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Trevithick's Steam Engines: A Contemporary of Jane Austen in Industrial Cornwall.

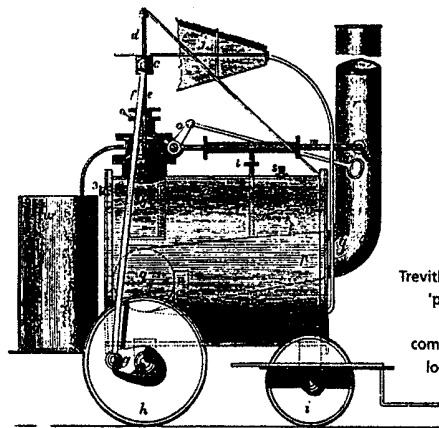
Eileen Sutherland.

Mining tin had been a way of life in Cornwall for many centuries. As the surface deposits were exhausted, the necessity to dig deeper and deeper for the metal produced great difficulties. Besides the actual danger of the deep workings, pumping out the water that seeped into the pits was a major problem, not merely designing and building practical pumps, but providing power to drive them. Animal power, windmills and water wheels were put to use until the early 18th century, when rudimentary steam engines were devised, first by Thomas Newcomen and then James Watt.

Richard Trevithick was born in 1771 in the heart of the mining country in Cornwall. His father was a mine manager, responsible for the pumping engines, who probably knew as much as anyone about the operation of Newcomen and Watt engines. Richard was sent to the village school, but was frequently absent and inattentive, and gained very little formal education. He spent most of his time wandering around the mines, and learned a great deal about the practical problems of mining, and the operation and maintenance of engines and pumps.

Trevithick grew to be a big and strong man, and was said to be "a great favourite, full of fun and good humour, and a good story teller." He soon acquired a reputation for his practical knowledge - he was hired as a consultant about the performance of a new engine at the mine near Camborne, when he was only 21 years old. In 1799, Trevithick married Jane Harvey, a member of a family that built a foundry and made the biggest and most efficient beam engines ever built anywhere. She was a woman of great courage and strong character, which she needed in the years to come.

The next two decades for Trevithick were years of brilliant invention and inexhaustible energy. Many of the machines he designed were great improvements on current models, and were soon in widespread use. However, it was his work on steam engines that was of major importance. In 1797 he made his first models of high-pressure engines, first stationary ones and then locomotives. Using high-pressure steam vented to the atmosphere (thus avoiding using Watt's patented condenser), they produced much more power for the same size cylinder, and also ran faster, increasing the output. Subsequently, he reduced the weight and size,



Trevithick's first
'passenger-
carrying
common road
locomotive'

and simplified the engine design. In 1801, he built the first full-sized locomotive in Britain, at Camborne. The record of the design has been lost, but it probably had a wooden chassis, a boiler with a fairly tall chimney and a single-cylinder engine driving a single pair of wheels. On its first run, the locomotive carried several men up a hill successfully. However, the life of the machine was short: on one trial when it came to a gully on the road, it went out of control and broke down. In the ensuing excitement, the men forgot to tend to the engine, its boiler went dry and red hot, and all was burned.

Trevithick was not discouraged. He was kept busy supplying stationary engines for a wide variety of uses. His high-pressure engines were well designed and reliable - one of the earliest installed near Camborne in 1800, was still working in 1870. But Trevithick was not well-organized or business-like, and his financial success was not nearly what it might have been. On an historic occasion in 1804, Trevithick's locomotive travelled on the tram-way in South Wales (usually cars drawn by horses), carrying 10 tons of Iron, five waggons, with 70 men riding on them, over nine miles in 4 hours and 5 minutes. This locomotive was the first to run on rails, and had most of the essential features of the later engines of the great steam era.

Trevithick's last locomotive was built in London in 1808 - the *Catch Me Who Can* ran on a circular track and was meant to show it could run further and faster than a horse. Admission was one shilling, which included a ride for anyone who dared venture on it. However, the track was not strong enough for its weight, and the display was not a great success.

