

DR. CAMPBELL'S DIARY: A CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF JOHNSON - E. Sutherland.

The story of the discovery of Dr. Campbell's Diary has all the aspects of one of the Gothic romances Catherine Morland treasured. Far away across the seas, in the mid-nineteenth century, an old dingy building was about to be renovated. To prepare for re-painting, workmen moved an enormous antique wardrobe in a dark-panelled courtroom. Wedged behind it was found a dusty, crumpled manuscript, yellowed with age. It was more interesting than the laundry-list Catherine discovered - the papers were written by an 18th century clergyman describing his visit to England, and his conversations with Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the year of Jane Austen's birth.

How did this journal get to a courthouse in Sydney, Australia, to be lost and forgotten for over one hundred years? Eventually, as in one of Mrs. Radcliffe's thrillers, all the mysteries were solved, and turned out to be quite reasonable and ordinary events.

In 1854 a small pamphlet was published in Australia, with the elaborate title of Diary of a Visit to England in 1775, by an Irishman (the Reverend Doctor Thomas Campbell, author of "A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland") and other papers by the same hand. With notes by Samuel Raymond, MA, Prothonotary of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. A copy was sent to the historian, Macaulay, who wrote in his Diary in May, 1859, "A letter from Sydney with a curious little pamphlet printed there - a Diary of Dr. T. Campbell, mentioned in Boswell's Life of Johnson. The Diary contains an account of what the Dr. saw during a visit to England in 1775. It by no means gives the notion of a blind fanatical worshipper of Johnson, as I had supposed Campbell to be from Boswell's narrative. There are some odd things as coming from a clergyman; and some passages still more indecorous have been omitted. I observe that Johnson could swear and swear even before a parson when in a passion".

Macaulay goes on to explain how the papers probably got to Sydney: "Campbell's eldest nephew went in 1870 to Sydney with letters of recommendation to Governor Macquarrie. As Campbell left no children, this nephew no doubt had his papers and took them to New South Wales".

Dr. Samuel Johnson



The author of the Diary, Dr. Thomas Campbell, was born in Ireland, the eldest son in a clerical family. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and ordained into the Church. While engaged as a country curate, he studied the antiquities of Ireland and pulpit oratory. By 1775 he had obtained preferment in the church, and decided to see something of England. He set out for London with a reputation as "an important church dignitary, a preacher of high repute, and a rising young Irish antiquary". He was tall, handsome, and rather stout, with an Irish wit and a charming manner.

Like most travellers of the time, Dr. Campbell complained about the food at the inns - "At Conway both meat & drink were as bad as we could meet in any Irish Inn"; took a countryman's notice of the land - "That part of Warwickshire...seems to be a poor wet clay, for on the commons it is a mixture of rushes & heath, but on the adjacent parts they are obliged to lay down the ground in prodigious broad ridges to deepen & dry the soil"; and was interested in all the sights he passed - at Stratford "I was amply rewarded by diverting from the great London road, for there I saw the tomb of Shakespeare, was in the room wherein he was born & sat in his chair &c &c". However, Campbell doesn't let enthusiasm overcome his common sense and accuracy of observation: "Avon is here a poor little muddy stream, which w<sup>d</sup> have forever remained inglorious, if this Swan had not warbled on its banks - little gabbards [barges] with coals & groceries &c come up here from Bristol".

Campbell looks at the countryside with the eye of a painter and student of the Picturesque: "It would be heresy here to deny that Richmond hill afforded the finest prospect in the world - yet it has nothing picturesque to be seen from it - for it wants the 2d & 3d distances"; and later, "From Tewksbury to Worcester is by far the most beautiful I have seen in England - it is not like the country round London a dead flat, nor like that round Bath all hill & dale, but there is a wide plain, along the banks of that fine river the Severn, & rising hills interspersed till at length the prospect terminates in mountains of a very varied outline - so that here we have the 1st 2d & 3d distances, essential to all first rate landskips". [In Northanger Abbey Henry Tilney gives Catherine a lecture on landscape in Bath: "He talked of fore-grounds, distances and second distances - side-screens and perspectives..."]

