THE SKEATHAM COTERIE

A Thesis Presented for the
Degree of Master of Arts

by

Jane Edgecomb Bailey, B.S., B.A.

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Approved by:

[Signature]
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INTRODUCTION

I Statement of the Problem

For many years, readers in the period of the last half of the eighteenth century have been accustomed to encounter references to the so-called Streatham Coterie. The appellation has been, to most tyros in the field, a vague and elastic term embracing a few outstanding figures such as Goldsmith, Reynolds, Garrick, Burke, Johnson, and a nebulous group of men and women, for the most part unhonored and unsung.

It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine the identity of the nebulous figures in that group, (2) to discover the relationship in which they stood to their hostess at Streatham, and (3) to unearth such biographical data as are available about them.

II Review of the Literature

A large body of literature has been written upon the life and intimates of Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi during the period in which Dr. Johnson was a permanent resident at Streatham. The references, however, which have been of most value for the purposes of this investigation are: Thraliana, the Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale; the Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay; Hayward's Autobiography Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs Piozzi, and Clifford's H. L. Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale).
Thraliana, without whose invaluable information this study would have been completely fruitless, is composed of two large volumes of material edited from the original Thraliana of six volumes quarto, comprising over 800 folios of MS. (Now in the possession of the Huntington Library, Pasadena, California. Excerpts have been printed in Hayward in 1861, and Hughes in 1916.)

The edited Thraliana, in the words of its editor, is, a pot-pourri of curious bits strung together without a plan. The anecdotes relate indifferently to the dead and the living, the great and the unnamed obscure. They are sometimes culled from books, sometimes from life at second or third hand, and sometimes from her own experience, and are consequently of unequal interest and authenticity.

Mrs. Thrale devoted the first third of her second volume (pp. 158-215, in this edition) to a recapitulation and expansion of the material she had collected about Dr. Johnson. This was the material she later used as a basis for her Anecdotes of Johnson. After the exhaustion of this subject, she returned to her former style and method which she maintained until the exigencies of her life required an outlet for her strong emotions, at which time she reluctantly used her notebooks as a diary. When her personal problems were adequately settled by her marriage to Piozzi, her interests were so diversified that the keeping of Thraliana became somewhat laborious, and she completed the remaining

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1 Katherine C. Balderston, editor, Thraliana, The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi).

2 Ibid., p. XIII et passim.
volume, only from a reluctance to leave an unfinished blank book.

Hayward's *Autobiography Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi* is a two volume set of valuable but illly-arranged material which appeared in 1861. Hayward was the first scholar to make any extensive research into manuscript source-material. He was permitted by Mr. Piozzi's grandson, The Reverend Augustus Salusbury, to quote some passages from *Thraliana*; he had complete access to all the letters and notes saved by Sir James Fellows, in addition to many others written by Mrs. Piozzi to her publishers, etc., all of which he combined haphazardly with Mrs. Piozzi's other writings.

The *D'Arblay Diary*, especially volumes I-III were invaluable to this study for the reason that they expanded and elaborated upon the people, places, conversations, personalities, and idiosyncrasies of those who frequented Streatham during the years from 1777 to 1784.

Clifford's *H. L. Piozzi* is a most comprehensive and carefully documented biography of Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi. Mr. Clifford was fortunate enough to be able to consult, for

3 James L. Clifford, *Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale).*

4 Charlotte Barrett, editor, *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay.*

5 A. Hayward, editor, *Autobiography Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale).*
his volume, 2,500 letters written by Mrs. Piozzi, 2000 letters addressed to her and never before published, the manuscript "Children's Book" kept by her from 1766 to 1778 containing the records of her early friendship with Johnson, and unpublished five-volume literary autobiography compiled by Mrs. Piozzi expressly for her adopted heir; her later "New Common Place Book," seventeen smaller diaries, and a large collection of miscellaneous business papers.

III Value of the Study

It is the writer's earnest hope that this study may prove of some small assistance to the reader of the period in which Dr. Johnson was largely resident at Streatham, by (1) collecting in one place the names of the little known but intimate friends of Streatham; and (2) tracing their history and relationship to Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi through the records of that lady herself.
The Streatham Coterie

Between 1763 and 1783, the influence of Hester Lynch Thrale on the world of letters must have been a source of dismay, puzzled bewilderment, and supercilious envy to those salonieres who maintained the more proper and literal salons of their day. It surely seemed an incredible feat to the true "blues" that a practically unknown brewer's wife from the unfashionable Southwark section was able to establish such a phenomenon as the Streatham Coterie in the comparatively short period of seven years. How was it that this little, unimposing, unknown woman was able to capture the two most coveted authors of the period, Samuel Johnson and Fanny Burney, and establish them in her home for very long periods of time?

The caging of these two lions was indeed a far cry from the early days of Mrs. Thrale's marriage; for in 1763 she writes, in recalling her first few years as a bride:

My mother lived with me & I was content; I rec'd to her in the Morning, played at Back Gammon with her at Noon, & worked Carpets with her in the Evening. Mr. Thrale profess'd his Aversion to a Neighbourhood, in wch my Mother perfectly agreed with him, so we visited nobody; he sometimes brought a Friend from London, and that She had more Wit than to oppose.¹

To this remark, Mrs. Thrale adds a footnote concerning her

¹ Balderston, op. cit., p. 307.
husband's London friends: "Murphy, Bodens, Fitz(p)atrick Peter King, Captn King, Captn Conway were les Amis du Maison I liked none of 'em but Murphy. & my Mother despised them all."2

Mrs. Thrale's "content" at this time could more aptly be called a period of reconnaissante, of settling herself in her new surroundings before making any decided attempt to satisfy those intellectual necessities which her active and pampered literary cultivation and spirited intelligence demanded, and which she felt quite certain her prosaic and apparently disinterested husband would never provide for her.

That Mrs. Thrale's wit and cleverness were not alone in the field of vers de societe and belles lettres is amply borne out by the skill which she must have used in denying the hospitality of her drawing room to those former friends of her husband's salad days whom her mother "had despised" but "had more Wit than to oppose." We have Clifford's word for it that:

In 1763 the only company who found their way to Southwark were Thrale's family and bachelor friends. Except for Murphy, the witty Irishman, they did not meet with Mrs. Thrale's approval. Neither the facetious George Bodens nor the notorious Simon Luttrell (nor the sickly Dr. Faitz-patrick) proved congenial or attractive.3

2 Loc. cit.

3 James L. Clifford, Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale), p. 53.
It is then, to Mrs. Thrale's eternal credit that only some seven years later, the evidence of the change in the type of society entertained at Streatham is so conclusive and so complete, that Clifford is again able to state categorically:

By 1770 the change in the character of guests entertained in the Thrale home was almost complete. The old rakish companions of Thrale's bachelor days had disappeared, and now an increasing number of gifted and famous members of London's literary and artistic set could be counted among their friends. Johnson, to be sure, was the bait which drew across the river to Southwark and out to Streatham the best-known painter of his time, Sir Joshua Reynolds; the greatest actor, David Garrick; the most versatile writer, Oliver Goldsmith; and the most powerful force of the political opposition, Edmund Burke. For long periods of time these and others of Johnson's circle could find him only at the house of the Thrales, and, if they wished to keep up their intimacy, were literally forced to accept the invitations of the ambitious member of Parliament and his wife.4

Johnson, to be sure, was the "bait which drew across the river to Southwark" some of the most eminent men of the day; but in considering the successful deep-sea fishing which this vivacious little literary dilettante accomplished, sight must not be lost of her profound knowledge of the type of bait to use in attracting her quarry to her line, and her undoubted skill in gaffing the huge creatures so as to make the iron hook in their side a gentle and pleasurable experience.

The first great fish that she landed was, of course, the Great Cham of Literature, and Thraliana tells us about

4 Ibid., p. 84.
it in detail:

It was on the second Thursday of the Month of January 1765, that I first saw Mr Johnson in a Room; Murphy whose Intimacy with Mr Thrale had been of many Years standing, was one day dining with us at our house in Southwark; and was zealous that we should be acquainted with Johnson, of whose Moral and Literary Character he spoke in the most exalted Terms; and so whetted our desire of seeing him soon, that we were only disputing how he should be invited, when he should be invited, and what should be the pretense. at last it was resolved that one Woodhouse a shoemaker who had written some Verses, and had been asked to some Tables, should likewise be asked to ours, and made a Temptation to Mr Johnson to meet him; accordingly he came, and Mr Murphy at four o'clock brought Mr Johnson to dinner-We liked each other so well that the next Thursday was appointed for the same company to meet-exclusive of the Shoemaker, and since then Johnson has remained till this Day, our constant Acquaintance, Visitor, Companion and Friend.5

The beginning of the Streatham Coterie had been made. The winning and feminine Mrs. Thrale had anchored to her side, first, the erstwhile companion of her husband's play-boy days whose serious parts she had discovered early in their acquaintance. She was quick to realize that he was a very popular dramatist, a more than better classical scholar, a witty and amusing ornament to her drawing rooms, and best of all—the intimate friend and companion of many of the eminent men of the day. Like a well-trained hunting dog, he had secured for his mistress a fine trophy of the field in the shape of Samuel Johnson, and from these two were to come many.

The establishment of the great Doctor in residence

5 Balderston, op. cit., p. 159.
at Streatham put an end to Mrs. Thrale's complete absorption in "reading in the Morning, Back Gammon at Noon, and Working Carpets in the Evening." She no longer was forced to live, as Johnson once quite frankly told her "like a kept mistress, shut from the world, its pleasures, or its cares" while her husband found ample amusement and entertainment in London. More and more such men as were the good friends of Johnson were amenable to the invitations of the Thrales, since they did everything in their power to alleviate the rigors of the journey out from London, and their guests were quite sure of beautiful surroundings, splendid food, and stimulating conversation with men of their intellectual and social equal. The Thrales cared little for the purely rich or noble; in one aspect at least, they were in accord, and that was to attract to their home and their table the witty men, the learned men, and the well-informed men of the day. And men their guests usually were, for it was to be many years before the Mistress of Streatham cared greatly about drawing to her the outstanding members of her own sex; in the early years as the presiding genius of her drawing room, she was content to be the one feminine lodestar in a constellation of brilliant men, and, it is interesting to note, men who had risen to eminence through their intellectual powers and not

6 A. Hayward, Autobiography Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale), I, 257.
through birth or wealth. With them all, whether it was the
difficult excitable Baretti, or the pontifical and equally
difficult Johnson, the witty vivacious hostess played a
commanding role, even to the point of valiantly standing
her ground in differences of opinion with the profound
assertions of her scholarly visitors.

The ascertainment of the exact components of the
Streatham Coterie is a somewhat anomalous task since nowhere
in Thraliana, or the D'Arblay Diaries, or, to the best of my
knowledge, in any of the familiar writings of the period, is
an exact list of this group of eminent people put down. The
group of portraits which were painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds
to hang in the library at Streatham is, one would think, a
definite statement of their membership in this select group;
but even this evidence is made somewhat doubtful when one
reads such statements concerning them as the following:
"Of Sir Robert Chamber's peculiarities I know little,
Suffice it that he is esteem'd a Man who made Virtue
amiable: His Person—& perhaps his Mind resembled Dr.
Burneys."7 Of Garrick and Goldsmith whose portraits Mr.
Thrale also commissioned for his library, Mrs. Thrale says:
"With Garrick I had no close Acquaintance, and could there-
fore give nothing but in general:—Goldsmith had likewise
forestalled everything one could have said I suppose; had I

7 Balderston, op. cit., p. 473.
been intimate with him, which I never was." Of Reynolds himself, she again states: "Sir Joshua is.... an extremely agreeable Acquaintance, & one does not want every body to be a Friend or an Admirer." She then concludes these ambiguous statements with an even more upsetting remark, for she adds:

So here are all our Friends described—without prejudice or partiality; and who will say that any of them are such Characters as one would wish to be oneself? but let any other Set be produced, & the manifest Superiority of ours will speedily be acknowledged. I have not gloss'd nor spar'd my own Portrait—it is as like as any of them.

What, at first glance, might be considered a more reliable clue to the coterie may be found under the date of July, 1778, when Mrs. Thrale, as a momentary amusement, set down in Thraliana a rating sheet of various items, and proceeded to classify her friends according to a fixed scale. At the conclusion of this somewhat obnoxious pastime, she girlishly states: "I have run this foolish Amusement already out of Breath before half my Acquaintance are classed," and the careful student of Thraliana can soon discover that many of the names listed on this sheet were

8 Ibid., p. 478
9 Ibid., p. 382.
10 Ibid., p. 477.
11 Ibid., p. 331.
never entertained at Streatham at all, and many more but infrequently. Are these people then acquaintances as she herself names them, or are they members of the Streatham Coterie? Are the Streatham library portraits intimate friends of the house, or merely eminent men fitted by their prominence to hang at Streatham?

The writer of this study found herself disinclined, after a careful perusal of the day-by-day entries in Thraliana and the D'Arblay Diaries, to place much credence in the rating list and the portraits per se. Instead of which, she decided to resolve her problem by tracing down through Thraliana, the D'Arblay Diaries, and other familiar writings of the day, those persons whose relationship to the Thrales' life was of such a caliber as to fulfill the definition of a member of a coterie,—one of a "circle of familiar friends."

In pursuit of this object, the Thrales' friends were followed through the various vicissitudes of Mrs. Thrale's life, compared for frequency and duration of their visits, analyzed for the type and intimacy of her records concerning them in such references as Thraliana, Mrs. Thrale's Autobiography, and Letters, and the results, when possible, compared and checked with the comments of Madame D'Arblay.

The results of the study seem to prove that the Streatham Coterie was a group of more or less eminent people who gravitated to the spacious and comfortable home of the Thrales for a number of different reasons. The
truly great and prominent men such as Reynolds, Garrick, Burke, and Goldsmith, visited there, when they did visit, to converse with Johnson, "for, if they wished to keep up their intimacy, they were literally forced to accept the invitations" of the Thrales. Their visits were not frequent or familiar, in the full meaning of the phrase.

Vulliamy says:

Goldsmith, who was a Streatham visitor, died in 1774. Burke preferred to meet the Johnsonian group in London, but he went to Streatham occasionally; ....Reynolds was probably at Streatham more often than Burke, ....Garrick, who died in 1779, was a rare visitor, though he is to be reckoned as one of the Streatham circle. He was... the intimate friend of Johnson and Murphy.12

The Streatham Coterie, if we disregard the occasional visits of Reynolds, Burke, Goldsmith, and Garrick, was composed, then, of a group of people whose friendship was based on early and prolonged intimacy with the Thrales, or later congeniality. Some of them were of little note among the intelligentsia; some of them were of exceeding prominence in the various fields such as music, drama, writing, or the Church; some of them were simply old family connections—dull and comfortable, and always there in time of trouble.

The Streatham Coterie—that "circle of intimate friends," in this writer's opinion, and on the bases of the stated criteria, was composed of:

12 C. E. Vulliamy, Mrs. Thrale of Streatham, p. 163.
Giuseppe Marc Antonio Baretti
Dr. Charles Burney
Frances (Fanny) Burney
Jeremiah Crutchley
Sir Philip Jennings Clerke
Mr. and Mrs. Corbet D'Avenant (later Sir Corbet Corbet and
Lady Corbet
John Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough
Dr. Michael Lort
William Seward
Sophy Streatfeild
Arthur Murphy
Margaret Owen
Sir William Weller Pepys
and of course, first and foremost, Samuel Johnson, Ll.D.
Lexicographer, writer, critic, moralist, and wit.

These guests at Streatham were not always a brilliant
assemblage, and although it was the pleasant custom of many
of those received in that house as well as many who were
not, to speak of Mrs. Thrale as a Blue-stocking, we must
look upon this term applied to Mrs. Thrale as of dubious
exactness. To most of the recognized "blues," Mrs. Thrale
"was known only by name; her place in society, as well as
her undesirable vivacity and awkward manners, kept her
permanently outside the fashionable literary clique."13

13 Ibid., p. 164.
Like the French hostesses, the London salonierses "kept up in their assemblies a tone that was at once aristocratic and literary; they made conversation the chief entertainment of the drawing room, and the patronage of letters their most elegant aim. Each of them attached to herself...some writer, who frequently repaid her friendship with tributes in verse." 14

Mrs. Thrale, however, who was doing much the same thing at Streatham as Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Montagu, Miss Carter, and Hannah More in London, "was always more or less of an outsider" because she maintained her own coterie. 15 It did not mix to any appreciable degree with the Court Circle at St. James's or Horace Walpole's more exclusive circle at Strawberry. 16 It is undeniable, furthermore, that "Mrs. Thrale...was never unreservedly accepted into the inner circle of the Blue-stockings. It seems probable that she never even met Mrs. Delane; not did she ever become intimate with Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Chapone, or Miss Carter." 17


15 Ibid., p. 124.

16 A. H. Broadley, Doctor Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, p. 113.

In spite of such social independence, however,

Professor Tinker asserts:

Alone among the literary ladies of the age, Mrs. Thrale has retained the fascination which she exercised in her own time....She might consistently have aspired to the title, "Queen of the Blue-stockings," but she did not even care whether she was reckoned one of them, contenting herself with outwitting them at every point. It was she, for example, who captured the two authors most coveted by the mistresses of the salons, Johnson and Miss Burney, and "planted" them in her house...The nearest approach to the true salon that we find in the eighteenth century in England is the dining-room at Streatham; the spectacle of Johnson there reading aloud from the proof-sheets of the Lives of the Poets is in exact accord with the best traditions of the salon...It was she who attempted to direct the genius of Fanny Burney towards the theatre, prevailing upon her to write a comedy...and in view of the influence which Mrs. Thrale could bring to bear in the theatrical world through Murphy and others, it is difficult to see why her advice to the young writer was not sound...Her innate brightness enabled her,..."to romp with learning and to play blind man's buff with the sages." In the somewhat stifling atmosphere of salons such a personality is of the very highest worth.18

How amazed the salonieres would have been to hear the "flasher"19 referred to as "The nearest approach to the true salon...in the eighteenth century in England."20

18 Tinker, op. cit. p. 164-5.
19 Balderston, op. cit., p. 375.
20 Tinker, loc. cit.
Arthur Murphy

Arthur Murphy might, in all reasonableness, be called the beginning of the Streatham Coterie, since he was the first visitor to the Thrale household who met with its mistress's unequivocal approval. Indeed, he must have been a very welcome addition to the dull life which the gay and gregarious Mrs. Thrale had so recently had thrust upon her. She writes, in referring to her early married days:

Mr. Thrale profess'd his Aversion to a Neighbourhood, in which my Mother perfectly agreed with him, so we visited nobody; he sometimes brought a Friend from London, and that She had more Wit than to oppose, tho' She did not encourage it. (Murphy, Bodens, Fitzpatrick Peter King Capt'n Conway were les Amis du Maison. I liked none of 'em but Murphy. & my Mother despised them all.) His Sisters each came once in a formal way, my Mother charged me not to be free or intimate with 'em, & none of them pleased me enough to make me wish to break her Injunction. Meantime my Husband went every day to London & returned wither to dinner or Tea, said he always found two agreeable Women ready to receive him, and thus we lived on Terms of great Civility & Politeness, if not of strong Alliance and Connection.

Murphy, then, was all she was able to salvage from her husband's more than gay bachelor days, but he was an excellent choice, for he, in turn, through his introduction of one great man to Streatham, was to bring about that famous group of people who have made the Thrales immortal.

Murphy, himself, was the impecunious son of a Dublin merchant, Richard Murphy, and his wife, Jane French.

1 Balderston, op. cit., p. 307.
He was educated at St. Omer's College in France, but moved permanently to London at the completion of his studies.

His early years in London were spent in a hodgepodge of hack scribbling, clerical work, and a series of the more literary coffee houses where he became a friend of Samuel Foote. By Foote's advice, he finally completely relinquished his business career, and entered upon the business of publishing "The Gray's Inn Journal" a weekly periodical on the order of the "Rambler," which venture lasted some two years. His heart, however, was set upon the stage; so, under the auspices of Garrick, who had taken an interest in him, he embarked upon a brief, but fairly successful career as an actor. His earliest appearance was in the role of Othello, at Covent Garden Theater in 1754. Two year's later, he produced the first of his own plays, The Apprentice, which was followed by The Spouter, The Upholsterer, The Orphan of China, and four or five others of similar mediocrity. He did obtain some permanent stature as a comedy writer with The Way to Keep Him which was produced in 1760 with a cast containing the celebrated stars, Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, and Kitty Clive.

The Dictionary of National Biography classifies his plays as "among the worst that have obtained any reputation," but his contemporary, Samuel Johnson, said of him, "I don't know that Arthur can be classed with the very first dramatick writers; yet at present I doubt much whether we
have anything superior to Arthur.*2 His other publications were a *Life of Garrick*, an *Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson*, and sundry translations from the classics.

After achieving success in the theater, Murphy decided to enter the legal profession, but was denied admission to the Inner Temple because of his connection with the stage. Through Lord Mansfield's influence, however, he finally gained entrance to Lincoln's Inn, and eventually was admitted to the bar, where he remained in active practice until 1788.

In 1754, Murphy became acquainted with Johnson who instantly took so great a liking to the witty and mercurial Irishman that he soon was referring to him as "Dear Mur". *Thralesiana* relates the amusing incident of Johnson's and Murphy's first meeting:

The way Johnson & Murphy got acquainted was an odd one; Mr Murphy was engaged in a Periodical Paper called I think the Grays Inn Journal, but he was in the Country with his Friend Foote & said he must go to Town to publish his Sheet for the Day; hang it says Foote can't your do it here & I'll send a Man & horse-'tis but ten Miles-up to the printer; This was settled & Murphy impatient to join the Company & unwilling to pump his own Brains just then snatched up a French Journal that he saw lying about, translated a Story which he liked in it & sent it to press. When he came to Town two days after he soon found what he had done; that the Story was a Rambler written by Johnson, & translated into French; and that he had been doing it back again; he flew to Johnson's Lodging, caught him making of Aether, told him the Truth and commenced an Acquaintance, which has lasted with mutual Esteem I suppose near twenty Years.3

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Previous to the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, Murphy and the brewer's heir had been inseparable companions. Murphy knew, only too well, all the amusing places in London, and, since Thrale had ample means, the two men and their equally rakish companions led a very gay bachelor existence. They played fantastic jokes on the famous Gunning sisters, and were habitues of all the fashionable sporting resorts and gambling rooms of the day.

Murphy, the gay, the witty, the worldly, and the agreeable, was then a most acceptable house and dinner guest, and Mrs. Thrale found him to be:

a mighty pleasing Man upon the whole; so entertaining, so unassuming, so unaffected, so friendly in his manner & address; so willing to amuse you, to divert your company, to inform, to soothe; yet no buffoonery, no coarseness, no meanness, but a behavior perfectly decorous; and a conversation so happily made up of narration & native good sense, of fact & sentiment, that it is impossible to imagine a more agreeable man. Is your table filled with people of high rank & accomplishments? nobody outshines Murphy, yet nobody is eclipsed by him; every one goes away in the same mind concerning him. have you a set of low fellows, burgesses of a borough or freeholders of a county? Murphy sets them on a continual roar, & seems pleased with them, while they appear not to be disappointed; he loves a tête à tête, he wants nobody to brill before: He'll lay out all his talents for your amusements, or if you are not in the humour to be amused, will talk to you of your children, your estate or your improvements. All this without the least spark of regard for you or the least desire of ever seeing you more till some chance brings you once more together. Mr. Murphy is a mere man of the town, without one moment's thought of anybody but himself; he is a man you must like, but cannot love; as there is no foundation either of religion, morality or friendship—his motto should be—

Tout m'amuse, et rien m'attache.

4 Ibid., p. 151.
It is no wonder, then, that this man whom Burney described as "tall and well made, with a very gentleman-like appearance, and a quietness of manner upon his first address that...is very pleasing," should be greeted upon his arrival at Streatham by the usually dour and reserved Thrale with cries of "good fellow!" instead of the customary "scoundrel," and "rascal." This was the one man about whom Mrs. Thrale could say: "my Master really loves him at his heart," and who caused the little Burney to write, "I question if Mr. Thrale loves any man so well." How could anyone help loving a man who "was the life of the party;...was in good spirits, and extremely entertaining; and told a million of stories, admirably well?"

Welcome indeed, was Arthur Murphy at Streatham, and so would have been almost any friend whom he chose to present there under his recommendation. Johnson, whom he did present, after having first titillated the interest of his hosts, was made so very welcome that he remained on a permanent status for many years, and thus was begun the memorable Streatham Coterie. Thraliana describes this historic meeting in detail:

It was on the second Thursday of the Month of January 1765 that I first saw Mr. Johnson in a Room: Murphy whose Intimacy with Mr. Thrale had been of many Years

6 Ibid., I, 218.
7 Balderston, op. cit., p. 155.
8 Barrett, op. cit., I, 218.
standing, was one day dining with us at our house in Southwark; and was zealous that we should be acquainted with Johnson, of whose Moral and Literary Character he spoke in the most exalted Terms; and so whetted our desire of seeing him soon, that we were only disputing how he should be invited, when he should be invited and what should be the pretence. At last it was resolved that one Woodhouse a Shoemaker who had written some Verses, and been asked to some tables, should likewise be asked to ours, and made a Temptation to Mr. Johnson to meet him; accordingly he came, and Mr. Murphy at four o'clock brought Mr. Johnson to dinner.--We liked each other so well that the next Thursday was appointed for the same Company to meet--exclusive of the Shoemaker, and since then Johnson has remained till this Day our constant Acquaintance, Visitor, Companion and Friend. 9

Murphy was not only Mr. Thrale's best-loved friend, but he was also high in the affections of Mrs. Thrale, and was to prove one of the few members of the early coterie who remained faithfully by her side during all the ups and downs of her tumultuous life. In 1779, she listed the friends of her heart as being, "Johnson who is next to my own immediate Family in my favour, then Mr. Scrase whom I do love & honour with true and affectionate Esteem, then Burney Murphy & Seward the rest are at an immeasurable Distance as to real kindness, however I may like their Company." 10 Even as greatly as she came to regard Fanny Burney, she told her "in a merry way, that though she wished" her "to excel Cumberland and all other dramatick writers, yet she would not wish" her "better than her old

9 Balderston, op. cit., p. 159.
10 Ibid., p. 372.
friend Murphy.*11 Her only complaint about her good friend was the infrequency of his visits, which, though she regretted it, did not in any way affect the warmth of her friendship. In 1777 she complains to Thraliana:

Murphy has now been with us two Days together; we have not seen him these fifteen Months, & once he is gone; we shall not perhaps see him again for fifteen more; yet he is so kind, so agreeable so caressant as the French expressively say, that one cannot without some Effort recollect that he does not care a Rush for one; indeed he is now only distrest to get the Cottage at our Kitchen Garden Gate, to build a house for himself upon, just in our neighborhood he loves us so—a Scoundrel as Mr Thrale says.12

Even on the sad occasion of Mr. Thrale's death, the seemingly selfish Murphy made no effort to serve the part of friendship, and Mrs. Thrale again writes in her Diary, *He did not come to Streatham for seven months after Thrale's death in 1781, and excused himself by writing, on Nov. 6, 'I wished to be made by Time a Little callous, before I could think of going to Streatham.'*13

It was probably during such a period of neglect that Mrs. Thrale allowed her natural pique to induce her to write one of the few criticisms of her long-time friend which she ever put down in Thraliana:

Foote has the same odd Predomination over the Mind of Mr Murphy, who never speaks I think but a Story of Foote bursts out: what Foote said, or did, or thought, is always upper most in that man's Mouth—I suppose in his Soul too. Oh says Seward how

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11 Barrett, op. cit., I, 190.
12 Balderston, op. cit., p. 155.
13 Ibid., p. 155.
foot-sore we all are of Murphy's Conversation. Such constant recurrence to a favourite Character is call'd Love when the People are of different Sexes, & I wonder not at a Person being seized with admiration of Excellence in any way; I only wonder at their steadiness in persisting to play with the same Rattle for ever so; I feel distractedly fond of Garrick today, and Piozzi tomorrow, & so on; but when I perceive myself giving to any Man or Woman, or any Thing, more of my Thoughts than somewhat above a reasonable share, for there is no need to be exact—indeed such exactness is hateful—I begin to be frightened, & cut a new Channel for Imagination to frisk in. 'Tis a certain Sign of a Mind nearly morbid, when one Idea so prevails over the rest that it can neither be changed nor discarded; & 'tis as foolish, tho' not as wicked, to run Mad for Friendship as for Love.14

Earlier in their relationship, Mrs. Thrale had felt that Murphy merely tolerated her, for she wrote:

Murphy did not use I think to have a good Opinion of me, but he seems to have changed his Mind this Christmas, and to believe better of me, I am glad on't to be sure, the Suffrage of such a Man is well worth having. He sees Thrale's love of the fair SS. & I suppose approved my silent and patient endurance of what I could not prevent by more rough & sincere Behaviour. Men always admire a Woman who tho' jealous does not rave about it—and what she'd one rave for! would raving do anything but drive Mr Thrale quite away from me? No to be sure it would not, I could rave else willingly enough.15

Murphy's "suffrage" was to prove "well worth having" for he remained a true and loyal friend during the heart-breaking period before the Piozzi's marriage and during their years abroad. When, during that period, Mrs. Piozzi was planning her Johnson book, she was able to call upon

14 Ibid., p. 484.
15 Ibid., p. 357.
Murphy for help, and record in Thraliana:

Murphy has sent me his Anecdotes of Doctor Johnson—they are at least done very genteely, and the kind word on Mr Thrale called up Tears to My Eyes—It was pretty of Murphy to bring it in so, & very grateful & goodnatured; the Praise however is grossly injudicious—Mr Thrale was a particularly reserved and guarded Mind, nothing less than ingenuous. 16

Somewhat later on, Murphy again proved his friendship when he made the arrangements for Mrs. Piozzi’s *British Synonymes*. She records: “Mr. Murphy sold them for me—that is he suggested the price, & drew up the Agreement:—Murphy is very good, and comes about us very kindly.” 17

After the Piozzi’s return from the continent, Mrs. Piozzi was especially grateful to Murphy; for he “alone of all my old Acquaintance have I to depend upon—and He is a Host. his Talk is still more fascinating than ever to me, who love as well as himself to recollect past Images, & recall old Incidents or Axioms, or Tales of other Times as Ossian calls them. but I leave him happier than he used to be.” 18

Gradually, however, Mrs. Piozzi was moulding a new life for herself and her husband. She was vastly interested in music and all that pertained to it; there were new friendships to be cemented, and most of all, the Piozzis were absorbed in their new home, Brynbella. One of the joys of the early months at Brynbella was the close

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proximity of Cecelia and her new husband, John Meridith Mostyn. In the early days of this marriage, Mrs. Piozzi had been more than pleased with her daughter's handsome young husband. Presently, however, strange rumors began to get about concerning Mostyn's treatment of his bride. All that the Piozzi's knew definitely about the situation was that Mostyn refused to make his promised marriage-settlement upon his wife. Since Cecelia was due soon to come of age, Mrs. Piozzi felt it more than expedient to insure a definite settlement by Mostyn upon her daughter before Cecelia's fortune fell into her husband's hands. In an effort to bring matters to a head and force Mostyn into some action, Piozzi demanded an accounting from Cator, the executor of the Thrale estate, which action resulted only in the forced joining of forces of Mostyn, Cator, and the other Thrale girls, who unaccountably opposed their mother. Both Mrs. Piozzi and Queeney consulted Murphy on the case, and although he engaged himself in their behalf in a long series of legal involvements, the tangle dragged on interminably.

Just at this time, Murphy's inexplicable actions concerning the Prince of Wales caused a serious breach between him and Mrs. Piozzi. She confides to Thraliana:

Mr. Murphy plagued me with calling ye Prince of Wales & actually inviting him what Madness! to Streatham park- I am ashamed of Mr. Murphy; did he mean to get something for himself I wonder-by exposing his friend's Children so? The Prince wanted an Opportunity with y^6 young Thrales no doubt, but Murphy should have known better. I kept the Prince away however, no Prince shall court my Daughters in my
House certainly: but I was forced to be quite rude to our fine Heir Apparent—No Matter. When Hon’T is in question One must not stand upon Ceremony. Murphy has hated Me ever since, & I have loved him less; What an old Goose he must be—or an old-something worse than Goose. Did he mean to sell the Girls? What did he mean? I am afraid to think. He is grown poor no doubt, but was this his Way of mending his Fortune? Shame! Shame! 19

Murphy continued his efforts to help the Piozzis in their action against Mostyn, however, until Mrs. Piozzi accused him of neglecting his business and giving them wrong advice. (On November 20, he had written her (Ry. Eng. MS. 578) that Cator had actually produced hers and Mr. Piozzi's letters in which they agreed to the fixed sum of £150 a year for Cecelia before she came of age and £200 after, which weakened their suit against Mostyn.) This letter, in conjunction with her annoyance over the Prince of Wales episode, seems to have piqued Mrs. Piozzi, and her friendship for Murphy was cut off until 1801. In 1803 she notes: "Mr. Murphy has written to me again & we renew our Good Will again. Was mine towards him ever lost?—Oh No! No! little worth must it have been sure to break up an old Friendship for my fine young Daughters, who care nothing for either of us." 20

Though amicable relations had once more been established, the Piozzis and Murphy saw each other only infrequently. In January of 1788, Mrs. Piozzi wrote in

19 Ibid., p. 973.

20 Ibid., p. 1034.
Thraliana, "Murphy is grown monstrous deaf I perceive, otherwise not very bad." 21 Then, not again till 1805 is anything of importance recorded in Thraliana concerning Murphy. At that time, she wrote:

The Death of dear Murphy (on June 18, at his apartments in Brompton Row, Knightsbridge.) opens this Page: Oh Melancholy! & by me heart-felt Occurrence, so pass the Companions of One's Youth away! so passes Youth itself, & Maturity, and ev'ry thing—He was not quite as old as M'F Thrale I find—i.e. if M'F Thrale knew his own Age; of which there are Reasons for doubting—but of his Contemporary gay Fellows, & Play Fellows, none seem to be left now except little Sir George Colebrooke....& What will they say of poor Att'y—as M'F Thrale used to call him—I wonder. If ill, the Survivors are ungenerous; for he was no ill Speaker of those who with himself ran for the Prize of Public Favour, light-hearted & sweet temper'd, with true Value for Virtue; & of no unorthodox Religious Opinions, liv'd Murphy in a Circle the Contemplation of which confirmed Him in a low opinion of Mankind's Morality—but if he found few good, I really think it was his Point to make no one worse. All His Dramas & Papers have what he consider'd as a proper Tendency, and to read or see them can do harm to no one.