His real interest was not in locomotives but supplying engines for ironworks and collieries. In this he was very successful, some of his engines being still at work fifty years later. Others of his projects applied the high-pressure engine to boring brass cannon, crushing stone, powering corn and grist mills, and forging hammers, as well as the mining uses. He drove a barge by paddle-wheels driven by a steam engine, and several dredges - not the first of their kind but the first to use the compact high-pressure engines.

A company of gentlemen in 1805 proposed a tunnel under the Thames "capable of taking horses and cattle, with or without carriages, and foot passengers." There had never been a tunnel under a major waterway. The first attempts were not successful, and Trevithick was offered the job. He estimated the total length would be 1220 feet. He had progressed more than three-quarters of the way, when there was a sudden inrush of water and quicksand, and a fall of earth into the tunnel. Some of the directors lost faith, in spite of the fact that two experienced colliery engineers supported Trevithick: "He has shown most extraordinary skill and ingenuity . . . and we do not know any practical miner that we think more competent to the task than he is." But the Thames Tunnel project was discontinued. (In 1823-4, the Brunels finally constructed a tunnel under the Thames).

For the next few years, Trevithick had many ideas and constructed innovative models, making important contributions to the development of steam engines, but nothing much came of them. His "Cornish boilers" were a great improvement on previous types and were widely adopted all over the world. Another prototype engine was devised to drive a corn-threshing machine, very successful and much cheaper than the horses formerly used; it continued to work for 70 years, and has been preserved in the Science Museum.

A new breakwater was to be constructed at Plymouth. Large quantities of stone were required, to be brought from quarries three miles away. Trevithick proposed several different ways to improve the boring machines, the splitting of the rock and the use of steam engines to lift and move the blocks, all of which decreased the price allowed in the contract. The sheer volume of his work, his determination, and mental and physical energy were impressive.

Old and very rich silver mines in Peru could no longer be worked, mainly because there was no adequate means to pump out the water. What was required was a steam engine that could work at 14,000 feet altitude, which could be dismantled into pieces small and light enough to be transported up the mountains by mule. Trevithick was able to overcome the difficulties, and sent engines and spare boilers to Peru. Some worked well, but local conditions and the inexperience of the operators caused problems. Trevithick decided to go to Peru himself, to make sure the engines worked properly. He soon came up against jealousy and opposition which frustrated his efforts, and he left the mines. He travelled widely in Peru, but the political state of the country was unsettled, and he spent the next ten or fifteen years in incredible adventures - he had to serve in the army of Simon Bolivar, began to work a copper and silver mine, and went back to the original mine workings, until the War of Liberation overwhelmed the district and the mine was destroyed and the machinery smashed. He had a government job raising a sunken frigate to recover a large number of brass cannons, to be rewarded with all the tin and copper on board, but he invested all his capital in a scheme for pearl fishing at Panama, and lost all.

For the next few years, he and a friend investigated rich mining prospects in Costa Rica. Returning to England to raise capital, they crossed the Isthmus of Nicaragua on foot, the first white men to do so, over rough terrain, thick jungly undergrowth, and rivers infested with alligators. After three weeks of struggle, they reached their destination at Cartagena, Colombia. There he met Robert Stevenson, whom he had known years earlier, and who gave him enough money to get home, where he eventually arrived in October 1827.

During all the years of Trevithick's absence in South America, his wife remained in Cornwall looking after their children. They received no financial assistance from him, and almost no letters except in the early days. Her brother looked after her, and set her up running the inn at Hayle, where she maintained the family and did all she could to help with her husband's business affairs at home. She firmly and courageously stood by him all her life.

Trevithick was welcomed home with ringing church bells and greetings from the local gentry, but gained little financial award. He tried to obtain payment for royalties due to him for the use of his patents for engines and boilers, but he had little legal proof, and got nothing. His South American partner died shortly after his return, and again nothing came of the mining prospects there. In his last years, he still had a flow of new ideas, and kept busy with designs for a storage heater, a water-jet propelled ship, and an enormous column to commemorate the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, never built. In April 1833, working on a design for a reaction turbine at Dartford, Kent, Trevithick took ill and died a week later, aged 62. His workmates carried his body to Dartford churchyard, paying for his funeral expenses themselves. His wife lived on to the age of 96. Several of their descendants became well-known engineers, working in the development of steam engines, boilers and railways, in Canada, India, Egypt, New Zealand and Japan.

