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

[In May, 2003 (Newsletter No. 82), I printed a review of this interesting description of history and geography, social customs and political affairs in various parts of the world during Jane Austen's lifetime, specifically in the year 1800. Part I of my article dealt with Europe and the Americas, beginning with France (and the French Revolution) and Britain; then moving on to North and South America: Mexico, Peru and Brazil.

In Part II, here, I turn to Bernier's picture of Asia - China, Japan, India, the Ottoman Empire, and Africa.

This is the world that Jane Austen would have known, through newspapers, letters from her sailor brothers, political commentary, and the informed discussions of her father and her university-educated brothers. It was not a lack of broad knowledge, but her own choice that led her to write her novels about "three or four families in a country village."]

The World in 1800. Part 2. Asia.



Asia. **China**, that "vast, self-sufficient, and self-satisfied empire", was far from the Western world, in distance and in culture. It traded - silk, lacquer, porcelain and tea - with the West, but the country grew and made almost everything it needed. The Emperor was the "Son of Heaven", and he ruled with absolute power over 300 million people. [Britain in 1800 had 10 million]. China considered itself the most civilized country in the world - they were surrounded by half-primitive people, barbarians not worth bothering about. Peace had prevailed for more than two centuries. Trade and agriculture expanded and the government was efficient, fair and not very corrupt. All the bureaucracy - nobles, officials, commissioners, magistrates - were of the gentry class, and maintained civil control, prevented strife, disorders and banditry. The Emperor lived in a separate world, the Forbidden City, surrounded by massive walls and guarded gates. Access was severely restricted.

In 1800, China seemed as strong as ever, but in the previous decade internal weaknesses made it prey to decay.

Eight-sided Chinese pagodas near Peking.

A young favourite of the old Emperor was promoted to positions of great power. He engaged in a campaign of corruption which spread throughout the governing officials. Military personnel were underpaid and armaments deteriorated. Dams and dikes were left unrepaired and devastating floods swept the land. The population increased with no land to support them; the peasants migrated to the mountains and border areas, where lack of administration resulted in banditry and violence among different groups, armed and wild. Bribery undermined efficiency everywhere. The people felt the time had come for a change of dynasty.

A popular religious society spread across the more lawless parts of central China, proclaiming a re-incarnation of the Buddha in the person of a member of the previous Ming dynasty, who would usher in an age of peace and plenty. As the government tried violently to disband the groups, village after village rose in rebellion. When the old Emperor died, his son and heir put down the rebellion calling for honesty and loyalty, but the state of corruption remained. China was changing, but not in the way the new Emperor had hoped.

Japan. In 1800, Japan was a country set apart. Not only its language, history and culture were different, but the Japanese islands, for nearly 200 years, had been deliberately and completely insulated from the outside world. No Japanese ships were allowed to sail to other countries; no Japanese person could go abroad. All trade and diplomacy was restricted to the one port of Nagasaki. There were three reasons for this: to prevent any outflow of gold and silver (in short supply in Japan); to prevent missionaries from entering - the whole culture and government of Japan was based on religion: if the gods were debased, the structure of the country was likely to be destroyed; to preserve the culture of the Japanese ruling class and to prevent any form of Westernization. Everything must remain as it was in 1600.

Japan had an emperor who was sacred, and who performed the essential rites of the Shinto religion. But neither he nor his surrounding court had any power - the government was under the absolute control of the shogun, a sort of regent. The shogun's power was limited by a rigid class system: at the top were the nobles, then the peasants who worked very hard and paid almost all the taxes; lower down were the artisans; and at the bottom were the merchants, who produced nothing. There was a growing problem, however, because the country had shifted from barter to a money economy, and the merchants had prospered: some made sizable fortunes and lived luxuriously. During the two centuries before 1800, land owners prospered - the endless civil wars which had devastated the countryside had ceased and the peace led to prosperity. This was reflected in the growing number of temple schools and the progress of education: by 1800 a large part of the population was literate. Visitors found much to praise, but all was not well. However, Japan was a country that could not imagine any change - the past was admired, and the highly refined civilization was enough for most of the people.