Campbell attended two or three different church services each Sunday in London, and as an expert himself gave a stringent critique of the style and quality of the preaching. He had little good to say of most of the preachers he heard. At one church, "a most beautiful Gothic structure", he complained that "the service was ill read...The discourse was the most meagre composition...& the delivery worse - He stood like Gulliver stuck in the marrow bone, with the sermon...in his hand, and without grace or emphasis he in slow cadence measured it forth". He commented on another preacher: "No bombast-player in Tom Thumb or Chrononhoton [two contemporary plays which burlesqued the ranting of actors] &c ever so roared & so bellowed as he did - & his matter was as lifeless as his manner was Hypertragic".

When Campbell found a good preacher, however, his praise is unstinting. Mr. Warner "is positively the best deliverer of a discourse I ever hear'd. He is the very thing I have often conceived a preacher ought to be...He does not (as he ought not) to rely on his notes...He avoids the frozen beaten track of declamation, & keeps clear of the labyrinth of nonsense into which those enthusiasts wander, whose vanity or hypocrisy rejects the clue of composition".

In the theatre, also, Campbell found much to criticize. Of his first sight of Garrick, he wrote: "I cannot say he came up to what I had hear'd of him...His voice is husky & his person not near so elegant as either Dobbs or Kings [actors in Dublin] - but then his look, his eye is very superior." Other actors were found wanting: "Smyth is a mere ape of Barry - Palmer a fine figure & strong voice & if he had an atom of judgment w<sup>d</sup> be an actor, but he is a wretched, mouthing ranter".

Music was not one of Campbell's interests. He was not impressed by the opera he attended. "An Italian opera is not so absurd an entertainment as I expected - For it is nearly as intelligible as if it were in English, considering the inarticulation of the words by the Singers - The grand absurdity lyes against an opera at large i.e. an attempt to express the passions by singing...- However this was the first & it shall be the last sacrifice I shall make of sense to sound".

People, however, were Campbell's special interest, and he wanted to meet the important intellectual figures of the time. This was the main reason he had come to London. Dr. Campbell met the wealthy brewer, Henry Thrale, possibly through Irish business acquaintances, and met Dr. Johnson while dining at the Thrales. Campbell was not

favourably impressed at first: "He has the aspect of an Idiot - without the faintest ray of sense gleaming from any one feature. With the most awkward garb & unpowdered grey wig on one side only of his head, he is forever dancing the Devil's jig, & sometimes he makes the most driveling effort to whistle some thought in his absent paroxysms". Campbell then goes on to describe the conversation, Johnson speaking of publications unfavourable to his Journey to the Hebrides. "His awkwardness at table is just what Chesterfield described & his roughness of manners kept pace with that". When Mrs. Thrale mentioned someone he disliked, "he flew in a passion & said that Foster was a man of mean ability, & of no original thinking". Later Johnson wanted to know what people were saying about his last pamphlet, Taxation No Tyranny, and Campbell asked himself, "Was this like a man insensible to glory?". When someone could not find out where he lived, "This plainly raised his indignation, for he swelled to think that his celebrity shd not be notorious to every porter in the street."

In spite of these initial strictures, Campbell wanted to see more of Johnson, and hear his opinions, especially his views on Ireland. Campbell quoted these freely in his later writings on Irish history and politics. But he had no aspirations of becoming famous as a Johnson chronicler - his notes are terse, unpolished and obviously written in haste. They met again on later occasions, which both Boswell and Mrs. Thrale record. When Campbell dined at the Thrales when Dr. Johnson was not present, "Johnson was the Subject both before & after dinner...his bon mots were retailed in such plenty that they like a surfeit cd not lye upon my memory". Nevertheless he manages to recall and note down a number of anecdotes which confirm and in some cases enlarge on passages in Boswell's accounts.