Poor Fellow! I am very Sorry for his Death. Where will they bury him? among the Catholics? he never frmally adjured that his original Sect of Xtion. Farewell old Friend Iamque Vale! Sit tibi Terra levis! He does lye by his Mother's Side at Hammersmith. 22

Through all the vicissitudes of her life, Mrs. Thrale had managed to retain possession of Murphy's portrait alone, from that collection which had once adorned the beautiful library at Streatham. Even on her last peregrination to

21 Ibid., p. 706.
22 Ibid., P. 1066.
Bath, from which she never returned, she arranged to have with her, the portrait of the man about whom she had once written:

A Manner so studied, so vacant a Face
These Features the Mind of our Murphy disgrace;
A Mind unaffected; soft, artless and true,
A Mind which though ductile—has Dignity too:
Where Virtues ill-sorted are huddled in heaps,
Humanity triumphs, and Piety sleeps;
A Mind in which Mirth can with Merit reside,
And Learning turns Frolic with Humour his Guide:
While Wit, Follies, Faults, its Fertility prove
Till the Faults we grow fond of, the Follies we love,
And corrupted at length by the sweet Conversation,
Protest there's no honesty left in the Nation.
An African Landscape thus breaks on our Sight,
Where Confusion and Wildness increase the Delight;
Till in wanton Luxuriance indulging our Eye,
We faint in the forcible Fragrance, and die.23

In May 1816, she wrote to her good friend, Sir James Fellowes:

Did I tell you I had saved Murphy from the general wreck? and that Mr. Watson Taylor wrote after me to beg him for 157½ 10 s.; but I am no longer poor, and when I was, there ought surely to be some difference made between fidelity and unkindness. When B----'s [Burney's] were treacherous and Baretti boisterous against poor unoffending H.L.P., dear Murphy was faithful found, among the faithless only he:

He, like his muse, no mean retiring made,
But follow'd faithful to the silent shade.

Equally attached to both my husbands, he lived with us till he could in a manner live no longer; and his portrait is now on the easel, with that of Mr. Thrale, coming to Bath; my mother, whom both of them adored, keeping them company.24

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23 Ibid., p. 472.

24 Hayward, op. cit., II, 163.
Jeremiah Crutchley

The second "coterian" in point of seniority was Jeremiah Crutchley, a man whose occupation was never listed in either Thraliana or the Burney Diary. He lived in Sunninghill Park in Berkshire, and was M. P. for Horsham, Sussex. Mrs. Thrale used to speak of him as a "young man of large fortune," and "a ward of Mr. Thrale."¹ Her first remark concerning him, in her Thraliana, is the mention of receiving from him a "large Pike" which "weighed 30 lb 3 ounces, and measured in Length three Feet seven Inches and a half,"² which he had sent to her from Sunninghill Park. He occupies little space in her jottings after this time, however, until the development of affairs connected with Mr. Thrale's death; although we know from the Burney Diary that Crutchley was a frequent guest in the Thrale household. Mrs. Thrale describes him as being:

A mighty particular Character:......strangely mixed up of Meanness and Magnificence-liberal & splendid in large Sums & on serious Occasions; narrow and confined in the common Occurrences of Life; warm and generous in some of his Notions, frigid & suspicious however for 18 hours at least out of the 24. likely to be duped, though always suspecting fraud; and easily disappointed in realities, though seldom flattered by Fancy. He is supposed by those that knew his Mother & her Connections, to be M. Thrale's natural Son, & in many Things he resembles him, but not in Person; as he is both ugly & awkward. M. Thrale certainly believed he was his Son, & once told me as much, when Sophy Streatfeild's affair was in question; but nobody

¹ Barrett, op. cit., I, 133.
² Balderston, op. cit., p. 67.
could persuade him to court the S.S. 3

Mrs. Thrale seems strangely complacent about this family skeleton which she made no special effort to keep decently interred in the closet; however, there is no confirmation of it except the recognized propensities of her husband for extra-marital activities, and the fact that the ages of the two men would permit the situation.

She was mildly concerned, on the other hand, about Crutchley's increasing interest in Queeney inasmuch as there was the strong possibility of their being children of the same father. In September of 1781, for the first time, she recognizes the possibilities and writes in her comment book:

I begin to wish in good earnest that Miss Burney should make Impression on Mr. Crutchley; I think She honestly loves the Man, who in his Turn appears to be in Love with some one else--Hester I fear! Oh that would indeed be unlucky!

People have said so a long while, but I never thought it till now! Young Men & Women will always be serving one so to be sure, if they live at all together: but I depended on Burney keeping him steady to herself. 4

And Burney did keep him "steady to herself" at least in the form of conversation, for her Diary records no other series of conversations as complete as those of Crutchley and herself. In the main, the conversations deal with the utmost trivia, and in truth could be described as a peculiar and laborious form of flirtation. Her first prolonged

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3 Ibid., p. 497.

4 Ibid., p. 505.
contact with him came in May of 1781, a short time after
the death of Mr. Thrale for whom he was acting as Executor.
During this particular period, he was a great deal at
Streatham, for Mrs. Thrale writes of him that month:

Mr. Crutchley lives now a great deal with me; the
Business of Executor to Mr. Thrale's will, makes
much of his Attendance necessary; and it begins
to have its full Effect in seducing and attaching
him to the house: Miss Burney's being always
about me is probably another Reason for his close
Attendance, & I believe it is so what better could
befall Miss Burney? or indeed what better could
befall him, than to obtain a Woman of Honour; &
Character, & Reputation for superior Understanding.
I would be glad however that he fell honestly in
Love with her; & was not trapp'd into Marriage
poor Fellow: he is no Match for the Arts of a
Novel-writer.5

He was as events turned out, not only a "match for
a Novel-writer" but also more than a match for his hostess
in the conduct of her late husband's affairs. At this
particular time, however, he was being very amenable and
agreeable, for Fanny describes him as behaving to Mrs.
Thrale as "a darling son or only brother," who could not
possibly be more truly devoted to her."6 She was, in fact,
so impressed that she was compelled to revise her former
indifference to him to the point where she now felt him to
be a very rare fellow. She says: "On the contrary, I both
respect and esteem him very highly; for his whole conduct
manifests so much goodness of heart and excellence of prin-
ciple, that he is fairly un homme comme il y en a peu;"7

5 Ibid., p. 496.
6 Barrett, op. cit., I, 475.
7 Ibid., I, 476.
Unfortunately, this happy rapport was to be of very short duration, for Sir Philip Clerke chose to make some jesting reference to a future match between Fanny and Crutchley, and Crutchley responded "in a voice of pride and pique that spoke him mortally angry—'Thank him! Thank him!" Thereupon, the sensitive Burney retreated into a sullen reserve which lasted for some ten pages of her diary and until she was finally frightened out of it by a continuous barrage of questions and threats and implorings from the bewildered Crutchley who never did discover the nature of his offense. He did solidify his position though, for his impassioned efforts to discover the cause of her displeasure and the remedy for it impressed her so much that she wrote at the conclusion of this affair: "I see...that Mr. Crutchley, though of a cold and proud disposition, is generous, amiable, and delicate, and, when not touched upon the tender string of gallantry, concerning which he piques himself upon invariable hardness and immovability, his sentiments are not merely just, but refined."

Crutchley had no particular talents with which to make himself outstanding among his chosen friends, therefore, judging from the other entries in the Diary, he concluded

8 Ibid., I, 477.
9 Ibid., I, 486.
that he would be remarkable for eccentricity, world-weariness, modishness to the point of utter desperation, and the pose of a man bowed under the heart-breaking burden of great and secret tragedies in his life. He, like his friend Seward, knew well that an infallible method of securing the interest of any sweet young woman was to appear in the role of a sorrow-ravaged and defeated man of the world. Therefore, he cornered Fanny one day, grew "very unexpectedly grave and communicative," and told her, in what, no doubt, were very lugubrious tones, "that he had had two calamities as heavy and as bitter as anybody could have or could feel. 10 One is led to believe that these experiences had so deprived him of the joy of life that he would just as soon spend the rest of his days "shut up in the Exchequer," and there was "nothing but prejudice in preferring any other mode of life, since every mode was, in fact, alike. 11 Life was bad enough for him, but as for people- "I protest I would not spend an hour...with anybody I did not like to save me from ruin,....I cannot even make common visits to people unless I like them. But the few I do like, perhaps nobody ever liked equally. I have, indeed, but one wish or thought about them; and that is, to be with them not only every day, but every hour." 12 Even these

10 Ibid., II, 6.
11 Ibid., II, 4.
12 Ibid., II, 4.
dearly beloved friends mattered little, in the final analysis; so little that he could not forget his ennui long enough to take care of his health since, "it was of small matter whether he lived or died, as life was of no value to him, nor had he any enjoyment of it."\textsuperscript{13}

No wonder the little Burney was entranced; and no wonder that she concluded in her diary:

Poor Mr. Crutchley! I begin to believe his heart much less stubborn than he is willing to have it thought; and I do now really but little doubt either that some former love sits heavy upon it, or that he is at this moment suffering the affliction of a present and hopeless one: if the latter is the case, Miss——, I am next to certain, is the object. I can possibly, however, be mistaken in both conjectures, for he is too unlike other people to be judged by rules that will suit them.\textsuperscript{14}

He is indeed, I believe sincerely, one of the worthiest and most amiable creatures in the world, however full of spleen, oddities, and minor foibles.\textsuperscript{15}

A further and final passage to her sympathies was his adulation of the Thrale family. "He acknowledged to her readily that he was never so well pleased as when at Streatham, and spoke of its four inmates, Mrs. Thrale, Miss Thrale, Dr. Johnson, and F.B. in terms of praise bordering upon enthusiasm," and protested that it was a "society which made all other insupportable."\textsuperscript{16} In truth, Fanny says, "His

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., II, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., II, 16.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., II, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., II, 19.
\end{itemize}
fondness for Mrs. Thrale and her daughter is the most singular I have ever seen; he scarcely exists out of their sight, and holds all others so inferior to them, that total solitude seems his dearest alternative to their society."17

Mrs. Thrale, however, did not find this attitude always in evidence during her dealings with him, which were very frequent from the time when "Mr. Crutchley was ran down at Hetty's entreaty" from the chamber in which Mr. Thrale lay dying, till some time after she and Piozzi were married.18

The first rift in the lute came during the settling up of the affairs of the sale of the brewery. Mrs. Thrale determined to get from under a business which she neither understood, nor cared to be burdened with. With the exception of Johnson, the executors were agreed on the wisdom of Mrs. Thrale's disposing of the business. Perkins, the chief clerk of the brewery, had agreed to purchase one fourth interest in the business, but apparently was unable to raise enough funds to meet his obligations. In July of 1781, Mrs. Thrale writes, "Perkins wanted more indulgence than we as Executors could give him; so I lent him the Money I had saved & put in the Stocks-2000£ it was, & sold out for 1600£ and odd..."19

17 Ibid., II, 18.
18 Balderston, op. cit., p. 490.
19 Ibid., p. 501.
She was forced to this unwise move because of "the iron resolution of Mr. Cator and Mr. Crutchley"\textsuperscript{20} who prevented the executors from extending him credit. For this contretemps she blamed Crutchley, writing in her book, "Twas he Mr. Crutchley that made Mischief for me with Cator."\textsuperscript{21} It is possible that Crutchley's reasons for taking such a stand were based on sound business principles, however, for Fanny Burney quotes Mrs. Thrale as saying on July 2, that Crutchley, "though he cared not himself if the man were drowned," offered to lend Perkins a thousand pounds merely by way of giving pleasure to her.\textsuperscript{22}

In August of 1782, Mrs. Thrale determined to go to Italy in order to conserve her money since "the Establishment of Expence" at Streatham was more than her "Income would answer,"\textsuperscript{23} in the light of the results of the lawsuit with Lady Salusbury, and the unwise loan to Perkins. The plan was no sooner fixed in her mind than she began to worry about Crutchley's reaction. "Mr Cator as another of the Children's Guardians has given his Consent, but what will Crutchley say who is in Love with Queeney?"\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 591.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 596.
\textsuperscript{22} Barrett, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 18.
\textsuperscript{23} Balderston, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 540.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 541.
She had not long to remain in doubt, for on August 28 she wrote:

Crutchley says every ill natured Thing, & puts every Retardation in force that he can put; He will not suffer us to take Piozzi—very well says I we will go without him; he then looked disappointed for want of fresh Objections, but I suppose he will create fresh. 25

By December the situation was greatly changed; Mrs. Thrale had determined to marry Piozzi, but had not given up her plans for the Italian journey. In an effort to forestall the proposed move to the continent, Crutchley suggested that the Thrale heiresses be made wards in Chancery, a provision stipulated in the father's will, but hitherto unacted upon.

The guardians have met upon the Scheme of putting our Girls in Chancery; I was frightened at the Project, not doubting but Lord Chancellor would stop us from leaving England; as he would certainly see no Joke in three young heiresses his Wards quitting the Kingdom to frisk away with their Mother into Italy; besides that I believe Mr. Crutchley proposed it merely for a Stumbling block to my Journey, as he cannot bear to have Hester out of his Sight....Crutchley was forced to content himself with intending to put the Ladies under legal Protection as soon as we should be across the Sea. 26

The situation was extremely difficult at this time; Mrs. Thrale could not make up her mind to accept Piozzi and take the only way she could "be happy in this World." and "abandon the children of" "her first Husband" who left her "so nobly provided for, and who depended on her Attachment to his Offspring," or to give up all that she wanted so

25 Ibid., p. 541.
26 Ibid., p. 552.
passionately because of the "Voice of Conscience." 27

In January Fanny Burney wrote to Miss Thrale saying: I am half distracted to think how your poor Mother will bear either way, your telling, or his—....If at least he would defer till she is better this horrible explanation,—....If not,—if you cannot prevail with him to be quiet,—endeavor my dear friend, to take the business into your own hands: 28

Either Queeney made no effort to dissuade Crutchley, or else he could not be stopped, for on January 25, Mrs. Thrale writes: "Whether Miss Thrale sent him word slyly, or not I cannot tell; but...M Crutchley came hither to conjure me not to go to Italy: he had heard such Things she said, & by means next to miraculous." 29 The "Things", of course, were the scandalous rumours that were being circulated about the lovers.

Some pages later in the Thraliana, (several of which have been excised, probably by Mrs. Thrale, herself) the harassed woman confides to her diary:

I told Dr. Johnson & Mr. Crutchley three Days ago, that I had determined—seeing them so averse to it—that I would not go abroad; but that if I did not leave England, I would leave London, where I had not been treated to my Mind: 30

27 Ibid., p. 559.
29 Balderston, op. cit., p. 558.
30 Ibid., p. 559.
and again: "Adieu to all that's dear, to all that's lovely. I am parted from my Life, my Soul! My Piozzi."31

Even this wrench was not to be enough; the Salisbury suit had to be settled one way or another. Mrs. Thrale had little hope of winning the case in the courts, so she insisted upon making a compromise offer, which was finally accepted. In order to raise the necessary funds to meet the settlement agreed upon, it was necessary to borrow from her daughters' inheritance, giving as security, a mortgage on her Welsh estate.

For some obscure reason, Crutchley violently objected to the loan and brutally "bid her make a curtsey to her daughters for keeping her out of a Gaol."32

The problems were finally all settled, and Mrs. Thrale was able to look forward to a period of peace and happiness. Her last word in Thraliana concerning Crutchley will serve very well as an epitaph to him:

Crutchley says he has examined Carot's Acc's of the Miss Thrale's Fortunes, and finds them exactly and honourably kept....of his honesty I have no Doubts. Mr Crutchley is, or was at least when I knew him, a Man of delicate Honour, with Manners so very coarse, and so very cold, that he scrupled not to shew his ill Opinion of People to their Faces, in a Way I never saw any one use but himself—this made him incommmodious enough to do Business with—as he would affront his Coadjutors whom he did not wish to offend; Sullen, & apparently disappointed by the paucity of Life's Pleasures, (for he has had but few pains;) the sole Comfort that Fellow has in

31 Loc. cit.

32 Ibid., p. 561.
the World is doing his Duty, which at last is done so disagreeably, that he never gets even Thanks for his Pains. 33

He never married, and his estate was inherited, at his death in 1806, by George Henry Duffield, the eldest son of his second sister, Alice, who took the surname of Crutchley. 34

33 Ibid., p. 707.
34 Ibid., p. 505. (note).
Giuseppe Baretti 1719-1789

Giuseppe Marc Antonio Baretti was born in Turin, Italy. He was the child of upper class professional people, being the son of an architect, and the grandson of a doctor and a noblewoman. He left home at the age of sixteen, not quite because he “had drawn his sword on his Father,”¹ as Mrs. Thrall believed, but because of his customary passionate objection to a course of procedure of which he disapproved; in this instance, his stepmother’s cavalier servente, one Miglyna Capriglio. He quarreled with the young cavalier, challenged him to a duel, was rebuked by his father, and left home in a towering rage.²

He abandoned all thoughts of following his father’s profession, and secured work as a merchant’s clerk, while indulging a literary bent on the side. Eventually, his hot-headedness caused him to decide hastily to leave Italy permanently. Three of his works had been suppressed for offensively outspoken criticism,...the authorities of Venice were preparing to arrest him for alleged criticism of the government, and he prevented them only by voluntary withdrawal. No evidence has been found that he was actually expelled from any city, however.³

¹ Balderston, op. cit., p. 154.
² Ibid., I, p. 154.
³ Loc. cit.
He left for England in January of 1751. Upon becoming settled there, he opened a school for the purpose of teaching Italian, and secured, among other pupils, Charlotte Lennox, the author of *The Female Quixote*.4

Within the next three years, he became acquainted with Dr. Johnson,5 who was immediately sympathetic to his fellow lexicographer: so sympathetic indeed, that there is little question but that the "preface of Baretti's *Easy Phraseology* is by Johnson."6 Johnson had a very high opinion of Baretti and his work. Concerning the latter's *Journey*, he observed: "His account of Italy is a very entertaining book; and, sir, I know no man who carries his head higher in conversation than Baretti. There are strong powers in his mind."7

Johnson was not singular in his partiality for Baretti: "his talents, acquirements, and strength of mind must have been considerabe, for they soon earned him the esteem and friendship of the most eminent members of the Johnsonian circle, despite his arrogance."8

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4 D.N.B. I, 1100-1102.

5 At Baretti's trial for murder, Johnson testified, "I believe I began to be acquainted with him about the year '53 or '54." Boswell's *Life*, op. cit., IV, 97.

6 D.N.B., op. cit., p. 1101.

7 Hayward, op. cit., I, 81.

8 Loc. cit.
The existing records are at variance on the length of time during which Baretti remained in the Thrale household. His obituary notice in the Gentleman's Magazine declares that "he was either nine or eleven years almost entirely in that family,"^{9} but that is evidentially impossible unless Mrs. Thrale's statement that "Mr. Baretti, who has since October of 1773 been our almost constant Inmate,...he walked out of the house on the sixth day of July 1776",^{10} is completely untrue. Baretti, himself, said that he had been with them for five and a half years, and had never received a shilling.^{11} This statement too, is most probably an error, since Baretti later was forced to recant his statement about "never receiving a shilling,"^{12} and the statement about the length of his stay in the Thrale house was quite possibly an exaggeration in an attempt to make the Thrale parsimony seem more heinous. It is, however, a proven fact that he was living at Streatham during the largest part of the time from October 1773, to July 1776.^{13} And it was during that period that Reynolds painted his portrait for the series in the Streatham library, and Baretti guided the family on their trip to France.^{14}

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9 Hayward, op. cit., p. 83.
10 Balderston, op. cit., pp. 43-46.
11 Ibid., p. 44, (Miss Balderston's Note).
12 Loc. cit.
13 Ibid., pp. 43-46.
14 Ibid., pp. 43-46; Hayward, op. cit., p. 10.
Before the period of his residence with the Thrales, Baretti fancied that he wanted to return to Italy to live. Therefore, "he determined to return...he left London in 1760,...(and) returned in the autumn of 1766." After this abortive attempt to return to his homeland, which was unsuccessful because of the same incendiary writing as he had published in Italy before 1751, he returned to England and remained there, except for short intervals of travel, until his death in 1789.

His English publications of note were: *Manners and Customs of Italy; Journey from London to Genoa, through England, Portugal, Spain, and France*; a translation of Johnson's *Rasselas* into French; Reynolds's *Discourses* to the Royal Academy Students into Italian; his *Frusta Letteraria* (an attack on contemporary literature in Italy which caused much bitter resentment); *A Dissertation Upon the Italian Poetry; An Account to Ascertain the Longitude at Sea* (published under the name of Zachiriah Williams, but really written by Dr. Johnson) translated into Italian; *The Italian Library; A Discourse on Shakespeare; The Dictionary of the Italian and English Languages* (which work firmly established his reputation as a scholar since it superseded all previous works of the kind, and has often been reprinted); and the *Easy Phraseology*, (written especially for Queeney) with a preface written by Dr. Johnson.  

15 D.N.B., op. cit., I, 1100.  
16 Loc. cit.
Mrs. Thrale's earliest record concerning Baretti was put down in *The Children's Book* and stated that as of October 17, 1773, "Queeney had begun to study Italian with the famous linguist, Joseph Baretti."\(^{17}\)

He was too independent and eminent a man to be engaged in the role of a mere tutor, so at Johnson's suggestion, a plan was devised whereby the Italian could stay at the house whenever he cared to. "Baretti, a brilliant, if sometimes overbearing conversationalist, proved, however, a valuable addition to the Thrales' dinner table."\(^{18}\)

The early part of the Thrale-Baretti relationship was, in the main, a fairly pleasant one; for Baretti, when he so desired, could be a man of charm and wit, and most adaptable to whatever company he found himself in. Mrs. Thrale wrote of him in 1777:

> Baretti could not endure to be called or scarcely thought a Foreigner; and indeed it did not often occur to his Company that he was one: for his Accent was wonderfully proper; and his Language always copious, always nervous, always full of various Allusions, flowing too with a Rapidity worthy of Admiration & far beyond the Power of nineteen in twenty Natives—he had also a Knowledge of the solemn Language & the Gay; could be sublime with Johnson or Black Guard with the Groom, could dispute, could rally—could quibble in our Language— I brought Mr Thrale a Bill to discharge one Day—a special hand at a Bill says he!—if says Baretti She's good at Billing you must pay it.\(^{19}\)

Not only was he a good companion and a man of

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18 *Loc. cit.*
19 Balderston, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
literary abilities; but he was also one who could "flash" with the approved wit of the Streathamites. On one occasion, Mrs. Thrale having noticed Baretti's frequent complete absorption in books, said: "Do you remember all you read?" "Scarce a word," replied Baretti, "but it produces a general Effect; if you dip your Hand into the Tub at the Door, you gather up no Water but your hand remains wet."\(^{20}\)

He was not awed into silence by the eminence of the men with whom he was associated either, for on another occasion when William Burke, the kinsman of Edmund Burke, chose to bait him, he responded quite in kind and got the best of the bargain at that. Mrs. Thrale writes:

> Will: Burke was tart upon M'r Baretti for being too dogmatical in his Talk about Politicks: You have says he no Business to be investigating the Characters of Ld. Falkland or M'r Hampden-you cannot judge of their Merits they are no Countrymen of Yours-True replied Baretti, and you should learn by the same Rule to speak very cautiously about Brutus & Mark Antony; they are my Countrymen, and I must have their Characters tenderly treated by foreigners.\(^{21}\)

With two such men as Johnson and Baretti at her table, Mrs. Thrale must have needed every bit of diplomacy and charm at her command. She did not agree that Baretti was following Johnson's precept of arrogance when Murphy said:

> Baretti means by his ferocity to imitate Johnson, but I am not of that Opinion Baretti's Mind is not a servile one to imitate another, be that other

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20 Ibid., p. 47.

21 Loc. cit.
who he will: Baretti was ferocious enough before he left Italy to have been shut out of some of its Capitals, & to have drawn his Sword on his Father when he was but sixteen. 22

Johnson, on the other hand, wrote to Mrs. Thrale in 1775:

To be frank he (Baretti) thinks is to be cynical, and to be independent is to be rude. Forgive him, dearest Lady, the rather, because of his misbehaviour, I am afraid he learned part of me. 23

By July of 1776, Mrs. Thrale had borne about all she could gracefully stand of Baretti. After his abrupt departure on that date, she put down in her Table Book all that she could—or would—say concerning the whole distressing relationship with the violent Italian:

If I had not once written his Character in Verse I would now write it in Prose for few People know him better: he was-Dieu pardonne me as the French say, My Inmate for very near three Years; and though I really liked the man once for his Talents, and at last was weary of him for y' use he made of 'em; I never altered my Sentiments concerning him—for his Character is easily seen, & his Soul above Disguise. Haughty and Insolent and breathing defiance against all Mankind; while his Powers of Mind exceed most people's, and his Powers of Purse are so slight that they leave him dependent on all,-Baretti is for ever in the State of a Stream dam'd up—if he could once get loose—he would bear down all before him. Every Soul that visited at our house while he was Master of it, went away abhorring him; & Mrs Montagu grieved to see my Meekness so imposed upon, had thoughts of writing me on the Subject an anonymous Letter, advising me to break with him. Seward, who try'd at last to reconcile us, confessed his Wonder that we had lived together so long; Johnson used to oppose & battle him, but never with his own Consent: the moment he was cool he would always

22 Loc. cit.

23 Ibid., p. 154.
condemn himself for exerting his Superiority over a Man who was his Friend, a Foreigner and poor:
Yet I have been told by Mrs Montagu, that he attributed his Loss of our Family to Johnson: ungrateful & ridiculous! if it had not been for his Mediation, I would not so long have borne trampling on, as I did for the last two Years of our Acquaintance. Not a Servant, not a Child did he leave me any Authority over; if I would attempt to correct or dismiss them, there was instant Appeals to Mr Baretta, who was sure always to be against me in every Dispute. with Mr Thrale I was over cautious of contending, conscious that a Misunderstanding there could never answer; as I have no Friend or Relation in the World to protect me from the rough treatment of a Husband shou'd he chuse to exert his Prerogatives, but when I saw Baretta openly urging Mr Thrale to despise my Requests, and to cut down some little Fruit trees my Mother had planted, and I had beg'd might stand: I confess I did take an Aversion to the Creature, & secretly resolved his Stay should not be prolonged by my Intreaties, whenever his Greatness chose to take huff & be gone. As to my eldest Daughter his Behaviour was most ungenerous; he was perpetually spurring her to Indepance: telling her She had more Sense, and would have a better Fortune than her Mother; whose Admonitions She ought therefore to despise; that She ought to write and receive her own Letters now, and not submit to an Authority I could not keep up if She once had the Spirit to challenge it; that if I died in a Lying In, which happened while he lived here; that he hoped Mr Thrale would marry Miss Whitbred, who would be a pretty Companion for Hester, and not tyrannical and over-bearing like me.—Was I not fortunate to see myself once quit of a Man like this? who thought his Dignity was concerned to set me at Defiance—and who was incessantly telling Lies to my Prudence in the Ears of my Husband and Children? When he walked out of the house on the sixth day of July 1776—I wrote down what follows in my Table Book. 6: July 1776. This day is made remarkable by the departure of Mr Baretta; who has since Octr of 1773 been our almost constant Inmate, Companion, and I vainly hoped—our Friend. On the 11th of Novr 1773. Mr Thrale let him have 50 £ and at our return from France 50 £ more besides his clothes and Pocket Money; in return to all this—he instructed our eldest Daughter—or thought he did—and puffed her about the Town for a Wit, a Genius a Linguist &c.
at the beginning of the Year 1776 we purposed visiting Italy under his Conduct; but were prevented by an unforeseen and heavy Calamity: (the death of young Harry Thrale on March 23, 1776) that Baretti however might not be disappointed of Money as well as of Pleasure, Mr Thrale presented him with 100 Guineas which at first calmed his Wrath a little, but did not perhaps make amends for his Vexation: this I am the more willing to believe, as Dr Johnson's not being angry too, seemed to grieve him no little, after all our Preparations made. Now Johnson's Virtue was engaged; and he I doubt not made it a Point of Conscience not to increase the Distresses of a Family already oppressed with Affliction.-Baretti however from this Time grew sullen and captious; he went on as usual notwithstanding, making Streatham his Home, carrying on Business there when he thought he had any to do, and teaching his Pupil at by Times when he chose so to employ himself; for he always took his Choice of hours, and would often spitefully fix on such as were particularly disagreeable to me, whom he has now not liked a long while if ever he did. He professed however a violent Attachment to our eldest Daughter, said if She had died instead of her poor Brother he should have destroyed himself, with many as wild expressions of Fondness. Within these few days however when my Back was turned, he would often be telling her that he would go away & stay a Month, with other Threats of the same Nature; & She not being of a caressing or obliging Disposition, never I suppose soothed his Anger, or requested his Stay: of all this however I can know nothing but from her, who is very reserved, & whose kindness I cannot so confide in as to be sure She would tell Me all that passed between 'em: & her Attachment is probably greater to him than me, whom he has always endeavoured to lessen as much as possible both in her Eye & what was worse—her Father's—by telling him how my Parts had been over praised by Johnson, & over rated by the World; that my Daughter's Skill in Languages would even at the age of fourteen vastly exceed mine, & such other idle stuff which Mr Thrale had very little Care about; but which Hetty doubtless thought of great Importance; be this as it may, no angry Words ever passed between him and me, except perhaps now & then a little Spar or so when Company was by in the way of Raillery merely; Yesterday however when Sir Joshua and Fitzmaurice dined here, I addressed myself to him with great particularity of Attention, begging his Company for Saturday as I expected Ladies, & said he must come and flirt with them.&c. my Daughter in the mean Time kept on telling me that Mr Baretti was grown very odd and very Cross, would not look at her
Exercises, but said he would leave this House soon, for it was no better than Pandemonium; accordingly the next Day he packed up his Clokebag which he had not done for 3 Years, & sent it to Town; & while we were wondering what he would say about it at Breakfast, he was walked to London himself, without taking leave of any one Person, except it may be the Girl; who owns they had much Talk, in the Course of which he expressed great Aversion to me & even to her who he said he once thought well of. Now whether She had ever told the Man things that I might have Said of him in his Absence, by way of provoking him to go, & so rid herself of his Tuition; whether he was puffed up with the last 100 Guineas & longed to be spending it—all Italiano; whether he thought Mf Thrale would call him back, and he should be better established here than ever; or whether he really was Idiot enough to be angry at my threatening to whip Susan & Sophy for going our of Bounds altho' he had given them leave—for Hetty said that was the first Offence he took huff at—I never now shall know—for he never expressed himself as an offended Man to me except one Day when he was not shaved at the proper hour forsooth, and then I would not quarrel with him because nobody was by, & I knew him be so vile a Lyar, that I durst not trust his Tongue with a Dispute: he is gone however, loaded with little presents from me, and with a large Share too of my good Opinion, though I most sincerely rejoice in his departure, & hope we shall never meet more but by Chance. Since our Quarrel I had occasion to talk of Him with Tom Davies, who spoke with horror of his ferocious Temper; & yet says I there is great Sensibility about Baretti, I have seen Tears often stand in his Eyes—Indeed! replies Davies—I should like to have seen that Sight vastly when—even Butchers weep.24

Though Baretti had left her household, and left it fiercely angry, Mrs. Thrale could not get him off her mind, Again in May of 1777, she reviews in Thraliana the talents which Baretti had brought to Streatham, the invaluable services he had performed for the Thrales in France, and her interpretation of the fundamental characteristics of the man

24 Ibid., pp. 43-46.
which had caused him to react as he did. She says:

Baretti has besides some Skill in Musick with a Base Voice very agreeable besides a Falsetto which he can manage so as to mimic any Singer he hears. I would also trust his knowledge of Painting a long way: These Accomplishments, with his extensive Power over every modern Language make him a most pleasing Companion while he is in Good humour, and his lofty Concioussness of his own Superiority which made him tenacious of every Position, and drew him into a thousand Distresses, did not I must own ever disgust me till he began to exercise it against myself, and resolve to reign in our house by fairly defying the Mistress on't. Pride however though shocking enough is never despicable: but Vanity which he possessed too in an eminent degree, will sometimes make a Man near sixty ridiculous. France however displayed all Mr. Baretti's useful Pow'rs— he bustled for us, he cater'd for us, he took Care of the Child, he secured an Apartment for the Maid, he provided for our Safety, our Amusements, our Repose—without him the Pleasure of that Journey would never have balanced the Pain: and great was his Disgust to be sure when he caught us as he often did, ridiculing French Manners, French Sentiments &c. I think he half cryed to Mrs. Payne the LandladAy at Dover on our return because we laughed at French Cookery, & French Accomodations. Oh how he would court the Maids at the Inns abroad, abuse the Men perhaps and that with a Facility not to be exceeded, as they all confessed by any of the Natives; but so he could in Spain I find, and so tis plain he could here: I will give one Instance of his Skill in our low Street Language.---Walking along a Field near Chelsea he met a Fellow who suspecting him from Dress & Manner to be a Foreigner said sneeringly Come Sir will you shew me the way to France? No Sir says Baretti instantly, but I will show you your way to Tyburn.