India. The vast rich subcontinent of India was far away from Europe, but since Britain, France and Portugal had ports on its coasts, it was less mysterious than China and Japan. By 1800, Britain was afraid of France conquering the disunited areas, and within a decade India became a dependency of Britain.

India offered a growing market for British products, and it grew opium which could be exchanged for Chinese tea. Here is another example of how trade made the world smaller and more connected. British influence had started with the trading ports of the East India Company, but by 1798, after the conquest of one rajah or state after another along the coasts and into the mainland, the corporation controlled a large part of the country. These possessions required an army, a civil service, a body of law, and a government - essentially a state, with a joint government of Crown and Company ruled by a governor-general and a Board of Control.

Cornwallis was the first governor-general, an excellent choice. His reforms and efficiency ended corruption, and separated commercial interests from the civil service. Civil and criminal justice systems were created. His successor was the Marquis Wellesley, who came to his job wildly ambitious and determined to make his fortune. Whatever he did to prevent any opportunity to France was justified by the government - the more land he conquered the safer India would be. Wellesley lived in grand style like a monarch. His ambition was to conquer all India, and by 1804 that was the situation. He went too far, however, and British troops were defeated. He was recalled in 1805, but the British Raj was well established.

Ottoman Empire. Turkey in 1800 was in the middle of great reforms. Most of the empire was in Asia, but Western Europe with modern armies and advanced technology was a lodestar to the Sultan, Selim III, who wanted a new army and navy, and a more modern system of education. To Western Europeans, Turkey was exotic and wealthy, with a splendid and mysterious imperial court, hidden women, and ferocious soldiers. The two different worlds were coming together.

The Ottoman Empire was vast, occupying a significant part of Europe. Istanbul, the capital, was the greatest city in Europe, with a larger population than London or Paris. It was a great trading centre - from all parts of the Empire people and goods flowed to the capital. During the 18th century, Turkey was a declining empire: it had lost Hungary and Serbia; Russia was a large dangerous neighbour - in 1774 Turkey lost territory to Catherine the Great. More important, the treaty gave Russia the right to protect all Christians in Turkey; to have an ambassador in Istanbul; and the right of passage for its ships through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Another war with Austria and Russia resulted in the loss to Russia of the Crimea and Georgia, and thus the control of the Black Sea.

During the late 18th century, the young sultan Selim III tried his best to institute reforms - to end corruption and to create a new effective army. Unfortunately, he left the framework of the government intact: the incredibly corrupt treasury, and reactionaries in positions of power. Selim was forced to abdicate, and later was murdered. The new sultan succeeded in reforming the bureaucracy, but by 1800, Turkey was sinking deeper into decadence and its territory kept shrinking. Wars and poverty became the norm for part of eastern Europe and all the Middle East.

Africa. Africa, to Europeans and Americans, was well known as a source of spices, slaves, ivory, gold dust and tropical goods; but its geography and population remained a mystery except for a few ports along the coast. The people were war-like, fighting constantly among themselves, and tropical diseases were virulent - conquest by Europeans was deemed impossible.

Although technologically backward, Africa was politically sophisticated. There were different states with different systems of government and economies. Some had a form of constitution, with laws about property, marriage and inheritance. Many areas had elaborate religious, artistic and cultural forms. Some were constitutional monarchies, some were commonwealths of federated kingdoms. In many cases, the local power was being eroded by the slave trade, technological innovations from Europe, and the work of Christian missionaries. Slavery was nothing new to Africa, but the large scale slave trade of the late 18th century was destroying the economic and political structures, until they finally collapsed. But in 1800, few people thought it should be stopped.

In 1800, no one could have predicted the changes that were coming to all parts of the world. "Looking back, however, it is possible to see that many later events flowed logically from what had happened at the turn of that century."

May Meeting.

Maria Edgeworth.

