streets to spend a few most agreeable months in comfortable apartments surrounded by his friends and supporters, with hampers and other presents arriving daily from all over England and America. There were also the usual number of witty, charming and complaisant ladies to console the rigours of his imprisonment.

All the time a steady stream of pamphlets issued from the King's Bench prison, extolling the virtues of Wilkes, Britannia's hope and the champion of liberty and fiercely attacking the government and their base and tyrannical supporters. The mob outside grew ever more menacing. The inevitable collision occurred, when in April 1768, troops stationed outside the prison opened fire, killing not only a few demonstrators, but many innocent bystanders. To make matters worse, it was the Scots Guards who fired and popular fury, fanned by Wilkes and the anti-government press, grew greater than ever. In December Wilkes got hold of some secret instructions of the Secretary at War to use force, if needs be, in controlling the rioters, and promptly published the document, with bitter comments, in the St. James's Chronicle to show "how long the horrid massacre in St. George's Fields had been planned".¹⁵ Egged on by the King, the ministers had now resolved that Wilkes must be expelled once more from Parliament. Despite an able and courageous defence of his own conduct, on 3rd February 1769 the House voted decisively to expel Wilkes and declared the Middlesex seat to be vacant. In a long address issued the next day to the electors of Middlesex, Wilkes plainly and succinctly put to them the fundamental constitutional point:

If ministers can once usurp the power of deciding who shall not be your representative, the next step is very easy and will follow speedily. It is that of telling you when you shall send to Parliament and then the boasted Constitution of England will be entirely torn up by the roots.¹⁶

Wilkes was again triumphantly returned for Middlesex. The House promptly declared that he was incapable of being elected as a member to serve in the present Parliament and that the seat was again vacant.

It was this which was the fundamental difference of opinion between the supporters of the government and those of Wilkes in the bitter and sustained pamphlet war which now arose. Had or had not the House of Commons the right, by the continued expulsion of a member, to determine who the electors of any given constituency should return? Could it regulate exclusively its own membership, or were the rights of the elector always paramount, either in Wilkes words "to build the power of the House of Commons on the subversion of the rights of their constituents",¹⁷ or in Johnson's dictum "If the House cannot punish [a member], he may attack with impunity the rights of the people and the title of the King"?¹⁸ Wilkes himself had no doubts as to where he stood and that, in his person, he was defending the liberty of the people - all the people and not merely the relatively narrow electorate - and preserving from usurpation the fundamental right of all free-born Englishmen to choose for Parliament whoever they pleased.

Once more, Wilkes was returned for Middlesex, this time unopposed and again the Commons declared the election null and void. The ministry now at last persuaded someone to stand against the popular hero, Colonel Luttrell, a man of peculiarly dissolute habits, who was said to bear a personal grudge against Wilkes. Despite every effort of the government, Wilkes' ever increasing popularity and efficient organisation carried the day and he was once more returned by a large majority. Now Wilkes' former prophesy to the electors was fulfilled and the Commons voted that Luttrell ought to have been returned and then that he had in fact been duly elected.¹⁹ A renewed controversy then broke out, with Johnson, Blackstone and Dyson on one side; on the other Wilkes himself, Burke, Sir William Meredith and the great and mysterious Junius, a remarkable array of talent on both sides.

Johnson's pamphlet, entitled The False Alarm, was published in 1770. In it he states the ministerial case with vigour and determination. "It is evident," he thunders, "that this nation with all its renown for speculation and for learning have yet made little proficiency in civil wisdom".²⁰ Since, it would seem, society had been thrown into ever

mounting confusion by an "opposition to the government raised only by interest and supported only by clamour"²¹ Johnson has nothing but contempt for his adversaries and especially for Wilkes himself. He cannot favour the opposition for he thinks it wicked and cannot fear it for he thinks it weak. To him it was ridiculous that the electors of Middlesex should wish to return as their member a man of whom "Lampoon itself would disdain to speak ill of him of whom no man speaks well",²² hardly a correct description of one in whose honour, whether justifiably or not, songs were being made, inns named and children called after, throughout England and America. The good doctor's dislike of Wilkes seems here to have got the better of his common sense. To him it was unforgivable that in his sarcastic phrase "Every lover of liberty stands doubtful of the fate of posterity because the chief county in England", if such it was, which he doubted - "cannot take its representative from a jail".²³

To him there was no argument. Luttrell's election was entirely valid, since only those votes could be counted "which are given for a legal candidate".²⁴ According to this somewhat remarkable doctrine of legality, Luttrell, or whoever else was selected to oppose Wilkes, was the rightful member, contrary to the clearly expressed wishes of the electorate itself. To justify himself, Johnson lays down the doctrine of "political necessity", that old friend of arbitrary government everywhere. It was necessary for the preservation of public order for the House to have the unchallenged right to permanently expel an unwanted member. Johnson concludes on what he clearly regards as a challenging note "Nothing therefore is necessary at this alarming crisis but to consider the alarm as false. To make concessions is to encourage encroachment. Let the court despise the faction and the disappointed people will soon deride it".²⁵

Faction, in the person of John Wilkes, soon replied. In a very short time, Wilkes issued his answer, A Letter to Samuel Johnson. On the title page he quotes his opponent's own verses from "London":

Here let there reign whom Pensions can incite
To vote a Patriot black, a courtier white

and then at once addresses himself to the "undoubted author of the ministerial rhapsody circulated under the title of The False Alarm ... the spitter forth of that effusion of servility

and bombast".²⁶ Wilkes, too, could write a pretty piece of abuse when he chose. Wilkes, having made fun of Johnson's style, his "hendecasyllables", takes him seriously to task for his doctrine of "political necessity", when circumstances, quite obviously, did not warrant it. To Wilkes, as to Johnson, the matter was perfectly clear. The Commons' admitted right of expulsion could never diminish the rights of the electors.

The rights of the people are not what the Commons have ceded to them, but what they have reserved to themselves; the privileges of the Commons are not to what they have an indefeasible pretension ... but what the people for their own benefit have allowed them.²⁷

The rights of the electors were paramount. They were never "meant to hold their franchises at the discretion of beings of their own formation",²⁸ the voice of a new-born democracy that found a ready echo in the New World beyond the seas. For Wilkes "only death or the law can incapacitate" and never the resolutions of a single House. As he had said in his Address to the Electors of Middlesex, to Wilkes the fundamental issue and real danger was that this or any future House might overthrow all popular representation by supplying the vacancies in itself by "co-optation". This was why not only Middlesex but all England (a slight exaggeration, since it was, in fact, only the more politically conscious counties that were aroused) saw their own liberties threatened "if they silently submit to a decision destructive of the rights of the freeholders of Middlesex".²⁹

Wilkes and his supporters had grasped a fundamental principle which the ministerialists failed, it would seem, to rebut. It did not matter whether Wilkes himself was fit to sit in Parliament or not, though, by any normal standard, he was far more fitted than a Luttrell, or whether intimidation or not was used to bring about the result, although there is no evidence that to any extent it was. The question was simply one of pure principle, which applied in all circumstances, regardless of persons.

The object of the dispute was not, therefore, in the words of another attack on The False Alarm "whether Middlesex shall be represented or not by a criminal straight from gaol but a much more glorious object ... Liberty itself."

One must try to be as impartial in this as possible but to my mind, Wilkes clearly gets the best of the argument. It is a pity Johnson did not write a reply. It would have been interesting to see how he would have answered Wilkes. Perhaps it would have made little difference. They were poles apart. Johnson could only see a wicked man, bringing an institution and a government which he admired into disrepute by his very presence; Wilkes only the necessity of establishing, not only his own right to sit in the House if returned to it by a free and unfettered vote of the electorate, but also the rights even of those who had no vote but whom he and his friends considered Johnson had abused "with unprovoked virulence ... the most numerous and respectable part of the nation".

