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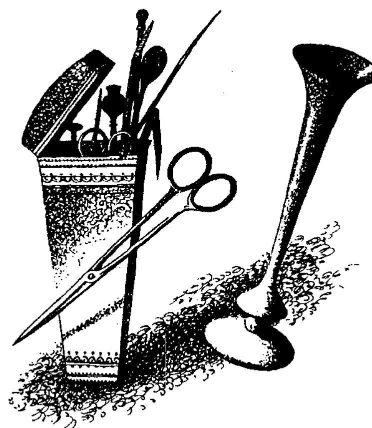
In Sickness and in Health : Roy Porter and Dorothy Porter (1988) - Eileen Sutherland.

The Georgians were obsessed with illness - not surprising, considering how their lives were rife with deadly fevers, crippling or fatal diseases, infant mortality, endemic maladies, and pains, eruptions, ulcers, kidney stones, gout and wasting sicknesses. New and virulent strains of diseases were emerging, and spreading along the burgeoning network of trade routes throughout the country. Contemporary medicine had few means of combating afflictions like violent fevers, apoplexy, pneumonia or smallpox. Everyone lived in the shadow of death, often sudden and unexplained. Falls, drownings, mishaps with tools, knives or poisons, or road accidents, could be fatal in the absence of ambulances and casualty services. Almost every family had a history of infant or early childhood deaths. When Keats wrote to his brother: "Everybody is ill," it was a literal report of family and friends. Sickness was a constant menace on all sides.

Roy and Dorothy Porter have made a study of the "culture of illness" - what ordinary people thought of their illness or health, "their perceptions and experiences of sickness…what they did to preserve their health…and how they responded to pain and disability." The sources used by the authors to substantiate their conclusions are personal writings, letters, diaries and journals reporting sickness and pain; naming and trying to interpret the ailments that afflicted them; and in many cases, foretelling and resigning themselves to inevitable death.

Charles Darwin devoted copious journal entries to his illnesses; Swift wrote to Stella of his infirmities; Gibbon, Parson Woodforde, John Locke, Byron, John Wesley, Boswell, David Hume - these are only a few of the diverse writers whose accounts of their illnesses are quoted in this book. It is fascinating reading. But I enjoyed finding my own sources - in Jane Austen. Scarcely a theme mentioned by the Porters cannot be illustrated with an example from Jane Austen's letters or novels.

Diet was important. The Sussex grocer Thomas Turner meditated on his daily regime and diet (including water gruel); so did Mr. Woodhouse: "An egg boiled very soft is not unwholesome…one of our small eggs will not hurt you…" Good health was something rare, and to be prized. But keeping the body healthy was a problem, with no knowledge of anatomy or diagnostic procedures. The surest basis for health was a good constitution to start with, and maintaining it called for fresh air, moderate living and exercise. Fanny Price rode for her health: when the mare was not available for four days, she had "the headache," and accepted a glass of Madeira because "the tears…made it easier to swallow than to speak."



Pocket surgical instrument case, mid-eighteenth century, and monaural stethoscope, *circa* 1805

The Georgians felt they could rely to some extent on outward appearances, e.g. the "bloom of health was recognized as forming a basic part of a young lady's beauty." (All too often, however, beauty was purchased through the use of tight-laced corsets and lead-based cosmetics.) Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Weston agree about Emma's appearance: "What a bloom of full health...Emma always gives me the idea of being the complete picture of grown-up health." Anne Elliot's "bloom had vanished early," and Captain Wentworth found her "so altered he should not have known [her] again."

Disturbing feelings, pains, low spirits - what we may now call "neurotic" symptoms - were blamed on certain parts of the body. Passionate feelings were reflected in outward signs: rage made one's blood boil and face red; fear caused trembling, hair standing on end, goose-flesh; one's heart pounded with grief, stood still in shock. It was accepted by everyone that the power of emotions could actually cause physical disease symptoms, one could "die of a broken heart." Marianne Dashwood got a chill, but it was her despair at losing Willoughby that turned it into a nearly fatal illness.