Presented by **Viviane McClelland** and **Virgil Oriente**.

The Austen family - "great novel readers" - must have been familiar with the work of most of the important contemporary writers, including Maria Edgeworth. However, the only comment in Jane Austen's *Letters* is rather tongue-in-cheek: "I have made up my mind to like no Novels really, but Miss Edgeworth's, Yours [her niece Anna] & my own." The speakers at the May meeting helped explain what Jane Austen would have liked about Edgeworth's works.

Virgil began the programme with a short biography of Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849). It was an Anglo-English family, and Maria spent much of her life in England. Her mother died young, and Richard Edgeworth married three more times, having a total of twenty-two children. He was a member of the philosophical Lunar Society, and was interested in educational theory, physics and science. Maria assisted him, keeping accounts, to bring their Irish estate into good order. She had a good academic education, reading French and English, writing translations, as well as studying politics and philosophy. She wrote essays, stories and dramas to entertain the family, and published works from 1783 onward.

With the publication of her main novels, Maria had a good income and attained celebrity status as a writer. Her numerous friends included Scott, Wordsworth, Mary Hays, Elizabeth Barbauld, and other writers of the time. She travelled extensively, visiting these friends, and making a long tour of France and Switzerland. She lived an orderly, useful life, dying suddenly of heart failure in 1849, aged 81. Edgeworth was one of the first writers of successful, interesting, didactic novels for children. Writing with realism rather than romanticism, her skilful dialogue and intelligent characterization resulted in true pictures of the social scene.

Viviane and Virgil took turns discussing several individual novels. *Castle Rackrent* was the first of the "Irish" novels, telling the story of 18th century Irish landlords, often brutish and dissipated, squeezing the utmost rent possible from their unfortunate tenants - an unattractive but entertaining picture of a certain group of an earlier period. In *The Absentee*, an Irish lord lives in London, and leaves his estate and tenants to the mercy of an unprincipled agent. *Ennui* ["a state of weariness, boredom, dissatisfaction, and depression"] tells the story of an orphan, undisciplined by his guardian, who grows up to a life of continual pleasure-seeking, and who is finally regenerated when he discovers the terrible conditions his tenants live under, and determines to successfully rebuild his estate. *Ormond* was another story of a boy left to run wild with no direction from his inefficient guardian. *Belinda* was the last novel considered. The heroine was another orphan, reared in an upper class family in London, but with bad relations among the adults. She finds cynicism, deception and intrigue in the society she frequents.

The two presenters did an excellent job, with light-hearted, witty comments on the plots and characters. Viviane enjoyed the novels for the most part, Virgil seemed a little less enthusiastic, but both recommended we should read some or all of Edgeworth's novels - we would find them "good reads". This programme was a lively and interesting presentation, and special thanks go to Jean Oriente who did much of the research. We hope to have Jean back at our meetings soon.

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"Books have always a secret influence on the understanding; we cannot at pleasure obliterate ideas: he that reads books of science, though without any desire fixed of improvement, will grow more knowing; he that entertains himself with moral or religious treatises, will imperceptibly advance in goodness; the ideas which are often offered to the mind, will at last find a lucky moment when it is disposed to receive them."

Samuel Johnson, in *The Adventurer*.

Sense and Sensibility: The Amiable Prejudices of a Young Writer's Mind. Joan Ray.

Joan Ray began her talk at the June Meeting by calling *Sense and Sensibility* Jane Austen's "neglected child" - conference co-ordinators are reluctant to use this novel as their theme, and many readers consider it of less interest than the more mature novels. Joan remembered John Parker once saying, "I'm never comfortable when I finish reading this novel." Why this reluctance, neglect, discomfort?

The real problem seems to be who is the hero? When Joan's students are half-way through their first reading, they are avidly waiting for a new character to appear who will be manly, charismatic and heroic - they are not satisfied with any who have come along yet.