During his imprisonment Wilkes had been elected an alderman of the City of London, surely a remarkable feat for a man "of whom no man speaks well", and on his release in April 1770 quickly to Sheriff and, in due course, Lord Mayor of London. In all these offices he showed himself to be extremely diligent, conscientious and capable, and clearly demonstrated how little use had been made of his party of the great gifts of organisation and administration he undoubtedly possessed. Once more, on 10th December 1774, he took his seat in Parliament and devoted the next few years to eventually successful efforts to get the hostile resolutions of the Commons repealed and the Journals consequently altered and to the advocacy of various liberal causes.

I have now, unfortunately, not the time to go into the way in which Wilkes, at his mischievous best, secured the freedom of the Press by successfully putting Parliament in the wrong and the Lord Mayor in the Tower.

Although Wilkes was now, in many respects, becoming less radical and, in his own phrase, "an extinct volcano", he was still a popular figure. Wilkes was that rarity, a genuinely tolerant man. He detested any form of intolerance and especially religious intolerance. In 1780 occurred the Gordon riots, that dreadful outburst of mob violence and fanaticism. Wilkes had no doubt where he stood; this time firmly on the side of law and order. As Chamberlain of the City, musket in hand, he boldly faced the howling, drunken mob, many of whom a few years earlier, had been among his most ardent supporters and calmly tried to instill a little courage into a terrified Lord Mayor and a vacillating

government. It was truly said that in those dreadful days in all London only two men never lost their heads - one was the King and the other Jack Wilkes. This and his growing estrangement for the new generation of radicals, together with his admiration for the younger Pitt, led to a reconciliation with many of his old enemies, including the King himself.

Determined perhaps to be first, James Boswell, in 1776, decided to bring together two very dissimilar men, both of whom he so much admired; these two old antagonists, that "lively facetious man", as he called him, Wilkes, and Dr. Johnson himself.

As I have said, Wilkes and Boswell had been friends for many years. In the great days of No. 45, Boswell had met the famous demagogue at a convivial dinner at the Beef Steak Club and subsequent meetings in France had led to a firm friendship. They had also other friends in common, such as David Garrick, a strong, though discreet, supporter of the patriot leader. Wilkes told his Scottish friend that he was "the most liberal man he had ever met, a citizen of the world free from the prejudices of any country" a statement that made Boswell swell with pride, and though, like Johnson, he would gently make fun of Boswell's Scotch connections, Wilkes had a real affection for his "old Lord of Scotland".

As Boswell says "I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together".³⁰ His ingenious plan to arrange a meeting between the two famous antagonists under the same roof was to get Johnson invited to dinner at Dillys the booksellers, a dinner at which he knew Wilkes was to be present and then got Johnson to say he would come even if Jack Wilkes should be there; "what care I for his patriotick friends,"³¹ thundered the great man, and when at last Johnson did meet "the gentleman in lace", Mr. Wilkes himself, he was agreeably surprised to discover how very charming that notorious reprobate could be. Wilkes always prided himself on his ability to captivate both men and women, "It only takes me half an hour", he once said, "to talk away my face", and one can see from Boswell's pages how completely he charmed the reluctant Johnson, especially when they got on to the common ground of the detestable Scots and their ways. As Boswell said "the interview had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity",³² and Boswell's triumph was assured when Johnson said how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes' company and what a pleasant

day he had passed.

Two such disparate characters could never be firm friends, but it was a good thing that their mutual animosity was now a thing of the past. The good-humoured and tolerant Wilkes would never bear a grudge for long, except, perhaps, against those who he considered had betrayed him. It was meanness he could never tolerate, and Johnson, at least, was never mean.

They met again a few years later in 1781 and the light banter that took place between the two old rivals delighted Boswell, especially when he discovered them sitting literally *tête à tête* discussing politics in the easiest and most friendly manner imaginable.

John Wilkes, impecunious and cheerful to the end, survived his old adversary by 13 years. To the last he retained his wanted vivacity, wit and high spirits. His beloved and faithful Polly continued to minister to him and his old heart was cheered by his other and much younger illegitimate daughter Harriet, who, with her mother, gave to Wilkes at the end something of the steady domesticity he had always craved for and yet had never had. His last years were spent partly in the City of which he was still Chamberlain but, to an increasing extent, in his cottage at Sandown, Isle of Wight, where he delighted to show visitors his garden in which he took great interest. On Boxing Day 1797, the old man quietly and peaceably drank the health of his "beloved and excellent daughter" and then died in her arms, a gentler death than poor Johnson had suffered. By his tomb is the inscription written by himself "Near this place are interred the remains of John Wilkes, a friend to liberty", no bad epitaph for the man of whom even that stern moralist Gladstone declared that the name of Wilkes, whether we chose it or not, must be enrolled among the great champions of English freedom.

I have written perhaps too much of John Wilkes and perhaps too little of his great contemporary and antagonist, Dr. Johnson. Wilkes, alas, found no Boswell to immortalise him. His wit, which filled the jest books of the day, now all too often sounds faded and contrived afterwards. I hope never the less to have done something to rescue his gallant spirit from undeserved neglect and to place him once more in the company of that greater man who deplored his weaknesses, opposed his policies yet could not, in the end, help liking

and, perhaps, even admiring such another very English character as John Wilkes.

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DR. JOHNSON'S CHEMISTRY
AND THE INFLUENCE OF BOERHAAVE*

Peter Cooper, F.P.S., F.C.S.

Despite the many facets of his intellect, Samuel Johnson does not strike us as the sort of man who would take an interest in chemistry. Yet there is sufficient evidence of his interests in this discipline of science. Hester Piozzi, in her Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D. during the last twenty years of his life (1786) makes this plain. She describes how Murphy went to apologise to Johnson for inadvertently re-translating one of his Rambler essays back into English from French,

and found our friend all covered with soot like a chimney-sweeper, in a little room, with an intolerable heat and strange smell as if he had been acting Lungs in the Alchymist, making aether. 'Come, come (says Johnson), dear Sir, the story is black enough now; and it was a very happy day for me that brought you first to my house, and a very happy mistake about the Ramblers.'

The date of this incident, according to Mrs. Piozzi, was 1777. That this interest in chemical manipulation was no transient matter we can see from the entry made by Boswell in his London Journal under 15 July, 1763:

Levett went up with me to Mr. Johnson's library, which is four pair of stairs up with two garrets where Lintot (son to the famous Lintot) had his printing house. I was much pleased to be in the library of this great man, where I saw a number of good books, but very dusty and confusedly placed. I saw too an apparatus for chemical experiments, of which it seems Mr. Johnson was fond.

There is an anonymous tribute to Johnson's love of chemistry and his respect for its practitioners which Boswell quotes in the Life. When he was in Wiltshire he was present at some experiments concerning the "new kinds of air." The lecturer having made frequent mention of Dr. Priestley, discoverer of oxygen,

* A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 21 March, 1970. Chairman: The Revd. Canon A. R. Winnett, B.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Johnson knit his brows, and in a stern manner inquired: 'Why do we hear so much of Dr. Priestley?' He was very promptly answered: 'Sir, because we are indebted to him for these important discoveries.' On this Dr. Johnson appeared well content, and replied: 'Well, well, I believe we are; and let every man have the honour he has merited.'

The mere mention of Priestley's name must have been anathema for Johnson, who could look upon Priestley's views and tenets only as highly antagonistic to the stability of Church and State. Indeed, in 1791 a Birmingham mob, parading these twin banners, wrecked Priestley's house and his chemical equipment. Yet respect for the clergyman-chemist's science overruled other considerations in Johnson's mind.

Study, for a man of the Doctor's physical calibre and poor sight, was a harmless enough pursuit, even when it touched on chemistry. He found it absorbing enough. Boswell has described setting out with his friend for Luton Hoo on 2 June, 1781:

He talked little to us in the carriage, being chiefly occupied in reading Dr. Watson's second volume of Chemical Essays, which he liked very well, and his own Prince of Abyssinia, on which he seemed to be intensely fixed ...

It was different when it came to experimentation with materials which were inflammable and explosive. We have seen that Johnson was on occasions bent on making ether, a highly dangerous liquid to let loose in the house. It was made (and often still is) by heating alcohol with sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol). The planning of some such operation was presumably in Johnson's mind when he sent his last Dictionary amanuensis out to buy him vitriol; alcohol was more easily come by in Johnson's day than it is today, and vastly cheaper.