The old ideas about "humours" which governed the temperament and the physical body, were gradually replaced by the fashionable term *nerves,* "suggesting a diffused heightened sensibility, febrile delicacy, vulnerability to excessive feeling, and a brittleness of temper." At first, only high society could be highly strung. But fashionable diseases as well as fashionable styles in dress gradually descended the social scale and "nerves" became vulgar. This certainly describes Mrs. Bennet: "You have no compassion on my poor nerves...I am cruelly used, nobody feels for my poor nerves."

If the mind could produce sickness, according to the Georgians it could also speed recovery. When Anne visited Mrs. Smith in *Persuasion*, she found "neither sickness nor sorrow seemed to have closed her heart or ruined her spirits." It was the duty of the patient to muster up good spirits and fight against lowness of the mind. When Marianne had recovered from her illness, her determination was steady: "I have laid down my plan...my feelings shall be governed and my temper improved." Jane Bennet, speaking of Bingley, says: "I have now learnt to enjoy his conversation as an agreeable & sensible young man, without having a wish beyond it."

Contemporaries were only too aware of all that could go wrong at childbirth, both to the infant and to the mother. Constant pregnancies wore away the wife's strength. Jane's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Knight, died very shortly after the birth of her eleventh child in fourteen years. Another sister-in-law, the wife of her brother Francis, also died after bearing eleven children. Jane was dismayed at the prospects of her young niece, Anna Lefroy, pregnant with her third child in three years: "Poor Animal, she will be worn out before she is thirty," and she advised another niece, Fanny: "By not beginning the business of Mothering quite so early in life, you will be young in constitution, spirits, figure and countenance, while [a friend] is growing old by confinements and nursing." The dangers of child-bearing were evident. All the neighbours in Highbury were concerned about Mrs. Weston until her baby was safely born and healthy.

Childbirth and the care of children changed during this period: male accoucheurs (better trained, more skilful, and with access to forceps) replaced old midwives; breast feeding by the mother took the place of wet-nurses; dosing newborns with alcohol was abandoned; and swaddling and stuffy overheated nurseries were rejected. This resulted in a mixed regime - parents with more leisure for their children often ended up fussing over and spoiling the children, who soon learned to manipulate their mothers. Jane Austen shows several families of children who fit into this type, especially the Middletons: "her four noisy children...who pulled her about, tore her clothes, and put an end to every kind of discourse except what related to themselves." Anne de Bourgh also may be an example of over-protection and over-physicking: she "was pale and

sickly." Mrs. Jenkinson, her nurse/companion, "was chiefly employed in watching how little Miss De Bourgh ate, pressing her to try some other dish, and fearing she were indisposed."

Growing older also caused anxiety, especially for women whose beauty and bloom meant so much. A married woman was considered past her prime by her mid-twenties, and unmarried young women did not expect a proposal after that age. Charlotte Lucas is the supreme example of almost giving up on marriage prospects, and accepting anyone for the sake of an establishment of her own. Lydia Bennet exclaimed: "Jane will be quite an old maid soon, I declare. She is almost three and twenty!...Lord, how ashamed I should be of not being married before three and twenty!"

The social pressures of aging did not weigh so heavily on men, who could still feel in their prime into their sixties and older. Sir Walter Elliot "might...be deemed only half a fool, for thinking himself and Elizabeth as blooming as ever," and General Tilney was described as "past the bloom, but not past the vigour of life."

Wealth could help stave off the discomforts and disabilities of illness. For the poor, however, who had lost their strength and ability to carry on, the workhouse was the prospect ahead. In *Emma*, John Abdy came to ask Mr. Elton for "relief from the parish" for his old father, "bedridden and very poorly with the rheumatic gout in his joints."

Pain and affliction were ubiquitous, among the rich as well as the poor. Medicine had little help to offer. Without effective drugs, diseases took their course. Even deficiency diseases, easily prevented today, remained painful and sometimes fatal, when there was no understanding of the role of diet. There were also few reliable pain-killers - alcohol was the favourite; drugs became habit-forming and destructive of the system. Jane Austen often administered laudanum (opium) to her mother, but there is no record of any addiction there. Many found the medicine as bad as the disease. And of course, those undergoing radical surgery without anaesthetics endured unthinkable agony.

