

DOBSON AUSTIN

FANNY BURNEY
(MADAME D'ARBLAY)

Austin Dobson

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Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arbly):

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(Madame D'Arblay)

PREFACE

The main sources for this memoir of Frances or Fanny Burney, – afterwards Madame D'Arblay, – in addition to her novels, the literature of the period, and the works specified in the footnotes, are as follows: —

1. *Memoirs of Dr. Burney, arranged from his own Manuscript, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections.* By his Daughter, Madame D'Arblay. In Three Volumes. London: Moxon, 1832.

2. *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay, Author of "Evelina," "Cecilia," etc.* Edited by her Niece. [In Seven Volumes.] London: Colburn, 1842-46. [The edition here used is Swan Sonnenschein's four volume issue of 1892.]

3. *The Early Diary of Frances Burney 1768-1778. With a Selection from her Correspondence, and from the Journals of her Sisters Susan and Charlotte Burney.* Edited by Annie Raine Ellis. In Two Volumes. London: George Bell and Sons, 1889.

I am indebted to the kindness of Archdeacon Burney, Vicar

of St. Mark's, Surbiton, for access to his unique extra-illustrated copy of the *Diary and Letters* of 1842-6, which contains, among other interesting mss., the originals of Mrs. Thrale's letter mentioned at page [86](#) of this volume, and of Burke's letter mentioned at page [124](#). Archdeacon Burney is the possessor of Edward Burney's portrait of his cousin (page [88](#)); of the Reynolds portraits of Dr. Burney and Garrick from the Thrale Gallery (page [94](#)); of a very fine portrait of Dr. Charles Burney by Lawrence; and of a group by Hudson of Hetty Burney, her husband, Charles Rousseau Burney, and her husband's father, Richard Burney of Worcester.

I am also indebted to Mrs. Chappel of East Orchard, Shaftesbury, granddaughter of Mrs. Barrett, the editor of the *Diary and Letters*, for valuable information as to Burney relics in her possession.

A. D.

75, Eaton Rise, Ealing, W.,
September 18, 1903.

CHAPTER I

THE BURNEY FAMILY

In the second half of the seventeenth century, there lived at the village of Great Hanwood, four miles from Shrewsbury, a country gentleman of a good estate, named James Macburney. In later life, he was land-steward to the Earl of Ashburnham; and he rented or possessed a house in the Privy Garden at Whitehall. Tradition traces his family to Scotland, whence it was said to have arrived with James I. However this may be, – and the point was not regarded as of much importance by his descendants, – James Macburney married his Shropshire rector's daughter; begat a son; and in due time, became a widower. The son – also James Macburney – was educated at Westminster School under the redoubtable Dr. Busby. Then, taking to art, he worked as a pupil of the “eminent Face Painter,” Michael Dahl. About 1697, at the age of nineteen, he ran away with Rebecca Ellis, an actress in Giffard's Company, and younger than himself. Thereupon his irate father disinherited him, and in further token of his displeasure, took to wife his own cook, by whom he had another son called Joseph, who, as soon as he arrived at man's estate, removed all possible difficulties in regard to the succession by dissipating the property. Having effected this with much promptitude, he settled down contentedly as a

Norfolk dancing master. Meanwhile, his elder half-brother, – who, though lacking in discretion, had many pleasing gifts (he was, in particular, an accomplished violin-player), – being left, by the death of his actress-wife, with a numerous family, wedded, for the second time, a beautiful young lady of Shropshire, Mistress (*i. e.* Miss) Ann Cooper. Miss Cooper was currently reported to have rejected Wycherley the dramatist, who, it may be remembered, like the elder Macburney, was desirous of disappointing his natural heir. Miss Cooper had some money; but James Macburney's second marriage increased the number of his children. The youngest members of his family were twins, Susannah (who died early), and Charles, afterwards the well-known historian of music, and the father of Fanny Burney. Like his predecessors, he was born Macburney, but the "Mac" was subsequently dropped.

Not long after Charles Burney's birth, which took place on the 12th April 1726, in Raven Street, Shrewsbury (a name probably derived from the famous Raven Inn once familiar to Farquhar and "Serjeant Kite"), James Burney, as we may now call his father, settled at Chester as a portrait painter, leaving his little son at nurse in Conover, a village near Shrewsbury. Here, with an affectionate foster mother, Charles Burney thrived apace, until he was transferred to the Chester Grammar School. At this date his natural gifts were sufficiently manifest to enable him at a pinch to act as deputy for the Cathedral organist. Subsequently, he became the pupil of his half-brother, James,

the organist of St. Mary's Church at Shrewsbury. Then, being again in Chester when the famous Dr. Augustine Arne was passing through the town on his return from Ireland to London, he was fortunate enough to be taken as that master's apprentice. This was in August 1744, when he was eighteen, pleasant-mannered, intelligent, very musical, very versatile, and – as he continued to be through life – an indefatigable worker. From Arne he did not learn much except to copy music, and to drudge in the Drury Lane Orchestra, which Arne conducted; and, although he had an elder brother in London, he was left greatly to his own devices. But his abilities and personal charm brought him many friends. He was frequently at the house in Scotland Yard of Arne's sister, Mrs. Cibber, the foremost tragic actress of her day; and here he made acquaintance with many notabilities. Handel was often among the visitors, playing intricate fugues and overtures with his pudgy fingers upon the harpsichord; and Garrick, with the wonderful eyes; and Garrick's surly old rival, the *bon-vivant*, James Quin; and Mason; and Thomson the poet of *The Seasons*.

With Arne, Charles Burney would probably have remained, but for a fortunate accident. At the shop of Jacob Kirkman, the German harpsichord maker in Broad Street, Golden Square, he met Mr. Fulke Greville, a descendant of Sidney's friend, the famous Fulke Greville of Queen Elizabeth's days. The Greville of 1746 either possessed, or affected to possess, many of the attributes of Bramston's *Man of Taste*: —

“I would with *Jockeys* from *Newmarket* dine,
And to *Rough-riders* give my choicest wine.
In *Fig* the Prize-fighter by day delight,
And sup with *Colly Cibber* ev’ry night.”

Like Bramston’s hero, he also dabbled in gardening. But his accomplishments were not confined to pugilism and field sports. He danced, fenced, drew, wrote verses, and trifled with metaphysics. Lastly, he “*had* an ear.” After the fashion of his day, he had doubted whether any musician could possibly be a gentleman, but Charles Burney undeceived him. The result was that Greville paid three hundred pounds to cancel Burney’s engagement to Arne, and attached his new friend to his own establishment in the capacity of musical companion. This curious conjunction, which seems to have included a fair experience of Greville’s other diversions, did no harm to Charles Burney. On the contrary, at Greville’s country seat of Wilbury House in Wiltshire, he met many interesting and some eminent people, who considerably enlarged his social aptitudes. In 1747, however, his patron married a Miss Frances Macartney, – the “Flora” of Horace Walpole’s *Beauties*, – making, in his impatience of the conventional, – or *fogrum* as it was then styled, – a perfectly superfluous stolen match. “Mr. Greville” – said the lady’s matter-of-fact father, when his pardon and blessing were formally requested – “has chosen to take a wife out of the window, whom he might just as well have taken out of the

door.” Burney gave away the bride; and after standing proxy for a duke at the baptism of the first child,¹ would have accompanied the Grevilles to Italy. But at this juncture he discovered that he, too, had an affair of the heart. Thereupon Mr. Greville magnanimously released him from his engagement, and left him to marry the woman of his choice.

She was a Miss Esther Sleepe, very attractive and very amiable. Her mother, although of Huguenot origin, was a Roman Catholic. Esther herself was a Protestant. She married Charles Burney about 1748, and they went to live in the City. In 1749, her husband was appointed organist of St. Dionis Backchurch, which had been rebuilt by Wren after the Great Fire. Burney’s modest salary was £30 per annum. But he composed music, and soon found many pupils. When his first child, called Esther after her mother, was born, is not stated; but the register of St. Dionis contains record of the birth, in June, 1750, of James Burney, afterwards an admiral; and, in 1751, of a son Charles, who, apparently, died early. Before this date, hard work and close application had begun to tell upon the father of the little family, and he was advised by his friend Dr. John Armstrong, the author of *The Art of Preserving Health*, to try living in the country. He accordingly accepted the post of organist, with a salary of £100 a year, at St. Margaret’s Church, King’s Lynn, to which place he removed in 1751, his wife joining him some months later.

¹ This was Fanny Burney’s later friend, – the beautiful Mrs. Crewe of Reynolds, and the “Amoret” of Sheridan and Charles Fox.

At King's Lynn, on the 13th June, 1752, was born his second daughter, Frances, or Fanny Burney, whose life-story forms the theme of this volume. The name of Frances came to her from her godmother, Mrs. Greville; and she was baptized at St. Nicholas, in Ann Street. At Lynn were born two other children, Susanna, no doubt so named after her father's twin sister; and a second Charles, later a famous Greek scholar, Rector of Deptford, and Chaplain to George iii. The date of Susanna's birth is not known; but Charles Burney was born in December, 1757.

