THE PERSONAL LIFE

OF

JOSIAH WEDGWOOD
JOSIA

BY HIS C.

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REVISED AND ED
A PREFACE
THE AUTHOR

C.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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1915
THE PERSONAL LIFE
OF
JOSIAH WEDGWOOD
THE POTTER

BY HIS GREAT-GRAND-DAUGHTER, THE LATE
JULIA WEDGWOOD
AUTHOR OF "THE MORAL IDéal"

REVISED AND EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND
A PREFATORY MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR
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PREFACE

The present volume was the chief occupation of its author during the last four or five years of her long life. Miss Wedgwood had long desired to make more familiar the life of her great-grandfather, and at the same time to put on record many early memories of the two ensuing generations which would otherwise have vanished at her death. The correspondence of Josiah Wedgwood with his friend and partner Bentley, which occupies many volumes in the Wedgwood Museum at Etruria, offered a rich fund of information about his personal as well as about his business life which none of Wedgwood’s biographers—not even the laborious and talented Miss Meteyard, whose work, moreover, has long been out of print—had fully utilised. Before Miss Wedgwood’s death in November 1913 the book had made substantial advances towards completeness. But failing health, without actually interrupting her work, had latterly impaired her power of working effectually; and notwithstanding the aid of an unusually able

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and devoted secretary, Mrs. Edith Slater, in providing and sifting the material, the literary form, both in arrangement and expression, fell far short of the high ideal of intellectual clarity, coherence, and power which had animated the writing of her prime. Some time before her death she asked the present Editor to undertake to complete the book should she be compelled to leave it unfinished. Such a request, at the close of an intimate friendship of more than thirty years, could not be refused. To me it has been not so much a sacred duty as a labour of love to do what I could to disengage this last literary labour of my old friend from the flaws for which not she, but only the burden of her fourscore years, otherwise so lightly borne, was responsible. No attempt has been, or could be, made to distinguish between the Editor’s work and hers in detail. But some chapters, especially II. and VII., have been reconstructed and some pages rewritten, and probably not more than a third of the sentences remain exactly as they stood. The Editor has also supplied a new Introduction, and a short Memoir of Miss Wedgwood herself.

The grateful thanks of the Editor are due to the Wedgwood family for facilities of every kind, especially in providing material for the Memoir; to the Museum at Etruria for the loan of the Wedgwood correspondence; to Mrs. Slater, who
is probably better versed than any other living person in the minutiae of Wedgwood's life, for many notes and corrections; to Messrs. Nisbet & Co. for permission to reprint some extracts from Miss Wedgwood's letters to Mrs. Russell Gurney; to the Proprietors of the Spectator for a similar permission in regard to a notice of Miss Wedgwood contributed by him to its columns; to the Editor and Publisher of Emma Darwin's Letters in respect of some extracts from that volume; and to the Chief Librarian of the Manchester Reference Library for exceptional facilities in the use of books.

C. H. H.
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Josiah Wedgwood (II.). From a plaque modelled by Hackwood.

Mrs. Josiah Wedgwood.

Tom Wedgwood.

Mrs. R. W. Darwin.

Memorial to Josiah Wedgwood in Stoke Church, Staffs.
FRANCES JULIA WEDGWOOD

A MEMOIR

BY THE EDITOR

The author of the present biography came, on both sides, of families which had been of intellectual note two generations at least before her birth. Her father, Hensleigh Wedgwood, grandson of the first Josiah, was a trained lawyer, and a philologist who, with little training, showed a severity of scruple in handling the laws of sound-change, then very unusual in England. His *Etymological Dictionary*, despite the enormous subsequent advance of the science, is still of solid value, and he criticised the later but often looser work of Skeat with trenchant effect. He applied, moreover, the same severity of scruple to his own circumstances and position in a fashion even more rare, resigning his lucrative office as a Lambeth magistrate because he could not reconcile the imposition of oaths with the commands of the New Testament. He married, in 1882, his first cousin, Frances, daughter of Sir James Mackintosh, author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* and of the defence of Peltier, one of the most distinguished lawyers and most brilliant conversationalists of the day. Julia, born
February 6, 1838, was their first child. She was known almost from the beginning, and among her intimate friends to the end, by the beautiful name "Snow"; and under the title of "Snowiana" her mother collected the early sayings of the lively little girl, some of them sensitive and tender, others anticipating the crispness and sparkle of her later conversation. At two, the granddaughter of the famous pleader was already "romancing and acting and speechifying." At six, her father's imperious conscience was already asserting itself. After a quarrel with a younger brother, "Snow was rather naughty," we are told; but at bedtime, having repented, was heard to say to her brother, "Oh, Bro., I can't bear it, turn your face towards me, kiss me, Bro." Which "Bro.," having first cautiously inquired, "Is your face wet with tears?" consented to do.\footnote{Letters of Emma Darwin, edited by her daughter, H. Litchfield, i. 460.}

The Wedgwoods, with the closely intermarried and equally prolific families of the Allens and Darwins, were a large clan; and Snow grew up in the frequent companionship of troops of cousins, both of her own and of an elder generation. Of one of the latter, Erasmus Darwin, an engaging portrait has been left by Carlyle.\footnote{Reminiscences, ii. 208. "He had something of original and sarcastically ingenious in him, one of the sincerest, naturally truest, and most modest of men . . ." He was a beloved friend of both husband and wife. Cf. also a letter on him by Miss Wedgwood herself, Spectator, Sept. 8, 1881.} His younger brother, Charles, married, in 1839, Snow's aunt Emma Wedgwood, and Mrs. Darwin's letters yield most of the glimpses we possess of Snow in these early years.
MISS F. J. WEDGWOOD.
FRANCES JULIA WEDGWOOD

In the country house of Down, in Kent, whither the great naturalist and his wife moved three years later, Snow and her two small brothers spent the summer months of 1842 during a serious illness of their father's. Here a childish adventure, not without risk, took place; the children were lost in the woods, and Snow, now aged nine, won general admiration by the firmness with which she met the situation, dragging a small cousin over muddy fields and high stiles and keeping him and herself in resolute good spirits.¹ At a later time, when the Darwin house was full of children—all made intimate companions by their father and mother—it was Snow who summed up the character of that delightful household by the remark that "the one room where you could be sure of not meeting a child was the nursery."²

Though she was to become widely accomplished, and in subjects then rarely explored by women, Julia Wedgwood owed little to formal education. Her father, characteristically exempt from the egoism of parents, made somewhat light of the capacities of his able children, and discouraged their ambitions,—to their lasting disadvantage, his eldest daughter thought in after life. She attended school only for a few months of 1847. The really vital moments of her education were those in which her mind, at once delicate and powerful, was brought in contact, at the most sensitive periods of youth and early womanhood, with a succession of distinguished spiritual teachers. James Martineau,

¹ Letters of Emma Darwin, ii. 52. ² Ibid. i. 468.
Alexander John Scott, Frederick Denison Maurice, and Thomas Erskine of Linlathen—it was no common privilege to sit at the feet of four such men; nor was it an ordinary woman who, after outgrowing the ardent discipleship of girlhood, could pass on into a close friendship, only terminated by their death, with them all.

The influence of Martineau, though in a doctrinal sense the first to be overcome, was nevertheless, it may be, the most important of all. For it found her a keen and precocious girl of thirteen, in his sister's school at Liverpool, vaguely hungering for something to which her home circle, with all its rare endowments of mind, temper, and circumstance, offered little clue. The Wedgwood stock, from which, on one side, both her parents sprang, was of the best staple of English eighteenth-century intellect and character, but it shared the limitations of the type. Laborious, practical, inventive, of strong understanding, and enlightened conscience, its characteristic temper was positive, cheerful, sensible, but somewhat unimaginative and matter-of-fact. And such certainly was the groundwork of Julia Wedgwood's mind. But it was crossed and enriched in her by qualities of quite another order, pointing to a lineage of mystics and transcendentalists, philosophers and poets—qualities actually derived, it may be, from the fervid Highlanders of her maternal grandfather's ancestry, little as Mackintosh's own verbose sobriety of style would augur anything of the kind. To these qualities, in any case, the teaching of her four spiritual masters
would powerfully appeal; and Martineau, it is probable, for the first time made the girl keenly aware of the great heritage of human thought and imagination which she was to explore with so eager a zest. "He opened to me the door of intellectual life," she used to say.

Some outwardly uneventful years intervened, during which, living quietly at home, she laid the foundations of her later substantial if not quite impeccable command of Latin and Greek, of Vergil and Plato and the Fathers. To these years belongs also her first acquaintance with Alexander John Scott, a follower of Edward Irving and preacher in the Irvingite Church in London, who in 1851 was appointed first Principal of the Owens College, Manchester, and professor of philosophy there. Frequently a guest in his house, she became intimate with many members of the circle which centred in the Manchester home of Mrs. Gaskell. Shortly before his death, in 1866, an earlier acquaintance with the recluse mystic, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, ripened into one of the closest friendships and deepest interests of her life. Every summer from 1865 till his death, at eighty-two, in 1870, she spent many weeks in the spiritual seclusion of his Forfarshire home. The first summer was made memorable to her by her meeting there with another of Erskine's devotees, Mrs. Russell Gurney. Their friendship ripened with wonderful swiftness. "How can it be," wrote Mrs. Gurney later, "but that it began in a sort of spiritual tropics where wonder-flowers bud and blossom independently of the usual succession of seasons";
and it remained the treasured possession of both until Mrs. Gurney’s death in 1896. During the later ’sixties the movement for the higher education of women, heralded, half a century before, by Mary Wollstonecraft, was gathering volume in Liberal England, and Hensleigh Wedgwood and his wife took active part in founding the Queen’s College in London, in 1848, for its definite promotion. Bedford College was opened shortly after. The lecturers at the two institutions included several men of high distinction, among them Francis Newman and F. D. Maurice. “Snow” Wedgwood was an auditor of both, and in the teaching of Maurice encountered what was probably the strongest spiritual influence of her life. The fame of Maurice has waned with a generation which does not easily recover the focus of his narrow but intense vision, and for which his elusive eloquence is not quickened by the magic of personal contact. Yet he had an extraordinary power of inspiring sensitive natures; though the first effect of the stimulus was sometimes, in the more gifted of them, a violent reaction, in which the very bases of faith were put on their trial. It was thus with Miss Wedgwood. “His teaching was more impressive than Martineau’s,” she wrote, nearly half a century afterwards, “but also more monotonous.” “While Martineau’s was elastic, various, suggestive of problems, and opening vistas on every side, Maurice never lost sight of certain central truths, which threw their own strong light on every subject. . . . By the very fact of being kept always in the presence of strong convictions,
I was led to consider the foundations of all belief, and roused to a spirit of critical questioning which in many cases became antagonism. Life seemed, in the presence of that teaching, more solemn, more simple, than one could feel it in any other atmosphere, and one was forced to ask oneself whether the difference lay in the facts or in the mind confronting them.... However, the presence of a profound faith was what remained to me as the deepest influence of his teaching, when the phase of reaction . . . had passed away.”

Of the quickened social unrest, too, of these years—the years of the European revolution, and of Chartism, she saw something at first hand. Maurice himself was one of the leaders of that Christian Socialist movement which sought to meet the crying economic needs of the time by the joint power of the workmen and the Church; and Julia Wedgwood attended the meetings, and breathed the stimulating air of large hopes and eager ideas, unreservedly put forward in that rare frank intercourse between workshop, pulpit, and country-house. “I ought,” she humbly adds, “to have been something larger than I am.”

It was Maurice also who first encouraged her to literary effort, sending her word, through a friend, that she was “one of the few young persons whom he would advise to write.” She did not, however, as a writer mature early. Her

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1 A letter by Miss Wedgwood to the Woman's Herald, May 28, 1891, giving a summary account, at its editor's request, of her career and aims. Its most salient statements have been incorporated in the present memoir.
2 The Woman's Herald, u.s.
3 Ibid.
first serious piece of writing was a dialogue on "The Boundaries of Science," intended to rebut the theological arguments which then caused widespread difficulty in regard to *The Origin of Species*. It was published in *Macmillan's Magazine* (July 1861), and brought a letter of kindly praise, and what was doubtless yet more valued, serious and interested comment, from the great naturalist to the young kinswoman who had entered the lists on his behalf.¹ "I think that you understand my book perfectly, and that I find a very rare event with my critics."

Between her twentieth and thirtieth years she produced two novels, of refined charm but showing little dramatic or constructive power; then, at thirty-three, her first essay in the study of religious ideas, a Life of Wesley, still regarded by Wesleyans, we believe, as the best biography of him not composed under sectarian auspices. It was, however, only a prelude; and soon after its appearance in 1866 she settled down to the systematic study of ethical history in the civilisations of the world, which issued, twenty-two years later, in the great work of her life, *The Moral Ideal* (1888; second and enlarged edition, 1907). Chips from her workshop and occasional fragments of her work appeared from time to time during these years, chiefly as articles in the *Contemporary* or the *Spectator*. The title was, as she confesses in the beautiful dedication "To an Old Friend," a makeshift.² She might

¹ The letter is published in *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, edited by his son, i. 318.

² It may now be made known that the "Old Friend," as she told the editor in confidence ten years ago, was Robert Browning.
have called the book "A History of Human Aspiration," but that, in a volume of moderate compass, would have suggested irony; and it was not strictly a "history" of anything at all. Yet she would not have denied that she had attempted in some sort to express the soul of history, the inner temper, the guiding inspirations, of the dominant epochs of the past. The Moral Ideal is, in effect, an essay in the history of civilisation, based upon the principle that men and nations are finally to be interpreted not by what they did, nor even by what they wrote and said, but by what they aspired after. That she dedicated it to Browning is easily explained.

But no one knew better that historical aspirations can be deciphered only through the record of words and deeds, a task demanding immense equipment, capacity, and patience. It was, as has been said, the result of more than twenty years' labour, much of it effected in the hours between 5 A.M. and a late breakfast, a habit she maintained in all seasons until within a few months of her death. In mere erudition these chapters are remarkable enough. No doubt Miss Wedgwood’s powerful synthetic imagination was somewhat ready to sum up the ethics of an entire nation in a speaking formula, such as "India and the Primal Unity," "Greece and the Harmony of Opposites," "Rome and the Reign of Law"; and she cared little for the obscure, incipient, and intermediate phases of ethical evolution. But her interpretations of its great salient epochs are of enduring value. They are contributions
to the history of ethics; contributions, moreover, of an historian for whom the past was still alive, in the sense that she regarded the succession of the "Moral Ideals" slowly evolved by it as vital material which must be taken up into the completed Moral Ideal of the future.

Both in what it does and what it declines to do, The Moral Ideal—like her later study of a portion of the field, The Message of Israel in the Light of Modern Criticism, 1894,—vividly reflects a very distinctive trait of Miss Wedgwood's mind, the pervading blend of the rational and the mystical temper, of which I spoke above. In The Message of Israel she applied the results of criticism, with equal candour and devotion, in the service of a regenerated Hebraic religion; believing that "the work of criticism is fitted to restore to us our Bible with the freshness of a new Reformation."

The crossing of opposite strains in a mind often leads to a deadlock, or even to mental bankruptcy. In Miss Wedgwood it led to a dualism of mutually fertilising principles, each gaining vigour from the other's challenge. Like Kant, she was at once a powerful reasoner and an inexorable critic of reason; anti-rationalist to the verge of fanaticism in temper, yet a most subtle and formidable wielder of every logical weapon. The great religious mystics who most deeply influenced her spiritual life excited none the less, as we have seen, the criticism of her keen intelligence. She could be provoked by the "rhetoric" of Maurice—"the pouring out
of his indefinite yet vehement ideas, as it were, over all the difficulties that they do not touch"; ¹ she could even write almost with irritation of the Linlathen household, absorbed in "the eternal principles" in the midst of a political crisis, and find that "even the bread of life would be more palatable accompanied by more of life's intellectual condiments." ² Yet these critical flashes did not disturb her enduring sympathy with precisely what was mystical, even impalpable, in their thought. For all her beliefs she had apt arguments, for all her arguments felicitous words; but no belief was more radical with her than that the best part of truth is that which evades our thinking, and the best part of thought that which evades our speech. It belonged to this inborn dualism that she could accept all that science had to say, and yet insist, with a heightened access of the grave intensity which (with gleams of quiet humour across it) was her most usual mood, that the deeper truth begins where "science" ends. This is interestingly illustrated by her relations with her famous kinsman, Darwin. As a much-beloved uncle and cousin, in whose house she had been intimate from childhood, a man of less than his distinction and personal magnetism might well have deeply influenced an able girl; and we have seen that her first essay was a paper in defence of his doctrine. But though she eagerly read at his bidding Mill's Logic ("which, I think, he had not read himself"), the most definite effect of his influence, a lasting and permanent

¹ Letters of E. R. Gurney, p. 68. ² Ibid. p. 47.
one, upon her was to entrench her the more firmly in her spiritual idealism by helping her to a clear idea of "science." That very defence took the form of an attempt to define its "boundaries." And while treasuring every chance of his rich and suggestive talk, she remained conscious that they belonged to different worlds of thought. She used to tell how she had once tried to induce him to read the Critique of Pure Reason, and how he returned the book shortly, reporting that it said nothing to him. A fine sentence which bears upon this contrast of their two worlds was often in her mind: "God has so arranged the chronometry of our spirits that there shall be thousands of silent moments between the striking hours." She counted faithfully the striking hours, but the sphere of her more peculiar insight and interest lay in the silences between. It was the main work of her life, in the book by which she will chiefly be remembered, to make some of these silences speak.

During the greater part of her long life Miss Wedgwood suffered from deafness. She was thus cut off from all general conversation, from a good deal of ordinary intercourse, and from music. But these disabilities perhaps even quickened her delight in pictures, and in making water-colour sketches, singularly choice and delicate in quality, of her own; while it increased her opportunities for talk with a single intimate friend—and almost all her friendships were intimate—particularly for that delightful form of intimate talk which remains on record in the
form of letters. In part because other forms of intercourse were relatively difficult she found in letter-writing a kind of liberation, and she moved in this medium with spontaneity and zest, like a born swimmer breasting the sea. Her letters thus reflect with exquisite delicacy the complexion and colour of her mind, its subtle play of imagination, its eager spirituality, and its shrewd and masculine good sense. The art of playing delightfully with trifles which is sometimes held to be the last and rarest grace of the letter-writer, and reaches its height in the “divine chit-chat” of the Cowpers and the Lambs, was scarcely hers; the “trifles” either arrested her interest by some unsuspected beauty and significance, or else they fell out of her field of vision altogether. Her writing was never perfunctory, and the careless beauties which flow from some pens quand l'esprit flotte ailleurs were as foreign to hers as those elaborated by conscious literary art. But many an unsought beauty found its way into these transparent records, which portray her even more vividly than her books, and naturally give a clue to much in her experience of which her books are silent. She often wrote, for quiet, in the early morning; and such a prelude as “It is 5 A.M. and for two hours I am secure from interruption,” distinguished her from many otherwise gifted letter-writers. A small number of her letters have already been published; in particular some of those addressed in the flower of her years to Emelia Russell Gurney—the friend, of rare and kindred gifts, ten years her senior, whom she first met,
as already mentioned, at Linlathen.¹ If the history of the more intimate and sequestered intellectual and religious life of the nineteenth century should ever be written, it will contain few choicer pages than the intercourse of these sister-spirits.

We are permitted to quote the following from her letters to Mrs. Gurney during 1870–71:

How thankful I am for you that the first return of all these days most loaded with memories of sorrow [the anniversary of her mother’s death] should find you thus occupied, their barbs sheathed in this atmosphere of love. Oh, how it seems at times as if days bristling with recollections that tear one’s heart can never subside into a mere framework for any other experience! And yet they do thus subside, and a chance date awakens recollections, which, while one realises their poignancy, one can scarcely believe have slumbered. Yet it is best that they should slumber; we cannot receive their message while we are overwhelmed with their weight. We shall learn most from our past when emotion has gone out from it, and we can contemplate it in the calm of a perfect acquiescence in all the decisions of God, not only for ourselves, but for others. Till then I feel grateful for the gradual fading of these memorial characters on one’s mental character, knowing eternity must have the power of reviving them.

Oh, Emily, I cannot tell you how thankful I feel for such books as my uncle’s [Charles Darwin’s], that drive us from the miserable little corner where we seek to shut up all divine energy, and force us to listen for the voice at our ear. If not here, then never and nowhere. That alternative, far from alarming me, is what I rejoice at, for I cannot think that when men once awaken to it,

¹ Letters of Emelia Russell Gurney. Edited by her niece (Nisbet, 1902).
they will be satisfied with this deaf, dead, mechanical sound, that seemed not so unnatural while people thought God was less occupying Himself with us than He used to do.

I feel such a longing for a word with you, I must yield to it. Your forget-me-nots are still beside me. All the rich turquoise blossoms which caught your eye have withered away, but other buds, diminished and colourless—mere ghosts of flowers—have had strength just to open, and show a faded and shrunken suggestion of what the ideal is, when it draws sap from its own root in the far-off country streams, and not from mere stalks stuck into artificial reservoirs here in this unflowery London. And I cannot fling away the poor stalks that put forth this poor ghostly echo of the true flower, feeling them such a symbol of my life, all colourless and shrunken as it is—of our lives—let me say, of the lives that attach themselves to a mere stalk—the root being some far-off reminiscence that can only be recognised as a hope. When shall we see the real blossom, the flower of humanity in the fulness of colour and form that came from a real root?

I was looking at Orion last night through the shifting clouds, and the two seemed to me such a symbol of the things of eternity and the things of time, and then I thought how much more one estimated the stationary objects when one contemplated them through that changing medium, and how much truer a value might be gained of the everlasting when we had gone thro' all the changes of time.

We are also permitted to quote the following extracts from her letters (hitherto unprinted) to a friend of later years, considerably younger than herself.
On Ruskin:

The name of Ruskin is to me like a bar of long familiar music, when I hear it the graves give up their dead. I recall the first excitement,—the upheaval as of some intellectual watershed—all the eager or indignant opinion it stirred up;... and then the inevitable. I stopped for a word for it seems unfair to write disappointment... of his personality. It was, I think in several ways an engaging one, but could not but be a slight bathos after the effect of his eloquent pen. No one, in my experience, ever originated so much discussion, everybody had an opinion about him, whether or not they had read a line of his writings. His influence seems to colour the middle of the last century as I cannot feel any influence colours the beginning of this or indeed the intervening years. Is it that I was young then, or would that be the view of literary history?

The following may be quoted as expressing a mood which entered into all her friendships, and haunted especially her more intimate correspondence:

I find it very difficult to answer yours with any adequate expression of what it is to me. If I allowed myself to put it into words adjusted to and suggested by my feelings the result might seem exaggerated and be even disconcerting. And if I receded from that ditch I might be much nearer misconception. I can hardly exaggerate what your sympathy is to me, so much does it recall as well as suggest. And in some ways, as you imagine, it is enhanced and needed by a vast solitude. Oh how vast is the solitude of human life! If looking back we reckoned up the milestones of the soul, they would be found in no event, as events are cognizable from without, but in the moments when we felt another spirit near our own! And then in the strange mystery of consciousness our own spirit first becomes known to us. We wait for those revealing moments of neighbour-
hood to know ourselves. They are but moments—but they illumine all the dark hours with their memory. Dear . . . , you wonderfully understand some things in my life which very few understand.

The following passages, lastly, illustrate her attitude on the Suffrage question, and also her characteristic tenderness for a cause of which, after supporting it earnestly for many years, she had come to disapprove, but which was still dear to many of her friends:

I am allowing myself just as a personal luxury to send a contribution to your Bazaar (in support of the Suffrage Cause) (not to bring any purchase, please, but to help it in any way that seems most helpful), and I must add a few words of explanation. I should certainly see the Conciliation Bill pass most gladly if I thought it would mean a goal, and not merely a brief halting place. But as I am convinced it is only the latter, I have sadly and reluctantly given up my wish, which in former days was an endeavour, for Female Suffrage. . . . Still I do not see that this debars me from the trifling self-indulgence I have spoken of, and so I allow myself to send you this trifle which I hope you will not feel tainted by the confession which accompanies it.

You would be amused at one result of the snow-storm here—a stately colossal statue of a really well-carved dame in the garden, with “Votes for women” on her capacious bosom. The sculptors must have been delighted to see with the returning west wind how she lost her head first, thereby I suppose becoming a more fit representative of her class in the eyes of her creators.

Letter-writing was, for her, as we have said, a kind of liberation. But in spite of the obstacle of deafness she also delighted in con-
versation with a single friend, and was, like her maternal grandfather, highly adept at it. Her talk was extremely varied, copious, and brilliant; and she talked not for display, or for victory, but because her mind was full. She had none the less a very keen relish of conversational quality, and could express herself with much frankness when A. had been prosy or B. monosyllabic. But that deep-seated distrust of the adequacy of words and thoughts of which I spoke above made her final estimate of men and women singularly independent of either their talk or their opinions. With some of her closest friends she had scarcely an article of faith in common, unless it were the proposition that the faith which can be put into articles cannot be final. Little concerned with the detail of politics, she felt deeply upon its larger issues. At twenty-one, on the Crimean War, and afterwards on the Indian Mutiny, she took sides strongly against the policy of national self-assertion. Thirty years later, when Ireland was the absorbing question, her attitude had changed. The Home Rule split left her an ardent Unionist, and in this camp she remained to the end. Without abandoning her critical attitude towards traditional orthodoxy, she became a devoted Churchwoman, and contributed largely to the building of churches. The sufferings of animals were an enduring sorrow to her, and she was an ardent and generous supporter of the cause of anti-vivisection. But, as has been said, her friendships stood in no obvious relation to these causes. She had intimate friends among
strong Liberals and advanced thinkers in religion as well as in politics. That is happily not uncommon; but intercourse between them can rarely have evolved so constantly the sense of a fellowship deeper than creeds or policies, as did theirs with her. She used playfully to lament that she had "no intellectual bigot" among her friends. Deepest of all in her was the passion for righteousness, the divine fire which glowed in Greek as in Hebrew, and of which policies and creeds, in their noblest exponents, are the partial, the stammering, expression.

Miss Wedgwood retained her vigour without serious abatement until within a few months of her end. Her last years were spent not far from one of the earliest London homes of her childhood; and she used to insist on identifying the tall trees of the garden with those that had overhung an old-world lane, long vanished, which she had loved as a child. Between her seventieth and eightyeth years she had to face two terrible anxieties,—the prospect of cancer and of blindness; but the one peril was removed by a successful operation, and the other advanced so slowly that to the last she was able to read without difficulty. How easily her mind bore its weight of years may be judged from her entering, when her eighth decade was half over, upon the formidable biographical labours of which the result is now given to the world. The small, slight figure with the grave, absorbed eyes under the massive brow, was no longer often to be encountered, noiselessly moving along the catalogue shelves
in the reading-room of the British Museum. But she continued as of old to work at her desk some hours before London—outside Covent Garden—was awake. From the beginning of 1918 she rarely left her rooms, but until the summer continued to be keen and fresh in conversation. Then a change became apparent; during the early autumn she rapidly declined, and on November 26 quietly passed away. A few days later her ashes were laid in the beautiful hill-side churchyard, near Idlerocks, of the church she had helped to build.
INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR

Josiah Wedgwood confessedly occupies a niche of no little distinction in the crowded temple of eighteenth-century invention and industrial art. Yet he was no prodigy of rare and astonishing genius, no Bernard Palissy or Benvenuto Cellini, performing miracles with the scantiest means; but simply the greatest of a race of master-potters who for four generations had "thrown" and moulded on the Burslem heights, and not greatly superior to contemporaries, like Turner, whose fame has been all but obliterated by his own. Outside pottery he was simply a very shrewd and energetic Georgian Englishman.

Nevertheless, his career has long been recognised as of unusual and singularly varied interest. Beginning as a poor lad and making his way unaided to wealth, influence, and renown, he touched the life of his generation at very many points, besides providing the author of Self-Help with an unsurpassed illustration of his theme. In politics, economics, education, in engineering, mineralogy, and chemistry he has something to say, apart from his extraordinary contributions to the technique of his own art. And he has, in
a rare degree, the added importance which the founder of a family derives from the distinction and achievements of his descendants.

I

Industrial progress, invention and discovery in the practical arts, and whatever increases man's mastery over the materials and forces of Nature,—this was the field of Wedgwood's dominant preoccupations, where his mind was spontaneously alert and active from first to last. Between the dates of his birth and death (1730–1795) lies the epoch of most fruitful invention in the history of modern Europe; and the zest of it is nowhere more contagious than in the genial, homely letters written by Josiah Wedgwood to his partner and intimate friend Thomas Bentley. In the pages of this memorable document, which fills many volumes in the Etruria Museum, we catch his dominating interest in every variety of aspect. When he goes a journey, his alert eyes are busy noting "improvements" of every kind; at Cromford he is disappointed at being refused admission to Arkwright's mill, the inventor allowing few to observe "his ingenious performances"; and year by year he watches with fascinated admiration the career of "princely Boulton," the creator of the famous Soho works at Birmingham. Wherever man has put forth his hand to tame or transform nature, Wedgwood's response is instant and warm. At Matlock he rejoices to see a barren and stony hill-side turned into grass and corn, and the beetling crag
of the Tor traversed by a path. Adam, a poor man of Matlock, who made the path, is the first of heroes in his eyes. "Let me here stop to tell you, my dear boy," he writes to his son after mentioning this, "that this poor man... by a well-timed exertion of his ingenuity and industry, has acquired more real fame than many noble lords. . . ."

In a man of this temper we evidently must not look for any trace of the enthusiasm for "Nature" which, towards the close of his life, was taking shape in the verse of Cowper. The choice of "scenes" which he made for the Empress Catherine's dinner-service included, indeed, not a few of what were then called "fine prospects"; but these were mostly views of the parks and mansions whose inclusion was calculated to gratify their noble owners, and Wedgwood's native bent in these matters is much more clearly seen in the picture of the canal which traversed the Etruria works.

Canal-making was, indeed, during the central years of his life, an interest with him scarcely second to pottery itself. The provision of inland communication by roads and artificial waterways was, in England, the tardy achievement of the second half of the eighteenth century. France had made her first canal a hundred and fifty years before, and was in every point of inland communication far ahead of us. After the Duke of Bridgewater and Brindley no one did more to make good this deficiency than Wedgwood. His initiative and devotion had the largest share in procuring the construction of the great Trent
and Mersey Canal and its branches, which connected the Potteries and Birmingham with Lancashire and the North and Irish Seas.

It was the act, in the main, of an astute man of business. The problem of carrying delicate and fragile wares brought Wedgwood’s canal into being, as the need of conveying coal had prompted the Duke of Bridgewater’s. The canal was a great business tool, superior both in economy and efficiency to all that it replaced. And Wedgwood introduced the same efficiency into every stage of the fabrication of pottery. He abolished the rough rule-of-thumb methods, the dirt, the disorder in which the older potters were content to work. Regular hours of labour, punctually observed and enforced, characterised Etruria, and this was the first large manufactory in the country to announce them by a bell. Above all, Wedgwood stood for thoroughness and precision in the work itself. As Boulton set himself against the fraudulent workmanship which had won a bad name for Birmingham metal-work, so Wedgwood insisted that his wares should be good to use as well as to look at. “The lids fitted, the spouts poured, the handles held.”

He was himself everywhere, controlling, experimenting, the ubiquitous master-mind, and the best workman in his factory. His place in the history of industrial organisation is no less assured than his place in the history of ceramics. But organisation, like canal-making, was, for his practical intellect, only a more effectual tool for the better making of earthen vessels.

1 Church, D.N.B., s.v. Wedgwood.
II

It was the same practical need that drew him to scientific experiment, and won him finally a respectable place in the annals of the primitive chemistry of that day. As a young man he had alienated a less enterprising partner by his costly experiments with novel combinations of different clays. Later, he saw the value of certain chemical compounds for texture and colouring, and manufactured jasper—his most brilliant discovery—from a foundation of sulphate of baryta. His study of the effects of fire upon infusible clays in the furnace led to his invention of the "Pyrometer," and to his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society. Even by the standards of that day he was not a great chemist; but he followed with liveliest interest the chemical and physical investigations of his friends, and took a leading share in organising a fund to enable Priestley, the most distinguished of them, to devote himself entirely to science. At the meetings of the "Lunar Society" of Birmingham, one of the oldest of the "philosophic" societies of the Midlands, he was an infrequent but enthusiastic visitor. And in return, the old potter's researches in heat-measurement were followed with keen interest in Paris by one of the most original chemists of the day, Lavoisier.1

1 On the chemical and other technical aspects of Wedgwood's works see the Appendix.
III

Wedgwood's rank as an artist is higher and more indubitable than his rank as a chemist; but his artistry, like his science, grew out of the needs of the potter, and ended with them. In his wealthy later days he bought, and to a moderate extent collected, pictures; he commissioned a large canvas of his family from Stubbs, and, it is said, a portrait of himself from Wright of Derby; but his few extant judgments suggest that he judged the painted figure very much as if it were a cameo or a bas-relief. In music his taste was elementary. Even in the ceramic field his insight and comprehension of figure and subject are insecure in comparison with his true and delicate instinct for colour, and for the simple grace in form and grouping which distinguish Etruria's wares from the showier splendour of Soho. It was not merely outer circumstances or business interest which led him to his unremitting emulation of Attic art. That the homely provincial, put to work at nine years old, unacquainted with any country and (save for a little French) with any language, but his own, should have been the founder of a school of pottery which rejected all vernacular ceramic idiom to express itself in a tongue distinctively learned and exotic, is no doubt a paradox. And it is true that Wedgwood's ceramic language, persistently classic as it is in intention, falls gravely short, to our present standards, of perfect scholarship in Attic art; while its relatively high achievement must be largely credited to the
FLAXMAN.

Model in Wax. Falcke Collection.
"VINI 01
CALIFORNIA"
skill of famous artists, such as Flaxman, who worked in his employ. Moreover, the "antique" note fell in with a definite vogue in the English taste of the time, which was especially pronounced among the cultivated nobility, who were his most important clients. The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a disposition, under many different aspects, to recover "original" forms of art and literature, while the elegant artifice of the Augustans steadily lost ground. At the outset of Wedgwood's career this new symptom of taste was nascent but recognisable. In one quarter it appeared as a cult of mediaeval ballads and Gothic architecture, led by Percy, the editor of the Reliques of Ancient Poetry (1765), and Horace Walpole, the builder of Strawberry Hill (1758–76). In another quarter it inspired the "return to Nature"—the cultivation of simpler speech and more unaffected manners, of an education released from scholastic pedantry, and a morality freed from the vices of civilisation—the ideals preached by Rousseau from 1750 and Cowper from 1780. In yet other regions the alluring ideal was the art and poetry of Athens, the genuine "antique," just beginning to be recognised by discerning spirits, but still dimly and tentatively beyond the derivative work of Rome and of the "pseudo-classic" seventeenth century. Stuart and Revett's measurements of the Parthenon (Antiquities of Athens, 1761) inaugurated the scholarly study and reproduction of Attic architecture; Robert Wood's "Essay on the Original Genius of Homer" (1769) discredited the dominant conception of
him as a rude precursor of Vergil; and the fastidious genius of Gray scandalised the Latin conservatism of Dr. Johnson by emulating in English Odes (1755) the strophic arrangement and diction of Pindar.

Of all these symptoms little or nothing was known to Wedgwood, or would have had any interest for him. But they make it easy to understand the immense and rapid vogue which his imitation "antiques" secured. Imperfect in Attic scholarship as the best of them were, they fully reached the level of comprehension of Greek art then prevalent even among connoisseurs; and to the well-to-do laity all over Europe they brought a genuine revelation of refined beauty, greatly promoted by its happy union with superior practical efficiency. Wedgwood, by sheer native instinct, unconsciously obeyed the Horatian recipe for success: *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.* His classic elegances were borne home beyond appeal by that silent advocacy of the spouts that poured and the lids that fitted. But there was something of his genius, too, in the bent towards Attic art which, imperfectly as he achieved his aim, he so steadily maintained. *Studia abeunt in mores* was hardly true of him, simply because, between his character and his art, there was a kind of elemental consonancy which forestalled any moulding influence of the one upon the other. The frank and genial simplicity of a character to which affectation and disguise were unknown passed over into his judgment and his taste, and determined his steady preference for a type of art in which
these qualities were transparently clear, however subtly mingled with others which he could not penetrate.

Doubtless there was loss as well as gain in the classicism of Wedgwood. The puzzle-jugs, loving-cups, and posset-cups and the like, of the rude Old English pottery which he superseded, had quaintness and humour and individuality and the zest of the native earth. They call up visions of Eastcheap, they might have been quaffed by Falstaff and the rest of that disreputable immortal crew. Wedgwood's ware takes us rather to a dinner of amiable dilettanti, absorbed in discussion of the last finds in Rome. Novalis's comparison of Wedgwood to Goethe, cited by Gladstone half a century ago, and rarely omitted at Etrurian banquets since, was meant of the Hellenising poet of the later Weimar period only, and in that sense it is not extravagant; for the imitative classicism of an *Achilleis*—nay, of a *Hermann und Dorothea*—was hardly of greater account for European culture than was the pottery of Wedgwood. Otherwise it is pointless and even absurd; for Goethe's supreme and enduring work was done in *Faust* and in his songs, where the soul of poetry is in intimate fusion with that national and familiar life which Wedgwood's art almost wholly excluded.

The debt of English and European society to Wedgwood's art is, then, when all reserves have been made, definite and substantial. It concurred with and, so far as mute matter may, contributed to fortify, nascent ideals of simple and cheerful elegance, of decorous and rational
enjoyment, of easy good breeding and unfettered but not random converse. If Wedgwood must be compared with any poet, we should think rather of Cowper, a no less genuine Englishman, who stood, in verse and prose, like him, for a fastidious simplicity and a cheerful uninebriating joy.