Without reliable medical help, patients were forced into self-medication. A medical "grape-vine" passed recipes from one patient to another. Confronting the unknown was unbearable. Naming a condition or disease was vital to knowing and controlling it: "A disease known is a disease half cured" was an old proverb. According to Georgian understanding of health and disease, disorders did not afflict just one specific organ. Some were indeed localized: bladder stones, ear aches, sore eyes. But most were the surface indications of deep-seated malaises which were "mobile" and could relocate to another area. For this reason it seemed best to treat symptoms indirectly, by purges, bleeding, the application of blisters, and so on, to lure it into a safer place. Similarly, it was important to force a disease "out", by encouraging fevers, rashes and boils to erupt at the body's surface, and disperse.

Health care books above all stressed the importance of currents of fresh air: "health lay in open windows, abundant ventilation, the cool and fresh condition." Mr. Woodhouse could not have a strong and healthy constitution as long as he lived in closed, overheated, stuffy rooms.

There are some topics which Jane Austen did not choose to write about: pain, deformity, death, for example; but in what she did write she gave a specific and vivid picture of life in her time. So, obviously, did Roy and Dorothy Porter.

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"Spring has really come. The south opened like a mouth. It blew one long breath, humid and warm, and flowers quivered inside the seeds, and the round earth began to ripen like a fruit."

Regain, Jean Giono.

SPRING MEETINGS.

February 17. ***Lady Susan.***

Margaret Atwood, in her introduction in the *Penguin* edition of *Lady Susan,* considered that it should be read "for pleasure, rather than study." This was the approach decided on for our meeting.

The programme began with a short discussion by Irene Howard. Did Jane Austen think the short novel was worthy of publication? At least we know she made a "fair copy" of it in her adult life - she intended it to be preserved, if not published. She was about 16 to 18 years old when she wrote it. It has often been dismissed as just an early work, but this and the other pieces of *Juvenilia* are important for an understanding of Jane Austen's development as a writer. Even in the early works we can hear the tone of voice of each character - a foreshadowing of the characters in the mature novels. Here at 16 she has a black-and-white view of the world, a not very subtle, relentless way of looking at people. She is still sharp in her later works, but her irony becomes much more refined. After reading *Lady Susan,* we have a new understanding of what Jane Austen finally achieved. She never again used this technique of a "blunt instrument" to delineate her characters.

Irene had prepared a script using dramatic sections from *Lady Susan,* with a continuity to link them into a complete story. Virgil Oriente read the letters of Reginald De Courcy and his father; Jean Oriente was Mrs. Vernon and Frederica; Mary Atkins depicted Lady Susan; and Irene Howard was Mrs. Johnson, and the narrator. The story was well read, expressive, and brought out the feelings of the letter writers. The melodramatic intricacies of the plot and the one-dimensional characters were cleverly turned into an amusing little "play." The readers brought alive what at times is a rather dull story.

March 17. ***Fanny Price's British Museum.***

Miranda Burgess, assistant professor in the Department of English at UBC, and author of the recently published *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order*, gave us important insights into the character of Fanny Price. We are introduced to the young "poor relation" when she arrives at Mansfield Park - shy, fearful, lonely, condemned by her cousins as totally ignorant of such important facts as the geography of Europe, the rivers of Russia or the chronological order of the kings of England and the Roman emperors. But in the course of the novel, readers see Fanny growing physically and learning to use her mind. She shows her knowledge of physical and political geography, and asks intelligent questions about slavery.

Fanny tries to settle at Mansfield, and forget her old home, but throughout the novel we are conscious of Fanny's memory. Fanny and Mary talk of Mrs. Grant's shrubbery - useful and decorative now, but nothing a few years ago. Like a metaphor of the two young women, Mary sees only herself in the shrubbery; Fanny can recognize Mrs. Grant's landscaping success.

The description of Fanny's East Room gives us more appreciation of her character: the collection of objects had formed her mental growth and remembrance of the past - "everything was her friend," her plants, books, transparencies, family silhouettes, and William's sketch of his ship. She had learned to participate in the social activities of the English upper classes, but her privileged present had not erased the details of her past.

As a child, Fanny didn't know where Ireland was, and Professor Burgess suggested that Jane Austen used Ireland - poverty-stricken, powerless and disfranchised - to remind readers of Fanny's bleak and sorrowful life. A lively question period and discussion followed.