At Lynn, in spite of an execrable instrument, and an irresponsive audience, the new organist's health speedily improved. His hearers, if unmusical, were not unfriendly, and his own good qualities helped him as of yore. "He scarcely ever entered a house upon terms of business, without leaving it upon those of intimacy." He gave music lessons in many of the great Norfolk mansions, – at Houghton (Lord Orford's), at Holkham (the home of the Leicesters), at Rainham (General Lord Townshend's), and at Felbrigge Park (Mr. Windham's), – padding along the sandy crossroads to his destination upon his sure-footed mare "Peggy," with a certainty that permitted him to study Tasso or Metastasio in the saddle, and even to consult a dictionary of his own composing which he carried in his great-coat pocket. These things, added to correspondence with the Greville circle, projects for a *History of Music*, increasing means, and a pleasant home, made Lynn life very tolerable for a season. But towards 1759 he seems to have wearied a little of his

provincial lot, added to which, friends began to counsel his return to town, and to protest against his exile among “foggy aldermen.” “Really, among friends,” – wrote one of them, to whom we shall often refer hereafter, – “is not settling at Lynn planting your youth, genius, hopes, fortune, etc., against a north wall? Can you ever expect ripe, high-flavoured fruit, from such an aspect?” And then the writer went on to adjure him to transplant his “spare person,” his “pretty mate,” and his “brats” to the more congenial environment of the capital. He eventually quitted Lynn in 1760 for London, which he had left about nine years before.

At this date, he was four and thirty. He set up his tent in Poland Street, then a rather more favoured place of residence than it is at present, and having, beyond the Oxford Road (as Oxford Street was then called), little but open fields and market gardens. Portman Square, Manchester Square, Russell Square, – of all these not a stone had been laid.² But Poland Street was not without aristocratic occupants. The Duke of Chandos, Sir Willoughby Aston (with whose daughters the Miss Burneys went to school at Paris), Lady Augusta Bridges and others were all distinguished neighbours in this now dingy street – to say nothing of the Cherokee King, who, when he visited England, actually, to the delight of the Burney children, took lodgings “almost immediately opposite.” At Poland Street Charles Burney rapidly became the music master most in request with the fashionable world. Soon he had not an hour of the day unoccupied, beginning

² *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, 1832, i. 134.

his rounds as early as seven in the morning, and finishing them, sometimes, only at eleven at night. Often he dined in a hackney coach on the contents of a sandwich box and a flask of sherry and water. But he must still have found time for original work, since it was at Poland Street that, besides “Sonatas for the Harpsichord,” he composed in 1763 the setting for Bonnell Thornton’s Burlesque *Ode on St. Caecilia’s Day*, “adapted to the Antient British Musick; viz.: the Salt Box, the Jew’s Harp, the Marrow-Bones and Cleavers, the Hum-Strum or Hurdy-Gurdy,” and the rest, which was performed at Ranelagh in masks, to the huge delectation of an audience musical and unmusical, and the amusement of Dr. Johnson.³ But the pleasures of increasing popularity were dashed by domestic misfortune. Mrs. Burney, the “pretty mate” of the last paragraph, having, in the new home, given birth to a fourth daughter, Charlotte, sickened of consumption. A visit to the Bristol Hot Wells (Clifton) proved unavailing; and to the intense grief of her husband and family, she died, after a brief illness, on the 28th September, 1761. She seems to have been a most affectionate

³ Dr. Birkbeck Hill’s *Boswell’s Johnson*, 1887, i. 420. In a note communicated by Burney in 1799 to the third edition of Boswell’s book, he dates this performance “1769,” when (he says) he resided at Norfolk. But his memory must have deceived him, for according to the *Annual Register* for 1763, the Burlesque was performed at Ranelagh on June 10 in that year, having been previously published as a pamphlet, which is to be found in the British Museum; and it figures among the new books for June, 1763, in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. The point is a trifling one, only important here because the success of the Ode has been advanced as one of the things which decided its composer to leave Lynn for London in 1760.

mother, and sympathised with her husband in his bookish tastes. With one of his subsequent essays he published a translation from Maupertuis, which she, naturally an excellent French scholar, had executed; and her reading of Pope's *Works* and the *Virgil* of Spence's friend Christopher Pitt, was one of the memories of her daughters. But at the time of her death her eldest child was only twelve, and her youngest a baby.

The little family at Poland Street, thus suddenly left motherless, must have been an exceptionally interesting one. Esther, or Hetty, the eldest, is described as extremely beautiful, and possessed of that fortunate combination, good sense, good humour, and an abundant love of fun. She was besides remarkably musical, and according to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was wont to astonish her father's guests, at a very early age, by her skilful instrumentalism. James, the eldest son, who, at the age of ten, entered the Navy under Admiral Montagu as a nominal midshipman, was an unusually bright and manly lad, full of vivacity and high spirits. When at school in his Norfolk home, he had been taught by Eugene Aram. He could recall how that "melancholy man" would pace the playground talking of strange deeds to the elder boys; and he remembered well the memorable night in August 1758 when

"Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
Through the cold and heavy mist,
And Eugene Aram, walk'd between,

With gyves upon his wrist.”⁴

James Burney rose to eminence in his profession, – sailed twice round the world with Captain Cook, was with him at his death, and lived to be a fine specimen of the old-time sailor, cheery and humourous, unpolished externally, but “gentle and humane” at heart. Charles Lamb loved him; Southey depicts him in his *Captainhood* as “smoking after supper, and letting out puffs at one corner of his mouth, and puns at the other”; and he dropped Hazlitt out of his whist parties, to which he was as attached as Mrs. Battle, because “W. H.” had affronted him by reviewing his sister Fanny’s *Wanderer* severely in the *Edinburgh*. In this brief biography James Burney cannot often appear hereafter, which must excuse these anticipations. The third child, Susanna, or, to be exact, Susanna Elizabeth, was also remarkable for her sweetness and charm. Joseph Baretti praised her *dolcissima voce*; her knowledge of music was affirmed to be exact and critical; and her native literary faculty was as fine, if not as imperative, as that of her sister Frances. Charles, the second boy, was still in the nursery; and Charlotte was a baby. Neither of these last can have had much influence on Frances, who with Esther, Susanna and James made up the little group of clever children which delighted Charles Burney’s friends, from Garrick

⁴ Admiral Burney’s recollections are referred to in Hood’s “Preface” to the separate issue of *The Dream of Eugene Aram* published in 1831, with William Harvey’s illustrations.

to the singer Pacchieroti. “All! *all! very clever girls*” (James was of course at sea) – said this observer later in his queer broken English. “Sense and *witta (sic)* inhabit *here...* All I meet with at Dr. Burney’s house are superior to other people. I am myself the only *Bestia* that enters the house. I am, indeed, *a truly Beast*” – by which the poor gentleman in his humility, as Mrs. Ellis suggests, obviously intended no more than is conveyed by the French *bête*.

In the above enumeration of Charles Burney’s children, Frances has been intentionally passed over, and to Frances we now turn. Like many other persons destined to make their mark in this world, she does not seem to have impressed it greatly at the outset. Neither for beauty nor physique was she notable in childhood; indeed she was both short and short-sighted. She was besides extremely shy and silent, as well as backward in most things. At the age of eight she had not learned to read, and her sailor brother used often to divert himself by giving her a book upside down in order to see what she would make of it. Mrs. Burney’s friends used to call her the “little dunce”; but her shrewder mother “had no fear of Fanny.” For it was observed, by those who looked close, that her perceptive faculties were exceedingly acute; that, in a quiet way, she noticed many things; that she was full of humour and invention in her play; and that whenever she went with the rest to Mrs. Garrick’s box at Drury Lane, although she could not read the piece acted, she was quite capable of mimicking the actors, and even of putting appropriate speeches into their mouths.

These exhibitions, however, she would only give in the strictest domestic privacy. Before strangers, she became at once the demure, reserved, and almost sheepish little person whom it was the custom to designate familiarly as “the old lady.” An anecdote related by her father illustrates some of these peculiarities of character. Next door to the Burneys in Poland Street lived a wig-maker who supplied the voluminous full-bottomed periwigs then favoured by the gentlemen of the Law. The Burney girls used to play with the wig-maker’s daughters, and one day the playmates got access to the wig-magazine. They then proceeded to array themselves in what Fanny’s later friend Dr. Hawkesworth calls “the honours of the head,” dancing about in great delight at their ridiculous figures. Unfortunately one of the ten-guinea flaxen masterpieces soused suddenly into a garden tub filled with water, and forthwith losing all its portentous “Gorgon buckle,” was declared by the manufacturer to be totally spoilt. “He was extremely angry,” says Fanny’s father, “and chid very severely his own children; when my little daughter, the old lady, then ten years of age [1762], advancing to him, as I was informed, with great gravity and composure, sedately says; ‘What signifies talking so much about an accident? The wig is wet, to be sure; and the wig was a good wig, to be sure; but it’s of no use to speak of it any more; because what’s done can’t be undone.’”⁵ Dr. Johnson himself could not have been more oracular, though he would probably have said (as indeed he does in *Rasselas*) –

⁵ *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, 1832, ii. 170-1.

“What cannot be repaired is not to be regretted!”