IV

Pottery was the work of Wedgwood's life. But as we have seen, many other interests, which sprang from this, throve alongside it in his alert and energetic mind. And there were others again, not directly generated by it, which it perceptibly coloured, fortified, or warped. In politics, for instance, he took an active, at certain crises even a leading, part; in the education of his children he struck out a way of his own; in matters of religion he had pronounced and characteristic sympathies, if hardly reasoned convictions. Wedgwood's intellectual power was not of the kind which welds into coherent unity the whole complex of a man's beliefs; and he fell, quite honestly, into gross inconsistencies which brought upon him undeserved but very natural charges of desertion and false play. His opinions on matters outside his craft would not of themselves deserve study. But they have their due place in the study of the social group in which the master-potter of Etruria was a distinguished yet broadly typical figure. Even where his importance as an individual is least, his life remains a luminous and characteristic page in the history of the industrial revolution.
INTRODUCTION

Wedgwood’s closest friends all belonged to a group drawn together mainly by the zest of scientific invention, but also sharing in various degrees advanced opinions on politics and religion. They opposed the American War and acclaimed the French Revolution; they mostly professed the rationalist Unitarianism, then in its heyday. Wedgwood’s dearest friend, Bentley, had been a pillar of liberal religion in Liverpool before he became his partner; Priestley occupied a Unitarian pulpit in the intervals of his researches in chemistry, and incurred the destruction of his laboratory by openly celebrating the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. Erasmus Darwin, his most familiar intimate after Bentley, was the “universally-curious” dilettante of the group, prolific and indefatigable alike in devising machines, in criticising the style of trade pamphlets, in giving advice on the education of children, or in contriving tormented poetic panegyric for some champion of Liberty.

In this group Wedgwood moved with evident ease. The prevailing cast of opinion was to his mind, and accorded with that in which he had grown up. But he was capable of energetic assertion of principle when it was unpopular or even unsafe. He was a staunch “American” throughout the great war, and a generous supporter, later, of Wilberforce and Clarkson’s crusade against the slave trade. He at all times honestly counted himself, and was generally accounted, a “friend of liberty.” But his conception of liberty was coloured by trade and class interest. The “liberty” of the manu-
facturer, as he conceived it, was equally infringed by imposts and by the competition of other manufacturers; and his two most prominent interventions in politics were when, within a very few years, he led the opposition to Pitt’s bill for free trade with Ireland, and helped to bring about the Treaty of Free Trade with France. Of his attitude towards the French Revolution little can be said. He probably disapproved, and certainly did not emulate, the democrat fervours of his admired friend Priestley. Yet there is no trace of reactionary sentiment in him. Though on terms of cordial friendship with many enlightened noblemen, and frequently received at their tables, he neither forgot, nor yet unduly asserted, the dignity of his own rank as a manufacturer and artist. When his son, as a boy at school, inquired through his sister whether he ought to address his father’s letters “Mr.” or “Esquire,” which latter the courtly Bentley was accustomed to use, he was told to keep to the bourgeois “Mr.” Not many men who lived in the style of an affluent country gentleman would have decided so.

His sons, as usual in such cases, when they had power to choose, decided to be country gentlemen pure and simple, and dropped, sooner or later, all but a formal connection with the works. But Wedgwood, while leaving them free, had designed their education on the assumption that they would enter business; and his design, carried out in his own house under his own supervision, is one of the interesting curiosities of that age of educational reformation and
experiment. He was one of the first to organise regular lectures on chemistry for young people. Of defined educational theory the great potter had little enough; but it was not for nothing that he was one of the earliest readers of the English version of *Emile*, and the intimate friend of the English Rousseauist Edgeworth.

Religion, in the theological sense, had little part in Wedgwood's life. His religion was to make perfect vases. But, like most of his friends, he accepted and supported the rationalistic Unitarianism of that day. Mysticism and religious emotion were wholly foreign to his positive temper, established dogmas and ritual to his liberal creed. The Unitarianism of Priestley and the Warrington Academy avoided either peril with entire success. We find Wedgwood busying himself with genuine concern to secure a minister for the Newcastle pulpit. Yet when preaching threatens to take the place of chemical experiment, the relative hold of the two upon his mind is instantly laid bare; and he is foremost in the field in providing a subscription to enable Priestley to dispense with the labours of the pulpit which he had accepted.

Finally, Josiah Wedgwood derives a reflex interest and importance through his sons and daughters and their descendants and connections. That his eldest daughter became the mother of Charles Darwin would suffice to justify some curious lingering over the faded family records
of her life, and her sprightly letters to her father. The relations of his two younger sons to Coleridge and Wordsworth and their circle, and the story, still in some points obscure, of their annuity to the former, give them an enduring place in the history of that memorable group. Tom Wedgwood, the younger of the two, is still recalled as one of the most fascinating figures in an age of wonderful young men; close friend of a great poet, but cut off too early to give more than the doubtful promise of genius—the Arthur Hallam of his generation, had but his poet "remembered" him to equal purpose! What the poet neglected the latter-day biographer must piece together as he can; and all that is now possible has been accomplished for Tom Wedgwood in the recent Life to which reference is made in the text.

The English eighteenth century has many passages more stirring and splendid than the career of Josiah Wedgwood. Branded by Carlyle's scorn as an age of spiritual sloth, that century was in truth an age of momentous origination,—in mechanism, in conquest, in scholarship, in poetry. To many of these new beginnings the potter of Etruria was cheerfully indifferent; not a few lay altogether beyond his ken. But he stood at the very heart of the movement of industrial discovery, and he reflected his impressions and ideas about it, day by day, in a correspondence which unites the fulness and vivacity of a memoir with the veracious intimacy of a confidential document. He is thus among those who make most real to
us the driving inspirations and practical working of a movement which may perhaps finally be recognised as having not less vitally contributed to the strength of modern England than all the sensational conquests of the Seven Years' War.
CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE (1730–1760)

The sixty-five years which elapsed between the birth and the death of Josiah Wedgwood belong to a period of awakening energy in industrial development, of expanding human sympathies, and of a certain compensatory narrowing in the horizon of thought. It was a time of growing self-consciousness in that middle class which must always be the kernel of a great nation; its excellences and its defects alike were those of an age which demanded definite practical results, which did not ponder or brood, which remained within the limits of accepted truth, and did not willingly or habitually explore new ground. This character is stamped upon the literature of the time, especially upon its earlier portion. It is coincident with the influence of Pope. But it is seen even in the poetry that is touched by the breath of a new era. The homely, delicate, natural images of Cowper, the choice and finished verse of Gray or Collins, the "wood-notes wild" of Robert Burns touch on no problem, open no vista, stir no depth of human speculation. The thinkers of this period neglect, ignore, or deny
all matter of human thought or interest that neither appeals to the senses nor supplies material for demonstration. Its preachers address the poor, the ignorant; men whose lives are too full of suffering and struggle to ally their faith with thought; exceptions to this rule have the brilliancy of isolation. Men's mental vision was, we may say, curtained off from the Invisible and the Eternal that they might for the time devote themselves to that world of the visible and the transient in which so much was to be achieved, transformed, and renewed. The vast Beyond was hidden, it seems, that this present world might be illuminated and improved. Josiah Wedgwood is a typical expression of this sturdy, unspiritual, industrious age, exhibiting its virtues and advantages, its prejudices and limitations, in all their force and in all their distinctness.

The trade which was to bring him fame and fortune was no creation or adoption of his; it had been for several generations the support of the industrious clan into which he was born. It would, however, have been despised by his remote ancestors, who used armorial bearings and occupied a certain position as landowners in a small way. Their origin is obscure. They early deserted the little hamlet of Wedgwode, in North Staffordshire, from which they took their name, and which must have been unfortunate in soil or other circumstances, for in

1 The etymology of Woden's Wood has been suggested, and as Wednesbury—Woden's borough—another Staffordshire town, is pronounced Wedgbury, it seems probable. See Notes on Staffordshire Place Names, by W. Duignan, 1902.
1811 it and the neighbouring village of Brindley Ford included only 105 inhabitants between them, and it is now represented by a single farmhouse, looking across the valley of the upper Trent. By the end of the thirteenth century we find Weggewode or Weggeswood a regular surname. The founder of the family fortunes was a certain John Wedgwood,¹ who married, about 1470, the daughter and heiress of John Shaw of Harracles;² and their descendants are touched by more than one historic side-light testifying to their importance, if not to their merits. His grandson, the second John Wedgwood of Harracles (1490–1535), described in a contemporary document as a yeoman, was twice brought before the Court of Star Chamber on charges of riotous conduct; while his son, the third bearer of the name, was entrusted in 1563 with a function of some dignity and much opportunity of gain—for one not troubled by scruples—the collection of a subsidy.³ By means familiar to all who have farmed the public taxes, this office was rendered a lucrative one; his relations certainly, his friends probably, were omitted from the list of tax-payers drawn up by him, and their pecuniary acknowledgment must have accounted for

¹ See A History of the Wedgwood Family by Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., 1908, pp. 8 and 17. This work, by the present member for Newcastle-under-Lyme, a great-great-grandson of his illustrious namesake, is my authority for all that concerns the Wedgwood ancestors. It will be referred to here as The Wedgwood Family.

² The estate of Harracles is now represented by a dignified seventeenth-century farmhouse near the source of the Trent, with a fine oak staircase speaking of better days. It seems to have been built about 1680, and of course occupies the site of a much older building.

³ John Ward, History of the Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, 1848, Appendix XIII.
much of the large fortune that swelled his landed property. His son and heir, the fourth John Wedgwood of this line (1540–1589), is in one sense the most familiar of the series to posterity, for we may still gaze upon his spare, almost ascetic countenance on a brass in Horton Church near Harracles.¹ It looks like that of a man much older than forty-nine, his age at his death, but bears the stamp of faithful portraiture, and is not unpleasing. His comely wife kneels opposite him; their eight children surround them. One other link between these early Wedgwoods and history may be noted. This John Wedgwood was a distant cousin to, and friend of, Sir Edward Fitton, whose daughter Mary, maid-of-honour to Elizabeth and mistress of the Earl of Pembroke, was till lately identified with the dark lady commemorated in Shakespeare’s sonnets. This theory has been disposed of,² but even a fallacious association with Shakespeare suggests so much that is worthy of remembrance as to deserve a passing mention.

The direct ancestry of Josiah Wedgwood starts with Richard, second son of the fire-eater twice carried before the Star Chamber, with whom, however, the fierce lawlessness of the earlier stock seems to have become extinct. A second fortunate marriage in the family connected Gilbert, grandson of this Richard Wedgwood, with the town which was to be their home for many generations; but it seems at the same time to announce their social decline. Burslem,

¹ See The Wedgwood Family, p. 82.
one of the "five towns" now known collectively as the Potteries,\(^1\) which have in this first decade of the twentieth century been made familiar to the reader of fiction by more than one successful novel, and to the student of municipal history by their recent federation, appears in Domesday Book and other early records in various forms. The form in Domesday, Barcardeslim, is an obvious error, the copyist having introduced a c. Mr. Duignan\(^2\) gives Burhweardes-hlimme—Burhweard's stream. In 1686, when Plott published his history of Staffordshire, it was already the chief seat of the Pottery manufacture. Traces of ancient ovens have been discovered in the district, and perhaps the work may never have entirely ceased; at any rate it does not seem possible to name a date when the modern development of the business took its start. But at the time of Josiah's birth, Burslem was a mere group of thatched houses, with strips of gardens, crowded together on the top of a low hill; and John Wesley, a generation later, had no difficulty in finding an open space within the limits of the town to address his large audience. Traces of the local industry were then probably seen mainly in unsightly patches and pits where the clay had been dug away. It was still, at any rate, a rural abode.

The transition from the riotous or dignified

\(^1\) So they appear in Mr. Arnold Bennett's fiction; they are in reality six: viz. Hanley, Burslem, Stoke, Longton, Tunstall, and Fenton. They were, in 1910, federated into the borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, with a population of 250,000. It includes several smaller towns, Etruria being one of them. A great-great-grandson of the subject of the present memoir, Mr. Cecil Wedgwood, was the first Mayor.

\(^2\) *Notes on Staffordshire Place Names*, p. 28.
gentry of Harracles to their bourgeois descendants at Burslem came about quite naturally, through the fact that the descendants of Gilbert Wedgwood and Margaret Burslem increased more rapidly than their wealth. And so early did they decide to become prosperous potters instead of needy gentry that, in the second decade of the eighteenth century, out of the forty-two potworks of Burslem six were owned by different members of the family. The fame which was to attach to the name in the trade was already beginning; Aaron, fifth son of Gilbert Wedgwood, and two of his brothers are found, soon after the Revolution, making red-ware with success, in connection, perhaps in actual partnership, with the famous brothers Elers, to whom the introduction of red-ware is commonly held to be due. And the series of Thomas Wedgwoods who stand to Josiah in the relation of great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and brother, all reached an

1 The Wedgwoods were a prolific race. A review of several generations gives a minimum of six, and a maximum of eleven. Gilbert and Mary were parents of ten children and were grandparents of some fifty or sixty. Josiah himself was one of ten children, and his father one of eleven.

2 Cf. Church, *English Earthenware*, chap. vii.; *The Burlington Magazine*, Feb. 1908; and *The Wedgwood Family*, chap. viii. The Elers brothers were of German origin, and came over at or shortly after the Revolution. They introduced the salt-glaze method, and were especially famous for their red-ware. By 1693 they had won sufficient success to be the subjects of a chancery suit brought against them by an English potter, Dwight, for illicit imitation of his ware. With them were associated as defendants Aaron, Thomas, and Richard Wedgwood of Burslem, who are described in the indictment as having "entered into partnership" with the Elers. The Elers pleaded that they had learnt their methods abroad. The answer of the Wedgwoods is lost, and it is possible that they made red-ware independently of their connection with the Elers. But they are much more likely to have owed the secret to the younger men. Aaron in 1693 was a man of about seventy.
at least estimable level as potters, and never fell very low.

Josiah's great-grandfather, the first Thomas Wedgwood of this branch (1617–1679), seems nearer of kin to the subject of this memoir than any other of his ancestors. He married the only daughter and heiress of John Shawe of the Churchyard House, where he lived with his father-in-law until he succeeded, in 1669, to the Overhouse property. His lengthy and elaborate will shows a concern for the education of his children, especially of his daughters, such as was then and long afterwards very rare. "The careful provision for his children's education," says his descendant, the historian of the Wedgwood family, "occurs in no other of the many wills of the period I have seen, and for girls in something above the yeoman class, education was in 1679 considered superfluous." It is disappointing to have to add that his eldest daughter Margaret, who married and survived the curate of Burslem, signed her will only with her mark, so that her father's care for education, irrespective of sex, must have been an afterthought of his later years; but at least he passed it on to her, for she also desires in this will that a certain sum should be set aside for the education of her two younger children, Daniel and

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1 The Wedgwood Family (p. 108 and App. II., III.) gives the history of the Shawes' title to this house. The grandfather of John Shawe, having married, in the reign of Henry VIII., the sister and heiress of John Astbury, curate of Burslem, took possession of the late curate's house. In the next century the property was claimed as church land by the rector of Stoke, but as it remained in possession of the Wedgewoods it is probable that some compromise was made.

Katharine, having probably felt keenly in her own person, as a clergyman’s wife and widow, the disadvantages of illiteracy.

This Thomas Wedgwood must have been successful as a master potter, for he bought land in Burslem on which he constructed new potworks, probably those which were afterwards called, from their situation, the Churchyard works, and became the scene of the first labours of his great-grandson. His second son (1660–1716) and namesake, Josiah’s grandfather, who inherited the Churchyard estate, was thus started in life as a man of property. The income he derived from his father’s works, which were on a very modest scale, must indeed always have been small; but it was supplemented by bequests of land from him and from others of their kindred. His easy circumstances are evident in his purchase of one of the best pews in the church for £7, and his standing among his fellow-townsmen by his filling the office of churchwarden, more thought of in his day than in ours.

But the prosperity of the Churchyard works was short-lived. Thomas Wedgwood (1685–1739), the third bearer of the name in a direct line from Gilbert, seems to have been but a poor manager. Mary Stringer, his wife, is said to have brought a little property into the family; it can have been only a little, as she was the daughter of an obscure Nonconformist minister. The young couple set up about 1707 a small potwork of their own in the village. Ten years later, however, on the death of the second Thomas Wedgwood, they returned to the Churchyard
CHURCHYARD HOUSE AND WORKS.
house and works. But in neither place did they put much energy or initiative into the manufacture; and there are signs that Josiah's father left his affairs in some confusion.\(^1\) His will has one unpleasing touch, a stern exclusion of his daughter Anne from any benefit under it, for some offence to which we have no clue.\(^2\) But there is a faint tradition which would suggest happy relations with his workmen.

Josiah, the subject of the present memoir, was baptized on July 12, 1730. Biblical names were much in favour among the potters; the Wedgwood pedigrees alone exhibit, besides those already mentioned, among others, Kezia, Abner, and Daniel within a generation or two; the name Josiah occurs here for the first time. He was born into a busy home. Potting was still a home industry, and was carried on, during his youth, in the same modest dwelling—a thatched house adjoining the churchyard—in which Wedgwoods for generations had worked successively with the aid of a single oven. Josiah's health was always frail, but his temperament, reflected in his charming letters, was eminently cheerful, and he would seem to have had a happy childhood. For playground there were the strips of waste land still

\(^1\) The Executors, Samuel Stringer and John Wedgwood, refused to act, and it looks as if there was not enough in the estate to pay the legacies. A bond, dated June 8, 1727, records his debt to Margaret Wedgwood of Jackfield of £50, and he and his son paid interest on this at least to the year 1746, showing that the profits of the potwork did not suffice to discharge this small debt.

\(^2\) The words 'except my daughter Anne' occur twice within a few lines, as if guarding her disinheritance anxiously. Perhaps her marriage to a certain Philip Clarke had displeased him. She was on friendly terms with her brother Josiah, who mentions a visit to her on her sickbed as late as 1776, and her brother John left her a legacy.
left in the village, for playfellows some score of young kinsfolk, and for daily inexhaustible interest the fascinating processes by which the clay was fashioned into baking-dishes, milk-pan, jugs, and pitchers, and then carried off by the "cratesmen" on their pack-horses, along the rough Staffordshire lanes, to sell.

But play-time soon came to an end, for at the age of seven Josiah was sent to a day-school at Newcastle-under-Lyme, walking the distance of three and a half miles, each way, to and fro. We know nothing of this first phase of his education, but may venture to believe that no part of his brief school-time can have been altogether wasted. The only record of these too brief school-days is a tradition that he used to cut out of paper wonderful representations of battles, fleets, and similar exciting objects, and stick them along the sloping desks of his school-fellows, to their delight and his master's displeasure; but the rough sketches in his letters show that he was no draughtsman, and suggest a later origin for the legend. His schoolmaster must have had unusual qualities, and few men whose only schooling has been from their eighth to their tenth year can have owed so much to their teacher. His influence, or something associated with it, must have endowed Josiah Wedgwood with that indescribable quality which more than any amount of knowledge makes the difference between cultivated and uncultivated men.

His school-time ended with his father's death in 1739. His eldest brother, the fourth Thomas Wedgwood of the Churchyard (1717–1778),
inherited the paternal fortune, burdened with the claims of the younger children for maintenance, and was unable apparently to afford any further expense for their education. After a well-taught childhood, Josiah had no more of what we are apt to call, exclusively, education. How much in that narrow sense we exclude which is truly educating is manifest in many lives, distinguished and undistinguished; but no career can ever have embodied a stronger protest against such exclusiveness than that of Josiah Wedgwood. We find among his letters some which might be written by a man with a University education, many which would seem to presuppose an average schooling, none which bear the stamp of illiteracy.\footnote{The instances of mis-spelling in his letters are far fewer and less glaring than would be found in the letters of many contemporaries his superiors both in rank and educational opportunities.} The only sign in his letters that his schooling had ended with his childhood is in his occasional use of a word the meaning of which he evidently does not know. He ceased at ten to be taught, but he never ceased to learn. We find him, when his trade begins to grow prosperous, but long before guineas can have been at all abundant, eagerly beginning to form a library. In 1762 he is buying what must have been the most expensive new book of its day, a quarto edition of Thomson’s poems, beautifully illustrated, and so fine a specimen of typography that a volume was for some time exhibited in a show-case at the British Museum. A wealthy man’s purchase of an Italian masterpiece probably represents a far smaller sacrifice than Josiah Wedgwood’s purchase, and we may be sure it
was not the only instance of the kind. He was a patron of literature before he became a rich man.

He began early to exercise his trade. At ten we find him working with another brother in one small room in the family dwelling. But few branches of the trade were practicable for a child, and his progress in these continued unimpeded only about a year. When he was eleven years old the smallpox visited Burslem, and Josiah was one of its victims. He recovered, indeed, but he rose from the attack bearing the seed of permanent ill-health, which assumed various forms in after life. The most distressing of these was pain and stiffness in the right knee, ending in permanent lameness. A temporary improvement allowed him, at the age of fourteen, to become his brother’s apprentice; otherwise this infirmity would have precluded the claim to learn “from the said Thomas Wedgwood his Art Mistery Occupation or Imployment of Thrower ¹ and Handleing which the said Thomas Wedgwood now useth.” He struggled on with much difficulty, but when in his sixteenth year found it necessary to give up this part of the manufacturing process. To resign a delicate and critical kind of skill which he had made his own, and take up such obviously less important work as could be done in a half-recumbent position, might seem equivalent to giving up all prospect of distinction in his craft; it, in fact, secured his path to the technical and artistic accomplishments by which

¹ Throwing is casting the clay upon the potter’s wheel and moulding it during the revolution, an art in which bodily agility is indispensable.
he was to transform it. So little do we know the good and ill of events! But at the time the trial must have been heavy; it might have soured a poorer nature. Josiah Wedgwood might have been excused if his bearing under lameness had resembled the morbid irritability of Byron; it in reality recalls the self-forgetful cheerfulness of Scott. He must have suffered for years more than they did, and his misfortune was a hindrance in earning his daily bread; yet never, as far as appears, did the trial throw any cloud over his buoyant spirit. His letters, it is not too much to say, could not have been written by one who had ever indulged a morbid thought.

Almost the only fact known to us concerning the brother under whose roof and control Josiah Wedgwood remained thirteen years is one which rouses misgivings as to his faithful guardianship. His father had left small legacies—£20 each, a sum equivalent to at least double the amount in present money value—to his six younger children, Thomas being entrusted with the duty of payment from the property in his hands. Though this property was increased by a bequest from a cousin, the heiress of the family, Mrs. Egerton, and his will shows him to have been a man of comparative wealth, we find that two of these legacies, those to his sisters, were left unpaid at his death in 1772. It was Josiah, as his brother's executor, who in 1776 stepped in and paid them.¹ This remissness has never been

¹ The author of The Wedgwood Family throws doubt upon this story. The existence of the receipts from the two sisters (in the Mayer MSS.) seems to me sufficient evidence for it (Meteyard, i. 218).
explained, and it is difficult to imagine an explanation which would justify it. The separation of the brothers at the end of the apprenticeship did not, however, result from any dissatisfaction with the business on the part of Josiah. For the apprentice, on the completion of his term, proposed to his brother to take him into partnership. The proposal on the part of a youth of nineteen betokened great consciousness of power; but we cannot wonder that it met with a decided refusal. Yet the lame and sickly youth, without capital, and under age, had not long to wait for another partnership. The small firm of John Harrison and Thomas Alders invited the keen young potter to join them; but their desire for profit and his for discovery led in different directions, and the partnership lasted less than two years. It was followed by a much more satisfactory alliance. Thomas Whieldon of Fenton Low was a man of much energy and industry, and one of the best potters of his day. He had struggled upwards from very small beginnings, carrying his own wares at the outset, on his back, to Birmingham, a tramp of thirty odd miles. He had a turn for bright colour, and specimens of his green and tortoise-shell ornaments still figure as "Whieldon ware" in collections, while visitors to the Potteries may still drive through "Whieldon Road." It was apparently in 1753 that he offered partnership to young Wedgwood, and it is evidence of the reputation his experiments in technique were winning, that the articles of agreement expressly stipulated that he should be free to practise secret processes of
his art—a condition implying great confidence in his character as well as in his resources. He presently justified that confidence by the discovery of a beautiful blue-green glaze; and the small dishes for pickles and preserves, and especially the snuff-boxes, which introduced it to the public, met with a ready sale. Snuff-boxes had been a stock article of Whieldon ware, and the finest specimen of Josiah’s art at this time was the superior snuff-box he now turned out, ornamented with enamelled patterns, and lustrous with the improved glaze. The snuff-box was still a most important accompaniment of social intercourse, serving equally to open a conversation and, as in the classical case of Sir Joshua, to quench a bore:

When they talked of their Raphael, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.

Wedgwood’s dainty little boxes, now the prize of the collector, could in his day hardly aspire to enter the society frequented by a Reynolds, where gold or silver was still the rule; but they came rapidly into request in social gatherings of somewhat less distinction. They may be taken as the first stage of Wedgwood’s progress in that dexterous combination of use and ornament which was to be one of his chief marks as a potter.

In 1758 the agreement with Whieldon terminated, and it was not renewed. We read of the close of their relations with a certain disappointment. But here again it is not difficult to suggest explanation. Whieldon was already a
master-potter when the little Josiah was walking across the fields from Burslem to his Newcastle school; and if he and his young partner entirely agreed as to the degree of submission which the one should impose and the other accept, they were somewhat unusual people. Perhaps, like his predecessors, he thought Wedgwood's experiments disproportionately expensive, valuable as he had discovered them to be. Moreover, the young man had had during this partnership a long illness; for whole months his aid had been lacking, and the cause—his diseased leg—was likely to prove equally disastrous in the future.

But whether or not this disability told against him with Whieldon, it is certain that his illnesses often brought him good fortune. On at least three occasions they led to a large and unexpected enrichment of the life they seemingly marred. The smallpox had shut him out, as a boy, from the thrower's bench, but opened his path to research; a similar attack later on had interrupted the progress of his early trade and success, but with similar compensations; finally, an accident confined him at Liverpool for weeks, far from his business and his home, but introduced him to Thomas Bentley. During these preliminary years—1751 to 1759—Wedgwood lived in the neighbouring town of Stoke, lodging with a draper, Mr. Daniel Mayer. Mayer was a man of substance, and had built his own house, with a shop, in the centre of the town. Behind stretched a large garden, long since covered with houses and streets, but then offering, we may
surmise, a pleasant outlook from Wedgwood's sick-room window, or a suitable nook for reading. Of the relations between Mayer and his inmate we know nothing, but they would hardly have lasted so long had they been other than cordial. He benefited also, during the later years of his residence, by a new and happy connection. His sister Katharine married, in 1754, the Rev. William Willett, minister of a Nonconformist chapel at Newcastle, a man of culture and benevolence. Willett's library was at his brother-in-law's service, and, supplemented as it was by his advice and instruction, it became a priceless boon to the young student.¹ Nor was it his only resource. Before the days of circulating libraries people bought books, and Josiah's friends were willing to lend them. In spite, too, of the large drain of ill-health on his resources, he was now in a position to buy a certain number himself. His genuine delight in books is testified by his repeated declarations that the very best thing that he hoped from his trade was that it should yield him provision for a life of study. His later life, no doubt, shows that other desires were yet stronger. Books inevitably could not keep the same place in the life of a busy manufacturer, and in later life his wife could twit him with being fonder of buying than of reading them. But the wish to possess them, at any rate, remained strong, and in 1779 we find him sending to Bentley a list of a hundred

¹ We find Wedgwood writing to Bentley after Willett's death:
"Pray have you not found a written catalogue in your library of my late brother Willet's books?" (Aug. 2, 1779).
books from a sale catalogue which he desired for the Etruria library. ¹

And he was generous in furthering the means of knowledge for the district at large. He had previously, in 1760, subscribed, in common with the other leading potters, for building a much-needed school at Burslem. The sum thus gathered was afterwards unfortunately diverted to the building of the present Town Hall.

Wedgwood’s entirely independent work began in 1759. By an agreement of December 30, 1758, his cousin, Thomas Wedgwood, engaged to serve him as journeyman from May 1, 1759, to November 11, 1765, at the rate of £22 per annum. Two distant cousins, Thomas and John Wedgwood of the “Big House,” who were also potters at Burslem, agreed to let him the “Ivy House” and works at the rent of £10 a year. This tenement consisted of a small ivy-clad cottage, with more extensive workshops and sheds at the back, a strip of garden in front, and the two ovens beyond—the whole capable of letting now at about ten times that sum. The Market-house of Burslem was later erected on its site. Here Wedgwood remained till the time of his marriage, in 1764. For some years the young master potter worked with his own hands among his men, surpassing them all in skill in every department of his art. He made his models and

¹ Besides county and other histories, travels, and books on mathematics and science, especially chemistry, the list includes a large number of works of general literature: Bacon’s Works, Sterne’s Letters, Churchill’s Works, Hesiod, Horace, Cicero, Caesar, Sidney on Government, Bolingbroke on History, Beattie on Truth, Sheridan’s Lectures, Cudworth on English and Jewish Morality, and Rollin’s History, together with Marvel’s poems and Hudiabras.
IVY HOUSE AND WORKS.
prepared his mixtures; he was his own clerk and warehouseman. This combination of master and workman in one person undoubtedly contributed largely to his success. In every way he refused to despise "the day of small things." A branch of business which most Staffordshire potters still declined was that of producing imitations of foreign or Oriental earthenware, where a breakage had spoiled a set. The expense, labour, and difficulty of such imitations were great, the secret of the composition being naturally unknown; yet it was impossible to charge for a single cup or plate enough to bring in any profit worth speaking of. To Josiah Wedgwood, however, the difficulty was only an additional allurement. And the experiments involved in dealing with these practical problems led to further original improvements in his own manufacture. Besides carrying on, with various refinements, the production of most of the articles turned out by Whieldon, he was now among the first to perfect the manufacture of the ordinary cream ware (later known as Queen's ware), upon which the Staffordshire potters had been experimenting for half a century. Its trim neatness could not vie in charm with the picturesque and homely ware it displaced; the gain in utility was for the moment a decline in art.

But the gain in utility was enormous and decisive; a new epoch opened in the history of English earthenware, and Staffordshire soon supplied not England only, but Europe, with its ordinary table ware. Other potters, such as

Warburton and Turner, carried out similar improvements independently, and must share with Wedgwood the honour of this technical revolution; but he probably reaped the larger share of the profit, as he did, without doubt, of the renown.

Josiah's capital thus increased rapidly during the years at the Ivy House. His first use of it was steadily to remodel and systematise the whole apparatus of production. Accurately-moulded pottery demanded precise tools, and of his tools, mechanical and human, he exacted an unheard-of degree of precision. With the human tools the process was long and troublesome. It was easy to pull down and rebuild a kiln that fired unequally; but the men were less easily weaned of their cottage-pot-works traditions, their rule-of-thumb methods, and their neglect, in particular, of the strict division of labour indispensable for specialised skill.

Some sixteen years after Wedgwood's work at the Ivy House began, Adam Smith opened his classical treatise with the famous words: "The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which it is anywhere directed or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour." This was the main source of England's transformation from an agricultural into a manufacturing nation. But the change of method led to the substitution of huge factories for home industry; it exchanged green fields and leafy lanes for "black country";

it superseded to some extent the activity of the brain by that of the fingers. Mr. Church, in his excellent article in the Portfolio (p. 17), has well stated both the advantages and the disadvantages, so far as relates to pottery, of this great modern revolution in the world of industry. "The constant change from one kind of occupation to another and from one part of the factory to another—from mixing-shed to slip kiln, to thrower's bench, to moulder's shop, to firing oven and back again had indeed many drawbacks. It was impossible for any one man to acquire equal facility in the varied kinds of manipulation demanded in the different departments of the works," not to speak of the loss of time and material involved in such changes. But, on the other hand, the worker who follows his clay through its various stages of transformation in the mixing-shed, the slip kiln, etc., till it emerges a pot, must take an interest in his work impossible to the worker who goes on mixing clay or even throwing it all day long. In the first case he is a creator, in the second he is part of a machine—a necessary machine if the work is to be perfected, but no longer an inventive, enjoying craftsman. The change is chronicled, as we have seen, in the disappearance of the punning, jesting, puzzle-jugs and posset-cups, to make way for the vase and the plaque. The double aim of the trade was furthered; use and beauty alike made progress. The services of the table not only became better adapted to their daily work, but also in their finer specimens formed an alliance with artistic feeling. The
business depended for its success mainly upon "useful ware," and the thorough organisation of the work brought this branch to perfection. "For their safe carriage by land and by water, and for their complete adaptation to their intended uses," says Church, "perfect regularity in form and substance were most desirable qualities. Dozens of [Wedgwood's] plates can be piled up without exerting unequal pressure upon one another, so exactly do they correspond in size and shape."

These improvements were all effected in his early prime. Good workmanship was the foundation and the condition of all the later developments of his craft; and it was no defect in design or ornament, but a flaw in workmanlike execution which (according to a tradition thoroughly veracious in spirit if not in letter) most surely brought upon the erring vessel the stroke of the master potter's stick, and the famous: "That won't do for Josiah Wedgwood."
CHAPTER II

FRIENDSHIP WITH BENTLEY

The plan of this narrative is only partially chronological. In the biography of a statesman, whose career intimately reflects the changes of history, the milestones of time must be constantly kept in view; an event may be wholly misinterpreted when we detach it from its context. But there are other equally important lives which we best learn to know by occasionally disregarding chronological sequence, and telling as a whole the story of some single momentous relationship. Such a relationship was that which opened in the life of Wedgwood, when, in the spring of 1762, an illness at Liverpool brought about his introduction to Thomas Bentley.

Liverpool, of which Bentley was then a prominent citizen, has a larger place in the history of pottery than any other English city of the first rank. It was itself at that date a noted seat of the industry, and the domed kilns built on the eastern heights, near the present university, are conspicuous in early views of the town. Here, too, the noted firm of Sadler and Green had since 1752 practised their invention of pattern-printing on earthenware. And since the later seventeenth century, Liverpool had been
the leading English place of export for all north-country pottery wares, as well as for the import of the greater part of the raw material. Here were landed cargoes of clay from Cornwall and Devon; here were to be purchased the costly cobalt, and the various chemical compounds used for colouring or texture. A successful Staffordshire manufacturer would thus have reason to make many a journey to the town, and Wedgwood had for some years been in the habit of riding to and fro at frequent intervals before the occasion which led to his detention there.

Liverpool had been at this time Bentley's home for some eight years, and though still a young man, he was already, as has been said, one of its prominent citizens. He had settled here as "Manchester Warehouseman," in partnership with a Mr. James Boardman, to whom are addressed most of his few extant letters.

All that we know of his previous history may be told in few words. He was born in January 1730, the son of a Derbyshire gentleman farmer, and was thus, socially, rather above Wedgwood, whose earlier letters are tinged, not ungracefully, by a consciousness of the difference. At the Presbyterian Academy of Findern,¹ near Derby,

¹ Findern Academy was founded in 1698 by Thomas Hill, son of an ejected minister. It was one of a considerable number of schools and colleges for higher education established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for young Nonconformists, to whom the Universities were closed. Thomas Hill died in 1720, and was succeeded by his assistant, Dr. Ebenezer Latham, who carried on the Academy till his death in 1754, when it was closed. Wedgwood's brother-in-law, the Rev. William Willett, was educated at Findern, and married as his first wife the sister of Dr. Latham. Amongst the more distinguished students were Ferdinando Warner, the historian, and John Taylor, author of a Hebrew Concordance.
which turned out more than one good scholar, he must have gained a fair amount of classical knowledge; but his schooldays, though evidently well spent, ended in his seventeenth year. He was then apprenticed to a cotton manufacturer at Manchester, but subsequently resided in France and Italy, gaining a good practical knowledge of both languages. His circumstances were apparently prosperous. At twenty-four he was able to marry (1754), bringing his bride, a Miss Hannah Oates of Chesterfield, to a good house in the fashionable quarter of Liverpool. There, two years later, she died.

The town had then, relatively to other English towns, little less than its present importance, and it possessed some kinds of amenity since gravely diminished, being a garden city as well as a seaport. The moist Atlantic breezes murmured in shady walks, and the name of Paradise Street, now in the heart of the business quarter, where Bentley and Boardman lived together, was plausibly explained by the charm of its surroundings. Nor were its attractions merely external. In common with several other large provincial towns of that day, it possessed a kind of social and intellectual life, which in ours we are accustomed to look for chiefly in London. Dr. Aikin, in his Life of Enfield, describes it as “a town abounding with agreeable society, and distinguished by liberal sentiments and hospitable manners,” and he adds that Dr. Enfield “passed here seven of the happiest years of his life.” On the other hand, the town enjoyed some advantages, or at least some sources of
wealth, which we may be truly thankful it has lost. From its harbour issued privateers, which sometimes returned with prizes, ensuring to the captors a life-long deliverance from anxiety as to the means of living; at other times they brought home only a wounded and dying crew. A great proportion, moreover, of the wealth of Liverpool was derived from a traffic even more criminal. The slave trade was extremely profitable; the ships carried the kidnapped slaves from Africa to the West Indies, and returned laden with the produce of those islands; sometimes the living cargo was brought home also. On September 12, 1766, we learn from a contemporary Liverpool newspaper, eleven negroes were to be sold at the Exchange Coffee House; and another six years elapsed before it was decided by law that the first footstep on English soil gave emancipation. Here and there, perhaps, in later days, a jolly negro butler would be remembered as an argument against abolition. Nothing seen on English soil could indicate the horrors of the middle passage or of slave life on a plantation. A poet informs the electors, whose sympathy is desired for a practical issue, that—

If the slave trade had gone, there's the end of our lives. Beggars all we must be, our children and wives; No ships from our ports their proud sails e'er would spread, And our streets grown with grass, where cows might be fed.

The doggerel is worth remembering if we would understand what it meant for an inhabitant of

1 In the year 1771 the amount of slaves transported in Liverpool ships was 28,200, a number not greatly inferior to the contemporary population of Liverpool. An Essay towards the History of Liverpool (always thus spelt by him), by William Emfield, ed. 2, p. 68 (1774).
Liverpool, in the eighteenth century, to oppose the slave trade, even by the most temperate and non-polemic methods.