Such however was his Ignorance in a certain line that he once asked Johnson for Information who it was composed the Pater Noster, and I heard him tell Evans the Story of Dives and Lazarus as the Subject of a Poem he once had composed in the Milanese Dialect—expecting great Credit for his powers of Invention—Evans owned to me that he thought the Man drunk, whereas poor Baretti was both in eating and Drinking—a Model of Temperance.
Had he guessed Evan's Thoughts, the parson's Gown would scarcely have saved him a Knouting from the ferocious Italian.25

In December of 1777 Mrs. Thrale learned that Baretti was "in distress" and that Seward had given him twenty guineas while Johnson recommended that he write a History of the House of Savoy.26 She was concerned for her one-time friend's welfare, but at that time did nothing to assist him. In March of that year, during a period of National economic distress, she was sufficiently generous hearted to record:

Baretti's effort (in writing the overture to Philodor's opera, The Deserter) has partly succeeded I hear, however bad the times be; I had no heart on't myself, but it will do: he & Philodor have jointly fitted up the Carmen Seculare for publick Exhibition, and 'tis said they have got two or three hundred Pounds clear by it; if Baretti can make 500 £ he may buy himself an Annuity will secure him from Distress. I wish he may, he has a great Soul and a forcible Understanding, and the Sight of a Wit wanting Bread is to me very mournful. We are not Friends, but Baretti is a Man of great & Valuable Powers, Friend or Foe; & like the Highwayman one must be true to the Gang.27

By September of 1780, the relationship had sufficiently warmed up so that Mrs. Thrale again was receiving Baretti at Streatham:

Baretti has dined here again, after an Absence of--I forget how long--but about four Years I think: the Joy of all our Servants to see him again was singular & pretty; much to their Credit & much to his: I could not help feeling glad too, though I cannot imagine why; for Baretti was the only Man

26 Ibid., p. 224.
27 Ibid., p. 371.
I never could make attached to me by trying to do so. his Character is I verily think that which a Man of Spirit wd prefer to three or four of those already drawn, & intended to be put in this Book when finished.28

But the renewal of friendship was not a success, for in January she wrote in great indignation:

Baretti is a Scoundrel though: he goes about abusing me for a Vixen, to all indifferent People; it is really very unjust, & below a fellow of his Parts and Knowledge to be traducing one so: I always speak well of him; the Truth is there is Something respectable enough in a Man's living among Folks so, & setting them at Defiance, besides that I was always willing to love Baretti,--it was Baretti that hated me. He made Barry the Painter believe such strange Things of my Shrewship that when I met the Man casually t'other Night at a Visit, he told the people of the House that my mildness had amazed him--Good heavens what did he expect?29

It was in this same month that Mrs. Thrale wrote out in final form the doggerel verses which were designed to accompany the library portraits. Of all the verse-portraits she composed, she liked Baretti's best of all, and found no occasion to make it more vituperative in the light of events which occurred after her original writing. She still could say in it, "and where can we find....a Mind more firm in Distress, or in Friendship more fervent."

Most women would have to admit, "She's a better man than I;" for her objective viewpoint was, at times, truly remarkable!

The following Verses need no Comment I trust—they are most to my Liking of the whole Collection.

Baretti hangs next, by his Frowns may you know him, He has lately been reading some new-publish'd Poem;

28 Ibid., p. 458.
29 Ibid., p. 419.
He finds the poor Author a Blockhead, a Beast, 
A Fool without Sentiment, Judgment or Taste; 
Ever thus let our Critick his Insolence fling, 
Like the Hornet in Homer, impatient to sting, 
Let him rally his Friends for their Frailities before 'em, 
And scorn the dull praise of that dull Thing Decorum; 
While Tenderness, Temper, & Truth he despises, 
and only the Triumph of Victory prizes. 
Yet let us be candid, and where can we find, 
So active, so able, so ardent a Mind? 
With your Children more soft; more polite with your Servant, 
More firm in Distress, or in Friendship more fervent. 

Thus Etna engag'd his Artillery pours, 
And tumbles down Palaces Princes and Towers; 
While the Peasant more happy who lives at its foot 
Can make it a Hothouse to ripen his Fruit.---30

After the disastrous first attack of illness, poor befuddled Mr. Thrale felt that the only thing that would improve his greatly weakened health was a second trip to the continent. Mrs. Thrale, knowing full well that such an expedition was almost fantastic, still went ahead making the plans necessary to carry out her husband's behest. She even was willing to subdue her own pride, and secure, if she could, the services of Baretti as guide and expeditor:

Baretti should attend I think; there is no Man who has so much of every Language, & can manage so well with Johnson; & is so tidy on the Road, so active too, to obtain good Accommodations. He is the man in the World I think whom I most abhor, and who hates, & professes to hate me the most; but what does that signify? he will be careful of Mt Thrale & Hester whom he does love—& he won't strangle me I suppose; it will be very convenient to have him—somebody we must have; Croza would court our Daughter, & Piozzi could not talk to Johnson, nor I suppose do one any Good, but sing to one:—& how should we sing Songs in a strange Land? Baretti

30 Ibid., p. 474.
must be the Man, & I will beg it of him as a
favour—Oh the Triumph he will have! & the
Lyes he will tell! 31

Her self-inflicted humiliation proved unnecessary, however;
for the ailing Thrale died before the plans could be car-
ried through. Baretti, in fact, was present at the Monday
dinner preceding Mr. Thrale's death on Wednesday, at which
the sick man ate so voraciously as to help precipitate his
final stroke of apoplexy. 32

After Mrs. Piozzi's marriage to her second husband,
Baretti seemed to lose what little restraint he ever had.

He wrote Mrs. Piozzi a virulent letter about which she
said:

Yesterday I received a Letter from Mr. Baretti, full
of the most flagrant and bitter Insults concerning
my late Marriage with Mr. Piozzi—against whom however
he can bring no heavier Charge than that he disputed
on the Road with an Innkeeper concerning the Bill in
his last Journey to Italy; while he accuses me of
Murder and Fornication in the grossest Terms, such
as I believe have scarcely ever been used even to
his old Companions in Newgate; whence he was re-
leased to scourge the Families which cherished, and
bite the hands that have since relieved him. Could
I recollect any Provocation I ever gave the Man, I
should be less amazed; but he heard perhaps that
Johnson had written me a rough Letter, and thought
he would write me a brutal one; like the Jewish King
who trying to imitate Solomon without his Under-
standing, said my Father whipped you with Whips, &
I will whip you with Scorpions. I am sorry his
connections with Mr Gotor, keeps him so much about
the person of my eldest Daughter whose sullenness
in never sending me one Letter, after such repeated
promises of constant Correspondence I can attribute
only to her listening to his wicked Insinuations

31 Ibid., p. 487.
32 Ibid., p. 490.
concerning my past Intimacy with my present Husband--a Charge which those who make it do not themselves believe, and which is false as cruel. God and himself (I mean Mr. Piozzi) know how false that Accusation is--but as we cannot refute, we must endure--and as we ought not to revenge Injuries--we must forgive them I think. While we continue to love each other, the good Word of such abandoned Scribblers as Baretti should be despised, much more the ill Word: and I am only mortified to think that the Peace of the Innocent should be so much in the Power of the Wicked. Dear Piozzi's honourable Heart beats with Rage at hearing his Wife traduced in a way he knows her to be guiltless; and those who insult me must now owe their Safety to my Intreaties. God knows we have both been used exceedingly & undeservedly ill; the old Man who went out with him last Year as Friend & Companion, proved a Bosom Serpent; and would if possible by representing Mr. Piozzi in his Letters to me as an interested and avaricious Man, have broken the Match; & now when I complain of his Conduct in a Letter to M'r D'Ageno--Baretti who has seen my Letter writes to me in his Defence, and writes such Things! Good Lord have mercy upon me! but I think the man is fit for Bedlam. 33

In the spring of 1788 the European Magazine began printing the so-called "Strictures" of Baretti. They appeared in the May, June, and August issues. The first one was entitled "On Signora Piozzi's Publication of Dr. Johnson's Letters, Stricture the First." In this article, Baretti calls her "the frontless female, who goes by the mean appellation of Piozzi." The point to which he takes exception in this Stricture is the reference in her letter of May, 1776, written after Harry Thrale's death in which Mrs. Thrale states: "Baretti alone tried to irritate a wound so very deeply inflicted..." He, here, indirectly

33 Ibid., p. 616.
acused her of having been the cause of Harry's death, though insisting on dosing him herself, and of threatening Queeney with the like by giving her "tin pills." although Dr. Jebb had told her that they would "tear the child's bowels to pieces." In the second "Stricture," he vindicates himself of the charge, expressed in Johnson's letter of July 15, 1775, of tyrannizing over the girls; and accuses her of maternal tyranny and unreasonable discipline. In the third "Stricture" he tells the story of Piozzi and his reputed relationship to Mrs. Thrale, his courtship, and the employment of Mecci, etc. 34

When Mrs. Piozzi read the savage and scurrilous statements made about her by Baretti, she was unmoved by his attack, but frightfully shocked at the fact (as she erroneously believed) that the Burneys were editing the European Magazine at the time. She wrote then: "he is a most ungrateful, because unprincipled Wretch, but I am sorry that anything belonging to Dr. Burney sh'd be so monstrously wicked." 35

In May of 1789, Mrs. Piozzi learned, with surely a sign of relief, that Baretti was dead, and wrote:

Baretti is dead--Poor Baretti! I am sincerely sorry for him, & as Zanga says--If I lament thee, sure thy worth was great.

He was a manly Character at worst; & died as he lived, less like a Christian than a Philosopher.

34 Ibid., p. 719.
Refusing all spiritual or Corporeal Assistance—both which he consider'd as useless to him—and perhaps they were so. He paid his Debts, call'd in some single Acquaintance, told him he was dying & drove away the Panama Conversation which Friends think proper to administer at Sick Bed-Sides, with becoming Steadiness. Bid him write his Brothers word that was dead; & gently desired a Woman who waited, to leave him quite alone. No Interested Attendants watching for ill-deserved Legacies,—no Harpy Relations clung round the Couch of Baretti, He died!

And art thou dead? So is my Enmity; I war not with the Dust.36

If she did so sign, her relief was premature; for in December she again began hearing disquieting rumors. Perhaps, as she said, she was above "warring with the dust;" but unfortunately, the dust was not too noble to war with her. She records in Thraliana, Baretti's final thrust:

"I hear Baretti's Emnity towards me outlived his Powers of exerting it; and that he left a Libel behind him desiring it might be printed to vex me.—Can such Malignity inhabit the Heart of anything but Daemons? I hope the Story is not true, for no such Pamphlet did I ever see.—Mr James of Bath said he saw it, but I scarce believed him—I will ask Lysons some Day if any thing disagreeable is to be heard—he'll tell it. Mrs L. says the Name of ye Work is the Sentimental Mother. her own Dream I doubt not.37"

It was far from a dream, however. The Morning Post of May 9, 1789 remarked shortly after Baretti's death: "If Baretti had not unfortunately slipped his wind, the world would soon have been favoured with some anecdotes respecting the musical Signora of Hanover-Square and her pseudo-brother, of a very interesting kind."38 Because these papers were,

36 Ibid., p. 746.
37 Ibid., p. 752.
38 Clifford, op. cit., p. 326.
most probably, at the printers at the time of Baretti's death, they escaped the fate of his other documents, for his cautious executors burned the lot of them as soon as they could. 39

The evidence of the authorship of The Sentimental Mother is to be found in the conclusion of his second Stricture when he says: "Who knows, I say, but some one of our modern dramatich geniuses may hereafter entertain the public with a laughable comedy in five long acts, intitled with singular propriety THE SCIENTIFIC MOTHER?" 40

The playlet itself, though the story bears no resemblance to events in the Thrales' household, attributes to Lady Fantasma Tunskull the same shortcomings that Baretti had attributed to Mrs. Thrale in the magazine libel—namely harshness towards her children, parsimony, vanity, love of power, insensibility towards her family, effusive sentiment for her friends, and a faculty for achieving her ends by scheming. Signor Squalici, the daughter's tutor, who is meant to represent Piozzi, is passed off in the play as Lady Fantasma's half-brother. 41

Baretti's references to Piozzi being her half-brother were the scurrilities which made the Piozzi marriage so distasteful to the friends of Mrs. Thrale. The only

39 Balderston, pp. 747-748.
40 Ibid., p. 752.
41 Ibid., p. 752.
basis of fact which Mrs. Piozzi's biographers have been able to locate which would explain the seemingly demented Baretti's emphasis on this subject in the *European Magazine* article of August, 1788, are to be found in two entries in Thraliana, one dated July, 1780, and saying: "I have picked up Piozzi here, the great Italian Singer; (he is amazingly like my father.) and another dated December 1781, and saying: "'tis odd that none of my Children should resemble my Father--& that a likeness of him--or I dream so--should in this Manner arrive from Italy. Very odd!" Baretti, of course, claimed to base his facts on a certain letter from one, Martha Piozzi, to Mrs. Thrale's father, which she found in Wales and later destroyed.

In addition to his published obscenities, Baretti filled the margins of his copy of the *Letters* with further insults and evidences of his poisonous hatred. For instance, opposite Johnson's remark, in this volume, "when he comes and I come, you will have two about you that love you," Baretti scribbled:

Impudent Bitch! How could she venture upon forging this paragraph! Johnson to put himself abreast with such an ignorant and stupid Dog as Piozzi! You lie, you Bich, and Johnson, never wrote this dam'd paragraph.

42 Ibid., p. 448.
43 Ibid., p. 520.
44 Ibid., p. 448.
The basis of Baretti's hatred for Mrs. Piozzi would make a most fascinating study for an expert psychiatrist, for the explanation must lie within the well-springs of the two people involved. Nowhere in Mrs. Piozzi's writings which are remarkable, if for anything, for the absolute lack of personal reticence which she exhibits, does she give any possible explanation for Baretti's almost pathological obsession.

In the failure of any expert testimony, it is interesting to play with the theory of C. E. Vulliamy, who tentatively offers the explanation that Baretti was in love with the wife of his employer. He bases his rather flimsy theory of the following facts: He says: "The excuse for his attack was the publication of Mrs. Piozzi's Letters to and from Dr. Johnson, several of which contained unpleasing references to Baretti, but the real stimulus is that of a burning, inextinguishable grievance. In the whole attack there is a quality of passion, of ecstatic hatred, which cannot be put aside as mere literary bravado."46

Vulliamy contends that both sides of the case as put by the two interested persons, are highly improbable; that Mr. Thrale would never have allowed an outsider in his house to bully his wife, or to interfere with children and servants; that had the situation been as reported by Mrs. Piozzi, he would never have commissioned a portrait by Reynolds of Baretti; nor would Johnson have continued his

unquestionable respect and friendship for the Italian.

On the other side of the wall, no reader could be expected to believe that Mrs. Thrale would deliberately dose her children with dangerous drugs, or, in the knowledge of her staff of nurses and servants, believe that she was continually running after them with an ivory whip and whistle.

The truth of the matter according to Vulliamy's hypothesis, is that Baretti arrived at Streatham during the so-called "dangerous years." He was of a passionate, hot-blooded, southern, temperament by nature; he was in the dangerous fifties; and he became inflamed by the pretty and witty Mrs. Thrale. This accounts, perhaps, for the otherwise unaccountable change in their relationship, for his abrupt departure from Streatham, and for the vicious and inexplicable violence of his accusations.

As a further stone in his wall of supposition, Vulliamy remarks that Mangin said that he had never heard Mrs. Thrale speak uncharitably of any person she had known except Baretti, and she said of him "Ah! he was a bad man." When Mangin asked her for particulars, "she seemed unwilling to explain herself, and spoke of him no more."47

To Mr. Vulliamy's rather feeble points, the writer would like to add one more equally feeble. In 1786, Fanny Burney received a letter from Baretti which she quotes in

47 Ibid., p. 162.
full. It is given here for what it may be worth:

My dear Miss Burney, or Mrs. Burney, as I am
told you must now be called—let your old friend
Barretti give you joy of what has given him as
great and as quick a one as ever he felt in all
his days. God bless you, and bless somebody I
dare not name, Amen. And suppose I add, bless
me too—will that do me any harm? 48
(underlining mine)

48 Barrett, op. cit., II, 408.
Charles Burney, Mus. Doc., F.R.S., 1726-1814

Dr. Burney was a descendant in the fifth degree of James Macburney, a native of Scotland, who attended King James I, when he left that country to take possession of the English throne. His father and grandfather, each bearing the name of James Macburney, were born in the village of Great Hanwood, Shropshire.

Charles Burney was the youngest of twenty-two children, and was born, with a twin sister, in Shrewsbury on the twelfth of April, 1726, at which date, his father still retained the patronymic "Mac" to his name. There is no evidence showing when or why the prefix to the name was removed, but by the time Charles had attained manhood, the entire family, in all its connections, had concurred in adopting the surname of Burney.

Charles attended the Free School at Chester, the village in which his father was living at that time. His musical proficiency demonstrated itself at a very early age, and his first musical instructors were his half-brother, and Baker, the organist of Chester Cathedral. In his eighteenth year, his half-brother, James, recommended him to the notice of Dr. Arne, the composer of "Rule Britannia," who offered to take him as a resident pupil in his London home.

In 1747, Fulke Greville, one of the social, literary, and sports leaders of the day, was so impressed with the
young Charles, that he paid £300 to Dr. Arne to cancel his apprentice's articles, and took him to live in his home. It was to the sponsorship of Greville, perhaps, that Dr. Burney owed his later reputation as a fashionable professor of music, and one of the most polished and courtly wits of his time.

In 1749, Charles Burney married Esther Sleepe, a step which was considered unfortunate by his aristocratic friends, since his wife had neither position nor fortune. Within a few years of the marriage, the young musician's health broke down, and he was forced to remove to the country. He accepted the position of organist at King's Lynn where he remained for about ten years. He made many friends there, and commenced an acquaintance by letter with Johnson.

After gaining some general repute by writing a musical setting for the ode for St. Cecelia's Day, which was performed most successfully at Ranelagh Gardens, he determined to resume his career in London. This proved a wise step, for in a very short time, he was most successful in gaining students, and in making friends with many of the eminent men of the day: namely, Garrick, Reynolds, and the sculptor Nollekins among others.

Mrs. Burney died in September of 1761; and in the spring of 1768, Dr. Burney married a warm friend of his former wife, a Mrs. Stephen Allen, a handsome and well-informed woman who proved an admirable wife and excellent
stepmother to the Burney children.

Dr. Burney took his doctorate of Music at Oxford, and in 1770 visited France and Italy, and later Germany and the Netherlands in order to collect materials for his *History of Music*.

In 1783, Burney was appointed organist of Chelsea College, where, the next year, he was prominent in the Handel Festival, and presented George III, personally, with a book he had written on that composer's life.
Dr. Burney's initiation into the Streatham Coterie was via the professional route, for, in the fall of 1776 he was invited to Streatham by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale to give lessons in music to their eldest daughter, Queeney. His courtly manner and depth of knowledge seemed to make such a profound impression, that very soon he was thought of as one of the Streatham intimates. Mrs. Thrale records:

Doctor Burney was first introduced to our Society by Mr. Seward in the Year 1776—he was to teach our eldest Daughter Musick, & attended once a Week at Streatham for that purpose: but such was the fertility of his Mind, and the extent of his Knowledge; such the Goodness of his Heart and Suavity of his Manners that we began in good earnest to sollicit his Company, and gain his Friendship. few People possess such Talents for general Conversation, and fewer still for select Society, where no Restraint is laid upon one's Expressions & where Humour and good humour charm more than Wit and Philosophy—tho' Burney is never found deficient in either; and would be called a deep Scholar was he not without Pedantry, as he would be reckon'd a Wit was he not without Malice.—if ever the—Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re—resided in mortal Man, tis surely in Doctor Burney.1

His own daughter, in writing his memoirs a great many years later, and after much muddy water had washed over the dam, still thought this was one of the high points of his career. She says:

Fair was this period in the life of Dr. Burney. It opened to him a new region of enjoyment, supported by honours, and exhilarated by pleasures supremely to his taste: honours that were literary, pleasures that were intellectual. Fair was this period, though not yet was it risen to its acme: a fairer still was now advancing to his highest wishes, by free and

frequent intercourse with the man in the world to whose genius and worth united, he looked up the most reverentially—Dr. Johnson.

And this intercourse was brought forward through circumstances of such infinite agreeability, that no point, however flattering, of the success that led him to celebrity, was so welcome to his honest and honourable pride, as being sought for at Streatham, and his reception at that seat of the Muses.

Mrs. Thrale, the lively and enlivening lady of the mansion, was then at the height of the glowing renown which, for many years, held her in stationary superiority on that summit.

It was professionally that Dr. Burney was first invited to Streatham, by the master of that fair abode. . . . So interesting was this new engagement to the family of Dr. Burney, which had been born and bred to a veneration of Dr. Johnson; and which had imbibed the general notion that Streatham was a coterie of wits and scholars, on a par with the blue assemblages in town of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Vesey; that they all flocked around him, on his return from his first excursion, with eager enquiry whether Dr. Johnson had appeared; and whether Mrs. Thrale merited the brilliant plaudits of her panegyrists.

. . . . Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Burney had beheld as a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of female wits; surpassing, rather than equalizing, the reputation which her extraordinary endowments, and the splendid fortune which made them conspicuous, had blazoned abroad; while her social and easy good humour allayed the alarm excited by the report of her spirit of satire; which, nevertheless, he owned she unsparingly darted around her, in sallies of wit and gaiety, and the happiest spontaneous epigrams.

Mr. Thrale, the Doctor had found a man of sound sense, good parts, good instruction, and good manners; with a liberal turn of mind, and an unaffected taste for talented society. Yet, though it was everywhere known that Mrs. Thrale sportively, but very decidedly, called and proclaimed him her master, the Doctor never perceived in Mr. Thrale any overbearing marital authority; and soon remarked, that while from a temper of mingled sweetness and carelessness, his wife never offered him any opposing opinion,
he was too wise to be rallied by a sarcastic nickname, out of the right by which he kept her excess of vivacity in order.

....But Dr. Burney soon saw that he had little chance of aiding his young pupil in any very rapid improvement. Mrs. Thrale, who had no passion but for conversation, in which her eminence was justly her pride, continually broke into the lesson to discuss the news of the times; politics, at that period, bearing the complete sway over men's minds. But she intermingled what she related, or what she heard, with sallies so gay, so unexpected, so classically erudite, or so vivaciously entertaining, that the tutor and the pupil were alike drawn away from their studies, to an enjoyment of a less laborious, if not of a less profitable description.....

Mr. Thrale had lately fitted up a rational, readable, well-chosen library. It were superfluous to say that he had neither authors for show, nor bindings for vanity, when it is known that while it was forming, he placed merely one hundred pounds in Dr. Johnson's hands for its completion;.....

One hundred pounds, according to the expensive habits of the present day, of decorating books like courtiers and coxcombs, rather than like students and philosophers, would scarcely purchase a single row for a book-case of the length of Mr. Thrale's at Streatham; though, under such guidance as that of Dr. Johnson, to whom all finery seemed froppery, and all foppery futility, that sum, added to the books naturally inherited, or already collected, amply sufficed for the unsophisticated reader....

This was no sooner accomplished, than Mr. Thrale resolved to surmount these treasures for the mind by a similar regale for the eyes, in selecting the persons he most loved to contemplate, from amongst his friends and favourites, to preside over the literature that stood highest in his estimation.

And, that his portrait painter might go hand in hand in judgment with his collector of books, he fixed upon the matchless Sir Joshua Reynolds to add living excellence to dead perfection by giving him the personal resemblance of the following elected set; every one of which
occasionally made a part of the brilliant society of Streatham.

Mrs. Thrale and her eldest daughter were in one piece, over the fire-place, at full length.

The rest of the pictures were all three-quarters. The general collection then began by Lord Sandys and Lord Westcote, two early noble friends of Mr. Thrale.

Then followed

Dr. Johnson  Mr. Burke  Dr. Goldsmith
Mr. Murphy  Mr. Garrick  Mr. Baretti
Sir Robert Chambers and Sir Joshua Reynolds himself.

There was place left but for one more frame, when the acquaintance with Dr. Burney began at Streatham; and the charm of his conversation and manners, joined to his celebrity in letters, so quickly won upon the master as well as the mistress of the mansion, that he was presently selected for the honour of filling up this last chasm in the chain of Streatham worthies. To this flattering distinction, which Dr. Burney always recognized with pleasure, the public owe the engraving of Bartolozzi, which is prefixed to the History of Music.2

Not only had the musician won the regard of the Thrales and achieved a place of honor upon their library walls, but he had also renewed the friendship with Johnson made by letter some twenty-two years ago. Johnson's indifference to music is and was notorious, and he was even inclined to speak slightingly of its professors, but he conceived a strong liking for the lovable little music teacher. Burney returned the affection of the great man, and in fact, Mrs. Thrale thought him to be one of the very few persons who actually truly loved Johnson. She wrote in 1777:

2 Madame D'Arblay, Memoirs of Doctor Burney, II, 73-81.
Of all his (Johnson's) intimates and Friends, I think I never could find any who much loved him Boswell and Burney excepted—Mr. Murphy too loved him as he loves People—when he sees them——& as to Burney had they been more together, they would have liked each other less; but I who delighted greatly in them both, used to keep those Parts of their Characters out of Sight wch would have offended the other.3

Johnson not only had a personal affection for Burney, but he also thought the musician had very definite literary talent. Thraliana records that he strongly approved one of Burney's little poems. The modern reader is inclined to wonder if Johnson was not allowing his personal affection to warp his literary judgment. Mrs. Thrale records:

Johnson says the following 8 lines of Burney are actually sublime—they are the End of a dull Copy of Verses enough, but the Lines themselves are most excellent.

The Monster Death keeps full in Sight, And puts the Faery Hope to flight; Blackens th' Horizon all around And points to the Abyss profound.

'Gainst Nature's Laws 'tis vain to plead I see the Joys of Life recede; And all its Prospects fade away Amidst the Horrors of Decay.4

The bond of friendship soon became so cordial between the Thrales and Dr. Burney that Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson accepted an invitation to a musical evening at St. Martin's Street to meet the rest of the Burney family, to look over the library, and to see Newton's

3 Balderston, op. cit., p. 182.
4 Ibid., p. 341.
curious old house.

The evening was a very difficult one, largely because Johnson was not in a talking mood; Pulk Greville was feeling his superior birth in an assemblage of tradesmen and "writing fellows;" and the musical fare was not to the taste of either Johnson or the Thrales. At this point, Mrs. Thrale became bored beyond endurance, or as Fanny Burney put it:

...at length, provoked by the dulness of a taciturnity that, in the midst of such renowned interlocutors, produced as narcotic a torpor as could have been caused by a dearth the most barren of human faculties she grew tired of the music, and yet more tired of remaining, what as little suited her inclinations as her abilities, a mere cipher in the company; and, holding such a position and all its concomitants, to be ridiculous, her spirits rose rebelliously above her control; and, in a fit of utter recklessness of what might be thought of her by her fine new acquaintance, she suddenly, but softly, arose, and stealing on tip-toe behind Signor Piozzi; who was accompanying himself on the piano-forte to an animated arria parlante, with his back to the company, and his face to the wall; she ludicrously began imitating him by squaring her elbows, elevating them with ecstatic shrugs of the shoulders, and casting up her eyes, while languishingly reclining her head; as if she were not less enthusiastically, though somewhat more suddenly, struck with the transports of harmony than himself.

This grotesque ebullition of ungovernable gaiety was not perceived by Dr. Johnson, who faced the fire, with his back to the performance and the instrument. But the amusement which such an unlooked for exhibition caused to the party, was momentary for Dr. Burney, shocked lest the poor Signor should observe, and be hurt by this mimicry, glided gently round to Mrs. Thrale, and, with something between pleasantry and severity, whispered to her, "Because, Madam, you have no ear for music, will you destroy the attention of all who, in that one point, are otherwise gifted?"
It was now that shone brightest attribute of Mrs. Thrale, sweetness of temper. She took this rebuke with a candour, and a sense of its justice the most amiable; she nodded her approbation of the admonition; and, returning to her chair, quietly sat down, as she afterwards said, like a pretty little miss, for the remainder of one of the most humdrum evenings that she had ever passed.\(^5\)

This, surely, is one of the most hilarious and ironical episodes in all English literature.

The family of her friend Burney proved interesting to Mrs. Thrale, but she found them incomprehensible in her scheme of life. She states as her opinion of them:

The family of the Burneys are a very surprizing Set of People; their Esteem & fondness for the Dr seems to inspire them all with a Desire not to disgrace him,—so every individual of it must write and read and be literary: He is the only Man I ever knew, who being not rich, was beloved by his Wife & Children: 'tis very seldom that a person's own Family will give him Credit for Talents which bring in no Money to make them fine or considerable. Burney's talents do indeed bring in something, but still I shd expect a rich Linendraper to be better beloved in his own house—and nobody is so much beloved.—--\(^6\)

She found, however, that she could quite agree with them in their regard for their husband and father, for she says:

The Doctor is a Man quite after my own Heart, if he has any Fault it is too much Obsequiousness, though I should not object to a Quality my Friends are so little troubled with.—his following close upon the heels of Johnson or Baretti makes me feel him softer though; like turning the Toothpick after you have rubbed your Gums with the Brush & immediately applying the Sponge to them. \(^7\)

\(^5\) D'Arblay, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 111.

\(^6\) Balderston, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 399.

\(^7\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 368.
Not a small part of her regard for him was the fact that he had no inconsiderable talent in that literary performance which was almost a necessity in the Streatham group. She writes of him in 1777:

...it appears to me he could write admirable Verses had he Leisure and Inclination so to do. He has shewn me in Confidence a little Poem partly on the Plan & in the Spirit of the Dunciad in which are some Strokes of Satire well express'd, with great fertility of Allusion too, & his personified Characters of Science, Wit, and Taste, are as happily finished as 'tis possible....I have not the lines about me.8

The main quality, however, which was necessary in any man who was to be a success at Streatham, aside from the indispensable attributes of good manners and some intellectual ability, was that of being politely and gallantly in love with its mistress. It is significant that she says, "My heart opens spontaneously to Murphy, Seward or Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, & runs forward a Mile to meet my dear Doctor Burney."9 And again, "The men I love best are Johnson, Scrase, and Sir Philip Jennings Clerke: The Men I like best in the world are Burney, Solander, and the Bishop of Peterborough."10

She liked intensely the feminine feeling she achieved by being able to record of one of her admirers:

8 Ibid., p1 217.
9 Ibid., p. 378.
10 Ibid., p. 444.
I have just recollected some Verses of Dr. Burney's on my saying I was ashamed to think how much he praised me

    Honest Praise you may parry as much as you will
And ever 'tis forbidden to taste it:
For you I brimfull will the Incense Pot fill,
Yet never can lavish or waste it.

Your Head I have ne'er thought so empty & light
    That such Vapours could injure or turn it;
What I say of your Worth you must hear day & Night
    From Wits that can better discern it.

More justly decide of yourself and of me
    Nor the Sycophant's Trade think I follow,
E'er such a vile Slave to the Great I would be
    I'd like Marsyas be flay'd by Apollo.11

and it stirred her womanly ego to discover among her male guests the emotions which enabled her to say:

    Burney pretends to be jealous of Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, who has been very assiduous about me of late,...how little Cause has he to be jealous of any one--next to Johnson and Scrase I love the dear Doctor to be sure.12

It delighted her to see evidences of jealousy between Piazzi and Dr. Burney, for she writes:

    Mr. Johnson praises Hester's Diligence at her Classical Studies liberally & kindly--She is a good Girl: She has made vast Improvements too under Miss Guest (a tailor's daughter of Bath, who gave Queeney singing lessons. Later she became the "great Mrs. Miles," and instructed Princess Charlotte of Wales.) & Piazzi; & Dr. Burney is jealous of that I see: he is a Monkey to be jealous of Piazzi, he particularly recommended him to our notice.13

Could anything be more arch than that "monkey?"

    In Mrs. Thrale's estimation, Burney fell down badly

11 Ibid., p. 373.
12 Ibid., p. 372.
13 Ibid., p. 455.
in only two of the classifications in her rating sheet; those two items were wit, and humor. In all the other columns, he rates more highly than any other man in the list, except Johnson.

In spite of this accolade (for Mrs. Thrale is a severe judge), she did not deny him his human failures; for instance, she notes: "Burney hates Pepys because he is a Whig," and, "Doctor Burney--who lived long among the Grevilles hates Mrs Montagu--I mean in his way of hating, whose manners are as sweet as his Musick;" She goes no farther than these cryptic utterances, and leaves her reader in complete bewilderment as to the whys and wherefores of the dislike.

There are many clues to the Thrales' estimation of their guests; among them are the animal-game, the meat-dish game, the flower-game, and the material-game. Doctor Burney appears in only one of these amusements,—the food-game. Here, he is likened to a "dish of Fine Green Tea," which this writer would interpret to mean a delicate, fastidious, subtle, and rather weak sort of a person.

For a thoughtful and permanent character analysis, however, the portrait-verses will serve better than any other. Mrs. Thrale puts down in her Thraliana:

14 Ibid., p. 378.
15 Ibid., p. 136.
16 See Appendices A.B.C.D.
Next follows Dear Doctor Burney; let me try not to be too partial to a Friend from whom I never did receive any thing but Pleasure. his sweet Daughter whom I dearly love, will scarce think the portrait sufficiently favourable—yet she might trust him with me; 'tis lucky enough that he so closely follows his perfect Opposite Baretti.