I was entertained [remarks Boswell] by observing how he contrived to send Mr. Peyton on an errand, without seeming to degrade him: 'Mr. Peyton - Mr. Peyton, will you be so good as to take a walk to Temple Bar? You will there see a chemist's shop, at which you will be pleased to buy for me an ounce of oil of vitriol; not spirit of vitriol, but oil of vitriol. It will cost three half pence.' Peyton immediately went, and returned

with it and told him it cost but a penny.

The Thrale house at Streatham, however, seems to have been the centre for chemical experiments. So far as we can make out these tended towards the "chemical magic" demonstrations beloved of some schoolmasters, and popular among the nobility who attended demonstrations at the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street towards the end of the eighteenth century. Mrs. Piozzi, in her Anecdotes gives a tantalisingly sketchy account of what went on, and what Mr. Thrale thought of it:

Mr. Johnson was always exceedingly fond of chemistry, and we made up a sort of laboratory at Streatham one summer, and diverted ourselves with drawing essences and colouring liquors. But the danger Mr. Thrale found his friend in one day when I was driven to London, and he had got the children and servants round him to see some experiments performed, put an end to all our entertainment; so well was the master of the house persuaded that his short sight would have been his destruction in a moment, by bringing him close to a fierce and violent flame. Indeed it was a perpetual miracle that he did not set himself on fire, reading a-bed, as was his constant custom, when exceedingly unable even to keep clear of mischief with our best help; and accordingly the fore-top of all his wigs were burned by the candle down to the very net-work ...

Thrale set his valet-de-chambre to keep a close watch on Johnson.

Future experiments in chemistry, however, were too dangerous, and Mr. Thrale insisted that we should do no more towards finding the philosopher's stone.

The "drawing essences" of which Mrs. Piozzi speaks seems to have been more of a perfumery operation than a chemical one. In Thraliana for March to April of 1778, she gives us a few more details of what went on:

Mr. Johnson and I were distilling some Pot herbs one Day for amusement in a Glass Retort over a Lamp, and we observed all the Bubbles to be Hexagonal, a thing we could give no Account of. Mr. Johnson however took occasion from that Circumstance to tell me that a Hexagon is that form which contains most space, excepting the Circle.

Johnson, then, seems to have taken chemistry seriously over at least several decades of his life. His attitude towards it contrasts with the playful, even perhaps flippant, approach shown by his friend Hester. We are justified in asking how the interest in such a subject of study, so far removed from literary and theological matters, first grew in Johnson's mind. And at this point we must look at the life and works of Herman Boerhaave, whose brief biography Johnson wrote in 1739.

Herman Boerhaave, now known to comparatively few except students of medical history, was for long called "the Dutch Hippocrates". His fame was such that the story runs that a letter sent to him from China, addressed to "M. Boerhaave, Physician in Europe" was duly delivered to him in Leiden. Boerhaave was born on the last day of 1668 in Voorhout, son of a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. He was intended for the ministry, and studied Latin, Greek and History to that end. His father, dying when Herman was 15 years old, left a widow in charge of nine children. This threatened the university career of the eldest son, who nevertheless gained his doctorate in philosophy in Leiden. For some reason, Boerhaave then became attracted to medicine. He had already achieved some success in curing himself of an ulcer of the thigh which had baffled the conventional remedies, by treating it with salt and his own urine; a painful, but effective method which is not so unreasonable as it appears. Nevertheless, in adopting medicine as a career, Boerhaave did not neglect theology, teaching mathematics to pay for his lessons.

At this time the theologians were arguing fiercely over the doctrines of Benedict Spinoza, who was generally regarded by Catholics and Protestants alike as a heretic. Stoic pantheism was the last creed which Boerhaave would have adopted, but there were not wanting a few jealous spirits who spread a rumour that he was a Spinozist. This was apparently sufficient to disallow Boerhaave's application for a licence to preach in Holland, and may well have been the main reason why he turned increasingly to medicine. He took his degree in Harderwick, offering a dissertation entitled "Disputatione de utilitate explorandum excrementorum in aegris et signorum." He became celebrated in Leiden, and in 1709 was appointed to the first chair which happened to become vacant; that of medicine with botany. As if this was not enough for one man, Boerhaave studied chemistry also, and in 1718 added the chair of chemistry to that he already occupied.

In the field of chemistry Boerhaave opposed the iatrochemists of the school of Paracelsus, struggled to establish chemistry as a science in its own right, and not as a mere handmaiden of medicine, and encouraged its introduction into the university curriculum as such. Among other aims, he wanted to test the existing belief in the transmutation of metals. He was a keen experimenter, averse to taking anything on trust that could not be confirmed by experiment. Some of his investigations involved heating metals for many years continuously. One sample of mercury (long considered a hopeful starting point for transmutation) he maintained above 100 degrees Fahrenheit for fifteen years and six months. One sample of gold amalgam was distilled by his assistants no less than 877 times. Other experiments using tin and lead were carried out for some twenty years. In the midst of these studies Boerhaave managed to continue the clinical care of his patients in private practice. For relaxation he would walk, ride his horse, or play the lyre.

From 1718 onwards, students of chemistry placed a high value on Boerhaave's lecture notes, which eventually found their way into the hands of an unscrupulous printer. In 1724 an unauthorised work entitled "Institutiones et experimenta chemiae" appeared under Boerhaave's name and a Paris imprint. It was followed three years later by reprints from Amsterdam and Venice, and an English translation by Peter Shaw and Ephraim Chambers was published in London as "A New Method of Chemistry." Boerhaave was worried by the errors which appeared in these versions of his notes, and angered because his students often used the corrupt text during his own lectures. He therefore set out to publish an authoritative book to correct the blunders. This magnum opus, "Elementa Chemiae quae anniversario labore docuit in publicis practisque scholis" appeared in a quarto volume in two parts, first the Elements, then the Practice. The second part has been claimed to provide the basis for modern organic chemistry.

Boerhaave died on September 23, 1738, mourned by the whole learned body of Europe. His funeral oration was pronounced by Albert Schultens. It was printed in London and widely read throughout Britain and France. Abstracts of it appeared in The Gentleman's Magazine for September 1738. At this time Samuel Johnson, impecunious and unsettled, was in London making the acquaintance of Edward Cave. Whether it was Johnson or Cave who thought of including a life of Boerhaave in the Magazine is not apparent; it may well have been Johnson

himself. At any rate the Life appeared anonymously in four instalments during 1739. For it, Johnson drew largely on the oration of Schultens, possibly supplementing his information with details supplied by Dr. Robert James (of whom more anon), who had been a medical student at Leiden while Johnson had been at Oxford. The Life of Boerhaave was reprinted in the Chalmers' edition of The Works of Samuel Johnson (1816) and later in a Dutch translation in 1836, and doubtless served to introduce a large circle of literary students to Boerhaave who would otherwise have heard little of him through scientific channels. Moreover, the Life was reprinted in Robert James' Medicinal Dictionary of 1743, of which Johnson wrote a great deal.

Johnson's Life of Boerhaave is not a very accurate account. It has numerous errors in dates and proper names, and must be regarded as a piece of journalism by a rising young writer, and little more. Yet for Johnson himself it may well have acquired later significance, and may have been the door by which he entered the magic world of experimental chemistry. There are parallels between the lives of the subject and his biographer. Both were hampered by lack of money and the calls of family responsibility at a time when they thirsted for study opportunities. By a tremendous effort Boerhaave achieved his academic success; Johnson had to abandon his studies, but not for want of much trying to gain suitable teaching appointments which might have enabled him to progress academically. Both were ardent philosophers and theologians, grounded in classical studies. Of Boerhaave, Johnson comments:

It is, I believe, a very just observation, that men's ambition is generally apportioned to their capacity. Providence seldom sends any into the world with an inclination to attempt great things, who have not abilities likewise to perform them. To have formed the design of gaining a complete knowledge of medicine by way of digression from theological studies, would have been little less than madness in most men, and have only exposed them to ridicule and contempt. But Boerhaave was one of those mighty geniuses, to whom scarce any thing appears impossible, and who think nothing worthy of their efforts but what appears insurmountable to common understanding.