In an attempt to address the problem, Joan compared the novel to the recent Emma Thompson screen-play. Thompson adds scenes to make Edward Ferrars more lively and attractive to the reader and to the other characters. Austen, however, didn't feel that Edward needed outward signs of manly beauty and grace; she describes him as not having "any peculiar graces of person or address. He was not handsome, and his manners required intimacy to make them pleasing." She gives him no direct speech until Chapter 5. Evidently she felt that his attractions and general worth would become obvious as the story went along. Emma Thompson asserted that *S&S* was her favourite Austen novel, she had always loved it. Why then did she interpolate these changed scenes? She doesn't give any explanation in the screen-play.

Austen leaves us with some contradictions, however. Elinor "gloried in Edward's integrity" in maintaining his engagement to Lucy in spite of opposition. But she kept hoping that "some resolution of his own, some mediation of friends, or some more eligible opportunity of establishment for the lady" would prevent the marriage. If Edward was so morally good, why would he lead Elinor on for months, why raise expectations in her family, why wear a ring of Lucy's hair, when Lucy would not have a chance to see it? As Joan Ray remarked, it took a *Robert ex machina* to put an end to the engagement and free Edward. We cannot be really satisfied.

Colonel Brandon presents another problem. He is a respected military man, has fought the only duel in Austen's novels, successfully brought his impoverished estate to prosperity, and shows unflinching diplomatic courtesy to all. What has Willoughby accomplished, besides dancing until morning at balls, riding *ventre à terre* on the hunting field, and being excessively charming - when he wants to?

Why do we always think of Brandon being so grave and subdued? Austen called him "silent and grave", but this was in contrast to Mrs. Jennings and Sir John Middleton. Elinor liked him in spite of his "gravity and reserve." Darcy, Knightley, Sir Thomas and Edmund Bertram are all called "grave" many times in their novels. We don't consider the gravity of these men to be black marks on their character - why pick on Colonel Brandon?

The film tries to transform Brandon into a wild and glamorous Willoughby-like character. Both men bring flowers to the injured Marianne. Both "rescue" her from misadventure in a rain storm. Austen's Colonel Brandon is in a perfect balance of courtesy, courtliness and courage - he does not need to be transformed into any other role. At the end of the novel, Marianne "by general consent was to be his reward." A close reading, however, will show him to be the most romantic man in the novel, finding Marianne almost a reincarnation of his first never-forgotten love, the hero whom Marianne has always yearned for.

It was easy to pay Joan "the compliment of attention" - her talk was scholarly, insightful, rich and interesting. She gave us a perfect demonstration of how much a close attentive reading of the text can enlighten a reader! We were privileged to have her with us.

Sir Walter's Favorite Skin Lotion

by Keiko Parker

I am going through an interesting experience—the reading of *Nicholas Nickleby* by Charles Dickens. That in itself is not remarkable, but the edition I have on hand (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) is reproduced “in facsimile from the original monthly parts of 1838 - 9.” On the CONTENTS page it proclaims: “Title page, Preface, Contents list, and list of plates, as originally issued.” In other words, my edition is a compilation of monthly installments—much as some Victorians had these monthly installments especially bound into a book by a bookbinder. No.1 (April 2, 1838) starts with the illustrated wrapper on the front, followed by seventeen pages of advertisement, ranging from the publisher Bentley's other publications to “OUTFITTER” for “GENTLEMEN GOING ABROAD,” and “EDE'S MARKING INK” that comes in square bottles and promises never to wash out of linen. We then come to thirty-two pages of text comprising Chapters 1 to 4, and ends with a few more pages of advertisement. No. 2 (May 1, 1838) again contains seventeen pages of advertisement, followed by Chapters 5 to 7, and so on. (For ease of reading and saving space, I have converted all Roman numerals to Arabic numbers.)

I first discovered this interesting edition at a secondhand bookshop in Vancouver but there was only VOLUME 1. Imagine my amazement when I was passing through Penticton only a week later, and happened to go into a large secondhand bookshop and found VOLUME 2! The two volumes together were obviously meant to be mine! VOLUME 2 starts with No. 11 (Chapters 34-36) and finishes with double numbers 19 and 20 of October 1, 1839 (Chapters 59-65).