See here happy Contrast! in Burney combine, Every Power to please, every Talent to shine; In professional Science a second to none, In social—if second—tho' Shyness alone; So 'sits the sweet Violet close to the Ground, While Holyoaks and Sunflowers plant it around: This Character form'd free, confiding, & kind, Grown cautious by Habit, by Station confin'd, Tho' born to improve and enlighten our days, In a supple Facility fixes its Praise: And contented to soothe, unambitious to strike, Is the favorite of all Men,—of all Men alike.

'Tis thus while the Wines of Frontiniac impart, Their sweets to our Palate, their Warmth to our heart; All in Praise of a Liquor so luscious agree, From the Monarch of France to the wild Cherokee. 17

In August of 1778 Dr. Burney presented his daughter, Fanny, to the Thrales for her first visit to Streatham.

She says of her treatment there:

From the very day of this happy inauguration of his daughter at Streatham, the Doctor had the parental satisfaction of seeing her as flatteringly greeted there as himself. So vivacious, indeed, was the partiality towards her of its inhabitants, that they pressed him to make over to them all the time he could spare her from her home; and appropriated an apartment as sacredly for her use, when she could occupy it, as another, far more deservedly, though not more cordially, had, many years previously, been held sacred for Dr. Johnson. 18

Indeed, by July of 1781, the little Burney had become so

17 Ibid., p. 475.
18 D'Arblay, op. cit., II, 171.
much a fixture and a necessity to Streatham, that Mrs. Thrâle was taking a proprietary air about her and finding it incomprehensible that her father should desire some of her time. She scolds in *Thraliana*:

> What a Blockhead Dr. Burney is, to be always sending for his Daughter so! What a Monkey! is not She better and happier with me than She can be any where else? Johnson is enraged at the silliness of their Family Conduct, and Mrs Byron disgusted: I confess myself provoked excessively but I love the Girl so dearly—and the Dr too for that matter, only that he has such odd Notions of superiority in his own house, & will have his Children under his Feet forsooth rather than let 'em live in Peace Plenty, and Comfort any where from home. If I did not provide Fanny with every wearable, every Washable, indeed, it would not vex me to be served so; but to see the Impossibility of compensating for the Pleasures of St Martin's Street, makes me at once merry & mortified.

Doctor Burney did not like his Daughter should learn Latin even of Johnson who offered to teach her for Friendship, because then She would have been as wise as himself forsooth, & Latin was too Masculine for Misses—anarrow Souled Goose-Cap the Man must be at last; agreeable and amiable all the while too beyond allmost any other Human Creature. Well! Mortal Man is but a paltry Animal! the best of us have such Drawbacks both upon Virtue Wisdom & Knowledge.19

Mrs. Thrâle was no longer quite so indulgent of her dear Doctor Burney. Her "heart was not running quite so far" nor quite so fast to meet him as it had done previously. Even before Dr. Burney had begun to resent the Thrâle demand on his daughter's time, Mrs. Thrâle had recorded a little crack in the wall of their friendship. It is possible that he had already seen the way the Thrâle breeze

was blowing the Piozzi leaves, even previous to the death of Mr. Thrale. In any case, he was showing his disapproval of Mrs. Thrale's partiality for Piozzi. Whether the case was actually jealousy on his part, as Mrs. Thrale claimed, or was disapproval of a situation he saw impending, is conjectural. In any case, Mrs. Thrale wrote:

Doctor Burney has translated the famous old French Chansons Militaires—all about Roland: how happy, how skillful, how elegant is that dear Creature's Pen! but his Mind is so elegant, every thing that comes from it, partakes of the Flavour: Yet there is no Perfection to be found in Character: Burney is narrow enough about his own Art: envious of Hawkins, jealous of Piozzi; till I listened a little after Musick, I thought he had not a fault but Obsequiousness: that is a Vice de Profession, however—so God a Mercy Burney! I do love the man; he is so much to my natural Taste. 20

At the time of Mr. Thrale's first serious illness, the crack was visibly widened, for the harassed Mrs. Thrale felt that Dr. Burney, who had been dining with her on the evening of the catastrophe, had shown very little interest in her welfare at that time. She angrily wrote:

Distress shews one's Friends; Seward was the first to fly to our Assistance; fetch Physicians, carry Reports, turn out troublesome Enquirers, attend Mr Thrale in all his Operations!...Johnson is away—down at Lichfield or Derby, or God knows where, something always happens when he is away... I expected more Attention from Burney!...Dr Burney's Indifference disgusts me.

....I shall never love Doctor Burney as I have

20 Ibid., p. 458.
loved Him, for there I expected Kindness, & deserved it—his Daughter has behav'd better than he,...21

Apparently, upon the recovery of Mr. Thrale, apologies and explanations were offered and accepted, for Mrs. Thrale appends a footnote to the above item, saying: Burney had no "Notion of the danger,—he did send Dr Bromfield."22 She may have been satisfied, but the reader of her notes is inevitably drawn to wonder why, if he were actually present when Mr. Thrale was brought into the house, he didn't have any "Notion of the Danger;" Seward and Clerke weren't that obtuse. In any case, by the month following her husband's seizure, she had forgotten her temporary pique with her friend, and, via Thraliana assured herself:

I have made it all up with Dr Burney, I mean in my Mind, for I never told him I loved him less than I had done; but he really had no Notion of Mr Thrale's danger, & so could not shew Apprehensions he did not feel.

Poor dear Man! he is sadly pressed for Pelf too I fear, the Times go so hard with him; his Book will never pay its own Expense I am confident, & in two or three Winters more—nothing new happening neither—people will be pretty sick of spending their Money to tickle their Ears, it begins already to grow a grand Thing to have a Concert; and seven Years ago—even the City Dames regaled their Company with Italian Musick & elegant Performers. a Harpsichord made by Rucker, & sold six Years ago for sixty five pounds was Yesterday disposed of for thirty, Burney says; & the Owners glad to get that.23

21 Ibid., p. 390.
22 Loc. cit.
23 Ibid., p. 395.
Again in 1782, Mrs. Thrale records, with what seems something akin to glee, that the fair S.S. was practicing her arts upon the head of the Burney family:

Sophy Streatfeild sent me these Verses yesterday, She has begun the new Year nicely with a new Conquest—Poor dear Doctor Burney! he is now the reigning Favourite, and She spares neither Pains nor Caresses to turn that good Man's head, much to the Vexation of his Family; particularly my Fanny, who is naturally provoked to see Sport made of her Father in his last Stage of Life by a Young Coquet whose sole Employment in this World seems to have been winning Men's hearts on purpose to fling them away. 24

In the winter of 1783, Mrs. Thrale had been contemplating the feasibility of a marriage to Piozzi. Her state of mind is too well known at that particular period, for this writer to need to discuss it; sufficient to say, she was absent, restless, moody, and, at times, hysterical.

According to his daughter, Dr. Burney had no inkling of the cause of his friend's worries:

...while ignorant yet of its cause, more and more struck he became at every meeting by a species of general alienation which pervaded all around at Streatham. His visits, which, heretofore, had seemed galas to Mrs. Thrale, were now begun and ended almost without notice; and all others—Dr. Johnson not excepted—were cast into the same gulph of general neglect, or forgetfulness; all—save singly this Memorialist!—to whom, the fatal secret once acknowledged, Mrs. Thrale clung for comfort; though she saw, and generously pardoned, how wide she was from meeting approbation. 25

Eventually, the Doctor became aware of what was troubling the mistress of Streatham; he could not have

24 Ibid., p. 523.
25 D'Arblay, op. cit., II, 245.
avoided knowing that Fanny was in the confidence of the agitated Mrs. Thrale, but though, on one occasion, he "sat silent and quiet....fully expecting a trusting communication" from Fanny, "She gave, however, none: his commands alone could have forced a disclosure;" he "respected her secrecy," and continued about his own affairs. 26 He did, however, as he drove his daughter home from her last visit to Streatham, turn back "his head towards the house, and, in a tone the most impressive, sign out: 'Adieu, Streatham! --Adieu!' " 27

In July of 1784, The good Doctor's forebodings proved most "ignominiously" true; the marriage of Mrs. Thrale and Signor Piozzi was consummated. The couple avoided any possibility of encountering their acquaintances, since among their friends:

Dr. Johnson, excepted, none amongst the latter were more painfully impressed than Dr. Burney; for none with more true grief had foreseen the mischief in its menace, or dreaded its deteriorating effect on her maternal devoirs. Nevertheless, conscious that if he had no weight, he had also no right over her actions, he hardened not his heart, when called upon by an appeal, from her own hand, to give her his congratulations but, the deed once irreversible, civilly addressed himself to both parties at once, with all of conciliatory kindness in good wishes and regard, that did least violence to his sentiments and principles.

.....The Doctor always waited, and his daughter always panted, for any opportunity that might re-open so dear a friendship, without warring

26 D'Arblay, op. cit., II, 248.

27 Loc. cit.
against their principles, or disturbing their reverence for truth.28

The Doctor may have "always waited...for any opportunity that might re-open so dear a friendship" but wait was all he assuredly did, for not until 1807 was their ruptured friendship even partway restored. At that time, he was wintering in Bath after a severe illness, and encountered Mrs. Piozzi purely by accident. He wrote in a letter to his daughter, a description of the position and feelings of the couple towards each other in 1808:

During my invalidity at Bath I had an unexpected visit from your Streatham friend, of whom I had lost sight for more than ten years. She still looks very well, but is graver, and candour itself; though she still says good things, and writes admirable notes and letters, I am told, to my granddaughters C. and M. of whom she is very fond. We shook hands very cordially, and avoided any allusion to our long separation and its cause; the Caro Sposa still lives, but is such an object from the gout that the account of his sufferings made me pity him sincerely; he wished, she told me, 'to see his old and worthy friend,' and, un beau matin, I could not refuse compliance with his wish. She nurses him with great affection and tenderness, never goes out or has company when he is in pain.29

Undoubtedly, she could not look with too great kindness, upon the man who, after the publication of her Anecdotes of Doctor Johnson, had written in the Monthly Review of May, 1786, an indignant attack upon her for "exposing his (Johnson's) failings and his weaknesses, to the curious,

28 Ibid., II, 391.

29 Barrett, op. cit., VI, 46.
yet fastidious eye of the Public.30 Nor, yet, could she completely forget the evil suspicion that her busy friend, Mrs. Lewis, implanted:

...that the posthumous Pamphlet called the Sentimental Mother, or a last Legacy from an old Friend to Hester Lynch Piozzi, was not Baretti's writing but Burney's.--Her Reasons are forcible, & She thinks herself sure of it. I should like to know which of my old Inmates I was obliged to: & whether Miss Thrale instigated that Insult as well as the rest.31

Even so, as always, she was willing to forget self in the needs and even the desires of those close to her.

Mrs. Piozzi's admirers must often wonder if, at no time, did Mrs. Piozzi recall to the virtuous doctor the scandal which rattled in his own closet, which she had recorded in Thraliana in 1779 and promptly forgotten. She said at that time:

Mrs Crewe asked me the other day if the Story in Fanny Burney's book--Evelina about Mr Macartney was not founded on Fact, for said she I heard it was true, and that she had told you so; and that you had told many, how the Anecdote or Circumstance or what you will of Macartney's going to shoot himself actually did happen to her own Brother Charles Burney, who having been expelled the University & forbidden his Father's house was actually discovered by his Sister Fanny in the desperate State mentioned of Macartney. I protested to Mrs Crewe that I had never heard a word on't before that moment, so that I never could have related what I never had heard, nor was inclined to invent it.--however said I the Story may be true, tho' tis false that I knew any thing of the matter--and accordingly the next Day when Burney came himself--I gave him a hint that I had heard somebody observe

30 Clifford, op. cit., p. 266.
31 Balderston, op. cit., p. 772.
that the Story of Macartney was written with such feeling, it must absolutely be founded on Fact; at this Discourse he changed Colour so often, and so apparently that tho' I instantly got quit of the Conversation--I left it however well persuaded that all Mrs Crewe said--or great part of it was but too true. A Strange World after all! 32

Footnote:
This strange story, in so far as it concerns Charles Burney's expulsion, is true, although it has so carefully been guarded by the Burney's family pride, and perhaps also by the charity of the Burney's biographers, that it has not been previously mentioned in the family records. Charles entered Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, at the beginning of Michaelmas term 1776, and "left college after a short time: he was detected removing books from the University Library..." Later Charles Burney became a distinguished Greek scholar, and in 1807, he received by royal command, the degree of M.A. from the University which had expelled him. 33

This is certainly a case of a glass house, and a far more fragile and transparent building than any that Mrs. Piozzi had erected to live in.

So far as we know, Mrs. Piozzi never stooped to petty recriminations with this particular traitor to her friendship, but that she never forgave him is apparent, for she wrote in her New Common Place Book after his death in 1814:

Burney--dead at last I am told at 89 Years old; and in the full possession of his Faculties:--They were extremely fine ones. He thought himself my Friend once I believe, whilst he thought the World was so:--when the Stream turned against the poor Straw, he helped retard its

32 Ibid., p. 360.
33 Ibid., p. 360, Footnote.
Progress with his Stick: & made his Daughter do it with her Fingers—The Stream however grew too strong, and forced the little Straw forward in Spite of them—Oh then they cower'd, & sneaked again, and would again have plaid the Parasite.34

34 Clifford, op. cit., p. 414.
Sir Philip Jennings Clerke d. 1788

Sir Philip Jennings Clerke was the son of Philip Jennings, Esq. of Dudlesone Hall, Salop, and one of a family of three sons and eight daughters. He was M.P. for Totnes, and according to Boswell who met him at the Thrales' in 1781, was a man who "had the appearance of a gentleman of ancient family, well advanced in life. He wore a black velvet coat, with his own white hair in a bag of goodly size, an embroidered waistcoat, and very rich lace ruffles."¹

In March of 1779, Mrs. Thrale had occasion to consult Sir Philip about the plantation of her park at Streatham, and in recording this event, writes:

Sir Philip Clerke has been consulted about the Alterations we have lately made in our Pleasure Ground—he is a famous Orator on the side of the Whigs in Parliament, so I call his Walk his Seat &c. The Phillipicks of Demosthenes. He was formerly a Gentleman well known by the name of Phil: Jennings; & being a Man of Family & Fortune, rose to the Rank of Colonel in the Army, when he was supposed a favourite with many a handsome Woman, & particularly with M' Thrale's Widow Sister Lady Lade, by whom I have heard he had a Child—however in process of Time he had an Estate left him in Hampshire by an old Sir Something Clerke (Sir Talbot Clerke, his mother's father of Leicestershire) whose Name he took, & a new Patent in order to succ(e)d him likewise in the Title. It was on this Occasion that M't Thrale's other Sister M'ts Plumbe now Lady Mayoress, said Lord! how odd it is that Colonel Jennings should have thus changed both his Names; both says I Madam what do you mean?—why says She, was he not Colonel Jennings before, & now is not he no Philip Clerke? I fancy she thought Colonel a Name.²

¹ Boswell, op. cit., IV, 80-81.
² Balderston, op. cit., p. 373.
He may have been "A Man of Family and Fortune", but the color of his politics did not endear him to Streatham, for Mrs. Thrale records in Thraliana that Johnson and Dr. Burney "hated Clerke and all for the same Reason, because he is a Whig," and Fanny Burney wrote in her diary:

...Sir Philip Clerke supped with us, and came to breakfast the next morning. I am quite sorry this Sir Philip is so violent and so wrong in his political opinions and conduct, for in private life he is all gentleness, good breeding, and friendliness.

On another occasion in 1779, when the Streathamites were all congregated at the Park, Fanny records in her journal:

The next day Sir Philip Jennings Clerke came. He is not at all a man of letters, but extremely well-bred, nay, elegant, in his manners, and sensible and agreeable in his conversation. He is a professed minority man, and very active and zealous in the opposition. He had, when I came, a bill in agitation concerning contractors--too long a matter to explain upon paper--but which was levelled against bribery and corruption in the ministry, and which he was to make a motion upon in the House of Commons the next week.

Men of such different principles as Dr. Johnson and Sir Philip, you may imagine, cannot have much sympathy or cordiality in their political debates; however, the very superior abilities of the former, and the remarkable good breeding of the latter, have kept both upon good terms; though they have had several arguments in which each has exerted his utmost force for conquest.

Fanny, in her ingenious way, chooses to give quite

3 Ibid., p. 379.
4 Barrett, op. cit., I, 327.
5 Ibid., I, 199.
some space of writing to this debate between Sir Philip and Dr. Johnson. The discussion became decidedly acrimonious, as discussions were apt to become when the Great Cham felt strongly upon a subject, and the "extremely well-bred" Clerke became so "baffled" though not "convinced," that he "was self-compelled to be quiet." Mr. Thrale, who had made a wager with Sir Philip on the outcome of the bill, must have won his bet; for according to the Gentleman's Magazine, "Sir Ph. J. Cl--ke brought forward the bill for excluding contractors with government from sitting in the house; which was rejected by a majority of 41."  

The bill, however, while temporarily down, was very decidedly not out. In the next three years, Sir Philip must have been very assiduous about his fence-mending, for in 1782 Mrs. Thrale wrote to Fanny Burney:

So Sir Philip's bill is passed, and I am so glad! Why your father says that there would have been a rebellion if his bill had not passed. A rebellion! and all about our dear innocent sweet Sir Philip who, while his humanity is such that he would scruple no fatigue to save the life of a lamb, would have drenched the nation in blood without ever foreseeing, or ever repenting the consequences.

Sir Philip's bill, The Contractor's Bill, which was thrown out by the Lords in 1780, was brought in again in March of

6 Ibid., I, 199-201.
7 Gentleman's Magazine, December, 1779, p. 575.
8 Barrett, op. cit., II, 82.
1782, and successfully passed both houses. 9

Previous to this successful period in the "violent Whig's" political affairs, Mrs. Thrale had become somewhat alarmed at the possibility of government confiscation of the letters which she and Sir Philip had been exchanging for over twelve months, and in which, she feared, her expressions of sympathy and understanding for his political beliefs might well be misunderstood. As a consequence, she concluded that it might be the better part of wisdom to retrieve her part of the correspondence between them, so she asked him to return her letters. He maintained his reputation for good breeding in this instance, as in all others, for she writes after his visit to her with the incriminating documents:

What a Man of Honour! what a glorious Fellow is Sir Philip Jennings Clerke! he and I have now for more than a Year I think--kept up a free & unrestrained Correspondence by Letter, but latterly these tumultuous times have alarmed my Fears, & such has been his Conduct in publick matters, that I knew not when his papers might be seized--this last Time therefore of my being in London I mentioned MY Apprehensions to him upon the Subject, & that very Afternoon he brought me all My Letters to burn--full as they were of Expressions of Tenderness toward him he said,—my Peace was of more Consequence than his Pleasure—so there they were: I burn'd them to be sure, & a fine Flame of Friendship, Folly, & Politicks they made; but how must this Behaviour of his exalt him in my Opinion—Noble Creature! I do love him & from the Bottom of my Heart.— 10

9 Balderston, op. cit., p. 308.

10 Ibid., p. 444-5.
She had come a long way from the time in 1778, when she looked upon Sir Philip's politics with an amused and tolerant eye which enabled her to write what she termed "Another of my politickal Frolicks" entitled A Tale for the Times. Her "political Frolick" was a very clever political satire, dedicated to Clerke, and actually published in The Public Advertiser of November 28, 1778.11

Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, at first glance seems an anomalous member of the Streatham Coterie since he had almost no pretensions to literature or the literary life. Mrs. Thrale's first comment on his character, in fact, is one of amazement at his ignorance, for she says:

I was I think never so surprized at any Instance of Ignorance as at one this Evening from Sir Philip Jennings Clerke; He really did not know a Quarto Book from an Octavo nor an octavo from a 12mo now so near 70 Years of Age-Risum teneatis.12

Nothing hindered, however, by this flaw in his tastes, the diligent Clerke pursued his course of ingratiating himself with Mrs. Thrale, for whom, it is almost a certainty, he cherished a profounder feeling than mere friendship, even in the very early stages of his acceptance at Streatham. That he was gaining ground was indubitable, for in March of that year, his hostess writes:

Burney pretends to be jealous of Sir Phillip Jennings Clerke who has been very assiduous about

11 Ibid., p. 349.
12 Ibid., p. 374.
about me of late, & seems to pant after our Society—
...Sir Phillip has nothing particular to recommend
him but good plain sense & Manners highly polished—
a Civility of a very fine sort it is though, always
gentle & never obsequious,—the Manner of an old
Horse Officer entirely, & not too ceremonious neither.
Manner however, & Courage I suppose, is all the old
Baronet has; for there is a total absence of Lite-
arture, & an Ignorance of common things in that way
Which amazes one. He has a good Taste however in
Gardening, and a good Taste for my Conversation, &
for what ever I may say. I already hope great
tenderness from him, & feel an earnest Desire of
making myself agreeable which is always a certain
Symptom of Liking, so well done Sir Philip!13

In June of 1779, he had so far consolidated his
gains by confessing his past rakeries, expiating on the
sorrows of his bereavement, and extolling the virtue and
wisdom of his hostess, that Mrs. Thrale was quite enchanted,
and more than sympathetic. She says of him:

Sir Philip Jennings Clerke & I have had a long
Taste a Teste to day; and he has treated me with
unreserved Friendship & Confidence, & told me all
his Sorrows: I hope I may have it in my Power to
alleviate them; a New Friend has that only Advantage
over an old one, that he can suggest new Ideas on a
hackney'd Subject; perhaps that may be the Case here.
he honors me with extreme partiality & perfect
Reverence, & will possibly permit such Arguments from
me, as he would reject if offered by another Person
of whom he has less Esteem. Of What Advantage is
unsullied Character! one has so much Happiness of
other People's in one's power! here is a Man eminent
for past Rakeries throwing his whole Heart into my
Lap, only because he knows that I am virtuous; --May
God give me Grace long to preserve that Reputation
by which my Fellow Creatures may be benefited, and
may he defend my Soul from Pride in the Conciouness
of its own Purity. may he give me that true Love of
my Friends & Neighbors wch stops not at wishing, or
even at promoting their Temporal Happiness, but
extends to that State where Sorrow shall be remembered
only as a means to Joy, & a Step to everlasting Bliss.14

13 Ibid., pp. 372-3.
14 Ibid., p. 388.
The clever politician may have been unliterary, but he was a skilled psychologist, for he had accomplished that most perspicacious of masculine wiles, that of making a woman feel womanly and feminine. She had absolved him from the wickedness of his "wild oats," she had comforted him in his grief, and in the so doing, "her heart opened spontaneously to...Sir Philip Jennings Clerke," and she felt that most intoxicating of all female sensations, "the power of one Sex over the other." She admits quite frankly to herself:

I should not have the same Power myself over Johnson's Spirits or Sir Philip Clerke's, if I were not a Woman; they would neither of 'em have trusted their own Sex with such Secrets as they have entrusted to me.15

And in the warm feeling of being the feminine comforter and confessor, she transferred her sensation of well-being to the prime force of the feeling. She says:

Sir Philip Jennings Clerke is a Conquest I shall long be proud of; he is a Conquest made by Virtue; his Regard for me is boundless, & it is founded in a Notion that I am better & wiser than other Women are; while I continue good & wise therefore, I shall have his Esteem, & he is an extremely amiable respectable Character.--Touched by God's Grace, I think in the latter part of his Life, & brought to a Conviction of Sin by the Affliction of his Daughter's untimely Death, he flies to Religion and to Friendship for Comfort, & he shall never want one to speak Peace to his Soul while Life is lent to H.O.P.

NB I will make him leave off wearing Black; 'tis a Singularity that can do no good; is I

15 Ibid., p. 423.
should fear displeasing to God, & at best but an ill Compliment to his other Children:--16

In June of 1779, at the time of Mr. Thrale's first serious attack, Mrs. Thrale's friendship was intensified for her elderly admirer, for she says of him in especially reproachful accents since she was mistakenly feeling betrayed by Dr. Burney and others:

Distress shows one's Friends; Seward was the first to fly to our Assistance;...I kept Sir Philip away, (His ill Health, & Age and Nervous Disposition could not have borne the Sight of an old Friend so suffering.) or he would have done all in his Power; he has sent, & written, & run about with honest and unaffected Agitation.17

Within a month, however, Sir Philip was called upon to bear an additional load of grief and sorrow in spite of his "ill Health, & Age and Nervous Disposition" for he lost his beloved son, who "twice inoculated he at length caught the Small Pox naturally, and died of it ten days ago. the father is half wild, & writes to me to comfort him. Poor, melancholy Creature! how shall I comfort him?"18

A year later, Sir Philip had returned to Streatham, and Mrs. Thrale found him:

...ten Years older than when he went away: his Family have teized him & lower'd his Spirits, & he looks--Oh how he does look! are Women wise

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16 Ibid., pp. 390-1.
17 Ibid., p. 390.
18 Ibid., p. 415.
to make their Husbands hate home so; & fly for relief & Comfort to less perplexing, less harassing Companions? Ah No, No, No! 19

The groundwork had been laid for that period in Mrs. Thrale's widowhood when she would write:

Tis now Sir Philip Jennings Clerke's Turn to torment me; he makes Love to me now quite openly & seriously; says he shall marry me for that his Wife is Ill. Oh! what variety, what change of Torments from all but my Dear, my delicate, my disinterested Piozzi! 20

and:

The Persecution I endure from Men too who want to marry me—in good time—is another Reason for my desiring to be gone; I wish to marry none of them, and Sir Philip's teasing me completed my Mortification; to see that one can rely on Nobody! 21

In 1781, however, at the time of the Gordon riots, Mrs. Thrale had no such feeling of Clerke's unreliability. This disturbance, which broke out on June 2 and lasted until June 9, was a fanatical Protestant protest, led by Lord George Gordon, against the modification of the Catholic disability law, which Parliament had consented to in 1779. The reason for the Thrales' leaving Bath, on June 10, was the appearance of a notice in a Bath and Bristol paper of that date *in which Mr. Thrale was asserted to be a papist. This villainous falsehood

19 Ibid., p. 478.
20 Ibid., p. 538.
21 Ibid., p. 541.
terrified us even for his personal safety, and Mrs. Thrale and I agreed it was best to leave Bath directly, and travel about the country. Concerning them, Mrs. Thrale wrote:

Mr. Perkins saved the Place from the Rioters to enjoy the Dignity of it himself; he has now a fourth Share, & will perhaps in Time be Master of it all; My Dear Sir Philip saved it for me & for my Children; I thanked him for it again today, and earnestly pray to God to bless him for his true, his tender Friendship: I think if ever one human Being loved & respected another, that Man from his Heart loves & respects me. I have been, & am now exceedingly ill, & Good Lord! how attentive, how kind he is! To him & my sweet Mr. Byron I sent the earliest Intelligence of the ease my Mind had received, they love me with more of their Souls than any body now alive I think.

and:

...I got back to Bath again and staid there till the Riots drove us all away the first Week in June: we made a dawdling Journey cross the Country to Brighton where all was likely to be at peace: the Letters we found there however, shewed us how near we were to Ruin here in the Borough; where nothing but the astonishing Presence of Mind shewed by Perkins in amusing the Mob with Meat and Drink & Huzzas, till Sir Philip Jennings Clerke could get the Troops & pack up the Counting House Bills Bonds &c.; & carry them which he did to Chelsea College for Safety; could have secured us from actual Undoing. The Villains had broke in, & our Brew-house would have blazed in ten Minutes; when a property of 150,000 £ would have been utterly lost, & its once flourishing possessors quite undone.

22 Barrett, op. cit., I, 421-2.
23 Balderston, op. cit., p. 499.
I left Mr. Thrale at Brighthelmston, & came to Town again to see what was left to be done: we have now got Arms, & men to defend ourselves by Force, if further violence is intended. Whenever I come on these mad Errands, Dear Mr. Johnson is sure always to live with me, & Sir Philip comes every day at some Hour or another!—Good Creature how kind he is! and how much I ought to love him! God knows I am not in this Case wanting to my Duty. 24

The trouble subsided in due course of time, and peaceful days were again seen at Southwark and at Streatham. Sir Philip was often to be found there walking in his special section of the pleasure grounds, chatting with the other guests, and in general living the life of those who were intimately welcomed to the family of the Thrales.

Sir Philip was somewhat unique, however, in the Streatham group because of his distaste for the "fair SS," and her exquisite weeping. Fanny relates a prolonged discussion in which Sir Philip assures Mr. Thrale and Seward (who had confessed a remote desire to "take her to church") that Sophy, "taking away her Greek... was as ignorant as a butterfly," and that should Seward marry her, He'd be "devilish tired of her... in half a year," because "a crying wife would never do." 25

Somewhat later on in the course of the house party, Mrs. Thrale induced Sophy to produce the "crystal

24 Ibid., p. 437.

tears into her soft eyes," for the benefit of Clerke who had not seen this phenomenon before. At the sight he had to call upon all the good breeding of which he was possessed, in order to maintain his reputation for "elegant manners." Fanny says:

Loud and rude bursts of laughter broke from us all at once. How, indeed, could they be restrained?...Sir Philip, I thought, would have died in convulsions; for his laughter and his politeness, struggling furiously with one another, made him almost black in the face.26

When he left Streatham from his last visit to that famous house, Burney wrote of him:

Sir Philip Jennings has spent three days here, at the close of which he took leave of us for the summer, and set out for his seat in Hampshire. We were all sorry to lose him; for he is a most comfortable man in society, for he is always the same--easy, good-humoured, agreeable, and well-bred. He has made himself a favourite to the whole house, Dr. Johnson included.....27

Her expression might well have served as his epitaph, for Mrs. Piozzi's final record of him at the time of his death at the George Inn, Southampton in January of 1788 can say no more for this good and true friend:

The Loss of poor dear Sir Philip goes to my Heart; there was a Man would have gone through Fire, nay he did go thro' Fire to serve me: and now he will have his Reward

26 Loc. cit.

27 Ibid., I, 250.
too--poor dear old Man! if I had not loved him
I had been a Monster, if I were not sorry for
him I were a Jew! 28

28 Balderston, _op. cit._, p. 705.
Another of the intimates of the Streatham circle was William Seward, the dilettante son of a wealthy brewer who, if not a brilliant literary light of this select group, at least was a sparkler, whose oddities, whimsicalities, and general pleasantness kept things from becoming at all dull or stereotyped during his sojourns among them. He seems to have been an intellectual, dandified, formally and elegantly conventional, witty young man, whose judgment was trusted by Mrs. Thrale that he was allowed to assist her in collecting some rare books for her own library. She mentions in her diary of 1780:

"I have made a Collection of Anas with Seward's help,—I can now count 20 of them in good Editions;"¹

He, himself, had published some excellent and entertaining anecdotal material under the titles of *Anecdotes of some Distinguished Persons*, and *Biographiana*.

Mrs. Thrale met Seward at Bath in May 1776, and described him to Johnson at that time as "An Irishman... very hot-headed, loud, and lively, and sure to be a favourite with you, ...for he can live with a man of ever so odd a temper, he tells us."²

Something over a year later, he appears for the first time in *Thraliana*, and after having learned to know

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¹ Balderston, *op. cit.*., p. 467.
² Ibid., p. 220.
him somewhat better than she had at Bath, Mrs. Thrale's opinion of him seems to have undergone a radical revision, as it was fated to do at least twice more before the end of their relationship. In Dec. of 1777, she thought of him as "beneficent though frigid," "amiable though he does not even wish to be loved", of such fine "Literary Character" and "perpetual ill Health" that "One loves him in spite of both of one's self and him." In recommending him to Fanny Burney on the occasion of their first simultaneous visit to Streatham, she said:

I hope you will know more of him, for I want you to take to him. He is a charming young man, though not without his oddities. Few people do him justice, because, as Dr. Johnson calls him, he is an abrupt young man; but he has excellent qualities, and has excellent understanding. He has the misfortune to be an hypochondriac, so he runs about the world to borrow spirits, and to forget himself. But after all, if his disorders are merely imaginary, the imagination is sufficient, and therefore, I am sorry for him.  

and, indeed, in making an exact list of her best-loved friends, she placed him fifth among them all:

...Johnson is next to my own immediate Family in my favour, then Mr Scrase whom I do love and honour with true and affectionate Esteem, then Burney Murphy & Seward—the rest are at an immeasurable Distance as to real Kindness.

In spite of her stated regard for him, when Seward somehow got wind of her activities with Thraliana, and

3 Loc.cit.
4 Barrett, op.cit., I, 140.
5 Balderston, op.cit., p. 372.
"begged hard to see it", she wrote: "a likely matter I should shew the Thraliana: he is a very odd Man; so literary, so delicate, yet so course and illbred-Affected upon Principle, and agreeable (so far as he is agreeable,) from the very Things that would make one hate any other Man."6

Mrs. Thrale thinks of him as "Course and Illbred", but during the scene where the beautiful Sophy is made to cry for benefit of Fanny Burney, Seward was the only member who had the good taste to see the episode for what it was, and rebuke his hostess, for exploiting her guest by saying: "If I had been her, I would never have visited you again."7 His "courseness" however, did not prevent her from thinking very highly of him, at least until the beginning of the affair with Piozzi, when he elected to side with Queeney and her friends. She says of him, while trying to analyze her strange lack of affection for Pepys, "I always feel trying to fondle Pepys, while my Heart opens spontaneously to Murphy Seward or Sir Philip Jennings Clerke."8 And, as a further indication of his admission to the affections of the Thrales', he, along with Miss Owen, and Mrs. D'Avenant, was asked to serve as godparent for their eleventh child, Caecilia. This circumstance gives Mrs. Thrale's readers cause for wonder

6 Ibid., p. 460.
7 Barrett, op.cit., I, 233.
8 Balderston, op.cit., p. 378.
when they recall her Streatham rating sheet, and realize that Seward was not deemed worthy of any points at all in Religion, humour, or Good Humour. The characteristics which must have made him seem fit to undertake the care of Caecilia, should it have become necessary, were a score of 17 points in Morality, a score of 12 in Scholarship, a score of 18 on "wit," and 10 in Manner.