At this point it becomes necessary to introduce a personage who, for the future, plays no inconsiderable part in Frances Burney's biography. Mention has been made of a friend by whom Charles Burney was advised to exchange the north wall of Lynn for a more congenial London aspect. This was one Samuel Crisp, a gentleman twenty years older than Fanny's father, who had made his acquaintance when acting as musical companion to Fulke Greville. Samuel Crisp was a person of some importance in his day, – a man of taste and fashion, good-looking, well-mannered and accomplished, having gifts both artistic and musical, – friendly alike with the Duchess of Portland and Mrs. Montagu, – with Lady Coventry and Richard Owen Cambridge, with Quin and Garrick. Like many of equal abilities, he had dabbled in literature; and two years after Fanny's birth, Garrick had produced at Drury Lane, not without pressure from the writer's aristocratic supporters, a tragedy which Crisp had essayed upon a subject already treated more than a hundred years before by John Webster, – the story of Virginia. Crisp's play cannot be said to have failed, for it ran for two nights more than Johnson's *Irene*. But, on the other hand, it was not a genuine success, although Garrick, besides supplying an excellent Prologue and Epilogue, himself acted Virginius to the Virginia of Mrs. Cibber. The truth is, it was dull, – too dull even to be galvanised into mock vitality by the energy of the manager. No alterations could thenceforth persuade Garrick to revive it,

and the author was naturally deeply chagrined. In a frame of mind very unfriendly to humanity in general, he carried his mortification to Italy. Returning in due course somewhat soothed and restored, he settled at Hampton, furnishing a house there so lavishly with guests, pictures, bustos and musical instruments that he speedily began to exhaust his sources of income. His annoyance at this discovery being aggravated by gout, in a fit of spleen he sold his villa by the Thames; and determining to realise Pope's "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," took sanctuary with a friend in a secluded part of the country.

The retreat he selected was at Chessington, or – as it was then spelled – Chesington Hall, a rambling and ruinous old house between Kingston and Epsom. At this date, though on high ground, it stood in the middle of a wild and almost trackless common, which separated it effectually from the passing stranger. Its owner, Mr. Christopher Hamilton, was an old friend of Crisp and, since the house was too large for his means, only too pleased to welcome as an inmate, a companion who would share his expenses. At Chessington Crisp lived many years, and at Chessington he was buried. Until he became too infirm, he quitted it annually for a few weeks every spring, when he repaired to Town to visit his old haunts, look in at a concert or two, and run through the principal picture galleries. Lord Macaulay has described him as "hiding himself like a wild beast in a den," in consequence of the failure of his tragedy, which – as we have seen – was rather indulgently received, at all events

on the stage.⁶ But Lord Macaulay had not before him all the information we have at present. Although Crisp rated his tragic powers too high, and consequently felt his qualified success more acutely, it is probable that impaired health and reduced means had most to do with his withdrawal to Chessington, and there is no particular evidence that his seclusion, though strict, was savage. In one of his periodical visits to London, he happened upon Burney; came at once to see him at Poland Street; grew keenly interested in his motherless children, and thenceforward continued to be the lifelong ally and adviser of the family. Chessington Hall became a haven of rest for the Burneys, – “a place of peace, ease, freedom and cheerfulness,” to which, even when it was later turned into a boarding-house by Miss Hamilton, the father retired to work at his books, and the children for change of air. As Crisp grew older, they grew more and more necessary to his existence, filling the dark passages and tapestried chambers of the old house with fiddles and harpsichords, dancing, amateur acting, and all the stir and bustle of their fresh and healthy vitality. Their company must have been invaluable to a host, contracted, but by no means wedded, to melancholy; and there is no doubt that in return his experience of the world, his sterling good sense, and his educated taste were of the greatest service to them. They brightened and cheered his life; but they also owed not a little to the personage

⁶ Crisp's *Virginia* was published anonymously by Tonson in 1754 with a dedication to the writer's friends, the Earl and Countess of Coventry.

whom, in brief space, they came to designate affectionately as “Daddy” Crisp.

For two or three years after Mrs. Burney’s death not much is known of her husband’s doings. His grief at first was intense; but like many sensible men, he at once sought to mitigate it by hard work, attempting among other things a prose translation of Dante’s *Inferno*. In June, 1764, he paid a short visit to Paris in order to place Hetty and Susan at school there. Fanny was older than Susan, but apart from her general backwardness, her father seems to have apprehended that her very emotional character (she had been overpowered with grief at her mother’s death) might, when on the Continent, perhaps induce her to adopt the creed of her grandmother, Mrs. Sleepe, to whom she was much attached. In the French capital, Charles Burney found many friends, and under the influence of Paris air, Paris clothes, Paris festivities and the *Comédie Italienne*, began speedily – like Garrick in the same place a few months afterwards – to recover his spirits, and interest himself once more in his old pursuits. Either now or later, he set to work upon a version of Rousseau’s musical *intermède*, the *Devin du Village*, under the title of *The Cunning Man*.⁷ Towards the end of June, he left Hetty and Susan in the care of a certain Mme. St. Mart. They remained at Paris for about two years, returning in 1767.

⁷ *The Cunning Man* (i. e. fortune-teller or soothsayer) was produced at Drury Lane in 1766 when Rousseau came to England, but it was coldly received (*Biographia Dramatica*, 1812, ii. 145).

The first diarist of the family appears to have been Susan Burney, who began her records at the early age of ten. Soon after her return home she sketched the portraits of her two elder sisters. "The characteristics of Hetty seem to be wit, generosity, and openness of heart: – Fanny's, – sense, sensibility, and bashfulness, and even a degree of prudery. Her understanding is superior, but her diffidence gives her a bashfulness before company with whom she is not intimate, which is a disadvantage to her. My eldest sister shines in conversation, because, though very modest, she is totally free from any *mauvaise honte*: were Fanny equally so, I am persuaded she would shine no less. I am afraid that my eldest sister is too communicative, and that my sister Fanny is too reserved. They are both charming girls—*des filles comme il y en a peu*."⁸ The words make one think that the composing of *Caractères* or *Portraits* must have formed part of Mme. St. Mart's *curriculum*. At all events they are all we know of Frances Burney at this time, and they coincide with what we have learned already. Doubtless, during the absence of her sisters in France, she had been slowly developing. To her busy father, although he left her much to herself, she was devotedly attached; and she had grown almost as fond of the adopted parent who had now become her "guide, philosopher and friend." When Hetty and Susan were away, she probably saw

⁸ In Letter lxiv. of *Evelina*, Miss Burney, applying this locution to Lord Orville, attributes it to Marmontel. The above passage is printed in the "Introduction" to the *Diary and Letters*, 1892, i. pp. xi-xii.

a great deal of Mr. Crisp, and in the beginning of 1766 paid her first visit to the "dear, ever dear Chesington" which was to figure so frequently in her future journals. It had been her father's intention that she and her younger sister Charlotte should also have the advantage of two years' schooling at Mme. St. Mart's establishment; but the project, first postponed, was afterwards abandoned in consequence of Mr. Burney's second marriage.

This took place in October, 1767. The lady, Elizabeth Allen, was the widow of a wealthy Lynn wine-merchant. She had been the intimate friend of the late Mrs. Burney, whose death she had deplored almost as much as Mrs. Burney's husband. She had three children; but, owing to losses in her widowhood, apparently possessed nothing but a dower-house in the churchyard of St. Margaret's at Lynn. Coming to London for the education of her eldest daughter, Maria, she renewed her acquaintance with the Burneys. Handsome, intelligent, well-read, and something of a blue-stocking to boot, she seems speedily to have inspired in Mr. Burney an affection as genuine as her own for him. But as her Lynn relatives were not likely to approve the match, seeing particularly that Mr. Burney had six children of his own, the marriage took place privately at St. James's, Piccadilly; and the newly wedded pair, with the connivance of the friendly Crisp, spent their honeymoon in a farm-house near Chessington. Even then, the matter was kept quiet, being only revealed at last by the misdelivery of a letter. After this, the second Mrs. Burney took her place definitively as the mistress of the Poland Street

home, and the Lynn dower-house became an additional holiday resort for the combined family. The children on both sides seem to have been delighted with an alliance which brought them more intimately together; and the new mamma increased rather than diminished the literary tone of the house. "As Mrs. Stephen Allen," says Mrs. Ellis, "she had held a sort of *bas bleu* meeting once a week; as Mrs. Burney, she received men of letters, or art, almost daily, in an informal way." One result of the marriage, as already stated, was that Fanny and Charlotte did not go to Paris. Charlotte was put to school in Norfolk; and it was arranged that Susanna should teach Fanny French.

At the time of her father's second marriage, Fanny Burney was in her sixteenth year. Whether she had written much previous to the return of her sisters from Paris, cannot be affirmed; but it is evident that, with the advent of the diary-keeping Susanna, her native bias to scribbling rapidly increased. Every available scrap of paper was covered with stories and humourous sketches, confided only to the discreet ears of the younger sister, who laughed and cried over these masterpieces in secret. But it so chanced that Mrs. Burney the second, with all her appreciation of the *monde parleur*, was also keenly alive to the *misères du monde scribe*. Something led her to suspect that the girls were writing a good deal more than in her opinion was good for them, and the result was that they were gently but firmly admonished not to spend too much time in idle crude inventions. Thus, one fine day, it came about that, in the paved play-court at Poland Street,

when her father was at Chessington and her step-mother at Lynn, the docile Fanny “made over to a bonfire” all her accumulated stock of prose compositions. In the Preface to her last novel of *The Wanderer*, where it is added that Susanna stood weeping by, the date of this holocaust is given as her fifteenth birthday (June 1767). But as it obviously occurred some time after her father’s second marriage in October of the same year, her memory must have deceived her. Among the papers she burned was said to be an entire work of fiction, to which we shall return. Luckily, – although by this act she provisionally abjured authorship, and the discredit supposed to attach in the polite world to female writers and female writers of novels and romances in particular, – she did not refrain from journal-keeping. For the date of her first entry in her *Early Diary* is May 30 [1768], at which time Mr. Burney’s second marriage had been publicly acknowledged.