Campbell had been struck by the general ignorance in England concerning Ireland, and he returned home determined to publish a book for tourists describing the historical monuments and antiquities, points of interest, customs and traits of the Irish. He published this, as well as pamphlets and sermons, but nothing was considered noteworthy. He made other visits to London, but no diary notes for them, if he wrote any, have been found. He certainly sought out Dr. Johnson on many occasions, and later commented: "I had been honoured (and it is my pride to acknowledge it) with his familiarity and friendship". Except where his name is linked to that of Dr. Johnson, Campbell has been forgotten.

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#### SENSIBLY? - Kathleen Glancy

*He expressed himself on the occasion...sensibly and warmly. (P&P)*

Here we have a prime example of how the language has changed. A modern reader might well take that to mean that Darcy was expressing himself with remarkable logic considering he was in love. A contemporary reader, knowing the word as meaning "with feeling" would know otherwise. The chances are that any detached listener hidden behind a hedge would have thought it a great pity such a handsome creature (yes, all right - the detached listener glimpsed him through a hole in the hedge) seemed to be a congenital idiot. Fortunately the only audience he has is so far from being detached she has no clear idea where she is or where she is going. She does, in the words of the song, know who's going with her.

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Canadian writers and historians were asked to name the book they most enjoyed reading during the past year. Some found it hard to choose -- June Callwood wrote: "It is like being asked if I prefer Jane Austen to Albert Camus".

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NEVER A WORD WASTED - Kathleen Glancy

*First of all he asked Miss Lucas...So, he enquired who (Jane) was and got introduced, and asked her for the two next. Then, the two third with Miss King and the two fourth with Maria Lucas and the two fifth with Jane again and the two sixth with Lizzy... (P&P)*

Mr. Bennet's uncharitable wish that Bingley had sustained an injury in the first dance would surely have been spared if he had listened to what his wife was saying. He doesn't ever do so, of course, with real attention. The reader should not make the same mistake, and should instead consider in what a light this speech places Bingley. He dances first with 27-year old, plain Charlotte Lucas. Then with Jane, with whom he could have begun and remained all evening had convention allowed. Then with Miss King, "a little freckled thing", and the vapid Maria Lucas. While indulging himself with Jane again he fails signally to persuade Darcy to ask Elizabeth to dance, and promptly asks her himself for the next pair of dances.

Considering how many of his partners were less than fascinating ladies (and we don't even know who got him for the Boulanger), and the fact that "Bingley had never met with pleasanter people or prettier girls in his life", we are shown as well as told about the singular sweetness of his nature. Jane Austen never writes a word that has not a function.

To take another example, Maria Bertram's speech as she approaches her future home tells us something very important about her future husband. "Here lies the village. These cottages are really a disgrace...Those are almshouses, built by some of the family". I wonder what those two superlative landlords, Messrs Darcy and Knightley, would have to say about Mr. Rushworth having, almost at his gates, cottages that visibly had something disgraceful about them. Mr. Rushworth is a bad landlord. What's more, he hasn't even got the excuse of a bad example. His forefathers cared enough to build almshouses.

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JANE AUSTEN A "VICTORIAN" AGAIN: Leila Vennewitz

I note with much amusement and some despair the item in the February 1993 Newsletter regarding the British politician (mercifully, for him, unidentified) who allegedly referred to "Mrs. E." as "a strait-laced Victorian lady." The ensuing comment that Mrs. E. was neither Victorian nor a lady is beautifully apt.

Should one perhaps launch a crusade to fight the growing and unsettling tendency to relegate Jane Austen to the Victorian era? I see this error in the Globe and Mail, I hear it on the CBC, and some of my literate friends have been guilty of it. It should, one would imagine, be easy enough to put the perpetrator right by pointing out that Jane Austen died two years before Queen Victoria was born; but the reaction is likely to be either: "Surely not?" or the wordless smirk that conveys: "Don't confuse me with facts."