In this Liverpool society, then, Thomas Bentley, at the date of his meeting with Wedgwood, in 1762, was playing an important, influential, but by no means altogether popular, part. He had many distinguished friends, too, in other parts of the country—Dr. Turner, one of the pioneers of chemistry, Chubbard the painter, Brindley the engineer, and Joseph Priestley. The last-named, then holding a chair at the neighbouring Academy of Warrington, gives us an interesting glimpse of the man. "At Liverpool," he says, "I was always received by Mr. Bentley, . . . a man of excellent taste, improved understanding, and good disposition, but an unbeliever in Christianity, which was therefore often the subject of our conversation. He was then a widower, and we generally, and contrary to my usual custom, sat up late." ¹ When he died, eighteen years later, Erasmus Darwin described his loss as a public calamity; and the founder of the Royal Literary Fund, David Williams, ranked Bentley with Franklin and "Athenian" Stuart as the three men of his acquaintance who most excelled in "the delicate and difficult art of conversation." He wrote also, contributing a number of articles to the Monthly Review. That he was an admirable letter-writer is certain from the few specimens that remain, apart from the numerous ecstatic expressions of his correspondent in Etruria. It

¹ Rutt's Life of Priestley, i. 60.
is a serious misfortune that almost all his letters to Wedgwood have perished.

He was a principal promoter of the foundation of the Liverpool Library, and one of the founders of the congregation of the Octagon Chapel, intended for the resort of persons who, like himself, desired some relaxation of the orthodox creeds and ritual. Bentley was, further, and it is not the least of his claims to honourable remembrance, a staunch opponent both of the slave trade and of the American policy of the Government—both causes, particularly the first, demanding in their advocate, as we have seen, a high degree of moral and even physical courage.

Such, in the bare summary alone possible, was the man who for eighteen years was beyond question and beyond comparison Josiah Wedgwood’s closest and dearest friend. That fact entitles him and his leading preoccupations and ideals, all shared in a great degree by Wedgwood, to a larger place in a biography of the latter than their intrinsic interest for our generation might warrant. Before tracing the actual course, then, of their friendship, it will be proper to dwell a moment upon two of the activities above outlined—his contributions to the *Monthly Review* and his participation in the gallant but doomed enterprise of the “Octagonians.”

The most striking trait of Bentley’s contributions to the *Monthly Review* is his keen and vigorous interest in every quarter of the economic and industrial world where human labour illustrates natural law and contributes to human welfare. It was an age in which economic and
Sir. I yours & I am your old & true friend,

Thomas Bentley

Burden May 10, 1768
industrial facts loomed large; they advanced new claims and offered new stimulus; they were turned to account not only as a source of prosperity, but as a witness to truth. A vast change had come over the general mind; the objects of knowledge, study, and pursuit were seen in altered perspective, and acquired altered values. Theology, the absorbing and imperious subject of man's interest in the preceding century, had been discredited. The realm of spiritual truth, in which that century had with disinterested earnestness sought the good of mankind, had been brought no nearer by a succession of savage religious wars. Was it not time, men asked themselves and each other, to turn to physical facts, and try whether at least this narrower and more superficial kind of Truth might not be more closely approached? The attempt seemed justified by much striking and well-attested success both in discovery and in practical application within this physical region; a new and easy road to human welfare seemed suddenly opened up from this side, and "physical" and "metaphysical" became, for many minds, synonymous with certainty and doubt.

In this new spirit Bentley eagerly participated. Canal navigation, moss-draining, new materials for manufactures, improved processes in industry, new inventions of all kinds arrested and retained his attention. But these by no means exhaust his range. He was a man of culture as well as of ideas, and found illustrations of kindred laws in widely remote fields. His articles dealt not only with trade and inventions, but with politics,
education, the fine arts, even poetry. His literary articles make no pretension to decide the rank of the books they review, but they show fresh insight unwarped by current conventions, and this is almost the best thing that criticism has to supply. Bentley’s versatile accomplishments qualified him to play his part with entire success when, towards the close of his life, he and his wife were the guests of the most illustrious of Georgian blue-stockings, Mrs. Montagu, during part of the summer, in her country home.¹

His portrait, preserved in the Liverpool Museum, is that of a handsome man in middle life. The intelligent, kindly eyes sparkle under a domed head, entirely bald save for some clustering curls behind. It was still eccentric, if not quite unheard of, in Bentley’s class, to wear no wig. The man who made his London show-rooms, in after days, a sort of levée of the fashionable world, where duchesses and ambassadors forgot the showman in the noble host, could evidently be eccentric with impunity. Yet the trait illustrates his sturdy independence of conventions. We might even say that open-mindedness was his foible. His abhorrence of “prejudices” was carried to the point of being itself a prejudice. But it gave him, on occasion, a rare breadth of sympathy. A warm admirer of George Washington, he could recognise dignity and spirit in George III.’s reception of an ill-judged attack by the citizens of London; a steady opponent of arbitrary government, he could find arguments for Bute’s detested Excise Bill. His

¹ Wedgwood to Bentley, June 19, 1776.
religion, if rationalist and unspiritual according to the ideas of the twentieth century, sufficed to make him a staunch opponent of crying evils which enjoyed the full approval of the orthodox. Yet in his religion he stood a good deal alone; most of those who went as far as he did in the same direction went much further. We trace in this region of his thought the same direct readiness to embrace truth wherever he saw it, without nice concern for its logical coherence with other truths already entertained, which enabled him to be just to men like George III. and Bute, whose whole conduct he disapproved. Such a quality is no part of the moral equipment of the obvious and unquestionable leaders of men, for it is directly opposed to party spirit; it liberates the individual mind from many of the obstacles to spiritual truth, but it blurs the broad lines of party division. Hence Wedgwood found an invaluable partner in Bentley; hence, no less, the Octagon chapel failed to find in him an inspiring influence. Thus he supplied the balance and temperance wanting to his friend, but he lacked the touch of fanaticism which might have given driving and staying power to the little body of his fellow-worshippers.

The particular point on which the Octagonians came to a division was the question whether a liturgy was a desirable addition to a chapel service. To those in extreme recoil from the elaborate officialdom and splendour of Rome, the simplicity of a service consisting solely of extracts from the Bible and direct addresses to God was the ideal of worship. More temperate
spirits clung to the view that prayer together should be *common* prayer, and that this sense of community would, in most cases, be disturbed by periodical original utterances of any length. From this risk the Octagonians were to be free; they were to be united by a liturgy as definite as that of the Church of England, while the path of indefinite doctrinal advance was to be left open by the absence of any creed. The last half of the eighteenth century was a time of much and varied development in religious life. While the impulse which had roused the Wesleys continued to provide a stimulus to dogmatic religion, which extended far beyond the bounds of Methodism, the antagonism to dogmatic religion gained steadily in force and volume, and gathered tributary streams from many quarters. An English Broad Church seemed more within reach then than now, and in the foremost minds was actually broader. The Liverpool Octagon was opened in 1762. Ten years later a widely, or at least significantly, signed petition to Parliament demanded the abolition of all compulsory creeds, and the substitution of the mere Bible as the bond of union. There was no external connection between these two events, but in both the expression of a common aspiration is seen. At a time when religion was supposed to be at its lowest ebb we find an attempt made to obtain some national recognition of a God in Heaven in which all might join but those who were prepared to deny His existence altogether. Almost every reference to the Octagon Chapel impresses upon us the spirit of hopeful reform.
in which it was inaugurated. Not least the building itself. In a day when ugliness was almost a principle of Nonconformist chapel architecture, the Octagon was, Dr. Enfield tells us, "planned and finished with a degree of elegance seldom to be met with in structures of this kind." ¹

The animating spirit of the congregation was in keeping. We see in Wedgwood's letters on its inauguration the warm hope and strong sympathies which it inspired:

"The account of the opening of your Octagon," he wrote on June 16, 1768, "gives me great pleasure both as a friend to your society and a lover of rational devotion, & I most sincerely sympathise with you in the exalted pleasure you must feel in thus leading the way to a reformation so long talked of and so much wanted in our Church Millitent here below. I long to join with you, but am alas! tyed down to this rugged Pott-making spot of earth & cannot leave it at present without suffering from it."

The Octagon was thus associated with liberal views and with forward-looking beliefs, what we should call a Church of the future. It proved too much a Church of the future; the worshippers of the present were not sufficiently numerous for its support. In 1776, seven years after Bentley's departure, it had finally dwindled away, and the building was disposed of to the Anglicans. Bentley had never lost his interest in the Chapel. When a resident in London he still regularly contributed to its support, and he regarded its alienation with great regret and some indignation.

¹ History of Liverpool, p. 47.
"I am sure," he wrote to Boardman in 1776, "if the gentlemen had not been unnecessarily precipitate and had thought proper to consult their distant friends upon the subject before they had consented to ruin the noblest institution of the kind that has been established, it need not have been given up. . . . I ought, in decency, to have had some intimation of the state of things before so fatal a determination was made." These words paint for us all that the Octagon had been to Bentley, and record a yearning which did not pass away with that well-loved building. He still sought, after his removal to London, for some kind of communion which might take its place. And this, for a time, he believed himself to have found. He was a member of a club at Chelsea, of which I have already spoken in quoting a tribute to his powers of conversation, and it was the person who paid him that tribute who enlisted him in a new endeavour, and gave the Octagon for a short time a feeblener and vaguer successor.

David Williams (1738–1816) was one of those men who produce more effect on their contemporaries than posterity can readily account for; he is remembered now only as the founder of the Royal Literary Fund. Originally a Welsh Nonconformist minister, he early acquired a reputation for heterodoxy, and after ministering to three churches in succession, opened in 1772 a school at Chelsea, with little happier result.¹ "I am sorry," writes Wedgwood to Bentley, two

¹ The school seems, however, to have won some reputation, and is mentioned by Franklin
years later, "though you know I cannot be surpris'd to hear our Friend Mr. Williams's School does not answer his wishes. I hope," he adds with one of the exaggerated expressions of political feeling which every now and then come from his pen in somewhat haphazard style,

the next effort of his ingenuity & the very valuable talents he possesseth will be attended with better success. If opening new Churches will open the eyes of the People of England to see their real situation, 'tis very well, otherwise, it is, in my opinion, of little consequence what God, or what Religion is preach'd to a community of Slaves.¹

The new "effort" was the opening of a chapel on the site of the present All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, near Portland Place; it was carried out in 1776. Williams had previously abandoned his school in violent grief on the death of his wife. The chapel attracted some notice from scientific people, and some popular obloquy, as a supposed centre of "American" opinions. Satirical lampoons were launched against it, and Williams was once personally assaulted. Bentley was a regular adherent, and Wedgwood shared his interest, becoming a perpetual subscriber for four seats, and adding considerable donations.

"I go hand in hand with you," he writes to Bentley (April 11, 1778) from Etruria, "and you will please to do the needful for me now or at any other time."

For use in the services, a liturgy was drawn up by Williams, with the aid of Franklin, and copies

¹ To Bentley, Aug. 30, 1774.
were sent by the author to Frederick the Great and to Voltaire, both of whom acknowledged them in appreciative terms. It is entitled "A Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality," and consists largely of expressions of praise taken from the Psalms. The sermons, or rather lectures, delivered by Williams were afterwards published, and seem to have had a considerable sale, but the Chapel failed to pay its expenses, and the experience of the Octagon was repeated.

The expression "Rational Religion" may be accepted as gathering up the aspirations of many serious-minded men of that day. The two experiments, whose brief history has been sketched, sprang from the same sober and balanced scheme of reform, from the same ideals, subject to the same limitations; hence the short life of both. No theological passion kindled these congregations, no theological bias swayed them; they rather turned altogether from theology and sought some bond of union founded on human sympathies; a religion exceeding as little as possible the simplicity of pure Deism. Such a religion satisfied the devout instincts of earnest but secular-minded men, to whom all mystery was distasteful and suspect. It was, we may say, the reflection of democracy in religion, obliterating all superhuman claim for even the first of human beings, and satisfied with regarding Jesus of Nazareth as a great teacher and a great example. It could never have formed the basis of an Established Church, but it was at first devoid of the anti-ecclesiastical animus which
characterised more definite Nonconformity. The ideal which it embodied, if we look at it in connection with questions of Church and State, was of a State respectful to religion, but in its own character purely secular, prescribing no form of theological belief, but admitting none to any legal status which allied itself with any other than a national polity; a proviso which would leave the adherents of Rome beyond the pale of its tolerance. In fact, it was perhaps within the fold of the Established Church itself that this form of what was virtually Unitarianism took most hold; the very fact of an accredited channel for thought tending to check all investigation or originality, and to concentrate attention on those moral views in which all average virtue finds common ground. But within the Church, of course, the anti-supernatural tendency could not proceed beyond a certain point. How far it went elsewhere is measured by the fact that of the numerous Presbyterian chapels in England, many of which were built in the early part of the century, a large proportion had before its close become definitely Unitarian, so that in England a more orthodox form of Presbyterianism almost ceased to exist.

Such, then, was the man whose acquaintance Josiah Wedgwood almost casually won, in 1762, in consequence of an involuntary detention at Liverpool.

From Staffordshire, Liverpool was then most conveniently reached on horseback. Until the
London road across Cheshire was reached, the only way was by wretched lanes, the perils of which were enhanced for one suffering, like Wedgwood, from a disorder in the knee. A trifling accident in the course of a journey there, that spring, compelled him to remain some weeks in a Liverpool inn. The delay was naturally annoying in the extreme; his business was at a standstill, his workmen without a head, he himself in pain, solitary, and without any baggage but what his horse had carried. But he was fortunate in the attendance of an eminent surgeon, Matthew Turner, whose professional services were the smallest part of his aid, for he introduced Wedgwood to his friend Bentley. Wedgwood was a man of warm family affections and of many friendships, but he had not hitherto enjoyed what is perhaps the rarest of all blessings, a close and equal friendship with a man of his own age, in complete sympathy with his views and aims, and at the same time of an intellectual cultivation beyond his own. A few sentences taken almost at random from the letters will show that by Wedgwood this privilege was amply appreciated.

The correspondence began at once, and lasted without a break or a chill for the remaining eighteen years of Bentley's life, bringing us news from Wedgwood's nursery and schoolroom as well as from his works and office, and reflecting an intercourse without a cloud. Without a cloud, we may say, for the page crossed by one fleeting and transparent shadow is, in fact, that which the reader least could spare as testimony
to an affection of peculiar stedfastness and trust. We may allow ourselves to commemorate the opening of this correspondence by an anticipatory glance at the master-potter in his writing-room, as he gloats over his friend’s treasured letters; sorted, stitched up, and indexed by his own careful fingers for better preservation,—a vain defiance of the fate which has unhappily destroyed them all.

"How much am I indebted to my dear friend," he writes on February 14, 1767, "for his affectionate & sympathizeing epistles, & the interest I know he takes in all that concerns me, more—much more than I shall ever be able to pay, unless he will, as usual accept of a grateful heart to ballance all deficiencies.

"But notwithstanding I owe so much, would you believe me so void of shame, Grace or discretion that I am every day wishing to owe more.—I wold scarcely believe it of myself, but the symptoms are too strong upon me to deny the charge, for every post day I catch myself greedily running over the directions of my letters & if a well known hand does not appear, Sally is ready to ask what has so suddenly alter’d my countenance. I am too pettish (for you know I am subject to be cholerick on a disappointment) to give her any answer, but read my letters, & unless a good order, or some such circumstance intervenes, few things go right with me that day."

Again on August 10 in the same year:

Well, now I have read your letter another time or two I am more at leisure to thank you for it, & to tell my dear friend that I like these double letters of his of all things. The very feel of them, even before the seal is broke, cheers my heart, & does me good, & I am as eager in hunting out a corner to hide myself in, that I
may devour my delicious morsel without being molested as—as—hem—no, now I have it, as an Alderman of—w’d be to find out a vacant seat at a Turtle feast. . . . But a pl-gue of all little paper say I—I think your stationer does not use you well. If you are disposed to change him I can direct you where you may buy your paper as large again, & two of those sheets, well fill’d wod be a Princely meal, & fit to meet a Patagonian Appetite, such an one as I have got for everything which falls from your pen.

I rece²d your kind letter of the 21 last night & am very thankful for it. Your letters allways rejoyce & entertain me, & therefore do me good as a Medicine, as an old Author observes upon a merry heart, but that is only a small part of the advantage I recieve from them, & I must have more interesting employment even than this great Metropolis can afford me, to prevent me reading them many times over.

I have read over my whole number today, made an index, deposited it in a new portfolio, & am now as orderly in my head, & as finely refresh’d & happy at my heart as can be, so farewell, & thank you for my elegant treat my good friend.

The friendship thus begun, based as it was on community of taste and conviction, included every other kind of common interest. Bentley seems to have acted in some measure as Wedgwood’s Liverpool agent during the years preceeding their partnership, and we may give first a few of the letters which mark the progress of their business relations.

Burslem, 26 June 1766.

My worthy Friend—I am extremely happy in the thoughts of haveing our connections increased in any
way, & the pleasure will grow in proportion as those connections can be made more agreeable or advantageous to you, & as you are to be a Pot merch\textsuperscript{t}, you may rest assured that in everything I can make or purchase you shall be enabled to serve your friends to the utmost of their wishes. . . .

With respect to commission or proffitt upon the goods you sell I shall very readily conform to any plan you may have determin'd upon, or if you have not settled that matter, I wo\textsuperscript{d} make a proposal a very simple one to you respecting this new branch of Trade betwixt us, which is that whatever goods I purchase to send you, we divide the proffit laid upon them equally betwixt us which is to pay you for the trouble of selling & me for that of buying in the goods, & for the goods of my own manufacture I allow you 10 per Ct Comm\textsuperscript{n} as before & I hope by this plan a trade may be struck out worth our attending to.

* * * * * * * * *

On Thursday next you may expect another Cargo\textsuperscript{e} of Creamcolour & perhaps a little green and Gold for hot Climates, with some pretty things for the Ladys who honour you with their company.

I expect a small ship Ld of Clay at your Port in 8 weeks at farthest, pray what are the Port dues I am to pay. If you could get me the honour of being made free of your Corporation now it might be of some use to me & I wo\textsuperscript{d} be exceedingly good & vote just as I was bid, you cannot think how passive I feel myself to be, & that is surely qualification sufficient for an honorary Burgess.

Burslem, 15th Sept\textsuperscript{r} 1766.

I thank you most cordially for your two last very kind & entertaining letters, & for a great share of the pleasure & benefit I rec\textsuperscript{d} from my late excursion.

I am sorry your shoulders sho\textsuperscript{d} take upon them so much & grumble so long for a little shakeing, the
Alderman,¹ I think, contributed not a little to their motion, but I hope he did not leave any soreness behind him, as you are perfectly acquainted with his manner. My Sally says your fat sides require a good deal of shaking & would recommend a journey on horseback, not in the Coach, to Burslem, & is half angry with me for coming home without you, but your last letter hath brought her into a little better temper, as she expects not only the pleasure of seeing you here in a little time, but likewise a jant to Liverpool in consequence of your Visit, besides she will not fix upon a spot for either house or Gardens no nor even the Stables 'till you have viewed & given your opinion of the premises, so now my dear Sir you are invited to the Ridgehouse Estate in the quality of a Brown,² & this may remove my only objection to seeing you here, I mean, your taking so long a journey to so little purpose. Ten Guineas if I remember right is the price of a single call, with or without the advantage of his direction, to make a Lawn & piece of Water here—Cut down that wood & plant it there, level that rising ground, & raise yonder valley &c., &c. But for ten times the business, fifty miles riding, & a hundred times the genius, why we must expect to be sure to pay accordingly. One thing farther permit me to mention, that we shall be affronted with a short visit, but very thankfull for a long one, so pray settle your business accordingly before you mount your Rosinante, & as a Salvo, or Quietus, to your Conscience for the loss of so much time, which I know to be very squeamish, & am glad it is so, on these occasions, tell the troublesome sprite, that as our connections are to become extensive in the Potting business, it is absolutely necessary you shod visit the Manufacture, see what is going for there, make your bargains accordingly, & lend your assistance towards its farther improvement. Tell him yr frd Wedgwood hath some

¹ Wedgwood's brother John.
² The well-known landscape gardener "Capability" Brown.
pretty things laid up for you which he cannot send without your first seeing them, & I hope he may be prevail'd upon to let you spend a fortun or so in this neighbourhood.

We are sending by Morriss to-day the Bp of Mans service & several others for you, the T. ware, Vases & all other pretty things I shall let alone 'till I have the pleasure of seeing you here. . . .

And only four days later he pursues the subject:

If you would wipe the tears from our eyes & gladden the hearts of your afflicted friends, surprise them with the unexpected visit. The Alderman & Sally both earnestly wish that such an event may take place, & you have my free consent to fall in love as soon & as often as you please, provided allways, that you pay your devotions in propria Persona.

It was during the visit thus eagerly anticipated that the idea of a partnership was first definitely considered. It had been proposed by Wedgwood at least as early as April 1766. "You know what sort of Partner it requires," he wrote to his friend at that date, after describing some of the improvements which were "crowding in" upon him; "either resolve quickly to join me yourself, or find me out another kindred spirit." Bentley naturally hesitated to give up his own business. But Wedgwood pleaded earnestly and eloquently, and in the end with success.

Nov. 8, 1766.

I have read your letter many times over, and find several of the objections to our nearer approach may be surmounted and I shall speak to those you have mentioned in the order you have stated them—The first is "your total ignorance of the business"—That I deny
as friend Tristram says to St. Paul—you have taste, the best foundation for our intended concern, and which must be our Primum Mobilie [sic], for without that, all will stand still, or better it did so, and for the rest it will soon be learned by so apt a scholar. The very air of this Country will soon inspire you with the mere mechanical part of our trade. The difficulty of leaving your business in Liverpool, which seemeth now to be altering for the better, I cannot so easily obviate, this being a matter of Calculation, in which there is no data to proceed upon, but probabilities of future contingencies, which we cannot investigate, or command with the certainty that I could wish my friend to have in a matter of so much importance to his interest. I have it's true, a great opinion of the design answering our most sanguine expectations with respect to profit, but if you should suffer as much on the other hand by having your' attention taken off your mercantile concerns, you wod be a loser upon the whole, though I sho'd not, and to what degree that loss might be extended I can have no idea, nor you any certainty, unless we co'd divine in what proportion your absence wo'd affect the success, or prevent the increase of your commerce.

The money objection is obviated to my hand, and I doubt not in a way that will be agreeable to us both. But the leaving your friends, and giving up a thousand agreeable connections, and pleasures at Liverpool, for which you can have no compensation in kind (indeed my friend I know from experience you cannot) this staggars my hopes more than every thing else put together, and allways hath done, for I have often seriously thought at it before I rec'd your letter, and as I wish you to see every shade in this chequer'd piece, permit me to ask you—Can you part from your Octogon, and enlightened Octogonian brethren, to join the diminutive and weak society of a Country Chapel?

Can you give up the rational and elevated enjoyment of your Philosophical Club, for the puerile tete-a-tete
of a Country fireside? And to include all under this head in one question. Can you exchange the frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with your learned and ingenious friends, which your present situation affords you, besides ten thousand other elegancies and enjoyments of a Town life, to employ yourself amongst mechanicks, dirt and smoke? inliven'd indeed with so much of the Pastoral life as you shall choose for your self out of the Ridgehouse Estate?—If this prospect does not fright you, I have some hopes, and if you think you could really fall in love with, and make a mistress of this new business as I have done of mine, I sho'd have little or no doubt of our success, for if we consider the great variety of colours in our raw materials, the infinite ductility of Clay, and that we have universal beauty to copy after, we have certainly the fairest prospect of inlarging this branch of Manufacture to our wishes, and as Genius will not be wanting, I am firmly per-
swaded that our profits will be in proportion to our application, and I am as confident, that it wo'd be beyond comparison more congenial and delightful, to every partical of matter, sense, and spirit in your composition, to be the Creator as it were of beauty, rather than merely the vehicle, or medium to convey it from one hand to another, if other circumstances can but be render'd tolerable. Let us therefore endeavour to take a more distinct view of the outlines of our project, which may furnish us with some amusement, at least, and perhaps it may not be the first time we have pleased ourselves with future schemes that have eluded our grasp, and vanished away like the morning Cloud or early dew.

The time of coming you may make agreeable to your-
self, it will be 12 months at least before the works can be built, and I suppose you wo'd choose to have a house, with so much of a farm as will keep you a Horse, a Cow, and a pig, with a few other domestick animals, all which will take up some time to make ready.
On November 14, 1768, the firm became Wedgwood and Bentley. It had at first been designed that Bentley should settle at Etruria, and Wedgwood, following out the above hints, had for some time been at work arranging for the building of a house for him there. He pursued this plan with the zest of a bridegroom preparing a home for his bride. All through the later months of 1768 and the early ones of 1769 his letters report the progress of the builders or their vexatious delays. The excitement of house-building took strong hold of his active and constructive mind. But on every point he must have his friend’s advice, and not merely because Bentley was the person chiefly concerned with the details of the house he was to occupy, but with instinctive deference to Bentley’s superior “genius” and taste. By June 25, 1769, the house is practically finished. “The walls only want drying,” he writes to his friend, “and it is habitable”; a few days later he describes with gusto the well which had been sunk, from which “the water springs almost as fast as two men can draw it out.” The prospect of constant companionship with his best friend seemed to be on the point of fulfilment, and never had his presence seemed more needful to the warm-hearted senior partner. “I feel but the half myself,” he wrote in July, “when we are separated; but I am comforted with the thoughts of having you here for good and altogether.”

At this point, however, occurred a sudden change of plan. For reasons which we have in
the main to infer, for the friends were now neighbours and their discussions took place in unrecorded talk, it was decided that in the interest of the firm Bentley should not settle in Etruria but superintend the warehouse and show-rooms in London. The rapidly growing vogue of Wedgwood’s wares in the fashionable world made the presence in the sale-rooms of a man of his wide accomplishments, culture, and taste obviously expedient; and Wedgwood reluctantly abandoned the project on which he had set his heart. But his descendants must rejoice at a decision, however occasioned, which left him a correspondent instead of a near neighbour.

Bentley accordingly, in the early autumn, took up his permanent abode in London, living for the first few months at the warehouse in Newport Street, Long Acre, and then settling in a house in Little Cheyne Row in Chelsea, close to the workshops in which the painting and enamelling processes were carried on.

But business is by no means the only matter of the correspondence. As the operations of the firm grew larger and more intricate, the shop inevitably took a larger place in the communications of the partners, and matters of deeper import were driven into the background. But the earlier letters abound in indications of their common public and intellectual interests, and they are here quoted at some length. The first gives Wedgwood’s frank and hearty “proposal” of friendship.
My much esteemed Friend—if you will give me leave to call you so & will not think the address too free, I shall not care how Quakerish or otherwise antique it may sound, as it perfectly corresponds with the sentiments I have & wish to continue towards you; nor is there a day passes but I reflect with a pleasing gratitude upon the many kind offices I reciev'd in my confinement at your hospitable town. My good Doctor & you in particular have my warmest gratitude for the share you both had in promoteing my recovery & I know he is too well acquainted with the influence of a good flow of spirits (whatever they are) upon the whole animal Ωconomy, to refuse you your share of merit in this instance. Believe me I could with pleasure dwell much longer upon this subject & say a great deal more without offending against that excellent rule in your MS. upon the article of letter writing which teacheth not to belye our own failings in writeing better things of any person than we think is strictly true, but I know your delicacy in this point & have done. I find by the papers that the subscription for Thompsons works ¹ is open'd again & intend to add my name to the list, or at least become a purchaser, which may do as well. I wish I could do the same by an excellent piece upon female education, which I once had the pleasure of reading in MS. Why will not the benevolent author be prevail'd upon to publish a thing which would benefit thousands without hurting one! "It is not perfect."—Why should you or the Publick expect it should be so? do you know any publication on this side Rome, that is so in every respect? I can honestly tell you & from some experience that it is perfect enough to do a great deal of good, & for my own part I did not, nor do I imagine those it is wrote for, will see the faults you father upon it; therefore in behalf of myself and many others, his Majesty's good improveable subjects, as well male as female, who

¹ James Thomson, author of The Seasons.
are daily lamenting the want of a proper education, &
would gladly make use of such an help as you have
prepared, I say in behalf of myself and 10,000 fellow
sufferers, I do now call upon you to publish the above
mention'd book, but if after this admonition you still
persist to keep such a talent buried in your study, at your
own peril be it. I have discharged my conscience, & for
this time at least shall say no more, but appeal to your
good sister Miss Oats, whether a few hypercriticks (for such
only, I think, you have to fear) should be put into com-
petition with the best if not the greatest part of the lady's
of Great Britain & I may add many of the Gentn too.

Since my return home I have been very busy but
have found time to make an experm1 or two upon Aether,
the result of which I have ventured to trouble my good
Doct2 with & I can tell you that you as well as myself
may be thankfull if he permits me to write to him on
these subjects. You have perhaps escaped this time
reading a tedious acc3 of acids, alcalies, precipitation,
saturation, etc. But not to make this equally tedious
it will be necessary to conclude and am very respect-
fully, Dear sir, Your gratefull friend, & most obed1
servant,

Josiah Wedgwood.

It is somewhat surprising to find a plain man
so urgently recommending the publication of an
essay on a subject which had still to wait a
century for serious attention or treatment. But
women were pressing in growing numbers into
the fields of literature; some of them, like Sarah
Fielding,—soon to be followed by the Burneys
and Opies, the Austens and Edgeworths,—had
won distinction there; and their success might
be held to argue, according to the point of view,
either that women then possessed sufficient op-
portunities of intellectual development, or that
they deserved more.
Five months elapsed between Wedgwood's opening letter and his second. Clearly the length of the interval was due to no remissness on Bentley's part in responding to the first. We may rest assured that Wedgwood's plea of diffidence gives the sole cause of his delay; it can never have occurred to him that his name would be more familiar to posterity than that of his correspondent. The letter will not be felt too long by any one who recognises how much it reveals of the life of both correspondents, and of the time.

Burslem, Oct 26th, 1762.

My dear Friend—It is now so long since I was favoured with your kind letter, & have not yet thanked you for the very great pleasure it gave me, that I feel a secret reproach every time I think of it, which mixes itself with & allayeth that pleasure which ever accompanies the idea of my worthy friend. I am indeed too sensible of your candour to imagine you will impute my silence to anything that borders upon disrespect. No: to be ranked amongst the number of your friends is a priveledge I too highly esteem & am too proud of to treat it with anything like indifference: but when I reflect on the polite & numerous correspondents who are capable of returning the pleasure they receive which you must already be engaged with—the time your business, now you have lost your partner, will necessarily require at your hands—with the many other objects of attention which will ever present themselves to a person of your disposition, I confess I am allmost discouraged from writing to you at all and taking up that time, which you would otherwise employ to better purpose. And perhaps when I have told you what a troublesome correspondent you may have of me, you may think it more for your ease to drop than continue the correspond-ence.—However I will be quite honest & tell you what
you have to expect from me—that I may, as the necessi-
tudes of life may furnish occasion, sometimes call upon
you for advice, at other times I may call upon you for
assistance to settle an opinion—or to help me form a
probable conjecture of things beyond our kenn and
sometimes I may want that valuable and most difficult
office of friendship, reproof. If you will promise me to
be faithful in the discharge of this last office, I will not
doubt the rest, but trust to that instinctive goodness,
if you will call it so, I am already so much indebted to;
though I am not fond of the term instinct as you apply
it, and if it does not include all the charities & the finest
feelings of the improved human mind I renounce it
& must make so free as to tell you that in this instance
you have made use of an improper term.

Your favourite author,¹ and particularly his fine poem
on Liberty, has more than answered my expectation,
though not a little by your just encomiums. His
descriptions of ancient Greece & Rome are truly grand,
& place those theatres of liberty and publick virtue in
the strongest light of anything I ever met with. And
his resurrection of the masterpieces of antiquity is
highly entertaining & instructive, & is as strong a proof
of his fine taste in the works of art, as the whole of his
works are of his extensive benevolence & goodness of
heart. His zeal seldom or never omiteth a fair oppor-
tunity of introducing his favourite subject. Happy
would it be for this island were his three virtues the
foundation of British liberty—indepenent life, integrity
in office, & a passion for the common weal more strictly
adhered to amongst us.

When you favour me with a line, I shall be glad to
hear if you have fixed upon another minister for your
Octogon, as I hear Mr. Sedan ² has not accepted your
invitation, & when your prayers are published I should

¹ James Thomson (1700–1748), author of The Seasons.
² Rev. Thomas Seddon, who had been in contemplation for that
pulpit.
be glad to buy two or three copys of them. I wish they had been published two or three months ago, we should have stood a chance of having them made use of in our neighbourhood. A gentleman at Newcastle has built a chapel in one of our villages which lay at an inconvenient distance from the mother church. When the building was finished he applyed to the Bishop & prayed his Lordship to give it his blessing, which was refused from motives that do no honor to the cloth & are not worth troubleing you with. The old gent a who was late an attorney, now one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, being unwilling that his pious endeavours to instruct the ignorant should be so lost to the poor inhabitants, went to work himself with his prayer book; altered it to his own liking & sent the MS. to have two or three hundred copys printed for the use of his chapel, for which he has now took out a license & agreed with a good orderly schoolmaster his neighbour, for the valuable consideration of £15 p. ann m to officiate as priest, and he is to enter upon his new employment on next L ds day. You naturally conclude that the hearts of these vilagers must overflow with gratitude to their benefactor, who has made his way through so many difficulties to serve them.—Nothing like it Sr indeed. The Church is in danger with them even before it is well built & many of his intended flock are afraid of being cheated out of their religion before they have any to lose. His prayers are found great fault with before they are seen & they cry mainly out, we will have them like other folks' prayers, or have none. The ferment is so strong amongst them at present, that 'tis thought the poor Chaplain may sell his sacred vestments again, for in all probability they will not let him enter upon his function. If you have any curiosity to see the prayers I will endeavour to send you a copy.

Pray how could you think of my knowing the author of that little piece on prayers for publick worship in the last number of "the Library"? 'Tis true I have the
advantage of a particular acquaintance with the author, but I did not imagine you were well enough acquainted with Mr. Willett's manner of writing to find him out there. I remember some time reading a sermon, with some such title as, _a full answer to all the sermons that have, or ever shall be_ preached on the 30th Jan'ry which tittle I think might with a very little alteration suit that excellent little essay. I was glad to find it had not escaped your notice & have thanked the worthy Author in your name. Oh I for a more ample effusion of such a truly Christian spirit amongst all professed teachers of the religion of the benevolent Jesus.

I hope my good friend is putting the finishing hand to his valuable MS. which it seems is not yet deemed fit to appear in publick. Indeed I am afraid that you are too severe in your criticisms upon it & may keep it private much longer than is necessary for its doing the good you intend in the world. And though it is with the greatest sincerity I assure you that you have not a friend in the world who wou'd be more anxious for your litterary credit in this article than myself, yet as your benevolent intentions in writing it were directed chiefly to the younger part of our species, when one reflects how soon our young folks nowadays grow up to be men & women & enter into the busy world, I cannot help regretting that unless you get the better of your scruples soon, one generation at least must lose the benefit they might otherwise receive from your generous labours.—Consider d't S't so many young persons everyday getting out of the way of instructions by the various connections of riper years, is an object worthy of attention. I shall leave it with you & know it will not be disregarded.

If you have seen Rousseau's Emilia I should be glad to know your thoughts of that piece & now it is translated I should be glad, _by your recommendation_, to purchase it, notwithstanding his Holiness has forbid its entrance into his domains; & as I am about to furnish a shelf or two of a book-case, if you would assist
me with your advice in the furniture, I should esteem it a particular favour. Mr. Willett & I are perswaded that you could inform us more concerning the intended institution in favour of liberty, than has yet appeared in the Gent**as Mag.,
but if it is not proper any more should be known at present, we are far from desiring it, but will wait with patience towards Xmass, when we hope Mr. J. S., agreeable to his promise, will be more explicit. You will now perceive one reason I have for concluding; another is I am afraid I have already encroached too much on your time & patience by this unconscionable epistle, but I hope you will pardon it & let me have the pleasure of hearing from you soon.—Adieu dr. Sr believe me with all the cordiality of friendship, Yr much obliged frd & humble Servt.

The delight of both correspondents in Thomson's poem on "Liberty" is not likely to be shared by any reader of our day, nor was it shared by all readers of theirs. Johnson, in writing the life of its author, confessed that he could not read it through. But Wedgwood's enthusiasm is interesting as a clue to one of the strongest influences upon his own artistic production. Thomson's classical and other illustrations were well calculated, both by their sentiment and by their matter-of-fact precision, to incite a liberty-loving potter to imitate them in his own medium. Such, for instance, was the description of the "Dying Gladiator":

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1 In the Gentleman's Magazine for September 1762 is a letter signed "J. S.," apologising for delay in developing a scheme to institute a society in defence of liberty, first mentioned in the February number, and promising a public meeting before Christmas. The writer asserts that the scheme is intended for the general good, and begs all friends of liberty to give their attention to the matter. Nothing seems to have come of it.
Supported on his shortened arm he leans,
Prone, agonizing; with incumbent fate
Heavy declines his head; yet dark beneath
The suffering feature sullen vengeance lours,
And still the cheated eye expects its fall.

Or of the Belvedere Apollo:

In graceful act he stands,
His arm extended with the slackened bow.
Light flows his easy robe, and fair displays
A manly softened form. The bloom of gods
Seems youthful o'er the beardless cheek to wave:
His features yet heroic ardour warms;
And sweet subduing to a native smile
Mixed with the joy elating conquest gives,
A scattered frown exalts his matchless air.

Other points in the letter will be taken up
in later chapters. The reference to Rousseau's
Emile illustrates both the eagerness of the
English public to read the book (even when,
like Wedgwood, they mistook the sex of the
hero) and the keenness of Wedgwood's own
educational interests some years before he him-
self had children to educate.

Bentley's long widowerhood ended in 1772;
his second marriage, to a Miss Mary Stamford
of Derby, though childless, was evidently happy.
For some years Wedgwood's eldest daughter
was their guest. The Chelsea home was rich
in social opportunity and in all the charm of a
beautiful suburb; but as business increased,
the inconvenience of being required in two places
at once became more apparent. The warehouse
in Newport Street was in constant need of
Bentley's presence; the painters and enamellers
at Chelsea required his superintendence. In
1774 the firm overcame this difficulty by taking new premises in Greek Street, Soho, ample enough to hold not only show-rooms and workshops but also a residence for Bentley, and here he removed with his household in July of that year. His health suffered, however, from the situation, and three years later he took what was then literally a country house at Turnham Green. The move failed of its hoped-for result, and he died there on November 26, 1780, in the fullness of his prime.

