

# Jane Austen Society of North America

VANCOUVER REGION - NEWSLETTER NO. THIRTY-TWO - NOVEMBER 1990

## *Jane Austen's Birthday Party*

SATURDAY, December 15, 1990

10:30 a.m.

St. Philip's Fireside Room,  
3737 West 27th Avenue,  
Vancouver, B.C.

"JANE AUSTEN COUNTRY" - slide presentation by Keiko Parker

Readings, Discussion, Pot-luck Lunch

Buon compleanno

Paula Peretto's family is Italian.

Doğan günün kutlu olsun

Mary Anderson learned Turkish whilst  
living in Turkey.

Hartelijk gefeliciteerd met je verjaardag

Fred Braches was born in Indonesia of Dutch parents.

Sto lat

Ethel Burrows' family was Polish.

Feliz navidad

Ruth Piddington  
studied Spanish.

Gratulerer med dagen

Irene Howard has a Norwegian mother.

Selamat ulang

Mavis Jones learned Bhasa Indonesia  
during her three years in Indonesia.

Bonne anniversaire

Viviane McClelland learned French

Fröliche Geburtstag

David Macaree speaks German

Tibi gratulamur

Mary Anderson is  
studying Latin.

Sonach breithla

Carol Sutherland  
is studying Gaelic.

Mazeltov-soll leben bis hundredziebstic

Esther Birney's parents spoke Yiddish.

A seilfu' birthday

Kathleen Glancy sent this Lallans greeting from  
Lowland Scotland.

Hjertliga lyckönskningar

Irene Howard's father was Swedish.

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Keiko Parker's  
first language  
was Japanese.

These are some of the languages of our members: native tongues,  
learned in school, or studied as a hobby. In whatever way we  
say the words, we celebrate Jane Austen's 215th birthday.

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ASSERTIVENESS AND AGGRESSION - SEPTEMBER

*Her answers were as short and indifferent as civility allowed (MP)*

Elizabeth Bennet answered back; Marianne Dashwood muttered under her breath and sat down at the piano; Fanny hung her head and cringed. How was a young woman of Jane Austen's day expected to react to the hectoring and bullying of her superiors and elders? Had Jane Austen herself faced up to some "Lady Catherine" as Elizabeth did, or was this something she wished she had been able to do? How much did money and status play in assertiveness?

These are some of the issues commented on in the wide-ranging discussion at the September meeting, based on Dwight McCawley's article Assertion and Aggression in the latest issue of Persuasions. There could be no ultimate conclusion, but the final consensus of opinion was that people don't change - there will always be those who attempt to ride roughshod over others, the "Iron Lady" type, for instance, and those who automatically submit - but the novels reflect the society of the time, and must be looked at from the view point of the way women were expected to behave.

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OCTOBER MEETING: "LOVERS' VOWS"

*We bespeak your indulgence, you understand, as young performers (MP)*

We don't think there were any undertones of scandal or incipient or frustrated love affairs among the members of the cast, and since Sir Thomas Bertram didn't stalk out upon the stage and abruptly put an end to the production, the October meeting featured a dramatic reading of "Lovers' Vows", on October 20th.

From the touching reunion of Frederick and his mother at the beginning, to the universal happiness showered around at the end, the melodrama, humour and morality of this old play entertained an attentive and enthusiastic audience. Listening to the eight readers (John Howe, Margaret Howell, Dianne Kerr, Viviane McClelland, Rachael Nichols, John Parker, Keiko Parker and Ruth Piddington), we tried to visualise the Bertrams and the Crawfords in these roles, and the tortuous intrigues and innuendoes as they rehearsed.

A lively discussion followed the reading. There were half a dozen performances of Lovers' Vows at Bath during the years Jane Austen lived there, and no doubt she saw it at least once. It is interesting to imagine Jane Austen returning from the theatre and working up her own story around private theatricals of the play. If she had her story blocked out, and then decided to look for a suitable play to fit the number and personalities of her characters, the search might be long and difficult. She herself explains, "There were, in fact, so many things to be attended to, so many people to be pleased, so many best characters required, and above all, such a need that the play should be at once both tragedy and comedy, that there did seem as little chance of a decision, as any thing pursued by youth and zeal could hold out."