Well, Jane Austen herself, product as she was of the European Age of Enlightenment, would have enjoyed a quiet chuckle over this solecism. But had she been able to look into the future she might also have been very content to be bracketed with her sisters-in-literature, Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, who were indeed, while anything but strait-laced, genuine Victorians."

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OR WORSE - E. Sutherland

Writing of the Sylvia Beach Hotel in Oregon, where each of the rooms is decorated in the style of a different author, the reporter (Vancouver Sun, March 1993) described her favourites: "The Ernest Hemingway room with its antique typewriter, antelope head and strong, simple decor, much like the author's words; the Jane Austen room on the third floor with its Edwardian decor" (!!).

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ANOTHER HAMPSHIRE FAMILY - Mary Millard (quoted from the Toronto Newsletter)

"Once upon a time in Hampshire, there lived a family consisting of father, mother and -- girls. In default of an heir male, the estate was to devolve upon another line. The parents were not well-suited. The father was fond of the country and of books, was brilliantly intelligent and highly educated, but indolent; his wife was beautiful, energetic and almost madly sociable. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news. The girls were taught by their father, who despaired of finding a governess suitable to instruct his daughters.

So - was this household Jane Austen's inspiration for the Bennets of Longbourn? Impossible. The real-life parents were married in 1818, the first girl was born in 1819, and the second and last in 1820. Jane Austen was dead by the time of these events.

The best is yet to come. The second daughter was called Florence, and the family name was Nightingale. Yes, that Florence Nightingale!

I hope that you will be pleased to know that, in 1868, 'Flo' Nightingale wrote to a friend that Jane Austen, in her opinion, ranked 'second to Shakespeare in the English Language for dramatic power'."

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"Lucy Maud Montgomery, trapped in an unhappy marriage to a Presbyterian minister with all the accompanying social demands of a country parish in the 1920s, poured her frustration and unhappiness into the pages of her journals. Her husband, the Rev. Ewan Macdonald, suffered from periods of black depression and she had to hide the truth lest he lose his job. Her life was not made any easier by the fact that the Presbyterians were under pressure to join Methodists and Congregationalists in a newfangled United Church. She was a staunch Presbyterian.

Monday, Nov. 24, 1924: 'The Union battle rages wordily still. I am sick of it. I am training a lot of boys and a lot of girls in two dialogues for the S.S. concert. And I am sick of that. I cough and snuffle constantly - and I'm sick of that. There are some things I am not sick of however, and one of them is Jane Austen's novels. I've been reading Emma. When I think of it and Flaming Youth [a torrid novel which provided a catchword for the period], the contrast is between a mad-house and a decent home.' (The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery)

-Quoted from the Toronto Newsletter.

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"Among English-language novelists regarded in some quarters as great, Anthony Powell may be the most amusing. And while questions of definition and judgment arise right away in both spheres - greatness and the ability to amuse - Powell would seem to have few rivals in the amusing-and-great line: Fielding, Jane Austen, Dickens, Mark Twain, Evelyn Waugh, perhaps James Joyce and how many others?"

(Book Review in Letter From Chicago)

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APPRECIATING FANNY PRICE

Fanny is not usually considered a favourite heroine, suffering from the contrast with Elizabeth, Emma or Anne. But:

"If each of us had read only Mansfield Park, and knew nothing of the rest of [Jane Austen's] works, how different would be our opinion of and response to Fanny Price?" - Tom Hoberg, Letter From Chicago.

Any comments?

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SPRING MEETINGS

February: Jane Austen Spoofs the Gothic - arranged by Margaret Howell.

*Are they all horrid, are you sure they are all horrid?* Our thoughts at the February meeting were as much taken up by the Gothic as Catherine Morland's when she was discussing novels with Isabella. Margaret Howell prepared an interesting and thought-provoking programme, beginning with her reading of a paper "Jane Austen Spoofs the Gothic". Small groups then discussed prepared topics, such as: What accounts for the excessive 'sensibility' of Gothic fiction? Did JA want to criticize modern mundane life as much as she wanted to 'spoon' Gothic fiction? Why 'Gothic'? What other novels are in this genre? Why is there a demand for the wild, the barbarous, the unrestrained?