Another of the qualifications which made Seward welcome among his friends was that of dry humor. Fanny Burney gives us a perfect illustration of that ability when she describes an incident of Crutchley issuing an invitation to Seward, and Seward accepting it. Miss Burney doesn't specifically say that the two men were acting the part of vaudevillians, but what other interpretation is possible? In writing of it, she says:

I cannot remember half the absurd things that passed; but a few, by way of specimen, I will give.

"How long do you intend to stay with me Seward? cried Mr. Crutchley; "how long do you think you can bear it?"

"Oh, I don't know; I shan't fix," answered the other: "just as I find it."

"Well, but—when shall you come? Friday or Saturday? I think you'd better not come till Saturday."

"Why yes, I believe on Friday."

"On Friday! Oh, you'll have too much of it! what shall I do with you?"

"Why on Sunday we'll dine at the Lyells'. Mrs. Lyell is a charming woman; one of the most elegant creatures I ever saw."
"Wonderfully so," cried Mr. Crutchley; "I like her extremely—an insipid idiot! She never opens her mouth but in a whisper; I never heard her speak a word in my life. But what must I do with you on Monday? will you come away?

"Oh no; I'll stay and see it out."

"Why, how long shall you stay? Why I must come away myself on Tuesday."

"Oh, I shan't settle yet," cried Mr. Seward, very drily. "I shall put up six shirts, and then do as I find it."

"Six shirts!" exclaimed Mr. Crutchley; and then with equal dryness added—"Oh, I suppose you wear two a-day."

and so on.

Probably the aspect of William Seward which most perturbed Mrs. Thrale was his so-called hypochondria, which, incidentally has been established since that time as a genuine valetudinarianism and resulted in his death in 1799 at the early age of forty-eight.

Apparently, Seward was not lugubrious about his frail health, for one of the earliest entries in the Thraillana was a very poor joke concerning it, between him and Mrs. Thrale. Seward said one day, "My Constitution is so very atrabilious; that if I marry, my Children's Blood will be nothing but Ketchup;—especially if I get Joe Dickenson's Daughter to have me: it will replied I, have a Chance to be some what like Ketchup indeed, when

'tis nothing but Essence of Mushrooms. Mrs. Thrale had a strange theory concerning the origin and continuance of Seward's concern over his health; she felt that he had more or less been driven to that course by hearing much discussion of the subject when but a child. It was her opinion that,

People have a strange Power of making their Own Characters;—Commended in Youth or even in Childhood perhaps, for some particular Quality—they drive the Thing forward by that delight which every one naturally takes in talk of himself—Yes I was always mischievous; or I was always a good natured Fool—the Dupe to my Play-mates who often had not half my sense &c....the boy & girl quickly resolve to realize this nonsense, chiefly for the pleasure of hearing it over again too....One would not however at first suppose this could go on to Manhood, but when one hears Johnson tell how he was always a sullen dog,.....when one hears Seward say how sickly he has been from his Childhood and sees him go through long Courses of unnecessary Med'cine to keep up his Character of a Hypochondriack;.....one must be careful to not take up a Character or contribute to the giving one to another.

It is an original theory, and perhaps not entirely fantastic. However, subsequent events proved psychologist Thrale wrong in this particular instance, since Seward died comparatively early. Unless, of course, his very "long Courses of unnecessary Med'cine" shortened his life, as, I have no doubt, they were the ultimate cause of his failure of reason.

Fanny Burney gives us a very nice finale to the Crutchley-Seward invitation and acceptance. After the visit

10 Balderston, op. cit., p. 268

11 Ibid., p. 358.
was concluded, Crutchley told his friends at Streatham:

When he was at my place, he did himself up pretty handsomely; he ate cherries till he complained most bitterly of indigestion, and he poured down Madeira and Port most plentifully, but without relief. Then he desired to have some peppermint-water, and he drank three glasses; still that would not do, and he said he must have a large quantity of ginger. We had no such thing in the house. However, he had brought some, it seems, with him, and then he took that, but still to no purpose. At last, he desired some brandy and tossed off a glass of that; and, after all, he asked for a dose of rhubarb. Then we had to send and inquire all over the house for this rhubarb, but our folks had hardly ever heard of such a thing. I advised him to take a good bumper of gin and gunpowder, for that seemed almost all he had left untried. 2

If the man kept up this pace is it any wonder that he was ill?

A very definite indication of Mrs. Thrale's understanding of the character of William Seward is to be found in the very clever dialogue 13 which she wrote around his central character. She says, in writing of these satires: 
"...yet they have some small merit too, from the perfect & finished Resemblance every Speaker's Speech & Phrase has to the person speaking...not a Creature says but what I am morally certain the people significant or insignificant would most certainly say, at that Time & in that Situation in which I put them." 14

If the characterization of these dialogues is true, and the literature of the period seems to bear it out, then

12 Barrett, op. cit., II, 17.

13 Hester Lynch Thrale, Dialogues of Hester Lynch Thrale.

14 Balderston, op. cit., p. 402.
Seward was indeed, "a very odd man."

In spite of Mrs. Thrale's admonition to Fanny Burney, on the occasion of her first meeting Seward, that she "hoped she would take to him," Fanny was anything but impressed. It seems that Seward made the presumptuous mistake of declaring out loud to Fanny his admiration of the author of *Evelina*. This caddish act convinced the delicate Fanny that Seward was nothing less than a boor, and it took quite some period of time for the luckless young man to overcome her prejudice. One of Fanny's first expressions of his character was a comparison between him and Crutchley to the effect that, "Mr. Seward has a great deal of vanity and no pride," while "Mr. Crutchley has a great deal of pride and no vanity."15

The astute Mr. Seward, quite possibly realizing in which way the wind blew, soon set to work to rectify matters, and in a burst of repartee suggested that he and Fanny write a comedy and make her the heroine. In the spirit of jest, she agreed, with the stipulation that he should be the hero. The title was to be "The Indifferent Man," Or "Everything a Bore" with the hero being Mr. Dry, an appellation which Fanny had saddled upon Seward and which had so caught hold that "she knew not when he should lose it."16

In the course of plotting the story of the play,

15 Barrett, *op. cit.*, II, 12.

16 *Ibid.*, I, 241
Fanny says:

And then we ran on, jointly planning a succession of ridiculous scenes; he lashing himself pretty freely, though not half so freely, or so much to the purpose, as I lashed him; for I attacked him through the channel of Mr. Dry, upon his ennui, his causeless melancholy, his complaining languors, his yawning inattention, and his restless discontent. 17

The naive Fanny had left herself wide open to the cleverness of the worldly Seward, for he took this occasion to maneuver Fanny into a conversation intime, where he utterly convinced her that he was a badly misunderstood man. She says:

The next morning, Wednesday, I had some very serious talk with Mr. Seward,—and such as gave me no inclination for raillery, though it was concerning his ennui; on the contrary, I resolved, at the moment, never to rally him upon that subject again, for his account of himself filled me with compassion. He told me that he had never been well for three hours in a day in his life, and that when he was thought only tired, he was really so ill that he believed scarce another man would stay in company. I was quite shocked at this account, and told him honestly, that I had done him so little justice as to attribute all his languors to affectation. 18

Oh clever Mr. Seward!

From this occasion thenceforth, Fanny felt more tolerant toward the tactless Seward. She came more and more to feel that, "Mr. Seward, though a reserved and cold young man, has a heart open to friendship, and very capable of good-nature and goodwill, though I believe it abounds not with them to all indiscriminately." 19

17 Ibid., I, 242.
18 Ibid., I, 244.
19 Loc. cit.
Miss Burney depicts Seward in many different roles, roles however, which discover always the same underlying character traits. He was, in her opinion, awed by neither man nor superman, as witness his laughter in the face of the tactless reading of denunciatory verses concerning Dr. Johnson, right in the great doctor's presence. She writes, in describing Dr. Lort's faux pas: "I was astonished at him, Mrs. Thrale not much pleased; Mr. Thrale silent and attentive; and--Mr. Seward was silly laughing." 20

Seward's final role which the Diary depicts, however, is that of the melancholy ennuye, drinking to avoid his boredom and his illness, for Burney says: "But added to quacking both himself and his friends, he has lately, I hear, taken also to making a rather too liberal use of his bottle, thinking, I suppose, that generous wine will destroy even the blue devils." 21

The last half of Mrs. Thrale's friendship with Seward shows a gradual deterioration to the final point where she considered him as one of the traitorous and treacherous friends who maligned and deserted her at the time of her greatest need. It would seem, on the basis of the evidence, that she had ample justification for her bitterness in this particular case. The discovery of Seward's falseness was a particularly bitter blow to her, for the reason that

20 Ibid., I, 92.
21 Ibid., II, 17.
in the two years just previous to her marriage to Piozzi, she had come to depend on Seward as a trusted advisor. In fact, in 1779, at the time of one of Mr. Thrale's seizures, one of which was in 1781 to prove fatal, she wrote concerning Seward:

Distress shews one's Friends; Seward was the first to fly to our Assistance; fetch Physicians, carry Reports, turn out troublesome Enquirers, attend Mr. Thrale in all his Operations: Dear Creature how kind he is! 22

The beginning of the rift came, however, after the death of Thrale, and after Seward had been most helpful and even instrumental in advising her about the sale of the cumbersome business which Dr. Johnson had so enjoyed helping her run. The last kindly items concerning Seward are to be found during the year 1782, when she relates, surprisingly enough:

Mr. Seward has picked up the original Musick—or thinks he has, of the Song the Indians sing while their Tormentors are preparing and inflicting various Tortures upon them....Mrs John Hunter.... has made a base to the Tune; & set these Words to it; 23

Mrs. Thrale had done well to get this song by heart as she was shortly to have need of it.

By November of 1783, Mrs. Thrale was undergoing the distress of knowing herself to be the subject of gossip, rumor, and speculation, which finally drove her to the consideration of leaving England. She desperately wrote in

22 Balderston, op. cit., p. 390.
23 Ibid., p. 533.
her diary:

There is no Mercy for me in this Island— I am more and more disposed to try the continent. one Day the paper rings with my Marriage to Johnson, one Day to Crutchley (rumored her husband's natural son); one Day to Seward. 24

She found these conjectures incomprehensible for the most part, though she says: "Seward and Selwin being both disposed to offer their Persons and Fortunes is less odd, tho' not less silly." 25

Ultimately, Seward, finding his hopes of marrying the wealthy and attractive widow come to nothing, began to follow the path of treachery which he pursued to the end. In October of 1783, he visited Mrs. Thrale at Bath where "by compassionate Attention" to her illness, by "repeated Offers of Service proceeding from cordial Friendship" he at length persuaded her "to trust him with the Secret of my Love for Piozzi." At that time Mrs. Thrale had no thought but that he would be honorable and would "smooth the Difficulties" in the lover's "Passage to each other." 26

But, by the end of that same month, she knew how erroneous had been her judgment, for she wrote:

Seward has behaved with unprovoked Cruelty and Treachery: worming me out of a Confession of my Passion for Piozzi by promising faithfully to keep My Secret from the Girls to whom he instantly ran with the News, & now helps them to hoot and ridicule me; tells me he is at the Bear Inn at Bath to fright me & then laughs at my Distress with Ye Girls. 27

24 Ibid., p. 547.
25 Loc. cit.
26 Loc. cit.
27 Ibid., p. 576, note.
Unhappily, Fanny Burney misguidedley advised Mrs. Thrale to consult Seward, about Piozzi and then equally unwisely advised Queeney to ask him for his help. Fanny wrote to Queeney in September of 1783 saying:

Upon the whole, though I don't like your consulting Mr. Seward, the case is so desperate, that it seems the least bad thing to try....She has much regard for him, & had rather he should know her affairs than any other person....She proposed consulting Mr. S; herself; & unlucky I advised her not, thinking it would be merely spreading the affair for nothing....you had best talk with him openly, state the affair, & let him negotiate between you....He is benevolent & good natured; & if anybody can think of any compromise, he will.28

The "benevolent" Mr. Seward failed to be "good natured;" in fact, Mrs. Thrale felt that his "ill Usage had hurt the worst among them" mainly because he was "so kind & Charitable to every suffering Wretch" but her.29 Even Fanny was outraged. She wrote to Queeney in October, "I am amazed at Mr. Seward....to tell her Daughter to be passive, though she expire before her Eyes, is surely stretching his sense of propriety into inhumanity."30

Seward's actions were truly those of an inhuman creature, for by 1784, when Mrs. Thrale was visited by him at Bath even she could see "by the oddity of his Behaviour" that he was "going out of his Senses."31 In the bitterness

28 Queeney Letters, op. cit., p. 70-1.
29 Balderston, op. cit., p. 580.
30 Queeney Letters, op. cit., p. 72.
31 Balderston, op. cit., p. 595.
of her heart, however, even this could not serve as complete extenuation, for she writes, on learning definite confirmation of her suspicions:

I am told Seward is half a Lunatick if so, he is more excusable; but I will never see him again if I can help it. No need to be hunted down by Monsters & Madmen and Fools & all. 32

Actual proof had come to her in the form of a letter from George James on February 7, 1788 which said, "Mr. Seward is still in a disposition of mind that entirely (sic) differs from the common run--of mankind--therefore they still confine him." 33

Before his complete mental breakdown, however, Seward repented his ill-advised actions, and, Mrs. Thrale says, "sues for Reconciliation under hand--so do they all; & I as sincerely forgive them but--" 34 But--she had no intention of re-admitting to her friendship those who once had played her false. This attitude of mind must have been made quite clear to Seward in 1874, after the Piozzi's were safely married; for, Mrs. Piozzi writes to Queeney saying:

A propos Piozzi met Seward in the Street, who would have embraced him as if for Joy--but the Honour was rejected with sudden, and I doubt not apparent Aversion by a Man who does not know the nature or meaning of Duplicity. 35

32 Loc. cit.
33 Ibid., p. 595.
34 Ibid., pp. 770-1.
35 Lansdowne, op. cit., p. 166.
The snub was not sufficient; for a few weeks later Seward had the effrontery to write to Mrs. Piozzi "so tenderly and kindly" that one could "scarce believe" his eyes. 36 Mrs. Piozzi no longer needed Seward or any of his cohorts. Her Piozzi had "come home" and fetched her away—"far far from those open Enemies & pretended Friends." 37


Michael Lort D.D. 1725-1790

A most interesting member of the group congregated at Streatham was Michael Lort, the son of Major Roger Lort of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers from Pembrokshire.

From 1759-1771 he held the post of professor of Greek at Cambridge; until which time he became rector of St. Mathew's, Friday Street, London, and in 1789, he obtained the rectory of St. Michael at Mile End in adjoining Colchester.

Boswell mentions "a short but excellent commentary by my late worthy friend, the Rev. Dr. Lort."¹ on the Lord's Prayer. His only other publications were two sermons, though he reprinted an Elizabethan manuscript on the State, Order and Manner of Government of the University of Cambridge.

In speaking of the activities of Mrs. Thrale in the year 1776, just three years after her marriage, Clifford says:

Philanthropy may have occupied some of Mrs. Thrale's time, but her chief interest outside the nursery was society and conversation. Still the company at Streatham and Southwark was preponderantly masculine, made up of business and political connections of her husband and the famous friends of Johnson. These last, indeed, should have been enough to content any hostess. To receive letters of compliment from Edmund Burke, visits from Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Scotch poet and philosopher James Beattie, pamphlets and gossip from Dr.

¹ Boswell, op.cit., IV, 335.
Michael Lort, the Cambridge Greek scholar, was a triumph indeed for the wife of a Southwark brewer.\(^2\)

While it is indubitably true that Dr. Lort was one of the more frequent guests at Streatham, since his correspondence with its hostess, the *Burney Diaries*, and Mrs. Thrale’s own records concerning him prove it indisputably, one wonders why so few anecdotal records of him appear in a book quite devoted to the remarks, opinions, and intercourse of the people who appeared there. The explanation, this writer thinks, may be found in the rating sheet which Mrs. Thrale compiled upon the qualities of her friends. Dr. Lort scores uniformly high in the more solid virtues such as Religion, Morality, Scholarship, Knowledge (17, 12, 16, and 15 respectively), and falls down deplorably low in the social virtues such as Manner, Wit, Humor, and Good Humor. (5, 0, 0, and 10, respectively).\(^3\) This is not the sort of man to “flash” (in the Streatham jargon), in the kind of company which the Thrals kept. Then too, in the "meat-dish"\(^4\) comparison, he is thought of as a beefsteak which can only be interpreted to mean a solid, worthy, uninspired sort of a man.

In her description and analysis of Dr. Lort, Mrs. Thrale can find nothing actually wrong with the learned scholar to criticise, yet she is unwilling to accede him

\(^2\) Clifford, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

\(^3\) See Appendix E

\(^4\) See Appendix B
her wholehearted approval. She avoids the issue by resorting to literary doubletalk. She says:

We asked Lort the Greek Professor today who he would change with, and he instantly named Erasmus; how Pat this falls in with my System that everybody desires a little more of themselves! I have a great Respect for Mr Lort; he is a very fine Fellow, has great Scholastic Learning I believe, and a large Portion of polite & general Knowledge—is an Antiquarian, and eminently conversant with Natural History, a Study which always entertains me. One has many Chances for Improvement and almost a Certainty of being amused by a Conversation with Mr Lort: I have known him now about 12 Years, and have a very great Esteem for him. There is however something trifling in his Character, something Quisquilian—but when one says such a Man is pious, Virtuous, Learned & happy, what more needs be added? I love & honour Mr Lort.5

Fanny Burney saw something of the same quality about Dr. Lort, for even though she had heard of him as "one of the most learned men alive," and a famous "collector of curiosities, alike in literature and natural history," she found his manners to be "somewhat blunt and odd," and he himself to be "altogether out of the common road, without having chosen a better path."6

Had the diffusive Fanny written the above description a day later than she did, she probably would have found stronger words of disapprobation than "blunt and odd;" for the obtuse Greek scholar made two extremely bad faux pas on this visit to Streatham. The first one concerned Dr. Johnson, and Fanny writes:

Mr. Lort produced several curious MSS. of the famous Bristol Chatterton; among others, his will,
and divers verses written against Dr. Johnson, as a placeman and pensioner; all which he read aloud with a steady voice and unmoved countenance.

I was astonished at him; Mrs. Thrale not much pleased; Mr. Thrale silent and attentive; and Mr. Seward was silly laughing. Dr. Johnson himself, listened profoundly and laughed openly: Indeed, I believe he wishes his abusers no other thing than a good dinner, like Pope.'

Considering the splenetic nature of Johnson, this contretemps might well have been expanded into a major incident; however, Miss Burney accords it only the importance of several paragraphs. A little later in the day, on the other hand, we read of a truly stupendous gaffe, which occupies several pages in the diary.

On this occasion, Dr. Lort grossly and insultingly inquired if anyone in the company had "heard anything of a new book that runs about a good deal, called Evelina?" quite innocent of the fact that its unannounced author was in his presence. He then went on to further heinous insult by saying, "It has been recommended to me, but I have no great desire to see it, because it has such a foolish name."

The situation was explained and passed over, but Fanny "could not sufficiently recover" herself "the whole evening to speak one word, but in answer."8

Mrs. Thrale may have found "a something trifling" in the character of Dr. Lort in 1779, but after and during the holocaust of her marriage, she found him to be of sterling metal, to be sure; for he was one of the very few

7 Balderston, op. cit., p. 92.
8 Barrett, op. cit., I, 92.
members of the old group who remained faithful to her.

In 1785, while she was travelling with her new husband, Fanny wrote to Queeney: "Every body that hears from her in Town, report that she talks of returning. Sir Lucas Pepys, Mr. Selwyn, Dr. Lort, Mr. Lysons, & Mr. James she writes to constantly." 9

Dr. Lort was to be of more service than his ostentatious display of friendship at the time of her supposed disgrace. In January of 1785, there appeared in St. James's Chronicle, a passage offensive to both Mrs. Piozzi and her husband. In a later issue of the same paper, there appeared a glowing expiation on the rumoured Life to be published by Boswell. Naturally, the highly gratified Boswell inquired, by means of a signed letter to the paper, the author of the compliment. Mrs. Piozzi, knowing full well the condition of Boswell's feelings for her, quite reasonably felt that Boswell was at the root of all three items. As a result, she included in her Anecdotes a most incendiary passage directed squarely at Boswell. Her agent, Samuel Lysons, and her publisher, Cadell, saw this fiery passage after the Anecdotes were printed, but before they were published. Lysons talked with Sir Lucas Pepys, Bishop Hinchcliffe, and Dr. Lort, and they agreed that the remarks were most unwise. The passage was cancelled and a substitution made of an English translation of the

9 Lansdowne, op.cit., p. 110.
epitaph on Thrall hurriedly made by Dr. Lort. To their surprise, far from being ired at her well-meaning friends, Mrs. Thrall wrote in March, "I hasten to tell you that I am perfectly pleased and contented with the alterations made by my worthy and amiable friends."10

After the Piozzis return to England, Dr. Lort was promptly on hand to lend them his public, social, support. Just one week after their return, he gave an entertainment in their honor, and asked a large number of their mutual friends. The Piozzis were not unappreciative, for in May Mrs. Piozzi noted in Thralians:

The old Blues Stocking Society as the folks call them, appear to be ashy of me this Spring; & Sir Lucas Pepys has been but a half-faced friend at last... I think all the People here look very little altered since we went abroad; few if any it seems expected that we should ever return. Dr Lort is attentive and kind, so is Mr. Selwin, & Sammy Lysons retains his officiousness and Gratitude: We have miss'd seeing Sir Philip by Chance, but he has not forgot me. Mrs. Byron seems glad of my Return, but hates my Husband cordially...We are somehow got much into new Acquaintance by one Accident or another, but shall contrive to drive Like along very well among them, I nothing doubt.11

Dr. Lort was unfailingly "kind and attentive" both then and for the remaining few years until his death, when Mrs. Piozzi wrote in her "Analect Book":

Dr. Lort too; a more valued--a more valuable Friend, (than Mrs. Byron of whose death she had just been writing) often mentioned in this Analect Book; gone too! thrown away I think; a warm Climate might have saved him, & good

10 Balderston, op.cit., p. 629
11 Ibid., p. 681.
Care kept him alive;...I loved Dr Lort; he was a Man one could tell one's whole Heart to—I have now no Creature that I really confide in—all Acquaintance & no Friends—my Loss in Doctor Lort is pro-
digious—...What shall I do for my dear old Doctor? his Principles were the same as mine; his Pre-
judices the same—these new fashioned Philosopher—Man fatigue me to hear them prattle.12

12 Ibid., p. 788
Sophia Streatfeild 1754-1835

Another of the early and constant members of the Streatham Coterie was Sophia Streatfeild, a young woman who, in Fanny Burney's words, was "a girl in no respect like any other." The facile-penned Miss Burney wrote, in the case of the S.S. as she was generally referred to by her intimates, words far more penetrating than the usual too easy analyses of those whom she encountered and promptly cast for immortality as gods, demons, or bores. The exquisitely beautiful Sophy was to prove something of an enigma to the ladies of her circle, not to say more than something of a thorn in the flesh of Mrs. Henry Thrale.

The "beautiful Grecque" swam first into Mrs. Thrale's ken during the summer of 1778 while both of them were staying at Brighton and Mrs. Thrale puts it down for us in Thraliana under the date of May the nineteenth, 1778:

The Person who wrote the Title of this Book at the top of the Page and on the other side-left hand-in the back Letter; was the identical Miss Sophia Streatfeild mentioned in Thraliana Vol. I as Pupil to poor Dear Doctor Collier after he & I had parted. By the Chance meeting of some of the Currents which keep this Ocean of Human Life from stagnating, this Lady and Myself were driven together 9 Months ago at Brighthelmstone: we soon grew intimate from having often heard of each other, and I have now the honour and Happiness of calling her my Friend. Her Face is eminently pretty, her Carriage elegant, her Heart affectionate, and her Mind cultivated. There is

1 Barrett, op. cit., I, 273.
2 Ibid, p. 78.
above all this an attractive Sweetness in her Manner, which claims & promises to repay on's Confidence & which drew from me the Secret of my keeping a Thraliana to deposit all kinds of Nonsense in. 3

and in October of 1778, she writes as marginalia to a letter from Johnson in which he states: "So you may set the Streafield at defiance,"

My dear and ever honoured Doctor Collier was the cause of my making this Miss Streafeld's acquaintance. I had learned from others that he dropped into her hands soon as dismissed from mine; and that he gained rather than lost by the exchange, had long been my secret consolation. She was but fourteen or fifteen when they first met and he was growing sickly. She did her own way, and her way was to wait on him, who instructed her in Greek, and who obtained from her excess of tenderness for him what I could not have bestowed. 4

No doubt the actual meeting with Sophy had reminded Mrs. Thrale that one of the earliest items which she had written in her brand new Thraliana book was a little reference concerning this very young woman and her own formerly adored tutor, Dr. Collier. 5

Sophia Streafeld was the eldest daughter of Mrs. Henry Streafeld, widow of Henry Streafeld, Esq. of Chiddingstone, Kent, who was herself the natural daughter of Jocelyne, Earl of Leicester. Sophia lived alone with her mother at Mt. Ephraim in Tunbridge Wells, from whence she occasionally departed in order to visit London. As a girl, she had been tutored by the same Dr. Collier under whom

3 Ibid, p. 323.
4 Hayward, op. cit., I, 296.
5 Balderston, op. cit., p. 17.
Mrs. Thrale had studied until she was about sixteen, and from whom she was parted reluctantly by her mother because she "did not approve of some of his Doctrines, nor delight in the Confidence I shewed for him, parted us with Assiduity and Pleasure." The doctor gave Sophy a thorough grounding in Greek as well as a thorough-going taste for elderly and erudite gentlemen which was to remain with her through a long and flirtatious career. "He died in her arms," we learn, and at his death, "was buried at her expense the moment she came of age." From that time henceforth, she was to wear mourning dress on the anniversary of his death, and never cease regretting that it was not she who was available to hand the dying doctor a glass of wine.

In December of 1778 the "ivory necked Smiling Streatfeild" was being entertained, for what was probably the first time, in the Thrale household, and already was up to her soft seductive, and alluring little feminine tricks, with Mr. Thrale, for Mrs. Thrale writes on that occasion:

We were diverting ourselves with Goldsmith's Idea of every body's being like some Dish of meat we agreed that

Johnson should be - - - Haunch of Venison.
Pepys - - - - a Perigord Pye.
Bodens - - - - a Piece of Sturgeon.
Mrs Montagu - - - - Soup-a la Reine.

6 Loc. cit.
7 Hayward, op. cit., I, 296.
Sophy Streatfeild - - - White Fricassee.
Mrs. Byron - - - Provincial Toast.
Mrs Pepys - - - Boil'd Whiting.
Seward - - - a Ham.
Dr Burney - - - a dish of fine Green Tea.
Mrs Smith - - - an Aspique.
Tom Cotton - - - Water-Suchy.
Lort - - - Beef Steaks.
Fanny Brown - - - Landskip in Jelly.
to these Mr Johnson desired he might add the following
My Master - - - Roast Beef.
My Mrs - - - a Gallina.
Miss Burney - - - A Woodcock.
& Sir Philip Jennings - - a Roasted Sweetbread.8

Apparently Mrs. Thrale was able to conceal her knowledge of Thrale's deep interest in Sophy from her guests, as she always was able to do throughout all of her husband's outrageous peccidillos, but she was driven to express her true reaction in the pages of Thraliana; for she writes as a footnote to the above foolish list: "Sophy Streatfeild will make a Brown Fricassee of me soon—I see, I see! my Husband is in Love with her. Fowl Fricassee--broken up will be poor H.L.T."

One month later, the bedeviled woman's suspicions were even stronger, and, unfortunately, she could do nothing but sit

8 Balderston, op. cit., p. 348.
impotently and watch this natural born coquette work her charms on the unresisting and momentarily rejuvenated Henry Thrale. The aspect of the situation which must have galled Mrs. Thrale most, was not the insulting reciprocity of her degraded husband, whom she merely bore with patiently, but the stupidity and hypocrisy of the traitorous Sophy in pretending that it all was for the benefit of her hostess.

Mrs. Thrale put a bold face on it when she wrote in her diary:

She is very pretty, very gentle, soft and insinuating; hangs about him, squeezes his Hand slyly, & with her sweet Eyes full of Tears looks so fondly in his Face—& all for Love of Me as She pretends; that I can hardly sometimes help laughing in her Face.

A Man must not be a Man but an It to resist such Artillery—Marriott said very well

Man flattering Man, not always can prevail,
But Woman flattering Man can never fail.

This was brave whistling in the dark and it even fooled that shrewd little observer, Fanny Burney, who did not hesitate to have a "private confab" later with Miss Thrale and Lady Ladd, the befuddled Thrale's sister, and found that "she is by no means a favourite with either of them, though she is half adored by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and by Dr. Johnson." Mrs. Thrale's clever pretence completely confused the little Burney, and while she probably realized that something was not quite right, she failed to see anything but the superficial charm and amiability of Sophy, or else she saw the intimacy with Thrale in the same light as her own relation—

9 Ibid., p. 356.
ship with her "dear Daddy Crisp." At any rate, she confides to her diary in 1779:

Miss Streatfeild came. Mrs. Thrale prevailed upon her to stay till the next day.

I find her a very amiable girl, and extremely handsome; not so wise as I expected, but very well; however, had she not chanced to have had so uncommon an education, with respect to literature or learning, I believe she could not have made her way among the wits by the force of her natural parts. 10

Mrs. Thrale's approaching confinement at this particular time, gave the reprehensible Thrale what little excuse he needed to elaborate amour which he was carrying on in his wife's presence, and one particular episode enabled Mrs. Thrale, for once in their relationship, to put Johnson quite out of face. Hayward quotes Mrs. Thrale as saying:

I had remarked to her that Johnson's readiness to condemn any moral deviation in others was, on a man so entirely before the public as he was, nearly a proof of his own spotless purity of conduct. She said, 'Yes, Johnson was, on the whole, a rigid moralist; but he could be ductile, I may say, servile; and I will give you an instance. We had a large dinner-party at our house; Johnson sat on one side of me, and Burke on the other; and in the company there was a young female, (Sophia Streatfeild), to whom I, in my peevishness, thought Mr. Thrale superflously attentive, to the neglect of me and other; especially of myself, then near my confinement, and dismally low-spirited; notwithstanding which, Mr. Thrale very unceremoniously begged of me to change place with Sophy ---, who was threatened with a sore throat, and might be injured by sitting near the door. I had scarcely swallowed a spoonful of soup when this occurred, and was so overset by the coarseness of the proposal, that I burst into

10 Barrett, op. cit., I, 210-11.
tears, said something petulant—that perhaps ere long, the lady might be at the head of Mr. T.'s table, without displacing the mistress of the house &c., and so left the apartment. I retired to the drawing room, and for an hour or two contended with my vexation, as I best could, when Johnson and Burke came up. On seeing them, I resolved to give a jobation to both, but fixed on Johnson for my charge, and asked him if he had noticed what passed, what I had suffered, and whether, allowing for the state of my nerves, I was much to blame? He answered, 'Why, possibly not; your feelings were outraged.' I said, 'Yes, greatly so; and I cannot help remarking with what blandness and composure you witnessed the outrage. Had this transaction been told of others, your anger would have known no bounds; but, towards a man who gives good dinners, &c., you were meekness itself! Johnson coloured, and Burke, I thought, looked foolish; but I had not a word of answer from either.'

Mrs. Thrale seems not to have had the reaction which would have been pardonable in any woman in the world; she did not upbraid her husband, at least as far as we can discover, but followed a policy of appeasement and excuses. She says in some marginalia to a letter from Johnson dated October 15, 1778:

No wonder Mr. Thrale, whose mind wanted some new object, since he had lost his son, and lost beside the pleasure he had taken in his business, before all knowledge of it was shared with myself,—no wonder that he encouraged a sentimental attachment to Sophia Streatfeld who became daily more and more dear to him, and almost necessary. No one visited us missed seeing his preference of her to me; but she was so amiable and so sweet natured, no one appeared to blame him for the unusual and unrepressed delight he took in her agreeable society. I was exceedingly oppressed by pregnancy, and saw clearly my successor in the fair S.S. as we familiarly called her in the family, of which she now made constantly a part, and stood godmother to my new-born baby, by bringing which I only helped to destroy my own health, and disappoint my husband, who wanted a son. "Why Mr. Thrale is Peregrinus Domi," said Johnson; "he lives in Clifford

11 Hayward, op. cit., I, 90.
Street, I hear, all winter;" and so he did, leaving his carriage at his sister's door in Hanover Square, that no inquirer might hurt his favourite's reputation; which my behaviour likewise tended to preserve from injury, and we lived on together as we could. 12

In January of 1780, Mrs. Thrale observed in her Thraliana, that the Morning Post remarked on the return of Sophy Streptfeild to London. The fact that it was necessary for Mrs. Thrale to get her information from the newspaper would seem to indicate that she had not seen the Streptfeild for some space of time, and a welcome absence it must have been. She remarks with what seems to be relish, and who could blame her, that the husband-charmer's reputation was going before her, and mentions several ladies of her acquaintance whose husbands were discovering the indubitable charms of the amiable S.S., namely, Mrs. Wedderburne 1 and Lady Erskine. She doubts very much that they accept the situation with the same complacency maintained by herself; for she says: "She has won Wedderburne's heart from his Wife I believe; & few married Women will Bear that patiently if I do, they will some of them wound her Reputation so that I question whether it can recover." 13 One can not help wondering if, although the unhappy woman was unwilling to take the lead herself in publicly denouncing Sophy, that the above culmination was not devoutly to be desired.