Of the effect of the loss upon his devoted friend and partner we know nothing. The comparative paucity and dryness of Wedgwood’s letters during the remainder of his life eloquently witnesses what this friendship had meant for him.

APPENDIX

In 1851 James Boardman, the son and namesake of Bentley’s Liverpool partner, presented to the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society a medallion portrait of Bentley, together with a letter, giving an account of his life, the source of almost all that we know of it. The principal passages of the letter are here given:

Dear Sir—I beg to present to the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society, of which you are the worthy President, a Medallion Portrait of Mr. Bentley, executed in the material called Jasper, by Wedgwood, from a model in wax by Flaxman.

So many years have elapsed since the death of Mr. Bentley, that few of our Townsmen are aware that he was once a distinguished resident of Liverpool. A few particulars respecting him may, therefore, be interesting.
Mr. Bentley settled in Liverpool about the middle of the last century, and his name appears in conjunction with that of my Father in Gore’s first Directory, published in 1766, as Manchester Warehousemen. The former a widower, the latter a bachelor, lived together in Paradise Street, ... then a fashionable quarter, and received its name from the charms of its situation.

The illustrious Priestley, who then held a professorship in the Warrington Academy (an institution rescued from oblivion by the pen of Mrs. Barbauld), was often their visitor. The doctor alludes to the circumstance in his Memoirs, bestowing a high compliment on the talents and taste of Mr. Bentley.

Brindley, the Civil Engineer, was another of Mr. B.’s visitors, and the only particulars of the life of that distinguished man, are from Mr. B.’s pen. ....

Dr. Turner, an excellent Chemist, and a great wit, with Mr. Chubbard, a Painter of considerable merit, were of Mr. B.’s circle. ....

Mr. Bentley was one of the most active of the projectors of the Liverpool Library, and his name appears in the list prefixed to the valuable Catalogue lately published. Some of the books in the Library were gifts from him. Mr. B. was also one of the founders of the congregation of dissenters who erected the handsome Chapel, afterwards St. Catherine’s Church, situated in Temple Court, but taken down to give place to the Fire Police Station. The intention of the founders of this sect, y’clept Octagonians, from the form of their chapel, was to unite those who preferred a liturgy, and yet had scruples with regard to the Athanasian Creed, with its damnatory clauses, and other parts of the Common Prayer, which either savoured of Catholicism or did not allow sufficient latitude of opinion.

Although the services of a learned and eloquent Minister (a Dr. Clayton, of London) were engaged, who numbered among his congregation several of the leading families of

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1 The term “Manchester wares” was at this time not confined to the actual products of that city, but included all similar goods wherever manufactured.
the town, the scheme failed and the building was sold to the Corporation.

At the time of Mr. Bentley's residence in Liverpool, the slave trade was in its zenith, and so identified were the inhabitants generally with that abominable traffic, that, to use the words of a powerful writer and orator, now no more, "at that time to speak irreverently of the King, or even to deny the existence of a God, were, in the town of Liverpool, venial offences, when compared with the atrocity of condemning the sale and purchase of human flesh." Mr. B. was the decided enemy of the trade in human beings, and was indefatigable in his endeavours to persuade the merchants and masters of vessels trading to Africa to promote a trade in ivory, palm oil, woods, and other produce of the country; but all his exertions were fruitless, "sinews bought and sold" afforded a better profit, and the bells of St. Nicholas' Church rang their merry peals on the periodical returns of the ships from their diabolical voyages. Mr. B.'s philanthropic schemes were ridiculed, and his pursuits and habits being of too refined a nature for the people of Liverpool generally of that day, he did not, although highly respected, become a popular man.

Mr. B., as might be expected, took a lively interest in the struggle of the American Colonies with the Mother Country, sympathizing with the former, and deprecating the unwise course pursued by the latter. He became intimately acquainted with Franklin, and at an after period enjoyed the society of that great philosopher and diplomatist at his own residence on several occasions. A visit of the celebrated Mr. Wedgwood to Liverpool was the cause of that gentleman's introduction to Mr. Bentley, and an offer of partnership in his manufactory. Mr. Marryatt, in his interesting volume on "Pottery and Porcelain," says, speaking of this event: "In this partnership, Mr. Bentley, who managed the house in London, he (Mr. Wedgwood) found a valuable coadjutor, whose extensive knowledge in many departments of literature and science, as well as his acquaintance with many eminent patrons of art, greatly assisted him in the higher branches of his manufacture, and especially in his obtaining the loan of valuable specimens of antique sculpture, vases, cameos, intaglios, medallions, and
THOMAS BENTLEY

Born at Scropton in Derbyshire, January 1st, 1790.
He married Hannah Gates of Chesterfield in the year 1754,
Mary Stamford of Derby in the year 1772,
Who survived to mourn her loss.
He died November 26, 1790.

Blessed with an elevated and comprehensive understanding,
Informed in variety of science,
He possessed
A warm and brilliant imagination,
A pure and elegant taste.
His extensive abilities,
Guided by the most exalted philanthropy,
Were employed
In forming and executing plans for the public good.
He thought,
With the freedom of a philosopher,
He acted
With the integrity of a virtuous citizen.

BENTLEY'S MONUMENT BY SCHEEMAKERS, IN CHISWICK CHURCH.
seals suitable for imitation by some of the processes he had introduced. . . ."

Previous to Mr. B.'s departure from Liverpool an excellent portrait of him was painted by Caddick, a Liverpool artist, which is in my possession, and is one of the best specimens from the easel of the painter.
CHAPTER III

EARLY MARRIED LIFE AT BURSLEM (1764–1769)

The Trent and Mersey Canal

Two years after the beginning of the great friendship of Josiah’s life, he entered upon the only bond which was to be the source of even greater happiness. He had reached his thirty-fifth year, and the extension and prosperity of his business would have warranted his undertaking the responsibilities of family life even had they not been lightened by the fact that his wife, who was also his third cousin, was the daughter of a comparatively rich man. The two families, besides their kinship, were connected by more than one previous intermarriage, and had many opportunities of intercourse. Her father, Richard Wedgwood, a retired cheese-factor living at Spen Green, a few miles across the border of East Cheshire, was the eldest of three brothers. The other two were potters, and lived, with a sister, in what was called the Big House at Burslem. The name attests both their own importance and the insignificance, at that time, of the town, in which one house could be so singled out. At the last census
(1911) it numbered 41,566 inhabitants. The house had few architectural pretensions, but, if we may trust traditional memories handed down orally, "people came to look at it from a distance," and an authentic sketch represents it as a solid, respectable building of three stories, with five windows in a row, and a somewhat dignified outer gateway to the enclosure in which it stood. It seems to have set the fashion of a better style of building in Burslem, and may thus be regarded as a landmark in the advance of the town and its manufacture. The Big House was also doubtless the chief scene of Josiah's wooing. Spen Green was ten miles from Burslem, too far for frequent meetings in those days of bad roads, but the hospitable-looking house in Burslem, whither Richard Wedgwood used to bring his daughter on a pillion behind him, would often open its doors to her lover. Its inhabitants formed an evidently united family. The brothers and the sister had lived together till her death, one brother then marrying, at what Josiah calls the "venerable" age of fifty-five. But this was subsequent to his own marriage.

Josiah and Sarah Wedgwood were married in the fine old church of Astbury, near Congleton, on January 25, 1764. Sarah Wedgwood was somewhat above her husband socially, and her education seems to have been superior to his. I was told by her eldest grand-daughter that she was in mature life somewhat hard and stern, but that when laid low by a weary illness preceding her death, she became wonderfully
softened, and lost the reserve which in earlier life her children had felt repelling. She was a devoted daughter throughout her married life, and her husband completely identified himself with her in this relationship of which he had himself known so little. Richard Wedgwood’s portrait and the few incidents mentioned below reveal a choleric and somewhat despotic character, but it does not seem to have been one repellent to affection. The difference of opinion about settlements touched on in the following letters in any case merely delayed the happiness of the lovers for a few days, and this seems to have been the only approach to a quarrel between the two men during an intercourse of many and eventful years.

The letters were written shortly before his marriage; the first from the Willetts’ house at Newcastle, where Josiah was spending his Christmas with his sister and brother-in-law:

N. Castle (Xmasing & wanted at play), Jan 9th, 1764.

Dear Friend—I had acknowledg’d your very kind letter before now, but hoped by waiting a post or two to be able either to tell you of my happiness or at least the time I expected to be made so; but “O grief of griefs” that pleasure is still denied me & I cannot bear to keep my friend in suspense any longer, though I own myself somewhat asham’d & greatly mortify’d to be still kept at bay from those exalted pleasures you have often told me attend the marriage state. If you know my temper & sentiments on these affairs you will be sensible how I am mortify’d when I tell you I have gone through a long series of bargain making of settlem’ts, reversions, provisions, etc. etc. Gone through, did I say! Wo’d to Hymen I had—No, I am still in the
between us }}
Joseph Wedgwood
Sarah Wedgwood

in the presence of }}
Mrs. Wedgwood
Mr. Earl

SIGNATURES IN MARRIAGE REGISTER.
CAMEO MEDALLION OF MRS. WEDGWOOD.

Mayer Collection.
Attorney's hands, from which I hope it is no harm to pray, "good Lord deliver me." Miss W. & I are perfectly agreed & could settle the whole affair in three lines & so many minutes—but our Pappa, over carefull of his daughter's interest was by some demands which I cannot comply with, go near to separate us, if we were not better determin'd. On Friday next Mr. W. & I are to meet in great form, with each of us our Attorney, which I hope will be conclusive. You shall then hear farther from your obliged & very affec'te friend.

Burslem, 28th of Jan'y, 1764.

Dear Sir—All things being amicably settled betwixt my Pappa elect & myself, I yesterday prevail'd upon my dear girl to name the day, the blisfull day! when she will reward all my faithfull services & take me to her arms! to—pleasures which I am yet ignorant of & you my dear friend can much better conceive, than I shall be able ever to express. In three words we are to be married on Wednesday next. On that auspicious day, think it no sin to wash your philosophic evening pipe with a glass or two extraordinary, to hail your friend & wish him good speed into the realms of matrimony.

Adieu my good friend, I am very busy today, that no business may intrude on my pleasures for the rest of the week.

"The Brick House," the home to which Wedgwood brought his bride, though not to be compared with the Big House, was an advance on that hitherto occupied by him. Its name indicates how recently the town had been a mere cluster of thatched cottages. It takes us forward as well as backward, for this first house which Wedgwood could feel a home stood on the site of the Institute which now commemorates his
name and fortunes. It was little more than a cottage, but the works attached to it occupied a good deal of ground, and there was a garden both in front and behind. In comfort and dignity it would hardly have satisfied exacting claims, but the two "married lovers" found it a very happy home. Here their first four children were born, and hard by a little grave must have associated the spot with undying memories more tender than sad; ¹ here, too, important enterprises were pondered and launched, and a healthful, fruitful life was carried on. The parents' delight in their little Sukey, the first-born, could hardly have been increased had they known that she was to be the mother of Charles Darwin. The character of Josiah Wedgwood, so abounding in vivacity and affection, seemed formed for paternity; to children he must always have been a playfellow. I give later my grounds for an impression that in his relation to his grown-up sons there was something disappointing, but his outpourings of pride and delight in his first-born give a pledge of a happy childhood for all his children.

To these early years of his married life belongs also Wedgwood's first decisive intervention in the public affairs of his district. He never intervened to more useful purpose; and he holds a place in the history of English canal-making, though less distinguished, not less secure, than in the history of English ceramics. No

¹ Richard, their third child, born 1707, died a year later.
THE BRICK HOUSE.
doubt the two enterprises were intimately connected; canals meant immensely extended business for the potter, and pottery needful revenue for the canals. Wedgwood was one of the first to see that what trade and industry most needed in his day was better means of locomotion; and he may claim as large a share in the furtherance of this work as could be contributed by one who brought to it neither engineering skill nor large capital, nor parliamentary and social influence. In all schemes which require co-operation between various classes and arouse hostile interests, there is needed even more than these the gift of the mediator, who welds the scattered atoms into an organised body. And this gift the following letters surely show Wedgwood to have possessed in no common degree. The urgent need of the work could be disputed by no one. A road is hardly the name for such a track as called forth the denunciations of Arthur Young, unless in the sense of the well-known couplet:

If you had seen these roads before they were made
You'd have held up your hands and blessed General Wade.

Arthur Young gives us his impression of similar "roads before they were made," with careful evidence as well as forcible denunciation. He tells us that in eighteen miles he found three carts broken down and ruts four feet deep.¹ If we imagine the struggles of a horse laden with crates of crockery on such a road, and remember

¹ Young, A Six Weeks' Tour through the Southern Counties; A Six Months' Tour through the Northern Counties; passim.
that carts or horses formed the only means of transport for the heaviest and also for the most fragile goods, except in the few cases where navigable rivers were available, we shall realise how severely the rapidly growing industrial and commercial energies of the country were thwarted by its backward means of communication.¹

During the second half of the century, this grave national disadvantage was materially diminished by two distinct reforms: the substantial improvement of the roads, and the introduction of canals.² In both reforms Josiah Wedgwood was an agent. He helped to sub-

¹ See, for a vivid illustration of this assertion, a dialogue in broad Staffordshire quoted in Ward's Stoke-on-Trent, pp. 280-281.

"A BURSLEM DIALOGUE
BETWEEN JOHN TELWRIGHT AND RALPH LEIGH.

T. Thee remembers, Rafy, th’ caart-ruts beein up to th’ axle-treen alung th’ tāhin-street, here, that’s nāi so gud, oi rek’n?

L. Aye, wal enuf; bu’ ther wur no mommy caarts agait at th’ tayme ol wur yung; th’ beyurs as had no’ meules, carrt ther pots i’ creytes at ther backes. Th’ Chester cley wur brout i’ paryers on th’ back o’ chosses, an th’ furst hoss had a bell hung at his neck, t’ gee warnin’ ’ut th’ gang wur comin’; for th’ roads wur as narrow as they wur wurn bad; and wee had’n mych wark t’ get ’em mended.

T. Oi’ve some recollection abāıt a stir as was mayde for t’ hay th’ roads mended an awturt.

L. It wur no lottle stir, belee me. An’ afore th’ turnpikes wur mayd, mooast o’ th’ goods wur facht awey by jack-ass looads, bi’ th’ higglers, as seun as ait o’ th’ oon.

T. Things are greatly mended for th’ better sin then.

L. Ya. Ol’d summut t’ doo t’ get dāhin to L’pool wi’ eawr caart, at th’ tayme as oi first tayd Mester Siah Wedguts’ wheit ware for t’ be printed ther. Yu known as hāi ther wur no black printin on ony ware dun l’ Boslum i’ thoos deys. Fawmally, it wur a feerfu’ ruffish spot. Aw th’ hāhisen wur thatcht loike this hear’n; an’ afore ther duurs, e’erybody had a bread-oon an ess-middin’; an’ th’ tāhin street here wur aw full o’ cley-pits."

² A luminous and concise account of the whole movement is given by Mantoux, La Révolution industrielle au 18ème siècle, p. 98 f.
stitute turnpike roads for such lanes as those described by Arthur Young, and waterways wholly under the direction of man for streams liable to the baffling vicissitudes of flood or drought. Both proposals, though their general utility was evident, encountered fierce opposition from vested interests. Wedgwood was specially concerned for the provision of turnpike roads to connect Burslem with Buxton, Bakewell, Uttoxeter, and Newcastle. In a letter to his brother John of February 1, 1765, he describes the singular antagonism roused in the good folks of Newcastle by the prospect of a well-made road in their neighbourhood.

Burslem, 1st Feb., 1765.

We have another Turnpike broke out amongst us here betwixt Leek & Newcastle, & they have vi et Armis—mounted me upon my hobby-horse again, & a prancing rogue [rogue] he is at present, but hope he will not take the route of London again. He carried me yesterday to Leek, from whence I am just return’d much satisfied with our reception there. Tomorrow I wait upon Sr Nigil to beg his concurrence & on Monday must attend a meeting to settle the petition, etc., at Mony Ash at yr frd Isaac Whieldons—We pray to have the Uttoxeter & Burslem Turnpikes join’d, & to have the Road made Turnpike from Buxton & Bakewell to Leek, & from Leek to N: castle. Whether or not our good frds at Newcastle will give us battle on this occasion we do not know, if they do, there will be some probability of my haveing a commn & seeing the great City again.—£2000 is wanting for this road. My Uncles Tho & Jno have—I am quite serious—at the first asking subscribed—I

1 The first turnpike road was made in 1668; but the system made little progress before 1750. Cf. Mantoux, loc. cit.
know you will not believe me, but it is a certain fact—
five hundred pounds!!! I have done the like, intending
2 or 800 of it for you, and if you choose any more you
must let me know in time.

The letters of this period help us to understand
why Josiah was so often chosen to face the
sluggish forces opposed to beneficial change.
He could smile at the perversity which comp-
pelled him to undertake an inconvenient and
expensive journey, with its troublesome sequel
of attendance at Parliamentary Committees,
in order to further a measure which its oppo-
ents, he foresaw, would within a year or two
give much to have furthered themselves. He
was of a blithe and hopeful disposition; above
all, he had a sense of humour. Without such
endowments, indolence, short-sighted selfishness
and prejudice would have been attacked in vain;
for intelligence is powerless against them, and
zeal often a hindrance. As it was, the opposition
scored some partial triumphs. Newcastle, though
it could not prevent the road being sanctioned,
secured that it should stop at Burslem, some
miles short—a result which presently did more
than any logic or eloquence to make patent the
folly which had thus partially prevailed.

The same short-sightedness was, however, to
be exhibited in the second reform, the making
of canals. And it had hardly more excuse, the
marvels of aqueduct engineering already ac-
complished on the Continent being at this time
known to all travelled Englishmen. As early
as 1681 the waters of the Atlantic and the
Mediterranean had been joined by the Grand
Canal of Languedoc, a magnificent waterway 148 miles long, climbing to a height of 600 feet above the sea. "Here, Lewis XIV.," exclaimed Arthur Young, "thou art truly great. Here with a gracious and benignant hand thou dispensest ease and wealth to thy people." Yet it was not till 1720 that an Act was obtained for making the rivers Mersey and Irwell navigable from Manchester to Liverpool, and this first step towards the great ship canal of our own day incidentally tended to retard further progress. It created a monopoly; and the "Old Navigators," who had invested money in a lucrative method of public service, and could not but oppose rival schemes, were interested in keeping up the natural delusion that rivers were better waterways than canals.

The two men who were the life and soul of the Inland Navigation Scheme represented the two extremes of society. Of the two, James Brindley, the designer, the son of an ignorant peasant, had the finer character, and the more distinctive genius. But posterity continues to take a yet greater interest in the romantic story of the other, the Duke of Bridgewater, whose sacrifices made the work financially possible. The enterprise which Brindley was

1 Tour in France, p. 46.
2 The sources of our knowledge of Brindley's life are meagre. The chief is the article in Kippis's Biographia Britannica, which was compiled from information obtained by Wedgwood and Bentley from Hugh Henshall, Brindley's brother-in-law and his successor in his engineering work. As was natural in the case of so original a genius, there is also a considerable number of oral traditions and anecdotes, and these, as well as the authentic particulars, have been put together by Dr. Smiles so as to form a very readable biography (Lives of the Engineers, vol. i., 1861).
now, in conjunction with Wedgwood, to carry out was far more considerable and hazardous than any he had yet undertaken. But without the Bridgewater precedents its success would have been far less rapid, and it might well have remained a dream. Wedgwood's close association with both men in this phase of his career demands a brief notice of them in the story of his personal life.

James Brindley (born at Tunstead, 1716) was apprenticed as a mere child to a drunken millwright. In that capacity, despite the ill-will of fellow-workmen and the careless indolence of his master, he contrived to make himself a craftsman of such quality as to earn from the latter the mingled tribute and reproach: "Jem, if thou persists in this foolish way of working there will be very little trade left to be done when thou comes out of thy time." The boy's practical answer was to walk twenty-five miles on a Saturday night to inspect a paper-mill, returning on the Monday morning with its machinery clear in his head, so as to be able to complete a job of which his master was totally incapable. He now gave up the business to his generous apprentice, and was maintained by him in comfort during the last years of his life. Brindley became known, through his multifarious and successful ingenuity, as "the Schemer." He undertook the repair and invention "of all machinery connected with the pumping of water, the draining of mines, the smelting of iron and copper," and most other kinds of manufacture. Work for which a modern
engineer receives some ten guineas a day, he carried out for wages that would not now satisfy a day-labourer, executing the most arduous details with his own hands. But his originality was severely handicapped by defective education. He was curiously inarticulate, his spelling and pronunciation alike uncouth; he was often helpless to explain his schemes, until the timely arrival of a lump of clay or—it is said—a large piece of cheese enabled him to demonstrate what he could not describe. Such a man with all his gifts might have failed had he not met, and won the complete confidence of, a wealthy patron.

Of Francis, third and last Duke of Bridgewater, we may perhaps say, even remembering Wellington and Marlborough, that he is the duke to whom England owes most. His early life gave little promise of such distinction. He was a sickly and unattractive child, and an awkward, almost loutish youth. The first energies of his manhood were spent upon horse-racing. He went on the grand tour, but the marbles he brought back remained untouched in their packing-cases to the end of his days. A single decisive event changed the whole current of a life hitherto aimless and futile. He had sought the hand of the young Duchess of Hamilton, one of those two Gunning sisters whose beauty fills the memoirs of the last half of the eighteenth century with freakish gossip. Displeased at the follies of the Duchess’s sister, the Duke insisted that his bride should break off all intimacy with her. She resisted his
claim with spirit; the Duke stood to his terms, and bade adieu to the gay world for ever. It was for him the close of a carnival, ushering in a life which most of his old associates would have regarded as one long Lent.

"Never previously," says Sir Spencer Walpole, "had light conduct in a woman produced such beneficial consequences to the human race." When he adds that the Duke's devotion "laid the foundation of two of the most prosperous of English cities—Manchester at one end, Liverpool at the other, of his great water-road," his assertions, however extravagant, may at least be understood. Certainly not many individuals can have done as much to increase the activity and the comfort, even if we hesitate to add the happiness, of mankind. And unquestionably the Duke would not have been allowed to live on £400 a year (as at one time he did, when funds for this enterprise were low) if he had married the Duchess of Hamilton. It might be said that all this was in his own interest; his property was rich in coal, and of course gained enormously in value from the possibility of water-carriage. But wealthy nobles do not scorn delights and live laborious days in order to get richer; it must be a larger object that sustains them through such years of struggle and sacrifice as the Duke of Bridgewater passed before he finished the great engineering work which commemorates his name.

The first of the Duke's canals, that connecting his mines at Worsley with Manchester, was

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1 Spencer Walpole, *History of England*, i. 72 (1900).
begun in 1759, and carried out during the next three years. The larger project of the Mersey and Irwell Canal, connecting Manchester and Liverpool, obtained legal authorisation, in spite of violent Tory opposition, in 1762. It was well advanced but still unfinished when the yet more considerable scheme of the Trent and Mersey Canal began, in the spring of 1765, to take practical shape. The idea was not, however, new. As far back as 1755 the ground had been surveyed at the instance of a body of Liverpool merchants; it was surveyed again in 1758 by Brindley, and in 1760 by Brindley and Smeaton; and all the surveyors had declared the scheme to be “very practicable.” They had, moreover, added their opinion that in view of the mines, minerals, and manufactories of this district, “there was not a Tract of Land in the Kingdom which stood so much in need of an inland Navigation, or was naturally so well adapted for that purpose, and for uniting the East and West seas.”

Of all the towns to be served by a Trent-Mersey Canal, none stood to gain so largely as the Potteries. Their delicate and perishable ware ran peculiarly heavy risks when it could find a market only by carriage on horseback along the wretched lanes described by Arthur Young. It is not surprising, then, that it was a potter who finally took the lead in pushing the scheme, and that Burslem responded more promptly to it than the magnates of Birmingham and Liverpool. Yet the scheme for some

1 *Navigation Pamphlet, addressed to Parliament, 1765.*
years hung fire. But the striking success of Brindley’s first great work, and the rapid progress of the second, providing as this eventually would communication between the Potteries and Manchester as well as Liverpool if the Trent-Mersey Canal were made, quickened the dormant project in the spring of 1765. A factor of at least equal importance was Wedgwood’s acquaintance with James Brindley.

Brindley had for some time been an occasional neighbour, for as early as 1750 he rented from the Wedgwoods of the Big House a millwright’s shop in Burslem; and in 1756 he was erecting a mill for crushing flints on the property of these Wedgwoods. The first mention, however, of Brindley in Wedgwood’s letters occurs on March 11, 1765, when he tells his brother John that he has lately dined with “Mr. Brindley, the Duke’s engineer.” From that time forward intercourse must have been frequent, and the two men can hardly have met without discovering common aims, while the differences between a nature suited for intercourse and one strikingly deficient in any power of expression tended in this case not to sever but to bind. On Wedgwood’s side, at all events, appreciation deepened into reverence. In a letter to Bentley, February 22, 1768, he writes:

It is very cruel in you to convey your raptures at the Man of Nature to me [i.e. Rousseau’s Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité parmi les hommes] unless you intend to favour me with a sight of your translation by the very first conveyance. . . . However I can make my boasts of reading a man of Nature sometimes though
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not so often as I could wish, and have my raptures too. Mr. Brindley and his Lady call'd here in their way home, lay with us, and are just left us this morning. We are to spend to-morrow with them at Newchapel, and as I allways edify full as much in that man's company as at Church, I promise myself to be much wiser the day following. It is an old adage, that a man is either a Fool, or a Physician at fifty, and considering the opportunitys I have with the Brindleys and Bentleys of this Age if I am not a very wise mortal before that Age I must be a blockhead in grain.

From the first inception of the scheme Wedgwood gave it the support of his energy, his industry, his money, and, not least important, his power of conciliatory and temperate but cogent and consistent argument.

The Grand Trunk Canal (to call it by the name finally chosen for it) was thus not, like its predecessor, the product of one princely fortune, but, like all its successors, a joint-stock concern. The potters of Staffordshire were willing to subscribe to a scheme so obviously beneficial to their trade, and the canal was made by the genius of one and the contributions of many. Despotism has its advantages, and the Duke of Bridgewater had not, like Wedgwood, to struggle with the interested and unintelligent opposition of co-operators. The following letters illustrate at once the kind of difficulty he had to encounter and his power of dealing with men.

To John Wedgwood.
(1765.)

BURSLEM, 3rd Apr.,
before breakfast.

DEAR BROTHER—I find Tom hath made you acquainted with my late Tour, & in part with our success
in it. Mr. Taylor is just enter'd into partnership with one Mr. Loyd in the Banking business, & Mr. Loyd, it seems, is one of the Proprietors in the Burton Navigation which will be injured by our intended Canal, as it is proposed to carry it beyond Burton to Wilden in order to keep clear of their Locks and shallows.

We made it appear pretty evident to the Gentn of Birmingham that £10,000 per annum would be immediately sav'd to them in the Article of Land Carr'ge to and from the River Trent, so soon as the Canal was bro't to their Town which wo'd it is apprehended be in less than three years after it is begun upon. . . . This scheme of a Navigation is undoubtedly the best thing that could possibly be plan'd for this country & I hope there is a great probability of its being carried into execution.

15th Apr 1765.

We met Mr. Gilbert (the D. of B.'s Gilbert 1) in our way to Trentham, and stop'd here long enough to shew him our plan and explain the scheme a little to him. He immediately asked if it could not join the Duke's canal which wo'd be almost as near a way to Liverpool and much nearer to Manchester & save our locking down into the River, for which we might afford to give his G° a small Tonnage, we told him the Gentn who favoured this scheme wo'd do everything to make it agreeable to his G° consistent with Public Utility & would enquire into what he mention'd accordingly I shall write to Mr. Brindley upon the subject today & sho'd be glad to have your thoughts, have inclos'd you a plan that you may be better able to form some opinion abo't it.

Councillor Gilbert 2 was at Trentham & was highly

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1 John Gilbert, brother of the more distinguished Thomas Gilbert, the "Councillor" mentioned below.

2 Thomas Gilbert (1720–1798), M.P., was a well known Poor-law reformer. In 1782, he succeeded in obtaining a modification of the Act of Settlement by which parishes were to be allowed to form Unions which would replace the village poorhouse by one central workhouse. The Act, being permissive, and taken up by only 924 parishes, was important only as heralding the dawn of a national system.
pleased with the Plan & scheme & recommended us besides other measures to get a pamphlet well wrote upon the subject. . . . And, upon the whole one might plainly see his heart was engaged along with his tongue in the scheme, so that I have no doubt of his being a steady friend.

Mr. Sparrow was on Friday last at a meeting of Justices at Trentham who all approv'd of the Navigation, some of them heard Ld Gower at his Table speak of it in such a manner as show'd he would favour the scheme. . . . Is it not time now to begin our subscriptions for the expences of obtaining the Act of Parliament &c. & I sho'd much rather the subscriptions for carrying the scheme into execution was done by a number of Gentn Tradesmen &c. along the Canal than to have one individual who hath no other connection with it than to subscribe the whole.

Shortly after this conversation with the Gilberts at Trentham an important further step was taken. At a public meeting in Newcastle, at which Brindley was present, it was settled that an engineering survey should be set on foot to ascertain the most practicable path by which the intended canal could be joined with that already completed by the Duke of Bridgewater, the surveyor being Mr. Henshall, who afterwards became Brindley's brother-in-law, and a further meeting was announced for June 27 to collect subscriptions. It was also decided that the canal was to be as free as a turnpike road, and that interest of 5 per cent should be paid to subscribers—no extravagant undertaking after the success of the Bridgewater Canal. The Mayor, a Mr. Tarleton, at a dinner to which Wedgwood was invited, "introduced the subject
very genteely by giving for a toast—*Success to a scheme for uniting the Trent and Weaver by a navigable canal*. The toast went round the board with glee,” and the Mayor further promised large subscriptions and the use of his influence with various M.P.’s. The business seemed on the threshold of success, and about two months later a visit to Worsley, recounted in the following letter, reflects Wedgwood’s hopeful feelings in their brightest colouring.

*July 6th, 1785.*

I should have wrote to you sooner but have been waiting upon his G— the D— of Bridgwater with plans &c. respecting Inland Navigation. Mr. Sparrow went along with me, we were most graciously receiv’d spent about 8 hours in his G——‘s comp’y, & had all the assurances of his concurrence with our designs that we could wish. His G—— gave me an ord’r for the completest Table service of Cream colour that I could make, shewed us a Roman Urn 1500 years old at least, made of red china, & found by his workmen in Castlefield near Manchester. After his G—— had dismiss’d us we had the honour, & pleasure too of sailing in his Gondola nine miles along his Canal, thro’ a most delightful vale to Manchester, the next day we waited upon the Cheshire Gent’n at a meeting of the Comm’n for the Weaver Navigation at Northwich, who promised likewise to use their interest in favour of our design, provided we fall into their Navigation.

The Bridgewater Canal had been open, when the last letter was written, nearly four years, and it is pleasant to come upon such a proof of its prosperity as the order for a Wedgwood service, an impossibility in the days, still recent, when the Duke would have been thankful to get
the sum it must have cost as a loan from a tenant. The glimpse of him afforded here, indeed, is much more in harmony with the associations of inherited dignity than any we catch elsewhere, and, we must add, quite unlike anything else we hear of a grandee who is said to have pulled up flowers planted in his garden as troublesome superfluities, and is commemorated by his literary kinsman almost as a mere boor. With his great work behind him and the two great cities of Lancashire's commercial future already brought into connection by his canal, he was still a young man, five years younger than Wedgwood. Hardly ten years had elapsed since he, the typical young English lord on the Grand Tour, had lounged through Venice and Rome wholly unresponsive to the glories of the past which surrounded him.

It is another aspect of his character which is brought before us by Wedgwood's account of his eight hours' conference with the Duke in the fine old house near Manchester. We see the great canal-maker, who had never thought it worth while to open his packing-cases of priceless marbles, bringing out his antique vase, found on the site of the Roman fort at Manchester, and expounding to his listening guests what little he could say of the fall of Roman power in Britain.

Much of the following autumn was occupied with the preparation and discussion, vexatiously prolonged, of a pamphlet intended to win the favour of the public, and particularly of Parliament, for the scheme. It was at first intended
that Dr. Darwin, whose literary reputation was even then considerable, should be the author. He soon relinquished the attempt, however, exchanging the post of author for that of critic, in neither case contributing anything of value to the result, and seriously hampering the efforts of the principal author, Bentley. His criticisms would indeed be unworthy of notice had they not evoked some of the few letters of Bentley himself which have been preserved. Wedgwood evidently thought little of the academic cavils of his future relative, whose curious artifices of style and invention can at no time have been very congenial to his strong and homely intelligence, and wrote to Bentley in this sense. Darwin also communicated his criticisms to Bentley—a stranger to him—in terms for those days exceedingly frank, even rude. Bentley replied with admirable courtesy, firmness, and modesty, disarming his severe critic, as the latter owned to Wedgwood.

The following letters give some glimpses of this matter. They have some interest for students of the eighteenth-century ideal of "elegance" of phrase.

In the first Wedgwood reports to Bentley Darwin’s criticisms, with his own comments.

Bureslem, 26 Sept. 1765.

My dear Friend—To-morrow I shall set out for London & therefore need not tell you that to-day I am very busy, but cannot help sending you a correction or two for our Navigation Pamphlet with I have just read from a friend.

In general he thinks the style rather too flat or tame,
but be it remember'd that he is himself a Poetical Genius.

That it is not wrote enough to the Landowners, & they, if any body of men does, will ruin our scheme.

Secn 1. Sentence 1st.—"Whose int's are more immediately concern'd in its success " not approv'd as it reminds the Landowner that the contributor is interested more than he is in it.

This objection does not appear to me to be well founded, as the "immediately concern'd " may relate to the Landowners as well as any other Persons, for who are more than they concern'd or interested in its success?

In the Article of pleasures.

"Gentlemen in other situations &c." is offensive, is nobody to wish for such things but Gentlemen? A Correction attempted—"wch your honour, in another situation, if it please your honour, would wish for in vain!"

This appears to me more witty than just—who are not Gent but when addressed in print? besides the Articles of luxury refer'd to belong more properly to Gents than either Farmers or Mechanics.

"To have a Lawn terminated by a Canal &c." Why change a more elegant & equally simple word for a worse? Why a Canal is as straight as Fleet Ditch. A Canal at the bottom of your meadow! Foh! it can't be born by the Goddess of modern taste, but "Water," ay, Water, give me Water to terminate or divide my Lawn.

This seems a real emendation, if you think so pray alter it accordingly, for I have the fear of the Goddess before my eyes.

"Is the circumstance of our trade being safer in war time omitted least the Gents concern'd in the Coasting trade sho'd be alarmed?"

"The acct of China is Curious if one could believe it."

The intention here implied that the critic should remain anonymous seems to have been im-
mediately changed, or perhaps forgotten in the hurry of travel, for he is named on the following day.

Uttoxeter, 27th Sep. 1765.

Dr. Darwin at our Inn, & just made his appearance! Was ever anything so apropos? adieu 'till we get to Derby. . . .

Dr. Darwin says nobody writes Grace, & R's honourable, but Taylors & such like folks, so do as seemeth good in your own eyes. Nor wod the Dr. have anything farther than ingenious or so, to Mr. Brindley's name, but that matter is left intirely to your own discretion, feeling, &c.

Mr. Gilbert & Ld Gower (I ask his L'ships pardon) have seen your Dedication this morning & approve of it, but Dr. Darwin does not like Legislature & some other things in it, & thinks Inhabitants in the article of pleasures, more unexceptionable than Gent— but he hath promis'd me to write you his sentiments himself on these and some other things in the Pamphlet in a day or two at farthest.

Ten days later he writes from London (October 7):

Dear Sir—I doubt not but you have rec'd my letter from Uttoxeter & Derby, & a long, Critical epistle from our ingenious & poetical friend Doct: Darwin, which I doubt not, if it be such as he generally favours his friends with, hath afforded you entertainment, & shook your diaphragm for you, whatever it may have done respecting your Pamphlet on Navigation.

This is a part of Bentley's reply to Darwin:

"I am far from thinking that [the pamphlet] is what it might have been if some Person better capable of Writing would have undertaken it," he writes on October 11. "But the Misfortune is those who can write best seldom know much of such subjects; and no
man can write well upon a subject that he does not understand. . . .”

He declines to call the pamphlet his work.

Every one knows there is a great difference between writing a Piece and endeavouring to mend one. . . . I will make all the Use I can of your Remarks and desire the Continuance of them. I am much pleased that Dr. Darwin permits me to call myself his ob\textsuperscript{1} Friend and hble Serv\textsuperscript{1},

THOS. BENTLEY.

A little later Wedgwood writes to Bentley:

15 October 1765.

LAWRENCE LANE, LONDON.

I am very sorry that this Pamphlet turns out so troublesome an affair to you who I am sure have full employm\textsuperscript{t} for every moment of your time. As to our friend of Lichfield's remarks if you can avail yourself of them in the part not yet print\textsuperscript{d} I know you will, but the condemnation or postponing of the whole I can by no means agree to nor perswade myself that there is any necessity for it. Must the Uniting of Seas & distant countrys depend upon the choice of a phrase or mono-syllable? Away with such hypercriticisms, & let the press go on, a Pamphlet we must have, or our design will be defeated, so make the best of the present, & correct, refine, & sublimate, if you please, in the next edition.

Wedgwood's elder brother, John, with whom he and his wife spent some days in November, disposed of the literary critic even more peremptorily.

"I will take care of the [Monthly] Review," he wrote to Bentley in a joint letter. "The Language I am not afraid of, & the Plan will have Justice. I have cons-ulted with Griffiths who begs his respects.
"In my Opinion Dr. Darwin’s Criticism is below a Man of Letters. I fancy the Author was sore—you know the old Proverb."

Josiah concludes:

I shall for the future be very cautious how I hook my friends into such thankless, profitless business again, & how I engage in them myself too, but there is no retreat ing now without both loss & shame therefore must make the best of a bad matter.

Mr. Gilbert tells me that the D. of Bridgwater wants to know how we proceed in our design as he hath not heard anything of it lately. I am glad to find he has not forgot the subject & hope he will be our steady & potent friend.