Jane Austen's own memory of the play was of humour. In London in 1814, she met a General Chowne, whom she had probably seen years before play Agatha's son in a private production. She wrote to Cassandra, "I was ready to laugh at the remembrance of Frederick, & such a different Frederick as we chose to fancy him from the real Christopher [Chowne]" - a suggestion that she and Cassandra were accustomed to discuss the real life of the actors of the various roles. When Mr. Yates tells of the abrupt

termination of the rehearsals at Ecclesford, Tom Bertram remarks that it changes to "an after-piece instead of a comedy". However, Lovers' Vows was most likely played "straight", as a sentimental drama: long-lost children, mistaken identities, and the moral lesson that birth and wealth are not important compared to ethics and strength of character, were common plot themes. The comic role of the butler, with his bad doggerel verses and morose manner, can be equated (slightly!) to the fool in Shakespeare - a relief from tension and a contrast to the suspense and tragedy of the play.

The casting at Mansfield Park was interesting. Tom Bertram speaks of the Baron and Frederick as "two capital tragic parts" for Yates and Henry Crawford. Maria Bertram seems to have chosen Agatha for herself at once - a lightning decision, which indicates how well the play was known to them (and to Jane Austen's readers) - and was immediately concerned to make sure Henry Crawford became Frederick.

Jane Austen used the casting to make important points and to foreshadow later incidents in her plot. Maria plays the part of a fallen woman, which she becomes at the end of Mansfield Park. Rushworth, a character we know already to be insignificant, becomes Count Cassel for the sake of his elegant costume. The count in Lovers' Vows is a sensual libertine with no conscience or morals. He could be played as a fop and a nonentity, or fully conscious of the double entendre in his lines, needling and mocking the Baron at the same time he seems to be praising him. The incongruity of Rushworth in this role must have delighted Jane Austen's sense of the ridiculous.

Mary Crawford is very suited for Amelia - the others speak of Amelia's "playfulness", her "small, light, girlish, skipping figure", and call her "pert" and "impudent". She is sharp, not innocent - Anhalt is putty in her hands. But Amelia has high moral standards, complete honesty and integrity - again Jane Austen must have enjoyed the thought of her Mary Crawford in this role.

The Bertrams and the Crawfords were more concerned with what the characters did, and whom they acted opposite, than with the personalities and morals of the individual characters.

The discussion ended only when the meeting did, all agreeing it had been a very interesting and worthwhile performance, and hoping some day to see Lovers' Vows performed as opéra bouffe - all the ingredients are there!

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#### TRAVEL STUDY IN ENGLAND

Simon Fraser University has another study-tour planned for 1991, this time with the theme of three authors: Jane Austen, William Cobbett and Gilbert White. The first week, the group will stay at the Holbrook House Hotel in Somerset, and field trips will be arranged to Bath, Wells, Salisbury, Glastonbury and Lyme Regis; the next week, at the Swan Hotel in Alton, with field trips to Steventon, Chawton and Selborne. The programme ends with two nights in London. The fee is \$3,183 per person, which includes accommodation, meals, ground transport and special tours, and the academic programme. For more information, please contact the Alumni Relations office, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6.

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JANE AUSTEN VINDICATED: by Barbara Peacock

This summer I read Richard Church's Introduction to Northanger Abbey for the first time (Folio edition 1975) and was jolted by his comments about novel writing in JA's time. He says: "The novel was already being looked at askance and Jane therefore may have wanted to justify herself, and to underline her almost unconscious claim as a writer of 'genius and taste'; a claim fully justified by her achievement. She even breaks into her narrative, with a cadenza almost of agony:

Yes, novels; for I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are themselves adding... Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard?... Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers... 'Oh! it is only a novel!' replies the young lady; while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame. 'It is only Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda;' or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language... (NA, end of Ch.5)

...suggests to me (continues Richard Church) that Jane did not write this one when she composed the book in her early life (1798) under the title of Susan, but thirteen years later, by which time the moral tone of English society was already becoming more serious and even solemn under the influence of the Wesleys and the general religious revival that was later to ossify into Victorianism."