Before dealing with those portions of this chronicle which concern the present chapter, it is necessary to say something of the proceedings of the father of the family. In 1769 Mr. Burney, of whom we shall hereafter speak as “Dr.” Burney, received his Mus. D. degree at Oxford, his preliminary exercise being an anthem which was performed in the Music School, where it “was received with universal applause.”⁹ The chief vocalist was one of the Doctor’s pupils, Miss Jenny Barsanti, often referred to in the *Diary*; and Fanny wrote some congratulatory verses to her father on his distinction, which, at all events, exhibit a knack of

⁹ *Oxford Journal*, 23 June 1769.

rhyiming. The receipt of his degree appears to have revived all Dr. Burney's dormant literary ambitions. In matters connected with his profession he had always been an industrious note-taker; and he was also much interested in astronomy. One of the results of this last taste was an anonymous pamphlet prompted by the comet of 1769, at the close of which year it was published. To this was appended the translation from Maupertuis by the first Mrs. Burney, of which mention has been made. The *Essay on Comets* attracted no notice; but it served to strengthen its author's hand; and he began systematically to look over the miscellaneous collections he had accumulated towards that *History of Music* of which he had dreamed at Lynn. In arranging and transcribing the mass of material, Fanny fell naturally into the office of amanuensis and keeper of the records. But these had not long been manipulated before her father discovered that it would be necessary for him to make a personal tour in France and Italy, – first, to procure information in regard to ancient music, and secondly, to ascertain, by ear and eye, the actual condition of the musical art on the Continent. At Paris he visited Rousseau and Diderot, both of whom were interested and helpful. At Ferney he had a chance interview with Voltaire, then seventy-eight and wasted to a skeleton, but still working ten hours a day, and writing without spectacles. Discord, rather than harmony, was the topic of this conversation. The quarrels of authors – Voltaire held – were good for letters, just as, in a free government, the quarrels of the great and the clamours of the small were necessary to

liberty. The silence of critics (he said) did not so much prove the age to be correct, as dull. Dr. Burney had started in June 1770; he did not return until January 1771, when he almost immediately buried himself at Chessington to prepare his notes and journal for the press. In the following May his book was printed under the title of *The Present State of Music in France and Italy; or, the Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect Materials for a General History of Music*; and it obtained a considerable success. Copies went to Mason, Hawkesworth, Garrick, and Crisp, all of whom had aided in its progress. Among its other readers must have been Johnson, who told Mr. Seward that he had “that clever dog, Burney” in his eye when, two years later, he wrote his own *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*.¹⁰

During Dr. Burney’s absence abroad, his wife had found the Poland Street house too small. She accordingly fixed upon a fresh residence in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, which was then much more in the country than it is at present. The new home was at

¹⁰ Dr. Birkbeck Hill (Boswell’s *Johnson*, 1887, iv. 186 n.) seems, perhaps not unnaturally, to doubt this, as Burney “writes chiefly of music.” But it is confirmed by a passage in the *Early Diary*, 1889, i. 212. “He [Baretti] told my father that Dr. Johnson.. has read both his Tours with great pleasure, and has pronounced him to be *one of the first writers of the age* for travels!” Moreover, in the second Tour, the author was less chary of personal anecdote. In Edward FitzGerald’s letters, he draws Carlyle’s attention to some of the very interesting particulars which the second Tour contains concerning Frederick the Great (*More Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, 1901, p. 67). But Carlyle, who quotes the visit to Voltaire from the first Tour, does not mention the second at all.

the upper end of the square, which had been considerably left open by the architect so as to afford a delightful prospect, across Lamb's Conduit Fields, of Highgate and Hampstead, which Miss Burney – we regret to say – spells “Hygate and Hamstead.” There was also a special interest in the house itself, for it had once been inhabited by Queen Anne's printer, Alderman Barber, the “*Johannes Tonsor*” and “very good and old friend” of Swift; and it was a fond tradition of the Burney household that the author of *Gulliver's Travels* had often dined with Barber at Queen Square. But the *Journal to Stella*, when it mentions Barber, invariably refers to him as in the City; and it is probable that Swift visited him uniformly at his place of business. In any case, the Queen Square house was “well fitted up, convenient, and handsome.” Especially was there a closet or playroom up two pair of stairs where Fanny could retire to compose her Diary, for which task, during her father's absence abroad, she had unexpected opportunities. But she had also another, and more picturesque asylum in her step-mother's dower-house at Lynn. At the end of a long side garden was a “Look Out” or Gazebo, called “The Cabin,” from which ships could be seen on the Ouse. Here, except when she was driven from it to the more secluded garden by the profane language of the seafaring population, she was accustomed to write and dream at her ease.

Dr. Burney's activity did not permit him to pause long after his first book. Very soon we hear that he is learning German, – no doubt with a purpose. In July, 1772, he set out upon a second

tour, this time to collect materials for his history in Germany and the Netherlands. During his absence, which lasted five months, his family lived mainly at Lynn and Chessington. In December he returned to England, terminating his travels by an unique experience. Upon his passage to Dover, in the very stormy winter of 1772, he was so exhausted by sea-sickness that he fell asleep in his berth, and was carried back again to Calais. On reaching Queen Square he had a severe illness, requiring to be carefully nursed by his family; but, with his customary energy, dictated to his daughters, from his bed, portions of the new Tour whenever the intervals of pain permitted him to do so. As soon as he was convalescent, he hastened off to Chessington, carrying his secretaries with him. The result of his labours was at press in February, 1773, and was published in May. It was received even more kindly than its predecessor, and included detailed *Proposals* for the forthcoming *General History of Music*. Not many months after, in consequence of difficulties as to title, the Queen Square house was given up, and the Burneys moved to Leicester Fields.

With some account of the next new house, which had, even then, its history, we may fitly open a fresh chapter. In closing this one, however, something must be said as to that *Early Diary* which Fanny Burney began to keep in May 1768. When, in 1842-6, her *Diary and Letters* were edited by her sister Charlotte's daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Francis Barrett, an amiable and learned lady who happily combined a knowledge of Hebrew with a genius for making jelly, it was thought right to withhold

the portions preceding the publication of *Evelina*, as being “of a more private and personal nature than that which attaches to the Journal after its writer became universally known.” But in 1889, this earlier portion also was edited by the late Mrs. Annie Raine Ellis from the original mss. which the first writer, in her own words, had freely “curtailed and erased of what might be mischievous from friendly or Family Considerations.” One of the explanatory memoranda states, and another repeats, that the record was begun at the age of fifteen. Prefixed to the Diary, and “Addressed to a Certain Miss Nobody,” is a whimsical Introduction, which Mrs. Barrett reproduced in *facsimile* at the beginning of the *Diary and Letters* of 1842-6. This, of course, may be earlier than the rest, as it is said to be on older paper, and in a slightly different hand. The Diary that follows, as already stated, was considerably revised by the writer in her old age; and, as reprinted in 1889, shows numerous omissions. Of the record for 1769, for example, Mrs. Ellis says, “Much has been cut from the Diary of this year, and it has many erasures. It appears to have been in two or three *cahiers*, which all lie now within one quarto sheet of paper, so much are they shrunk in size.” There are also large excisions in the accounts for 1771 and 1772; and the manuscript everywhere bears token of wholesale obliterations. Where these are Miss Burney’s own, they are said to be so effectual that scarcely a word can be read. In future chapters, we shall take leave to make sundry extracts from the Burney chronicle; but in this, where only a brief period (1768-73) is

in question, we may fairly confine our citations to a few notes, relating mainly to the diarist and her method.

In the first lines of her address to Nobody, Miss Burney defines her purpose. The reason, she says, which induces her to keep a Journal is that, “when the hour arrives in which time is more nimble than memory,” she may have some account of her “thoughts, manners, acquaintance and actions.” Writing in the Cabin at Lynn a little later, she reverts to this idea. “I cannot express the pleasure I have in writing down my thoughts, at the very moment – my opinion of people when I first see them, and how I alter, or how confirm myself in it – and I am much deceived in my *fore sight*, if I shall not have very great delight in reading this *living proof* of my manner of passing my time, my sentiments, my thoughts of people I know, and a thousand other things in future – there is something to me very unsatisfactory in passing year after year, without even a memorandum of what you did, etc.” Presently, she has her difficulties. Dr. Burney comes upon a fugitive page of this *chronique intime*, and though he does not forbid the practice, protests that if he finds it lying about he will post it up in the market place. Then one of her mother’s friends, Miss Dorothy Young (whom the first Mrs. Burney on her death-bed had recommended her husband to marry) had her doubts about this “most dangerous employment.” “Suppose now,” says Miss Young, “your favourite wish were granted, and you were *to fall in love* [it may be noted that Fanny had already confided this tender aspiration to her pages], and

then the object of your passion were to get sight of some part which related to himself?" Here was an appalling suggestion, to which Fanny could only reply that she should have to take a precipitate trip to Rosamond's Pond in St. James's Park, then the last resort of the despairing. It is characteristic of this very early entry in the Diary, that the conversation is given exactly as if it had been reported in shorthand. As the record progresses, there are many similar instances of this practice, which greatly irritated distrustful Mr. Croker. "I shall recollect as much of the conversation as I can, and make the parties speak for themselves," Miss Burney writes of a long interview with the currish misogynist and Tory, Dr. John Shebbeare. And then follows a dialogue to which the names of the speakers are prefixed as they would be in a play.