April 21. Jane Austen's *Persuasion.*

Professor Ray Ciacci, of the University of Chicago, gave us a low-key but stimulating talk on this Jane Austen masterpiece which "speaks directly to the heart." He began with his long title: "*Introspective Love that Waits on Patience and Resolve Despite Anxieties from the Voices of Others.*" Then he went on to discuss each of these key words - introspective love, patience, resolve, anxieties - all major themes of the novel.

The characters develop more ideas - Anne shows us what constitutes a good marriage. Lady Russell, like Emma, considers herself an expert on giving advice, but she is older and should know better. She is still an influence on Anne. The society in the novel consists of those like the Crofts, unaffected and sincere; and others not in touch with themselves. Tensions, duties, values are questioned. Sir Walter Elliot scorns the navy men, but it is Admiral Croft who pays the bills.

Professor Ciacci referred us to 5th century Greece to find counterparts to the issues Jane Austen brings up - love and constancy, the element of time, the role of letters. The word "persuasion" itself is not about truth but about rhetoric - how to get one's way, enforce one's will on others. Socrates wrote about the aristocracy threatened by the *nouveau riche* - there are many examples of this economic theme in Jane Austen's works. The important aspect of life is not what you acquire but what you are - virtue, wisdom, goodness do not depend on money or rank.

Why is the title simply *Persuasion*? Previous novels capitalized on contrasts: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*. But it is not easy to find a word to match with "persuasion." The theme, however, is the examination of "persuasion" versus "right" or "truth". How is the reader also persuaded to follow Anne in the story?

One way to study the novel is to consider the three major "falls" in the story. The Musgrove child suffers what might be a serious spinal injury; and Louisa's fall results in a long period of unconsciousness from a head injury. These alarming accidents show Anne's good character - the "strength and zeal and thought" with which she takes control and arranges the best thing to do.

The third "fall" is not physical or painful: Anne has fallen from dreams and plans of happiness to near despair when she follows Lady Russell's persuasion. Lady Russell is the most difficult character to understand. We know the consequences, but at the time was she right or wrong? Was it good advice or bad? Anne's lack of experience and her belief that Lady Russell *should* know best lead to her painful decision.

Why do we believe in the special love and constancy between Anne and Captain Wentworth? We are persuaded by Jane Austen that this is a right relationship. Good relationships are rare in Jane Austen - Darcy and Elizabeth, Anne and Wentworth, Emma and Knightley are some of the few. Most marriages in the novels are not examples of happiness: Charlotte and Mr. Collins, the younger Bennet sisters, the Musgrove women too often are bowing to convention rather than finding an ideal love match.

Professor Ciacci did not give us answers - he asked questions, made comments and suggestions, and sent us back to re-read the novel and think things out for ourselves. His last comment: you can't have love without persuasion, of yourself or of another; you cannot be passive, you must make an effort to love.

The Post Office: A Tribute.

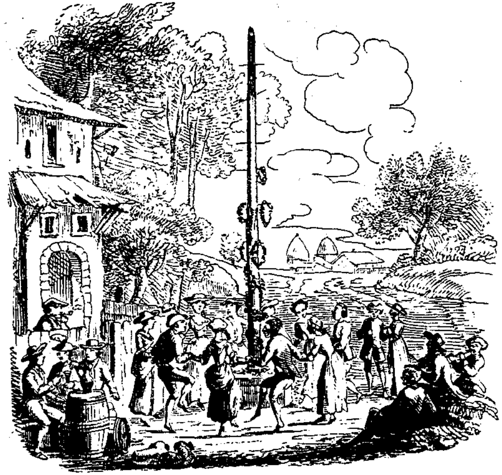
"The parcel, however, is not yet come, tho' it ought to have been here at the same time as your letter. I have, however, no fears for its safety, as I never knew anything lost in the Mail Coach." Letter to Lady Melbourne from Charles Grey, December 20, 1791.

Maypole Festivities.

Jane Austen herself must have delighted in Steventon and Chawton maypoles, but she didn't write about them. The only May activity in *Emma* is the ball at the Crown Inn, for invited guests. Perhaps the maypole festivities were too "common" for Emma and the other heroines.

"The Maypole nearest to the metropolis that stood the longest within the recollection of the writer was near Kennington Green [Lambeth]. It remained till about the year 1795, and was much frequented by milkmaids.