In the eulogy marking the centenary of Trevithick's death, he was described: "Standing head and shoulders above his contemporaries by indomitable courage, force of personality, and an infinite capacity for hard work, he fought his way to immortal fame practically single-handed. In the brief period between 1799 and 1805, he totally changed the breed of steam engines; from an unwieldy giant of limited ability he evolved a prime mover of universal application."

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"The first time I read an excellent book, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend; when I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one."

Oliver Goldsmith: *The Citizen of the World*.

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Spring Meetings - February and March.

Most of the meeting time in February was devoted to the viability of holding the JASNA AGM and Conference in Vancouver in 2007. **Keiko Parker** gave a thorough and detailed report of the pros and cons of all aspects of the proposal. She answered questions from members, and encouraged a discussion. The vote showed about 75% in favour. Copies of Keiko's report were circulated to all members.

Look over the report carefully, and think of how you can be helping - and enjoying - the planning and preparations.

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In the time remaining for the meeting, two speakers discussed articles from the most recent *Persuasions*, No. 23. **Mary Atkins** gave a critique of "Jane Austen and the Reconsigning Child: The True Identity of Fanny Price", Kay Torney Souter, (p.205). The author in this framework discusses child-stealing, slavery, "shifting children around", "domineering and asset-controlling elders", the child as a chattel, etc. Mary pointed out that this is looking at the issue from twentieth century values; the essay doesn't ring true, the author doesn't prove her point.

Irene Howard's choice was "Reading Body Language: A Game of Skill", Juliet McMaster, (p.90). The idea of being able to "read" a person through what we call "body language" was a familiar concept from the 17th century. Irene quoted passages in which the author shows Jane Austen's use of this convention, from the mockery of the *Juvenilia* to the mature novels: Elinor seeing Willoughby, "starts back with a look of horror", Mr. Knightley correctly interprets "the blush on Jane's cheek", Mr. Elliot casts a look of "earnest admiration" at Anne in Lyme. As a writer herself, Irene showed her appreciation of Juliet's insight into language and character expressed in smooth simple ideas.

Other talks on *Persuasions* articles were deferred to the March meeting:

Adele Shaak discussed "Following Footpaths in *Emma: Actual and Metaphorical*", Julia Park, (p.139). She found the article was too much filled with speculation, a lot of the time unfocused and not pertinent to the topic. However, it piqued her interest: it was the germ of a good idea. From the concrete example of Knightley telling his brother about moving a local footpath, Jane Austen moves on to metaphorical footpaths: Mrs. Elton "was very ready to lead the way" to the strawberry patch, and to anywhere else; Emma wants Harriet as a walking companion, but leads her astray; Knightley goes directly to his destination; Jane meets Frank while walking home and they quarrel; Mr. Knightley meets Emma in the shrubbery and proposes to her. In other Austen novels, *P&P*, and *MP*, for instance, there is lots of walking but not much essential happens on these walks. In *Emma*, as Adele pointed out, the footpaths metaphors are used deliberately and effectively.

"Jane Austen and the Pleasure Principle" caught **Jackie Johnson's** attention at the beginning with its stress on the antithesis of "pleasure" and "obligation", giving the article a Victorian rather than 18th century emphasis. Austen describes the misguided and child-like pursuit of pleasure in *NA*, *P&P* and *Emma*: Catherine Morland delights in the Gothic novels she has been introduced to, but finds her pleasure in the company of Henry Tilney [referred to as "Henry Morland" in the article! (p.66)] even deeper and more powerful than the imaginative experience. She becomes "self-aware and able to judge and act properly". Elizabeth Bennet gets great pleasure in judging others, presuming she is apart from and superior to them. In the course of the novel, however, both Elizabeth and Darcy are educated and changed by their awakening love for

each other. Emma finds her greatest pleasure in matchmaking, trying to manipulate other people. As in the case of Elizabeth, "love and moral change have coincided." In the other novels, *S&S*, *MP* and *Pers.*, Jackie showed that Elinor, Fanny, and Anne are not originally devoted to pleasure in this way - they love the heroes from the beginning and don't need to change in moral behaviour: duties and obligations seem to be a very light burden for them to carry.