A last letter from Josiah to his partner, a fortnight later, describes Darwin’s not unkindly reception of the comments upon his criticisms.

The Dr. acknowledg’d he had wrote you two or three very rude letters, & said you had drub’d him genteely in return, which he seem’d to take very cordially, & to be very well pleas’d with his treatment.

The Pamphlets came to hand on friday or saturday last. I saw them yesterday only but have been so much employ’d in dispersing them that I have not yet had time to read one but have dipped upon some alterations which please me much.

The word, revive, in the dedication may possibly give offence to the late administration & their friends, on some of whom we chiefly depend for success in this undertaking. The papers have been so full of complaints that our trade & manufactures are ruin’d by the blunders of the late administration, that when we pray them (as a part of both houses of Parliam’) to favour our design for reviving our (decayed) manufactures & commerce, they must be affected either with shame for their own
maladministration, or with anger for the reproof, which last I think is most probable, & though they may deserve it ever so much, we should not make our Dedication a channel for anything of that sort. I know you would have me write my sentiments without any reserve, on this, or any other subject, & so you see I do. I am quite open to conviction, & shall be glad to know my fears have no foundation.

The opposition to the whole scheme was extraordinarily active and unintelligent, and so far prevailed that the course of the canal was eventually laid out so as to avoid the neighbourhood of some large manufacturing towns, whose hostility could not otherwise be bought off. It need hardly be stated that the towns thus avoided subsequently discovered their mistake. Happily, the pottery towns were not large enough to be treated with this baleful respect.

A sentence from the letter of October 11 may be quoted to show the attitude of the public mind towards the scheme. "The readers of the pamphlet," Bentley wrote, "will be looking out for Deceit and Artifice in every line of it. I wou’d disappoint them with the manly simplicity of Truth." Nor was this prejudice common only among the uneducated, as the following letter shows:

_**Saturday, noon.**_

I am just return’d from waiting upon Sr Walter Bagot, & his son who is Member for our County, they were on a visit at Mr Sneyds of Keel Sr Walter’s Son in Law, & sent for me to come & explain the plan of our intended navigation to them. I spent the evening & morning 'till noon with this good company, chaled
out all the plans in agitation & answer'd all their objections in the best manner I was able, & had the satisfaction to find my labour was not bestowed in vain, for they acknowledg'd themselves convinced of some errors they had imbibed, & said they now understood our plan &c. much better than they had ever done before, & when they knew the sense of the County in general & had considered a little upon the Subject they would be glad to see some of us at Bliffield. Sir Walter & his son have hitherto been avowed Enemies to canal navigations, but I hope their eyes are opening & we are taking proper measures to let them know the sense of the County.

Mr. Wm Bagot has been much abroad in France, Italy, &c. He hath seen the famous Canal of Languedoc & says that though it is navigated upon only about three months in the year it is of so much consequence to the Inhabitants in exporting their wine & oyl & importing corn for their subsistence that the country bordering upon it would scarcely be habitable without the conveniences it furnishes. Its importance he says may be known by the great annual expence they are at in keeping it Navigable, he has seen vast numbers employed in clearing it of the weeds which choke it up in the nine months it lies idle. This Canal is vacant so long every year for want of Tonnage to be conveyed, & not through any defect in the Canal & this vacancy creates the expence of Clearing &c. I was glad to learn these facts from so good Authority, as the expence attending the Languedoc Canal & its insufficiency to answer the purpose it was intended for hath often been mention'd as an objection to ours, where hills are to be level'd, cut through, &c., but no weeds grow in the Duke's Canal, & I hope we shall have motion enough in ours to prevent any great degree of vegetation in its waters. Mr Bagot says the Languedoc Canal is too small to be ever intended for shiping, that it now keeps a communication open between the Mediterranean & the Ocean &
would if there was tonnage enough to keep it clear of weeds answer the purposes it was made for.

The pamphlet, when at last published, towards the close of the year, had a considerable success, and received a eulogistic notice in the *Monthly Review*. "There has not," says the reviewer, "for many years been a more interesting publication than this little treatise. The subject is of such great and national importance as to command attention, and the manner in which it is treated will render attention agreeable." It may appear little but a string of truisms; but much that is obvious to cultivated intelligence at all times needs emphatic repetition to force it on the attention of average men in the face of interested opposition. It is, in fact, a skilful and able piece of work. To us its laborious demonstration of the utility of cheap and universally accessible internal communications may appear a tissue of truisms. But these truisms were then largely novel, and they needed emphatic and repeated assertion to force the attention of average men in the face of interested opposition. It is amusing to find Bentley's and Wedgwood's favourite poet Thomson invoked, in the motto on the title-page, in the cause of making

Long canals and deepen'd rivers join
Each part with each, and with the circling main,
The whole enliven'd isle.

During the last month of 1765 Wedgwood can have had but little leisure to attend to his own business. "This is the sixth I' on Naviga-
tion I have despatch'd to-day," he writes on December 16. "Adieu. I wish this bustle was over and I was quietly settled a Potter only again." A second edition of the pamphlet was called for, and "his Grace thinks it can receive very little improvement in any respect. It is universally admired & will be more so the more it is read."

The new year (1766) began with an incident which threatened for a moment seriously to set back the Navigation Scheme. The danger was averted by prompt and somewhat daring action on Wedgwood's part. His account of the affair to Bentley gives us a lively notion of his address, argumentative skill, and mastery of the salient facts.

BUBBLE, 2nd Jan. 1766.

MY WORTHY FRIEND—The moment I returned from Liverpool I had one of the printed papers you refer to put into my hands which astonish'd, Confounded & vexed me not a little. I was told the writer was Mr. Gilbert, M.P., & that he had given it out as a scheme to obviate every objection. His Broth'r Mr. John Gilbert call'd upon me the same evening to whom I gave my sentiments of the four last paragraphs, that they were dark, mysterious, & ungenerous, & much better calculated to overturn than support our design. That his printing & circulating such a paper without once consulting the Persons who had hitherto lent their heads, hands & purses too in planing & forwarding our scheme of Navigation was as indelicate, as the insinuations were gross & ill-founded.

Mr. Gilbert reply'd that he wished his Bro' had not taken so unadvised a step and desired I wo'd meet L'd Gower, Mr. Garbett & his Bro' at Lich'd on sunday evening, for these Gent'n with Mr. Councilor Beard of
Newcastle were it seems to settle preliminaries for 
monday, & fatal wo’d have been the consequences 
thereof.

Mr. Beard was sent for, Mr. Sparrow nor anybody else 
ever mention’d, I plainly saw the necessity of our going, 
but had a very great sacrifice to make, such as no one 
can feel stronger than yourself in consenting to intrude 
myself unasked upon a junto which I then thought did 
not want my company.

Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Brindley (Engineer) & my Bro’ 
saw our critical situation in the same light with myself 
and stifling every other sensation in that of promoting 
our General Cause we altogether posted away to Lich-
field, where we arrived about 10 minutes after his L’d 
ship. Mr. Garbitt was there in conference with Mr. 
Gilbert, & we soon found that they were both very 
sanguine in supporting their chimérical plan of a medium 
betwixt Proprietors & Comm’n. As I had thought more 
on this subject than most of our people had, they served 
me as poor Uriah of old was served & placed me in the 
forefront of the battle. After a slight skirmish with 
Mr. Gilbert, in which he did not choose to answer point 
blank to some questions which I had prepared for him, 
he desired I would go & speak to Mr. Garbitt & his 
friends who were in another room. I obeyed, & soon 
perceived by what each of them s’d compared w’th what 
they had wrote to myself & others that the medium 
scheme was the joint production of those two Gentle-
mens brains, or at least that they had concerted or 
adopted it together. Mr. Garbitt at my request 
explained to me the whole plan, & answered my ques-
tions rather more explicitly than Mr. Gilbert had done, 
the consequence of which was that in 10 minutes time 
he found his baseless Fabrick tumbling down to the 
ground & deserted it immediately without one atempt 
to rear it up again. I am afraid you will think me 
rather too figurative, but remember I am not reasoning 
now I am only huzzaing and singing Io after a conquest.
To return—Mr. Gilbert w'd neither speak quite out nor give up the point, but we were call'd to sup with L'd Gower in the midst of our debates. After supper the subject was introduced before his L'dship which I was very glad of as I knew him to be sensible & Humane & the scheme proposed to be either weak or Tyranical.

His L'dship desired that both the plans might be explained to him. Mr. Gilbert opened his own & made his remarks upon it at large. Think my friend how I was delighted to find that he had not one argument, inference or flourish to make in the whole harangue but what I felt myself able with the greatest clearness to confute. In this situation I was call'd upon to make my reply & most joyfully enter'd upon the task, my heart was ingaged in the cause, & that I believe made my thoughts & expression obedient to my wish. You will know what could be said on the subject, which may save you the trouble of reading, & me of writeing half a doz. sheets at least—if I had time for it—but I am now interrupted by a Gent'n who wants to subscribe £1000 & tell me some interesting facts. In short then I concluded in very honestly endeavouring to interest his L'dship's candour & humanity in favour of the Proprietors, by appealing to him—if it would not be very cruel, when a set of men had employed their time, their talents & their purses for ten years together—the best part of their lives—in the execution of a design by which the Public wo'd gain 300 £ C, & when they have executed this Laborious task—what is their reward? why a new sett of Masters are raised up to controul both them & their works, they have hitherto had but bare interest for their money & now perhaps they will be permitted to have 1 or 2 £ C extra out of 300 they have saved to the Public, which poor pittance wo'd not at the highest calculation pay them 4d dimes for their past Labour. L'd Gower turned to Mr. Gilbert. "It wo'd be hard," he s'd, "Gilbert, it would be very hard, & if the Proprietors can save so much to the Public as Mr. W. hath
proposed I do not think their plan can be rejected by Parliament.”

Our plan was accordingly fixed, and Lord Gower declared & everyone join’d in the opinion that if we had not met that evening at Lichfield, nothing could have been done at Wolsley Bridge, & as that was the last meeting we could have, we should scarcely have got over these difficulties.

In the course of the spring the Bill passed successfully through Parliament, and the scheme was promptly set on foot. “On June 3rd” (1766), Wedgwood wrote to Bentley from Burslem, “a very Noble, Numerous, and amicable General Assembly of the Comm’r & Proprietors of the Navigation from the Trent to the Mersey had been held, which was conducted with the utmost Order, Harmony & as far as appear’d to the entire satisfaction of all parties.” “I have inclos’d you an abstract of the business done,” he writes to his brother John on the following day, “by which you will see the honour done me, which was quite unexpected and voluntary, without the least previous sollicitation on my part, and without one dissentient voice.” The tribute was high, being the offer of the responsible position of Treasurer to the Company, though the honour, according to his own humorous account of it, appears to have been an expensive one. The letter contains the following list of officers and their salaries, viz.:

James Brindley, Surveyor General. £200 per ann.
Hugh Henshall, Clerk of the works. £150 per ann. for self and clerk.
T. Sparrow, Clerk to the Proprietors. £100 per ann. Jos. Wedgwood, Treasurer at £000 per ann.—out of which he bears his own expenses.

He was further required to give surety for £10,000.

The manner of his receiving the offer was gratifying. "Mr. Sam Robeson took me aside," he tells his brother, "and very genteelly offer'd to join in my security for as much as his bond wd. be took for, which unexpected favour I shall ever remember with gratitude whether I accept it or not." A meeting held at the charming village of Sandon, early in July, "to examine the bills of the several claimants for expenses in obtaining our Navigation Act," allotted Wedgwood 150 guineas for his trouble, "for which I made them a very low bow, & told them I was perfectly satisfied."

The letter giving the account of this meeting marks the end of the real stress of the conflict. On July 26, 1766, Burslem gave itself up to festive celebration of the fact that on that day the first sod of the canal was cut by the hand of Josiah Wedgwood. Several distinguished persons of the neighbourhood associated themselves with him in this act of symbolic service, and the trowel and the wheelbarrow were handled by some who would have no other experience of such exercise as well as by the one who had known every form of manual labour. James Brindley wheeled away the earth turned up by Josiah Wedgwood. A sheep was roasted whole at Burslem in the afternoon, and illuminations followed in the evening before the private resi-
dence of Wedgwood. This was still the comparatively modest Brick House of which we have spoken above. It was soon to be exchanged for the more stately mansion of Etruria—a material symbol of the new prosperity brought to the Potteries by the Grand Trunk Canal.

It was a greater engineering work than the Bridgewater Canal in other ways than being longer. Its aqueducts were greater, one which crossed the Dove being supported on twenty-three arches, and approached by an embankment at either end which extended its length to two miles, and there were a hundred and sixty lesser ones, the Trent being thus crossed four times. But the great triumph of engineering was in the tunnels. The most difficult one, that under the ridge of Harecastle, which rises 395 feet above the canal’s level, was not actually completed till five years after Brindley’s death. But it had been reckoned an eighth wonder of the world five years earlier by some inhabitants of Burslem, and its creator was currently spoken of as “the great Mr. Brindley who handles rocks as easily as you would plum-pies, and makes the four elements subservient to his will.” He is “as plain a man as one of his own carters, but when he speaks all ears listen and every mind is filled with wonder.” This marvellous “subterraneous navigation” was looked upon, we see here, as a certain triumph within about a year from the time when it had been derided as an impossibility. We read of that triumph, however, with mingled feelings, for it meant
that heavy barges had to be propelled through a mile-long canal by men lying on their backs, and literally, to use Dr. Smiles' expression, kicking the boat along against the over-arching walls. To-day, goods and passengers are whirled through the North Staffordshire tunnel in less than one-tenth of the time occupied by that laborious transit.

Brindley's Sabbath came earlier than the completion of his work, and we may turn aside to contemplate the few remaining incidents of his life. The 8th of December 1765 was the only day we know of in his fifty-five years of life that he gave up to important matters which had no bearing on his engineering work. He was then married at Woolstanton Church to Anne Henshall, a girl of nineteen, whom he had known for some years. The six years of their union were spent in the roomy old Staffordshire mansion of Turnhurst, near Harecastle, the dignity of which may be remembered by the tradition that it was the last house in England where a fool was kept, and another tradition, probably mistaken, connects the village with Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith." His wife's relation to him must have been more like that of a daughter than even the thirty years between them would necessitate; for at fifty he had a very full day's work behind him, and but a brief eleventh hour in front. He died at Turnhurst, September 27, 1772, and Wedgwood's letters to Bentley on the occasion sum up their friendship and the impression he left on all his friends and on a far wider audience.
ETURIA, 26th Sept' 1772.

I have been at Turnhurst almost every day this week, & can give you but a melancholy acc' from thence. Poor Mr. Brindley has nearly finish'd his course in this world. He says he must leave us, & indeed I do not expect to find him alive in the morn- ing. His disorder I think I told you before is a Diabetes & this malady he has had upon him for seven years past most probably, which occasion'd his constant fever & thirst, though I believe no one of his Doctors found it out 'till D' Derwin discover'd it in the present illness, which I fear will deprive us of a valuable friend, & the world of one of those great Genius's who seldom live to see justice done to their singular abilities, but must trust to future ages for that tribute of praise & fair fame they so greatly merit from their fellow mortals.

Poor Mrs. Brindley is inconsolable, & will scarcely be prevail'd upon to take either rest or food sufficient to support nature, but she has promis'd me to exert herself in bearing this affliction stroke all in her power for the sake of her Aged Parents & her helpless Children.

ETURIA, 28th Sept' 1772.

I told you in my last that Mr. Brindley was extremely ill, & I have the grief to tell you he is now no more. He died the 27th Ins' about 12 at Noon, in a sound sleep, for about 3 O'Clock in the morning, after giving him some thing to wet his mouth, he said, its enough—I shall need no more, & shut his Eyes, never more to open, he continued to the time of his death (about 9 hours) seemingly in a fine sleep, & yielded up his breath at last without a single groan.

He has left two young Children behind him, & poor Mrs. Brindley inconsolable for the loss of a sensible friend, & affectionate Husband.—What the Public has lost can only be conciev'd by those who best know his Character & Talents—Talents for which this Age &
Country are indebted for works that will be the most lasting monument to his Fame, & shew to future Ages how much good may be done by one single Genius, when happily employd upon works beneficial to Man-kind.

Mr. Brindley had an excellent constitution, but his mind, too ardently intent upon the execution of the works it had plann'd, wore down a body at the age of 55 which originally promis'd to have lasted a Century & might give him the pleasing expectation of living to see those great works completed for which Millions yet unborn will revere & bless his memory.

Do I need to tell you that he bore his last illness with that fortitude & strength of mind which characterised all his actions.

If you have so much leisure perhaps you will send an account of this event to some of the papers, with such accompaniments as your esteem & friendship for the deceac'd shall dictate, & if a prem'm is requir'd from the printers I will gladly pay it. The Duke of Bridgewater might & indeed ought to have a handsome compliment paid him on this occasion, to encourage others to bring Genius to light & support its first efforts as he has nobly done.

We may append to this sorrowing record a tribute remarkably in unison with it, and with the words quoted before: "I edify in that man's company as in Church." Carlyle, the prophet of Work, in his Past and Present, takes Brindley as a type of the dumb worker.

The rugged Brindley has little to say for himself; the rugged Brindley, when difficulties accumulate upon him, retires silent, "generally to his bed"; retires "sometimes for three days together to his bed," that "he may be in perfect privacy there," and ascertain in his rough head how the difficulties can be overcome. The in-
CAMEO MEDALLION OF BRINDLEY.
eloquent Brindley, behold he has chained seas together; his ships do visibly float over valleys, invisibly through the hearts of mountains; the Mersey and the Thames, the Humber and the Severn have shaken hands: Nature most audibly answers, Yea!
CHAPTER IV

ETRURIA

We may conveniently mark out the progress of a busy man's activity by noting his successive homes. Wedgwood's lodging with the worthy draper at Stoke, retained as it was for so many years and the scene of so much varied experience, may be reckoned as the first, though in tracing the career of most men we should keep that title for the first four walls which he could call his own. It is characteristic of his companionable nature that at the most volatile period of life a bedroom in a draper's shop, where he boarded with the family, should have remained his domicile long enough to be thus remembered. The "Ivy House," which marks his first start in independent work, and first gave full scope to his own vigorous initiative, thus comes second. The "Brick House" was the early home of his happy married life, and lastly Etruria commemorates his achievement of wealth and fame, and what doubtless to him was more than either—the partnership with his dearest friend.

The desire for larger premises was an inevitable result of Wedgwood's expanding business. The ovens, counting-houses, and other
offices attached to the Brick House, serviceable enough while he was merely a prominent individual among the potters of Staffordshire, were quite inadequate to the needs of the "Queen's Potter," purveyor of the new ware indispensable to people of fashion. In the growing town—hitherto a mere village—of Burslem any expansion of existing premises at all adequate to such increased needs was impossible; even had only domestic interests been involved, the need of a better house might still have been felt. And lastly, the great public work in which Wedgwood's energies were so largely engaged—the Grand Trunk Canal—was now definitely in progress; and when an estate bordering on its course, known as The Ridgehouse, was announced for sale, to omit purchase was out of the question. Its situation on the canal would give his manufactory all the advantages and none of the disadvantages that an adjacent railway-station gives to a residence. No noise, no crowd, no obtrusive traffic was to be dreaded, yet the carrier would call at the door. Wedgwood at once entered into treaty for the property, and in July 1766 it became his own.

The correspondence of these years (1766—1769) bears witness to the great success of the pottery. He writes in February 1767:

I sho[d have made an attempt at the Bolingbroke Jug but my modeler hath been fully employ'd for two months past, in modeling various articles for his Excellency Mr. Mello the Portugal[e]ze Embassador, & Ld Pembroke w[ch are not yet finished, & I have been several times afraid the Embassador wo[d be sent home without his Crockeryware.}
On May 28 he asks his friend:

Woud you think it, I am this morning going by Comm'd to visit your old friend G—— G—— [George Grenville]. You may make yourself easy abou' America, we will settle their affairs whilst his Lady is giving her or'drs for Crockery ware.

On August 24 he is sunk over head and ears in business, and has "a Warehouse full of Gent" & Ladys," many of whom are people of distinction, and in September we learn that—

The demand for this s'd Creamcolour, Alias, Queen's Ware, Alias, Ivory, still increases. It is really amazing how rapidly the use of it has spread allmost over the whole Globe, & how universally it is liked.—How much of this general use, & estimation, is owing to the mode of its introduction—& how much to its real utility & beauty? are questions in which we may be a good deal interested, for the governm't of our future Conduct.

The following March brings an interview of several hours with Lord Cathcart, "our Embassador to Russia, & we are to do great things for each other," he adds.

As a craftsman Wedgwood may be said at this time to have reached his goal; as an artist he was just starting on the path towards it. It is from the period of his building Etruria that all which is especially associated with his name takes its rise. The perfection of his work in its earlier phase may be called complete, his attention now turned towards its expansion; and for finer work he needed finer material. His activity was transferred to some extent from the labour of perfecting his earlier methods
of workmanship to that of acquiring or creating new substances to serve as vehicle for the delineations which a new interest in Art encouraged him to study and present to his patrons and customers. A fine clay was said to be attainable in the England beyond the sea to which at this time men's minds were so powerfully drawn. Wedgwood's goods already found a market in America, and not for artistic reasons only. He had "sent Mr. Pitt" there, and the jugs or mugs which bore the eagle countenance of that notable friend of the colonists were in large demand. In return he hoped to obtain, from North Carolina, a clay suitable for his new and popular imitations of the antique ceramic treasures which were now rousing general attention. With this object a Burslem connection of the firm was appointed its agent in America.¹ The success of the new vases was immediate and striking. The modellers and turners could not make them rapidly enough for the orders which poured in from a great number of the noble houses of England. For a time vases formed the most lucrative as well as the most characteristic of Wedgwood's productions. It has been made a reproach to his art that this whole branch is in spirit a copy. It is avowedly imitative; its beauty simulates that of a foreign race and a distant age; nothing in it smacks of the soil; its highest pretension, indeed, was to have its date mistaken by nearly

¹ This was a Mr. Thomas Griffiths, brother of Ralph Griffiths, editor of the Monthly Review, whose relations with Wedgwood are noticed at length below (Chap. IX.).
two thousand years and its place of origin by about the same number of miles. No such mistakes would be possible now; but Wedgwood did much to prepare the way for the riper judgment by which even his finest work, matched with that of antiquity, must be found wanting.

His models were not always of the best period or of unexceptionable style. But his imitations, even so, diffused in England an idea of some of the most beautiful things the world has known. On every scale, from the colossal to the miniature, the Greek sense of beauty of form has been preserved to us in imperishable material; and its figured vases unite the double charm of painting and sculpture. The painted scene appears in the midst of a system of graceful curves, which yet do not serve merely as its frame; for their shape and contours are determined by the needs of the libation or the feast, the pouring of wine, or the drawing of water. "Wine-pourer" was the generic name in Greece for an entire class of vase, with endless varieties. Our eighteenth-century craftsman, with his simple, outward-gazing nature, has moments when he reminds us, unconsciously, of some Greek potter. At the opening of the Etruria works the master himself, we are told, took the clay in his hand, seated himself at the thrower's bench, and "threw" the first vase. It bore a representation of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, and the subject might well have served to symbolise his own position in his new abode, his arduous labours past, and the golden fruit of fame within his grasp.
Greek pottery never became known to Wedgwood in its native atmosphere. He never quitted his own country, and most of what inspired him with admiring emulation reached him at second-hand in the form of engravings. But here he enjoyed excellent opportunities. His first impulse towards a study of this form of ancient art seems to have been derived from the Comte de Caylus's richly illustrated *Recueil d'antiquités*, of which the first two volumes were published in 1752 and the last in 1767. It is no doubt to this work that he alludes in a hasty note written early in 1767, arranging a meeting with Bentley at Knutsford. "If you have found anything curious in the Pottery branch in the antiquitys if you brought a volume or 2 of them along with you, they wo'd serve as a diversion from the other subjects at proper intervals." Fashion was setting strongly that way; when Sir William Hamilton made his collection of ancient vases it was a part of his intention to stimulate their reproduction and imitation. "You will easily imagine what may be of any use to me in the Antiquitys if you find time to dip into them," he writes, again to Bentley, about the same time. "The colours of the Earthen Vases, the paintings, the substances used by the Ancient Potters, with their methods of working, burning, &c.—if you meet with anything of that sort, the uses they were intended for &c... Who knows what you may hit upon, or what we may strike out between us—you may depend on an ample share of the profitts arising from any such discoverys. I
have more Volumes of Antiquitys at your service." Here he is rather seeking hints for his own work than objects of direct imitation, and it is possible to find early specimens of his vases in which an Etruscan model has been actually improved upon.

In December 1766 we find him propounding his modifications with mock solemnity. "Vases with high Crowned hats! Have you ever thought seriously, as you ought to do on that subject?" And he goes on in earnest, "I never think of it but new improvements crowd thick upon me & allmost overwhelm my patience so much do I long to be engaged in that delightful employment, which I have every day fuller assurance of making as profitable to the purse, as it must be pleasant to the mind." Here we see that it is not solely, perhaps not mainly, as a branch of profitable trade that this new development of pottery appeals to Wedgwood. And the fascination grows. "Whoever tastes a little of the sweets of vase making," he writes in the spring of 1769, "will afterwards spare no pains or cost to have a full meal; at least I am sure he must be both very dull & very idle who does." His taste and his interest now ran in one channel, and his work brought him at least as much of creative delight as of business profit.

The one drawback in this period of prosperity was his health, and it is difficult to believe and remember how great a drawback this must have been, for his letters show scarcely a trace of it. From first to last they have the buoyant tone
which the reader must have appreciated in such specimens as have been already given, and which, if we did not know the contrary, we should feel justified in associating with a state of complete physical well-being. To our mind these letters are a model of the way to speak, in correspondence, of one's physical ailments, and above all of the way to leave them unspoken. The aggrieved tone, the accumulated details, the emphasis laid upon everything that it would be most desirable to forget—of all this there is nothing. Yet the writer was an energetic business man, to whom ill-health of any kind was highly inconvenient. He had suffered from childhood, as we know, an obstinate pain in the knee, the result of smallpox. Five serious illnesses had resulted from unskilful medical attempts to relieve it. Shortly after the last of these attacks, in 1768, he resolved to submit to amputation. This was carried out on May 28 of that year, the patient witnessing it, we are told, seated in his chair, without a groan. He had the great consolation of Bentley's presence with him during the operation, so that the correspondence contains no record of the feelings or experiences of that terrible hour. The only allusion to it is a light mention of "St. Amputation Day" in the following year—a mention which in its inaccuracy shows how lightly it was regarded. Wedgwood dates it on May 30, instead of a date two days earlier, certified by the accuracy of an invoice. The account of cream ware, piggins, salts, etc., has oddly tacked on to it, for the information of
another employee, "Mr. Wedgwood has this day had his leg taken of [sic] and is as well as can be expected after such an execution. The rev'd Mr. Horne's goods are packt," etc. Peter Swift, the writer of this brief announcement, was not, as he appears here, an indifferent and callous spectator of his master's fortunes, but a devoted servant. He had been introduced by Bentley, been approved at the first meeting, and was already endeared by two years' faithful service. The brief mention, the abrupt transition to business, the dry matter-of-fact tone of the reference—all seem to reflect the simple courageous spirit of the master himself. Peter Swift, we may be sure, cared more for Wedgwood's sufferings and danger than any of the peers and M.P.'s whose messengers daily thronged the London rooms to enquire about his progress. But, like his master, he saw in the event a painful fact to be remembered and briefly recorded, not to be dwelt upon.

The further accounts of the worthy bookkeeper, we are glad to find, do not continue the laconic style of his first announcement; as his news becomes pleasanter he grows more loquacious. "I have the pleasure to acquaint you," he writes to William Cox at the London warehouse, "that Mr. Wedgwood continues in a good way, he has every good symptom, so that we have the greatest hopes of a perfect cure." But he goes on to sad news. "Poor Master Dicky ¹ expired on Thursday morning and was interred last evening. Indeed I think

¹ Wedgwood's second son, Richard, b. 1767.
Mrs. Wedgwood has had great tryals of late, but the great hopes of Mr. Wedgwood’s perfect recovery seems to keep her Spirits up in a tollerable degree.”

**Burslem, 20th June 1768.**

I did intend writing to my dear friend by this post, to tell him how thankfull I am for his last most kind & affectionate letter, & how great—but that is impossible, to measure the obligations he has laid me undr is a task I cannot perform, but I am perfectly easy under them, knowing a grateful heart is the most acceptable return I can make him.—I say I purposed to write this morn but Ld & Lady Vernon, & their son & Daughter, with Mr. & Mrs. Sneyd & Miss Sneyd, with other matters & things have preventd me, & I must send this to Talk o’ th’ Hill just to let my good frd know that I proceed in the good way he left me. Have been at the Workhouse [*i.e. works*] & had two Airings in a Chaise—have left off my laudanum & do bettr without it. The skin on the upper part of the wound is healed, & got down to the bone, which I tell you to confute all those who deny the present to be an Age of Miracles.

Mrs. Wedgwood says you are a sad flattering Mortal. I deny its being flattery, & have reconcil’d her so far, that she sends her love & respects, I need not say best respects, as nothing short of best is sent to you from hence, with your most grateful & affect’d frd,

**J. Wedgwood.**

I have many, very many most kind & affect’d letters to be thankfull for to my dear friend, with a thousand other instances of his esteem—but that is too cool a term to express the feelings of my heart by; permit me to call it Brotherly love & affection, as such I do, & ever must regard you, & though I may be prevented telling you so, as often as I should wish to do it, yet I trust you know my heart too well, to think that I could for a moment cease to love, & be grateful to you. Now
I am recover'd so far as to be able to write, I find myself over head & ears in debt in that way, & every post is increasing the heavy load. It is this which confines me to the house, & retards my perfect recovery more than anything else, & though I put as much of this business off me, as I decently can, yet I have very many letters which, when I am able, & at home, must be wrote by my own hand, or they wod give offence. With you I know I can take the liberty of a friend & Brother, I have done it, both now, & often before, & I know you will forgive me; so you see I am in a state of assurance to youwards, & do you be so too respecting my health and welfare when you do not hear from me of a few posts, for whenever anything runs crooked, either with my body or mind, you may be assur'd of my asking for your advice, or sympathy. At present I am well even beyond my most sanguine expectations, my leg is allmost healed, the wound is not quite 2 inches by one & ½, I measur'd it with the compasses this morning when I dress'd it—yes, when I dress'd it, for I have turn'd my surgeon adrift & Sally & I are sole managers now, only we give him leave to peep at it now & then, when he lifts up his hands & eyes, & will scarcely believe it to be the wound he dress'd before. . . .

I have many things to say to you from the good folks at Newcastle &c. but Sally says "give over Joss & tell our frd B. that I command it" so I have done.

Her discipline proved satisfactory, for before the month is out we hear of their "rambling into Cheshire," and she was easy enough in her mind to pay her father a few days' visit without him. Very soon the accumulated store of business poured upon him in a flood—a heavy correspondence had to be taken up. Much of this concerned the London warehouse superintended by Bentley. The showroom in Charles
Street first occupied had now proved inadequate, and the Great Newport Street premises, after prolonged search, were fixed upon as the future London home of the firm. Partly on this business Wedgwood spent some weeks of July and August in London with Bentley.

In the midst of these occupations and distractions we find him continuing to direct the building operations at Etruria, arranging the departure of his nephew, Tom Byerley, to America, engaging workmen for both branches of the business, experimenting with new materials, turning vases with his own hands, and personally superintending the firing operations at the kiln.

The change from a modest dwelling at Burslem to the dignified mansion at Etruria was accomplished gradually. First conceived, as we have seen, in 1766, the project was delayed by difficulties at every step: the purchase of the estate and the arrangements with the architect, a Mr. Pickford, alike proved thorny and difficult. And the house where Wedgwood was to end his days, and his sons and grandsons to find a home, was not entered till the summer of 1771.

More than a year before this date he had already "taken possession of the Etruscan plains," to cite his own humorous magniloquence, by a temporary residence in the house he had built for Bentley when the partnership was first decided on.

The removal to this temporary abode was not without romantic circumstances. The good
wife managed the actual move during one of Josiah's many visits to London, and his three days' journey thence ended its last moonlight stage on November 11, 1769, at Etruria. "Was not this very clever now of my own dear Girl's contriving?" he asks Bentley with pride. "She expected her Joss on the very evening he arrived; had got the disagreeable business of removing all over, & I wo'd not have been another night from home for the Indies." Seldom can there have been a happier reunion, the husband and wife both wearied with well-bestowed labour and rejoiced to be alone together, and the little trio in the nursery, with the cradle so lately a source of sad recollections again a focus of happy hopes.

New hopes other than those of the nursery clustered round them. The unprecedented sale of the vases assured wealth and fame to the new firm of Wedgwood and Bentley, and the united names recorded a satisfied aspiration in which husband and wife equally shared.

Etruria Hall, to which the final move was made a year and a half later, is still a conspicuous building among many other brick-and-mortar erections in a treeless and verdureless waste. The recollections of my childhood come about half-way between the date above mentioned and the present day, and may give some help in imagining what Etruria then was. I well remember its green sweeps of lawn and tall trees, some seventy years ago, as a delightful sojourn for children, perhaps all the more delightful because even at that date it was mainly
a record of the past. The old drawing-room, too large for the needs and income of its possessor at that date, denuded of furniture, and thus empty of breakable or spoilable material, afforded a capital playground for a party of little cousins nearer of an age than brothers and sisters could be, and so far better playfellows. At that date the rooks still nestled in green boughs above grass-bordered paths where all is now cinders and oven-refuse, the gradual encroachment of the atmosphere of a manufactory. But we looked down on the canal, which presents itself to my mind as a sort of spirit of the quiet green landscape; and not without reason, for Etruria would not have existed without it.

The change from Burslem to Etruria was indeed an era in the life of Wedgwood. It marked not only an achieved success, but a transformed occupation, lifting him from the world of the arts to the world of Art, and giving him for the rest of his life work which was as much his delight as his business. It also raised him to a new social status, and introduced him to what, compared with his previous manner of life, may be called luxury. The word has low associations, but it implies possibilities valuable to every one, not least to one whose most coveted form of luxury had been the purchase of books, and who now more than ever needed and prized their possession. At Etruria, moreover, he had daily before his eyes the progress of the work to which he had devoted so much of his energy and in which he had gained so
much credit—the Grand Trunk Canal—and could regard the scheme of Inland Navigation as one secure of abundant success, in which was included that of his new village and pottery. This new phase of his work, moreover, had brought him a boon worth all the rest: it had made his dearest friend his partner. And all this had come upon him in the prime of life, while he was still, indeed, what we should call young, the move to Etruria being completed before he had attained his fortieth year. While he had still half a lifetime of energetic work before him, the tradesman whose schooling had finished in his tenth year was dining at Trentham, with no sense of disadvantage among the company he met there, or elation at finding himself a guest elsewhere than in the steward’s room. Life was richer every way. Even improved health was added to his blessings. The operation was behind him; he was delivered from a constant source of pain and illness, and, in spite of the disadvantages incident to the loss of a limb, must have felt, one would conclude, endowed with a new life to enjoy the rich influx of honourable prosperity and the achievement of elevated and expanded aims.

When with expectation thus roused we turn to the early Etruria letters the result is disappointing. They are much less exhilarating than their predecessors. We hear more of all sorts of difficulties—troubles with his architect, troubles with workmen, troubles with rivals, troubles with customers; life seems fuller of cares, and their pressure heavier. Just when
13 June 1769 Our days throwing at Eturia

From an original painting. Mayer MSS.
we expect the buoyant spirit to emerge in its fulness, the sky clouds over and the atmosphere grows chilly. It is a common experience; nevertheless it always fills one with surprise.

One cause for this disappointing lack of response to so much that seems fitted to inspire happiness was a new anxiety as to his physical condition. To the experience of lameness we must add, at this time, the fear of a much worse evil—blindness. From the account given later this fear appears to have been needless, but the fancy, if fancy it were, was not Wedgwood's alone. It was strengthened by every medical authority he consulted, with the significant exception of Dr. Darwin. It is very difficult to believe that the alarming warnings given to the patient had really no foundation but a trifling disorder (Muscae volitantes) known to most people, and needing no remedy but to be let alone.

The question is interesting on several grounds, but the answer, one way or another, does not seem to me to explain the depression of these early years at Etruria. The explanation lies deeper. Wedgwood was more at home in his work at Burslem than in his work at Etruria. The circle was expanded without being proportionally strengthened. The increased scale of business made demands on his powers which hitherto he had not been called on to meet, which perhaps he was not very well fitted to meet. We have seen him hitherto in an atmosphere which brought out all that was best in him. Almost every letter referring to his deal-
ings with inland navigation affords fresh illustration of his tact, forbearance, and self-control. If this cannot be said of the early Etruria correspondence we have to remember that a great influx of resources is also a great influx of responsibilities. At Burslem Wedgwood had been an eminently successful workman among average members of his craft. At Etruria he was a great man among little men. Each position has its own difficulties, the passage from one to the other has some of both.

An employer, as his business grows, has to meet not only increased demands from his workmen, but demands from a more heterogeneous class of workmen. At Burslem Wedgwood was dealing with men whose work he understood perfectly, and was qualified to direct and superintend. He could sit down at the thrower’s bench and give an example of successful throwing; he could watch the furnace and pronounce decisively on the time a batch of crockery had been left in the oven; there was very little of the work he could not have performed as well as or better than the best of his hands. And they were all under his own eye. At Etruria things were very different. A large part of the work he merely directed through the post, or inspected during short visits after a long ride. For about a year he maintained the old works at Burslem as well as the new at Etruria, and after this time there was always the business in London. And even what was not to be performed at that disadvantage was more complicated. Wedgwood had to make over an im-
MODELLING ROOM, ETRURIA.
portant part of his vase-making to men who were more or less artists—not more artists than himself in the sense of appreciation and discrimination of beauty of form, but in the skill of the draughtsman altogether his superiors. Moreover a larger part of the increased business had to be intrusted to overlookers and clerks, persons who, in the conventional sense of the word, might be in this case more educated men than their master. A gentleman at the head of his manufactory deals with men who may, no doubt, be his superiors intellectually, but still his attitude towards them has the ease given by long habits of social superiority, an ease far more favourable than equality to courtesy as well as to decision. I think the early Etruria letters—those of the years 1769–1771 or so—show that in this respect Wedgwood was to some extent at a disadvantage. He seems to me more timid and uncertain. I give the chief letters whence I derive this impression, but it is strengthened by other passages of similar tenor not quoted here.