This delightfully pretty print of a merrymaking round about the maypole illustrates the prevailing tendency of this work, and the simplicity of rural manners. It is not so sportive as the dancings about the maypole near London formerly; there is nothing of the boisterous rudeness which must be well remembered by many old Londoners on May Day. . . .



The late Dr. Samuel Parr [1747-1825], the fascinating converser, the skilful controverter, the first Greek scholar and one of the greatest and most influential men of the age, was a patron of May Day sports. Opposite his parsonage-house at Hatton, near Warwick . . . stood the parish maypole, which on the annual festival was dressed with garlands, surrounded by a numerous band of villagers. The doctor was 'first of the throng' and danced with his parishioners the gayest of the gay. He kept the large crown of the maypole in a closet of his house, from whence it was produced every May Day, with fresh flowers and streamers. . . . He always spoke of this festivity as one wherein he joined with peculiar delight to himself, and advantage to his neighbours. He was deemed eccentric, and so he was; for he was never proud to the humble nor humble to the proud.

The World of William Hone: John Wardroper (1997).

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Mark Twain is notorious for the slanderous things he said against Jane Austen. Yet one of his comments begins: "Every time I read *Pride and Prejudice* . . ."

Education for Women.

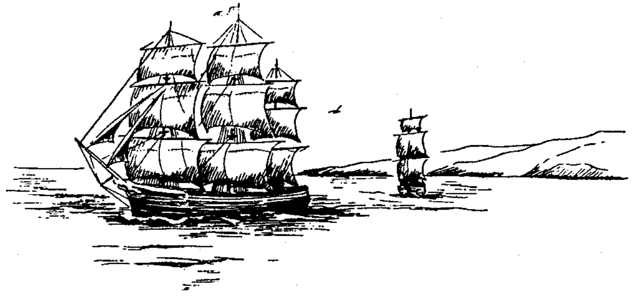
"In his last will and testament, John Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow University, established a second institution of higher education in the city, named Anderson's University. . . .When the new institution held its first lectures in the Trades Hall of Glasgow in 1797 under Professor Thomas Garnett, half those in attendance, uniquely for the period, were women." *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000:* T.M.Devine (1999).

Mary Crawford: "Selfishness must always be forgiven, you, know, because there is no hope of a cure." *MP* p.68.

Captain George Vancouver.

Captain George Vancouver was born 22 June 1757 in King's Lynn, Norfolk, England. He was on Captain Cook's second voyage, to the South Seas (1772-5), and third voyage, to the Northwest Coast (1776-80). Vancouver was appointed to lead an expedition to negotiate with the Spanish Commissioner, Bodega y Quadra, at Nootka in 1792, and then spent three summers (winters in the Sandwich Islands) exploring the coast from California to Cook Inlet, Alaska.

Back in England, he revised his journals of his voyages, but died just before they were to be published, on 12 May 1798, at Petersham, near Richmond, Surrey, at age **41**. What tremendous accomplishments in a short life!



The *Beaver* magazine this month suggests that we commemorate the death of George Vancouver by "surveying a coastline."

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The Misses Williams - Kathleen Glancy.

The umpires at the celebrated Wimbledon tennis tournament are excessively polite individuals and only call men by their surnames alone. Women are referred to as Miss or Mrs. The umpires therefore faced a problem when called upon to supervise a semi-final match between the American sisters Venus and Serena Williams. They settled on the rather cumbersome "Miss V. Williams" and "Miss S. Williams. Somebody promptly wrote to the Daily Telegraph pointing out that Venus, the elder of the two, should have got "Miss Williams" and her sister "Miss Serena" and recommending the umpires read more Jane Austen.

I am not so sure he or she - the name was Hilary Stewart, which could be either - was right there. The sisters are the two youngest of a large family. If any of their older siblings are female and unmarried they are properly "Miss Venus" and "Miss Serena".

Lemons for the Navy.