Murray Wanamaker completed the *Persuasions* discussions with his analysis of "Games and Play in Jane Austen's Literary Structures", David Selwyn, (p.15). Among what the author considers as "games and play" are leisure pursuits, journeys and visits, as well as the puzzles and riddles that are part of the plots of the novels. Murray posed his own puzzle: he was intrigued by the "predatory masculinity of Willoughby at his entrance to the story, with dogs and guns" - does this colour our view of Willoughby for the rest of the novel, and was it meant to do so by Jane Austen? Murray gave a detailed report on this "well written and thoroughly researched essay", in spite of some adverse criticism. He felt that the author was dealing with what Austen might have written, not what the text says. It is a challenge to sort out Austen's own ideas and those of her characters.

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How I Came to Write the Bath Essay - Keiko Parker.

After numerous visits to Bath, and much wandering through its streets and neighbourhoods, Keiko has made herself an expert on the city, and on Jane Austen's use of locations for her characters in *Persuasion*.

Using a large map of Bath, Keiko showed us where the main parts of Bath were, and where the characters lived. She began with a brief history of how Bath was built - the mediaeval walled town on low ground near the river, with a long slope of steep hills to the north. Later, buildings were built gradually higher and higher up these hills, in such a way that the upper regions were socially as well as physically up-scale. Sir Walter Elliot, for instance, impressed with his own importance and always wanting to impress others, had lodgings in Camden Place high on the northern edge of the city. Mrs. Smith, at the lower end of the social scale, rented rooms in Westgate Buildings, away down in the "dumps" near the old abbey and the baths.

Lady Russell is situated on Rivers Street, slightly lower in height than Camden Place but above The Circus and the Royal Crescent, a good address. Lady Dalrymple is in Laura Place, a stylish address but off to one side of the main north-south axis of the city: Keiko surmised that this indicated she was out of the mainstream of the story, and also that the Irish gentry were considered of lesser importance than the English. Colonel Wallis and his wife live in Marlborough Buildings, on the same level as the Royal Crescent, not so important as Sir Walter's situation but perfectly appropriate for the baronet to associate with them. Location thus appears to be a metaphor for characterization.

No address is specified for Captain Wentworth, but remarks by other characters indicate that he is staying with the Crofts, his sister and brother-in-law, in Gay Street, a little lower down but a good enough address for Sir Walter and Elizabeth to visit them. One main character is not specifically located - we do not know where Mr. Elliot lived. This ambiguity emphasizes Mr. Elliot's dubious and unknown status. Jane Austen deliberately left him an enigma.

Thanks to Keiko, reading the Bath scenes in *Persuasion* with these suggestions in mind gives us another way to appreciate Jane Austen's meticulous craftsmanship.

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More charades from Margaret Howell.

1. "Though low is my station
The chief of the nation
On me for support oft depend;
Young and old, strong and weak
My assistance all seek,
Yet all turn their backs on their friend.

At the first rout in town
Every Duchess will own,
My company not a disgrace;
Yet at each rout you'll find
I am still left behind,
And to everyone forced to give place.

Without bribe or treat,
I have always a seat
In the Chapel so famed, of St. Stephen:
There I lean to no side,
With no party divide,
But keep myself steady and even.

Each debate I attend,
From beginning to end,
Yet I seem neither weary nor weaker.
In the house very day
Not a word do I say,
Yet in me you behold a good Speaker." James Leigh Perrot.

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2. Divided, I'm a gentleman
In public deeds and powers;
United I'm a monster, who
That gentleman devours. Jane Austen.