Some of the most interesting entries at this date relate to her reading, and show that, instead of being, as Lord Macaulay supposed,¹¹ an infrequent student of novels, her activity in this way was fully equal to her opportunities. Richardson's works she must have known intimately, as she reminds her sister of their early love for him; she reads and cries over and criticises the *Vicar of Wakefield*; she reads *Rasselas*, and thinks the style and sentiments inimitable. The subject however is dreadful. "How terrible is it to be told by a man of his [Johnson's]

¹¹ Lord Macaulay relied upon the fact, mentioned in the Dedication to *The Wanderer* (p. xxii), that Dr. Burney's large library only contained one novel, Fielding's *Amelia*. But, as Mrs. Ellis pertinently remarks, "Novels were brought into the house if they did not abide in it."

genius and knowledge, in so affectingly probable a manner, that true, real, happiness is ever unattainable in this world!" The *Sentimental Journey*, – which was a special favourite with her step-mother, – she read three times; and, from a reference to "Hobby Horses," was probably acquainted with *Tristram Shandy*, or at all events with its famous eighth chapter. Stranger still, she had not only read Prévost's *Doyen de Killérine* (with which she is delighted), but that very stimulating work, the *Vie de Marianne* of Marivaux. Further, she occasionally quotes much inferior productions, e. g. the *Henry and Frances* of Mrs. Griffiths, the *Lady Julia Mandeville* of the once-popular Mrs. Brooke, and the *Lydia* of Shebbeare. These are advanced mainly in answer to Lord Macaulay. But the *Diary* contains numerous references to studies of a sterner sort. Among the books she speaks of reading, are Plutarch's *Lives*, Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Hawkesworth's *Telemachus*, Hume, Smollett, Smith's *Thucydides*, Middleton's *Cicero*, Hooke's *Roman*, and Stanyan's *Grecian History*, – all of which she professes to go through systematically. Here is strong meat enough, one would imagine, for a budding Mme. Roland; – certainly it would be a trying course, in the days when skipping was unknown, for even that model and methodical student, Miss Clarissa Harlowe. Moreover it proves plainly that Fanny's close attention to braid-stitch, cross-and-change, pinking, pointing, frilling, and all the other niceties of that needlework which her step-mother regarded as so important to young persons – did not leave her without leisure for literature.

To give any detailed summary of the material contained in the first four years of Miss Burney's *Diary* would be impracticable here. There are several portraits which (like that of Dr. Shebbeare) show that the writer's pen is already working willingly and easily in what was to be her most congenial field. There is a long description of the forgotten Spanish traveller, Mr. Richard Twiss, a polyglot eccentric of the first water; there is another of a delightful fop and cousin, Richard Burney, of Worcester, Junr., the son of Dr. Burney's elder brother; there is a picturesque *Journal*, addressed to Susan in 1773, of a visit to Teignmouth, – or “Tingmouth,” as the writer calls it, – which Mrs. Ellis fairly characterises as “Fanny's first book, privately circulated,” and which contains some lively sketches of rural sports and watering-place oddities. Some of these descriptions and portraits go off in letters to “Daddy” Crisp at Chessington, who is delighted, and gives his “dearest Fannikin” some very seasonable advice, which, in after years, she unhappily neglected. “If once you set about framing studied letters, that are to be correct, nicely grammatical, and run in smooth periods, I shall mind them no otherwise than as newspapers of intelligence... There is no fault in an epistolary correspondence like stiffness and study. Dash away whatever comes uppermost; the sudden sallies of imagination, clap'd down on paper, just as they arise, are worth folios... Never think of being correct when you write to me.” Not the least notable of Fanny's records are the glimpses we get of some of her father's friends. One is poor

mad Kit Smart, always needy and out-at-elbows, with whom Burney had grown acquainted at Arne's, and who died in 1772 in the King's Bench Prison. Another, who also died in this period, is Hawkesworth, whose end, according to Fanny, was certainly hastened by the attacks made upon him in connection with his subsidised publication of Cook's *Voyages*. Garrick more or less pervades the chronicle, dashing into the house in the most unexpected manner; rushing away with little Charlotte whom he declares to be the image of *Comedy* in Reynolds's picture; acting, grimacing, mimicking, posturing, and altogether comporting himself in every respect like the excellent friend and histrion he was. Fanny often sees him play – as Bayes in the *Rehearsal*; as Richard the Third; as Lear, and as Abel Drugger in the *Alchemist*. Of “crook'd back'd Richard” she says, – “It is inconceivable how terribly great he is in this character! I will never see him so disfigured again; he seemed so truly the monster he performed, that I felt myself glow with indignation every time I saw him. The applause he met with, exceeds all belief in the absent. I thought at the end they would have torn the house down: our seats shook under us.” Of Lear, – “He was exquisitely great; every idea I had formed of his talents, although I have ever idolized him, was exceeded.” But she very properly blames Cibber's feeble alterations of Shakespeare's work. As to Abel Drugger, perhaps Garrick's greatest part, she says: – “Never could I have imagined such a metamorphose as I saw; the extreme meanness, the vulgarity, the low wit, the vacancy

of countenance, the appearance of *unlicked nature* in all his motions.” These are more than the opinions of an “unlessoned girl,” for they are confirmed to the full by experienced spectators such as Lichtenberg and Mme. Necker. To Goldsmith, then not far from his end, there is passing reference. “Dr. Goldsmith” – says the diary in May, 1773, – “has just brought on the stage a new comedy, called, ‘She stoops to *Conquer*.’ We went to it with Mr. and Mrs. Young; it is very laughable and comic; but I know not how it is, almost all diversions are insipid at present to me, except the opera.” There is another mention of Goldsmith a few pages further on. It relates to his projected *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*. Among other contributors, Dr. Burney was to undertake the article “Musician.” But the plan never got beyond the prospectus stage. Goldsmith died in the following year, and Dr. Burney’s paper probably found its ultimate place in his own *History of Music*.

CHAPTER II

NO. 1, ST. MARTIN'S STREET

No. 1, St. Martin's Street, now No. 35, to which the Burneys moved early in 1774, may fairly be described as a house with a history. We say "now," since it still exists, – standing to the right at the top of the little street which opens into Leicester Square from the south; and having on its left that Orange Street Congregational Church where, in its Huguenot days, was wont to preach Wesley's opponent, – the Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady. The house itself, once red brick, but at present stuccoed over, is not impressive, save for the distinction conferred by a Society of Arts tablet which proclaims it to have been formerly the residence of Newton. Miss Burney, indeed, as her father supposed, declares that Sir Isaac built it; but this is an error. He took it in 1710, when he was nearing seventy, and he lived in it until 1725, two years before he died at Kensington. Beyond occasional visits to the Princess Caroline at Leicester House on the opposite side of the Fields; and the fact that he superintended the production of two editions of the *Principia* during his period of residence, no very definite traditions belong to his sojourn in St. Martin's Street. But Dr. Burney, who valued literary association, had a better reason for connecting his new house with Swift, than he had for connecting him with Queen Square.

For in Newton's house in St. Martin's Street had certainly dwelt one of Swift's intimates and Newton's relatives, the beautiful and witty Catherine Barton, – the “*jolie nièce*” of Voltaire, – and the “Super-intendant of his domestick Affairs” to Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, to whom, it is conjectured, she was privately married. After the death of Halifax in 1715, she became the wife of John Conduitt, Newton's successor as Master of the Mint; and, when in town, was accustomed to reside with her uncle in Leicester Fields. And it is no great stretch of imagination to assume that, at such times, though Swift himself was in exile, she was visited by the other old friends who had clustered around her when she was a Toast of the Kit Cats. The chairs of Lady Worsley and Lady Betty Germaine must often have waited at the narrow approach by which the street was then entered from the Fields, while their mistresses “disputed Whig and Tory” with Mrs. Conduitt, or were interrupted in a *tête-à-tête* by Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry.¹²

As regards situation, the change from Queen Square to St. Martin's Street was not entirely for the better. It was no small loss to substitute an “unpleasant site,” “confined air,” and a “shabby immediate neighbourhood” for the unobstructed view of “Hampstead's breezy Heath” which the Bloomsbury home

¹² Catherine Hyde was still living in Fanny Burney's day; and Fanny saw her at Covent Garden Theatre in January, 1773, when Mason's *Elfrida* was being acted. “I had the pleasure to see Prior's celebrated fair ‘Kitty, beautiful and young,’ now called Kitty, *beautiful and old*, in the stage box.” (*Early Diary*, 1889, i. p. 184.)

afforded.¹³ But in the way of convenience, and a central position, the difference was great, in addition to which, compared with its predecessor, the new residence was “large and good.” It is true that the stairs were so steep and narrow that one of Fulke Greville’s friends broke his sword in climbing them; but, on the other hand, most of the rooms were panelled, and one, at least, of the ceilings “prodigiously painted and ornamented,” not, as the Doctor was careful to explain, by him, but by previous occupants. The chief glory of the house, however, was the unpretentious structure at the top, which passed for Sir Isaac’s observatory. It is perhaps safest to say “passed,” because, between 1725 and 1774, there must have been other dwellers in No. 1, St. Martin’s Street, and many things may have happened. But the Burneys seem to have devoutly believed in the small-paned, wooden turret, with the leaden roof and tiny fireplace, which embodied so respectable a tradition. They exhibited it religiously to their visitors; and one of its new owner’s first acts was to put it into repair. When, four years later, it was all but whirled away by the hurricane of 1778, he practically rebuilt it. And it was unquestionably Fanny’s chosen retreat and *scriptorium*. “His [Newton’s] observatory is my favourite sitting place, where I can retire to read or write any of my private fancies or vagaries.” And then follows what – having regard to some of her previous

¹³ “There are now,” said Cunningham, writing as far back as 1849, “at least 2 square miles of brick and mortar between it [Queen Square] and the view.” (*Handbook for London*, ii. p. 686.)

utterances – is more interesting than unexpected.¹⁴ “I burnt all up to my fifteenth year – thinking I grew too old for scribbling nonsense, but as I am less young, I grow, I fear, less wise, for I cannot any longer resist what I find to be irresistible, the pleasure of popping down my thoughts from time to time upon paper.”