I also read, for the first time, J. Edward Austen-Leigh's Memoir, with great delight. The picture he gives of the times in which he lived and his comparison with those of his Aunt, are indeed a precious record. In the Introduction (by Fay Weldon) the question of novel writing is again discussed. She says: "The writing of novels by Mid-Victorian times had come to seem a seedy and slightly scandalous business, especially when undertaken by women, and no doubt in 1867 it seemed all the more necessary to stress his Aunt's respectability and rectitude. 'We did not think of her as being clever (Oh! unfeminine!), still less as being famous (Oh! indiscreet!), but we valued her as one always kind, sympathising and amusing (as any aunt should be!)). She was entirely free from vulgarity, which is so offensive in some novels, of dwelling on the outward appendages of wealth or rank, as if they were things to which the writer was unaccustomed (Oh gentility!) nor does she go lower than the Miss Steeles, Mrs. Elton and John Thorpe, people of bad taste and unbred manners' (Oh moderate! Oh saved!)."

I am reminded here of a song from the Mikado (Gilbert & Sullivan), a list of those undesirables who could be beheaded: 'The Lady Novelist, She never would be missed'. Probably this reflects the times quite accurately.

Thankfully times have changed and along has come an exciting book called Read for Your Life by Joseph Gold (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990). Dr. Gold advocates novel reading over and above almost everything else in life. He believes that reading is a unique source of personal benefit in a society dazed by TV, confounded by doublespeak and numbed by technology. He advocates almost any kind of novel reading, to suit one's own taste and need of experience. He calls it bibliotherapy, and the first part of the book is about enjoying fiction without guilt. He says: "Stories can be enormously helpful to our sorting out of experience... Fiction, however, goes much further in stimulating and coding our lives... novels 'story' behaviour by evoking emotion in the reader as well as providing information. This is very

effective since we memorize best through the emotional responses associated with people and events. Most of us live in 'stories' we spend a lifetime trying to organize."

Apart from teaching English Literature, which he has done at several universities, Dr. Gold is an author and a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. He lives in Ontario.

Yes, Dr. Gold does mention Jane Austen. He says: "...novels, for example, abound in carefully and vividly drawn portraits of marriage. Some of these are built out of observation, are the composites of impressions from watching others, and some are built out of living experience... Most writers have taught us something to add to our knowledge of the range of possible marriages... and of the whole range of conflict, betrayal and misunderstanding that we find in life. Most of Thomas Hardy for instance is about marriage. So is the work of George Eliot, Jane Austen, the Brontes, and so is much of Shakespeare and so on. To see how our own marriage works or might work we must read about others... for we cannot live through many marriages just to find out, not even if we are Hollywood marathoners."

Dr. Gold also says, in another reference - "People who are thinking of committing adultery could do a lot worse than read this book." (Which book? Answer: Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter).

There is of course much more in Read For Your Life, and the range is wide, but I was concerned here in quoting only some comments which stress the value of novel reading.

How right you were, Jane Austen.

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## WORDS AND POWER

*All histories are against you - all stories, prose and verse. (Persuasion)*

When Anne Elliot and Captain Harville are discussing the strength of women's feeling, he suggests that all writings are against her, that the fickleness of women is legendary in prose and verse. Anne is unwilling to accept examples from books. "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story", she declares. "The pen has been in their hands".

According to a recent seminar sponsored by the Vancouver chapter of the Canadian Association of Journalists, entitled "Women, Words and Power", women are still saying the same thing. One of the issues discussed was "the nature of news when seen from a female perspective", and comments showed that women "attach importance to things, events, trends and ideas that men often see as inconsequential". In media positions, "the top of the power structure is inhabited mainly by men and men get more news coverage than women".

The young women journalists felt that their ideas and ways of defining news from their life experience was not given the weight they deserved. Anne Elliot would think that nothing much has changed since 1815.

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A SAMPLE FROM WASHINGTON - Ron Sutherland

"Development of the English Landscape Garden, and Jane Austen" - John Dixon Hunt.

It would be difficult to find anyone more qualified to speak on both the English landscape garden and Jane Austen, as John Dixon Hunt was a professor of English literature for a number of years before becoming an authority on Landscape Architecture. He gave a thoroughly interesting and thought-provoking talk.

Landscape was enormously important at the time of Jane Austen, and was the subject of many books, considerable discussion and some controversy. The Jane Austen period was a time of transition from the formal garden of the early 18th century with its avenues of trees, to landscape vistas. The work of Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton's designs for picturesque landscapes provided fuel for the discussions which took place amongst landowners.