The first of them seems to bring out a new sense of helplessness unlike all we have seen of Wedgwood hitherto. William Cox, a clever artisan who had helped his master in the construction of an improved engine-lathe four years previously, was now at the head of the London business, and proved a much less valuable servant as a book-keeper than as a mechanician. During 1769 Wedgwood received from several

1 He was no draughtsman; the occasional sketches in his letters to Bentley might have been made by a child.
distinguished customers angry complaints of paid bills being sent in a second time. "It would be a fine story if people had nothing to do but to pay for whatever goods were charged to them," Mrs. Montagu (Queen of the Blue-stockings) writes to him in May. Wedgwood only found out the full extent of his clerk's carelessness at the end of the year, as we see from the following letters to Bentley.

ETRURIA, 16th Decr 1769.

I am much concerned to find so many more blunders in Mr. Cox's Cash acco't, & as I am daily suffering in so tender a point, as that of my Character for Honesty, & all through his neglect, I cou'd not help reproving him very severely for it. I shall send him up to Town immediately, & before he sets out, shall tell him that I insist on his doing nothing, but assist in clearing up the Books 'till that is done, & 'till this work is finished, I beg you will not send out any more bills, unless such as you are certain are not paid, for I had rather hire money at fifty 9 Ct. interest, than lie under the suspicions, Mr. Cox's extreme neglect has brought upon me. It must appear as the Gent'n you mention justly observes, that I must either be wanting in honesty or have trusted my business to servants, who cou'd not, or wou'd not keep any books, & as you know this latter has been the case, I beg they may be told so without reserve, or any way mincing the matter though Mr. Cox shou'd be present at the time. I acquaint him with what I write to you, & I owe this piece of justice to myself. It is equitable and just, that he shou'd rather lose his Character as a book-keeper which he has deserved to do, than that I shou'd lose mine for honesty, which I have never forfeited.

ETRURIA, 28th Decr 1769.

Keep making such things as these. I wish I had nothing else to do you shou'd see a great deal better
very soon, indeed it has been the chief of my business since I came home, 'till within this week or ten days, but thirty hands employed in making Vases, things of which they have no idea when they are doing right, or when they are doing wrong, is alone sufficient employment for three of the best heads in the Kingdom to look after them. I shall do the best, but as I am obliged at present to leave them, sometimes for whole days together, many things will escape my attention 'till it is too late to remedy them, & this in every branch that is going forward from the Throwing to the Gilding, most of the faults you mention were noted by me before the Goods were sent off; but I shall nevertheless allways be glad to heare of any deficiencies, as they occure to you, as those I might know of will serve as memento, & those I did not is so much knowledge gained.

I am convinced of the Difficulty of your situation, owing chiefly to the perplexed state of accounts you are involved in, & I have my fears lest your adjournment to Chelsea will not mend the matter, you will then only be able to visit the Warehouse in the busy part of the day, when you will scarcely find time to recieve & examine their Cash & Cash acc's which shou'd be done daily, to avoid that confusion or other bad consequences which may ensue, & there are a thousand other things which they will want to consult you about, & which that busy time of the day is Ill calculated for; if it now requires all your attention, which I know it does, when you are the whole 24 hours upon the spot, what will become of those things which you can scarcely keep streight in this time, when you have only four or five hours to regulate them in. I am perswaded you will find it necessary to Continue a bed in the house & stay now & then a night amongst them in the busiest part of the Season. I shall want Mr. Cox here early in the spring, & to stay with me the whole summer, & as he will be chiefly in the Country for the future, I apprehend it will not be convenient for him to be a Housekeeper in
London. I have mentioned it to him, & he thinks as I do; he will acquaint you with the plan we have talked of, & either that or some other must be adopted in two or three months.

The next complaint is more vague, and leaves more room for doubt as to some possible excuse. The offender, a man of the name of Crofts, was an enameller and painter, who had been engaged not by Wedgwood himself, but by David Rhodes, the principal workman in that kind—a transaction illustrating the expanded and complicated nature of the business at this time. He had, according to Rhodes, "enamelled at Paris etc., & does it with great Elegance etc., & wants to begin upon some small plates immediately, w^th you'll please furnish him with." His Parisian experience and his elegance seem to have turned his head, if the following complaint represents him truly:

I think Mr. Crofts does not use us very well & I admire in you what I fear I could not have imitated, though I believe it was right—I mean your patience with him. Not pleased with our behaviour to him! Why if he had been a Nabob himself we could not have behaved with more respect, & caution towards him, & between friends I believe that is the very thing which has spoiled him, by giving him an air of more importance than he can bear. But does he think it is right in him, or doing justice to us, to neglect our constant employment for the sake of a lucrative jobb? If he does, I w^d not give sixpence for him, or his principles, let his professions be what they will, we never have, nor ever sho'd have serv'd him so, & as he knows how much we want the Vases done for this season, and the bad consequences of neglecting Mr. Du Burks ord^rs I shall not
easily forgive his deserting us at this time, & meanly preferring a jobb to our constant employmt. He too will find in the end, as such people allways do, that he is penny wise & pound foolish. I shall be glad to know the new proposals he makes to you. I believe our ingaging him at the rate of £200 per Annm & making a companion of him, has turn’d his head more than his working for the Nabobs will ever do, though we shd not have thought too much of one or the other, if he could have bore it. But enough of this subject, you will know much better what to do with him than I can at this distance advise.

The worst case of disappointment came much earlier and before the move to Etruria, but not before the causes I have spoken of were at work, and for several reasons it seems to me more conveniently mentioned here. Voyez, a clever modeller whom Wedgwood had hired for three years, had been sentenced to imprisonment and whipping for some degrading crime in March 1768, and came out of gaol early in June 1769. The following letter makes plain how much value Wedgwood attached to his service,¹ at the same time that it forces on us the conviction of a kind of tolerance which all must regret.

Burslem, 9 April 1769.

I agree with you in most of your sentiments respecting Voyez, & do not intend to have anything farther to do with him on any acct. But where the matter is of consequence, I like to see, & argue upon it in every light, even though I may have resolv’d at the time, so far as I can judge of the subject, what measures to take in it, for it sometimes happens, at least it has with me, that

¹ Voyez enjoyed a certain reputation in his day. A match-holder designed by him was in Horace Walpole’s collection.
after I have been fully persuaded it was right to do so & so, & have acted accordingly, I have found that a little more time, & reflection would have inform'd me I was wrong, & therefore in any future situation of the like kind, I grow more & more apt to say to myself, though the thing for the time appears ever so clear to me, that it is very possible a few days longer, & a little more reflection may convince me that my present resolve wou'd be wrong, & where the circumstances will admit of farther time for consideration, I generally take it.

When I mention'd the affair of V—— to you I had been thinking upon the subject in something like the followg train.

I have got the start of my Bretheren in the article of Vases farther than I ever did in anything else, & it is by much the most profitable branch I ever launched into, 'tis a pity to lose it soon—there is no danger—true, not of losing the business, but the prices may be lower'd by a competition, & if the imitations are tolerable, the demand from us may be diminish'd, for all our buyers are not, though many of them are, qualified to discern nice differences in forms, & ornament. What then do our competitors stand in most need of to enable them to rival us most effectually? Some Person to instruct them to compose good forms, & to ornam't them with tolerable propriety. Voyez can do this much more effectually than all the Potters in the Country put together, & without much Personal labour, as the ornam'ts may be bo't or model'd by others. The next question was how to prevent this, without employing him ourselves which I had fully resolv'd against. Suppose he had his wages for doing nothing at all, 'tis only sinking six & thirty shillings per week, to prevent this competition from taking place of two years to come, by his means at least. The selling a single V: say a Medallion, less per w' through such competition wou'd be a greater loss to us than paying him his wages for nothing! does not this
fact strike you! Suppose we sho'd lose the sale of 20 or twice that No. per wk & lower the price of others! 'tis possible, & instead of sinking 36s. per wk we may lose the getting of so many pounds, aye twice that sum! . . .

I know he is vicious, & everything that is bad, & all my feelings are up in Arms against even so much as naming him. But to live in this world, as matters, & things are constituted, it is sometimes necessary to make a truce with these sensations, whilst we manage a Rascal, our evil stars have thrown in our way, to prevent repeated injuries which he might otherwise do us.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

I just mention these things to you as they have floated in my brain. I like none of the plans, neither to employ him, pay him for doing nothing, nor yet to discharge him. As I have now explain'd myself more fully to you than I did before, I sho'd be glad of your advice, but I do not like to write upon these subjects for fear of their being made public. Pray burn this Scrawl when you have read it.

I have resisted the temptation to pass over this episode in the life of one who had so little to be ashamed of. There is, it is true, a certain consolation in finding that good sense deserted Wedgwood at the same time with high principle; for it was highly improbable that Voyez would feel himself bound by any payment to take no other service and he would have had little difficulty in keeping the fact secret. We may hope that the kind heart had something to say in the matter. The man would be in a pitiable position when he came out of gaol, and some impulse of compassion may have hidden itself behind that of self-interest. But it cannot be denied that the ungraceful spirit of competition
here betrayed showed itself in other ways now and then. If any weak compliance was concerned in his dealings with Voyez, Wedgwood was suitably punished, for the knave was a thorn in Wedgwood's side for many years. But it will not be necessary to mention him again.

It was not always the weaknesses of Wedgwood which were brought out by his difficulties; we may turn from his indulgence towards a scoundrel to his large-hearted forbearance with his friend. In this difficult time forbearance was needed even with Bentley; the stage of disappointment brought the shadow of a passing cloud between them. It was the only shadow which ever clouded their intercourse, and probably few friendships have ever passed into a business connexion without some greater and more lasting experience of difficulty. At the time, however, the chill must have been very unwelcome, and the faithfulness which overcame it, as shown in the following letter, seems to me remarkable.

The partnership, though in the end no doubt a great pecuniary gain to Bentley, cannot at first have been otherwise than a sacrifice on his part. For a man in the prime of life to give up his business and his home, to transplant himself into new surroundings and undertake new work, renouncing cherished acquaintances and keeping only such friendships as will live upon correspondence and rare meetings,—a smaller number than one is apt to suppose till one has made the experiment—all this is a large
price to pay even for so valuable a gain as partnership in a rising house. It was a very different thing then from what it is now to migrate from Liverpool to London. We have seen how fully Wedgwood realised from this point of view that his friend would make a sacrifice in becoming his partner; possibly Bentley may have realised it more after the choice was made. He had secured no companionship with his friend, rather the contrary; and it is not unlikely that the home he had gained may have been altogether less to his taste than the home he had quitted.

Moreover the partnership for which this price was paid seems at first to have been, in a pecuniary point of view, somewhat unsatisfactory. Bentley was not Wedgwood’s only partner; there were two distinct firms: Wedgwood & Bentley, who manufactured “ornamental ware,” and Wedgwood & Wedgwood (i.e. Josiah and his cousin Thomas Wedgwood), who made “useful ware” only. The distinction partially explains itself, but only partially. Vases, of course—the great objects of attention at the moment—were ornamental ware, and dishes and jugs of all kinds, every sort of article either for the table or the toilet, were useful ware; but there were some articles, such as candlesticks, which were as much ornaments as utensils. Even the service for a meal might be so ornamental as to seem wrongly excluded from that division; it would seem absurd, for instance, that Queen Charlotte’s tea-service should be classed as useful ware. In spite of the mania for vases, Bentley must have felt pretty sure
that the artistic half of Wedgwood’s business would have to be more or less speculative in a sense in which the other half was not, and he may have realised the uncertain duration of a fashion. The things that everybody wants must always be a surer source of profit in commerce than the things desired only by a few, and it may well have seemed hard that one of the partners, and that the one who had made some sacrifice to become a partner, should be shut off from the more secure source of profit. The following letters from Wedgwood contain all there is to know about this brief and solitary approach to dissension between the two friends:

Etruria, 29th Aug. 1770.

With respect to making some usefull Etruscan ware at Etruria, I shall myself have no sort of objection to it, but you know I have another partnership, in which it is stipulated that he (T. W.) shall have 1-8th share of the profits upon all usefull ware, & he has bestow’d a great deal of attention for some time past upon China bodys for T:pots in brown, black, grey, &c. &c. so that though I believe he wod not deny me, if I ask him to give up the black T:pots &c. to us, yet I have some fear of its being a tender point with him. I have not yet mention’d it to him but propose doing so in a day or two, & shall be very happy if I can settle this matter so as to be agreeable both to him & you.

Etruria, 3rd Sept 1770.

My dear Friend—

With respect to the difference between Usefull ware & Ornamental I do not find any inclination in myself to be over nice in drawing the line. You know I never had any idea that Ornamental ware sho’d not be of “some
THROWING ROOM, ORNAMENTAL WORKS, ETURIA.
use." You knew this from all that we have done hither-to, from the many conversations we have had upon this subject, & from the list we wrote in your commonplace book of the uses to which ornamental Vases might be put; I co'd have wish'd therefore that you had not repeated this idea so often, & ask'd me if my Partnership with T: W: wo'd exclude our making Stellas Ewers. Tell me my dear friend did you ask me this question for information, or were you realy as angry with me, as the question accompanied with any other idea wo'd seem to import. I hope you were not, for I sh'd be very unhappy to think you wo'd be angry with me lightly, or that I had given you any just occasion for the warmth some parts of your letter seem to express. I say seem for I hope I am mistaken & shall rest in that hope 'till I have the pleasure of hearing from you again. But as this question has put me upon thinking a little more upon the subject, & the situation I am, or may be in, betwixt two Partnerships, it may not be amiss to enter a little deeper into it, & attempt something like a line in Theorie, though I hope we shall none of us be too rigid in our adherence to it in practice. And first Negatively, I do not think that fineness, or richness, or price, or colour, or enameling, or bronzeing, or gilding can be a criterion, for our purpose, for though we make a Table, or desert Service, ever so fine, rich, or expence, though they are every piece rich enough to adorn a Cabinet, they are, in my opinion, usefull ware still, & I think the same may be said of a Teapot, & on the other hand, though we make a flowerpot, Vase Candlestick &c. ever so plain, it is still in the Class of ornamental ware & clearly within the partnership of W. & B. only, & I sho'd think I did wrong in making them at Burslem on any occasion without first asking your consent. If degrees of richness, or elegance of form, were to constitute the difference in question, & consequently the making of it be transfered from Burslem to Etruria upon its improvement beyond such a pitch, this wo'd not only
lay a foundation for frequent disputes, but must have the same effect upon my usefull works, as the King of Frances Edict has upon the Potteries in France to prevent their rival's his works at Seve, for T: W: might with reason in that case say, I have such, or such an improvment to introduce into the desert, or Tea-ware, but I shall then lose the Article, or if I improve such a single article any farther it is gone! May not usefull ware be comprehended under this simple definition, of such vessels as are made use of at meals. This appears to me the most simple & natural line, & though it does not take in Wash-hand basons & bottles or Ewers, & a few such articles, they are of little consequence, & speak plain enough for themselves; nor wo'd this exclude any superb vessels for sideboards, or vases for deserts if they could be introduc'd, as these articles wo'd be rather for shew than use.

This appears to me the plainest line, & the least liable to objections of all others, but if you think otherwise, & have a different one to propose, I am perfectly open to conviction & am so far from wishing to limit our undertaking, or to render it too trifling for your attention, that I wish to extend it by every means, & that, I can very truly assure you, as much on account of my friend as myself. A friend whom I esteem & love (next to the nearer ties of nature) before all mankind, & cannot bear the thoughts of haggling with him about trifles. I may not continue long in business, & my life itself is a very precarious one, & whom have I then to leave my business to, capable of conducting it in the manner you know I sho'd wish to have it continued, but you two, let us therefore, my friend & Brother, live, & act like Brothers, & friends indeed, & not suffer any small matters to put our peace & harmony in jeapordie. All I mean by the above distinctions, is, to chalk out a path that I may walk in securely, by defining the limits of two interests, at present seperate, & of which my situation renders me the connecting link, without giving offence to either;
for if my friend on one side sho’d tell me, in any way, that I am too partial to my Burslem work, & my Relation, & Partner on the other hand be discontented & think I lean too much to the ornamental works, & am throwing every advantageous article into that scale—Think, my friend, you who can feel for me, the situation I must be in. Do you think I could bear it—no, & I am sure you would not wish me to lead a miserable life, continually jarring with those I wish most to be at peace with. Next to my Wife & Family, my Partners are those with whom I must be at peace.

You have for some time past, or at least it has seem’d so to me, from very many passages in your letters, been doubtfull of our undertaking being worth the time & attention you have bestowed upon it; & in your last you intimated its certainly coming to nothing upon the present plan. I should be sorry to think so too, but own I have no apprehensions of that sort. Ornament is a field which notwithstanding you have bestowed one years close attention upon it, & I many, yet it appears to me that we are but just stepped or stepping into it, & I am fully persuad’d that the farther we proceed in it the richer crop we shall reap, both of Fame & Profit, & I do upon the maturest deliberation give it as my firm opinion that mixing usefull with ornamental wares wo’d in the end, limit us both, (in Fame & Profit I mean) & make no doubt of your being of the same opinion too, if you have patience, & perseverance to proceed on in the same tract a little longer. But how or in what aspect does this first years essay give either you or me any ground for repining, or such gloomy forebodeings? If the first year of a business pays all expences, & furnishes any profit at all, I sho’d not call it a bad one, but if beyond this, it likewise gives a profit of £500, or £1000 in Cash for goods really sold & an increase of stock in manufactur’d goods ready for sale of one to two thousand pounds more, surely we ought to be more than barely content, I think we have reason to rejoice, & are robbing
ourselves of what is more valuable than money if we do not take the satisfaction of a prosperous, & very promising business along with us, as a cordial to support us in every hour of toil & fatigue wth our avocations necessarily require at our hands.

I must now quit this subject 'till I have the pleasure of seeing you here which I hope will be soon suppose you made Etruria in your way to Liverpool came this way back again & then by Derby to London you wod by that route see your works here twice & travel very few miles round for it.—Adieu my dear friend, believe me most affectly, yours at all times,

J. Wedgwood.

We have Bentley's express assurance that the trouble was overcome as soon as faced. On Wedgwood's letter he has written the following note, which seems to forecast the possibility of its being seen by other eyes:

Mr. B. rec'd this letter a few Days before he set out for Etruria. The Difficulty was easily setled, & the Etruscan Tea Pots made by ye Company at Etruria. The Company very much wanted some such constant selling Article.

After the signs of weakness we have come upon in some of the earlier Etruria letters, such a one as the last satisfies the mind as the resolution of a discord the ear. We feel in this case, as so often, that it is the lesser difficulties which are overwhelming, while the larger appeal brings a response at once.

A similar discord, similarly resolved, is to be found in Wedgwood's whole relation to his fellow-manufacturers after the new rage for imitating antique vases set in. Naturally, when
Wedgwood's vases were once in the market it was possible to imitate them, and of course this was what he was particularly anxious to prevent. Here we come upon an ugly characteristic which must always, as far as we can see, distinguish the craftsman from the artist. The artist can have nothing but pleasure in founding a school. The more imitators he has, supposing their works to be such as he can himself admire, the better. With the craftsman the case is altogether different. He may be more or less narrow and egotistic in his views, but human nature and human circumstances being what they are, it is inevitable that a manufacturer who has discovered new methods of work by his own ingenuity should wish to keep them a secret. The following letters make clear how clamorous was the demand for the new ware, and how ready a response it found on the part of unscrupulous imitators:

"I thank you my good friend," Wedgwood writes from London on 15th February 1769, "for the noble treat I have just been enjoying. They do me good to see 'em, but alass, the whole four packages are not a mouthfull, not one days sale, I could sell I am fully persuaded 1000 worth such Vases if I had them before I come home. Large, very large ones are all the cry, & we must endeavour to satisfy them. You shd set both the mills to work at grinding & with two setts of hands, one for night, & the other for the day."

"I had a piteous letter last night from Mr. Cox," he writes two months later (9th April 1769), "not a Vase scarcely of any sort to sell, Blue Pebble, and marbled, all gone. . . . To assist Mr. Cox a little, I have sent
his this week end Vases to amo of £186 & they are not much more than a good Crate full! But they are large ones, & he is now distress’d for the smaller sizes to make up setts, I am making a few of these sorts, but two or three hands make little progress on fine goods, & if I take my hands from my other works, such I mean as can do anything at Vases, it will almost put a stop to my completeing the orders on hand, or supplying my Warehouse, for we are as much at a loss for desert ware, & the finer articles which employ these hands, as we are for Vases, & without those finer articles, we cannot sell the other goods. What shall I do in this dilemma? not a hand loose in the Country to be hired, this s’d Creamcolour has made the Trade in general so brisk. The hands at Liverpool, if there sho’d be any loose, wo’d I doubt be of no use to us, unless by any great chance you could find out a presser, or finisher of China figures, we shall want a few of them immediately.

"Our last Kiln of Blacks turn’d out extremely well, we had a fine cargo of Medallions, wth Mr. Cox writes, are much wanted. Seven large Urns, all good. The Bedford Goats heads the same—we can now make them with the same certainty as other goods, & several sorts which I have now in embrio may be made with tolerable dispatch if we had but a modeler to form, & a few hands to execute them. And these must be had somewhere, for such an opportunity as we have now before us must not be lost, or trifled with."

And then again on May 1, 1769.

We have had a l’ from Mr. Du Burk the Gent’n who bo’t £800 worth of Vases & other Goods for Holland. He has had a most surprising sale, & ordr’s to amo of abo’t £150 more, & shall send he says another order in ten days.

Mrs. Byerley is just return’d from London, & brings a strange acc’t of their goings on in Newport Street. No geting to the door for Coaches, nor into the rooms for
Ladies & Gent's & Vases, she says, Vases was all the cry.
—We must endeavour to gratify this universal passion, though we shall be sadly short of hands for a year or two, trained ones, I mean. . . .

Among the rush of imitators and rivals whom this sudden demand called into the field the most dangerous was one almost as well known in the commercial world as Wedgwood himself. Matthew Boulton, partner with Watt in the introduction of the steam-engine, had been hitherto known only as a successful hardware manufacturer in Birmingham. We now find him contemplating the addition of pottery to the large and miscellaneous set of productions which issued from the Soho works, and are not surprised that Wedgwood was perturbed at the prospect of such a competitor. His relations with Boulton will be described in detail below (Chapter IX.). He faced this formidable rival with admirable spirit, but it was Boulton's challenge which led him to the attempt at a reasoned policy contained in the following important and characteristic letter.

**Burslem, Sunday morning, Sept. 27, 1769.**

Well, be it so—but if we are to have . . . The great ones of the Land to contend with, If everything we do, & produce, must first be criticis'd upon so severely by the Nobles, & instantly copied by the Artists, our rivals—should we not proceed with some prudent caution, & reserve, & not shew either one, or the other, too much at once, to glut the curiosity or spoil the choice of the former, or give the latter so large a field to fight us in. —By every new sort we invent, we inlarge their field of action, & give them another chance to rival us more
effectually. . . . The Encaustic will be imitated as soon as seen, let us therefore when once we begin, push it with all our force.—I think you shd make a point of shewing, & selling these yourself only. The Warehousemen may without offence tell any customer that you take that branch of business upon yourself.—They will think them the more precious—you can tell them the history of the piece & all about it, and let them know that we do not make good things by chance, or at random. It will baulk the spies for some time at least who are daily haunting the rooms, & answer many other valuable purposes.

I shall be glad to have your thoughts upon this subject. You'll easily observe the foundation of my arguments is money getting, take that away and they all drop to the ground. Instead of this if you substitute fame (& my bosom begins, & allways does glow with a generous warmth at the idea), I say, if instead of money getting you substitute Fame & the good of the Manufacture at large for our principles of action, then we sho'd do just the contrary of what I have been recommending—make all the Good, Fine & New things we can immediately, & so far from being afraid of other People getting our patterns, we should Glory in it, throw out all the hints we can & if possible have all the Artists in Europe working after our models. This wo'd be noble, & wo'd suit both our dispositions & sentiments much better than all the narrow, mercenary, selfish trammels—the coats of mail we are forging for our reluctant hearts, to case & hamper them in their journey through life, & prevent all benevolent overflowings for the good of their fellow Citizens,—all I mean that relate to the subject we are now talking of.—How do you feel yourself my friend? have you forgot how our hearts burned within us when we convers'd upon this subject in our way from Liverpool to Prescot? We were then persuaded that this open, Generous plan would not only be most congenial to our hearts, & best feelings, but in all
probability might best answer our wishes in pecuniary advantages, & for the time, I well remember we agreed to pursue it. Do you think when our principles were known the Nobility would not still more make it a point to patronise & incourage Men who acted upon such different principles to the rest of Mankind? the trading & mercantile part of them at least. When they are witnesses to our bestowing so much pains & expence in the improvment of a capital Manufacture, nay in creating a new one, & that not for our particular emolument only, but that we generously lay our works open to be imitated by other Artists & Manufacturers for the good of the community at large. This wo'd certainly procure us the good will of our best customers, & place us in a very advantageous light to the Public eye. We sho'd no doubt be esteemed as antique & as great curios-
ty as any of the Vases we fabricate, & perhaps upon the whole, this skeme might bring us as much profit as loss.—With respect to myself, there is nothing relating to business I so much wish for as being released from these degrading slavish chains, these mean selfish fears of other people copying my works—how many new and good things has, & still does this principle prevent my bringing to light—I have alway's wish'd to be releas'd from it, & was I now free I am perswaded that it would do me much good in body, more in mind, & that my invention wo'd be so far from being exhausted by giving a free loose to it that it wo'd increase greatly by such a generous exercise of the faculty, & with the help of your Genius & correct taste we could continue to furnish new, & capital improvments sufficient to engage the Public attention during our lives.—Dare you step forth, my dear friend & associate, & share the risque & honor of acting on these enlarged principles, or do you think it safer, more prudent, & advisable to follow the plan laid down in my first sheet? One of them we must adopt, & to be consistent, abide by. I have stated them both just as they lay in my perecranium, endeavouring to
forget in this sheet what I had said in the other, therefore you must not be shocked at seeing such glaring contradictions in one & the same letter, consider them as coming from two distinct beings, or call them if you please the arguings of my outward, & inward man, & close with that which liketh you best.

Now I have said my own sayings I will read your good letters over again but fear I shall not have time to say much more to you at this time & you will perhaps be ready to cry out—Enough already in Conscience!

Bentley must have responded at once and heartily to the generous half of this Janus-like letter, for in less than a week we have the following rejoinder. It is difficult to fit all subsequent expressions to this more liberal view, but we may regard it, on the whole, as that which prevailed.

BURSLEM, 1st of Oct., 1769.

Be it so, my dear friend, even so be it, let us begin, proceed, & finish our future schemes, our days & years, in the pursuit of Fortune, Fame and the Public Good.—You will be my Mentor, my Guardian Angel to pluck me back from the confines of extravagance, either in Theory, or practice when you find me verging that way. I will answer to the friendly call; lend a willing ear to your instructions, & most gladly join you in the Paths you have chalk'd out for us. My talents, which your friendship is so apt on all occasions to magnify, are very confin'd; they lie chiefly in the Potter.—Such as they are, think of them as your own, enlarge, confine, or use them at your pleasure, they can never make me happier than by contributing to the use, or comfort of my friend. We have now I think nearly fixed the plan of proceedings for this Winter, & with respect to Rivalship, we will cast all dread of that behind our backs, treat it as a base, & vanquish'd enemy, & not bestow another serious thought upon it.
I have no fear at all even from the combination of Chelsea & Soho, if that should ever happen, we have got, & shall keep the lead so long as our lives & health are continued to us. I am persuaded they are thoroughly in earnest at Soho. Mr. Fothergill told Mr. Cox that the Vase trade would be *inexhaustible*, it would be impossible to supply the demand for *good things* in that way. This is a right, just & true idea, & was not of Mr. Fothergills own Manufacture I am pretty certain. The field is vast indeed! It seems to grow wider & every way more extensive, the farther you advance into it. The Harvest truly is great, & the labourers (thanks be praised—theres my outward man for you, he will be stealing a march now & then upon me) but few.

We may probably suspect such a stolen march of the "outward man" in the patent taken out by Wedgwood about a month after the above letter (November 1769) for "The purpose of ornamenting Earthen and Porcelain Ware with an Encaustic Gold Bronze, together with a peculiar Species of Encaustic Painting in various Colours, in imitation of the Ancient Etruscan and Roman Earthenware." The patent was, however, the source of many difficulties, and seems to have been of very little advantage.

Through all this time of strain and stress Wedgwood had, as has already been intimated, one trouble, which might have been spared him altogether if he had met with more judicious medical advisers. He had a slight disorder in his eyes to which nobody now attaches importance; and it is difficult to understand the alarm then roused by it, but the following letters leave
no doubt of the fact. They were mostly written from the house of his father-in-law during an illness of the latter, to whom he seems to have been a real son in feeling.

Etruria, Wednesday Evens, Dec. 29, 1769.

It is now just dark & I am absolutely forbid to write or read by candle-light but I cannot forbear thanking my dear friend for his many kind letters & affectionate concern for my health & welfare.

Mr. Cox would write you that I was gone to consult a Dr. Elliot about my Eyes. I met with him at home & he told me there was always some danger in these cases (Mice Volanti, I think he calls the disorder) but he hopes he shall be able to overcome them. I am this moment return’d from Spen Green where I left my Wife and her bantling both well, my Father is still very poorly, far, the Apothecary says, from being out of danger.

I am very well in health but cannot help thinking my eyes in a bad way, & I do not know what to determine about building any more though I must leave my works at Burslem the next year.

Spen Green, Monday, 1st Jan., 1770.

I cannot begin the new year better than by thanking my dear & worthy friend for his affectionate solicitude for my health & welfare with that of my friends, & assuring him that whatever relates to his health, ease or happiness is far from being indifferent to his friends in Staffordshire. They lament with me the necessity of your very distant situation, & cannot any more than myself be reconciled to a plan which robs us of the pleasure we had long flatter’d ourselves with the enjoyment of in your company. I often comfort myself with the thought that this necessity may be of no long duration though at present, I must confess, I do not see any probability of our wishes being gratified soon. Patience & hope are our best friends, we always need their
assistance, & therefore sho'd make them our constant companions through every stage of our lives.

My Good Father, in whose room I write, has had some comfortable sleep tonight, & is much better for it. His fever has in a great measure left him, & I hope he is in a fair way of recovering, though we must expect it only by very slow degrees. He desires me to send his best respects & thanks to you.

I thank you my dear friend for your kind caution & inquiries about my eyes. The Dr. I apply'd has made these organs his study for many years, & is the most famous in this branch of the healing Art of any man in England. He cured the Duke of Bedford who was with him several weeks, & he was just return'd from attending the Duchess of Norfolk at Bath for a complaint in her eyes much the same as mine, when I waited upon the Dr at his house. He has cured her, & hopes he shall be able to set me to rights but says there is always some danger in these cases. He has ord'd me a Collyrium consisting of Elderflower water, Sp' of Wine Champorat'd- Sug' of Lead, & something else which I have forgot & with this I am to wash my eyes three times a day, & use them favourably & see him again in March, but in the meantime I must let him know the effect of his prescription. I have made use of it a week & perceive no alteration. The Atoms which appear when I look at the sky, the line or lines which are pellucid, & the little clouds continue still before my eyes when I look at the sky, or any distant object, as usual, & sometimes upon the paper when I am reading or writing, but not always. These things do not always appear before my eyes, & never in the dusk of the evening or by Candlelight, but I can always find them (in the daytime) by looking for them in the Air, or against a cieling, & sometimes against the floor but not always there. They are near, or farther from the Eyes in proportion to the distance of the object I am looking upon. When I look at the sky, or a distant landskip
they seem floating in the air at twenty or thirty yards distance, always descending till I raise them again by a turn of the eyes. If I look at a Window they are upon the glass, & float upon the paper (when they appear at all in that situation) when I write or read. The little Atoms are lucid, fill the whole compass which the eye takes in, & are ever twinkling & in motion. But these sorts of Atoms I have always seen from a Child, though not in the same degree as at present. The Dr. says that both they & the other appearances are the same disorder. Both my Eyes are equally affected. The lines & clouds assume various forms but ever appear like two distinct & different objects—the lines always pellucid, & the clouds dark & more opaque.

Mr. Whitehurst was at Etruria about a fortnight since but I was at this place & did not see him. He told Mrs. Wedgwood he wo’d insure my Eyes for 6d.—he had been affected in the same way, thought he was going blind immediately & apply’d to Dr. Darwin for advice. The Dr. told him he was very safe—that everybody at one time of life or other had the same appearances before their eyes, but everybody did not look at them, that he wo’d be well again in a little time, which he soon was, & says he has no doubt but I shall be so too.

Etruria, 6th Janv., 1770.

I thank you, my dear friend, for the share you take in our afflictions. I know your friendly & affectionate heart, & that you do sympathise with us most cordially, & this persuasion is not without its comfort, though the distance at which we are fixed robs us of a great deal more. I often stand in need of your advice, assistance, & consolation. The great variety, & load of business I am at present engaged in with the near prospect of a vast increase if I pursue the plan I am already in a manner involved in, & can scarcely retreat from, without giving up business entirely & at the same time being threatened with a disorder which must totally incapacitate me
from doing anything at all, & yet it is absolutely necessary that I should resolve upon, & pursue some one plan immediately. These things altogether, with some other Anxieties I have lately felt, have at times brought on a temporary suppression of spirits which I am not accustomed to & which do not naturally belong to my constitution.

If I carry on my works I must build the next year. If I build I must lay in the Timber & other materials, agree with all sorts of workmen &c. immediately, & perhaps may lose both my Eyes (for they are equally affected) before the building is completed. Is not this a terrible dilemma. What shall I do my Good friend. But who can advise what is best to be done, when the better or worse, depends upon an event which we can neither foresee nor command.—But let me turn from this dark scene, & tell you that my good Father continues to recover without much interruption & I hope will be able to come down stairs, & spare me my wife again in a short time which will be a great comfort to me for at present I am sadly forlorn indeed. I hope I shall receive a good letter from you by tonights post which will do me much good. God bless you & preserve you from every evil. Amen.

Burslem, 24th Jan 1770.

I must, my dear friend scarcely use these eyes, or this head of mine at present—my life, as well as my sight is at stake, for I find this disorder with which I am afflicted nearly as often deprives the miserable patient of one as the other, of which we have had two recent instances in this neighbourhood very lately with have come to my knowledge, & many more perhaps of which I am unacquainted, for I have made no enquiry after such cases. If the disorder is seated near the brain with which is often the case, Vertigoes convulsions &c. put a period to life & sight together. I only mention these things now as a reason why I dare not make much use of my pen. Time
—perhaps a little time may effect a change, & whether it be favourable to my hopes or the contrary, I shall endeavour after that resignation & fortitude which I know my best friends wold advise, & if possible inspire me with through every trying occasion in life.

ETRURIA & BURSLEM, 8th Feb., 1770.

I thank my dear friend very cordially for his last most kind & affecte letters which I read over, & over again by way of cordial to my heart when it stands most in need of support. Your advice to make my business an amusement only is very good, & wold suit me extremely well if I could but put it into practice, but 'tis very difficult to see things going wrong without feeling uneasy sensations & exerting the necessary force be it more or less, of the head or hands to set them right again. I do strive to make things pass on with me as easy as possible, & hope to be makeing some progress in that very usefull Philosophy, but to keep 150 hands of various professions, & more various tempers & dispositions, in tolerable order is no easy task even when the mind is otherwise free & in full vigor. I long to see you my dear friend, & I must on acc of the Patent be in Town in a few weeks, but how to leave these works at Etruria, & the Warehouse without any head to look after them I do not know.

Dan¹ does pretty well when at work, & I am here every day, but he often leaves the works, & drinks two or three days together, & has no taste to direct, at any time, & for the Warehouse I have nobody at all.

ETRURIA, 10th Feb., 1770.

. . . . . . . . . .

When you have settled matters in the best manner you can in London & Chelsea, I could wish you to be at the Manufactory awhile to learn the Art of Pottmaking, whilst I am able to go through that branch with you, which I shall do with great pleasure & hope you will carry on to great perfection those improvements which
I have been endeavouring to lay a foundation for, & shall be happy in leaving them with you my good & worthy friend, who neither want ability nor spirit to pursue the task.—May it be a pleasing & successful one.—Indeed I have no doubt but it will, & so long as my eyes & health will permit I shall gladly assist you in it. Do not think by what I have wrote that my eyes are worse, but I am sensible of my danger, & the last attack may be sudden & not give me an opportunity of communicating many things which I wold not have to die with me. I know how ill you can be spared from the rooms, but I think it will be better to suffer a little inconvenience for the present than leave you immers’d in a business, & not master of the principal parts of it.

I have given so much of the account of this dreary winter in his own letters in order that the reader may judge how far Dr. Darwin’s view of the complaint in his eyes was as true as it was singular. The whole series contains no allusion to any pain in them, and only one to any difficulty in using them, that one being easily explicable by the attention he was led to give to the wandering spots. The anxiety gradually subsided, he ceased to attend to these appearances, and seems to have forgotten their existence. It is curious in one so sane, and so often suffering, that the only ailment of which we have much detail from his own pen should be insignificant and to a certain extent imaginary.