At the end of spirited discussions, a representative from each small group reported to the whole session. It was decided that the popularity of mystery, menace, secret horrors and the violence of strangers, was a reaction to the rationalism of real life. JA may be spoofing a few characters, such as Mrs. Allen, but mainly she is gently mocking the lack of realism of most of these novels. Gothic novels have persisted through the years, from Frankenstein, to The Hound of the Baskervilles, to Mutant Ninja Turtles. Life is 'homogenized' today; we crave the exotic, a vicarious challenge, and escape from real horror to a story where right prevails in the end.

The meeting ended with an attempt to decide on the difference between 'horror' and 'terror', and lasted until hunger put an end to the discussion, and a serene, mundane but delicious lunch was enjoyed without a single frantic scream or rattle of chains down the passage.

March: They Were Apprehensive for his Lungs: Dr. Anne Bursewicz.

We must read JA's novels as her contemporaries did, so far as medical knowledge is concerned: very little was known about the cause of disease, and little could be done to alleviate it - the patient got better, or died.

Only twenty years or so ago was the connection discovered between the thinking part of the brain and the endocrine glands: shock - physical, emotional, financial - reduces the reaction to infection. Marianne Dashwood gives us a good example: her hope of Willoughby is destroyed, she is broken-hearted but rallies from the first shock. However, a short time later, at Cleveland, she gets a bad chill. If she were incubating germs, she was liable to succumb to illness. But she is young and strong, and recovers, and is soon out of danger. What was wrong? Perhaps diphtheria, or an acute strep throat.

The anxiety connected to any illness was because one never knew what might go wrong. This is why Elizabeth Bennet must take Jane's illness so seriously from the beginning. Her mother has been careless, most irresponsible; Mr. Bennet is jolted out of his cynicism enough to offer Elizabeth the carriage. As it happens, Jane is only ill and away from home five days, but she could easily have had a fatal illness.

What is the matter with Fanny Price? She was probably anaemic. She had a poor early childhood, with little care and possibly poor nutrition. She is compared to the really strong healthy Bertram children. Her tiredness could be a reaction to her feeling of inferiority.

Tom Bertram might have had a slight tuberculous infection in his youth - most people did. The tubercle bacillus locates at the top of the lungs and produces a little area of inflammation; the body walls off the abscess. It is nothing serious until something gives it an impetus: Tom's fall, along with his not chaste or sober life, sets it off. Aggravated by the exertion and excitement of coming home, the infection spreads, with a relapse at the shock of Maria's elopement. The diagnosis of a lung infection was relatively easy: the stethoscope was coming into use; doctors could hear variations in breathing. The only cure was to do nothing - Tom remains quiet, leads a better life.

In this way, Dr. Bursewicz took us through the novels, illness by illness, with descriptions of symptoms, professional diagnoses, and prognostications for recovery: Mr. Woodhouse probably had an over-protective mother; Louisa Musgrove had a concussion,

but with her hair styled in a knot at the back of her head, and a padded bonnet, she avoided a fatal fractured skull; Mrs. Smith had rheumatoid arthritis; Mrs. Price, Lady Bertram and Mrs. Gardiner move slowly and rest a lot - they may be suffering back problems as a result of too-closely-spaced pregnancies.

It was a fascinating look at medical problems in the novels, and we came away with a better understanding of the fears and anxieties among JA's characters.

#### April - Jane Austen Day.

#### Bad Parents and Worthless Lovers in Jane Austen: Ted Wing.

The heroines in JA's novels love and then reject the charming rogues, and at the end marry the men they have learned to respect and admire. One of the problems facing the heroine in her quest for maturity and a good marriage is the folly, stupidity and sometimes malice of her mother or father.