That sounds more like genuine admiration than a paraphrase of

the Latin funeral oration of Professor Schultens, and admiration often leads men to emulation.

No one appears to have recorded whether or not Johnson ever read the Elementa Chemiae, yet there is every likelihood that he did. If he could engross himself in Watson's Chemical Essays, how much more would he have lost himself in Boerhaave's work. Here he would have found chapters headed: analysis of soot; analysis of amber; analysis of blood by distillation; analysis of horses' hoofs by distillation; the production, destruction and alteration of smells and tastes; the production, destruction and alteration of colours. The last two of these irresistibly suggest the light-hearted experiments at Streatham. Perhaps it is on Boerhaave's instructions that the pot herbs were distilled which Hester Piozzi mentions, for the Elementa has a chapter entitled "Distillation of Aromatics". Moreover, the purchase of sulphuric acid by Mr. Peyton may not have been entirely for the making of ether. Johnson may have set out to make the spiritus salis Glauberi, for which Boerhaave gives instructions to distil common salt with oil of vitriol.

As we have observed in passing, some of Johnson's information about Boerhaave came probably from his friend Dr. Robert James, inventor of a celebrated fever powder. In 1743 James published the first volume of his massive Medicinal Dictionary ... together with a History of Drugs. This work was eventually completed in three folio volumes. The introduction, and a dedication to the celebrated Richard Mead, were the work of Samuel Johnson, who also contributed a great deal of the text, including, it is believed, the descriptions of chemical apparatus, and experiments. The note on chemistry is instructive:

Chemia. I shall always make us of Chymistry, as a word already received in the English language; though some, either out of an affectation of singularity, or too servile complaisance to the celebrated Boerhaave, or to the French, have lately called it Chemistry or Chemy; the last of which particularly appears to be a very trifling and idle Innovation.

Perhaps it is in the proposal sheet sent to likely subscribers to the Medicinal Dictionary in 1741 that Johnson offers posterity his apologia for taking up scientific interests:

It is doubtless of importance to the happiness of mankind, that whatsoever is generally useful should be generally known; and he therefore that diffuses science, may with justice claim, among the benefactors to the public, the next rank to him that improves it.

In matters of medicine, the study so closely allied to chemistry during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Johnson owed a debt to Dr. James for the knowledge which came through their collaboration. On several occasions Johnson was mistaken for a physician. In Montrose, in August 1773, records Boswell in his Tour to the Hebrides:

He afterwards went into an apothecary's shop, and ordered some medicine for himself, and wrote the prescription in technical characters. The boy took him for a physician.

In a letter to Mrs. Thrale dated 19 June, 1783, Johnson writes:

I suppose you may wish to know how my disease is treated by my physicians. They put a blister upon my back, and two from my ear to my throat, one on a side. The blister on the back has done little, and those on the throat have not risen. I bullied and bounced ... and compelled the apothecary to make his salve according to the Edinburgh Dispensatory, that it might adhere better. I have two on now of my own prescription. They likewise give me salt of hartshorn which I take with no great confidence, but I am satisfied that what can be done is done for me.

Yet, so far as the biological sciences are concerned, Johnson would never have made a scientist. He was far too squeamish in many respects. Human bones horrified him. Boswell, recording his Tour of the Hebrides, wrote in Rasay:

A little to the west of the house is an old ruinous chapel, unroofed, which never has been very curious. We here saw some human bones of an uncommon size. There was a heel-bone in particular, which Dr. Macleod said was such, that if the foot was in proportion, it must have been twenty-seven inches long. Dr. Johnson would not look at the bones. He started back from them with a striking appearance of horror. Mr. M'Queen told us, it was formerly much the custom, in these isles, to have human bones lying above ground, especially in

the windows of churches.

And again, in Inchkenneth during the following month:

I this morning took a spade, and dug a little grave in the floor of a ruined chapel near Sir Allan M'Lean's house, in which I buried some human bones I found there. Dr. Johnson praised me for what I had done, though he owned, he could not have done it. He shewed in the chapel at Rasay his horror at dead men's bones. He shewed it again at Col's house. In the Charter-room there was a remarkable large chin-bone, which was said to have been a bone of John Garve, one of the lairds. Dr. Johnson would not look at it, but started away.

When the relics of the once living were not in question, Johnson's scientific curiosity knew no bounds. He talks gladly of the arrow-heads of former inhabitants of the Isles, called by the people elf-bolts. He comments on the mineralogical treasures suspected to be hidden among the hills:

One of the rocks in Col has a black vein, imagined to consist of the ore of lead, but it was never yet opened or essayed. In Skye a black mass was accidentally picked up, and brought into the house of the owner of the land, who found himself strongly inclined to think it a coal, but unhappily it did not burn in the chimney. Common ores should here be of no great value; for what requires to be separated by fire, must, if it were found, be carried away in its mineral state, here being no fuel for the smelting house or forge.

He observes that hemp will grow in the Islands, and that, failing that, better ropes could be made of rushes or nettles than of the straws the people use there. He describes in detail the qualities of peat, the tanning of hides. He writes in 1783 to tell Mrs. Thrale of the great burning glass on view in London:

It wastes a diamond placed in the focus, but causes no diminution of pure gold. Of the rubies exposed to its action, one was made more vivid, the other paler.

To the military occupants of Fort George, Johnson can talk of gunpowder, the proportions of its ingredients, the methods of granulating and polishing it, as one who has knowledge of

such things, and cut a good figure among the experts.

All these indications of accurate observation, wide reading, and occasionally of experience in handling materials, add up to give us a picture of a man of learning who had covered more aspects of applied chemistry than the majority of his contemporaries. It may be that Johnson approached them as intellectual problems, for the sake of the exercise, as he did mathematics. It may be that he was strongly inclined towards the biological sciences, but found life and death too disturbing to his inward self, so that he compensated for this timidity by turning more briskly to the inanimate things of science. Whatever the explanation, it seems to me that the inspiration for his studies came from Herman Boerhaave.

During the discussion session following Mr. Cooper's paper, reference was made to Johnson's refusal to disclose full details to Boswell concerning his use of orange peel. Ross Wilson has sent the following extract from a letter from Johnson to a Miss Boothby, published in the 1899 volume of Johnson Club Papers:

My sweet Angel ... Give me leave, who have thought much on medicine, to propose to you an easy, and I think a very probable remedy for indigestion and lubricity of the bowels. Dr. Lawrence has told me of your case. Take an ounce of dried orange-peel, finely powdered, divide it into scruples, and take one scruple at a time ... This is a medicine not disgusting, not costly, easily tried, and if not found useful, easily left off. I would not have you offer it to the Doctor as mine. Physicians do not love intruders. Yet do not take it without his leave. But do not be easily put off, for it is in my opinion very likely to help you, and not likely to do you harm.

Music, Men, and Manners in France and Italy, 1770 by Charles Burney. Ed. by H. Edmund Poole. Pp. xxix + 245. (The Folio Society, London 1969, £1. 15s.; available to members only).

On 5 June 1770, Dr. Charles Burney set out from Dover on the first of two Continental expeditions to gather material for his great four-volume History of Music (1776-89). Armed with letters of introduction to men of learning and of the diplomatic corps in most of the principal cities through which he was to pass, Burney made his way, often in conditions of the utmost discomfort, from Calais to Lyons, then on via Geneva, Milan and Venice, to Naples and back. Fleeced at every turn by extortionate innkeepers and villainous coachmen, not to mention the hosts of esurient Italian customs officials, the modest eighteenth-century European traveller had not only to suffer such hazards as bad roads and wretched transport, but also such constant irritants as bugs, poor food and filthy accommodation. Undeterred by difficulties which might cause even the most zealous of modern tourists to blanch, Burney pressed on with undiminished enthusiasm and astonishing energy. Everywhere he went, there were performances to be heard, musicians to be interviewed, libraries and museums to be visited, pictures and sculptures to be seen, plus a hundred and one other things which reveal the extent of his general interests and endless curiosity. By Christmas, Burney was back in London, triumphant no doubt, but also completely exhausted.