Reading the advertisements gives you a good glimpse into the Victorian life, but what caught my eye is the one for Gowland's Lotion, the favorite item of Sir Walter Elliot of Kellynch Hall, presently of Bath. The advertisement, as you will see below, tells you of all the good effects to be obtained by its application to the skin. The curious thing is, the advertisement in *Nicholas Nickleby* No. 1 boasts of “nearly a CENTURY of successful experience,” and in No. 3 it tells only of “more than Eighty Years” of success. Did the company become younger by 20 years in two months' time?? You will also note from the ad in No. 5 (August 1, 1838) that Gowland's Lotion claims, for the first time in *The Nickleby Advertiser*, to remove “Freckle.”

The advertisement for Gowland's Lotion appears after that in Nos. 7, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18. The wording is slightly different each time it appears. For example, in No. 7 (Oct. 1, 1838), it is promoted to be of use against “AUTUMN, with an essential change of temperature.” No. 10 is the most explicit as to its age, “Eighty-four Years of . . . Patronage,” and the proprietor ROBERT SHAW styles himself as “Successor to the late Mrs. Vincent” (see below for Mrs. Vincent). No. 12 (Mar. 1, 1839) warns against “the fluctuating temperature of this season of the year” and again mentions “a CENTURY of undeviating usefulness and success.” No. 14 then goes back to boasting of “more than EIGHTY YEARS.” The last two numbers 16 and 18 go back to “nearly a CENTURY.” Not only the duration of its existence fluctuates, it offers itself as a remedy for all seasons and skin conditions indiscriminately.

The lotion, much prized by Sir Walter, must have been in existence since around 1740 if we take “nearly a CENTURY,” which appears most frequently, to be the “truer” statement. (Is anything completely “true” in a commercial advertisement? I agree with the author of *Emma* that we are seldom in possession of the whole truth in anything.) Possibly the point is the Lotion was so well known no one bothered to read the fine print.

I question Sir Walter's high commendation of Gowland's Lotion: “Mrs. Clay has been using it at my recommendation, and you see what it has done for her. You see how it has carried away her freckles.” The novel goes on to say “it did not appear to Anne that the freckles were at all lessened.” (P 146). We must conclude that Sir Walter's comments on Mrs. Clay is “caused” by his growing admiration of her and not “the result” (P 243) of the application of the lotion. It also shows up Sir Walter to be a gullible man—he was deceived by the lotion and betrayed by the woman who used it on his advice.

There is one other point of interest to modern readers. Chapman, in his edition of *Persuasion* (294), quotes “Mrs. VINCENT's GOWLAND's LOTION” in *The Bath Chronicle* of 6 Jan. 1814: “in quarts 8s. 6d.” And, as you see below, in 1838 the price remained the same. In nearly a quarter of a century not a penny's increase! Now that is something we should envy!

No 1, April 2, 1838

THE VERNAL SEASON.

SPRING, now hastening to present us with wreaths of opening flowers, has ever been considered typical of the Graces attendant on Beauty; but its return not unfrequently impairs the delicacy so elegantly acknowledged. Cutaneous Affections, and the Coarseness, which is a first indication of derangement in the functions of the Skin, prevailing in a greater degree at this period of the year; the facility and safety attending the use of

GOWLAND'S LOTION,

As a remedy for these inconveniences, is a subject of the most gratifying nature, more especially as its Specific effects are confirmed by nearly a CENTURY of successful experience: the sustaining properties of the Lotion become also evident when it is adopted for the current purposes of the TOILET, in the attainment of a pure and elastic state of the Skin with uninterrupted Freshness of the Complexion. The "Theory of Beauty," which accompanies each genuine package, will, particularly at the present season, be read with interest and advantage. GOWLAND'S LOTION is prepared only by the Proprietor, **ROBERT SHAW, 33, QUEEN STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON,** whose Name and Address are Engraved on the Government Stamp, a notice of which is respectfully solicited from Purchasers, as an effectual barrier to the danger of Substitutions and Imposture. Prices 2s. 9d., 5s. 6d., Quarts 8s. 6d.; and in Cases, from 1l. 1s. to 5l. 5s. 6d.