The picturesque period of landscape gardens came about as a result of the art of the period, picturesque landscape art becoming popular initially in Holland and then in England. The cottage, invariably a feature of the art, also became a requirement on the well laid out estate; whether it was ever lived in or not was immaterial - it completed the picture. There is a good comparison in S&S between the house and the cottage and what each represented. Jane Austen also used this feature for some of her special style of humour when she had the self-important Robert Ferrars talk about engaging Bonomi to design his cottage: this would have been recognized at the time as being as ludicrous and stupid as it would be today to suggest that you were going to hire E.M.Pei, the internationally famous architect of multi-storey complexes, to design your summer cabin.

Hunt pointed out Austen's dislike for the picturesque: in conversations when one of her characters supports a picturesque philosophy, it can be interpreted that the character is frivolous and lacking depth of understanding. References in Austen's writings on the landscape can be looked upon as moral statements by the personalities involved. These are more factors to be kept in mind when re-reading Jane Austen.

"Jane Austen's Town and Country Style" - Susan Watkins.

Susan Watkins opened her talk telling how as a young girl her life was affected by Jane Austen - fantasizing about meeting her Darcy, and so on. Having charmed her audience, she showed slides of English country homes Jane Austen may have, could have, or would like to have visited.

This talk and slide presentation was a particular delight to me as Susan Watkins took her overflow audience to many of the fine country homes we visited earlier this year. Goodnestone House was viewed in detail, as well as Stoneleigh Abbey, which was inherited by Rev. Thomas Leigh, Mrs. Austen's uncle, and visited by Jane with her mother. Stoneleigh has an austere exterior, but the interior, by Francis Smith, is an architectural delight of the late 18th century. Francis Smith was very much influenced by Robert Adam and James Wyatt, the two leading neo-classical architects of the period, and his work shows the elegance of the style and the period.

Dalesford, the Warren Hastings home, was also featured, as was The Vyne, the home of John Chute, who did his own interior design, very much in the style of Robert Adam. Many more of the stately homes were featured in this travelogue through the English countryside, with fleeting references to Jane Austen and the novels.

An indication of the captivation of Susan Watkins' audience was the sale of all 100 of her books (same title as her talk) at the Book Mall, all there was in stock.

\* \* \* \* \*

DECEMBER, 1775

*...amidst the dash of other carriages, the heavy rumble of carts and drays, the bawling of newsmen, muffin-men, and milkmen, and the ceaseless clink of patters... these were noises which belonged to the winter pleasures.*

[This is an account of a December evening in 1775, in the **centre of the City of London**, from a letter written by a German visitor, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, of the University of Göttingen].

"Imagine, if you will, a street about as wide as the Weender [in Göttingen] but, if added all together, probably six times as long. On both sides are tall buildings with windows of mirror glass [i.e. unflawed panes of large size]. The lower storeys consist of *boutiques*, and these seem to be made of nothing but glass. Thousands upon thousands of lights along the way illuminate the silver shops, print shops, bookstores, the clocks, glassware, pewter, paintings, women's finery (and unfinery), gold, gemstones, wrought iron and fashioned steel, coffee houses, and lottery offices without end. The entire street looks as if it were lighted for a jubilee. The apothecaries and drug shops have jars and bottles of such magnitude in their windows that...[you] could bathe in them; they are filled with coloured liquids and spread their purple, yellow, verdigris, and azure light over whole square yards. The pastry shops dazzle your eyes with their chandeliers and tickle your nose with their display of delicacies, both of these pleasures to be had for no more trouble or expense than it takes simply to enter these establishments. Spanish grapes, alternating with pineapples, are festooned there over pyramids of apples and oranges. In and out among these piles glide white-armed guardian nymphs in little silk caps and little silk dresses: but they - to bring out the devil in you - are themselves not overmuch guarded...