"During the long-drawn-out Napoleonic Wars, with the Royal Navy stretched to breaking point, Admiral Nelson purchased fifty thousand gallons of lemon juice (at 1 shilling a gallon) from Sicily for the seamen of the British blockading fleets. Sir Gilbert Blane [a Navy commissioner], who estimated that 'fifty lemons might be considered as a hand to the fleet', pointed out, after the defeat of Napoleon, that had the Royal Navy suffered the same rate of deaths from disease as during the American War of Independence, the fight against Napoleon at sea would have been lost. (And if lemon juice had been issued in 1753 - as was Lind's [Navy surgeon] advice - the war in America might have had a different result.) The lemon had proved as powerful as the carronade broadside."

Below the Convergence: Voyages Toward Antarctica 1699-1839: Alan Gurney (1997).

Jane Austen's World T-Shirts

In the latest issue of JASNA News, you will have seen the notice of the coming conference - in 2002 - at Toronto. Among the items commemorating this exciting event are some classy T-shirts for sale. They have the conference logo shown here, and the colours available are earth tones - a soft mossy green or sand (a pinky-beige). The white part of the globe will also be in the same colour chosen. If you saw the bookmarks passed out at our April meeting, you know how attractive these earthy colours are.

Sizes are Medium, Large and X-Large. (Children's sizes may also be available.)

Cost is $19.95, plus postage & handling (about $3). Put your order in soon, as the Toronto group wishes to have the T-shirts available in May for summer wear. Write to Clifford Collier, Conference Coordinator, #205 - 100 Maitland Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y lE2.

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Bathing Joke

Leila Vennewitz wrote that she had enjoyed the little piece, on the back of the April meeting notice, about bathing. She passed along an old joke which she had heard a "long time ago, at a time when it was not yet politically incorrect to make fun of people of other countries":

"An elderly French gentleman explains: 'Chaque année, *besoin ou non*, je prends un bain. C'est une habitude que j'ai contractée en Angleterre.' (Emphasis mine). I am especially fond of the *besoin ou non.* I hope you agree that such humour is so gentle that it can hardly offend even the most ardent P.C.er."

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Canned Food to the Arctic.

"In 1806 the French Navy was sampling preserved meat, fruit and vegetables that had been packed in glass jars. It was a process invented by a confectioner, Nicolas Appert, and in 1809 a grateful Napoleon awarded Appert 12,000 francs and the title 'Benefactor of Humanity.' The Appert process was to heat the foodstuffs to high temperatures in glass jars and then seal the jars with layers of cork. The idea crossed the channel and by 1812 the Donkin and Hall factory was at work in the Blue Anchor Road, Bermondsey, making preserved meat in tinned iron containers - not glass jars - resembling tea canisters. The canisters were labeled with the French word *bouilli* (boiled meat). The canned food industry had started and 'bully beef' was born. By 1813 canned food was being supplied to the Royal Navy, and four years later a Donkin and Hall brochure was quoting testimonials from such luminaries as Sir Joseph Banks, Admiral Cochrane, and Lord Wellesley.

British Arctic expeditions from 1814 were supplied with canned beef, mutton, veal, and vegetables. The Russian Arctic expedition of 1815-18 under Otto van Kotzebue carried Donkin and Hall products and found them excellent. A Russian Antarctic expedition under Thaddeus Bellingshausen stopped off in England to supply themselves with charts, navigation instruments, and 'Mr. Donkin's specially preserved fresh soups with vegetables and beef tea'."

Below the Convergence; Voyages Toward Antarctica 1699-1839. Alan Gurney (1997).

The Friendly Jane Austen: A Well-Mannered Introduction to a Lady of Sense and Sensibility: Natalie Tyler. 1999 - Reviewed by Eileen Sutherland.

In her Preface, Tyler writes: "In *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen says that she would 'Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort and to have done with all the rest.' As for *The Friendly Jane Austen*, my plan is to let other pens dwell on Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, political correctness, and cultural diversity. *The Friendly Jane Austen* is for the uininitiated as well as more serious Austenites. In short, I promise unalloyed adoration of Austen's works."

Tyler keeps her promise. The book begins with several pages of delightful and insightful quotations from some of the most noted Jane Austen scholars. After that high note, however, we are let down to a Self-Evaluation Quiz to determine which type of reader of Jane Austen you are: a Janeite; a member of the Gentle Jane school; the Ironic Jane school; or the Subversive Jane Austen school. The questions are the usual grocery- magazine type: Who is your favourite Beatle, planet, Broadway show, tenor, etc.?