No. 3, June 1, 1838

*The Nickleby Advertiser.***CEREMONIALS.**

SPLENDOUR, GAIETY, and EFFECT, pleasing concomitants upon memorable occasions of public ceremony, are anticipated in that which is approaching, in a degree not previously witnessed, one sentiment of loyal and affectionate participation pervading a whole people. Of the August Ceremonial alluded to, and indeed of every other, whether celebrated in palaces or private circles, Female Beauty is the chief grace and ornament. The preservation and enhancement of this charm of society may be confided to

GOWLAND'S LOTION,

With a reliance founded upon the successful experience of more than Eighty Years, SAFETY, and an early removal of all cutaneous irritability, attending its use. In the department of the TOILET, more particularly the advantages derived from the Lotion, are continued purity of the Skin, with a bright and lively tint of the Complexion, unaffected by incidental HEAT or change of Season, and a style of preparation and refreshing qualities peculiarly adapted to meet approbation where elegance and utility are appreciated.

GOWLAND'S LOTION is prepared only by the Proprietor, **ROBERT SHAW, 33, QUEEN STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON,** whose Name and Address are Engraved on the Government Stamp, a notice of which is respectfully solicited from Purchasers, as an effectual barrier to the danger of Substitutions and Imposture.

No. 5, August 1, 1838

The ad for GOWLAND'S LOTION is always followed by the same proprietor's hair preparation, SHAW'S MINDORA OIL, with the wording slightly different each time.

*The Nickleby Advertiser.***GOWLAND'S LOTION.**

The constant effects of HEAT and relaxation upon the Texture and Colour of the Skin, visible in DISCOLOURATIONS or Freckle, are prevented and removed by the use of this elegant preparation, which the experience of nearly a CENTURY recommends as

A PRESERVATIVE OF THE COMPLEXION;

Of uniformly SAFE and Congenial Character, and equally remarkable for its refreshing qualities, whether Tension or Languor affect the elasticity so essential to personal comfort: in Cutaneous affections of the Eruptive kind, all Irritability ceases upon application of the Lotion, and a pure surface and clear tint is re-established, with the pleasing facility which renders it the most acceptable article offered for selection as a permanent appendage of the TOILET.

GOWLAND'S LOTION has the Name and Address of the Proprietor, **ROBERT SHAW, 33, QUEEN STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON,** Engraved on the Government Stamp, by whom only (as Successor to the late Mrs. Vincent) this celebrated article is faithfully prepared from the original MS. Recipe of the late Doctor Gowland. The popular work, "The Theory of Beauty," accompanies each genuine package. Prices 2s. 9d., 5s. 6d., quarts 8s. 6d.; and in Cases, from One to Five Guineas.

SHAW'S MINDORA OIL.

The valuable peculiarities of this Exotic (for general purposes) are, its native purity, fragrance, and entire freedom from CHEMICAL admixture, by which CLEANLINESS and preservation of the true COLOUR of the Hair are decidedly obtained. COMPARISON will satisfactorily prove, that in these requisites Mindora Oil is widely removed from the class of COLOURED Oils and Compounds, while its restorative properties become speedily evident in a renewed and even growth, with the vigour which ensures the disposition to curl, so much desired by both sexes.

Prepared for the Toilet only by the Proprietor, **ROBERT SHAW, 33, QUEEN STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON,** in Bottles bearing his Signature on the label and wrapper at 3s., 5s. 6d., and in Stoppered Bottles at 10s. 6d. A Practical Treatise on the Hair accompanies each genuine Package. Sold as above, and generally by respectable Perfumers and Medicine Venders.

"Well, if you don't want to talk, take a book, and read it. There are books in your room."