All this is sheer magic to the unaccustomed eye, and so much the more caution is necessary to be a proper spectator. For no sooner have you stopped to look, than, bang! a porter runs directly into you and shouts out "By your leave!" after you are already lying on the ground. One chaise after another, carriage after carriage, and cart after cart go rolling down the centre of the street. Above all this hubbub, through the scuffling of thousands of feet and the babble of thousands of tongues, you can hear the pealing from the church belfries, the tinkling of the post-carriers' bells, the fiddles, hand organs, tambourines, and lutes ... and the cries from every corner of the street where things to eat, both hot and cold, are for sale under the open sky...Suddenly someone whose handkerchief has been snatched shouts out "Stop, thief!" and everyone dashes about, pushing and shoving, many of them with no intention of catching the culprit at all, instead to see if perchance they might manage to cut a purse themselves or get someone's watch...Then, forty paces in front of you a man is robbed...Everyone halts to examine his own pockets and to take pity on the miserable victim. But soon they are all laughing again because someone has slipped and fallen into the gutter...And so the procession goes along...Here, especially at night and especially in this part of London known as the City...everything is on the run; no one is a mere observer. The whole world looks as if it were dashing to the bed of a dying man. That is Cheapside and Fleet Street on a December evening".

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MRS. REYNOLDS - by Kathleen Glancy

*The housekeeper came; a respectable looking elderly woman... (P&P)*

I wonder sometimes if Jane Austen constructed histories even for minor characters. Whether she did or not, I have taken it upon myself to construct one for Mrs. Reynolds.

What was she, I wondered, when she first met Darcy? He was then 4 years old, so she can't have been a nursemaid or she would have known him from birth. If she was a housemaid or a sewing maid she wouldn't have had much contact with him. If she was a cook or a lady's maid to Lady Anne she might, as all small boys are attracted to where there is food, and even small well-born Georgian boys still wanted to see their mothers. Cooks and lady's maids, however, in a household the size of Pemberley, were specialists and not likely to become housekeeper. Moreover, if Mrs. Reynolds is elderly, even allowing that she is not as old as elderly would mean today, she is likely to be into the 50's. She was therefore in the late 20's or early 30's when she met Darcy - well past the age when girls entered service. It can be deduced that she was in service somewhere else, gained a skill, went to Pemberley after being "head-hunted", and was eventually promoted to housekeeper. (She would be rather young to have gone in direct as housekeeper).

There is one post that fits perfectly - that of still-room maid. This individual was in charge of brewing the household beer and wine, cordials and home medicines, and of preserving fruit and making jam and sweetmeats. If Mrs. Reynolds trained in some other household where she rose to be assistant still-room maid, was recruited to fill a vacancy for chief still-room maid at Pemberley, and thus met the young master (see small boys and food above) it would fit.

It even explains why Darcy was always at his best with Reynolds. By the time he reached the age where he could order rather than coax sweetmeats, he had become so used to being nice to Reynolds he went on being it despite her strawberry jam not holding the fascination it once had. Besides, he'd become fond of her, as she had always been of him.

You will note I don't put in any Mr. Reynolds. There could have been one, if she was widowed and had to go into service again, but most likely not. All housekeepers, and female cooks, were "Mrs." whatever their actual marital status.

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#### JANE AUSTEN SINKS IN STUDENT POLL

*...your popularity will stand upon your own virtues. (Emma)*

In an informal poll at the UBC Bookstore on September 8th - International Literacy Day - when readers were asked "What is your favourite book of all time?", Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice dropped to fifth place, tied with Brothers Karamazov, Wuthering Heights and Winnie the Pooh. In the previous poll, in 1987, Pride and Prejudice ranked in fourth place. This year's winners were Lord of the Rings, The Bible, Catcher in the Rye, and (tied for fourth) The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe by Douglas Adams and One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

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# VOYAGE TO THE SEA - E.Sutherland

*An absence not only long, but including so many dangers. (MP)*

"Having made every preparation for a long voyage, we embarked at 5 o'clock A.M." These prosaic words, written May 28, 1808, begin Simon Fraser's account of his long, dangerous journey down the Fraser River (which he thought was the Columbia) in search of a practical trade route to the coast.

The Journal is fascinating - vivid descriptions of the Indians and the countryside, calm acceptance of hardship and fatigue, reluctant acknowledgment of his disappointment in not reaching the "main ocean" at the end.