Imaginary or real, however, the physical and other sufferings of Wedgwood’s early years at Etruria were far outweighed by the legitimate and well-earned satisfactions which they brought him. Not to speak of the rare happiness of his married life, he had the joy of the craftsman
who has achieved new and significant improvements in his art, enhanced by that of the merchant who sees his goods winning instant and lucrative recognition. He had also seen a great enterprise of public and private utility, the Grand Trunk Canal, carried to a successful issue, largely by his own energetic and intelligent advocacy and devotion. The years immediately following were to crown, in some sense, his career as a potter by an event which added little directly to his profits, and marked no special advance in the artistry or technique of his wares, but brought the homely Staffordshire potter into momentary association with one of the most imposing and sinister personalities of the time, and contributed more than any other to his world-wide fame.
CHAPTER V

THE RUSSIAN DINNER-SERVICE

In March 1778 an order for a dinner-service, of an elaborate and unusual kind, was received by the firm, through the English consul at St. Petersburg,\(^1\) from the Empress Catherine II. of Russia. Wedgwood's wares had already been familiar for some years at the Russian capital. He owed the connection altogether to the good offices and enthusiastic connoisseurship of the English ambassador and his wife. Lord Cathcart was appointed to this post early in 1768, and took out with him to St. Petersburg later in the year a quantity of Wedgwood ware, designed expressly to appeal to Russian tastes. At a four hours' conference with Wedgwood in March, already referred to, Lord Cathcart had prescribed the details of the design. Wedgwood indicates their nature in a letter (March 19, 1768) to Matthew Boulton, whose international connections at this date were far more extensive than his own.

I have waited upon Lord Cathcart, the Ambassador

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\(^1\) In this historic connection it seems permissible to retain the old name of the city, the only one, naturally, known to the author.—Endnote.

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appointed for Russia, to bring about the plan we settled of introducing my manufacture at the court of Russia. . . . The Ambassador, but particularly his Lady, came into my measures with the utmost readiness, & I am to get done a plate by way of specimen, with the Russian arms & an edging round the plate, both in gold burnt in. His Ldship has now ordered a large service, plain, to take with him, & I must now desire you will by return of post let me know at what other courts in Germany or Europe (sic) you sh’d be most solicitous to have this manufacture introduced, & I will endeavour to get it done.

It may be permissible, in a life of Wedgwood, to glance for a moment at the career of the nobleman whose intervention so decisively affected his fortunes.

Charles, ninth Baron Cathcart, was a figure of some distinction in his day. He followed the campaigns of his friend the Duke of Cumberland; and a black patch on his cheek in both Sir Joshua’s portraits of him records a bullet wound at Fontenoy. His Embassy to the Court of the Empress Catharine was his first diplomatic appointment, and as it lasted only three years and was not succeeded by any other he may be surmised to have figured less brilliantly in diplomacy than in the field.¹

Lady Cathcart was the sister of Sir William Hamilton, a man our time remembers too exclusively on his ignoble side. His services

¹ For the convenience of an age which remembers nothing of his achievements in either region he may be recalled as grandfather of Sir George Cathcart, a Crimean hero who fell at Inkerman, and more effectively by lovers of art as father of the Mrs. Graham whose beautiful but somewhat haughty face looks down on the spectator from the best-known canvas of Gainsborough.
in preserving and perpetuating the beauties of antique art deserve recall, as well as his sensibility to a different form of beauty. He had published at this time four splendid folios, containing descriptions and engravings of the treasures of Herculaneum and other buried sites; and Lord Cathcart had lent his copy of them to Wedgwood two years before his embassy to Russia in 1768.

At St. Petersburg both Lord and Lady Cathcart proved steady friends to Wedgwood, exhibiting his wares, transmitting orders, excusing delays in execution, and in effect acting as his unpaid agents, with all the enormously added efficacy derived from their rank and office. On September 20, 1769, Wedgwood begs Bentley to despatch some of his vases, under somewhat odd conditions, to Lady Cathcart at St. Petersburg, and the letter is evidently not the opening of the correspondence. "I sho'd have wrote sooner, but I have so much business upon my hands, & hate writing to great folks"—especially when it is to convey so awkward a message, one would think. The Vases "must not be presented, & we must not pretend to charge them, so that they must neither be given nor sold—but we must borrow a pair of her Ladyship's chimney pieces to show them upon." Why this end could not have been attained by a simple presentation of the vases is not clear, as the goodwill of the Ambassador's wife was unquestionable. "May you not give Lord Cathcart a hint," the letter goes on, "that we are preparing to paint the Etruscan Vases after Mr. Hamilton's Book?"
The correspondence seems to have continued at intervals, for on January 24, 1770, we read that—“I fully purposed writing to Lady Cathcart to-day but find it impossible on several acc.” This was the time of his great fears for his eyes, exaggerated at the present moment into fears for his life.

Lord Cathcart’s service seems to have excited general admiration among his guests at the Embassy, ¹ and the immediate result was an order for four large services, including one for the Empress herself. The commission was brought to England by Mr. Baxter, the Consul at St. Petersburg. The execution of this order occupied about a year, and it seems probable that this great prospective increase in the export business was one of the causes which determined Bentley’s settlement in London instead of in Etruria. Wedgwood made a special journey to London to see the royal service in July 1770, his father-in-law accompanying him, and both were Bentley’s guests. “He joins with me in the warmest thanks to you, & your good sister, for the cordial reception & entertainment, & all the good things we enjoy’d at your hospitable mansion,” he writes to Bentley on the 30th. “We still drink our friends in the four Counties, with Middlesex at the head of them, which is likely to become a fashionable toast at Etruria, & we flatter ourselves with being remember’d sometimes over an evening pipe at Chelsea.”

¹ Russian taste drew distinctions, however. “They do not like the colour’d” (Queen’s ware), Lady Cathcart writes to Wedgwood, Feb. 8, 1770, “nor yet the gilt, which surprises me, but the plain & the shapes they admire vastly.”
In the course of the same autumn the four services were despatched to Russia. Two of them were adorned by printed views of scenery, and it may well have been the sight of these which induced the Empress to order, in March 1773, the more comprehensive series of the same kind which is the subject of the present chapter.

A collection of nearly thirteen hundred views of English scenery made at the direction of the greatest queen of her age deserves an examination in some detail, and the courtesy of the Emperor Nicholas II., Catherine’s descendant in the fifth degree, who lent it to the descendants of the maker and permitted them to take photographs of the views upon it, makes such an attempt possible.

The order for the service was no mere careless concession to a fashionable vogue, but an expression of individual taste. Catherine did not desire an English imitation, however beautiful, of the long buried treasures of Italy, then enjoying a glorious resurrection; she wanted an English work that should instruct her about England. We may take a glimpse at the service through the eyes of an English ambassador to whom she showed it, five years after its reception, at her country palace of La Grenouillière, a fanciful name symbolised in the green frog on every plate. “I have the good fortune to have made myself not disagreeable to the Empress,” Sir James Harris writes to his father from St. Petersburg, June 8, 1779. “She admits me to all her parties of cards, & a few days ago carried me with only two of her courtiers to a country palace where
she has placed the portraits of all the crowned heads of Europe. She calls this place La Grenouillière, & it was for it that Wedgwood made, some years ago, a very remarkable service of his ware, on which a green frog was painted. It represented the different country houses & gardens in England. This also we were shown, & this led us to a conversation on English gardening, in which the Empress is a great adept.” She was, he goes on to say, an adept in more important institutions of his native land. From gardens, by a long jump, “we got to Blackstone, where she soon led me out of my depth, as I believe she would many a Circuiter, being most perfectly mistress of our Laws & Constitution.” A worthy successor of Peter the Great! Her love of gardens had been her refuge and diversion in her dreary youth, when her first infant—the unhappy Paul—was taken from her immediately after his birth by her predecessor, the Empress Elizabeth. In need of some occupation for her active nature, she begged like a child for a piece of ground to make a garden of. She was given a piece of waste land where nothing would grow, but “as this was my first whim in the constructive line my plans assumed very grand proportions,” she tells us. Since then she must have conversed with Englishmen and learnt something of the surroundings of our palaces and cottages, and these girlish plans seem to have revived in this original fancy for pictures on plates, taken from the land of gardens—so we may surely distinguish our own country. She had also noticed and criticised the designs on Dutch tiles, and mentions
being haunted during an illness after the birth of her son with the "ill drawn figures" on the tiles of the stove at the foot of her bed. And now, in the intervals of planning the partition of Poland and the conquest of Turkey, she decided, perhaps with an imperfect appreciation of the possibilities of pottery, that the plates and dishes should remind her of her own early horticultural experiments. "Why, all the gardens in England will scarcely furnish materials for this sett, every piece having a different subject," Wedgwood writes to Bentley on March 23, 1778. Perhaps the limitation was a misunderstanding on his part, although Harris's account certainly suggests that this kind of subject was what she cared for most. At any rate Wedgwood had now passed beyond the stage at which, eight years before, he had executed the orders for Queen Charlotte's tea-service with anxious deference to his instructions; he now interpreted a royal order in his own fashion. A more various set of illustrations of English scenery could hardly have been made than that which finally graced the Imperial dinner-table. In the words of the Catalogue the subjects range "from rural cottages and farms to the most superb palaces, and from the huts of the Hebrides to the masterpieces of the best known London architects."

Heterogeneous as the series is, however, the choice of views betrays very clearly some ruling tendencies of contemporary taste. In 1778 Romanticism was a growing fashion. Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill had set the vogue of Gothic villas, his Castle of Otranto that of the
romance of mystery, mediaevalism and terror. Percy’s Reliques, Macpherson’s Ossian, Gray’s Norse and Celtic Odes, were recent events. The sentiment of the past began to obtrude upon the cheerful actuality of mid-eighteenth-century England. It is very apparent in the Catalogue, drawn up by Bentley for the Empress, of the scenes thought especially pleasing, or likely to please, in 1778, and thence reproduced in her dinner-service. Bentley, more sensitive, doubtless, than his sturdy partner to the currents of polite culture, even emphasises the romantic note, summarising the character of the entire series as “various views of the ruins in Great Britain.” He goes on to enumerate other subjects, but returns to ruins as the primary object of attention. Some of the views reproduce the less happy expressions of this taste—the artificial Gothic towers or antique temples recently erected in many noble seats. But nobler expressions are abundant: the stately Cathedral of Iona in its lonely grandeur, the monastery on Holy Island which was to supply Scott with his most tragic scene, and the noble east window of Tintern—above all, the so-called “Chapel of St. Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury,” a Gothic fragment of the best period of Early English.

This last little sketch, the work of a true artist, is worthy of a better place than that it holds on a dish-cover, but even so it appeals to the spectator as a true and loving transcript of Gothic windows and arches dignified by the stately wall which forms the background of the building and gives it space and a suggestion of
CUP AND SAUCER, RUSSIAN SERVICE.
Mayer Collection.
TO: VIRN
FROM: CAP
noble surroundings. The trace of havoc, everywhere apparent, is softened by the hand of Time, and a rich overgrowth of ivy fringes the arch whence the spectator looks out on the surrounding Somersetshire country.

Among the ancient castles portrayed were Caernarvon, mirrored in its encompassing waters, Caerphilly, Pembroke, and Windsor. Wales, where the practical importance of the inland fortress longest survived, is richly represented.

But the strength of the collection lies in its views of the statelier English homes. There is, indeed, some suggestion of an attempt to give the Empress specimens of every kind of home, from the highest to the lowest; and the series includes, as if to illustrate the homeliest variety, specimens of the conical huts and shielings of the Hebrides. But the normal commonplace house occupied by the vast majority of the people appears rarely and incidentally. Business and artistic interests concurred in directing the choice of the firm mainly to the noble and gentle country seats, whose parks and gardens offered inexhaustible "views" of varied beauty, many of them to be had, on easy terms, in prints.

The view of the most magnificent of all English seats, Windsor, was an afterthought, as will be seen below. In spite, however, of some failure in perspective, it is one of the most artistic of the series, and preserves an aspect of the castle familiar to the readers of eighteenth-century memoirs.

Among the private mansions may be mentioned a few of contemporary interest or subsequent fame. The view of Hagley Park, Wor-
cestershire (on a dish-cover), is not fortunate either in drawing or in choice of position. But it preserves a prospect which enchanted the eighteenth century, and the noble trees, at which three spectators are raptly gazing, could recall to observers of that day the Virgilian images of secura quies. ¹ A more artistic treatment of the same theme is given in the sketch somewhat quaintly described in the Catalogue as a "View of Lord Stamford's new house and the park at the same place"—a delightful glimpse of an English village, with its cottages clustering round a spire, and the "new house" modestly withdrawn into the background, the whole embosomed in masses of "tufted trees" with slopes of graceful lawn beneath.²

Some of the mansions have acquired an adventitious interest since the views were taken. The residence of "Thomas Fitzherbert, Esq., at Swynnerton in Staffordshire," is the subject of a commonplace little sketch, included doubtless mainly to please a neighbour. Seven or eight years later Thomas Fitzherbert died, leaving a

¹ "You might draw," Horace Walpole wrote to Richard Bentley, some fifteen years before this view was taken, "but I can't describe, the enchanting scenes of the park; it is a hill of three miles, but broke into all manner of beauty, such lawns, such wood, rills, cascades, and a thickness of verdure quite to the summit of the hill, and commanding such a vale of towns, and meadows, and wood extending quite to the Black Mountain in Wales, that I quite forgot my favourite Thames!"

² It is to be noticed that the taste for "natural scenery," pure and simple, has had no part in the selection of these views. It is doubtful whether Wedgwood had much relish for it. Sending a book of "Landskips" to Bentley, he writes (Dec. 10, 1778) that "most of them being mere Landskips, without any the least Pleasure Ground, I am afraid they are not proper for you" (italics in original). Even the view of Thorpe Cloud, the beautiful hill at the head of Dovedale, is introduced as "the property of Mr. Adderley."
SAUCER, RUSSIAN SERVICE.

Mayer Collection.
widow who was to be the only woman, probably, whom George IV. truly loved. And Wedgwood
himself had passed away when the social glories of a suburban mansion at Kensington, repre-
sented on another dish, began; for its owner in those later days, the third Lord Holland, was
born in the year in which the Russian commission was received.

London naturally offered its special and unique opportunities; and private mansions,
even of the rank of Holland House, or Northumberland House (whose ugliness, here faithfully
reproduced, may reconcile us to its loss), fell relatively into the background. Several views
represent pieces of a now bygone London. The old Royal Exchange with its central tower and
belfry burnt in 1838, where Addison had fancied the surprise of "one of our old kings standing
in person where he is figured in effigy" and hearing "all the languages of Europe spoken in
this little spot of his former dominions"; the first Westminster Bridge—that crossed by
Wordsworth—with its multitude of little arches, the shortest-lived of all memorable bridges; old
Somerset House, pulled down in 1776, with its dignified stairs to the river, the neighbouring
gabled houses contrasting with the columns and arcades which rejoiced Stow as being the only
fabric he knows "which deviates from the Gothic"—all these and many more just as
interesting might, if the pieces illustrating the Metropolis were copied and annotated, form no
contemptible contribution to a Handbook for Historic London.
In the choice of these views of ruins, castles, country seats, and civic monuments, we may discover partly the taste and sentiment of Bentley, partly the calculated and astute policy of the firm. But among them are mingled, in odd and piquant contrast, some which reflect the special bent and proclivities of the senior partner. Wedgwood lent himself, readily enough, in the interest of business, to the portrayal of feudal, traditional, and bygone England. But his heart was in the busy, industrial, inventive England just coming to the birth, and he gratified his taste even at some risk to his interest. Possibly Bentley himself felt a little alarm at his friend’s audacity, for he attaches the disarming title of “The Dunnington Hills, Derbyshire,” to what is in fact an excellent little study of a canal-lock. Art has long since discovered the glories of such subjects; but Bentley had to reckon with a generation bent upon “the elegant” and intolerant of “the low.” The drawing itself shows no trace of the timidity betrayed in the title. We can imagine how Wedgwood’s eye lingered over the detail of those massive water-gates with their structural indications of strength and purpose, always a subject for the artist—the fine timber mellowed by the action of water, the whole a reunion of bold decided lines and angles, and all associated in his memory with the most interesting and effective period of his own life. The same may be said of the bridge on the Duke’s canal at Worsley, where all the details of construction are shown, and we marvel at the careful drawing of ropes and pulleys.
Thus manifold, even conflicting, was the reflex of eighteenth-century England offered to the ruler of the still primeval civilisation of Russia.

For the biographer of Wedgwood the interest of these industrial and mainly Staffordshire scenes may excusably culminate in the view of his Staffordshire home in the heart of the Potteries, Etruria Hall. The house appears here, curious to say, more as it looks to-day in its actual condition than as it appears in those faint, indelible images of childish memory of which I have already spoken, coming half-way between the treeless field on which the house was built and the treeless waste in which it stands to-day—recollections retouched by a pencil sketch of one of his grand-daughters where the trees I remember are, as happens to most of one's childish recollections, somewhat, but only slightly, reduced in dignity. In another respect the Etruria on the Empress's plate is more like that of to-day than the intermediate house; the wings which he added to the house at a late period of his life are now pulled down. In everything but the actual building the contrast could not be greater than that between the scene here represented and its present counterpart. The canal occupies the foreground, and a barge is passing; but quiet fields surround the house on all sides, and two ladies and a gentleman are stopping on the other side to look at it, just as they stop on the wooded slope of Hagley, and apparently with equal reason and satisfaction.

Such was, in summary, the character of the "Views of English Scenes" with which Wedg-
wood and his partner responded to the demand of their august client. The task of procuring nearly 1300 different examples—for the designs were to be all distinct, and many pieces apparently were to have more than one—was sufficiently formidable.\(^1\) Wedgwood’s letters during the year (1773–1774) occupied by the work indicate the anxieties it occasioned him. Bentley, in artistic matters more experienced than he, seems to have taken the bolder initiative from the first, and Wedgwood playfully rallies him on his audacity. “Dare you undertake,” he writes to him on April 9, 1773, when about to ride to town for “a serious talk about this said Table service” and “a peep at your first essays towards it”—“dare you undertake to paint the most embellished views, the most beautiful Landskips, with Gothic Ruins, and the most Elegant Buildings, with hands who never attempted anything beyond Huts and Windmills, upon Dutch Tile at three-halfpence a doz. !—And this too for the first Empress in the World !—Well, if you dare attempt and can succeed in this, tell me no more of your Alexanders, no, nor of your Prometheus’s neither, for surely it is more to make Artists than men ?”

Wedgwood himself, however, had already gone in search of the “Artists,” with questionable results. In the same letter he describes a visit to a Mr. Stringer of Knutsford, who had estimated the lowest cost of each drawing at half a guinea,

\(^1\) In a memorandum of June 1774, when the service was complete, Bentley gives the precise number of pieces as 952, and the number of “views” as 1244; with an equivalent number of “borders” and “frogs.”
that of the entire service at £8000, and the time for execution at three or four years. Stringer’s services were, however, enlisted in making drawings. In August he was employed under Wedgwood’s supervision at Trentham and other neighbouring seats. In November he writes that “young Stringer has taken up a good deal of my time,” but he anticipates that “we shall continue taking views for ten days or a fortnight longer.” At this stage two days were occupied with each view, “it being about two days work to fix upon a situation, take a rough sketch, and copy and finish another from that, which is the course he takes.” But this is far from representing the pace at which the work was done. Other artists were called in; Stringer himself worked more rapidly;¹ above all, resort was had to paintings, drawings or prints already in existence,² which were copied in Bentley’s offices by artists engaged at a modest salary by the week.³

The drawings once provided, the manufacturing process was easy and swift. Here too, however, a less costly procedure was ultimately adopted than had at first been designed. The views were originally to have been reproduced in colours; they were finally carried out in a

¹ On Dec. 1 Wedgwood reports that Stringer has taken six views in a week “besides travelling.”
² Among the rest the drawings of George Barrett, father of a better-known water-colour painter of the same name.
³ Thus we hear of a Miss Pars, whose work was secured at half a guinea per week, perhaps equal to £250 a year now. She came of an artistic family; one brother was sent to Greece, and had his drawings published by the Dilettanti Society; another kept a drawing academy, and a third was a modeller in wax.
sober monochrome of dark purple on a cream-coloured ground.

Wedgwood himself spent altogether some six months in London during the execution of the order.\(^1\) But the anxieties of his astute and diplomatic mind were by no means limited to these technicalities. The extreme alacrity with which noble owners responded to the firm's obsequious requests for permission to take views of their seat was itself a source of embarrassment as well as profit. "The Gentlemen seem highly pleased with the compliments as they are pleased to say I am paying them," reports Wedgwood, November 14, "and from what I perceive in the little we have done [in Staffordshire] I could make it well worth while to pursue the same plan all over the Kingdom."\(^2\) But how distribute these "compliments" in proportion to claims, and above all without offending present or possible clients?

"Suppose a Gent" thinks himself neglected," he writes to Bentley, November 14, 1773, "either by the omission of his seat when his neighbour's is taken, or by putting it upon a small piece, or not flattering it sufficiently. He then becomes our enemy—Gains some of the Artists to his party, & Damns it with the Russian Ambassador & every one else he is able." The perils of the "small piece" were very real. Unluckily the small plates far outnumbered the great dishes, and there were more noble lords than soup

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\(^1\) To Bentley, July 8, 1774.

\(^2\) The notes of request (one of which, drawn up by Bentley, is extant) shrewdly intimated that the name of the owner would be printed, with that of his seat, in the Catalogue to be sent to the Empress.
tureens. "I am most afraid," he writes, "of our not having large Dishes . . . enough left to oblige our Friends who should be put into capital situations. . . . As it is, it will seem & be in reality too great a partiality for a Country Esq. though he does happen to be one's neighbour, & a good man, to occupy so capital a situation as a large Dish when there is but 2 or 4 in the whole service. If we can afford one of them to Lord Gower will be as much as the Bargain," and here he calls Bentley's attention to a "capital omission"—that of having neglected to apply for permission to take views of any of the royal palaces. The omission was now repaired.

The result we have seen in a plate that depicts an angle of Windsor Castle. It was an odd forgetfulness that prevented the Queen's Potter obtaining the design otherwise than as a mere afterthought, and it testifies to his remarkable freedom from the temptations of a courtier.

None of these anxieties and embarrassments impeded the progress of the work, which advanced with astonishing rapidity to completion. By the end of November but one-half remained to do; in June 1774 it is finished, and early in July Bentley is busy preparing the Catalogue (in French) and making the goods ready for shipment to St. Petersburg. The rumour of its impending departure spread, and London society betrayed a lively curiosity to see this culminating example of the fashionable ware, in which the homes of so many of its members were reproduced. The firm, nervous of possible consequences, resisted, but the Queen sent with some im-
patience to demand admission¹ (as far back as December 1778 she had expressed a wish, in common with the King, to "see their good things," and been politely put off on the plea that they were "not perfect enough for Sovereign inspection"), and the partners reluctantly exhibited a part of the service in the Greek Street Show-rooms.²

The scene doubtless closely resembled that witnessed in another London exhibition 136 years later, when a selection of the Empress's dinner-service emerged from some forgotten lumber-room of the Winter Palace, like some royal captive from a dungeon, to revisit its native shores, and be gazed on by a throng hardly less eager than the old.

Of its reception by Catherine we have little information; but she was apparently satisfied. As has been said, she showed it a few years later, with apparent complacency, according to his narrative, to the ambassador Sir James Harris; and Wedgwood’s secretary, Chisholm, in a MS. sketch for his life, records the report which had reached the firm that "the Empress was highly satisfied with the execution of this work," a vague tribute but of similar tenor. With her own part in it, at least, she had some title to be satisfied.

¹ "I have seen Lady Hold—s," writes Wedgwood, "and told her all I could—the result is, that she says it is impossible to put it off—the Q—— wants to see the Shop, and we must shew what we can of the R[ussian] service, and as well as we can, and that must do!"

² A lively account of her impressions of the exhibition is given in her Memoir by Mrs. Delany. "I am just returned," she writes on June 7, "from viewing the Wedgwood ware that is to be sent to the Empress of Russia. It consists, I believe, of as many pieces as there are days in the year, if not hours. They are displayed in a house in Greek St., Soho, ... there are three rooms below and two above filled with it, laid out on tables...."
The English Queen, some years before, had ordered a service distinguished by nothing but showy colouring and lavish ornament. The Russian Empress, on the other hand, in a country still some two centuries behind the rest of Europe in point of civilisation, gave her order for a set of crockery in which there was nothing to attract the eye that had not a mind behind it. No doubt it was a case where half would have been worth more than the whole; we must regret that some discrimination was not exercised as to what surfaces were suitable for a painting, so that Kew Gardens should not have afforded a delicate illustration for a sauce-ladle, nor Holland House appear on a dish-cover; but even these mistakes are a tribute to the conscientious industry which crowded the canvas without leaving a touch of hurry or slovenliness anywhere. If Wedgwood had seen that among crockery only plates and dishes were suitable for pictures, and that all curved surface should be kept for mere decoration, this famous service would have been a more profitable article of manufacture as well as a better work of art; and it is more to his credit that he ignored the first consideration than to his discredit that he was blind to the last. It must have cost about £3000, and there is some doubt as to the margin of profit. The present impression at the Works is that the price did scarcely more than cover the outlay, but of course the result on the finances of the firm in fame and all that fame brings was satisfactory enough to make the actual profit a secondary matter.
CHAPTER VI

THE PORTLAND VASE

The most beautiful product of Wedgwood’s art would be generally allowed to be his copy of that remnant of antiquity known to our forefathers as the Barberini, and to us as the Portland, vase. An earthenware copy of a glass cameo so successful as to be almost indistinguishable from the original, is indeed a triumph for the craftsman no less than for the artist, and this treasure of our National Collection forms the high-water mark of Wedgwood’s powers in both directions. It may even be said to signify a creditable approach towards some literary attainment on Wedgwood’s part — creditable, that is, for a man whose education had ended with his tenth year, and whose life had been spent in hard work as a manufacturer—for the little paper he wrote upon the vase is mentioned with some respect by men not unlearned. The vase is, in any case, the crowning work of his life.

The Italian title under which he and his contemporaries first knew the famous vase might seem a more appropriate one than that which succeeded it. Maffeo Barberini, member of a noble Florentine family, known to the world as
THE BARBERINI, OR PORTLAND VASE.
TO VIRU
AIRPORT LIAO
Pope Urban VIII., should by rights yield the honour of its discovery to the forgotten peasant whose spade or mattock revealed the existence of its age-long hiding-place—a subterranean vault beneath a little hill in the Campagna about two miles from Rome, called, probably from its fertility, the Monte del Grano. Of course the Pope ordered further excavation, and gave the treasure a princely home in a Roman palace. There it remained about a hundred years—the most brilliant, no doubt, of its existence. The darkness of the tomb was exchanged for the splendour of a noble library, where all its companion pieces were illustrious either for beauty or for historic or archaeological interest, and where vase and statue stood out against a background of rare and sumptuous folios in creamy or rich brown ranks—treasures which were the continual resort of the scholar, and which arrested for a moment the gaze of the young man of fashion on the Grand Tour. The list of those who paid it the homage of their eager or forced attention during the century following its emergence into the light of day—the century between the pontificate of Maffeo Barberini and the sale of his or his family's collection in 1740—would almost coincide with a catalogue of the celebrities of the learned, the artistic, and the fashionable world, during an epoch which we may regard as at once the afterglow of the Renaissance, and as the noontide in the most brilliant day of the social life of modern Europe.

To this bright noon succeeded an eclipse. The year 1740 was one of large opportunity to
wealthy connoisseurs, for no less than three Roman collections were then dispersed, and the Barberini vase passed into the hands of an archaeologist of some distinction at the time, James Byers. Byers sold it to Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador at Naples, who in 1784 brought it to England. Here, after a brief interval, it exchanged its noble and frequented Roman home for the private curiosity-hoard of a rich old lady, who secreted it from all eyes but those of a favoured few. The grounds of this secrecy remain obscure. As daughter and heiress of the first Earl of Oxford and widow of the second Duke of Portland, son of the Dutch favourite whom William III. had ennobled and enriched, she was able to spend plenty of money on her fancies and might have gambled away thousands without outraging the standards of that day; and the famous vase would have added éclat to her very miscellaneous collection. Dread of interference from members of her family is the most probable explanation of her action; against them, in any case, the ban of exclusion was maintained with peculiar rigour.

How sedulously the mystery even of the original purchase was guarded is shown by the mysterious character of the transaction described in the following extract from the journal of Miss Hamilton, Sir William’s niece, and his intermediary in the matter:

“Mrs. Chapone called for me in ye Dss. Do[or]t of Portland’s coach at 3 past 8,” writes the conscientious young lady in her journal for January 3, 1784. “I was not ready, but I ran down with my gown unpinned, my
large cloak hiding all, therefore I was not guilty of ye rudeness of making Mrs. Chapone wait an instant. When we got to Mrs. Delany I ask'd leave to go to her room and Mrs. Astley [Mrs. Delany's maid] came & gave me some pins. Mrs. Delany came & told me she must contrive to speak to me after dinner, for she had a secret message to me from ye Dss. Dr Portland. We went down to dinner at a little past 4, sat below till 6, very agreeable general conversation. When we came up Mrs. D. went to repose for a ¼ of an hour. Mrs. Chapone & I looked over some prints from the antique. Mrs. D. came to us, and then under ye color of getting me to look for a book, took me to her bedroom, & told me what ye Dss wanted me to do, viz. to purchase ye V. of my uncle Wm."

After the purchase the veil was kept as carefully drawn. Fanny Burney, with an abundant emphasis of underlining, thanks Mrs. Delany for "her very kind use of secret influence" to get her a sight of the hidden beauty, and hopes she "will have the indulgence to admit her some day in next week, though she dare not hint at such a wish for the Vase, lest it should prove impracticable." Sir William himself, at her Grace's request, never disclosed, even to his own relations, the name of its last purchaser. So little did her Grace know which of her actions would most interest posterity.

The concealment of the vase amid the Duchess of Portland's spiders and shells lasted only eighteen months. Her purchase had been concluded on January 15, 1784; on July 17 of the following year she died somewhat suddenly. The Duke, her son, immediately took steps to dispose of her vast collection, and its 4055 items
were sold, between April and June 1786, by auction. The vase, however, beyond comparison the most famous object it contained, he bought in for £1029.

The Duke was one to whom high rank and large wealth have done some disservice in raising him to a position needing a stronger man. He was, said a wit of the day, "a block to hang W(h)igs on," and one better known—George Selwyn—described the proposal to make him Premier in terms too drastic for print. Against these jeers we may remember that his worldly eminence was helped by a respectable character, and that a fancy, absurd as it was, that he was concealed behind the mask of Junius, could not have been aroused by one whose abilities were despicable. A strain of democratic sympathy underlay the decorous Whiggism of his family, and it sometimes found expression in ways that implied courage. Horace Walpole notes that the Duke's was almost the only house of any distinction which was illuminated on the occasion of the release of Wilkes. But after the Revolution the Duke followed Burke and most of the moderate Whigs into the opposite camp.

So much the reader of Wedgwood's life may be asked to remember concerning the Duke who gave the Portland vase its name and its familiarity to every cultivated English eye.

The description, in the sale catalogue, of the vase which was to be permanently called after him may be given here as a good compendium of all that is certainly known of its history and a little more. It is, we are there told, "the
identical urn which contained the ashes of the Roman emperor Alexander Severus and his mother, Mammaea, which was deposited in the earth about the year 285 after Christ, and was dug up by order of Pope Barberini, named Urban VIII., between the years 1623 and 1644. The materials of which it is composed emulate an onyx, the ground a rich transparent dark amethystine colour, and the snowy figures which adorn it are in bas-relief, of workmanship above all encomium, and such as cannot but excite in us the highest idea of the arts of the ancients.” The description adds to all that is certainly known of its subject an opinion of which we cannot say more than that it is not improbable, if indeed we can get so far as this. Alexander Severus was murdered in the year 285 A.D. at a place near Mayence; his body may have been burnt and the ashes taken to Rome, and the fact that the vase must then have been at least two hundred years old, perhaps three, does not prove that it may not have been a receptacle of the remains; for cinerary urns were bought and sold like any other, and indeed one of such workmanship as this would take too long in the making to be ordered for a special occasion. But of course it dissociates the designs on the vase from any connection with the Emperor, whose ashes it may possibly contain. This, like much else in its history, must remain uncertain.

The Portland vase is, as has been said, a cameo, that is, a cutting in some hard material, with a light and dark layer, in which the effect is produced by cutting the shape desired in the
white so as to stand out upon the darker ground. The material is usually a stone of that streaked kind known as onyx or sardonyx; here this natural substance is imitated, a layer of white glass being imposed on one of a darker hue while the latter was red-hot, and the double substance hard enough for the engraver. Grottesque accounts of its composition were current among its early custodians. We learn, for example, from an early traveller, Misson,\textsuperscript{1} whose work, says his biographer in the Dictionary of National Biography, "remained the standard Handbook for Italy for about fifty years," that connoisseurs were not wanting who "pretend that this vessel was found formed by nature almost of the same form as it is at present, with a white crust, or rather thick supercicies (for the white part is as hard as the rest of the matter). So that when the crust was cut into figures, and the pieces of the same matter that separate 'em taken away, they discovered the black substance, which serves as a ground to the ornaments or figures. The little camayeus are all wrought thus," proceeds the sceptical traveller, "but that so large a stone as this should be framed into the perfect form of a vessel by nature with a white crust just ready for the sculptor's chizeled, is something so singular and uncommon, that though I cannot positively deny it, I must confess I am not much inclined to believe it. For though my eyes could not discover any cheat either in the black or white substance it cannot be concluded from thence that art has not

\textsuperscript{1} Vol. ii. 210, 4th ed., 1714.
assisted nature in some part of it. However, 'tis certain that they assert the contrary here.” Francis Maximilian Misson is a traveller mentioned with respect by Addison, and would only of course take the opinion of those who spoke with some authority, and though it is difficult to suppose that this view of the vase as a lusus naturae ready shaped by Nature for the carver's hand was ever seriously held by learned men, we find the opposite and correct opinion described by another early traveller as quite exceptional. After citing the view just given, he goes on to particularise a Signor Ficaroni who, “upon frequent examinations of it, is of a contrary opinion: for that the ancients had certainly the way of making artificial cameos; of which he showed me several in his possession, and made me a present of a little one that was so.” Count de Caylus appears to be the first writer who definitely assigned to this vase its true material —glass.1

In giving this account of the recovery of the vase from the sepulchre and its passage from the noble house of the Barberini to that of the Bentincks, we exhaust all that may be called certain in its history. The opinion that the ashes contained were those of the Emperor Alexander Severus was general at the time of the sale. It is one that all admirers of the beautiful vase would gladly accept. Alexander Severus was the last prince occupying the throne of the Roman world on whose career the reader

1 Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines et gauloises (1762–1767).
can dwell with any satisfaction. To a Christian his history is one of peculiar interest. While adhering to the ritual and religion (inseparable comrades in the ancient world) of the empire, he showed a sympathy with the Christian faith more resembling the attitudes of the intellectual world in our day than in any of the seventeen centuries that intervene. In a private chapel where every day he spent a short period of retreat, he set up three statues, among others, typifying (as he thought) the religion of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Christians—Abraham, Orpheus, and Christ. Imagination would fain give a martyred youth so fair a sepulchre, but the actual reasons for doing so are, it must be confessed, worth very little.

When we turn from the history of the vase itself to the subject matter of the designs it bears, we quit ground that is more or less uncertain for cloud-land. The figures, which have by equally learned men been supposed to be those of Orpheus and Eurydice, Admetus and Alcestis, Paris and the goddesses, Achilles and Briseis, Jove and Leda, Peleus and Thetis, have led to the suggestion that the whole is probably "a mere picturesque representation of certain single and known characters." To suppose that a dramatic composition meant nothing because we cannot tell what it meant is surely a curious instance of the confusion between the limits of apprehension in one mind and the limits of creation or expression in another. The designs on the famous vase have all the appearance of definite and dramatic representation, and the theory
which regards them as no more significant than the pattern on a carpet or a wall-paper is surely a more untenable theory than any of those which the learned have entertained or abandoned.

The explanation of these designs accepted on the best authority in the present day is that they represent the nuptials of Peleus and Thetis, as an introduction to the birth of Achilles, whose adventures form the subject of the carvings on the sarcophagus in which the vase was found. This subject was depicted on the chest of Cypselus seen at Olympia by Pausanias, and his description of the scene has some remarkable similarities with that on the vase. But it appears to me that this similarity is purely external and accidental, and that the spirit of the scene described by Pausanias differs altogether from that on the vase. He was describing a defensive attitude in the bride; here the attitude is unquestionably one of welcome. The accident that a serpent figures in both has been taken as a clue to the meaning and has been interpreted in the same way in both cases—a sacrifice of the spirit to the letter, it seems to me. However, as far as authority goes, it cannot be denied that the view which commends itself to me finds little support. Yet I venture still to see in these graceful forms a symbolic representation of that vicissitude of death and life which so strongly impressed the imagination of the most living people that the world has ever seen. On this vase, it seems to me, we have the Greek expression of a belief in immortality. The figure seated on the ruins of a building appears to be the expression of what-
ever in human nature is subject to death. The languid attitude, the downward gaze, the inverted torch, the heap of ruins—all suggest failure, dissolution.

The project of reproducing the famous vase had, at the time of the sale of the Duchess of Portland’s museum, been for some time entertained by Wedgwood. But the original was inaccessible to him and was likely to remain so during her life-time. With his usual happy daring, however, he prepared to do what he could with the published engravings of the vase, in particular with that given by Montfaucon in his *L’Antiquité expliquée* (1719). Pottery had become in Wedgwood’s hands a medium of imitation far superior to engraving; he had, moreover, in his employ one of the first ceramic artists in Europe, Henry Webber; and he proceeded with high satisfaction, confident, as he later wrote to Hamilton, that he would at least equal the engraved vase. But work from an engraving was at best a makeshift; and when the death of the Duchess unexpectedly liberated her treasures, Wedgwood at once took steps to obtain access to the original, and if possible possession of it. In January 1786 he was in negotiation for its purchase, probably with the Duke himself, with whom he was on friendly terms and in frequent communication.1 The Duke, however, declined Wedgwood’s offer,

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1 “I have had very free and pretty long conversations upon the intended treaty [the commercial treaty with France] with the D. of Portland & Lord Stormont, both separately & together,” Wedgwood writes to a correspondent (Archdeacon Clive), February 20, 1786, and a few weeks later (March 8) he speaks of a visit to the Duke as if it were no uncommon event.
and himself, as has been said, bought the vase in at the sale. The sequel showed that his refusal was an act of generosity in disguise. For, three days after it had passed into the Duke's hands, it was transferred, as a loan of indefinite duration, to Wedgwood, whose formal acknowledgment and promise to restore it on demand, dated June 10, 1786, is extant.