The daily journal which Burney kept on his travels has been described by his most recent biographer as perhaps the liveliest and most entertaining of all his works. Though it is important chiefly for its first-hand account of many of the most famous musicians of the day - Balbastre, Galuppi, Padre Martini, the Mozarts, Farinelli, Piccini and Jommelli among others - the journal is also a mine of intelligent observation on a wide variety of non-musical topics: art, architecture, antiquities in general, agriculture and natural history, astronomy, electricity, volcanoes and social customs. As a bonus, we also have Burney's vivid description of his meetings with Diderot and Rousseau, and of a chance encounter with the aged Voltaire. In preparing the work for publication, Burney, following the advice of Garrick and other friends whose judgement he valued, agreed to purge his journal of "all that was miscellaneous of observation or of anecdote", and to confine himself to music on the grounds that France and Italy had been so written over by others before him that, except in this one quarter, there was nothing new to be said. It was

a decision he was later very much to regret.

The Present State of Music in France and Italy came out on 3 May 1771, and was immediately successful in establishing its author's claim to be considered a man of letters rather than "a mere musician". The following year, Burney was off again, this time on an even more arduous journey which was to carry him to Brussels, Cologne, Mannheim and Munich, then down the Danube to Vienna and back by way of Dresden, Berlin, Hamburg and the Netherlands. The literary result, a full two-volume account of his German travels, first appeared in May 1773, and was followed shortly after by another edition of the earlier Italian Tour. Doubtless it was the expanded form of this second book which so impressed Johnson and was to serve as a model for his own Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland in 1775. Some thirty years later, Burney returned to the unpublished portions of his French and Italian journal and began revising and expanding his material with the obvious intention of including it in his projected "Memoirs". Although substantial extracts from both books were published by Cedric Glover in 1927, it was not until 1959, however, that an ostensibly complete and scholarly two-volume edition of the entire Travels finally appeared under the editorship of the late Percy Scholes and the corporate title, Dr. Burney's Musical Tours in Europe.

For the deleted sections of the original Italian Tour, two MS sources survive. One, a heavily edited copy of the entire Tour including both published and unpublished material (British Museum Add. MS 35122) is apparently Burney's actual travel diary. The other (formerly in the possession of Dr. Scholes and now in the James Osborn Collection at Yale), though only partially autograph, would seem to be the revised version of the previously unpublished portions of the journal as they were to have appeared in the "Memoirs". It may be argued therefore that, of these two MSS, the Osborn copy is clearly the more authoritative, representing as it does Burney's final intentions in the matter; also that a conflation of its text with that of the "corrected" second edition of the printed Tour - which, with the further addition of footnotes from Ebeling's 1772 German translation and an occasional reference to Add. 35122, is incidentally what Scholes has already given us - ought to yield a more or less ideal version of the complete work as envisaged by the author.

But things are not quite what they seem. Add. MS 35122

has its own peculiar textual integrity, and, as a new edition of Burney's original narrative now under the title Music, Men, and Manners in France and Italy, 1770 abundantly proves, is not what Scholes inferred it was: a mere duplicate of the same unpublished material as was contained in his own (now the Osborn) MS. Both have their individual merits: the one a much more polished literary style, the other a compensatingly greater verve and immediacy of effect, while each contains information which is not to be found in the other or in the printed Tour. If Burney's first thoughts are of no great critical significance, except perhaps to those with a specialist interest in the man and his doings, they nevertheless contain a good many passing details - for example, a single sentence on p.79 from which we learn that, in Venice at any rate, there were still some harpsichord players who employed the old-fashioned overhand method of fingering long after it had been abandoned elsewhere - which are too valuable to lie forever buried in the British Museum. In addition to a considerable body of explanatory footnotes, the editor, H. Edmund Poole, has supplied a first-class Introduction, a useful amplification of Burney's 1773 "Explication" (i.e., Glossary), and an extensive Biographical Index. The volume is liberally adorned with a series of contemporary route maps and other charming period illustrations, and, like most Folio Society publications, is extremely well produced. All in all, it is a splendid achievement.

For students of eighteenth-century music (and art historians too for that matter), Burney's Italian Tour is essential reading, and for such as these, the present edition must be regarded as an indispensable supplement to Scholes. For the general reader too, the book is also of absorbing interest, even more perhaps for the wealth of "miscellaneous observation" and anecdote originally suppressed than for its purely musical detail. One puts it down firmly convinced, as was Johnson, that its author was "one of the first writers of the age for travels".

H. Diack Johnstone
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CURIOSITY GRATIFIED WITH WONDERS -
CHILDREN AND THE EXPERIENCE OF LITERATURE*

Brian W. Alderson

On Wednesday April 3rd [1776] I found him very busy putting his books in order, and as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves, such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle, Dr. Boswell's description of him, 'a robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries'.¹

Disregarding his performance as a lexicographer and as a textual critic, Johnson's almost animal vigour as a reader is sufficient in itself to attract attention to his views on the use of books and the value of reading. His "ravenous devouring" of Charles Sheridan's Account of the late revolution in Sweden prompted the ingenious Quaker lady, Mrs. Knowles, to say that he knew how to read better than anyone; that: "he gets at the substance of a book directly; he tears the heart out of it".²

Consequently, when Mrs. Thrale informs us that Johnson questioned whether there was ever yet "any thing written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrims Progress?"³ it provokes a desire to guess what particular merit he saw in these volumes that was lacking in all the others that he must have read, or half-read, or dismissed with one implacable glance.

In her primmest tone - reserved for objects of mere entertainment - Mrs. Thrale is able to satisfy us on the subject of Don Quixote, but Johnson's choice of the other two books is not glossed at all and cannot be explained away so easily.

In his scheme of things these books would seem to fall into the category of those which not only assist the enjoyment of life but also its endurance. Each carries a powerful commentary on matters of Conduct and yet each contrives to set this into a narrative which owes much to

* Based on a paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 21 February, 1970. Chairman: Miss Naomi Lewis, B.A.

1. Boswell, Life, OSA p.722.
2. Ibid., p.942.
3. Piozzi Anecdotes, ed. Roberts, p.180.

those never failing sources of popular appeal: tales of high adventure and the language of the common man. They could almost have been designed to appeal to a man with "so complex a magnitude of literary, moral and religious character".

It was not only literary, moral and religious characters, though, who were attracted by Robinson Crusoe and The Pilgrim's Progress; it was children too.

The children of the eighteenth century were not so well supplied with literature that they could afford to neglect books with such immediately attractive qualities as these. The mariner who, after a succession of escapades, is cast up to fend for himself on a desert island, the steadfast man, pursuing his course through a succession of natural and supernatural disasters - these are characters and events predestined to appeal to the child mind, and almost from their first appearance they were seized upon by the young to such good effect that many people who have not read them are even now unsure whether the books were written for children or adults.

When one compares these strong, direct tales with the books that were written to order for eighteenth-century children, the reasons for their success are even more cogent. At that time there seems to have been nothing like the prospect of a child readership to galvanize an author into a succession of literary cramps behind a protective screen of inhibitions and preconceptions.

Addressing himself passionately to the saving of souls - any souls - Bunyan is magnificent: "So he went on, and Apollyon met him; now the Monster was hideous to behold, he was cloathed with scales like a Fish; (and they are his pride) he had Wings like a Dragon, feet like a Bear, and out of his belly came Fire and Smoak, and his mouth was as the mouth of a Lion."

But when he directs his evangelism specifically at children as he did in his Book for boys and girls: or country rhymes for children (1686) he produces a strange conglomeration of plain description, religious exhortation and crudely contorted allegory - all couched in his typical halting but not entirely unattractive verse.

Upon a Stinking Breath.

Doth this proceed from an infected Air?
 Or from man's common, sweet and wholesome Fare?
 It comes from a foul Stomack, or what's worse,
 Ulcerous Lungs, Teeth, or a private Curse.