Whatever may have been her exact age at the date of the famous *auto-da-fé* in the paved court at Poland Street, she must have been nearing two and twenty when she “popped down” the foregoing passage; and the moment, taken in connection with the change of scene from Bloomsbury to Leicester Fields is a favourable one for reviewing the Burney family circle in 1774-5. Dr. Burney’s second or German Tour, as we know, had been published in 1773; and in the same year he had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society. At present, in the intervals of rheumatism, he was working, with Fanny’s aid, at his *History of Music*. By his second wife he had two children, – Richard, and Sarah Harriet, the latter of whom eventually, like her gifted half-sister, became a novelist. But both Richard and Harriet, at this date, were in the nursery. Esther, or Hetty, the eldest daughter, had been married for some time to her cousin, Charles Rousseau Burney, afterwards of Bath, a musician and former pupil of her father; while Maria Allen, the daughter of Dr. Burney’s second wife, was married to a Mr. Rishton. James Burney, the sailor, having sailed with Cook in his second voyage, and been made a lieutenant, had now returned home. In 1775 he was

¹⁴ See *ante*, p. 19.

serving on the North American Station, when he was recalled to accompany Cook on his third and fatal expedition. Of the rest, Susan and Charlotte were now grown up, Charlotte being about fifteen, and Susan some years older. Charles, after having enjoyed the reputation of being “the sweetest-tempered boy in the Charterhouse School,” was now, in all probability, pursuing at Cambridge those studies for which he was eventually to be classed with Porson and Parr. The only one of the Queen Square frequenters no longer to be encountered at St. Martin’s Street was “Daddy” Crisp. By this date he was sixty-eight, and his fits of gout had become so severe, that he had ceased to make his annual descents upon London from his Surrey hermitage. But his interest in all that befell his friends at Leicester Fields remained unabated; and in this he was kept carefully posted up by his favourite “Fannikin,” who, what with acting as librarian and amanuensis to her indefatigable father, writing periodical newsletters of “from six to twelve large quarto pages” to Chessington, and keeping her own voluminous journal besides – must have been very actively employed both in the Observatory and out of it. Not without reason can it have been that she acquired the “murtherous stooping” which her Mentor deplored, nor was it entirely chargeable to the shortness of sight which she shared with Charlotte Brontë. It is from her bright and graphic despatches to Mr. Crisp that we propose to draw most of the material for this chapter. Often these are repeated in her *Diary*, and they are also expanded in the *Memoirs of Dr. Burney* which

she wrote in later years; but they are at their best and freshest in her letters, – letters which, in many cases, must have been scribbled off immediately after the occurrence of the events they described. From one of them it is clear that their writer thought nothing of setting to work at what would now be considered a very lengthy epistle, when the entertainment of the evening had come to an end.

The Queen Square circle had already been sufficiently diversified; but it grew wider and even more varied at Leicester Fields. Some of the Doctor's friends were now in his immediate vicinity. The family of Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Strange, the engraver, – old Paris acquaintances, – were, for the moment, lodging close by. Reynolds, who had just painted the beautiful Eliza Linley (Mrs. Sheridan) as "St. Cecilia," lived only just across the Fields at No. 47; and Garrick, in the new house recently built for him by the brothers Adam at the Adelphi, was not too far off to be a frequent looker-in. Another artistic friend was the sculptor, Joseph Nollekens, whom Burney had met in Italy. James Barry, the eccentric and pugnacious Irish painter from Castle Street, then engaged in decorating the Meeting Room of the Society of Arts with vast designs (in one of which Dr. Burney, in a queue and tye-wig, figures incongruously among the nymphs of the Thames), – was also among the familiar faces. But the majority were naturally persons who were more or less attracted to the Historian of Music. In this category comes James Harris of Salisbury, "a most charming old man,"

– says Fanny, not only the author of *Hermes*, but a writer upon Music, and a composer whose pastoral of *Daphnis and Amaryllis* had actually been produced at Drury Lane. With him was his wife, the delightful Mrs. Harris whose gossiping letters to her son, the first Earl of Malmesbury, are some of the most charming in their kind. Then there was another new friend, whom the Burney girls grew to love almost as much as “Daddy” Crisp himself, the Rev. Thomas Twining of Fordham, near Colchester, afterwards the translator of Aristotle’s *Treatise on Poetry*. His acquaintance with Dr. Burney had begun over the *German Tour*, for Twining, too, had meditated a *History of Music*, which he abandoned in favour of Burney’s. “They were far from young when they met,” – says Twining’s brother and biographer referring to the new friends, – “and they could ill afford to lose time.”¹⁵ Besides these, there were the foreign professionals who regarded the author of the *Tours* as the supreme arbiter in matters musical: – the celebrated *soprano*, Lucrezia Agujari, otherwise the *Bastardini*; the almost equally celebrated Caterina Gabrielli, and the *Inglesina*, Cecilia Davies; while the men were represented by the singer and composer, Rauzzini, who is so much commended in the *German Tour*, by Gasparo Pacchieroti and others. Finally, there were the “*Lyons*,” – as the diarist calls them, – the Otaheitan Omai, who had

¹⁵ In *Recreations and Studies of A Country Clergyman of the Eighteenth Century* [Thomas Twining], 1882, there are several letters from Twining to Burney and *vice versa*, some of which will be hereafter cited.

come from the Society Islands with Lieutenant Burney; and the Abyssinian traveller, James Bruce of Kinnaird; and last, but by no means largest, for Bruce was six feet four, the Russian “man-mountain,” Alexis Orloff, who had certainly helped to strangle his Imperial Master, Peter iii., and was also – though not so surely – the reputed favourite of that terrible Czarina who, according to Walpole, had even more teeth than the famous Wild Beast of the Gévaudan. The goings and comings of these, and other notables and notorieties, – for those mentioned by no means exhaust the list, – must have been an unexampled school of character to a budding novelist, whose gift lay especially in seizing upon the peculiarities of human nature, whose perceptions were at their freshest and keenest, and whose singularly retentive memory was not yet perplexed and bewildered by too prolonged an experience of the very variegated patchwork of Eighteenth Century society.

Among the first visits to St. Martin’s Street that Fanny chronicles is one from that “most entertaining of mortals, Mr. Garrick.” He arrived, as usual, very early in the morning, marching straight into the study where Dr. Burney, “surrounded by books and papers innumerable,” was having his hair dressed. Fanny was making breakfast; Charlotte reading the paper. Nobody else was a-stir. “My father,” – says Miss Burney, – “was beginning a laughing sort of apology for his litters, and so forth, but Mr. Garrick interrupted him with ‘Aye now; do be in a little confusion; it will make things comfortable!’ ” He then began to look gravely at the hairdresser. (Dr. Burney, it

may be stated in parenthesis wore his own hair, – a crop so bushy and luxuriant that Frances Reynolds persisted in regarding it as artificial.) “He (Garrick) was himself in a most odious scratch-wig, which nobody but himself could dare to be seen in. He put on a look in the Abel Druggier style of *envy* and sadness, as he examined the hairdresser’s progress; and, when he had done, he turned to him with a dejected face, and said, ‘Pray Sir, could you touch up *this* a little?’ taking hold of his own frightful scratch.” At which the hairdresser only grinned, and left the room. But Garrick continued his proceedings in the same mirthful spirit. He made enquiries as to the progress of the *History of Music*, protesting that he was only waiting to blow the trumpet of Fame, which he forthwith proceeded to do with a stick, after the fashion of a Raree-Show-man. “Here is the only true History, Gentlemen; please to buy, please to buy. Sir, I shall blow it in the very ear of yon scurvy magistrate” – by whom he meant Sir John Hawkins of Twickenham, whom Horace Walpole had incited to a rival performance. His final exploit, after mimicking the Spanish traveller, Twiss, and Dr. Arne, Burney’s old master, was to give a dramatic rendering of an interview he had recently had with Johnson, – not yet personally known to the young ladies. Johnson had asked Garrick to lend him a book, and Johnson’s carelessness about books was notorious. “ ‘David, will you lend me Petra[r]ca?’ ‘Yes, Sir.’ ‘David, you sigh.’ ‘Sir, you shall have it.’ Accordingly, the book, finely bound, was sent, but scarce had he received it, when

uttering a Latin ejaculation (which Mr. Garrick repeated) in a fit of enthusiasm, – over his head goes poor Petra[r]ca, – Russia leather and all!”¹⁶ After this the mercurial actor bustled off to give breakfast to Boswell, promising to come soon, and plague them again. By the Burney household Garrick was idolised; but Miss Burney hints that where he was not on cordial terms, he could contrive to make himself extremely disagreeable.