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3. You may lie on my first by the side of a stream,
And my second compose to the nymph you adore,
But if, when you've none of my whole, her esteem
And affection diminish - think of her no more!" Jane Austen.

The World in 1800. Olivier Bernier (2,000).

Part 1. Europe and the Americas.

The various parts of the world today are closely linked: we hear of major events in China, Africa or South America almost as soon as they happen. In general, however, we know very little about these remote areas and peoples. The year 1800, in many ways, was the beginning of our own era. The U.S. had a government in which the people chose the president; the principles of the French Revolution were gaining increasingly wide acceptance throughout Europe; the Latin American colonies had become independent; Britain had conquered an empire in India; China was following a course which made it a prey to Europeans, then to the Japanese; the Ottoman Empire's decay would lead to the Middle East as we know it. 1800 was the beginning of events of which we are experiencing the consequences today.

The World in 1800 is an excursion into a past that matters because it is close enough to affect us and distant enough to be seen clearly. Bernier gives an excellent picture of the history and geography, social customs, and political affairs in different parts of the world. Learning about people and their lives then will help us understand life around us today.

By 1800, a sense of change and progress was widespread throughout Europe and the Americas. Freed from religion, science could begin to explore and explain the world. New and advanced industrial techniques transformed labour and marketing. The middle class was expanding rapidly and education was spreading. Wars continued, and there was a vast gap between the poor and the wealthy, but there was a hope for change and improvement.

The majority of people were illiterate, and remained for their lives in their little village or small town. Natural or man-made catastrophes could devastate their lives, but at the same time they had a sense of belonging, the support of a community. Life was simple: only basic consumer goods were available, food was grown locally, houses were small and cheaper and easier to build. There was not a great deal of difference among the common people all over the world.

After the explosion of the French Revolution, attempts to return to the old ways failed. European powers were leading the way to a new world. New technologies - mechanical looms, more destructive armaments, more complex metallurgy, and the mass production of consumer goods - were unequalled in the rest of the world. More important, the development of banking and credit made Europe the most powerful continent. The thirst for scientific knowledge, the Age of Enlightenment, religious tolerance, and even the discarding of religious tenets entirely, convinced the Europeans of their superiority to the rest of the world.

In the 18th century people from all over Europe came to Paris for pleasure - food and wine, conversation in the salons, art works in the galleries, fashionable couture. Shopping was unsurpassed: for furniture, elegant silks, Sèvres porcelain, Gobelins tapestries, spectacular jewellery. The Revolution swept away all the pleasures of Paris. But by 1800, some part of the former glories had returned to the city. New great houses were opened, operas were performed in three theatres, fashionable designers were hard at work at the latest mode. The Louvre, by far the greatest museum in Europe, housed the enormous royal collections, artworks confiscated from convents, churches and emigré estates, and the spoils of war. It was open to the public daily, and dazzled visitors by the thousands came to see the displays.

By 1805, France was again at war with most of Europe. It became evident that Napoleon could reorganize the continent any way he chose: some states were enlarged, some contracted, some disappeared, others were grouped into confederations. France stretched from Hamburg to the Adriatic coast. French armies were feared and resented, but many French ideas were welcomed: the metric system, the Napoleonic code of laws, a more efficient government. The ideas of the Revolution spread throughout Europe.

France would have remained a purely European power without its great rival. Without France, Great Britain with the loss of its North American colonies would probably have concentrated on its traditional trading routes. As it was, they fought each other all over the world from 1792 to 1815. The result was to make the whole world a single unit, all part of the conflict. After the American Revolution, the new United States had to make a choice of government on the model of English order or French democracy. They were thus thoroughly involved with Europe.

The book is divided into five parts, roughly corresponding to the continents. Bernier begins with **France and the French Revolution**, which initiated world-wide change. A short description of **Britain** in 1800, is followed by a discussion of the two to three decades of war which devastated Europe, and changed the boundaries of almost every country.