To this, I some men's Notions do compare,
 Who seem to breathe in none but Scripture Air.

Upon Death

Death's a cold Comforter to Girls and Boys,
 Who wedded are unto their Childish Toys:
 More Grim he looks upon our lustful Youth,
 Who, against Knowledge, slight God's saving Truth:
 But most of all, he dismal is to those,
 Who once profess'd the Truth, they now oppose.

Nor were the children's writers of succeeding generations much of an improvement. Dr. Isaac Watts, whose Divine and moral songs (1715) were praised by Johnson for their promotion of piety, may have been a smoother lyricist than the author of A book for boys and girls (and he was an altogether smoother non-conformist) but it was no less emphatic in the demands that it made on his young readers' consciences:

Praise to God for learning to read

The praises of my tongue
 I offer to the Lord,
 That I was taught and learnt so young
 To read his holy word.

That I am brought to know
 The danger I was in,
 By nature and by practice too
 A wretched slave to sin.

That I am led to see
 I can do nothing well:
 And whither shall a sinner flee
 To save himself from hell?

The All-seeing God

Almighty God! thy piercing eye
 Strikes through the shades of night;
 And our most secret actions lie
 All open to thy sight.

There's not a sin that we commit,
 Nor wicked word we say,
 But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,
 Against the judgment day!

And must the crimes that I have done
 Be read and published there?
 Be all expos'd before the sun,
 While men and angels hear?

Lord, at thy foot asham'd I lie;
 Upward I dare not look;
 Pardon my sins before I die,
 And blot them from thy book.

Remember all the dying pains
 That my Redeemer felt;
 And let his blood wash out my stains,
 And answer for my guilt.

O may I now for ever fear
 T'indulge a sinful thought!
 Since the great God can see and hear,
 And writes down every fault.

The later popularity of the Divine songs as a religious manual, as a Sunday School prize and as a Victorian coffee table book is one of the phenomena of the history of reading in the nineteenth century and won for its author the ultimate in all literary accolades: parody by Lewis Carroll.

'Tis the voice of the sluggard; - I heard him complain,
 'You have wak'd mee too soon, I must slumber again;
 As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed,
 Turns his sides, and his shoulders, and his heavy head.

'A little more sleep and a little more slumber:'
 Thus he wastes half his days, and hours without number;
 And when he gets up he sits folding his hands,
 Or walks about saunt'ring, or trifling he stands.

Moral Songs. Isaac Watts.

'Tis the voice of the Lobster; I heard him declare,
 'You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.
 As a duck with its eyelids, so he with his nose
 Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes.
 When the sands are all dry, he is gay as a lark,
 And will talk in contemptuous tones of the Shark:
 But, when the tide rises and sharks are around,
 His voice has a timid and tremulous sound.

Alice in Wonderland. Lewis Carroll.

But the prospect of Lewis Carroll was something which could scarcely comfort the young readers of eighteenth-century England and as the decades passed by the piety of Watts was succeeded only by the more conformist rigours of Mrs. Trimmer and Hannah More, and by the earnestly intentioned tales of Sarah Fielding and that wayward Rousseauist Thomas Day. To the historian of literature or the observer of the social scene their books are full of strange treasures, but to the child seeking another Robinson Crusoe they must have been a sobering disappointment. Even the still famous John Newbery, whom Goldsmith put into The Vicar of Wakefield as "the philanthropic bookseller in St. Paul's churchyard who called himself the friend of Children but was the friend of all mankind", and whom Johnson characterized so entertainingly as Jack Whirler in the 19th Idler proved to be a friend to children more for the manner in which he addressed them than for the matter he placed before them. Less coarse than Bunyan, less unctuous than Watts, he brought the language of the nursery into children's moralities. The title page of his first production is an epitome of his work, but for all the promise of amusement that it gives, the motives behind the book were predominantly Instructive - and Instructive they remained through nearly all his publications. Even the celebrated Little Goody Two-Shoes "set forth at large for the Benefit of those, Who from a State of Rags and Care, And having Shoes but half a Pair; Their Fortune and their Fame would fix And gallop in a Coach and Six." gestures only intermittently in the direction of Cinderella and is most often to be found seeking to promote responsible behaviour in adult and child readers alike.

It is a little disconcerting to find Dr. Johnson - the most august of the Augustans - among such company as this, but he does have claim to a small place by virtue of his fable The Vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe (1748) and his fairy tale The Fountains (1766): the one published in Dodsley's compendium of education The Preceptor (for which Johnson also wrote a smoothly commendatory preface), the other published in Mrs. Anna Williams' Miscellanies, where it has the character of a children's story, I suppose, only to the extent that many of the French tales in the Cabinet des Fées may have.

Of these two tales one is a little disposed to refer back to their author his remark about women preaching and dogs walking on their hinder legs: "It is not done well, but you

are surprised to find it done at all". It is true that Bishop Percy heard Johnson say that he thought that The Vision was the best thing he ever wrote, but it is a little hard to credit that he meant it, or, if he meant it, that he was not in one of his more frolicsome moods. It is interesting chiefly as a forerunner of the dreams and allegories that found their way into The Rambler; it is a hermit's progress with none of the colloquial passion that distinguished that of the pilgrim. And in like manner, The Fountains makes most sense to a reader intent upon observing Johnson's manipulation of those ideas about existence that had found their fullest expression in Rasselas: the creaking machinery of the story's plot serving an aim which is not that of most fairy tales (or most genuine Persian tales) - narrative delight - but rather moral illumination.

Children however have little taste for manuals devoted to the vanity of human wishes (even when the authority on that subject stoops to introduce his admonitions through the agency of a goldfinch transforming itself into a Good Fairy); and they can have raised little enthusiasm for the overt didacticism of the Hermit of Teneriffe who could offer only an abstract demonstration of the soul's progress from the Innocence of Childhood, through Education, to the final attainment of Reason and Religion - a progress whose order was subverted by those Habits which so distressed Dr. Johnson and which led him to predict a conclusion of Melancholy and Despair.

It is only fair to point out however that The Fountains never seems to have been issued as an individual work solely for children, and as far as I can trace, The Vision of Theodore was only once re-issued in a children's book, a Victorian "collection of Standard tales rhymes and allegories" called Every Boy's Stories. Every boy may have enjoyed Chevy Chase and John Gilpin in this anthology but I hardly think that he would have himself chosen the instructive sections from Sandford and Merton and Maria Edgeworth's Lame Jervas, nor yet the other pieces by Johnson - mostly oriental allegories from The Rambler.

Children's enthusiastic response to the far more worldly adventure stories of Bunyan and Defoe is sufficient indication of the real demands that they made of their books, and it is much to Dr. Johnson's credit that, for all the failure of his practice, he recognized clearly in principle

the need for children to enjoy their reading, and he knew the kind of books that would feed this enjoyment.

Time and again, throughout his works, Johnson is concerned to emphasise the contributions that reading can make to personal development - not as a substitute for life, but as a foundation for knowledge and a prophylactic against despair. The foundation of knowledge he told Boswell must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books which however must also be brought to the test of real life. And to his servant Francis Barber, at school at Bishops Stortford he wrote: "Let me know what English books you read for your entertainment. You can never be wise unless you love reading."¹

And as a pragmatist he was quick to perceive that there are more ways of creating a reader than by beating him round the ears with Cicero, and that so far as the child was concerned it was necessary primarily to foster the inclination to read, no matter how it was done. "I am always for getting a boy forward in his learning; for that is a sure good. I would let him at first read any English book which happens to engage his attention; because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards."²

Or again "I would put a child into a library (where no unfit books are) and let him read at his choice. A child should not be discouraged from reading any thing that he takes a liking to, from a notion that it is above his reach. If that be the case, the child will soon find it out and desist; if not, he of course gains the instruction; which is so much more likely to come, from the inclination from which he takes up the study."³