In the light of this premise, Ted Wing examined four of the novels, asking - and answering - such questions as: What is the worthless lover like? are some more worthless than others? what is their appeal? what are their ultimate fates? and who are the bad parents, and how do they affect their daughters?

Willoughby met Marianne in an intensely romantic scene - the storm, the accident - sweeping her into his arms and carrying her home. After weeks of increasing intimacy, he abruptly departs and abandons her. At the end his explanation and excuses to Elinor almost win her, and the reader, over to his side. At least he has truly loved Marianne, acknowledges his wrong-doing, and shows some ability to feel. He is punished by suffering a loveless marriage, with an abiding recollection of his love for Marianne.

Henry Crawford is manipulative and uses his charms to sport with women. But he is capable of generosity, and the woman he seduces is not a young girl. He, too, is left at the end with the knowledge he has, by his own fault, lost a woman he loved.

Frank Churchill is among the most worthless - he is irresponsible, lacks the capacity to feel for others, is motivated by a love of money, and his repentance is only on the surface. But because his sins are not sexual, he is not considered deserving of severe punishment.

Wickham has no redeeming feature. He is completely dishonest, tells outright lies, and is incapable of feeling compassion or guilt. He gets everything his own way in the end - he receives money, a new occupation, and acceptance by the Bennet family.

The bad parents and parent-figures can be grouped into those who are indolent and indifferent; affectionate but mis-guided; addle-brained; and truly wicked. Some have redeeming qualities, some have to be looked after by their children, and some repent and reform at the end.

#### Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen - A Connection? Ann Pearson.

Ann Pearson discussed the different ways that critics have considered Jane Austen: as a conservative, a subversive, or an enlightened feminist. JA is in some degree a feminist writer: she created central female characters who were rational, self-critical and morally responsible. She emphasized the need for a real education for women; and she criticized women's follies and failings.

Mary Wollstonecraft was a radical, concerned about the corruption of society as a whole, and the vital need for reform. P&P provides illustrations of these ideas. On one page of the Vindication of the Rights of Women, is an account of the extent to which the militia can corrupt life in a small town, and how a clergyman is diminished by blind servility to an important patron. The correspondences in the two works are extremely close - did JA read the Vindication (there is no external evidence that she did) or were these ideas "in the air" at this time?

Mary Wollstonecraft quotes Fordyce's Sermons at great length, especially his encouragement of young ladies to be delicate, fragile and helpless - exactly like Anne

de Burgh - in order to be attractive to men. This is the book Mr. Collins chose to read to the Bennet girls, and we can see how reprehensible were Elizabeth's walk and muddy petticoat, but also how much more realistic was JA's view of a young woman.

The main point where JA and Mary Wollstonecraft concur is on the lack of education for women. All too often Elizabeth's account was true: "Such of us as wished to learn, never wanted the means...Those who chose to be idle, certainly might". In most cases the stress was on "accomplishments" rather than real education. When Darcy states that a truly accomplished woman must also show "the improvement of her mind by extensive reading", JA is putting her message in the mouth of the authority figure of the novel.

Mary Wollstonecraft is concerned at the failure to develop moral judgement, the lack of moral education in the home - Lydia, and the Bennet marriage, illustrate this. In the Vindication, the author berates and harangues women; JA makes the same points with a light comic touch. Both attack the "marriage market", with its degrading effect on women, indicating their inferior position in society. Both authors see what middle-class society was doing to women, and their works concur in their serious moral, social and political aims.

A Voyage Around the Gothic - arranged by Irene Howard and Viviane McClelland.