Part 2 deals with **North America**. The American Revolution had created a new country with an untried form of government. At first dealing only with domestic affairs, gradually the country was inevitably involved with the great events tearing Europe apart. The most pressing matter was the safety of North American trade: the government depended on customs duties; merchants, manufacturers, and bankers could not exist without it. This was one side of the question. The other view was that the soundest base for a strong government was a large group of farmers who owned their own land; they had a personal stake in the country. Almost everyone was either pro-British or pro-French. French attacks on U.S. shipping, and refusal to give proper respect to the commissioners who tried to negotiate in Paris, led to deteriorating relations with France, and the creation of a U.S. navy. When Bonaparte seized power, however, he had exhausted armies and a depleted treasury: he was determined to effect a peaceful settlement with the U.S. By 1800, France was no longer seen as a threat by the Americans.

South America. Spanish America was far from Europe in distance, but closely connected politically and economically. Its king was the King of Spain, its ruling classes were Spanish, and its economies were controlled by Spain. Slavery, still rampant in so much of the world, had been outlawed, but its Indian population served as indentured labour for the white ruling class. This Spanish colony, with the exception of Portuguese Brazil and the Guianas, stretched from the northern boundaries of present day Texas, New Mexico and California, to the southern tip of Tierra del Fuego. It was divided into nine areas ruled by viceroys or governors.

The population of **Mexico** was divided into four unchangeable groups. Those born in Spain were at the top of society: the viceroy, some officials, noblemen and a few merchants. Next were the Creoles, of Spanish ancestry but born in Mexico. They were estate owners, officials (but never of the first rank), clerics, shopkeepers or craftsmen. Even those who were poverty-stricken looked down on the next two groups - a few of mixed blood (Indian, black or white) and the Indians, who made up over 80% of the population. They had almost no way of keeping out of debt, and were mostly in peonage. There was no possibility they could better themselves, and consequently worked only when absolutely necessary. The explorer Humboldt was a close observer: "Their only defense is ruse hidden under the guise of apathy and stupidity."

Most of the officials were venal and incompetent. Over the years, the king tried to bring in various reforms, but the distance was too great to supervise properly how they were carried out. The church owned too much land and contributed too little tax; it also enjoyed many privileges that made it virtually immune from the law. On the other hand, the church was the provider of spectacular entertainment: gold and jewelled decorations of the statues and altars made a brilliant show. Every feast day was reason for a magnificent procession, with fireworks, dancers and gaily costumed marchers, attended by crowds of clergy and Indian spectators.

In spite of all the connections to Spain, Mexico was different, and by 1800 its people were beginning to be conscious of this. But it was an extremely conservative population and it might

have remained unchangeable, except for the events in Europe. In the few years before 1800, Mexico was beginning to get more commercial freedom from Spain. The Mexican merchants could trade with any Spanish port, and also with America. The Spanish navy was no longer able to protect convoys from Mexico, and goods were put on the ships of neutral powers so that they would not be seized by the French. Then Spain allowed neutral trading vessels to enter Mexican ports.

In 1808, Mexico heard the stunning news that the king had been deposed by Napoleon, whose brother Joseph was proclaimed the king of Spain. Mexico was suddenly a monarchy without a king, and without a legal government. The upper classes declared that they had the power to rule the country. A rebellion failed, and guerrilla warfare was rife throughout the country. The defeat of Napoleon led to a liberal constitution in both Spain and its American possessions. Mexicans were eager for independence, which came in 1821.

Both **Peru and Brazil** were closely tied to Europe, steadily loyal to whatever government the mother country had. Peru was considered a distant province of Spain; Brazil was ruled directly by the Portuguese king. Both countries were economically tied to the mother countries in spite of the great distances. Both countries had slaves and were thus part of the commercial network that bound Europe, America and Africa.

In the 16th century, Peru was an immensely rich area. But by 1800, the country had been divided, losing most of the silver mining areas, and most of its markets. The population was small, with Creoles controlling the economic and political life. Agriculture was inefficient, and Peru did not produce enough food to feed its population. Roads were poor or non-existent, and what goods were produced could not get to markets. Uprisings - Indians and mixed bloods together - were not infrequent, and in 1780 a major revolt in the provinces lasted for two years, leaving a great hatred between the races. The news of the Napoleonic successes in Europe arrived late in Peru, but in any case did not cause any change in the feeling of allegiance to Spain.