"Yes, I'm reading *Emma* - for about the fifth time."

"You are?" enquires Miss Clutterbuck [the landlady] with interest. "I've read it oftener than that. There's nobody like Jane Austen to my way of thinking. I like the saltiness, the restrained satire. When I'm more than usually irritated and deived with the guests I get out *Northanger Abbey* or *Persuasion* or one of the others and have a good read. I find them soothing. Jane Austen had as little patience as I have with the vagaries of her kind."

Mrs. Tim Gets a Job - D.E.Stevenson. (Thanks to Barbara Helling)

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British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind: Alan Richardson (2001)

"[This book] works well on a number of levels. Not only does it supply a wealth of background material to enrich our understanding of such works as *The Idiot Boy*, *Kubla Khan*, the Odes of Keats, and Jane Austen's *Persuasion*; more generally it makes a convincing case for reading them as experimental examinations of the relationship of body and brain."

TLS Dec.28, 2001.

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Early Canadian Entrepreneur. (1811).

"Enos Collins [was] a Nova Scotian quickly making a name for himself as an entrepreneur with an uncanny knack for finding opportunity in the oddest of places.

It has been said that one such situation had presented itself to Collins a few years previous. During the Peninsular War (1808-1814), the British army had found themselves outside of Cadiz unable to continue battling Napoleon's forces because of lack of provisions. Learning of their plight, Collins loaded three ships full of food, selected three reliable captains, and dispatched them across the Atlantic. The ships slipped through enemy lines, eluding detection and capture, and reached the British safely. Their cargoes were then sold at a great profit, and the three captains returned with a substantial sum to add to Collins' coffers."

"The Privateer": Ben Maycock (*The Beaver*, June/July, 2003).

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Sauce and Sensibility

Recently a friend sent me a newspaper clipping review from the *Guardian Weekly*, December 2003, of a new novel, *Pride and Promiscuity: The Lost Sex Scenes of Jane Austen*, by Arielle Eckstut, with a note saying "Definitely required reading for the JA Society". The reviewer, John Mullan, begins: "Her lovers never kiss, yet her heroines throb and flutter. They strive mightily to command their rebel feelings, often hardly knowing what those feelings might be. Yes, there is plenty in Austen about physical attraction, but it is in code. Men and women admire each other's bodies, though the talk is of 'figure', 'frame' and 'carriage'. Just look through *Emma*'s eyes at Mr. Knightley's 'tall, firm, upright figure' at the Highbury ball."

Mullan goes on to summarize some of the scenes in the book. I didn't need to read much to be certain that this is one book I'll never read.

- Eileen Sutherland.

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George Washington's False Teeth, by Robert Darnton.

"Darnton's arch title is meant to startle his readers to think about the 18th century in new ways. Did the first American President have false teeth? Yes he did: at his inauguration in 1789 George Washington had only one tooth left, and relied upon false ones, made variously of elephant ivory, walrus or hippopotamus tusk, and human teeth.

Does this matter? For a start, it makes us realise that Washington, like many of his contemporaries, spent much time not thinking great thoughts but instead suffering from the preoccupying pain of toothache. The runaway rise in consumption of cheap sugar from the West Indian sugar isles was wreaking havoc with dental enamel, in an era before modern dentistry and dental hygienists had come riding to the rescue.

This means, among other things, that our sanitised modern film reconstructions of the 18th century are misleading, because we should be looking not at glossy filmstars with gleaming modern teeth but at people with blackened stumps, sunken cheeks and gummy smiles. Napoleon's Empress Josephine, for instance, was no grinning love goddess. Instead, this famous beauty cultivated an enigmatic smile with closed lips, to hide her dreadful teeth.

In this learned but readable book, Robert Darnton takes George Washington as his starting point but then moves on to investigate his twin themes of similarities and difference between past and present." (Review by Penelope J. Corfield, *History Today*, January 2004.)

[Does this explain Mr. Woodhouse's devotion to gruel, and "an egg boiled very soft" ? E.S.]