In JA's time, everyone, including JA herself, was reading the Gothic novel, the novel of terror, and "terror" is one of the most used words in Anne Radcliffe's Gothic novel, The Mysteries of Udolpho. But this novel, absurd and melodramatic as it seems to us, and as it did to JA, also contains a serious philosophical idea. For Anne Radcliffe, probably for JA, the idea of terror was connected with the idea of the sublime, "sublime" meaning something inspiring awe and admiration, and, as explained by an eminent 18th century philosopher, astonishment. Analyzing the psychological effects of terror, Edmund Burke observed what we ourselves have experienced from time to time - that fear paralyzes the mind, makes one incapable of thinking and acting. One's mind is completely taken over. And he adds that a sight that induces terror is sublime. In his essay, "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful", Burke explores several ideas which are stock-in-trade motifs of the Gothic novel, or the novel of terror. He says that obscurity is conducive to terror. When we know the extent of any danger, when our situation is clearly before us, our fears are much diminished. Mystery, however, generates fear.

We must also consider Power. The sublime derives from power. For, faced with overwhelming strength, where that strength is threatening, one feels vulnerable and inferior - and afraid. These ideas were quite general among writers and critics and philosophers of the time. Anne Radcliffe was certainly conversant with them and you will recognize them in the readings from The Mysteries of Udolpho. The villain of the novel is one Signor Montoni, who exerts a terrible power over his wife and over her niece, Emily St. Aubert. However, when Emily stands up to him and refuses to yield to his threats, she discovers that he becomes diminished and she feels superior to him. Her fear is replaced by contempt.

After this Introduction, the dramatic presentation began with a scene showing the non-gothic, unheroic heroine Catherine Morland and her parents. Contrasting to this were the following scenes and extracts read from The Mysteries of Udolpho, complete with trembling, fainting heroine, and a sprightly duel between two of the villains. The audience dutifully shuddered and hoped in turn, following the fearful adventures of Emily, through all her abductions, terrors and miraculous escapes. Back to Northanger Abbey, the echoes of Udolpho can be recognized when Henry Tilney teases Catherine about what will happen to her in the abbey she is about to visit.

The Programme Committee and cast of readers and actors deserve a special commendation for a splendid entertainment: Irene Howard, Viviane McClelland, Margaret Howell, Mary Anderson, John Howe, Helena Lyman, Jean Oriente and Ted Wing.

The "elegant sufficiency from the sideboard" included fruits, salads, casseroles, cheeses, cold meats, tarts, cakes, syllbub and trifle.

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## REGENCY FASHIONS - Patricia Crawford, Long Beach, CA

[One of the highlights of the 1992 conference at Santa Monica was the fashion show at luncheon on the Sunday, featuring the costumes from BBC productions of some of Jane Austen's novels, and modelled beautifully by local JASNA members. The fashion show was introduced with this interesting commentary]

Regency fashion from about the turn of the century to 1820 (roughly coinciding with the reign of the Regent, George IV) was unique because it represented the revival, for the first time in English fashion, of historical costume. A passion for the ancient world, stimulated by sightseeing in Italy and by neoclassical painting, led ladies to impersonate Greek nymphs.

It began with Marie Antoinette's chemise, became known as the Empire dress with Napoleon's Josephine, and English weather notwithstanding, lured the infamous Lady Caroline Lamb to dampen her muslin dress, hoping to attract Lord Byron at a ball with its clinging folds.

Technology came to the aid of this "fluid" style with the advent of the various muslins which became the height of fashion during the late 18th and early 19th century, superseding the heavier silks worn earlier. Originally imported from the East, they began at this time to be produced in England and Scotland.

Delightful lighter fabrics such as cotton, cambric and, of course, muslin, imposed their own character on women's dress and contributed to the softer, lighter, flowing lines. Furthermore, these fabrics would wash easily, unlike the heavier dress silks of the earlier era, and it now became possible to indulge quite freely the fashion for white or light-coloured gowns.

White gowns were soon to become the symbol of elegance and refinement. Eleanor Tilney in Northanger Abbey *always* wore white. In Mansfield Park Fanny Price is worried about appearing "over-fine" but her cousin Edmund Bertram assures her that: "A woman can never be too fine while she is all in white".

As an aside, we might mention a number of different cleaning agents apart from soap and water which were employed on these elegant whites -- ox-gall (quite literally, the gall or bile of the ox, used for cleansing purposes), Fuller's Earth, French chalk, milk, lemon juice, butter and soda.