Other early visitors were Bruce, the already mentioned Abyssinian traveller, and the Otaheitan Omai. We will take the traveller first. At this time he had been twelve years abroad, four of which had been spent in unexplored parts of Africa. “His figure is almost gigantic! he is the tallest man I ever saw,” writes Fanny, – who adds elsewhere that he almost frightened Mr. Twining. “I cannot say I was charmed with him; for he seems rather arrogant, and to have so large a share of good opinion of himself, as to have nothing left for the rest of the world but contempt. Yet his self-approbation is not that of a *fop*; on the contrary, he is a very manly character, and looks so dauntless and intrepid, so that I believe he could never in his life know what fear meant.” Despite his hauteur, Bruce seems

¹⁶ “So much of his [Garrick’s] drollery belongs to his voice, looks and manner,” says the *Diary*, “that *writing* loses it almost all.” Yet more than forty years afterwards, in her *Memoirs* of her father (1832, i. pp. 352-3), she expanded the above, about seven lines in the original, to a page and three quarters. It is clear that she worked from the *Diary*, for some of the expressions are identical. But many decorative particulars are added to the record of Garrick’s visit, which are not in the first account. We have preferred the earlier, if less picturesque, narrative. Boswell, of course, has nothing of this anecdote; which was not printed until long after his death.

to have taken to the Burneys. He liked music, and he lodged in Leicester Fields, so he came often to their social evenings. He even favoured the Doctor with two drawings, a Theban harp and an Abyssinian lyre, which were copied for the *History of Music*. The latter instrument prompted some rather obvious gibes about Abyssinian *liars* from Walpole and Selwyn. Bruce, as Johnson said, was “not a distinct relater,” added to which his large, imperious and rather swaggering manner prejudiced people against his stories, and had the effect of delaying his account of his exploits until a few years before his death in 1794. One of his last appearances at St. Martin’s Street was in 1776, when he stayed to supper “which, you know, with us, is nothing but a permission to sit over a table for chat, and roast potatoes, or apples.” But “his Abyssinian Majesty,” as Fanny calls him, neither discoursed on this occasion upon the Abyssinian lyre, nor the merits of raw beef-steaks as a diet. He only told a long and rather stupid story of a practical joke at a masquerade.

Oemiah, Omai, Omy, or familiarly, Jack, – the other “*lyon of Lyons*” – came to St. Martin’s Street upon the invitation of James Burney, whose sister gives detailed accounts of his visits. At the time of the first, the Society Islander, of whom, in his native state, there is a portrait in Cook’s *Voyages*, can only have been a few months in England. But although he had not learned English, he had already acquired all the externals of a fine gentleman. He arrived betimes, after a preliminary note in due form, arrayed splendidly in a Court suit of Manchester

velvet lined with white satin, a bag, laced ruffles (on his tattooed hands), and a very handsome sword which had been given him by King George the Third. Though not handsome, he was tall and well proportioned. “He makes *remarkable* good bows – not for *him* but for *anybody*, however long under a Dancing Master’s care,” writes Miss Burney. “Indeed he seems to shame Education, for his manners are so extremely graceful, and he is so polite, attentive, and easy, that you would have thought he came from some Foreign Court,” – a sentiment which seems later to have prompted a comparison between the lamentable failure of Lord Chesterfield’s precepts to make of Philip Stanhope anything but a “pedantic booby,” and the exemplary rapidity with which Otaheitan Omiah had contrived to “cultivate the Graces.” Miss Burney saw Omiah again before he returned to Ulitea. Upon this occasion, he obliged the company with “a song of his own country,” which, from his subsequent analysis, must have comprised the entire *scenario* of a comic opera. But his audience were too musical, and it was not a success. “So queer, wild, strange a *rumbling of sounds* never did I before hear, and very contentedly can I go to the grave, if I never do again. His [Omiah’s] *song* is the only thing that is *savage* about him.”¹⁷

But it is time – looking to the limitations of our space – to

¹⁷ The fate of Cowper’s “gentle savage” was pathetic. Painted by Reynolds and patronised by Lord Sandwich, – lionised by Lady Townshend and the Duchess of Devonshire, – he was suffered to go back once more to his own people, among whom he had neither status nor importance. He died soon after, having shown himself (says Vancouver) both “vain and silly.” And no wonder!

turn from the specific to the general, and give some account of the St. Martin's Street musical evenings. Already at Poland Street and Queen Square these entertainments had been the rule; and at Newton's house, with the Doctor's increasing popularity, they attained their greatest importance. Moreover, they found, as they had not before found, their faithful chronicler in Daddy Crisp's correspondent. The chief performers on ordinary occasions seem to have been Esther Burney and her husband, their *pièce de résistance* being Müthel's Duet for two harpsichords. Another famous harpsichord player was the Baroness Deiden, the wife of the Danish Ambassador, whose reputation is said to have been European. But the "peacock's brains" of the record was certainly the Agujari, and Miss Burney's enthusiasm overflows. Carestini, Farinelli, Senesino, all Mr. Crisp's old idols, – 'twas to these only that the *Bastardini* could be compared. And she seems certainly to have done her best. She arrived for tea before seven, stayed till twelve, sang almost all the time, permitted her hearers to encore nearly every song, and sang moreover in twenty different styles, minuets, cantabiles, church-music, bravuras and even that popular Vauxhall *misère*, the rondeau, growing at last so excited over an *aria parlante* from the *Didone Abbandonata* ("Son Regina, e sono Amante") that "she acted it throughout with great spirit and feeling." This was pretty well for the lady whom Macaulay qualifies as the "rapacious" Agujari, apparently because, at this date, she was earning fifty pounds a song – which she thoroughly deserved, since people went to hear her

and no one else – at the Oxford Street Pantheon.¹⁸ But she had an exceedingly appreciative audience, limited by her own request to the Burney family; she was tired of singing at concerts, book in hand, “*comme une petite écolière*,” and most of all, she was anxious to give the Historian of Music, who was also all-powerful in matters operatic, a taste of her real quality. It does not appear that she ever repeated her performances at St. Martin’s Street, so that it would be inaccurate to represent her as figuring habitually and gratuitously at the Burney “conversations.”

One of the next things which Fanny recounts to Mr. Crisp is the production, at the Opera House in the Haymarket, of that very *Didone* of Metastasio from which Agujari had borrowed her *aria parlante*. But the *diva* upon this occasion (Saturday, Nov. 11, 1775) was Caterina Gabrielli, who seems to have behaved with all her traditional caprice. The Burney family, who occupied the front row of the first gallery, are terribly divided as to her merits. “She was most *impertinently* easy,” says Fanny, “visibly took no pains, and never in the least exerted herself.” Elsewhere she writes, “Her voice is feeble, but sweetly toned. She has great powers of execution; but – she is no Agujari!” And thereupon, in the contest and confusion of opinion, the writer turns to a little concert that has just taken place in St. Martin’s Street, “at which *assisted* a most superb party of company.” It originated in the

¹⁸ Agujari, according to Grove’s *Dictionary of Music*, was the highest and most extended soprano on record. Her voice reached “from the middle of the harpsichord to two notes above it,” says Miss Burney.

desire of Dr. King, sometime chaplain to the British factory at St. Petersburg, that the famous Prince Orloff,¹⁹ before he left England, should hear Hetty and her husband in Mùthel's duet. Both in her *Diary* and *Letters*, Fanny has treated this exceptional entertainment at considerable length; and she subsequently "embroidered" the record in the *Memoirs* of her father. We shall depend, by preference, upon her account to Mr. Crisp. After introducing the guests as they arrive: – Dr. Ogle, the musical Dean of Winchester; Dr. King, who announces consequentially that the Prince, having dined at Lord Buckingham's, is coming as soon as he has been to Lady Harrington's rout; the *virtuosa*, Lady Edgecumbe ("all condescension, *repartee* (and yet) good humour"); Mr. Charles Boone, the fine gentleman who broke his sword in the staircase; Mrs. Brudenel; Mr. Anthony Chamier – all of whose conversation turns upon the Gabrielli and her performance of the evening before, – one of the *rat, tat, tats* with which the diarist diversifies her narrative, announces M. le Baron de Demidoff, thin, long-nosed, with a most *triste* and foreign countenance. M. de Demidoff travels with the Prince, whose *avant-coureur* he is. He brings the gratifying intelligence that His Highness is detained at Lady Harrington's, but may be expected with the least possible delay. Then follow Mr. Harris of Salisbury, Lord Bruce, a younger brother of the Duke of Montague (who has been to St. Martin's *Lane* by mistake) –

¹⁹ He is generally called "Count." But in her letters, diary, and *Memoirs*, Fanny styles him "Prince."

and so forth. At last – like Charlemagne after his Paladins – appears Prince Orloff, accompanied by General Bawr, a Hessian, stern, martial, who has seen service in the Turkish war. And here we most willingly surrender the pen to Miss Burney. “The Prince is another Mr. Bruce, being immensely tall and stout in proportion. He is a handsome and magnificent figure. His dress was very superb. Besides a blue Garter he had a star of diamonds of prodigious brilliancy; he had likewise a *shoulder knot* of the same *precious jewels*, and a picture of the Empress hung from his neck, which was set round with diamonds of such magnitude and lustre that, when near the candle, they were too dazzling for the eye. His jewels, Dr. King says, are valued at above £100,000. He was extremely gracious and polite, and appears to be *addicted to pleasantry*. He speaks very little English but knows French perfectly. He was received by my father in the drawing-room. The library, where the music was, was so crowded, he only shewed himself at the door, where he bowed to Mr. Chamier, who had met with him elsewhere.”