Johnson had little doubt where that inclination began; it was where he had himself found it: the reading of Romance, which he could never wholly abandon. Mrs. Thrale reports on his own first encounters with what he called "stories full of prodigies" when he heard St. George and the Dragon at his nurse's knee and she adds the significant observation that:

the recollection of such reading as had delighted him in his infancy, made him always persist in fancying that it was the only reading which could please an infant;

1. Letters, ed. Chapman no.238.
2. Boswell Life OSA p.1020.
3. Ibid., p.1080.

and he used to condemn me for putting Newbery's books into their hands as too trifling to engage their attention. 'Babies do not want (said he) to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat that can stretch and stimulate their little minds ... Remember always that the parents buy the books, and that the children never read them.'¹

On another occasion reported from the unpublished MS. notes of Mr. Longley, The Recorder of Rochester, he was similarly specific:

The next day I dined at Langton's with Johnson, I remember Lady Rothes spoke of the advantage children now derive from the little books published purposely for their instruction. Johnson controverted it, asserting that at an early age it was better to gratify curiosity with wonders than to attempt planting truth before the mind was prepared to receive it, and that therefore, Jack the Giant Killer, Parismus and Parismenus and The Seven Champions of Christendome were fitter for them than Mrs. Barbauld and Mrs. Trimmer.²

In the context of the rather rigorous attitude of the eighteenth century towards the care of its children, these views about children's books and reading are keenly perceptive and refreshingly liberal. Nor is it too unrealistic to assert that they have as close an application to the present time as when they were first formulated. With 2,500 new children's books reeling from the presses every year we are far outstripping the eighteenth century in point of quantity and variety, but even now we have not wholly escaped from a feeling that we have a duty to instruct the young reader as much as a requirement to entertain him. The boy let loose in the library may find himself trapped before long in a lecture on the Dewey Decimal Classification or a lesson on how to use the catalogue; and if he eventually gets to the bookshelves we cannot be sure that he will not light upon some modern version of Little Goody Two-Shoes, where the social criticisms and moral adjurations of Mr. Newbery's little novel will be replaced by contemporary didacticism. Instead of the preacher or moral philosopher it is now the psychologist and the social worker who beset our children's literature. Happily, however, those Romances which Johnson characterized as "wild improbable tales" are still circulated; we cannot afford to lose sight of their continuing contribution to the vitality of a person's early experience of literature.

1. Piozzi Anecdotes p.13-14.

2. Boswell Life, Hill & Powell, IV, p.8, n.3.

SIDELIGHTS ON SMUGGLING

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

The eighteenth century was the great harvest time for British smugglers. In the north of England, the people were largely given over to farming, though a few manufactures flourished. But in the south, as Daniel Defoe said, the one main industry from Thames to Land's End was smuggling. There was a high duty on almost everything imported: tea, coffee, brandy, rum, muslins, lace, linen, cambric.

The temptation was so strong that nobody seemed too respectable to take a hand in the game of evading the Revenue. Incredible quantities of "run" goods were landed and distributed. "In six months," says one eighteenth-century recorder, "1835 horseloads of tea and 1689 horseloads of wet and dry goods were landed on the Suffolk coast and removed by armed convoys of smugglers. 2000 hogsheads of spirits were run annually on the shores of Hants, Dorset and Devon."

The Free Trader was well repaid if he saved one cargo out of three - and he generally saved a good deal more. Prudent smugglers prospered, bought lands, built houses, accumulated more than their fair share of this world's goods.

Generally speaking, police arrangements were of little help to the Excise Officer trying to check smuggling. The parish constable was, more often than not, a poor tool physically or mentally. In the words of Shakespeare's immortal Dogberry, the parish appointed "the most senseless and fit man to be constable of the watch." Dogberry was a fair example of the country constable for centuries. His duty was "to comprehend all vagrom men." But "the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will."

Matters were little better in the towns. In 1829 - when Peel reformed the police system - the wealthy and prosperous district of Kensington depended for protection on three constables and three drunken headboroughs. Fulham, Barnet, Putney, Wandsworth, and Deptford had no police and no protection from robbery and outrage but the voluntary exertions of individuals and "the honesty of the thieves."

The Excise Officer had, as a result, often to call in the military. It is recorded that armed bands of smugglers 50 to 150 strong landed goods and loaded wagons and pack-horses on the open beach without opposition. Against that sort of thing a few Customs or Excise Officers were powerless, and even the military were not always successful. For instance, a pitched battle was fought at Deal over a trifling haul of 1500 casks of "run" spirits. The smugglers, well supplied with provisions and armament, held the town in force. The besiegers consisted of several Excise Officers and a detachment of 47 soldiers under a Captain Pennyman. The defenders had stretched ropes across the streets, and as the infantry advanced they tumbled over the ropes, and were badly mauled before they could get up again. The soldiers finally managed to seize some spirits and some raw coffee, but were obliged to retire with only a small part of their booty, under a hot fusillade from the smugglers, who retained the honours of the day - plus most of the spirits.

This is a contemporary account of a smuggling episode on the Cornish coast. A cargo was being landed and among the onlookers stood one stranger.

Crowds assembled on the beach to help the cargo ashore. On the one hand a boisterous group surrounded a keg with the head knocked in for ease of access to the good Cognac, into which they dipped whatever vessel came first to hand; one man had filled his shoe. On the other side, they fought, and wrestled, cursed and swore.

Horried at what he saw, the stranger lost all self command, and oblivious of personal danger he began to shout, 'What a horrible sight! Have you no shame? Is there no magistrate at hand? Cannot any justice of the peace be found in this fearful country?' 'No, thanks be to God,' answered a hoarse, gruff voice. 'None within eight miles.' 'Well, then,' screamed the stranger, 'is there no clergyman hereabout? Does no minister of the parish live among you on this coast?' 'Ay, to be sure there is,' said the same deep voice. 'Well, how far off does he live? Where is he?' 'That's he yonder, sir, with the lantern.' And sure enough there he stood on a rock, and poured with pastoral diligence 'the light of other days' on a busy congregation.

The police, as we have seen, were practically useless;

the soldiers could only help on field days. The smugglers were numerous, determined, and vindictive. They had their own allies and spies all over the country. Even in his own house the Revenue Officer was not safe. He was often hauled out of bed and beaten or wounded, even killed outright.

A famous case was that of Galley and Chater. In 1748 the notorious Hawksworth gang was one of the most daring and successful bands of smugglers in the southern counties. A cargo of tea they had tried to run had been captured by Revenue Officers and stored in Poole Custom House. In a night attack the smugglers recovered their goods. Chater, a Customs Officer, and Galley, a shoemaker, were on their way to give evidence against the offenders. The smugglers followed them, overtook them, escorted them into Rowlands Castle where they were made drunk and put to bed. Later they were both tied to one horse and at the insistence of the smugglers' wives the two men were flogged savagely and continuously all the way to Rake, near Liss. The party stayed at the Red Lion Inn, Rake, where it was found that Galley had died under the lash. Chater was not so lucky: his nose and eyes were cut out, and he was forced to walk into a well with a noose around his neck - so that he was hung.

A happier story is that of Mr. Henry Dent, Collector of Inland Revenue. He and two other persons, according to his account, were proceeding peaceably along the road between Northleach and Cirencester when to his astonishment and indignation "Several Persons in Disguise rushed out of a Wood with Blunderbusses and Cutlasses and fired upon them." Mr. Dent, however, defended himself right valiantly; the daring villains were driven back into the wood ignominiously; and the King's Servants proceeded to Cirencester, which they reached in safety. That was all on a fine April afternoon in 1779.

Dr. Johnson summed up eighteenth-century smugglers in his Dictionary, published in 1755, when he defined a smuggler as "A wretch, who, in defiance of justice and the laws, imports or exports goods either contraband or without payment of the Customs."

The Doctor was, of course, a life-long opponent, as a sound Tory, of Excise, an opposition enflamed by the Excise harassment of his father as a parchment manufacturer. His Dictionary definition bears repetition today, as we are all

in Great Britain increasingly harassed by the same scourge originating from the Civil War: "A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom Excise is paid." Attorney-General Murray ruled the passage might be considered as actionable, but that it would be more "prudent" not to prosecute.