These plainer, softer materials gave more scope for decoration than the richly-patterned silks worn previously. Muslin gowns were frequently embroidered in white or woven with gold or silver thread for evening. Ribbon trimming was also fashionable.

In 1814 Jane wrote "I have determined to trim my lilac sarsenet (a loosely woven and beautifully draping silk) with black satten ribbon -- Ribbon trimmings are all the fashion at Bath". Our creative Jane continues: "...now I am trying to draw it up into kind of roses, instead of putting it in plain double plaits".

Most dresses were made by mantua makers (dressmakers), skilled ladies maids, or the ladies themselves. James Edward Austen-Leigh reminisced in his Memoir of his aunt Jane that "some of her merriest talk was of the clothes which she and her companions were making, sometimes for themselves and sometimes for the poor".

The simplicity of the gowns of the era insured special emphasis on accessories. Shawls formed soft wraps for Regency gowns, especially the light and lovely cashmere Indian shawls favored by Lady Bertram. Remember? She wished her son "may go to the East Indies, that I may have my shawl. I think I will have two shawls".

Simple gowns were often accessorized with short, tight-fitting Spenser jackets or coordinated longer pelisses. Ladies lavishly decorated hats and caps, pirouetted in soft leather or satin slippers (color and fabric coordinated to match), twirled parasols, sported very large muffs and fine gloves, flirted with fans, and netted countless bags and purses. (Remember Bingley in Pride and Prejudice considers netting a purse as a female accomplishment?).

No ensemble was complete without the appropriate jewelry and hair ornaments, with pearls being especially prized. (Mrs. Elton in Emma was pleased to point out "I see very few pearls in the room except mine").

Most thought went into planning gowns for balls, especially since schools in the 18th century emphasized dancing, dress and deportment as among the most important accomplishments of a young lady. On Mr. Bingley admiring such ladylike occupations, Mr. Darcy rejoined: "Your list of the common extent of accomplishments has too much truth. The word is applied to many a woman who deserves it no otherwise than by netting a purse, or covering a skreen".

Matthew Towle, dancing master in Oxford stressed that "dancing gives a proper Deportment, a genteel behaviour and an easy Address". Those poor creatures who had not learnt the art of dancing suffered indeed -- "their Toes will lap one over the other in Walking, their Heads will project forward, even until their Chin touch their Bosoms". They will be "awkward...uncouth...deficient in Civility, and even Boorish". Dancing "adds greatly to the happiness of Society, for the happiness of Society depends on Civility".

Perhaps the most refreshing fashion trend of the Regency was an aversion to wearing cosmetics. Faces were admired for a naturally pale beauty and clear complexion. Perhaps this was a backlash to the preceding century when women ruined their health and damaged their skin by painting the face, arms and décolletage with ceruse, containing white lead. Pock marks and facial ulcers from venereal disease were hidden behind face patches in the shape of hearts or crescents. Patching for both men and women remained popular until about 1790.

By the way, the Prince Regent suffered from too florid a complexion for which he regularly applied leeches, followed by a liberal dusting of face powder.

Obviously, Jane Austen was an enthusiastic follower of fashion as revealed in her letters with their numerous references to styles, trimmings, accessories and shopping sprees. Fashion aficionado as she was, though, being Jane she kept things in perspective. Witness these lines from Northanger Abbey concerning Catherine's anxiety about what she should wear for her next ball:

"It would be mortifying to the feelings of many ladies, could they be made to understand how little the heart of man is affected by what is costly or new in their attire; how little it is biassed by the texture of muslin, and how unsusceptible of peculiar tenderness towards the spotted, the sprigged, the mull or the jackonet. Woman is fine for her own satisfaction alone. No man will admire her the more, no woman will like her the better for it. Neatness and fashion are enough for the former, and a something of shabbiness or impropriety will be most endearing to the latter".

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