Fraser's writing style is varied - sometimes terse and factual: "Embarked at 7. Passed on with great velocity". Other passages are poetic and full of feeling: "[Here] we had a very fine prospect consisting of extensive plains and, behind, hills rising upon hills". And at times he verges on what Jane Austen called "thorough novel slang": "It being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land...all hands without hesitation embarked, as it were à corps perdu [recklessly] upon the mercy of this stygian tide...Thus skimming along like lightning, the crews cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence. And [when] we arrived at the end we stood gazing on our narrow escape from perdition."



Simon Fraser's parents were Scottish settlers in Vermont, where they had a "modest comfortable farm, where life would be free of privations, but where there would be little in the way of luxuries". His Loyalist father, however, joined the British forces, was captured, and died in prison in 1779, when Simon, the youngest of the eight children, was only three years old. The family moved to Upper Canada a few years later, where they received grants of land near Cornwall, Ontario. Simon went to school in Montreal for two or three years, but, at age 16, he was apprenticed as a clerk with the North West Company. That seems to have been the only formal schooling he ever had. Where did he develop this polished, fluent way with words?

Fraser's maternal grandmother was noted for her poetical talents and interest in literature. Her son, also named Simon, received a classical education and inherited his mother's taste for poetry and music. Even amidst the hardships of pioneer life and revolution, there must have been a literate, cultured family life for the young Simon. The early interest in words and poetical descriptions is reflected in the letters and journals he later wrote in the wilderness.

It is interesting to read the occasional echoes of Romantic poetry in Fraser's Journal: "The river here...passes between two precipices, and is turbulent, noisy, and awful to behold!" or "The hills and banks have a romantic and Grotto shape"; or "This afternoon the rapids were very bad...mixt with rocky fragments and bound by precipices and mountains, that seemed at times to have no end. I scarcely ever saw anything so dreary, and seldom so dangerous in any country; and at present while I am writing this, whatever way I turn, mountains upon mountains, whose summits are

covered with eternal snows, close the gloomy scene" - it might almost be Marianne Dashwood writing!

Other echoes of Jane Austen's life in England can be heard faintly in Fraser's Journal. Jane Austen put in several hours one day in London writing to Cassandra, interviewing Henry's housekeeper, and shopping for linens - all before breakfast. Simon Fraser wrote, "We embarked at 5 o'clock A.M....after having proceeded eighteen miles we came to a strong rapid which we ran down...After running down several considerable rapids, we put ashore at 11 A.M. to breakfast."

Mrs. Austen found that the Hampshire villagers would not eat potatoes. Fraser and his men were more tolerant: "[The Indians] have a variety of roots, some of which taste like potatoes, and are excellent". He agreed with Mrs. Bennet in liking a fat haunch of venison: "I did not imagine the Moose Deer to be so good at this time of the year as it is, it being really fat".

Jane Austen wrote to Cassandra that she and her niece Fanny "regale" on tomatoes every day; Simon Fraser writes of some Indians, "They brought us dried salmon and three different kinds of roots with which they regaled us all." On one of her trips to Bath, Jane Austen describes a meal along the way: "Amongst other things we had asparagus and a lobster...and some cheesecakes." Fraser, also, infrequently mentioned the meals on his journey, but on one occasion the Indians "brought different kinds of Roots, wild onions formed into syrope, excellent dried salmon, and some berries".

One of Jane Austen's favourite drinks was orange wine, and she would have been familiar with the drink "shrub" made from oranges or lemons and rum which Fraser and his men enjoyed at the end of a particularly hard day: "When everything was brought over [the portage], we tapped our small keg of shrub...and gave all hands a dram".

Could any two lives have ever been more dissimilar? Jane Austen, gently reared, quiet and ladylike, scarcely ever leaving home except to visit dear friends or relatives; and Simon Fraser, robust, determined, and tough - as he had to be - travelling half way round the world, conquering the wilderness and blazing new trails.

They both achieved fame, but neither cared much for that. They were contemporaries - products of their time. Fraser's words, only a few months before his death, could refer to them both: "We have done our duty in the stations allotted us without fear, or reproach."

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This Newsletter, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, comes out four times a year: February, May, August and November. All submissions on the subject of Jane Austen, her life, her works and her times, are welcome. Mail to the Editor: Eileen Sutherland, 4169 Lions Ave., North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 3S2. Price to Non-members: \$8.00 per year.