The Doctor's antipathy to Excise continued, for in The Idler, No. 65, he referred to "the two lowest of all human beings, a Scribbler for a party, and a Commissioner of Excise." The latter may have redeemed himself somewhat as an individual; the former are increasingly and unashamedly pernicious.

LOCH NESS, WHISKY AND DR. JOHNSON

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

How very right it is that a Scotch whisky firm is subsidising an investigation of the Loch Ness monster at this time of the year, for it was in the summer of 1773 that Dr. Johnson first made the acquaintance of Highland malt whisky, and that by the shores of Loch Ness.

He and Boswell left Edinburgh on Wednesday the 18th August by chaise and arrived at Inverness late in the evening of Saturday the 28th. Abandoning the chaise as impracticable, the Doctor, Boswell and the latter's servant, Joseph, left Inverness on horseback, in company with two Highland guides on the morning of Monday, the 30th August.

When they had gone what Boswell calls "a good way by the side of Lochness", they came to a little hut with "an old-looking woman at the door of it." Her name was Fraser, and she and her husband were allowed the use of the hut and to keep goats in return for looking after the woods of Mr. Fraser of Balmain.

The party entered the hut and a rather confused conversation followed: she spoke "Erse" and hardly any English, and at one stage thought the Doctor wished to go to bed with her! "She asked us to sit down and take a dram," wrote Boswell. "She said she was as happy as any woman in Scotland ... She asked for snuff. It is her luxury, and she uses a great deal. We had none but gave her sixpence a-piece. She then brought out her whisky bottle. I tasted it; as did Joseph and our

guides; so I gave her sixpence more. She sent us away with many prayers in Erse."

The Doctor's account of this visit to a Highland hut is more restrained, remarking simply, "With the true pastoral hospitality, she asked us to sit down and drink whisky. She is religious, and though the kirk is four miles off, probably eight English miles, she goes thither every Sunday. We gave her a shilling, and she begged snuff; for snuff is the luxury of a Highland cottage."

Neither Johnson nor Boswell makes any reference to the Loch Ness monster, but the Doctor's description was possessed of a real news value for his English readers, who had never ventured that far from England in their lives. "Lough Ness," wrote Johnson, "is a very remarkable diffusion of water without islands. It fills a large hollow between two ridges of high rocks, being supplied partly by the torrents which fall into it on either side, and partly, as is supposed, by springs at the bottom. Its water is remarkably clear and pleasant, and is imagined by the natives to be medicinal. We were told, that it is in some places a hundred and forty fathom deep, a profundity scarcely credible, and which probably those that relate it have never sounded. Its fish are salmon, trout, and pike."

After staying overnight, 30th-31st August, at Fort Augustus, they set out about mid-day and travelled eleven miles until they came "to a house in Glenmorison, called Anoch, kept by a M'Queen. Our landlord was a sensible fellow ..."

Near this place they had passed a party of soldiers at work on the road and had given them "two shillings to drink." The soldiers accepted the challenge and, says Boswell, "came to our inn, and made merry in the barn. We went and paid them a visit, Dr. Johnson saying, 'Come, let's go and give 'em another shilling a-piece.' We did so; and he was saluted 'MY LORD' by all of them ..." "The poor soldiers got too much liquor," Boswell concluded. "Some of them fought, and left blood upon the spot, and cursed whisky next morning."

Johnson's account reveals the Sage at his usual heights of dissertation:

In the evening the soldiers, whom we had passed on the road, came to spend at our inn the little money that we had given them. They had the true military impatience

of coin in their pockets, and had marched at least six miles to find the first place where liquor could be bought. Having never been before in a place so wild and unfrequented, I was glad of their arrival, because I knew that we had made them friends, and to gain still more of their goodwill, we went to them, where they were carousing in the barn, and added something to our former gift. All that we gave them was not much, but it detained them in the barn, either merry or quarrelling, the whole night, and in the morning they went back to their work, with great indignation at the bad qualities of whisky.

Now it is to be noticed that Johnson himself - who had long spells of abstinence from all alcoholic beverages - did not join in drinking whisky at either the Loch Ness hut or at Anoch. The Doctor only drank it near the end of their tour, or, as he said in his account of the journey: "I never tasted it, except once for experiment at the inn in Inveraray, when I thought it preferable to any English malt brandy. It was strong, but not pungent, and was free from the empyreumatick taste or smell."

That was on the night of Saturday the 23rd October when they arrived at "an excellent inn" at Inveraray. According to Boswell's account, "after supper, Dr. Johnson, whom I had not seen taste any fermented liquor during all our travels, called for a gill of whisky. 'Come (said he), let me know what it is that makes a Scotchman happy!' He drank it all but a drop, which I begged leave to pour into my glass ..."

Intentionally or not, Dr. Johnson had used exactly the correct expression at Inveraray - "Scotchman": he had identified people and drink. For he first encountered it on the journey in a lochside hut a few miles from Inverness where it was already in a bottle; he had met it again as the soldier's drink at a small Highland inn, Anoch in Glenmorison, where the quantity kept was sufficient to keep a party of soldiers up all night. He met it again - apart from Boswell's junketings in Skye and his notes on stills on some of the islands - at "an excellent inn" at Inveraray. But first of all, be it remembered, by Loch Ness as he made his observations on that "very remarkable diffusion of water."

Ross Wilson's Scotch: The Formative Years will be published in July by Constable (75/-).

THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

OCTOBER, 1970 — APRIL, 1971

*Meetings are at 3 p.m. on the third Saturday of the month
at the White Hall Hotel, Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1.*

17th October

The Reverend Canon A. R. WINNETT, B.D., Ph.D.
"GEORGE PSALMANAZAR."

Chairman: The Very Reverend W. R. MATTHEWS, C.H.,
K.C.V.O., D.Lit., D.D., S.T.D., F.R.S.L.

21st November

Professor JOHN L. ABBOTT, M.A., Ph.D., University of
Connecticut.

"DR. JOHNSON AND DR. HAWKESWORTH: A
LITERARY FRIENDSHIP."

Chairman: J. H. LEICESTER, Esq., M.A.

19th December

WREATH-LAYING, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, noon.
INFORMAL LUNCHEON AT THE WHITE HALL
HOTEL, 1 p.m., followed by

The Reverend F. M. HODGESS ROPER.

"GENERAL OGLETHORPE."

Chairman: J. R. G. COMYN, Esq.

16th January

Miss CHRISTINE L. MORRISON, M.A., Oxon.

"JOHNSON'S OXFORD."

Chairman: Dr. RONALD MacKEITH, D.M., F.R.C.P.

20th February

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2 p.m., followed by

Miss ISOBEL GRUNDY, M.A., Oxon.

"A MOON OF LITERATURE: VERSE BY LADY MARY

WORTLEY MONTAGU."

Chairman: E. M. BONNER, Esq.

20th March

Dr. IAN JACK, M.A., D.Phil., Cambridge.

"GRAY IN HIS LETTERS."

Chairman: T. S. BLAKENEY, Esq.

17th April

Mrs. GWEN HAMPSHIRE, B.A., Oxon.

"ELIZABETH CARTER: HER PUBLICATIONS AND

HER FRIENDS."

Chairman: L. RADDON, Esq., LL.B., D.P.A.

BOSWELL'S *life of* JOHNSON



'... the most perfect that can be conceived, and will be more of a Life than any work that has ever yet appeared.' *Boswell*

The Folio edition of the Life has been based on Boswell's first edition which was published in 1791 and for which Boswell started collecting material nearly thirty years earlier. This edition was textually the most accurate; however the text used for the Folio edition has been amended and augmented according to Boswell's *Principal Corrections and Additions*, published in the same year as the second edition (1793). For this reason our text has succeeded in combining the accuracy of the first edition with the fullness of the second. It comprises all the material to which Boswell gave his approval and which Boswell himself saw to press.

This *special publication* of the Folio Society is available exclusively to members. For the Society's 1970 prospectus and full details of membership, please write to T. O'Neill, 6 Stratford Place, London, W1N 0BH, mentioning your membership of the Johnson Society.

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