The Müthel duet, which had been postponed for the Prince’s arrival, was then played with prodigious applause, relaxing even the “sorrowful countenance” of the Baron de Demidoff, who clapped his snuff box rapturously, calling out in broken English, “*Dis is so pretty as ever I heard in my life!*” Lord Bruce, turning to Prince Orloff, told him the performers were man and wife. His Highness seemed surprised, and walking up to Mrs. Burney, made her many compliments; and, expressing his wonder that

two such executants should chance to be united, added “*Mais, qu’a produit tant d’Harmonie?*” To this Hetty, in a flutter, could find no fitter reply than “*Rien, Monseigneur, que trois enfants,*” – that being the extent of her family, – an artless and unexpected answer at which Monseigneur laughs immoderately, and, being “addicted to pleasantry,” retails freely to those about him, with many “droll comments and observations” on Mrs. Burney’s words. “When the room was a good deal *thinned*” – Fanny goes on – “Mr. Harris told me he wished some of *the ladies* would express a desire of seeing the *Empress’s picture* nearer. ‘I, you know,’ said he, ‘as a *man*, cannot, but my old eyes can’t see it at a distance.’” [The truth was, Mr. Harris wished to be able to compare Orloff’s picture of Catherine II. with his son James’s (Lord Malmesbury’s) portrait of the King of Spain.] “I went up to Dr. King, and made the request to him. He hesitated some time, but afterwards *hinted* the demand to General Bawr, who boldly made it to the Prince. His Highness laughed, and with great good humour, desired the General to untie the picture from his neck, and present it to us; and he was very facetious upon the occasion, desiring to know if we wanted anything else? and saying that if they pleased, *the ladies* might *strip him entirely!* Not very elegant, methinks, his pleasantry! When we got it there was hardly any looking at the Empress for the glare of the diamonds. Their size is almost incredible. One of them, I am sure, was as big as a *nut-meg* at least. When we were all satisfied it was returned, and the Prince most graciously made a bow to, and received a curtsie

from, everyone who looked at it.”²⁰

In the remainder of Fanny’s letters to Mr. Crisp, she gives an account of a further concert arising out of the famous duet. This time the principal guest was the Count (afterwards the Duke) de Guines, the French Ambassador, who was not only a *virtuoso* of the first order, but an accomplished flute-player, who had the reputation of having dared to beard that other distinguished performer on the same instrument, Frederick the Great. His Majesty had said to him impatiently and impertinently – “*Je vous prie, qu’est-ce que fait votre maître quand il ne peut pas chasser De Guisnes?*” The Count – a typical aristocrat of the pre-Revolution days – shrugged his shoulders, and made answer, “*Il est vrai, Sire, que mon maître n’a pas le bonheur de savoir jouer de la flûte,*”²¹ a retort more dexterous than deserved, since Frederick, whom Dr. Burney had listened to at Potsdam, was not by any means a mere amateur. Lady Edgumbe had talked so much to M. de Guines about the duet, that he expressed a great desire to hear it, and a second concert had to be arranged. The company convened on this occasion included Lord Ashburnham, “Groom of the Stole, and First Lord of the Bedchamber,” the Baron and Baroness Deiden, Lord Barrington, Lord Sandwich (“Jemmy Twitcher,” to wit), and Signor Venanzio Rauzzini, the “pius Æneas” to the Dido of Gabrielli. Rauzzini was vainly implored to indulge the company with a *Rondeau de sa façon*—i. e. from his own *Piramo*

²⁰ *Early Diary*, 1889, ii. 121.

²¹ *Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach*, 1826, ii. 125.

e Tisbe; but he pleaded the professional cold. Fanny is enchanted with the young Roman's appearance. "He looked like an angel," she writes. "Nothing can be more beautiful than this youth. He has the complexion of our Dick, – the very finest white and red I ever saw: his eyes are the sweetest in the world, at once soft and spirited: all his features are animated and *charming*." " *'Avez vous une Assemblée chez vous tous les Dimanches,'*²² cried he, to my father. *'Je viendrai une autre fois quand je pourrai chanter!'* Only think how we were *let down!* *'Une autre fois!'* cried Hetty; *'Une autre fois!'* echoed Susette; *'Une autre fois!'* still more pathetically echoed your humble servant." But he contributed his quota to the gossip about the Gabrielli; and when the oft-told story was repeated as to the extraordinary ceremonial parade she observed in quitting the Opera House on Saturdays, with first a running footman to clear the way, then her sister, then herself, then a page for her train, then another footman, and then a man out of livery to carry her lap-dog in her muff, – Rauzzini interjected, "*Et puis, une autre pour un singe, et un autre pour un perroquet!*" As to "Mrs. Gabrielle" (for so she styled herself on her Golden Square doorplate), it is manifest that her reputation for whim had created considerable prejudice against her. But in the *History of Music* Dr. Burney, who knew her intimately, is

²² Dr. Burney evidently had mild qualms about these Sunday concerts. When after the first occasion here referred to, Dr. King and Dr. Ogle supped at St. Martin's Street, he said that he hoped for *absolution* from them if there was any crime in having *music on a Sunday*. To which Dr. Ogle replied discreetly that music was an excellent thing *any and every day*; and Dr. King evasively – "Have we not music at church?"

much milder in his expressions than the more excitable members of his family. He says that despite her low origin (she was the daughter of a Cardinal's cook at Rome), she had extraordinary grace and dignity of gesture. She was, moreover he declared, the most intelligent and best bred *virtuosa* with whom he ever conversed, speaking like a well-educated woman, who had seen the world, not only on music, but on other subjects. "In youth," he writes, "her beauty and caprice had occasioned an universal delirium among her young countrymen, and there were still remains of both sufficiently powerful, while she was in England, to render credible their former influence."

That Fanny's detailed despatches delighted her correspondent at Chessington, is only to be expected. "You have produc'd such an illustrious assembly of Princes, and generals, and lords, and ladies, and wits, and pictures, and diamonds, and shoulder-knots, that I feel myself shrink into nothing at the idea of them, – nay, you yourself that made one among them, seem to be a little dazzled at their glare." And then Mr. Crisp rallies her upon her evident admiration of the "beautiful Rauzzini." In another letter there is a significant sentence. "You have learned from that R[ogue] your father (by so long serving as amanuensis, I suppose) to make your descriptions alive" – an utterance which, while it throws some light on the vexed question of Miss Burney's style, also recalls us to the progress of that *History of Music*, in which she bore so laborious a part. In March 1775 it had come to a "dead stop" owing to Dr. Burney's rheumatism, which

prevented him from writing; and in April it was scarcely moving. “My father’s History goes on very slowly indeed at present... He teaches from nine to nine almost every day, and has scarce time to write a page a week.” Still, it gradually progresses, and in October, Fanny is able to report that the first volume is ready. “The History has been this very day, for the first time since its long cessation, put into the press[?]. It is now *rough* written to the end of the first volume, Preface and Dedication inclusive. When it is actually *published*, we intend to keep the Carnival.” A few days before, the Dedication to the Queen had been read by Dr. Burney to an admiring friend; and in 1776 the first volume was issued, when, we may conclude, the Carnival was duly kept.

But of this, unhappily, no record has been preserved; and it was some years before a second volume gave the busy Doctor opportunity for a further jubilation.²³ Beyond the fact that the Burneys, and Fanny in particular, made friends (through the Stranges) with the Miss Paynes, daughters of the famous old bookseller in Castle Street, “next the Upper Mews-Gate,” whose L-shaped shop was so well known to Eighteenth Century bibliomaniacs,²⁴— little remains of interest from the records of 1775. For 1776 there is no journal at all, what had been written having been “destroyed in totality,” as consisting wholly

²³ The second volume appeared in 1782, and the third and fourth volumes, completing the work, in 1789.

²⁴ In September, 1785, Miss Sally Payne married Captain James Burney, Fanny’s brother.

of family matters or anecdotes; and save for a very graphic picture of the slatternly Duchess of Devonshire in St. James's Park, no very attractive correspondence, although Mr. Crisp refers to a "conversation piece" which Fanny drew of the fine company at the house of Sir James Lake, the great portrait collector, which should have been good to read. "If specimens of this kind had been preserved of the different *Tons* that have succeeded one another for twenty centuries last past," he writes, "how interesting would they have been! infinitely more so, than antique statues, bas-reliefs, and intaglios." In a fragment dated 2 December there is a vignette of Nollekens the sculptor, "a jolly, fat, lisping, laughing, underbred, good-humoured man as lives: his merit seems pretty much confined to his profession, and his language is as vulgar as his works are elegant." Mrs. Nollekens (the very handsome daughter of Fielding's friend Justice Welch), his wife, is also mentioned: "a civil, obliging, gentle sort of woman; rather too complaisant." Then there is a costume-piece of "Miss B – *something*, a sister-in-law of Mr. Hayes of the Pantheon," and not entirely unsuggestive of Lady Louisa Larpent in *Evelina*; "a young lady quite *à-la-mode*, – every part of her dress, the very pink and extreme of the fashion; – her [head] erect and stiff as any statue; – her voice low, and delicate, and mincing; – her hair higher than twelve wigs stuck one on the other; – her waist taper, and pinched evidently; – her eyes cast languishingly from one object to another, and her conversation very much *the thing*." Decidedly "Daddy" Crisp was right in saying: "To do you

justice, Fanny, you paint well!”

For the next year, 1777, there is only one letter to Mr. Crisp; but it is an important one, since it gives Miss Burney’s account of her first meeting with Dr. Johnson, to which accident, indeed, it owes its preservation. Dr. Burney had for some time known Johnson slightly, – he had written to him from Lynn with regard to the Dictionary; he had also met him at intervals; and, as we have seen, Johnson, notwithstanding his insensibility to music, had read and appreciated the *Musical Tours*. Writing Dr. Burney’s *Memoirs* in extreme old age, his daughter seems to have thought that Johnson had already accompanied her father to Winchester to put his youngest son, Richard, under the care of the then Head Master of that day, Joseph Warton; and that he had also, before this date, interested himself to procure Dr. Burney access to the libraries at Oxford. But her memory must have led her astray, for both these things, as is plain from Boswell, belong to 1778, while Miss Burney’s “first sight” of the great man demonstrably took place on the 20th March, 1777,²⁵

²⁵ *Early Diary*, 1889, ii. 153; Birkbeck Hill’s *Johnson’s Letters*, 1892, ii. 5, and note.

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