A section on Jane Austen's Early Life and *Juvenilia* follows: a few paragraphs on her birth and childhood, and other family members. Then more quotations and a little discussion of each of the *Minor Works*. This is followed by a major section, about half the book, covering the mature novels.

For each novel we are given a brief but adequate summary of the plot, then short articles on some aspect of that novel's theme, characters, etc. For *Northanger Abbey,* for example, we are told about *'Rakes and Rattles', 'The Nature of Gothic Novels', 'Romanticism',* John Thorpe's knowledge of horses and Henry Tilney's, of muslins.

Half a dozen short quizzes are interspersed throughout the book - not too difficult, but stimulating. Every so often, also, Tyler puts in a question-and answer interview with some author or critic, asking about perceptions of Jane Austen's work, personal connections and influences, etc. There are some excellent short (1-2 pages) accounts of other contemporary writers, such as Cowper, Crabbe, or Johnson. Much of the book is like having a serious but relaxing talk about Jane Austen with a good friend. It is an especially pleasant relief to have a total absence of jargon, 'hard words' and pretentious airs.

Some sections are pretty frivolous and trivial, but there is enough solid worth to counteract these. Altogether, it is an easy-to-read and interesting discussion of Jane Austen's works.

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The Regency

Speaking of the era of the Prince Regent in the decades from 1770-1820, Roy Strong writes:

"These are decades of upper-class sexual depravity, royal family breakdown and political sleaze on a grand scale. That they draw the popular historian is hardly surprising, for the average reader finds himself rather at home"

- Review by Roy Strong of Prince of Pleasure: The Prince of Wales and the Making of the Regency, by Saul David (Country Life November 19,1998)

Landscape Gardening - Eileen Sutherland.

"The eighteenth century was an age of stability and standardisation, but when Jane Austen wrote as it drew to its close various cross currents began to make their appearance in matters of 'Taste and Feeling.' We can follow these changes through the characters in her novels as she chronicles their attitudes and reactions with amused detachment. . . .

The idea of linking sensibility and landscape in literature, art and landscape gardening had been gathering strength all through the eighteenth century, and we can chart its progress in the sequence of Jane Austen's novels as the plots revolve around her heroines. Marianne Dashwood in *Sensibility* is a heroine whose excessive sensibility is derived from sentimental fiction; Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey* is a victim of a surfeit of gothic novels. Elizabeth Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice* loved walking in the countryside parks and, like her creator, was 'enamoured' of William Gilpin's writings on the Picturesque. The sober Fanny Price of *Mansfield Park* was an enthusiast for nature in the poet Cowper's mould and voices his concern about the fashion for professional landscape improvement. Emma Woodhouse, in *Emma*, has traditional values about the countryside and responsible landownership. Anne Elliot, in *Persuasion*, the most mature of the heroines, had to come to terms with the new romantic attitudes that prevailed when Jane Austen wrote her last novel in 1815."

This is the opening of *Jane Austen and the English Landscape* by Mavis Batey (London: Barn Elms, 1996). It is a slim (135 pages) but very elegant book with lovely pictures on almost every page. Batey knows her Jane Austen and the history of landscape gardening. She gives a good overview of the different attitudes to nature and to landscape gardening in the period of Jane Austen's lifetime, using as examples the characters and estates of the novels, from the *Juvenilia* to *Sanditon*, as well as Jane Austen's personal experience visiting Stoneleigh Abbey, an uncle's estate 'improved' by Repton, and her brother Edward's landscaping and plantations at Godmersham and Chawton.

The book is interesting to read and a joy to look through. I consider it one of the treasures of my library.

Boiled Pork.

Mr. Woodhouse was not the only one to prefer his pork boiled.

Parson Woodforde wrote on July 31, 1795: "It being a fine Morning and Haymakers all at work, My Sister ordered a Leg of Pork to be dressed for them, but Rain coming about Noon they were obliged to leave off and go to their respective homes. The Pork had been boiling for them two Hours, we had it taken up and put by for them against another Day."

Diary of a Country Parson: James Woodforde.

This **Newsletter**, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, is issued 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 Avenue, North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 3S2. Subscription price to non-members is $10 per year.