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The Oxford Comma.

"The 'Oxford comma' is the optional comma placed before the 'and' at the end of a list - named after the Oxford University Press house-style. It is especially useful for lists which might otherwise be ambiguous: e.g. 'My favourite shirts are from New and Lingwood, Hackett, and Turnbull and Asser.' Without the second comma it might appear that an elaborate Jermyn Street revolution had occurred with Asser forced out on his own after Turnbull had joined forces with Hackett."

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'Atrocity' = Extreme wickedness, atrocious deed; (colloq.) repellent act or thing.

The *Jane Austen Times*, newsletter of the JASNA Puget Sound Region, has begun a new section called the "Jane Austen Atrocity File." Part I cited the Great Illustrated Classics edition of *Pride and Prejudice*. "The cover cites Jane Austen as the author. In reality, as the title page indicates, the work has been 'adapted' by Fern Siegel. Mrs. Siegel reveals her heavy hand in the first paragraph:

"It is a fact, everyone agrees, that a young man with money should have a wife. At least that's the way they thought in England in the nineteenth century. And the Bennet family in Meryton, in Hampshire, certainly agreed'."

It doesn't get any better! If you want to add examples to this "Role of Dishonor", send them to me, and I'll pass them on to Judith Fiedler in Seattle. [E.S.]

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The Charms of the English Countryside.

A recent *National Post* article, by Jack Kohane, quotes the celebrated classical cellist, Ofra Harnoy, recently appointed to the Order of Canada, on her favourite getaway destination, Hamstead Marshall, in Berkshire. In this little town about one hour west of London, she makes a point of stopping at the White Hart Inn, a much-needed sanctuary from the rigours of touring. She reminisces: "The atmosphere is very jolly. Its six spacious rooms, situated in a converted barn across a courtyard, aren't fancy but are saturated with charm, trimmed in white-painted walls and dark wooden beams. There are lots of hiking trails nearby, and I enjoy going for long walks and inhaling the fresh country air. It's like living a page out of a Jane Austen novel."

[Thanks to Freydis Welland for sending me this clipping]

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Gardens - 1805

"While the Empress of the French had her English garden [at Malmaison], English gentry filled summer *parterres*, greenhouses, hanging baskets and window-boxes, with brilliant displays of strongly-scented plants, with velvety petals of deep rose, scarlet, powder-pink, salmon-pink, crimson and ivory; zonal, ivy-leaved, shrubby and climbing, all of which they termed **geraniums**."

Britain Against Napoleon: Carola Oman (1969).

In *M.P.*, Fanny had geraniums in her East Room: after the quarrel about Fanny not being willing to act in the theatricals, she went to her room "in an agitated, doubting spirit, to see if . . . by giving air to her geraniums she might inhale a breeze of mental strength herself." (p.152.)

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"**The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914**", by C.A.Bayly. Reviewed by David Arnold.

"Eighteenth century European societies bore close comparison with Eurasia's other agrarian-based societies and complex polities, including Tokugawa Japan and Quing China in the east and the Islamic empires of the Mughals, Safevids and Ottomans farther west. Taken together with Russia and the Habsburg domains, these great agrarian realms probably accounted for 70 % of the world's population at the time. Each was different and distinctive and had its own claims to universality, but they shared many features in common . . . Increasing specialization in Commerce and labour, technological innovation and a growing appetite for better food and finer clothes stimulated commercial activity across Eurasia and, via European empires and trading companies, into Africa and the Americas, sending trade goods trundling around the globe, enriching the middle classes and expanding intellectual horizons. . . . But this new ferment . . . generated a multitude of local conflicts that eventually converged in the world-wide upheavals of the post-1780 period. . . . Viewed in this wider context, the destiny of Napoleon was decided as much by events in Egypt, the West Indies and India as by the Peninsular War, the retreat from Moscow, or defeat at Waterloo."

- TLS Feb. 20, 2004.

[See also **The World in 1800**, p.1-3]

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