Was it any consolation to her to feel that Sophy's

12 Ibid., I, 296.

13 Balderston, op. cit., p. 422.
relationship to her husband was purely platonic? that her husband's illness was of so advanced a degree that his only desire was to languish in the balm of her sweet tears and melting glances? The reader of Thraliana cannot avoid a faint feeling of revulsion toward Mrs. Thrale who could write of the woman who was destroying the peace of her household in the following words: "Of her Chastity however, I never had a doubt; She wasbred by Dr. Collier in the Strictest Principles of Piety and Virtue: She not only knows She will be always Chaste, but She knows why She will be so."

Mrs. Thrale seems to find an unnatural and vicious consolation in the fact that her husband was "now by dint of Disease quite out of the Question," so she herself could now be a "disinterested Spectator." Many years later, on the margin of a letter from Dr. Collier she wrote: He (Thrale) thought her a thing at least semi-celestial; had he once found her out a mere mortal woman, his flame would have blazed out no more.

The soggy little melodrama played itself out to its dreary end, and in March of 1780, just one year before her husband's final collapse, Mrs. Thrale confides to Thraliana:

The Saturday before Mr Thrale was taken ill,....we had a large Party to Tea Cards & Supper; Miss S. Streatfeild was one, & as Mr. Thrale sate by her--he pressed her hand to his Heart (as She told me herself), & said Sophy we shall not enjoy this long, & tonight I will not be cheated of my Only Comfort.--Poor Soul! how shockingly tender!....

14 Ibid., p. 423.

15 Loc. cit.

16 Hayward, op. cit., I, 306.
His sisters who had alternately sate up with him every night & his Daughter, were offended; as they had never been treated with a kind Word from him; but I, who expect none; thought it rather good that he had some Sensibility for Some human being. 17

The story was over for Mr. Thrale, but Sophy had new worlds to conquer and she lost no time in girding on her armor and entering the lists, for we learn from Thraliana just a few months after Mr. Thrale's death:

She (Sophy) has begun the new Year nicely with a new Conquest—Poor dear Doctor Burney! he is now the reigning Favourite, and She spares neither Pains nor Careesses to turn that good Man's head, much to the Vexation of his Family; Particularly My Fanny, who is naturally provoked to see Sport made of her Father in his last Stage of Life by a young Coquet whose sole Employment in this World seems to have been winning Men's hearts on purpose to fling them away. How She contrives to keep Bishops, & Brewers, & Doctors & Directors of the East India Company all in her Chains so--& almost all at a Time would amaze a wiser Person than me; I can only say Let us mark the End! 18

It is with relief that the reader of Thraliana sees no more of that pusilanimity which caused an often admirable woman to say: "Mr. Thrale's preference of her to me never vexed me so much as my Consciousness—or Fear at least—that he had Reason for his Preference. She has ten times my Beauty, and five Times my Scholarship—Wit and Knowledge has She none." 19 Instead, we are happy to see that her parting shaft at the "beautiful Grecque" is one with a barb, and worthy, at last, of her womanhood. Her last words in Thraliana concerning Sophia Streatfeild

17 Balderston, op. cit., p. 432.
18 Ibid., p. 461.
19 Ibid., p. 739.
are dated April, 1789, and say:

I met Sophy Streatchfield at an Assembly the other night, & was thrust by the crowd quite close to her; nothing could exceed her Confusion, & Distress when I said coldly How do you do Miss Streatchfield? I hope you have been well since we met last &c.

Therefore, with this final anecdote of the beautiful, the tearful, the "gay and learned" Miss Streatchfield, the writer, too, can only say, "Let us Mark the End."

20 Ibid., p. 739.
Frances Burney (Madame D'Arblay)
1752 - 1840

Frances Burney, more commonly known as Fanny to her intimates and those who have derived pleasure and instruction from her writing, was born at Lynn Regis, Norfolk, June 1752, during that period in her father's affairs when he was forced to live away from London because of his health. She was the second daughter, and the third child of Dr. Charles Burney\(^1\) and his first wife, Esther Slegg.

The Burney children were, as a group, youngsters of both early and exceptional development. The eldest daughter, Esther, inherited her father's musical genius; James, the eldest son, entered the navy as a "nominal midshipman" at the age of ten, had some romantic adventures sailing around the world with Captain Cook, and eventually achieved the rank of rear-admiral. Susanna, the favorite and closest sister of Fanny, showed promise of unusual writing ability much earlier than her famous sister, and has left some letters behind of quite equal merit with Fanny's. Charles, the second son, although he had a most unfortunate and inauspicious beginning at Cambridge,\(^2\) achieved unusual distinction as a Greek scholar and critic.

\(^1\)See section on Doctor Burney, supra., pp. 65-7.

\(^2\)See section on Doctor Burney, supra., p. 85.
Fanny's childhood, on the contrary, was notable for its divergence from the pattern set by her brothers and sisters. At eight years of age she still was completely unfamiliar with her letters, and James, her sailor-brother, used to torment her by pretending to teach her to read and handing her the book upside down, which she never discovered. Although she was thought of and called "the little dunce," her wise mother always said that "she had no fear about Fanny."

Most probably, Fanny's backwardness was due to extreme shyness and diffidence, since even at the age of ten she demonstrated no want of intellectual power. As an example of her poise and intelligence, at that age, her father tells an anecdote which concerns Fanny and a group of children destroying a valuable peruke in the course of their playing. Most naturally the peruquier was disturbed, and upbraided Fanny and his own daughters in no gentle terms. At that point, Dr. Burney says, "Fanny advanced to him with great gravity and composure and said, 'What signifies talking so much about an accident? The wig is wet, to be sure; and the wig was a good wig, to be sure; but it's of no use to speak of it any more; because what's done can't be undone.'" 3 This is certainly not the remark of a stupid child.

3Barrett, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
Because of Dr. Burney's preoccupation with his lessons and writing, he was too busy to instruct his daughters in any formal way; they did, however, have the advantage of listening to the conversation of the many eminent visitors to the Burney residence, and in this way were directed to intellectual pursuits. In addition, they had carte blanche in their father's library, which they used freely.

Before Fanny was fifteen years old, she was devoting much of her time to writing, and doing it in such secrecy that only her sister Susanna was privy to her occupation. Evelina, or her progenitor, really, had its plan and plot composed, written down, and destroyed before Fanny's fifteenth birthday, with the mental resolution to obey her step-mother's injunction to avoid a "scribbling turn."

During Dr. Burney's continental tours to gather information for his History of Music in 1771, Fanny could not resist assembling the remains of her first Evelina. Some years later, with elaborate subterfuge and caution, after first obtaining her father's amused blessing, Evelina was brought out, in January of 1778, to be exact.

Evelina was the open sesame to the chamber of fame in which she was admitted to the special friendship of Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, and many others. Fanny's second
novel, *Cecilia*, led to intimacy with Mrs. Delany, the friend of George III and his queen, which in turn, led to Fanny's appointment in 1786 as assistant keeper of the robes to the queen, in which position she remained for five years. In 1793, she married General D'Arblay, a French refugee, and eventually removed with her husband to a home in Europe which they maintained for some years.\(^4\)

\(^4\)Biographical data were secured from


(b) Barrett, *op. cit.*, I, 1-18.
Fanny Burney's entrance to the Streatham Coterie, the second brightest star in its constellation, came about through the little-heralded publication in 1778 of a novel called Evelina. It made quite a stir among the reading public of London, perhaps because of its anonymity, and Mrs. Thrale was no exception to the general rule. She "puffed" it about to her friends, and was utterly dumb-founded when she learned that it had been written by the second daughter of her good friend, Dr. Burney. She wrote in Thraliana:

I was shewed a little Novel t'other Day which I thought pretty enough & set Burney to read it, little dreaming it was written by his second Daughter Fanny, who certainly must be a Girl of good Parts & some Knowledge of the World too, or She could not be the Author of Evelina--flimzy as it is, compar'd with the Books I've just mentioned. --Johnson says Harry Fielding never did any thing equal to the 2d Vol. of Evelina.5

The date of this, the first mention of Fanny by Mrs. Thrale, was in July of 1788, for Fanny records in her journal July 20, "I have also had a letter from Susanna. She informs me that my father, when he took the books back to Streatham, actually acquainted Mrs. Thrale with my secret."6 Mrs. Thrale had read the book "when she was last confined"7 but did not as yet know Fanny personally.

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5 Balderston, op. cit., p. 329.
6 Barrett, op. cit., p. 46.
7 Ibid., p. 94. (the birth of Henrietta Sophia, June 21, 1778.)
even though she must have seen her during the Thrales’ visits to Dr. Burney’s home.

Mrs. Thrale’s first reaction to learning the identity of the shy young author was to invite her to Streatham, and she instructed Dr. Burney in a letter to, “Give my letter to my little friend, and a warm invitation to come and eat fruit while the season lasts.”

The date of her first mention of *Evelina* preceded her knowledge of Johnson’s opinion of the book, and accounts for her use of the word “flimzy” in connection with it. When he returned the first volume to her “full of the praises of the Book... and protesting there were passages in it which might do honour to Richardson,” she revised her opinion and could not speak too highly of it. Strangely enough, all the haute monde did not concur in Johnson’s estimate of it. Mrs. Thrale wrote to Johnson in October:

> Mrs. Montagu cannot bear *Evelina*—let not that be published—her Silver Smiths are Pewterers. She says, & her Captains Boatswains. The Attorney General says you must all have commended it out of a joke, My Master laughs to see me Down among the dead Men & I am happy to see him laugh.

In spite of the opinion of some of the “blues” Mrs. Thrale wrote to Dr. Burney in July, 1778: “I cannot tell

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10*Balderston, op. cit.*, 329.
what might not be expected from *Evelina* was she to try her genius at Comedy,¹¹ and her faith in Dr. Johnson's and her own judgment was vindicated when she learned that Sheridan had seconded her opinion:

Fanny Burney has gained such Credit by her *Evelina* that Mr. Sheridan invites her to write for the Stage, and her Scoundrel Bookseller having advertised the *Sylph* along with it lately, and endeavouring to make the World believe it hers; Mrs. Leverson runs about the Town saying how clever Miss Burney must be! & what Knowledge of *Mankind* she must have! Knowledge of *Mankind*! in good Time; the *Sylph* is an obscene Novel, and more *Knowledge of Mankind* is indeed wanting to 't than any professed Virgin should have.¹²

In August, Fanny succumbed to the invitations of Mrs. Thrale and "spent the most consequential day I have spent since my birth: Namely my Streatham visit"¹³ at their spacious home. Her description of her hosts' welcome was ecstatic and unforgettable, and the day's visit resulted in an invitation for an extended stay to begin the next week.

Fanny accepted the invitation and was in the company of the Thrales and their friends until almost the end of the year. She was enchanted with the company in which she found herself, and they, in turn, especially Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, were equally enchanted with the demure but


¹²Balderson, *op. cit.*, p. 363. The *Sylph* is now attributed to Georgianna, Duchess of Devonshire. Lowndes' conduct was probably the cause of her changing to another publisher when *Cecília* came out in 1782. (note by Miss Balderston.)

¹³Barrett, *op. cit.*, I, 53-60.
clever little Burney. Her diary for this period provides an almost perfect description of the intimate life of the Thrales and their guests, their conversation, jokes, activities, and their peculiarities of temperament.

In the fall, a family peregrination to Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, and Bath was undertaken, and Fanny was included as a matter of course. Throughout the winter, Fanny was again prized from St. Martin's Street, to become a fellow to Johnson in their residence at Streatham. Oddly enough, it was not until this period that any personal items concerning Fanny appear in Thraliana, which fact, in the knowledge that she had been almost inseparable from the Thrales since the previous August, and that her journal was almost exclusively devoted to accounts of her visits to Streatham, is most puzzling. In February of 1779, Mrs. Thrale wrote: "We were playing the fool today & saying every body was like some Colour; & I think some Silk -- Miss Burney was to be a lilac Tabby..............

The next Nonsense was Flowers; here we set down ... Burney--the Author of Evelina for the Ranunculus..."\(^{14}\)

Some explanation for this anomaly may be found in an item of the same month, a period in which Fanny was working on her comedy, The Witlings:

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\(^{14}\text{Balderston, op. cit., p. 367.}\)
Our Miss Burney is big with a Comedy for next Season; I have not yet seen the Ebauche, but I wish it well; Can I help wishing well to every thing that bears the name of Burney? ....his Daughter is a graceful looking Girl, but 'tis the Grace of an Actress not a Woman of Fashion-how should it? her Conversation would be more pleasing if she thought less of herself; but her early Reputation embarrasses her Talk, & clouds her Mind with scruples about Elegancies which either come uncalled for, or will not come at all; I love her more for her Father's sake than for her own, though her Merit cannot as a Writer be controverted. The Play will be a good one too I doubt not She is a Girl of prodigious Parts. 15

It would seem that Mrs. Thrale was not overly fond of Fanny at this period; she was pleased to have a new and fashionable young author under her protection, which was, after all in the best traditions of the salonnieres, and she was truly devoted to Dr. Burney. The conjecture is irresistible as to whether there was not just a soupcon of jealousy in her feeling; especially when she puts in Thraliana such an item as:

Miss Burney was much admired at Bath, the puppy Men said She had such a drooping Air & such a timid Intelligence; or a timid Air I think it was, and a drooping Intelligence; never sure was such a Collection of pedantry and Affectation as filled Bath when we were on that Spot. 16

and the superciliousness of the following:

I think if Miss Burney had been a Woman of high birth & breeding, & be an Italian, She would have been Maria Mancini, it seems to be her Character exactly only heighted & exalted--

15 Ibid., p. 368.
16 Ibid., p. 439.
Hester says so, & She is no despicable Authority -- 17

Whatever may have been her personal feelings about her frequent guest, she was more than interested in her literary activities, especially since Fanny's present preoccupation with a play was partly in honor of her hostess' encouragement. In May of 1779, Fanny submitted her comedy to Mrs. Thrale:

Fanny Burney has read me her new Comedy; nobody else has seen it except her Father, who will not suffer his Partiality to overbias his Judgment, I am sure, and he likes it vastly. -- but one has no Guess what will do on a Stage, at least I have none. Murphy must read an Act tomorrow, I wonder what he'll say to't. I like it very well for my own Part, though none of the scribbling Ladies have a Right to admire its general Tendency--.18

and when later, it was given to Murphy to read:

Murphy liked it very well, but her confidential friend Mr. Crisp advised her against bringing it on, for fear of displeasing the female wits--a formidable Body, & called by those who ridicule them, the Blue Stocking Club.19

By August, however, Mrs. Thrale had completely reversed her opinion of the play; she still thought it would succeed, but in the interim of first reading it and mid-summer, she must have realized that it would offend many a powerful bluestocking. Whether or not she advised Fanny concerning it, does not appear in Thraliana; however, when

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17Ibid., p. 403. Maria Mancini was of a noble family of Colonna, and niece to Cardinal Mazarin. (Miss Balderston's note.)

18Ibid., p. 381

19Loc. cit.
Fanny dismissed thoughts of producing her play, Mrs. Thrale wrote: "Fanny Burney has pleased me today -- she resolves to give up a Play likely to succeed; for fear it may bear hard upon some Respectable Characters. "\(^\text{20}\)

During part of the period which Fanny spent at Streatham that winter, the men of their group were in London to attend Parliament. As an amusement, Fanny and Mrs. Thrale concocted a series of daily papers to send them:

Fanny Burney and I said the other day that we would write a Weekly Paper & send it to London to our Gentlemen who desert us most grievously for the sake of attending Parliament -- What says I shall we call our paper? Oh the Flasher to be sure says She -- we have a Hack Phrase here at Streatham of calling ev'ry thing Flash which we want other folks to call Wit. well said I write you the introductory paper, and I will put in a Song.--

I sent 'em a Gazette in Imitation of Swift's Bountry Post last Week which diverted them highly.
She wrote the Paper therefore, to which I affixed the Motto from Queen Christina's Cannon

Habet sua fulmina Juno --

How bold the Streatham Muse is grown
To flash when all her Sparks are flown
Will nothing then abash her?
Our Solitary cope can blaze
Without the Sun's concentrated Rays
To animate our Flasher.

Nor Cruelty our Wit controul,
Like Salt they sprinkle on the Coals
That glow beneath the Rasher;
It makes our Flame but burn more bright,
and Prompts us to persue your Flight
With Gazette or with Flasher.

\(^{20}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 401.}\)
From such faint Fires my Master cries
The meek Minerva's radiant Eyes
May lead a Man away sure;
No Meteor with approaches near,
Where Sophy like the Sun severe
Soon dissipates each Flasher.

(Sophy Streatfield whose Greek and whose beauty
entitle her to the compliment, & who having no
Taste for Wit & Flash deserves the whole Stanza
quite well.)

Forbear Sir Philip cries, my Friend,
With pop Gun Wits shall we contend?
We must accept their Trash, --or
Displease the Streatham Coterie,
Which I've objections to-- D'ye see. (D'ye see is a
So e'en let pass the Flasher.21 hack phrase of
Sir Philip's.)

In June, all such lightheartedness was at an end for
the time being, for it was at this time that Mr. Thrale was
brought home from dining at his sister, Mrs. Nesbitt's, the
subject of a stroke. Dr. Burney and Fanny were dining with
Mrs. Thrale, and in the emergency, Dr. Burney did not ful-
fill all the obligations that Mrs. Thrale thought due her
and her husband. She wrote:

Distress shews one's Friends;......I shall
never love Doctor Burney as I have loved Him, for
there I expected Kindness, & deserved it--his
Daughter has behav'd better than he,22

Time healed this particular breach with the musician, but,
in this writer's opinion, Mrs. Thrale's decreasing
affection for the Doctor and her increasing affection for
his daughter dated from this episode.

21Ibid., pp. 375-6.

22Ibid., p. 390.
After Mr. Thrale's recovery from the stroke, life at Streatham was very gay, and Fanny's diary and letters depict it faithfully. In spite of Mrs. Thrale's feverish attempt to keep her husband amused, she herself was far from well as she was encountering a more difficult time carrying this baby than she ever had before, and, she eventually lost it. Clifford suggests that it was as a release from the worry over her husband and her own illness, that she struck out irritably at Fanny.23 As a case in point, she snappishly wrote in August:

Fanny Burney has been a long time from me, I was glad to see her again; yet She makes me miserable too in many Respects—so restlessly & apparently anxious lest I should give myself Airs of Patronage, or load her with the Shackles of Dependence—I live with her always in a Degree of Pain that precludes Friendship—dare not ask her to buy me a Ribbon, dare not desire her to touch the Bell, lest She should think herself injured—lest she should forsooth appear in the Character of Miss Neville & I in that of the Widow Bromley.24

Something of the same thing must have been expressed to Fanny; for, many years later, in a letter to Queeney, she stated the reasons for her attitude toward Mrs. Thrale's generosity:

She loads me with obligations which even at this time were oppressive to me, dearly as I loved her, -- & which, even then, when I considered her fondness to be unalterable, I thought the least pleasant part of it, from an inherent dislike to

23 Clifford, op. cit., pp. 177-8.

24 Balderston, op. cit., p. 400.
all sorts of presents, & from an innate spirit of contentment with what I naturally possessed, however small its proportion to what surrounded me. The things, indeed, from her, were trifles, her affluence considered, -- but my pride was dearer to me than her gifts, which were forced upon me whether I would or not, & which hurt me inexpressibly, frequently with a raillery that shewed she discredited the sincerity of my resistance. But I valued her friendship too much for any serious dispute-- & all other she over-powered.25

That Mrs. Thrale was seriously ill as a result of her confinement, is unquestionable; in August she wrote:

Tis less a Miscarriage after all than a dead Child: a Boy quite formed & perfect; once I wished for such a Blessing--now if my life is left me no matter for the rest.

The Abortions and the Profluvia however, the Vomitings & Diarrhea which accompanied them, & rendered the disorder still more Dangerous, are now got over, & this day Sunday 15: of August I go down Stairs like the Ghost of her who was carried up the Stairs a Week ago.26

No doubt, as a search for diversion and recuperation, Mrs. Thrale invited Fanny to accompany her husband, Queeney, and herself on a round of spas and visits. On October 4th she recorded: "..tomorrow we set out for Tunbridge and Brighthelmstone.-- Fanny Burney goes with us, not Johnson, he stays at home & writes, & is diligent."27

It was on the trip home, some six weeks later, that Mr. Thrale was overcome with a violent recurrence of his illness; Fanny wrote in a letter to Susanna:


26 Balderston, op. cit., p. 400.

27 Ibid., p. 409.
But when we stopped at Reigate his speech grew inarticulate, and he said one word for another. I hoped it was accident, and Mrs. Thrale, by some strange infatuation, thought he was joking, --but Miss Thrale saw how it was from the first.... Poor Mrs. Thrale worked like a servant; she lighted the fire with her own hands, took the bellows, and made such a one as might have roasted an ox in ten minutes.28

In spite of "Master's" failing health, the next winter was a very gay one, for Mrs. Thrale was gradually becoming intimate with some of the Blues29; and, the season at Bath the following spring was "A momentous experience for the authoress of Evelina. Herself the celebrity of the hour, Fanny found the society... enchanting."30

The Gordon riots caused Fanny and Mrs. Thrale to prolong their perigrinations before returning to London, and Fanny put down in letters to and from her family, the horror and indignation of that period of violence and insurrection.31 By June, however, things had sufficiently quieted down so that the Thrales, including Sophy and Susan this time, and Fanny Owen returned to Brighton, and "Fanny .. (went) home .. to study and live recluse."32

28 Barrett, op. cit., I, 447.
29 Clifford, op. cit., p. 182.
30 Ibid., p. 183.
32 Balderston, op. cit., 438.
During this period, Fanny had somewhat consolidated her position in Mrs. Thrale's affections, but she still was being "stuffy" about the gifts and benefactions which the brewer's wife wished to make her. It is not to be wondered at, since Fanny was not an impoverished protegee of some indulgent patron, but merely a guest. As an indication of Mrs. Thrale's feelings about the situation, she says:

Mrs. Byron who really loves me, was disgusted at Miss Burney's Carriage to me who have been such a Friend & Benefactress to her; not an Article of Dress, not a Ticket for Public Places, not a Thing in the World that she could not command from me; yet always insolent, always pining for home, always preferring the mode of Life in St. Martin's Street to all I could do for her; She is a saucy spirited little puss to be sure, but I love her dearly for all that; & I fancy she has a real regard for me, if She did not think it beneath the Dignity of a Wit, or of what She values more--the Dignity of Doctor Burney's Daughter to indulge it. Such Dignity! the Lady Louisa of Leicester Square! in good Time!

However, she was beginning to love Fanny sincerely in spite of her independence, but still she did not admit her to that deeper friendship enjoyed by a very few other ladies. In a list of the woman friends dearest to her, Fanny comes out a poor sixth:

Mrs. Byron, Mrs. Strickland, Mrs. Davenant, Mrs. Lambert are the Women I love best in the World; Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Montagu and Fanny Burney, are the Women I like best in the World--how different is Love & Liking?

33 Ibid., p. 443.

34 Ibid., p. 444.
But by the beginning of the next year, 1781, Fanny had destroyed all barriers and was supreme in Mrs. Thrale's female friendships:

What an odd Partiality I have for a rough Character! and even for the hard parts of a soft one. Fanny Burney has secured my Heart: I now love her with a fond & firm Affection, besides my Esteem of her Parts, & my Regard for her Father. her lofty Spirit dear Creature! has quite subdued mine; and I adore her for the Pride which once revolted me. There is no Friendship in the sneakers & Fawners:35

She even was engaging in that favorite occupation of the successful matron matchmaking. In this particular instance, and in the case of Crutchley, one is irresistibly inclined to think that Mrs. Thrale's machinations were more for the purpose of removing an unsuitable admirer from the vicinity of Queeney.36 She confides to Thraliana:

Miss Burney's being always about me is probably another Reason for his close Attendance, & I believe it is so—what better could befall Miss Burney? or indeed what better cd befall him, than to obtain a Woman of Honour; & Character, & Reputation for superior Understanding—I would be glad however, that he fell honestly in Love with her; & was not tricked or trapp'd into Marriage poor Fellow; he is no Match for the Arts of a Novel-writer.37


36 Clifford, op. cit., p. 205.

37 Balderston, op. cit., p. 496.
In spite of her intellectual quickness, or perhaps because of her own lack of understanding of the closeness of family ties, it was always incomprehensible to Mrs. Thrale that the Burneys were unwilling to completely relinquish Fanny to her. One cannot but feel her a completely insensitive and arrogant person when such a passage as the following appears in her Thraliana:

What a Blockhead D' Burney is, to be always sending for his Daughter home so. what a Monkey! is not She better and happier with me than She can be any where else. Johnson is enraged at the silliness of their Family Conduct, and Mrs. Byron disgusted; I confess myself provoked excessively but I love the Girl so dearly -- & the D' too for that matter, only that he has such odd Notions of superiority in his own house, & will have his Children under his Feet forsooth rather than let 'em live in Peace & Comfort any where from home. If I did not provide Fanny with every Wearable, every Wishable indeed, it would not vex me to be served so; but to see, the Impossibility of compensation for the Pleasures of St. Martin's Street, Makes me at once merry & mortified.38

In April of 1781, Mr. Thrale's self-indulgence at last exacted its toll, and he died. The ensuing period of estate details to be settled, and business worries was a difficult one for the widow, but she weathered them all in spite of fainting fits, and periods of hysteria.39

When the business was finally disposed of, and Mrs. Thrale had regained at least some quietness of mind, she

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38 Ibid., p. 502.

39 Ibid., p. 503.
undoubtedly expected that her future would be serene. The next three years, however, were "a tragicomedy of frustration and exasperation." 40

Fanny Burney's diary describing the summer at Streatham following Mr. Thrale's death makes it seem an unblemished time of relief and gayety. Thraliana, however, shows Mrs. Thrale to be in an incessant condition of worry over the Crutchley-Queeney problem, illness, lassitude of long duration, and very understandable ire over the gossip concerning her future, and her matrimonial intentions.

Eventually, the Salusbury suit was revived, Mrs. Thrale had discovered her true feeling for Piozzi, and she and Johnson had slipped into a period of decline in their friendship. She decided, at last to let Streatham, and go abroad with her daughters. Little aware, at that time, that the plan to live abroad was to be completely abandoned, she proposed to leave her lifetime collection of papers with Fanny, whom now she esteemed "above all living women."

If I dye abroad I shall leave all Papers in Charge with Fanny Burney; I have at length conquered all her Scruples, & won her Confidence & her Heart: 'tis the most valuable Conquest I ever did make, and dearly, very dearly, do I love my little Tayo, so the People at Otaheite call a Bosom Friend. She is now satisfied of my Affection, and has no Reserves, no ill Opinion, no further Notion I shall insult her Sweetness: I now respect her Caution, & esteem her above all living Women.41


41 Balderston, op. cit., p. 487.
In September of 1782, Fanny could no longer keep silent about the unfortunate love affair she saw developing. She broached the matter to Mrs. Thrale, who wrote in *Thraliana*:

Now! that little dear discerning Creature Fanny Burney says I'm in love with Piozzi—very likely! he is so amiable, so honorable, so much above his Situation by his Abilities... 42

What Mrs. Thrale's response to Fanny was at that time, we are not told. However, Fanny's assertion and deprecation of Piozzi led Mrs. Thrale to set down, as passionlessly as she could, all the points pro and con that she could think of concerning the connection with the Italian.

Finally, in November of 1782, she determined to cease vacillating, do away with half-hearted threats to go abroad, 43 and to announce her intention of accepting Piozzie. She called Queeney into her room and informed her of her intention,

...And to console her private Distress I called into the Room to her my own Bosom Friend, my beloved Fanny Burney; whose Interest as well as Judgment goes all against my Marriage—whose Skill in Life and Manners is superior to that of any Man or Woman in this Age or Nation; whose Knowledge of the World, ingenuity of Expedient, Delicacy of Conduct, & Zeal in the Cause will make her a Counsellor invaluable; & leave me


distribute of every Comfort, of every Hope, of every Expectation.\textsuperscript{44}

She then set down in Thraliana all the hopes, doubts, and fears of the results of her confidences. This, too, she could not resist showing to the two girls; perhaps in a faint hope that the written word would carry more weight than the spoken one. She said:

What is above written, tho' intended only to unload my heart by writing it, I shew'd in a Transport of Passion to Queeney & to Burney--sweet Fanny Burney cried herself blind over it; said there was no resisting such pathetic Eloquence, & that if She was the Daughter instead of the Friend, She should be even tempted to attend me to the Altar. but that while She possessed her Reason, nothing should seduce her to approve what Reason itself would condemn; that Children, Religion, Situation, Country & Character--besides the Diminution of Fortune by the certain Loss of 800£ a year were too much to Sacrifice to any one Man; if however I were resolved to make the Sacrifice, \textit{À la bonne Heure!} it was an astonishing Proof of an Attachment, very difficult for Mortal Man to repay.\textsuperscript{45}

In January of 1793, Crutchley forcibly indicated to Mrs. Thrale that the plan for taking the girls abroad was almost impossible, "Fanny Burney came, said she must Marry him instantly, or give him up; that (her) Reputation would be lost else..." and that the most hideous rumors imaginable were afloat in London. This was far from a welcome intelligence from the little Burney, especially as she had some faint suspicions regarding Fanny, anyway. In November

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 549.

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 550.
she had expressed them, saying:

*I am sometimes ready to think Fanny Burney
treacherous, but tis a sinful Thought & must not
be indulged—yet I could have sworn for Mr Seward
too; & his Behaviour amazes while it disgusts me.
Now I am sure enough become — A Tale, a Sport
for Fools.*46

Actually, at this particular time, according to Miss
Balderston, and Fanny's letters, she was experiencing an
anguished division of loyalties between love for her friend
and reverence for the opinion of the world. There is,
however, some basis for Mrs. Thrale's feeling, for Fanny
wrote to Queeney: "Is it not terrible that I should now be
ashamed of being the chosen friend of one in whose friend-
ship I so late gloried?"47 and "I feel the total wrong of
all her behaviour through-out this unhappy business,"48 and
"all that you can do for your poor fallen Mother will be
all to your own Honour."49

As a result of the scandal, the pressure brought
to bear by the executors, Fanny, and her children, and
Piozzi's conference with Queeney, Mrs. Thrale was forced
into giving up her intended husband, and wrote, "Adieu to
all that's dear to all that's lovely. I am parted from
my Life, my Soul! my Piozzi!"50 and, "When all was over

46Ibid., p. 591.
47Queeney Letters, op. cit., p. 75.
48Ibid., p. 77.
49Ibid., p. 80.
50Balderston, op. cit., p. 557.
I flew to my Dearest loveliest Friend My Fanny Burney, & poured all my Sorrows into her Tender Bosom. 51

By November of 1784, even Queeney could see that her mother's health as well as reason was being affected by the separation from Piozzi; so most coldly and ungraciously, this strange daughter acceded to Piozzi's recall, and Mrs. Thrale improved immediately. In May, she went to London, "to visit Fanny Burney, and to talk over my intended—(& I Hope—approaching Nuptials,)" 52 About the visit Mrs. Thrale wrote:

Dear Burney who loves me kindly, but the World reverentially, was I believe equally pained as delighted with my Visit; ashamed to be seen in my company, much of her Fondness for it must of course be diminished; yet She had not chatted freely so long with any body but Mrs. Philips, that my coming was a Comfort to her. 53

Fanny, in turn, confided to her journal:

The rest of that week I devoted almost wholly to sweet Mrs. Thrale, whose society was truly the most delightful of cordials to me, however, at times, mixed with bitters the least palatable. 54

and:

I parted most reluctantly with my dear Mrs. Thrale, whom, when, or how, I shall see again, Heaven only knows! but in sorrow we parted—on my side in real affliction. 55

51 Ibid., p. 561.

52 Ibid., p. 593.

53 Loc. cit.

54 Barrett, op. cit., II, 258.

55 Loc. cit.
On July 23, 1784, Mrs. Thrale was married in London to Piozzi. As they prepared to leave for Bath, where the second ceremony was to be read, Mrs. Piozzi wrote:

It hurts me to leave London without seeing Miss Burney tho' she has played a false & cruel part towards me I find -- stimulating my Daughters to resist their natural Tenderness, & continue the steady refusal of a Consent wch alone cd have saved my Life;--Very severe in Miss Burney, and very unprovok'd-- I wd not have serv'd her so.56

The record shows that Mrs. Piozzi was aware, at last, of the role Fanny had been playing in her affairs. Fanny wrote a letter to Mrs. Piozzi, after her marriage; in answer to which Mrs. Piozzi reproached her for failure to send cordial congratulations. Fanny's reaction to the letter in her journal was indignant:

...the unmerited reproach of not sending cordial congratulations upon a marriage which she had uniformly openly, and with deep and avowed affliction thought wrong.57

In answer to Mrs. Piozzi, Fanny wrote a firm and dignified protest, and received in reply,

Give yourself no serious concern, Sweetest Burney. All is well, and I am too happy myself to make a friend otherwise; quiet your kind heart immediately, and love my husband if you love his and your H. L. Piozzi.58


58. loc. cit.
As a final word between them, Fanny wrote:

To this kind note, F.B. wrote the warmest and most affectionate and heartfelt reply; but never received another word! And here and thus stopped a correspondence of six years of almost unequalled partiality, and fondness on her side; and affection, gratitude, admiration, and sincerity on that of F.B. who could only conjecture the cessation to be caused by the resentment of Piozzi, when informed of her constant opposition. 59

Between 1784 and 1787 there is nothing but a long silence between the two once-intimate friends. Mrs. Piozzi was convinced that the Burneys were completely treacherous to her, and when Sir Lucas Pepys brought word that Fanny had spoken highly of the Anecdotes, she could only write:

Miss Burney spoke kindly of me, but that I count nothing indeed, except that She thinks we are coming into Mode again. That Family has certainly been too ungrateful, they were dabbling in News paper Abuse of me all the Time I was away in Italy. 60

Actually, Fanny was not ever completely false to her friend. At this particular time, she was trying to thwart Queeney's efforts to prevent Mrs. Piozzi from keeping Cecelia. 61 Her journal is filled with proof of her continued interest and affection. 62

59 Loc. cit.
60 Palderston, op. cit., p. 686.
61 Ibid., p. 686.
62 Ibid., p. 760.
In March of 1790, the inevitable occurred. Fanny and Mrs. Piozzi met each other. Thraliana records:

I met Miss Burney at an Assembly last night, 'tis Six Years since I had seen her; She appear'd most fondly rejoiced—in good Time; ...I answered with Ease and Coldness, but in Exceeding Good humour, and we talked about the King & Queen, His Majesty's Illness & Recovery—and all ended as it should do with perfect Indifference.63

After this initial meeting, there were several others, equally cool on the part of the ladies, and a call or two in Bath after Madame D'Arblay's return from France with her husband and son. The intercourse, in each instance, was formal and strained in the extreme,64 until in 1818 Mrs. Thrale wrote in her New Common Place Book:

Madame D'Arblay, always smooth always alluring:—passed two or Three Hours with me today—My perfect Forgiveness of L'amiable Traithesse was not the act of Duty, but the impulsion of Pleasure rationally sought for, where it was at all Times sure of being found—In her Conversation. I will however not assist her Reception in the World a Second Time—'else she'll betray more men' as Shakespeare says; and she is no favourite with the present Race of Talkers here at Bath.65

"The renewed contact was however, pleasantly, if somewhat formally, continued by correspondence, and perhaps by further meetings, from 1818 until the time of Mrs. Piozzi's death in 1821." 66

63Ibid., p. 760.
64Loc. cit.
65Loc. cit.
Sir William Weller Pepys (1740-1825)

Sir William Weller Pepys was a direct descendant of Samuel Pepys, the diarist, being in the relationships of a third cousin twice removed.¹

Miss Alice Gaussen, in introducing her book, A Later Pepys, uses the letters written by Sir William Weller Pepys, now in the possession of Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, K.C.B., F.R.S., President of the Society of Antiquaries, as a basis for the biographical material concerning Sir William.