All the viceroyalties of Spanish America became republics, except Brazil, which was governed by a resident European dynasty. When Napoleon decided to conquer Portugal in 1807, the royal family, the court, the ministers of state and the churchmen, along with everything of value that could be moved, set sail to re-establish the dynasty in Brazil, to the great excitement and celebration of the people. The reigning queen was insane, and her son Dom Joao became regent. He was efficient and intelligent, and set about improving Brazil, changing it from a backward colony into a thriving nation. He established free trade, opening the ports to all shipping - this brought instant prosperity - and encouraged manufactures. He improved education and founded a medical school and a military academy. Besides a wave of economic growth, and the institutions that made it a real country, something like a real patriotism appeared.

With the fall of Napoleon, Portugal became a free country again, and insisted that Dom Joan return. He left his eldest son, Dom Pedro, as regent in Brazil. The Lisbon governing body tried to recolonize Brazil. The Brazilians demanded independence and in 1822 a constituent Assembly was convened and crowned Pedro emperor of a full-fledged monarchy. The system lasted until 1889. [Part 2. Asia - next Newsletter]

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Names - Kathleen Glancy.

It strikes me that Jane Austen must have had to spell her name out quite often to people who were under the impression it was 'Austin'. Can it be entirely coincidence that her most celebrated work has as its hero and heroine two people who have still not quite convinced everyone in the world that their surnames are not 'D'Arcy' and 'Bennett'?

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The British Museum: 250 Years On. David M. Wilson, (*History Today*, October, 2002).

The death of Sir Hans Sloane, at the age of 92, on 11 January, 1753, triggered the foundation of one of the great intellectual institutions of the world - the British Museum. Sloane's will provided for trustees duty-bound to save his enormous collection for the nation. Sloane was a leading figure of the European Enlightenment, and over his lifetime had acquired antiquities, manuscripts, printed books, coins, medals, drawings and prints. Many MPs had their own agenda. By the time the British Museum Act received Royal Assent in 1753, the trustees were saddled with the care of three major libraries, dominating the running of the Museum for many years. The trustees ran the Museum and made all the decisions, major and minor.

Soon one man, Sir Joseph Banks, dominated the board, and treated the Museum as his own private domain, attracting to it especially natural history and ethnographic collections (particularly from Captain Cook's expeditions). It was not until 1799, and the appointment of Swiss philologist Joseph Planta as Principal Librarian, that the staff began to have more say in the running of the Museum, and the library became less dominant.

During Planta's regime, the Museum acquired its first great collections of antiquities, classical sculpture and the Elgin marbles, and began its great specialties, Egyptian and Near Eastern antiquities.

More space was required, and in 1814 Sir Robert Smirke was appointed as architect, and for the next thirty years he designed and supervised the building of the Museum as we know it today.

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The Novel.

"The only literary form women can seriously claim to have been responsible for - to have shaped from its inception - is the novel. Their lives have always provided its most obsessive subjects, they were its most avid consumers, and they rapidly became its mass-producers and reviewers. . . . Not a few of the more exacting male practitioners, from Samuel Richardson to Henry James, have conceded the point by demonstrating an almost transvestite eagerness to impersonate women."
- *Times Literary Supplement*, January 10, 2001.

Beauty Secrets.

"One historical anecdote suggests: women of the 1770s bleached their hands with arsenic in order to produce a dazzling effect. The potter Wedgwood responded by producing black teapots to enhance the whiteness of the hands . . . White hands on a tasteful black teapot become the sign of sexual availability within class parameters. Whiteness becomes the signal that a woman exists within a leisured sphere, where she never labors, where her body never sweats or becomes otherwise sullied."
- *Consuming Subjects*: Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace.

Charade Answers: 1. Chair. 2. Agent. 3. Banknote.

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