He was born in 1740, in Brighton, of a banker—father who was of sufficient means to send his son to Eton and Oxford. As a child, William seems to have been always, a sensitive and introspective lad, unduly concerned with the "dread of unknown but half-suspected terrors."² Apparently he established for himself a splendid scholastic reputation at Eton which, "from want of health and spirits during his early years, he was not able to avail himself....."³ Even as a child, "the only part of the Church service he could not heartily join in, was thanksgiving for his creation."⁴

¹See appendix F, infra.
³Ibid., I, 6.
⁴Ibid., I, 7.
When he was twenty-one, he was forced by the condition of his health to leave Oxford and repair to Bath, "a martyr to what I was then young enough to consider a meritorious application to study." The course of treatments at Bath restored his health and spirits sufficiently to enable him to live comfortably for twenty years, after which, he again found it necessary to take the waters. The second visit was sufficiently recuperative to enable him to continue his activities for another six years before he was compelled to return a third time. On this occasion he wrote: "There is hardly one day in six, after drinking these waters, that my head will bear to trace pen upon paper. How long the third winding-up will last, God only knows." The third winding-up, however, was obviously the charm, for Sir William lived to the handsome age of eighty-five with all his faculties unimpaired and an unceasing interest in the literati of his very literary times.

At the age of thirty-seven he married Elizabeth, daughter of the Right Hon. William Dowdeswell, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1765. His eldest son succeeded to the baronetcy, and died unmarried. His second son became Lord Chancellor, and was created Earl of Cottonham. His third son became Bishop of Worcester.

5Loc. cit.

6Loc. cit.
Whenever, in the literary annals of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, mention is made of the "Bas Bleu" assemblies, there too will be found the name of Sir William Weller Pepys. In 1825, Hannah More, in speaking of the death of her long-time friend, said: "Our acquaintance began nearly fifty years ago; he was the Loelius in my little poem "The Bas Bleu." As he was the Chief ornament, so he was the last survivor of the select Society, which gave birth to the trifle." 7 He not only was the "chief ornament of the select society" but was also its ambassador-at-large, with portfolio from Mrs. Montagu, who was the acknowledged monarch of this little intellectual republic. Johnson, in fact, referred to Pepys as Mrs. Montagu's prime minister. This we learn by eavesdropping on a conversation between the gossipy Miss Burney and George Cambridge at a literary party of Mrs. Vesey's. Miss Burney had related all the succulent details of the actual Johnson-Pepys fray 8 and continued the discussion with the opinion that Johnson would very much like to have attacked Mrs. Montagu in just such a manner. She relates to her avid listener:

7Ibid., I, 47.

8See infra., p. 171 et passim.
Yes; but he never repeated it; (the quarrel) though he wished of all things to have gone through just such another scene with Mrs. Montagu, and to refrain was an act of heroic forbearance.

Cambridge: Why, I rather wonder he did not; for she was the head of the set of Lyttletonians.

Burney: Oh, he knows that; he calls Mr. Pepys only her prime minister.

Cambridge: And what does he call her?

Burney: Queen to be sure! Queen of the Blues! 9

Fanny Burney, in describing one of the Pepys' "Bas Bleu" affairs, writes:

The passion of Sir William for literature, and his admiration of talents, and zeal for genius, made him receive whoever could gratify his tastes, with pleasure that seemed to carry him into higher regions. The parties at his house formed into little separate groups, less awful than at Mrs. Montagu's, and less awkward than at Mrs. Vesey's; he glided adroitly from one to another, till, after making the round of politeness necessary for the master of the house his hospitality felt acquitted of its devoirs, and he indulged in the circle the most to his taste, leaving to his serenely acquiescent wife the task of equalizing attention. ...........But while animated conversation, a lively memory of early anecdotes, and readiness for reciting the whole mass of English poets, formed the enjoyment of his happiest hours, justice must raise him still higher for solid worth. He never looked so charmed as when engaged in some good office; and his charities were as expensive as the bounty of those who possessed more than double his income. So sincere, indeed, was his benevolence, that it seemed as much a part of himself as his limbs, and could have been torn from him with less difficulty.10

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9 Barrett, op. cit., II, 236.

10 Gaussen, op. cit., I, 10.
Therefore, in his capacity as a well-loved member of the exclusive Blue Stocking salons, William Weller Pepys was one of the earliest, most regular, and most welcome visitors to the various homes of the Thrales; and was a member in good standing of the Streatham Coterie. He seems, however, to have been one of the few persons in Mrs. Thrale's circle of intimates whom she could never definitely classify as one of her best-loved or least-loved friends, and one wonders if Dr. Johnson could have unwittingly influenced his hostess' vacillating opinions concerning her frequent guest, Mr. Pepys, for it is easily discernible, when the various Johnson remarks in Thraliana concerning Mr. Pepys are carefully compared, that the Great Cham felt the heartiest contempt for a man whom he considered a fop, a poseur, and something of an affected idiot. 11 Dr. Johnson did not restrain himself to the two notorious vicious and public attacks on Mr. Pepys, but constantly and consistently lashed at him, in and out of his presence.

One of the earliest entries in the first volume of Thraliana is a remark concerning Mr. Pepys. Considering the fact that Mrs. Thrale was acknowledging the gift of some very complimentary wedding verses from him, one would think to find her in a mellow frame of mind towards her

friend; she does, in fact, indicate a certain partiality for Mr. Pepys until she recollects Johnson's feelings about him; then she veers into the wind. The passage reads:

Mr. Pepys, whose Verses on our Wedding Day are written out two or three Pages back, is one of my great favourites, and I am very sorry Johnson hates him so; but 'tis no wonder, his Character is so very artificial—his Manner at least—that it disgusts a Man who has seen all sorts of Tricks and who can be pleased with nothing but Nature: they had a Dispute Yesterday however about Ovid, and I fully intended writing down the particulars of the Conversation, as many very striking Things were said; but one of my Girls was sick in the Afternoon, and I forgot every Word of it, carrying in my Head only this single Idea, that Pepys talked from Bouhours Book, (la Manière de bien penser) and therefore all Johnson said was lost upon him, for how can you convince a Man who is not uttering his own Opinions but those of another.  

On another occasion when the subject of Pepys came up, Mrs. Thrale reversed herself, and considers that he is a "Man of Virtue, a Man of Learning, a Man pious, frugal, charitable and kind; has a great many anecdotes to liven his Talk, and dresses gayly to set off his Person," and she agrees that in the words of Menage (Menagiana, 4 vols. Paris, 1715, ii. 76.) he is "...Le Galant le plus pedant et le Pedant le plus galant qu'on puisse voir." Yet in spite of agreeing that he is the most "gallant scholar and the most scholarly gallant whom one would be likely to

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12 Balderston, op. cit., p. 56.

13 Ibid., pp. 56-7.
see"; in the rating-sheet which she drew up upon the list of her friends she gives him only 75 per cent in General Knowledge, 35 per cent in Manners, and 50 per cent in Good Humour.

This computation is made increasingly obscure to the reader of Thraliana when Mrs. Thrale later writes of him as being a man with, "such unremitting Ardour for Literary Talk, such variety of Topics, & succession of Imagery, (as to be) very uncommon." One can only conclude that she judged him differently according to the vagaries of mood and the exigencies of the occasion. Indeed, she once said, he is "like a candle that would not light kindly; there was a perpetual struggle in him between Brilliancy and Obscurity." In the words of the old nursery rhyme, "when he was good, he was very very good, but when he was bad, he was--" awful.

In addition to the rating sheet, the "meat-dish" game gives the reader of Thraliana matter to ponder upon. Here, Mr. Pepys is likened to a "perigord pye", from which comparison one can only conclude that he was, in the Streatham opinion, at least, rare, overly-refined, insubstantial yet somewhat earthy, like the dish's components of partridges and truffles.

14 See Appendix B, infra.
15 Balderston, op. cit., p. 380.
16 Ibid., p. 61.
17 Ibid., p. 347. (See Appendix B)
In April of 1779, she wrote,

Mr. Pepys has spent a great deal of his Time with us of late & he improves upon me vastly; such unremitting Ardour for Literary Talk, such variety of Topics, & Succession of Imagery is very uncommon.18

How then, in the very same month of the very same year has she changed sufficiently to state:

Pepys duns me for Friendship still, & has done now for these dozen years; he would be happy if I loved him half as well as I do two or three People who do not deserve my Kindness more—yet I always feel trying to fondle Pepys, while my Heart opens spontaneously to Murphy Seward or Sir Phillip Jennings Clerke, & runs forward a Mile to meet my dear Doctor Burney—Ah! says Pepys yesterday—'tis seven & seven still and the Epergne—you will continue to treat me like a common Acquaintance & 'tis very cruel of you Mrs. Thrale, after twelve Years persecuting you with my Admiration—when shall we make such a Progress in Friendship that all this ceremony may abate?—his Wife and my Husband laughed heartily at the Apostrophe—for my own Part I felt conscious of Ingratitude. I will Make him read with me something of the Classicks, & then perhaps we shall grow more intimate; for though I respect the Man vastly, & wish him well sincerely, I never feel any of that Tenderness for him, which I do for many a less valuable Friend. Johnson don't love him, maybe that's the Reason; & Burney hates him too—but so he does Sir Phillip & all for the same Reason because he is a Whig—that is nonsense however, Johnson don't love Seward yet I do, & the D2 can't abide Jennings whom I rather delight in, so that Reason won't do, & I can think of none less agreeable— I could grow very fond of Lord Westcote now, who is really a less agreeable Man—so much for the state of my Heart towards my Friends whose partiality for me sometimes amounts almost to disease. the Creatures do love me, & I have not flung my Fondness away upon any of them.19

18Ibid., p. 380.
19Ibid., 378.
Mrs. Thrale spoke very truly when she said she "flung no fondness away" upon Pepys, for, in her *Dialogues*, she makes him appear a fatuous fool, dancing to the cleverness of Mrs. Mantagu. She did have the grace, however, when the satire was finished, to repent that she had not "made Pepys speak more tenderly" of her, since he "does love me; & very sincerely." But even so, "Be his Friendship however what it will his Vanity is still stronger; he would I believe speak & act just as he does in the Dialogue."²⁰

The *Three Dialogues on the Death of Hester Lynch Thrale* is considered by many critics of Mrs. Thrale, as her only piece of clever writing; it is a witty satire written around the imaginary conversations of her friends after her death. The talk takes place at a "Bas Bleu" assembly at the home of Mrs. Vesey and the characters are Mrs. Montagu, Johnson, Pepys, and Burke.

The dialogues are very short and are designed to accomplish nothing but the presentation of the writer's idea of the way her friends would react to her death, each in his own character. Pepys is shown as idiotically arousing Johnson from a contemplative meditation by saying: "We have a sad loss of an amiable Friend, Dr. Johnson - Mrs. Thrale - ."

Johnson: Yes sir.

Pepys: Here is always at this house a mighty happy Selection—too many tho' I think Sir for the purposes of Conversation; any five of them would do better, a mere Galaxy of Wits this, too many good Dishes like poor Mrs. Thrale's Dinners -- Dr. Johnson!

Johnson: I do not like to talk of Mrs. Thrale, Sir.

Pepys: Sir, I suppose nobody presumes to question the Propriety of any Expression that falls from Dr. Johnson, but give me leave to recover my Surprize at least — I had no Idea of your objecting to me for expressing my Concern for the death of that Lady, and you were (peevishly) suppos'd to have had some loss of her yourself too ———

Johnson: (Earnestly) If you suppose it Mr. Pepys, you do not surely observe the Rules of good Breeding in placing that loss before my Eyes so wantonly. No Man, should fail to respect the Sorrows of another, as no Man is likely to glide through Life without feeling any; and no Man, I must tell you, Sir ---

Pepys: God bless me I ——-

Johnson: (Very loud) Nay but give me leave -- I did not interrupt you. -- No Man I say has a Right to obtrude unpleasing Images on my Mind, nor force me for his Pleasure upon making ungrateful Comparisons between my past & present State of Existence. Would you declaim upon the happiness of sound Health to Beauflerc? Would you talk to your Friend (sneeringly) Keppel of the twenty seventh of July?

Burke: Mr. Keppel might be talked to concerning the Business of that Day Dr. Johnson, and often is, without any Diminution of that Self Complacency which in Good men ever attends the performance of their Duty, however unsuccessfull the Event.

Johnson: Burke you know better, but we have long ago agreed not to talk about publick Affairs—was I wrong though in what I said this moment to Pepys?
Burke: Perfectly right unless from the Violence with which it was said. Unless a Man had Stores less inexhaustible of Entertainment than I fear our Friend the Master will be found to have, he should be cautious of introducing Subjects of so delicate a Nature. Tis acting at last but like Aaron the Moor, who dug up People's dead Friends I think & set them at their Doors.

Johnson: Why somehow or other I don't much love Pepys, & so I might be tempted to be rough with him -- & yet it is unreasonable -- you know it is -- to be obliged to share Pain with a Creature with whom one cannot share Pleasure.

Mrs. Montagu: (To a Lady) What was Johnson so loud about at the other end of the Room?--I could not make it out.

Pepys: Why, the oddest Thing in the World -- I meant to please him & mentioned Mrs. Thrale's name, but he flew out so fiercely -- It put me in mind of a Thing --

Mrs. Montagu: Ayl He flew out--did not he--we heard him quite across the Room; why he burst in your hand like an overcharged Musket, & you seem a little shattered by the Recol too, I protest, -- but he has a Lass you'll allow -- Mrs. Thrale among her other Qualifications, had prodigious strong Nerves -- and that's an admirable Quality for a Friend of Dr. Johnson's.

Pepys: Oh Madam I have been stunned by him at Streatham many a Time, and Mrs. Thrale not content with his Loud Voice would make me exert my own Lungs very often till I have been quite ill after it -- how She could bear such bawling, & not be totally divested of all Delicacy was a constant Source of Wonder to me -- I used to tell her that She put me in Mind...

Mrs. Montagu: Bless me! yes, She had remarkable good Nerves, & yet carried off so suddenly--pounced by Death like a Partridge upon the Wing--caught in one of her Flights Mr. Pepys.

Pepys: Charming! Charming! Bravo! Bravo!
(And now he runs about telling everybody what Mrs. Montagu said last -- while Johnson, enquiring what the happy Mollie was & hearing it repeated -- leaves the Room, & the Conversation is changed to a worthier Subject.)\textsuperscript{21}

Pepys was speaking nothing less than bitter truth when he said "I have been stunned by him at Streatham many a time." The whole of the literary world reeled and divided itself into armed camps over the Pepys-Johnson word battle which Fanny Burney described so lightsomely in her journal. Fanny tells us that war had been proclaimed among the wits over the treatment accorded Lord Lyttleton in Johnson's \textit{Life of the Poets}. The "Blues", with Mrs. Montagu in the vanguard of the enraged avengers, had vowed their intention of obtaining revenge and satisfaction. Johnson, too, had received intelligence of the enemy plans, and, in turn, had determined to take the offense with the first of them he met. The unfortunate Pepys, quite aware that he was well-known as The "Queen of the Blues' Prime Minister," felt sure that he was going to have to answer to Johnson as the ambassador of the "Blues." Accordingly, in a hasty effort to avert hostilities, he sought out Fanny Burney at Streatham "before the company assembled", and asked her to do what she could to prevent the attack. But poor Fanny was helpless; she says:

It was, however, utterly impossible for me to serve him. I could have stopped Mrs. Thrale with ease, and Mr. Seward with a hint, had either of them begun the subject; but, unfortunately, in the middle of dinner it was begun by Dr. Johnson himself, to oppose whom, especially as he spoke with great anger, would have been madness and folly.

Never before have I seen Dr. Johnson speak with so much passion.

"Mr. Pepys," he cries, in a voice the most enraged, "I understand you are offended by my Life of Lord Lyttleton. What is it you have to say against it? Come forth, Man! Here am I, ready to answer any charge you can bring!"

"No, sir," cried Mr. Pepys, "not at present; I must beg leave to decline the subject. I told Miss Burney before dinner that I hoped it would not be started."22

The Doctor gave this mild effort to avert bloodshed not even the courtesy of a reply, but repeated his challenge, and, says Fanny, "a violent disputation ensued, in which this great but mortal man did, to own the truth, appear unreasonably furious and grossly severe. I never saw him so before, and I heartily hope I never shall again."23 In an effort to remain impartial, Fanny was impelled to grant that there was justification on both sides. She defended Johnson by saying:

He had been long provoked, and justly enough, at the sneaking complaints and murmurs of the Lytteltonians; and, therefore, his long-excited wrath, which hitherto had met no object, now burst forth with a vehemence and bitterness almost incredible.24

22Barrett, op. cit., I, 436.
23Ibid., I, 499.
24Loc. cit.
On the other hand Fanny could not but admire William Pepys who probably was utterly confounded that a gentleman could engage in a dispute of such violence at a lady's dinner table. She says that he had never before impressed her so much: "he preserved his temper, uttered all that belonged merely to himself with modesty, and all that immediately related to Lord Lyttleton with spirit." Even the Doctor was impressed; he stopped his tirade long enough to say to him: "Sir, all that you say, while you are vindicating one who cannot thank you, makes me only think better of you than I ever did before. Yet still I think you do me wrong," etc., etc.

Even after dinner, the Doctor was not content to leave off his boorish behavior, but called off Pepys and "harangued and attacked him with a vehemence and continuity" that quite upset the little Burney and her hostess, and finally drove the unhappy Pepys to take refuge in complete silence, "resolutely silent, however called upon." The silence itself soon became so uncomfortable that Mr. Gator, whom the miserable spectators must have viewed as the direct intervention of Divine Providence, broke it by saying ignorantly and pompously, "What I am

25 Loc. cit.
26 Loc. cit.
27 Ibid., I, 501.
28 Ibid.
now going to say, as I have not yet read the Life of Lord Lyttleton quite through, must be considered as being only said aside, because what I am going to say--." 29 It gave the agonized hostess the opportunity to end the whole disgraceful affair by saying, "I wish, sir, it had been all set aside; here is too much about it, indeed, and I should be very glad to hear no more about it." 30 Fanny felt that even Johnson knew that the reproof was deserved, so subsided permanently, saying only, "Well, madam, you shall hear no more of it; yet I will defend myself in every part and in every atom." 31 Thus ended "Operation Lyttleton." The next major battle was "Operation Gray", whose conclusion saw the protagonist ostracised from many of the "Bleu" salons where he formerly had been made very welcome. 32

We have no better witness to the fray than Fanny Burney, who once again was right on the scene, missing not a word, forgetting not a word. The engagement started this time with a discussion upon some lines of Gray, and upon Pope's definition of wit. Once again Johnson leaped to the attack with ferocity and forced the complete

29Loc. cit.
30Loc. cit.
31Loc. cit.
32See below, in this study, p. 177.
withdrawal of his enemy. Burney says:

...he was so roughly confused, and so severely ridiculed, that he was hurt and piqued beyond all power of disguise, and, in the midst of the discourse, suddenly turned from him, (Johnson) and, wishing Mrs. Thrale good-night, very abruptly withdrew.33

On this occasion, Miss Burney was able to recollect the entire conversation which she relates thusly:

The sum of the dispute was this. Wit being talked of, Mr. Pepys repeated, -

"True wit is Nature to advantage dress'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."34

"That, sir," cried Dr. Johnson, "is a definition both false and foolish. Let wit be dressed how it will, it will equally be wit, and neither the more nor the less for any advantage dress can give it."

Mr. P. - But, sir, may not wit be so ill expressed, and so obscure, by a bad speaker, as to be lost?

Dr. J. - The fault, then, sir, must be with the hearer. If a man cannot distinguish wit from words, he little deserves to hear it.

Mr. P. - But, sir, what Pope means--

Dr. J. - Sir, what Pope means, if he means what he says, is both false and foolish. In the first place, "What oft was thought," is all the worse for being often thought, because to be wit, it ought to be newly thought.

Mr. P. - But, sir, 'tis the expression makes it new.

33Ibid., II, 107-8.

Dr. J. - How can the expression make it new? It may make it clear, or may make it elegant; but how new? You are confounding words with things.

Mr. P. - But, sir, if one man says a thing very ill, may not another man say it so much better that—

Dr. J. - That other man, sir, deserves but small praise for the amendment; he is but the tailor to the first man's thoughts.

Mr. P. - True, sir, he may be but the tailor; but then the difference is as great as between a man in a gold lace suit and a man in a blanket.

Dr. J. - Just so, sir, I thank you for that; the difference is precisely such, since it consists neither in the gold lace nor the blanket, but in the man by whom they are worn.

She concludes her saga by stating: "This was the summary; the various contemptuous sarcasms intermixed would fill, and very unpleasantly, a quire."

This time, even she could not exculpate her adored Doctor. She is forced to admit that she was "grieved to see how unamiable he appeared, and how greatly he made himself dreaded by all, and by many abhorred."35

That he had made himself abhorred and dreaded was made amply evident by the sound of the "Bluestocking" doors being closed to his entry. Fanny Burney in disdaining her many "ton" engagements mentions many houses at which

he was no longer received; among them were the Countess of
Rothe, 36 Lady Shelley, 37 and Mrs. Halsey's. 38 The diarist,
finding that it was becoming increasingly necessary to
parenthesise every item with the remark that Johnson was
excluded finally makes a general statement and has done
with it. She remarks, on the occasion of having been
invited to Lady Shelley's; "Dr. Johnson, again (was)
excepted in the invitation. He is almost constantly omitted,
either from too much respect or too much fear. I am sorry
for it." 39

Mrs. Montagu herself made public her intention to
have nothing further to do with him, and in fact openly
vowed "that she would never speak to him more." 40 This
oath, happily, she was not able to keep, but relations
were strained from that time on with, not only Johnson,
but also Mrs. Thrale - much to her chagrin, as that lady
had been "assiduously cultivating Mrs. Montagu and her
satellites for the past few years, and it was not pleasant
to find this friendship threatened by a petty literary
feud." 41

36 Ibid., II, 109.
37 Ibid., II, 112.
38 Ibid., II, 113.
39 Loc. cit.
40 Ibid., II, 236.
41 Clifford, op. cit., p. 197.
All of this passed presently, as teapot-tampests have a way of doing, and life went on very normally for the widowed Mrs. Thrale. However, in January of 1782, she took a house in Harley Street for three months, "and hoped to have some Society, since 'tis too dull to live all alone so." She expected the world to watch her "& think I come o'husband hunting for myself or my fair daughter." She was quite safe in her expectations, for callers did come and invitations were issued her, but by that time she was exceedingly angry at most of her old friends for their gossiping and wager laying about her intentions for a remarriage. She writes in **Thraliana**:

The first Seduction came from Pepys; I had a Letter today, desiring me to dine in Wimpole Street, & meet Mrs Montagu and a whole Army of Blues; to whom I trust my Refusal will afford a very pretty Speculation - & they may settle my character & future Conduct at their Leisure.

Pepys is a worthless Fellow at last; he & his Brother run about the Town spying & enquiring what Mrs Thrale is to do this Winter; what Friends She is to see, What Men are in her Confidence, how soon She will be married &c. the Brother DP the Medico as we call Him, lays Wagers about me I find - God Forgive me, but they'll make me hate them both; & they are no better than two Fools for their Pains, for I was willing to have taken them to my heart. 42

But the worst was yet to come: the affair with Picotzi was building up to the climax of what the literary

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world was to consider the tragic marriage, and with which event her London friends were to desert her in droves. In July of 1784, the much discussed marriage took place. Henceforth, Hester Thrale Piozzi was to live a quite different life than that of her first marriage. She lived abroad for a very long time, and when she returned, she made, for the largest part, a new set and a new kind of friends. She writes in 1789:

Mrs Montagu wants to make up with me again; I dare say She does; but I will not be taken & left, even at the Pleasure of those who are much dearer and nearer to me than Mrs Montagu. We want for no flash, no flattery; I never had more of either in my Life, nor ever lived half so happily; Mrs Montagu wrote creeping Letters when She wanted my help, or foolishly thought She did; & then turned her Back upon me & set her adherents to do the same; I despise such Conduct; & Mr. Pepys, Mrs Ord &c now sneak about and look ashamed of themselves. Well they may!44

and again she says:

Pepys too, the Master in Chancery runs if he sees me like a Rat as they call the King's Friends, who sneaked off to ye other Party when their Sovereign's recovery grew Doubtful: 'tis a good Appellation enough, we know Rats do instinctively, & literally run from a falling house.45

As a final entry concerning her former "Bluestocking" friends, she writes: "The Pepysis find out that they have used me very ill -- I hope they find out too, that I do not care. Seward sues for Reconciliation under hand -- so do they all; & I as sincerely forgive them. But like the

44 Ibid., p. 745.
Linnet in Metastasis

When Lim'd, the poor Bird thus with Eagerness strains,
Nor regrets his torn Wing while his freedom he gains,
The Loss of his Plumage Small Time will restore,
And once tried the false Twig—it shall cheat him no more. 46

46 Ibid., pp. 770-1.
Among the intimate friends and frequent visitors of the Thrales, there was a small group of people who were of little note in the world of prominence and affairs, and who were not even frequently mentioned in the records of their hostess. The quality of the items that do mention them, however, is such that Mrs. Thrale's readers can not avoid the conclusion, that though they played no vital and important role in the theatrics of her life, they were often present upon the stage, merely standing by in the wings in case of need. Therefore, though they were not brilliant, nor witty, nor clever, they must be apportioned their fair share of the glory of the production. In short, they must be acknowledged as members of the Streatham Coterie.

Because of the paucity of the material concerning them, in most cases, they have been grouped together in this paper, quite probably as they were often grouped together while visiting at Streatham; they were of no great importance, required but little attention from their hosts; they were merely "the old familiar faces."
Hester Cotton D'Avenant (1748-1822)

Hester Cotton D'Avenant and Corbet D'Avenant (or Davenant), later Sir Corbet Corbet, Bart, and Lady Corbet, were family connections of Mrs. Thrale. Corbet D'Avenant was the son of Colonel Thomas D'Avenant (who married, for his second wife, Hetty Cotton's oldest sister, Elizabeth), and Anne, daughter and heir of Sir Richard Corbet of Stole, Salop.

Corbet D'Avenant married Mrs. Thrale's cousin, Hester Salusbury Cotton, daughter of Sir Lynch Cotton, and in 1786, assumed his mother's name, and was created a baronet.

Curiously enough, this marriage of Hetty Cotton's connected the families of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale; for Corbet D'Avenant was a great-grandson of Thomas Boothby, of Tooley Park, Leicestershire, who married as his second wife, Hester Skrymsher, Dr. Johnson's first cousin.¹

¹Balderston, op. cit., p. 113.
Hetty Cotton D'Avenant was one of the few girlhood friends of Hester Lynch who survived the years and separations to remain a family friend of the Thrales. That she was a very early friend we know, because Mrs. Thrale mentions, in *Thraliana*, that Hetty Cotton attended Queen Square Boarding School where she used to visit her.²

Their friendship did not die with the end of the schoolroom days, as do so many girlish devotions, but continued right on through Mrs. Thrale's marriage. In recalling the lonely and dull first months of her marriage, Mrs. Thrale says:

Miss Hetty Cotton the youngest of Sir Lynch's Daughters too used to be much with me, Mrs. Thrale grew passionately fond of her, so fond indeed that I was not much pleased with the partiality -- from Female Motives perhaps, but indeed I think not; some of her Sisters had behaved but indifferently, & her carriage was rather of the lightest, I apprehended some Mischief to her, and blame to Mrs. Thrale, for as I never was a fond Wife, so I certainly never was a Jealous one. (She was a near Relation my Mother liked her about us, but no one else.)³

Even though the young wife did not, as yet, know her husband's propensities for a pretty face, she did know the wild streak that ran in the blood of the Cotton girls; thus the reference above to "her Sisters who had behaved but indifferently." The episode which she was probably thinking about concerned Mary (Molly) Cotton, who

²Ibid., p. 334.

³Ibid., p. 307.
had run away with a butler to Scotland, was dragged back
by her family, and then, as her father wrote to his sister,
had met a certain Rev. Mr. Tench in the fields secretly
for four years, and publicly declared that "a husband she
would have if he was only a footman."4

The attraction between Thrale and Hetty Cotton did
not hinder the friendship of Mrs. Thrale and Hetty from
continuing for many years. Hetty Cotton, or Hetty
D'Avenant, as she became, was a constant visitor to
Streatham throughout the years, and was present at most of
the crises in the Thrale affairs.

In 1774, she created a little excitement herself.

Mrs. Thrale records:

The next Year, (1774), Mr. Thrale proposed to
me to take a Turn into Wales, and survey my Possess-
ions in that Country; I consented; .... Thro' Maccles-
field we past on to Combermere where Sir Lynch and
Lady Cotton behav'd unexceptionally to us, & their
youngest daughter Miss Hetty, our old Inmate,
entertained us with a runaway Marriage made however
with a very deserving Young Gentleman Corbet D'Avenant
Esq' of Atherly.5

In 1779, Mrs. D'Avenant served as godmother for
Cecelia, in place of Mrs. Strickland, the actual sponsor,
who could not serve because of her Roman Catholic
persuasion.6 Another emergency in which she was present
and helpful was at the time of Mr. Thrale's first stroke.

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5 Ibid., pp. 314-15.
6 Ibid., p/ 319.
After that tremendous event, Mrs. Thrale wrote:

But Seward and Mrs. D'Avenant shew'd the true concern; they came directly & have staid with me ever since.\footnote{Ibid., p. 390.}

Again in the spring of the following year Mrs. D'Avenant rallied to the needs of her friend by helping her canvass votes for Mr. Thrale's seat in Parliament, while he was too ill to do it for himself.\footnote{Ibid., p. 436.} That this service was not the end of her help at this trying time, is apparent from a letter of Fanny Burney's to her father in 1780. She informs him that she cannot leave Streatham until Mr. Thrale is better, or "Mrs. D'Avenant can come hither.\footnote{Barrett, op. cit., I, 451.}"

It is from Fanny, indeed, that we get what picture is available of the D'Avenants; for Mrs. Thrale limits her remarks about them to simple statements of fact concerning their presence at the Thrale functions, or their assistance in time of need. Apparently they were visiting at Streatham in 1781 during one of Fanny Burney's sojourns, for she writes:

We had Mr. and Mrs. D'Avenant here. They are very lively and agreeable, and I like them more and more. Mrs. D'Avenant is one of the saucy women of the ton, indeed; but she has good parts, and is gay and entertaining; and her spose, who passionately adores her, though five years her junior, is
one of the best-tempered and most pleasant-charactered young men imaginable.\textsuperscript{10}

Young Crutchley, the \textit{poseur}, however, did not agree with Fanny. He admitted that Mrs. D'Avenant was "lively and agreeable," but was profoundly puzzled "that such a thing as that "could" captivate a man." The fact that Mrs. Thrale had assured him that men in general liked her, only increased his bewilderment, or so he said. As he watched the lady in question strolling about the grounds of Streatham, he mused aloud to Fanny:

\textit{What a thing for an attachment! No, No, it would not do for me! too much glare! too much flippancy! too much neck! too much hoop! too much gauze! too much slipper! too much neck! Oh, hide it! hide it! muffle it up! muffle it up! If it is but in a fur cloak, I am for muffling it all up!}\textsuperscript{11}

Mrs. Thrale, on the other hand, was inclined to agree with Crutchley; possibly she had never forgotten the period when Hetty had enchanted her husband's eye, for she rather cattily remarks:

\textit{Aunt Catherine died firmly persuaded that Mrs. Davenant (sic) was a natural, & that I wrote her letters for her - how odd! Many people said she was the prettiest woman in the room last night,-- and that is as odd; Augusta Byron, & Sophy Streatfield, & Mrs. Hinchcliffe, being present.}\textsuperscript{12}

On another occasion, and in a burst of affectionate gratitude, Mrs. Thrale wrote of her friend:

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., I, 493.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., I, 496.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., I, 460.
Mrs. Byron, Mrs. Strickland, Mrs. Davenant, Mrs. Lambert are the Women I love best in the world; Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Montagu and Fanny Burney are the Women I like best in the World: how different is Love & Liking.  

In the face of the services that we know Mrs. D'Avenant rendered Mrs. Thrale, it is a little puzzling to see her rated only nine for "Worth of Heart" in the Streatham rating chart. However, her popularity, at least with the men, is clarified when we see that she rates 17 in "Good humour", and 10 in "Person Mien & Manner." With the men of Streatham, she had no need of "Conversation Powers," so a score of 3 was no detriment; but one is a little surprised to find "a saucy woman of the ton" having so few of the graces as to rate only a 2 in "Ornamental Knowledge."  

Presumably, the Thrale-D'Avenant relationship slipped smoothly over into the Piozzi-D'Avenant friendship, for no further mention is made of them in Thraliana or the Letters except casual remarks concerning Mrs. D'Avenant's increasing age and decreasing social attractiveness; her disappointment in having no children, and her desire to live abroad. With no evidence to the contrary, we may suppose that the friendship endured until the death of one or the other of the participants, just as do those in the families of many less celebrated, but equally normal people.  

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13 Balderston, op. cit., p. 444.  
14 Ibid., p. 330.  
15 Ibid., p. 1004.  
16 Ibid., p. 971  
17 Ibid., p. 482.
Fanny Brown

Another unpretentious but familiar visitor to the Thrale households was Fanny Brown, who is mentioned but little in their mistress's Common-Book, but who was, regardless of that fact, "an intimate of the Thrale household,"¹ The biographical data concerning Fanny Brown is almost non-existant, except for the fact that she was the daughter of Mr. Lyde Brown of Wimbledon, an antiquarian "well-known for his Taste for the polite Arts, & his valuable Collection of Pictures Busts & c."² and that she eloped with a "Cornet of Horse", one Thomas Gunter Browne, Esq., of the 37th regiment, in 1779. Of this episode, Mrs. Thrale affectionately noted: "I do love that little Minx, & hope She may yet be happy, tho' She has vexed me by this exploit a little too.--Poor silly Cecchina! or P. B. as we used to call her.--I wish She had a good Whipping & 10,000 £.³

That she was good looking and gay seems indisputable, for Fanny Burney thought of her as "very like the Duchess of Devonshire, only less handsome;" but a gay careless, lively, good-humoured girl,"⁴ and that she was

¹ Balderston, op. cit., p. 222.
² Ibid., p. 343.
³ Ibid., p. 407.
⁴ Barrett, op.cit., I, 103.
a Streatham Coterian in good standing is equally indisputable, for Burney records a conversation with Dr. Johnson in which she inquired "after all the Streathamites," and was told, "Why, we now want only you—we have Miss Streathfield, Miss Brown, Miss Murphy, and Seward—we want only you."  

The little Burney was fond of Fanny Brown, herself; an honor she did not accord to all the ladies who visited Streatham. She said about her, "I am become quite intimate with her...and I like her very much." In comparing her with Sophy Streathfield, the reigning beauty of Streatham, she found entirely in the favor of Fanny Brown, even though there were certain regrettable aspects of the latter which she wished might be altered:

Miss Streathfield requires longer time to make conquests. She is, indeed, much more really beautiful than Fanny Brown; but Fanny Brown is much more showy, and her open, good-humoured, gay laughing face inspires an almost immediate wish of conversing and merry-making with her. Indeed, the two days she spent here have raised her greatly in my regard. She is a charming girl, and so natural, and easy, and sweet-tempered, that there is no being half an hour in her company without ardently wishing her well........but dress is the last thing in which she excels; for she has lived so much abroad, and so much with foreigners at home, that she never appears habited as an Englishwoman, nor as a high-bred foreigner, but rather as an Italian opera-dancer; and her wild careless, giddy manner, her loud laugh, and general negligence of appearance, contribute to give her that air and look. I like her so much, that I am quite sorry she is not better advised, either by her own

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5 Ibid., I, 185.

6 Ibid., I, 209.
or some friend's judgment.

Miss Brown, however, was queen of the breakfast: for though her giddiness made everybody take liberties with her, her good-humour made everybody love her, and her gaiety made everybody desirous to associate with her. Sir Philip played with her as with a young and sportive kitten; Mr. Fuller laughed and chatted with her; and Mr. Seward, when here, teases and torments her. The truth is, he cannot bear her, and she, in return, equally fears and dislikes him, but still she cannot help attracting his notice.7

Dr. Johnson, however, not only found Fanny's manner of dress regrettable, but also thought her a singularly unlearned young woman. Burney relates one incident, concerning the uninhibited Doctor, which tells the reader a very great deal about both himself and Fanny Brown:

Indeed, it is well I have so much of his favour; for it seems he always speaks his mind concerning the dress of ladies, and all ladies who are here obey his injunctions implicitly, and alter whatever he disapproves...but notwithstanding he is sometimes so absent and always so near sighted, he scrutinizes into every part of almost everybody's appearance. Miss Brown who often visits here...has a slovenly way of dressing. "and when she comes down in a morning," says Mrs. Thrale, "her hair will be all loose, and her cap half off; and then Dr. Johnson, who sees something is wrong, and does not know where the fault is, concludes it is in the cap, and says, 'My dear, what do you wear such a vile cap for?'

'I'll change it, sir,' cries the poor girl, 'if you don't like it.'

'AY, do,' he says; and away runs poor Miss Brown; but when she gets on another, it's the same thing, for the cap has nothing to do with the fault. And then she wonders Dr. Johnson should not like the cap, for she thinks it very pretty. And so on with her gown, which he also makes her change; but if the poor girl were to change through all her wardrobe, unless she could put her things on

7 Ibid., I, 234-5.
better, he would still find fault. 8

He not only fretted her about her attire, but also took it upon himself to interrogate her concerning her household aptitudes; for, records Fanny Burney:

Mr. Seward then told another instance of his (Johnsons) determination not to mince the matter, when he thought reproof at all deserved. During a visit of Miss Brown's to Streatham, he was inquiring of her several things that she could not answer; and as he held her so cheap in regard to books, he began to question her concerning domestic affairs, - puddings. pies, plain work, and so forth. Miss Brown, not at all more able to give a food account of herself in these articles than in the others, began all her answers with, "Why, sir, one need not be obliged to do so, - or so," whatever was the thing in question. When he had finished his interrogatories, and she had finished her "need nots," he ended the discourse with saying, "As to your needs, my dear, they are so very many, that you would be frightened yourself if you knew half of them." 9

On another occasion, Mrs. Thrale twitted Johnson about tormenting Miss Brown upon her reading, to which Johnson responded:

"She might soon be tormented, madam," answered he, "for I am not yet quite clear she knows what a book is."

"Oh, for shame!" cried Mrs. Thrale, "she reads not only English, but French and Italian. She was in Italy a great while."

"Pho!" exclaimed he; "Italian, indeed!" 10

Mrs. Thrale, in this particular instance did not agree with her learned but dogmatic guest, for she adds to the remarks

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8 Ibid., I, 80.
9 Ibid., I, 100.
10 Ibid., I, 87.
of the Doctor:

Miss Brown is by no means such a simpleton as Dr. Johnson supposes her to be; she is not very deep, indeed, but she is a sweet, and a very ingenious girl, and nobody admired Miss Streatfield more. But she made a more foolish speech to Dr. Johnson than she would have done to anybody else, because she was so frightened and embarrassed that she knew not what she said.\textsuperscript{11}

That her opinion of Fanny did not coincide with that of Dr. Johnson is amply evident in the Streatham rating sheet. Here, she accords Miss Brown 15 points for "Worth of Heart, 14 points for "Person, Mien & Manner,"
19 points for "Good Humour", 17 points for "Ornamental Knowledge," and 8 points for "Conversational Powers." The reasons for her popularity are quite obvious.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., I, 89.

\textsuperscript{12} Balderston, op.cit., p. 331.
Margaret Owen 1743-1816

Margaret Owen came of splendid Welsh ancestry. She was daughter to Lewis Owen, the younger son of Sir Robert Owen of Porkington, Salop, M.P. of Marioneth and Caernarvonshire. Her father had a long university career at Oxford and left it most reluctantly, to accept the living at Barking, Essex, and Wexam, Bucks. He married Elizabeth Lyster, the pretty heiress to Penrhos Hall, Montgomeryshire, and Moynes Court, Monmouthshire. The Owens had two children, John, born in 1741, and Margaret, always called Peggy, in the following year. Her mother's people lived at Shrewsbury, which was also the original home of the Macburneys, and it was here that most of her life was spent.

Peggy was always proud of her distinguished ancestry as her family claimed descent from Hwfa ap Gyndellw, one of the fifteen patriarchs of North Wales. In 1779, Mrs. Thrale recalled that Talassi, the famous "Improvisatore" visited Streatham during one of Peggy's frequent stays there, "& made Improviso Verses for their Entertainment,"..."nor did he forget to celebrate Miss Owens distinguish'd Birth, and Golden Locks-Seward...had let him know that She could count back her Ancestry 900 Years."1

Peggy Owen is one of the puzzling members of the Streatham Coterie, for the very fact that while she was probably one of that group for a larger share of the time

1 Balderston, op.cit., pp. 403, 405.
than any other single member, she is mentioned fewer times, except in a very incidental capacity, by Thraliana and the D'Arblay Diaries, and the other intimate writings pertaining to that set. That she was friend, advisor, and prop to the mistress of Streatham from the occasion of their first adult meeting in 1776 till within a few years of Miss Owen's death in 1816, is incontrovertible. The evidence is to be found in Mrs. Thrale's various diaries and letters, and this writer will attempt to unearth enough of it to prove that she was one of the few constant members of this celebrated coterie.

The first reference in Thraliana to Miss Peggy Owen is to be found immediately after that distressing period in the lives of the Thrales, when their only son had died. They had completely abandoned their projected plans for a continental journey under the guidance of Baretti, and determined instead upon a quiet retirement to Bath to rest and recuperate from the strain and sorrow of the past few weeks. Accordingly, in April of 1776, they set out for Bath where they settled on the corner house of the North Parade.

Boswell, who had never spent a season in Bath, took this opportunity to be with the Thrales and Johnson; he took rooms at the Pelican Inn not far from their apartments. It was during this time that Mrs. Thrale encountered Miss Owen, an old childhood playmate and distant cousin from Penrhos near Shrewsbury. Her simple, un-
affected good humor, combined with Boswell's exhuberance, helped to drive away despondency. 2

Fanny Burney gives the only description available of Miss Owen, in her report to Mr. Crisp describing that famous first visit of Johnson to St. Martin's Street in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, Miss Owen, and Seward. She describes her thusly:

Miss Owen, who is a relation of Mrs. Thrale's, is good-humoured and sensible enough. She is a sort of butt, and as such is a general favourite; though she is a willing, and not a mean butt; for she is a woman of family and fortune. But those sort of characters are prodigiously popular, from their facility of giving liberty of speech to the wit and pleasantry of others, without risking for themselves any return of the 'retort courteous.' 3

Apparently Peggy served as a very handy instrument for whetting the Streatham wit; Dr. Johnson seemed to enjoy, in the word of Mrs. Thrale, "roughing" Miss Owen; more, perhaps, than would have been permitted by other guests of the house, even from so revered a man as the Great Cham. Mrs. Thrale relates two such incidents which occurred during 1777, the year following her reunion with Peggy Owen;

Miss Owen cry'd at the Thoughts of returning to Wales after a long Range among the Gay Folks of the Town—But think Madam says Johnson how your Conversation will illuminate the Montgomerians!—and besides there are some fine young Fellows grown up since your Departure from amongst them. He had before that made us all good Sport when we

2 Clifford, op.cit., p. 140.
3 D'Arblay, op.cit., p. 89.
went together to Tunbridge & Brightelmstone; say-
how he would puff poor Miss Owen in the Rooms, &
whisper People that that was the great Montgomery-
shire Fortune; but when I find them fired says he
with my Description, then I change my Voice, &
Accent, & cry-but She is plaguy nice that I can
tell you: - nice indeed Sir ! I offered her
myself—but it would not do. 4

And on another occasion:

...one has now & then a coarse Joke of his
partly to one's self; For example poor Miss Owen
said meekly enough one Day "I am sure my Aunt
was exceedingly sorry when the Report was raised
of Mr. Thrale's death" (an April Fool's jest of
1777) --Not sorrier I suppose replied Mr. Johnson
than the Horse is when the Cow miscarryes. 5

During the remainder of April and May (1776) the
Thrales remained at Bath with, presumably, their entire
party including Miss Owen. By the end of May, however,
the Thrales were ready to again face London, so, going
by way of Stonehenge, Southampton, and Portsmouth, they
arrived in that city at the beginning of June. Mrs.
Thrale, whose life seemed doomed to one crisis after
another, returned to Streatham in time to recruit a new
staff of servants, having dismissed the old ones at the
time of Harry's death, nurse herself through a siege of
cholera morbus, and her husband through what she resign-
edly thought to be a venereal infection, the explosion
of Baretti's "french" leave, and the depressing knowledge
of knowing herself again enceinte.

4 Balderston, op.cit., p. 176.
5 Ibid., p. 167.
Just before Christmas, Peggy Owen again joined them for a visit. In order to give her and the twelve-year-old Queeney a taste of London's glitter, "the three ladies took temporary lodgings for a week in Parliament Street. It was on this expedition that Mrs. Thrale made arrangements with the well-known music teacher, Dr. Burney, to give lessons to Queeney."  

With the advent of her eleventh child, Mrs. Thrale was oppressed with formless premonitions of disaster, and the certain belief that her husband's grief, in the event of her death, would be of short duration. She mourned to herself:

...he (Johnson) would willingly write my epitaph I am sure if my Husband would treat me with a Monument; which I do believe he would too, if any body would press him to do it before the first Year was out---after that he would be married again, & his second Lady would perhaps make Objection.

Feeling as she did, she was more than pleased to have Miss Owen promise to remain with her during the winter. As she wrote to Johnson on January 12: "'tis a vast Comfort to have a Lady about me- and I have had none so long."

In spite of her forebodings and gloomy prophecies, Mrs. Thrale delivered another daughter in February, who, in honor of Miss Owen and Mrs. Strickland (Cecelia Townley— an old friend of Mrs. Thrale's, who had married Charles

6 Clifford, op.cit., p. 149.
7 Ibid., p. 149.
8 Loc. cit.
Strickland of Sizergh Castle, Westmoreland), was named Cecelia Margareta. Mrs. Strickland, however, being a Roman Catholic, could not act as sponsor, so Miss Owen, Mrs. D'Avenant, and Seward were the godparents. 9

By the spring, Mrs. Thrale had completely recovered her health and spirits, and with Queeney and Miss Owen, was ready to enjoy all the pleasures of the London season. She especially enjoyed herself that spring because she had two novitiates to introduce to the plays, parties, and operas of fashionable London. On March 19, 1777 Johnson wrote her:

Did you stay all night at Sir Joshua's? and keep Miss up again? Miss Owen had a sight—all the Burkes—the Harris's—Miss Reynolds—what has she to see more? 10

Autumn of 1777 found the same group together: either Miss Owen had never left the company of her friends, or she had rejoined them at Brighton, for Mrs. Thrale informs Johnson:

We go on here as usual, invite Company to Dinner & dawdle in the Rooms at Night, yet my Master & Miss Owen call that Pleasure, & I like it better now I play at Cards.... 11

London drew Mrs. Thrale and her eldest daughter again in the spring of 1778; this season the mother allowed her budding daughter to accompany her to nearly every affair which she attended, where she was alternately

9 Balderston, op. cit., p. 319.
10 Clifford, op. cit., p. 151.
11 Ibid., p. 156.
annoyed and filled with pride at her child's ungirlish attitudes. Mrs. Thrale wrote to Johnson at this time:

Queeney will not dance, and the People twit me that I will not let her, because I dance myself— even Miss Owen who lives with us believes that to be the Case from Queeney's manner and management. The ubiquitous Miss Owen was again trailing her sponsor.

For the next two years, Miss Owen does not appear in the Streatham annals, which does not necessarily mean that she was not occupying her usual inconspicuous place among the more colorful members of that group. It may mean, simply, that there was no occasion to mention this little mouse of a Miss Owen. The Gordon Riots of June 1880, however, brought her out of the silence. After that strenuous and exciting episode, Mrs. Thrale, having done all she felt possible to restore to order the brewhouse and Streatham affairs, returned to Brighton. She took with her Susan and Sophy, her younger daughters, and Miss Owen. Much to her disappointment, for she dreaded the preseason dullness of Brighton, Fanny Burney had refused to accompany them. The rest of the party remained quietly in the summer resort, where it was happiness enough for Mrs. Thrale to observe her husband sufficiently improved in health to, as she wrote to Fanny, "joke Peggy Owen for her want of flash." Before their departure

12 Ibid., p. 161.
13 Barrett, op.cit., I, 431.
She had recorded in *Thrales*:

We return to Brighthelmstone tomorrow—I say we, for I carry-back Susan, & Sophy to spend their holidays there, with Hester & her Father, & Miss Owen, who is fishing for health in the sea.¹⁴

During the rest of Peggy's life, she figured quietly in all the highpoints of Mrs. Thrale's (soon to be Mrs. Piozzi's) turbulent career. In the period immediately after Mr. Thrale's death, when it was necessary, because of the trustees' insistence, for the widow to return to Streatham in order to transact the necessary estate business, "in her nervous condition she welcomed the presence of Fanny Burney and Miss Owen in the house."¹⁵ After the marriage was fait accompli, Mrs. Piozzi wrote Queeney:

I have received the kindest & most tender congratulations this moment from poor Miss Owens; see how early friendships last! She & Stricky (Cecelia Townley—an old friend of Mrs. Thrale's, who had married Charles Strickland, of Sizergh Castle in Westmorland.) were my first intimates.¹⁶

and, when the newly married Piozzis had established themselves in their new home at Brynbella, "many friends came to visit...The Lysons brothers, Miss Owen, and other occasional travelers."¹⁷ During the period of 1790-1794, "Miss Owen was one constant link with the past," of whom

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¹⁷ Clifford, *op.cit.*, p. 386.
not many remained, for, during this period, while her husband was travelling through Wales, Mrs Piozzi accepted an invitation to visit Miss Owen at her home in Shrewsbury. The visit proved one of the most exciting of her life. In recalling it later, she wrote:

...Miss Owen had written to request—almost to require—my Company at Shrewsbury, where she stood in serious need. She said of Advice & Consolation: I sent for Jacob (her Coachman) therefore to take care of Phillis (a Spaniel), & set out to comfort one of my earliest, perhaps one of my most disinterested Friends;...Cecelia and I left the pretty Rectory for Miss Owens Habitation...

When arrived at Shrewsbury whither Cecelia had no Mind to go;...good Welcome, good Cheer & Good Company,...had not poor Mr Owen, Brother to my Friend, in an evil Hour escaped from Dr Arnold's (asylum) at Leicester; and come to complain as he expressed it of the Tyranny exercised upon his Person at Belle Grove House, a Retreat for Patients under the Influence of temporary Madness—Such a Visitor terrified & confounded us extremely, & I hurried my Gentlemen back now, being really in corporal Fear, and possibly—for no one can answer how a Lunatic shall behave—in personal Danger. Miss Owen is only too good, & suffers from her Scruples of Morality—She will not take out a Commission against this unhappy Man, because she is next Heir, & fears lest Interest should mingle in the Motive—this is lovely, but in the mean Time her unfortunate Brother is left to inflame his Disorder by Intoxication, & destroy his Fortune by Freaks of Ex pense, while her own Life can scarcely be called safe, as his mistaken Fury often flies at her I find, for petty Offences which perhaps others have committed. —Dreadful Situation! though every thing else combined to make me doat upon Shrewsbury...I was truly rejoiced to return home to Streatham, after having half caught my Death by sitting with Mr Owen in the Garden one Morn—young when he called up his sister & me before Sunrise—and half broke my Leg by running from him another Morning, lest the same Con-

18 Ibid., p. 362.
cession shd be necessary. 19

Peggy Owen never inherited the estate which she loved so dearly, for she died unmarried at Penrhos, October 25, 1816, some seven years before her dipsomaniac brother. She was buried at Penrhos Chapel upon whose north wall there is a tablet erected to her memory by her brother John. But nowhere is there anything to associate her with the celebrated group with which she was so long intimate except a portrait of her, painted for the Streatham library by Sir Joshua Reynolds and bought in 1816 by a Mr. Stuart. 20 Insignificant as she was amongst these brilliant wits, she deserves a small place in the history of the Streatham Coterie.

20 Ibid., p. 471.
John Hinchcliffe (1731-1794)

A good many of the "dignified clergy" formed part of the Streatham Coterie and enjoyed the lavish hospitality of the Thrales. John Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, not only was a frequent visitor to the Thrales, but also kept up for many years a constant exchange of letters with both Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Montagu.¹

He was a latecomer to the circle of guests habitually entertained by the Sothwark brewer and his wife, but he made up in intensity of friendship and frequency of visits, for the earlier years which he had missed in the Streatham Coterie. Clifford says:

He (Piozzi) and the Bishop of Peterborough were her acknowledged favourites of all those who came to the house. She adored the Bishop with so much ardour that other old friends pretended to be jealous, and she laughingly admitted to Mrs. Lambert that "Dr. Johnson & Sir Philip wish to keep him out they always say."²

Mrs. Thrale, herself, writes in Thraiana:

Johnson protests if I talk so much of the Bishop of Peterborough, that people will assassinate the Man; all this is very flattering.³

and, again six months later:

The Men I love best in the World are Johnson, Scrase, and Sir Philip Jennings Clerk: The Men I like best in the World are Burney, Solander, and the Bishop of Peterborough.⁴

¹Broadley, op. cit., p. 132.
²Clifford, op. cit., p. 196.
³Balderston, op. cit., p. 418.
⁴Ibid., p. 444.
Mrs. Thrale had met the liberal Bishop of Peterborough in Bath in 1779. She wrote at that time:

...I made a good fortnight's work enough of it, having added to my Friends & my Conquests -- as I call 'em -- the amiable Bishop of Peterborough. (John Hinchcliffe, one of the liberals of the church.) I have seldom on a short Acquaintance liked any Man so extremely, especially a Man of mean Birth and rough Temper; but really there is so much Dignity, so little Pomposity, so much Wit, so little Buffoonery, so much Christianity & so little Cant; that I have seldom seen a Character more truly to my Taste. it will vex me in earnest if the Currents of Life should keep us apart, after so reciprocal a Liking to each other. Mrs. Hinchcliffe too was once my acquaintance, & has a mind to be my Friend; She is quite a Woman of Fashion and three parts a Beauty, besides a Disposition to cheerfulness which is always attractive. That People take a fancy to me is certainly a strong Recommendation to my Favour; & Heaven knows these Hinchcliffes are not behind hand. 5

That he was of mean birth and rough temper is understandable when we know that he was born in Westminster in 1731 where his father kept a livery stable. Hinchcliffe Sr. must have been an extraordinary stableman, however, for he had sufficient influence to succeed in securing for his son an appointment to the foundation of Westminster School in 1746, where young Hinchcliffe performed very ably. He went on to Trinity College, Cambridge, took his B.A. in 1754, was elected fellow in 1755, achieved his M.A. in 1757, and his D.D. by royal letters in 1764.

He was appointed Headmaster of Westminster in 1764, in which position he served for three months before resigning because of ill health. Four years later he was

5Ibid., pp. 387-8.
appointed Master of Trinity College, and the next year
secured the further honor of the Bishopric of Peterborough;
which position he fulfilled until his death in 1794.

He married Elizabeth Crewe of Crewe Hall, Cheshire,
the sister of an intimate classmate with whom he traveled
much abroad in his student days, and the sister-in-law of
the celebrated Mrs. Crewe of salon and literary fame. 6

The friendship was firmly cemented at Streatham and
Southwark in the following winter, and Thrale entertained
the Hinchcliffes many times. Fanny Burney was quite
as impressed with the literary Bishop and his fashionable
and beautiful wife as was Mrs. Thrale, for Fanny writes to
her father: "The Bishop of Peterborough...turns out most
gaily sociable," 7 and "in conversation (he) is indeed a
most shining and superior man, -- gay, high-spirited,
manly, quick and penetrating." 8

The Bishop was not only a brilliant churchman and
social adept, he was also a practising psychologist; for
he shrewdly recognized that the best way to win the favor
of the "Mistress" of Johnson and his eminent friends, was
to pay her little game of gallantry and pseudo-love, the
pretty little pretense she demanded and received from all

7 Barrett, op. cit., I, 222.
8 Ibid., I, 375.
the eligible men who frequented her drawing rooms. By the
next season at Bath, the socially ambitious Hinchcliffe
had learned the rules; for Mrs. Thrale records:

I have seen a great deal of the Bishop of
Peterboro' again this Year at Bath, he almost
lived with us; preached at my entreaty, sent
express for Sermons he thought I would like from
Cambridge, and treated me with public Tea drink-
ings & a long Et Caetera of Friendship and
Flirtation. he is a most exceedingly agreeable
Man to be sure; has a deep Fund of Literature,
strong natural Sense, and easy if not elegant
Manners; a Love for Society & a disposition to
talk of books and Life and Merriment, and serious
Conversation. he is a fine Fellow sure enough,
and who can help delighting in his Company? Not
I certainly; though the rest of my Majesty's
Courtiers are very jealous of him, & pretend out
of flattery to me, to hate him vilely. 9

Fanny Burney was so impressed with the success of
the Bishop that she sent home reports of ... "The Bishop
of Peterborough who adores, and is adored in return by
Mrs. Thrale."10 Mrs. Thrale "adored" him to such an extent,
that she minced no words in warning Sophy Streitfield, who
had a predilection for middle aged men of the cloth, to keep
off the preserves. She "repeated to her out of Pope's
Homer" very well Sophy, ...

Range undisturb'd among the hostile Crew
But touch not Hinchcliffe, Hinchcliffe is my due.11

After the explosions of the Gordon Riots had died
down, Mrs. Thrale was extremely concerned at the part two

9Balderston, op. cit., p. 438.
10Barrett, op. cit., I, 372.
11Balderston, op. cit., p. 461.
of her cavaliers had played in the melee. Both Hinchcliffe and Sir Philip Jennings Clerke were outspoken Whigs, and Hinchcliffe had actively supported Catholic toleration in the House of Lords, although he had foreseen that a too sudden repeal of the disability laws would arouse fanatical opposition. She confided her worries about her men to Thrale's:

What will they do with the Incendiary Lord George Gordon? I am not pleased at the parts my Bishop and Baronet have taken in the Fray, but they think themselves wiser than I; & Hinchcliffe is wiser, but Sir Philip should have been contented to be taught.\textsuperscript{12}

Mrs. Thrale was not a woman to worry long about any trouble, however, as in the same month she had apparently forgotten the Gordon Riots and was eulogizing the ability of her "favourite Bishop" to read poetry:

Of all the People I ever heard read Verse in my whole Life the best, the most perfect reader is the Bishop of Peterboro'.

How capricious a Thing is Voice! the Folks who sing best, often have an unpleasing Utterance in Conversation; & those who know nothing of Musick charm one with their Tones, of all the Voices that I have ever heard, none are so round, so full so sweet, so manly, as the Voice of the Bishop of Peterborough.\textsuperscript{13}

During the debacle of the Fiozzi courtship and marriage, we have no evidence to prove the stand which the sweet-voiced Hinchcliffe took; however, in the light of

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 440.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 439.
his behavior during Mrs. Piozzi's incendiary feud with Boswell over the remarks in the press, and his interest in protecting her from a mistake at this time, we are justified in believing that he remained her good friend.

On the Piozzi's return to England, he made it very evident that he intended to continue the relationship exactly where it had been cut off. Clifford says about this period:

A few of the Streatham coterie were still loyal -- Dr. Lort, the Bishop of Peterborough, .... in contrast to Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and others who refused to be cordial to the woman who had treated their friend so shabbily.

and:

We have two contemporary sources of information about Mr. Piozzi's social activity during the next few years: her own engagement books and the World newspaper. In the former -- side by side with the names of many titled personages, appear those of a number of friends of long standing. .... the Bishop of Peterborough seems to have been a constant guest.

Life went on for the Piozzis; perhaps not so brilliant an affair as that to which Mrs. Piozzi had formerly been accustomed, but, with the help of a few loyal friends like Hinchcliffe, Lort, Murphy, and others like them, -- adequately enough. It is safe to infer that Hinchcliffe remained their friend until his death in 1794, although

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14See section on Dr. Lort, supra., p.
15Clifford, op. cit., p. 293.
16Ibid., pp. 333-4, et passim.
Mrs. Piozzi makes only one more reference to him in her writings. Ironically enough, it was a presentiment of the manner of his death. She records in January of 1788, just six years before his death of a stroke of paralysis:

...Men of strong Passions, ardent in the Pursuit either of Preferment like the English, or of some Woman like the Italians, are easily led into Epilepsies, -- and what is so dreadful?... it comes in my Head that Hinchcliffe the Bishop of Peterborough will dye so...17

17 Balderston, op. cit., p. 703.
So here are all our friends described—without Prejudice or partiality: and who will say that any of them are such Characters as one would wish to be oneself? but let any other Set be produced, & the manifest Superiority of ours will speedily be acknowledged.¹

¹ Balderston, op. cit., p. 477.
SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

We were saying everybody was like some Animal & we put down

Johnson for the Elephant.
Baretti for the Bear.
Seward for the Porcupine.
Sir Philip for the Camel.

&

Old Michell for the Hog.
Sophy Streatfield for the Dove.
Fanny Burney for the Doe. or Antelope.
Mrs. D'Avenant for the Squirrel.
Mrs. Pepys for the Cow.
Mrs. Byron for the Zebra.

&

Myself for the Rattlesnake.

Poor Mr. Thrale! to be inamour'd of a Pigeon & coupled to a Serpent--he was unlucky indeed.--we set him down a Beaver I remember, he has such a Turn for Building. 1

1 Balderston, op. cit., p. 414.
APPENDIX B

We were diverting ourselves with Goldsmith's idea of every body's being like some dish of meat we agreed that

Johnson should be -- -- -- Haunch of Venison.

Pepys -- -- -- a Perigord Pye.

Bodens -- -- -- a Piece of Sturgeon.

Mrs. Montagu -- -- -- Soup a la Reine.

Sophy Streatfeild -- -- -- White Fricassee.

Mrs. Byron -- -- -- Provincial Toast.

Seward -- -- -- a Ham.

Dr. Burney -- -- -- a dish of fine Green Tea.

Mrs. Smith -- -- -- an Aspique.

Tom Cotton -- -- -- Water-Suchy.

Lort -- -- -- Beef Steaks.

Mrs. Pepys -- -- -- Boil'd Whiting.

Fanny Brown -- -- -- Landskip in Jelly.

to these Mr. Johnson desired he might add the following

My Master -- -- -- Roast Beef.

My Mrs. -- -- -- a Gallina.

Miss Burney -- -- -- A Woodcock.

& Sir Philip Jennings -- -- a Roasted Sweetbread.¹

The next Nonsense was Flowers: here we set down Mr. Montagu for the Rose Hetty Thrale for the Pink, 3:3: the Jessamine, Burney the Author of Evelina for the Ranunculus—and so finished without my being named at all—Mr. Langston is really very like in his Person to a Hyacinth with a long Stalk & drooping Head—Lady Frances Burgoyne would do well for the Crown Imperials, and as for me I shall petition to be set down for a Sprig of Myrtle—which the more it is crushed, the more it discloses its Sweetness.¹

¹ Balderston, op. cit., p. 367.
APPENDIX D

We were playing the fool today & saying every body was like some Colour; & I think some Silk--Sophy Streatfield was to be a pea Green Satten, Fanny Brown a Jonquil Colour'd Lutstring, Miss Burney a lilac Tabby, & myself a gold Colour'd Watered Tabby; My Master a mouse Dun & Johnson who helped this Folly forward was to be a Marone. Marone comes from Maron I suppose the French Word for Chesnut.¹

¹ Balderston, op. cit., p. 367.
### APPENDIX E

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Now with regard to these People I really think they are very fairly rated: those that have os have none of your quality mentioned, those that have Strokes Made thus--
I do not know well enough to decide N:B: by Good humor is meant only the Good humour ne(ce)sary to Conver-
sation.--

1 Balderston, op. cit., p. 330.
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Now for the Women; as they must possess Virtue in the contracted Sense, or one wd not keep em Company, so that is not thought about, & I would not be contracted about Beauty neither; it is general Appearance rather than Beauty that is meant by Person Mien & Manner the useful Knowledge we can all comprehend--By ye ornamental is meant Singing Dancing Painting & suchlike.²

---

1 Balderston, op. cit., p. 331.

2 Ibid., p. 330.
APPENDIX F

The Pepys Family

Showing the Connection between Samuel Pepys and Sir William Weller Pepys

John Pepys of Cottenham m. Edith Talbot
d. 1859 (they built Impington)

Richard of Midd. Temple, Thomas,
d. 1604. d. 1615.

Richard, Lord Chief Justice Thomas,
of Ireland, d. 1658.

John of Brampton,
d. 1680.

Samuel the Diarist,
d. 1703.

John,
d. 1739.

John, William,
d. 1750. d. 1741.

Mary=William Franks,
Sir William Weller,
of Beechhill, co. Middlesex, d. 1825.

Lord Chancellor Cottenham.¹

¹ Gauzen, op. cit., p. 35.