Wedgwood now had his opportunity; but the finished beauty of the original, at length unreservedly at his disposal, only complicated the problem of reproduction, and four years were to elapse before his final triumph. At the outset he turned, naturally enough, to his friend, Sir William Hamilton, who had given him so much important help in his reproduction of antiques, and was himself the former owner of the vase. The letter which he addressed to him (June 24, 1786) is a capital expression of Wedgwood's artistic mind, and of the keen critical sense, in ceramic matters, which forty years of practice and experiment had brought him. Often as they have been printed, its most salient passages are indispensable in any life of Wedgwood, and must be given here.

Sir—

You will be pleased, I am sure, to hear what a treasure is just now put into my hands, I mean the exquisite Barberini vase with which you enriched this island, & which, now that we may call it the Portland Vase, I hope will never depart from it. His Grace the Duke of Portland being the purchaser, at the sale of his late Mother's museum, has generously lent it to me to copy, and permitted me to carry it down with me to this
place, where I stand in much need of your advice and
directions in several particulars, which I beg leave to
state to you, for to whom can I apply with so much
propriety or hopes of success, as to so able and willing
a patron of the arts. . . .

When I first engaged in this work, and had Mont-
faucon only to copy, I proceeded with spirit, & sufficient
assurance that I should be able to equal, or excell if
permitted, that copy of the vase; but now that I can
indulge myself with full and repeated examinations of
the original work itself, my crest is much fallen, & I
should scarcely muster sufficient resolution to proceed
if I had not, too precipitately perhaps, pledged myself
to many of my friends to attempt it in the best manner
I am able. Being so pledged, I must proceed, but shall
stop at certain points till I am favoured with your kind
advice and assistance.

It will be necessary however for you to know some-
thing of the powers I am in possession of for this attempt,
before you can tell what advice to give. I have several
modellers constantly employed in the several branches
of that art; & one of them, who was recommended to
me by Sir Wm Chambers & Sir Joshua Reynolds, is
esteemed the first in his profession in England. I need
not add that I shall give myself unwearyed attention
to the progress of this great work. The material in
which I propose to make the copies is much harder than
glass, nearly as hard as agate, so that in this respect I
have the advantage of my predecessors; & like the
agate, it will bear to be cut, & take a polish, at the scal-
engraver's lathe. It has likewise a property peculiar
to itself, which fits it perfectly for this imitation,—which
is its taking a blue tint from cobalt, to any degree of
strength. It is apparent that the artist has availed
himself very ably of the dark ground, in producing the
perspective and distance required, by cutting the white
away, nearer to the ground as the shades were wanted
deeper, so that the white is often cut to the thinness of
paper, and in some instances quite away, and the ground itself makes a part of the bas relief; by which means he has given to his work the effect of painting as well as sculpture; and it will be found that a bas relief with all the figures of one uniform white colour upon a dark ground, will be a faint resemblance of what this artist has had the address to produce by calling in the aid of color to assist his relief. That hollowness of the rocks and depth of shade in other parts, produced by cutting down to the dark ground, & to which it owes no small part of its beauty, would all be wanting, & a disgusting flatness appear in their stead. It is here that I am most sensible of my weakness, and that I must of necessity call in the engraver to my assistance in order to produce the highest finished and closest copies we are capable of making. But in this resource difficulties arise, and, I fear, insurmountable ones; for how few Artists have we in this branch whose touches would not carry ruin with them to those beautiful & high wrought figures? And suppose one or two could be found equal to the task, would such artists be persuaded to quit a lucrative branch of their profession, & devote half a life to a single work, for which there is little probability of their being paid half so much as they earn by their present employments: for I do not think 5000 for the execution of such a vase, supposing our best Artists capable of the work, would be at all equal to their gains from the work they are now employed in; and the taste of the present age, you well know, Sir, is not awake, notwithstanding all you have done to rouse it, to works of much time and great expence. Here then I stand greatly in need of your assistance, for unless some new experiment can be happily thought of, we must submit to the loss of a beauty which we are perhaps capable of producing if all other circumstances are favorable to bringing it forward.

I suppose it is admitted, that the form of this Vase is not so elegant as it might be made if the Artist had
not been possessed of some very good reason for contenting himself with the present form,—either, perhaps, that he would engage the whole, undivided attention of the spectator to his sculpture, the vase itself being the production of another Artist, of an inferior class, the verrier,—or, because the material made use of, under the circumstances necessary for the display of his art, that is, the body being made of one colour, & the surface covered over to a due thickness with another, was not capable of taking a form with those delicate parts on which its beauty as a simple vase would in great measure depend, & which might be given to a vase made of metal or other more manageable materials. Now, though we should suppose the latter to be the case, I suppose you would still advise me to copy the form of the vase as well as the figures. But what I wish to ask you is, whether you would forbid me to apply these figures to any other form of vase, or with the addition of any borders or other ornaments.

I dare confess to you, Sir, that I have at times wrought myself up to a certain degree of enthusiasm, in contemplating the beauties of this admirable work; & in those paroxysms am ready to cry out, that this single piece is alone, a sufficient foundation for a manufactory, & that of no small extent, & then I begin to count how many different ways the vase itself may be copied, to suit the tastes, the wants & the purses of different purchasers.

The working Artist would be content with a true & simple copy, a cast in one colour, of a durable material, with the price accordingly. Others, who could afford to proceed a step further, would desire the addition of a blue ground, though painted only; & a third class would wish to have this addition in the composition of which the vase itself is made, & equally permanent, a fourth perhaps would pay for polishing this durable blue ground, & these two last would be my customers for Jasper copies; but whether any would be found with
sufficient confidence in the abilities of our Artist to order, or with patience to wait for, one of the highest order, finished by the engraver, or whether any Artist would be found hardy enough to engage in it, I have my doubts. However, if you approve of the idea of making copies suited to different purposes as above mentioned, I will attempt one or two of the easiest first.

In examining the bas reliefs upon the vase, there appear a few palpable slips of the artists attention. . . . Would it be advisable in these cases, to make any deviation from the original, or to copy as close as we can its defects as well as its beauties?

Most of the figures have their surfaces partially decayed by time. When we mould from these figures, may we venture to restore their original smoothness, with care to preserve the drawing, etc,—or let the copies pass deficient as time has left the original.

I next beg your advice respecting the introduction of these figures in other works & forms, in which they might perhaps serve the arts, & diffuse the seeds of good taste, more extensively than by confining them to the vase only. For instance, many a young artist, who could not purchase any edition of the vase, would be glad to buy impressions of the heads of the figures, or the whole figures, in a durable material of one colour, for studies. Others would purchase intaglios of the heads for seals, & cameos of two colors & polished grounds for rings, or the whole figures in separate pieces or groups, finished to any degree for cabinet pieces or pictures. In tablets for chimney pieces, & many other purposes, I have some reason to believe they will be acceptable, if I succeed tolerably in the copies. I should be glad to know if you see any objection to these proposed extensions & applications.

Several gentlemen have urged me to make my copies of the vase by subscriptions, & have honored me with their names for that purpose; but I tell them, & with great truth, that I am extremely diffident of my ability to perform the task they kindly impose upon me; &
that they shall be perfectly at liberty, when they see the copies, to take or refuse them; & on these terms I accept of subscriptions, chiefly to regulate the time of delivering out the copies, in rotation, according to the dates on which they honour me with their names.

In spite of the "powers" of which Wedgwood was in possession, the process of reproducing the vase proved difficult and slow. When Webber's work upon the figures was finished—probably by the summer of 1787, when he left Etruria for a year's residence in Rome—there remained the problem of imitating the contrast and play of colour in the new medium. Even in May 1790 experiments were still going on in the production of "Barberini black." ¹ But in the previous October a copy had been turned out sufficiently satisfactory to be sent to Dr. Darwin at Derby for his private inspection, and to excite his liveliest admiration. Disregarding the injunction of secrecy, he summoned his scientific friends to examine his treasure. "I have disobeyed you," he writes to his friend, "and shown your vase to two or three, but they were philosophers, not cogniscenti." He even introduced a passage of eulogy upon the successful imitator of "Portland's mystic urn" into the poem of didactic botany, with which he was just then occupied, and which, as The Loves of the Plants, appeared in the course of the same year.² Wedgwood,

¹ Meteyard, ii. 580.
² Wedgwood virtually invited this poetic exercise. He had written in July to Darwin, three months before sending his replica of "the cameo of all cameos": "The various explications of the bas reliefs upon this famous work of antiquity which I have collected, & think you have a copy of might furnish even a minor poet with subjects for a few lines; what effect must it have then on a fancy & genius of the
however, still dissatisfied, was continuing his experiments, and in April 1790 a still finer copy was produced, which Wedgwood himself was willing to submit to the critical scrutiny of the world. It was sent to London, where fashionable society, admitted by ticket, crowded to see it. At the close of June it was taken abroad, by Wedgwood's second son and Byerley, and exhibited at the Hague, Berlin, Hanover, and Frankfort, winning everywhere unbounded eulogies. Sir Joshua Reynolds himself attested the fidelity of the copy. This example is justly first order?" Darwin's lines are full of his curious infelicity, and are not even easy to construe, but the poem enjoyed ten years of popularity, before it was killed by Canning's parody, "The Loves of the Triangles," and there is no reason to suppose that Wedgwood's literary taste was fine enough to be offended by its baroque violences.

"Gnomes! as you now dissect with hammers fine
The granite rock, the noduled flint calcine;
And pleased on Wedgwood ray your partial smile
A new Etruria decks Britannia's isle,
To call the pearly drops from Pity's eye
Or stay Despair's disanimating sigh.
Whether, O Friend of art! the gem you mould
Rich with new taste, with ancient virtue bold;
Form the poor fettered slave on bended knee,
From Britain's sons imploring to be free;
Or with fair Hope the brightening scenes improve
And cheer the dreary wastes at Sydney Cove;
Or bid Mortality rejoice and mourn
O'er the fine forms on Portland's mystic urn.
Here, by fallen columns and disjoined arcades,
On mouldering stones, beneath deciduous shades,
Sits Humankind in hieroglyphic state
Serious, and pondering on their changeful state;
While with inverted torch, and swimming eyes
Sinks the fair shade of Mortal Life, and dies."

The other side is interpreted somewhat differently than in my suggestion, but on the whole the interpretation is so much what commends itself to me that I insert it in addition to the following tribute of which Wedgwood was justly proud.
reckoned Wedgwood's masterpiece. And it makes rather for than against this praise that all his art and experience failed to produce another copy equally perfect. "I have tried five more since you left us," he writes to his son, "but not one near so good as that you have." The one flawless copy of the Portland vase resembles an original work of genius at least in owing something to incalculable circumstance, so that it remains unique and beyond imitation even by its creator.

"Whether, O Friend of Art! your gems derive
Fine forms from Greece, and fabled Gods revive;
Or bid from modern life the Portrait breathe,
And bind round Honour's brow the laurel wreath;
Buoyant shall sail, with Fame's historic page,
Each fair medallion o'er the wrecks of age;
Nor Time shall mar, nor Steel, nor Fire, nor Rust
Touch the hard polish of the immortal bust."

Wedgwood answers this encouraging mention in a letter conveying his willingness that some of his cameos, notably the well-known one of the negro, should be engraved in the illustrated edition of the poem and pays back his friend's eulogy in the glowing style of the day.

After expressing some doubt as to the right place for the kneeling negro, he goes on: "But I cheerfully resign him into the hands of the powerful magician, who can work wonders, who can liquefy the granite & still harder flint into the softest poetic numbers, & with the breath of his mouth waft their varied productions to the most distant ages. . . .

"You have been extremely happy in describing the particular excellences of the ancient Etruscan potters, whether your prophecies respecting the productions of modern Etruria be as true as your poetry is excellent it will take some time to discover. I need not say how proud I am of the very honourable mention you make of me & my works; you have furnished me with another & very powerful motive for future exertions. I will endeavour to save your credit as a prophet; as a poet you have taken ample care of yourself."

Whether Darwin, in spite of his encomiums, had much perception of the fine qualities either of the original or of the replica, may be questioned. When preparing to issue the 

"Loaves of the Plants" as a part of the complete Botanic Garden, in 1791, he had engravings of the vase prepared, and submitted them with evident complacency to Wedgwood. The latter, however, returned them with severe strictures upon the rudeness of the drawing (Wedgwood to Darwin, June 27, 1791).
CHAPTER VII

WEDGWOOD AND POLITICS—I.

The score of years—1775 to 1795—during which Wedgwood was important enough for us to take note of his political action was a time filled with striking and pregnant events. It included the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. In a special sense it may be said to open the modern world. Preceding events interest us as history; those which follow, from the beginning of the American War onwards, interest us as politics; we are continually in touch with the living problems of the present day. In the political world Josiah Wedgwood, energetic and public-spirited as he was, never became thoroughly at home. His life was full of interests such as no one willingly interrupts for the engrossing cares of politics; and he was never drawn towards these either by ambition or by taste. Yet he intervened with characteristic energy and undoubted effect in several political movements. He was in no sense a political thinker, and his attitude on different questions was determined in the main by impulse; hence he was often inconsistent, and his inconsistencies, unlike those of Burke, cannot be
traced to a single profound principle, differently applied. His strongest passion, bearing upon politics, was a hatred of oppression. But in industrial affairs oppression was liable to mean whatever interfered with the economic arrangements under which pottery and other manufactures had so vigorously thriven. Everywhere else Wedgwood appears as a warm champion of "liberty." Whether it were the persecution of a lonely heretic, the illegitimate taxation of thirteen colonies, the enslavement of an ancient kingdom, or the cruel sufferings of African slaves, his heart, his purse and his time were ready for such response to their appeal as could be given by a busy man, full of zeal for human welfare. On the other hand, we find him no less keen and active when it is a question of restraining workmen from selling their labour more profitably, or Ireland from competing in manufacture with England. Wedgwood was a thoroughly high-minded man, and as zealous as he was high-minded. Such zeal as his supplies momentum to political movement, and men readily forget that momentum is not guidance. No mistake is more dangerous in the political area, since it is one especially prevalent with the generous and the high-minded. The notion that the sail renders the rudder needless often ranges the wise on one side and the good on another, and prevents men who hate oppression with a perfect hatred from knowing what liberty means.

The word Liberty is still one of those most potent to stir our enthusiasm. The struggle for
liberty calls up our most inspiring memories, any supposed infringement of it our most unfailing resentment. All men desire liberty for themselves; most men desire it for their neighbours so far as their own is not curtailed—a legitimate and even righteous precaution against the danger of confusing Liberty with Privilege. Against this danger all history is a warning. In the ancient world Liberty was never conceived but as Privilege, and almost the same may be said of many great ages of the Christian world. The barons who extorted John’s signature to Magna Charta had as much idea of universal freedom as of the electric telegraph. To them the destruction of Privilege would have been the destruction of Order. It took their descendants many centuries to perceive that Privilege is like that first green shoot above the soil announcing a plant to which it has no resemblance; it must both emerge and wither before Liberty can grow. While Wedgwood was subscribing money for the Poles, or writing letters about the slave trade, he was doing his best to defend liberty; but if at the same time he had been called upon to defend his endeavours to make emigration a penal act in his workmen he would have been merely bewildered. He could only have urged that the prohibition was one for the men’s own good; the suspicion that a sincere desire for the good of others might be an ally of despotism never would have entered his mind.

This confusion was fortified by his own position as the head of a great business created by his own energy and skill. A large employer of
labour has, moreover, of necessity to study the case for government, and in some ways this was presented to Wedgwood in a light specially favourable to the class above his own. In an earlier chapter I have tried to show that he may not have seen the best of the working classes, and I believe he did see the best of the governing classes. The corruption and rapacity which render the political history of George III.'s reign a melancholy exhibition of the temptations of power would be invisible to a busy manufacturer, whose own business was not only honest through and through, but was controlled at every point by a demand for the best possible work. All his intercourse with the aristocracy was such as tended to call out the more amiable qualities of the class. He was generously treated, as we have seen, by men like the Dukes of Portland and Marlborough; and his own character, at once independent and naturally respectful, fitted him to take his position in the most distinguished company on easy terms. There is a legend of an interview with Queen Charlotte which well illustrates these traits, whatever be its value as history. On some occasion when he was exhibiting his wares to Her Majesty, it is said that some hesitation concerning etiquette among her ladies-in-waiting left her exposed to the rays of the sun, till Wedgwood took upon himself to step forward and draw down the blind. "You see, ladies," she addressed them good-humouredly, "that Mr. Wedgwood knows how to be a courtier." However little such experience may weigh with high-minded men, it does not
leave political views exactly where it found them.

Not that Wedgwood never encountered class prejudice—then far more formidable than it is to-day; but he usually triumphed over it with singular ease. William Eden, the first Lord Auckland, the envoy who negotiated the first commercial treaty with France, and whose interest it therefore was to gain all the information that a busy manufacturer had to give, was at first unwilling to make Wedgwood’s acquaintance. "I remember the time," he was later reminded by an old friend, the first Lord Sheffield (February 11, 1787), “when with great liveliness you wondered how I could find time to talk with them [the English manufacturers], that you could not, and with difficulty suffered Mr. Wedgwood to be introduced to you, while I collected and collated other friends.”¹ No partiality to Wedgwood occasioned the remark; for only a fortnight later we find Lord Sheffield speaking of him as “having managed so ill,” i.e. at the Chamber of Manufacturers, as to bring it, according to his anticipation, towards utter insignificance. It was merely that he recognised, with more discernment than Eden did, the growing importance of the industrial class. The correspondence presents us with an instructive specimen of the eighteenth-century attitude of the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie, and shows the “person of quality” as then having more

¹ See the Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland, edited by his son, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, i. 400. John Holroyd, Lord Sheffield, was the well-known friend and editor of Gibbon.
² Ibid. p. 404.
to give, by his mere notice, than he can be said to have now.

While varied social experiences thus tended to detach Wedgwood from the democratic ideal, and coloured, perhaps, the larger part of his everyday feelings, he gave his conscious adhesion to democracy on its extreme side. So far as he could be said to belong to any party, it was to that which first emerged into importance about a decade after the accession of George III., and is known to our time as the Radical party. Though its name is comparatively recent, its existence dates from the Wilkes-and-liberty riots of 1768, as Whiggism from the Revolution of eighty years earlier, and each party bore the characteristic traces of its origin. Whiggism was temperate, dignified and aristocratic; Radicalism was turbulent, aggressive and uncompromising. They were almost as unlike each other as either was to their common Tory antagonist, and when the shock of the French Revolution had rearranged the forces they divided the field between them.

The central principle of Radicalism, if we look at it through the eyes of Wedgwood, was contained in its demand for short Parliaments as a pledge of the control of the electors over the elected. In May 1780 he tells Bentley:

I rejoice to hear that the D. of Richmond & Ld Shelbourne are friends to annual parliaments, & wish most earnestly that the idea may be widely diffus’d & contended for.

Ten years later, in May 1790, he writes to his
namesake son in the latest political utterance we have from him:

Speaking politically, I believe you know my sentiments that so long as we have septennial parliaments, 'tis of little consequence who is chosen into them; they will generally, in like circumstances, so long as human nature continues the same, act as they have hitherto done. A real parliamentary reform is therefore what we most stand in need of; & for this I would willingly devote my time, the most precious thing I have to bestow, or any thing else by which I could serve so truly noble a cause.

You will say perhaps, that to accomplish this end, we sho[d] chuse independent members of parliament. Alas! It is too certain that this object never will be obtained from parliament in the first instance; so long as parliament remains on its present plan, all little partial struggles is beating the air, & wasting that time & strength which should be employed for better purposes, I mean, to promote a radical cure, by reducing the duration of parliaments to their original limits.

The multiplication of elections seems both a meagre and a doubtful experiment as a remedy for Parliamentary corruption, but it commended itself to many persons in that day; the motion was brought forward every year in the House of Commons by Alderman Sawbridge; it had one illustrious convert in Chatham and a strenuous opponent in Edmund Burke. Burke's admission that the frequency of Parliamentary election has "a tendency to increase the power and consideration of the electors" would have appeared to Wedgwood a surrender of the whole case for the opposition. The counterpoise which followed —"It has no sort of tendency to increase their
integrity and public spirit, unless an increase of power has an operation upon voters in elections that it has in no other situation in the world"—would be no stumbling-block to one who considered that the integrity and public spirit of the people might be left to take care of itself, all that was necessary being to secure the faithfulness of their agents. This view of the office of the Commons lies at the root of the demand for short Parliaments, and it is nowhere expressed more peremptorily than in the following letter, written apparently in reply to some expressions of misgiving on the part of Bentley:

May 20th, 1780.

What is the true Representation or Agency? Is it not that the person so chosen to represent you in any assembly should transact the business you so employ him in, in the way you would do it yourself? And though in general you trust to his integrity & good sense, or if you please, to his superior knowledge & ability in the execution of the trust you have reposed in him; yet if you think proper to give him your positive instructions upon any particular point—if after telling you his opinion you insist upon his compliance & choose to judge for yourself in this instance, the agent in such case is, in my opinion, to comply with his instructions. The instructed member has only to say "It is no matter what my private sentiments may be upon this bill. My constituents who sent me here to transact their business & not my own, though they in general leave me at liberty to judge of their interests & act accordingly, they have in this instance chosen to think for themselves & have given me full instructions how I am to act as their agent and representative [he seems to have thought the words synonymous] & in this character I give my vote against this bill." To talk of a representative complying with
every reasonable wish of his constituents is saying nothing for who is to judge of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the wish?

The length to which consistent upholders of this view were prepared to carry it is shown in the declaration of Alderman Beckford that he should feel no scruple in voting against his judgment at the bidding of his constituents. "He was not going to set his opinion against that of 6000 of his fellow citizens."

To judge aright of such a theory of government we must again and again remind ourselves of the weighty saying of Burke—that the task of the statesman is to consider not what dangers are most eligible, but what dangers are most imminent. With this reflection the reader should remember that for more than a generation after his accession George III. was his own Prime Minister. The office as we understand it did not yet exist. It was held in dependence not, as it is now, on the favour of the electorate, but on that of the King, and was thus not a check upon, but an additional buttress to, his prerogative. Many other circumstances concurred: the final disappearance of the rival dynasty; the sincere and hearty declaration of the young monarch that he "gloried in the name of Briton"; his own spotless private character; above all the growth of a Tory reaction bent upon restoring to the monarchy some of the powers of which the Whig revolution had deprived it—all these contributed to encourage his ideal of a patriot king and to facilitate its realisation. For those who felt this a danger it became at once the
danger, and one against which short parliaments afforded an obvious and natural remedy. An election, with all its evils, is after all a national act; while it lasts every elector is a member of Parliament. To render such opportunities frequent would prevent an abuse which, in the early maturity of Josiah Wedgwood, had been impressed on the public mind by a unique experience—the six years’ disfranchisement of an important constituency as a penalty for choosing a member personally distasteful to the King. No statistics exhibiting the relative proportion of represented and unrepresented England, impressive as they are, could have moved the heart of the people so effectively as the fact that Middlesex had for six years to accept Colonel Luttrell with his 296 votes as its representative, against John Wilkes with his 1143.

The issue, in the case of Wilkes, is a little confused for the readers of our day by the character of the popular hero. An unscrupulous profligate who robbed and tried to starve a blameless wife while he squandered her money in debauchery would have little chance now with an English constituency; but such a character was regarded by the contemporaries of Wilkes with different eyes, and the fact that a King was interfering with a Parliament threw every other consideration into the shade. From April 29, 1763, when the famous No. 45 of his paper, the North Briton, declared that George III. had given “the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and the most unjustifiable public declarations,” there was, for eleven years,
war between the two men. The inevitable result of such a relation between a King and a subject was that Wilkes appeared as the victim of arbitrary power, and made as it were a burning-glass for popular indignation. The verdict finally given against his committal to the Tower was greeted with enthusiastic applause within Westminster Hall itself as well as outside. Four times in little more than a year he was elected for Middlesex, the popular will being in each case defeated by the royal resentment, and a constituency, for a whole Parliament, was not only disfranchised, but misrepresented. Popular wrath found expression in riots, and the so-called "massacre of St. George's Fields" was the culminating incident in that warfare which left Wilkes the fame of a martyr and the gains of a successful gambler. The result may be summed up in Franklin's epigram—that if John Wilkes had had a good character, or King George a bad one, the two men might have changed places.

Wedgwood, though a staunch adherent to the Radical creed, was, as Wilkes said of himself, "no Wilkite." It is doubtful whether his want of sympathy arose from any strong moral feeling. Perhaps the indifference expressed in the next letter was merely the result of a quality difficult to name, but which seems to me to have characterised my ancestor through life—a certain shrinking from all that was showy or dramatic or even eminent. No great man, as such, ever attracted him; we find in his letters slighting references to three of the greatest of his contemporaries—Burke, Chatham, and Washington;
and the mere brilliance of a popular demagogue was little likely to appeal to his sober and business-like mind. He was in London during the exciting weeks of March 1768 when Wilkes unsuccessfully contested the City, and though he wrote frequently to Bentley to give him the latest news of the progress of the election, his letters have the tone rather of an amused spectator than of a keenly interested partisan, and his comment on the mob's feeling for their hero expresses mere contempt.

March 16, 1768.

I have spent this afternoon in the City and cannot go to bed with a good conscience without acquainting my good friend with what has been done there to-day at the hustings. Alderman Beckford open'd the business with a very handsome speech; & his example was followed by the rest of the Candidates which was attended with much clapping, huzzaing, hissing, &c. Mr. Wilks, they say, made an excellent speech, but was interrupted with the acclamations of the People for many minutes together, & when they were desir'd so many of them as chose Mr. Wilks to represent them in Parliam't, to hold up their hands, hats, caps & wigs were off in a moment & waving in the air for their favourite Wilks & Liberty, for 't seems they are tagg'd together, like Hobgoblins & darkness, & nothing I believe but making this popular Gent'n a Lord will ever part them asunder.

So superficial indeed is his interest that he could write to Bentley after the election:

At the close of the Poll my attention was so much occupied by other objects that I did not think scarcely at all about Electioneering.

The separation between Wilkes and Liberty was effected at a lower rate than that here
anticipated. The mere addition of the letters M.P. was sufficient. While Wilkes the exile and martyr brought about a revolution in Parliamentary procedure, opening the door to the reporter and thus giving the electorate the right of entry within the walls of Parliament itself, Wilkes, the member for Middlesex, could not from his place in Parliament bring to a division the Reform Bill which he was the first prominent politician to introduce, and on no occasion do we find a speech from him there produce any effect whatever. His social brilliancy had no reflection in his political career, and if the King had been alive to his true policy none would have been more eager to see Wilkes in Parliament. But as the martyr vanished the citizen emerged. When next history takes note of him, it is as the courageous defender of order in the Gordon riots, a character in which the Wilkes of 1768 would hardly know himself. It needed moral as well as physical courage to take the part he then did, and it is with satisfaction that we remember in bidding him farewell that he failed in the one as little as the other.

Wilkes's influence survived in the various societies started at this time with a political basis. The earliest of these, that of the supporters of the Bill of Rights, was a gathering of his admirers brought together, in the first place, by their belief "that the man who suffers for the public good should be supported by the public." Its importance was established by the animosity of Burke, awake to the signs perceptible to himself alone of a coming earthquake. To him the
"Bill of Rights people" were "a rotten subdivision of a faction among ourselves who have done us infinite mischief by the violence, rashness, and even wickedness of their measures." The society may in some sense be considered the parent stock of others, over one of which we must linger awhile, for among the original members of the "Society for the Spread of Constitutional Information" we find the name of Thomas Bentley.

It was a body of some importance in its own day, numbering in its ranks three Dukes, and several men distinguished in the intellectual or political world. Sheridan, Sir William Jones, Dr. Price, Benjamin Smith, member for Norwich, and Granville Sharpe, deliverer of the slave, all belonged to it. A minimum guinea subscription, ensuring a certain well-to-do value in every member, provided a respectable financial basis. The society was in every sense of the word highly respectable, and there is no doubt that its members did good work for a time. Its title was, however, misleading. Its aims were not in any accurate sense conservative. The "Constitution" about which it sought to spread information had no actual existence; it had existed once, in Anglo-Saxon days, when it reflected with precision "the genius of the English people." But the Norman Conquest had brought a crowd of foreigners, whose innovations, contrary to the spirit of that constitution, had overlaid and obscured it. The aim of the society was thus to lead England back to the constitutional Eden from which she
had declined through seven centuries of continuous "Fall." They were Radical Reformers who, like Rousseau, conceived their reform as a restoration of the conditions of a primeval age, which they imagined with the same lack of historical sense. In their actual proposals they anticipated the Chartists.

Thomas Bentley was, as has been said, one of the founders of the society, and we recognise in its aims readily enough the temper of the dauntless merchant who had battled for liberty and the rights of men in Liverpool. He enjoyed intimate intercourse with many of the members, and Wedgwood, in remote Staffordshire, occasionally allowed himself a passing regret that he was himself cut off from these opportunities. "I do not envy you these fine sights," he writes apropos of an exhibition, "so much as I do the frequent conversations you enjoy with the first, the ablest friends of our constitutions and liberties, your Days & your Jebbs etc. I must content myself with seeing them in print where I can get at them." He goes on to mention with high appreciation a pamphlet by another member, Major Cartwright, which he has just read.

It may be permissible to linger for a moment over these half-forgotten prophets of Radicalism half a century before its day. They were men of rare and remarkable personality; and the story of their lives preserves in its faded details, in the not seldom eccentric traits, not a little of the delightful savour of eighteenth-century humanity.
John Cartwright (1740–1824) came in later life to be regarded as a man of one idea, with the associations of tedium which attach to that character. Yet his early life presents a career of large and various activity. To his own generation he was known as naval officer, American explorer, major in a militia regiment, and country gentleman; and in all these capacities, as in every relation of life, he gave an example of high-minded and disinterested energy. A list of his generous and conscientious actions would appear to outline the career of some typical hero of old-fashioned fiction. A single anecdote indicates the spirit of his life. In a discussion on the character of a person recently killed in a duel, he was reminded that the dead man had made an untrue and unprompted attack on his own character. "I had forgotten the circumstance," was his reply. Eminent goodness gives weight to zeal, even when it is not united with a high degree of intelligence. Perhaps, indeed, such optimism as led Major Cartwright to speak of Parliamentary Reform as "not only a great but also an easy work" is an advantage to a pioneer.

1 See Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright, edited by his niece and adopted daughter, F. D. Cartwright. She writes with an affection which, if she had let it take its natural course of intimate revelation, would have made up for the literary poverty confessed in her modest introduction. A better known niece was the "Mrs. Markham" whose History of England was familiar to a previous generation.

2 Perhaps the most striking instance of conscientious feeling was his refusal, in 1777, to join the service of his former commander, Lord Howe, in America, against the liberties of the United States, and his consequent surrender of all hope of promotion in a profession to which he was warmly attached.

3 In a letter to Lord Shelburne of February 27, 1777 (Life, vol. i. p. 108).
In his later life he suffered a certain amount of State prosecution, and he may be fairly awarded the rare tribute of never having exaggerated its efficacy. Among the workers for Parliamentary Reform his name should never be forgotten; he advocated strenuously the points demanded, half a century later, by the Chartists. It was the pamphlet in which he set forth these principles—"The People's Barrier"—that Wedgwood, read, as has been seen, with warm approval. The remainder of the letter is of interest as a lively expression of his political notions.

ETURIA, 10th May 1780.

I cannot help giving this little book the preference by much to anything I have read upon the subject for amplitude, solidity, clearness, & that becoming spirit which an honest & intelligent man must feel, & I think ought to express, in the investigations, and display of the various subjects. I hope it will have a proper, I am persuad ed it will have considerable effect, & if you should see the author pray thank him for me for the edification I have recieved from his labors. I wish it was divided, & for the sake of our hasty summer readers a little shorten'd; its usefullness would certainly be extended by that means, & the disfranchis'd part of the nation might by one or two 2d pamphlets be made to understand what are their rights as men, & the best methods of obtaining them.

Dr. John Jebb (1736–1786), Cartwright's colleague and intimate friend, was his equal in

1 "The People's Barrier against undue Influence and Corruption, or the Commons' House of Parliament according to the Constitution" (April 1780). In this pamphlet Cartwright advocates annual Parliaments, equal representation, universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and payment of members of Parliament. In July of the same year the society published a short summary of the pamphlet by Capell Lofft.
character and his superior in intellect. He was a member of a family rich in varied distinction, which has continued to our own times, and including at least four memorable men within little more than a century: the two Sir Richard Jebbs, the famous eighteenth-century physician and the brilliant nineteenth-century scholar; and the two John Jebbs, one the Bishop of Limerick, a name dear to all lovers of liberal High Churchmanship, the other the subject of this notice. A Second Wrangler, and Fellow of the Royal Society, his best record is on the ground furthest from science; he took orders in the Church of England, and when the spirit of enquiry forced him to quit its fold he carried into another profession his worship of Christ the Healer. "For inspiring the rising generation to act worthily and greatly," wrote Major Cartwright, "I would propose to them the god-like example of John Jebb." The expression sounds extravagant, but we may place beside it a temperate and cautious tribute, which, under the circumstances, means almost as much. "High as Mr. Paley afterwards stood in the public estimation," says Paley's dry and unenthusiastic biographer, writing of the years when Jebb was still an Oxford tutor, "it is no small honour, even to him, to be recorded as the friend and associate of Mr. Jebb."

The other name mentioned by Wedgwood is known to our age only as the author of a book which no longer finds readers, but which once found so many that his right to remembrance is assured thereby. The short life of Thomas Day
(1748–1789), author of *Sandford and Merton*, touches that of well-known contemporaries at several points, some of them unfortunate for his fame, the absurd libels of Miss Seward from their very extravagance being better remembered than the sober tribute of Dr. Edgeworth. Day, he tells us, was the most virtuous person he had ever known. He certainly was one of the most humane; he paid with his life for the belief that horses should be broken in by kindness, and was quite as incapable of torturing a child as Miss Seward herself. His actions were often eccentric and sometimes foolish, but he was himself the only sufferer from them. He settled an annuity on a step-father who had treated him unkindly, and was deterred, for a time, from marriage with an attractive young woman of family and fashion by the fact of her fortune, which was, at his request, placed beyond his own control.¹

The cause of Parliamentary Reform, which Wedgwood had so deeply at heart, drew support from many sources; and it was in the end to owe a good deal more to the rude practical argument of the people’s strength, shown in mass meetings and riots, than to all the information “spread” by the amiable members of the Constitutional Society. Some foretaste of that argument, applied to an economic issue, was given by the machinery riots of 1779. These outbreaks of lawlessness were widely regarded with a lenience surprising in an age accustomed to punish the slightest breach of law with savage severity. It

¹ She adopted his own ascetic ideal of life and only survived him by two years.
was indeed more dangerous at this time for a mother to steal a loaf from a baker's shop for her starving children than for a strong man to join a mob in destroying property worth thousands of pounds. The account given by Wedgwood of the machine-breaking outrages of 1779 implies an amount of confidence on the part of the mutinous mobs, and of half-hearted sympathy on the part of such men as Wedgwood himself, which seem to belong rather to the democratic development of the present day than to the harsh and arbitrary rule of the eighteenth century.

In 1775 Richard Arkwright had taken out a patent for the invention which has revolutionised the industry of the north of England, covering the country with factories, and banishing the spinning-wheel from numberless homes. The hungry, toiling crowds who went about destroying the machinery must have felt no more guilty in smashing the spinning-frames which had thrown them out of work than if the machines had been so many noxious animals eating up their children's bread. In a master of workmen we should have expected a very different attitude toward the destruction of property, and of property which it was in the interest of the destroyers themselves to preserve. The following extracts from Wedgwood's letters to Bentley in 1779 are from this point of view very instructive, and need no introduction.

"In our way to this place," he writes from Bolton on October 8, 1779, "we met several hundred people in the road & upon enquiring of one of them the occasion of their being together in so great a number, he told me
they had been destroying some engines, & meant to serve them all so through the country. Accordingly they have advice here to-day that they must expect a visit tomorrow, the workmen in the neighbourhood having muster'd up a considerable number of arms, & are casting bullets & providing ammunition for the assault.

"Many of the workmen having been turned off lately owing to a want of demand for their goods at foreign markets has furnish'd them with an excuse for these violent measures."

ETRURIA, 9th Oct 1779.

We met the mob on Saturday, but I apprehend what we saw were not the main body, for on the same day in the afternoon a capital engine, or mill, in the manner of Arkrites, & in which he is a partner, was attacked, but the owner with the assistance of a few neighbours repulsed the enemy. Two of the mob were shot dead upon the spot, one drown'd & several wounded. The mob had no fire arms & did not expect so warm a reception. They were greatly exasperated & vowed revenge: accordingly they spent all Sunday & Monday in collecting fire arms & ammunition, & melting their pewter dishes into bullets. They were now join'd by the D. of Bridgewaters colliers & others, to the number, we were told, of eight thousand, & march'd by beat of drum, & with colours flying to the mill where they met with a repulse on Saturday. They found S't Rd Clayton guarding the place with 50 Invalids armed, but this handful were by no means a match for enraged thousands; they (the invalids) therefore contented themselves with looking on, whilst the mob completely destroyed a set of mills valued at £10,000. On Tuesday we heard their drum at about two miles distance from Bolton a little before we left the place, & their profess'd design was to take Bolton, Manchester & Stockport in their way to Crumford, & to destroy all the engines, not only in these places, but throughout all England.

1 An excellent phonetic version of "Arkwright's."
Etruria, 13th Oct 1779.

The mob enter'd Bolton on Tuesday the 5th when we had left it not more than an hour. They contented themselves with breaking the windows & destroying the machinery of the first mill they attacked, but the next, the machinery being taken away, they pulled down the building & broke the mill wheel to pieces. They next proceeded to Mr. Keys of the Folds, & destroy'd his machine, & water wheel & then went to work with the lesser machines, all above so many spindles; I think 24—Jack says things are quiet now, & that 100 of the Yorkshire militia are come to defend them. I hope the delusion is ended & that the country may be in peace again.

Etruria, 16th Oct 1779.

I hear nothing farther of the Lancashire rioters only some soldiers are sent to oppose them with orders not to fire over the poor fellows heads but right amongst them, & to do all the execution they can the first fire, by way of intimidating them at once. This may be right for aught I know & cause the least bloodshed in the end; but it is dreadfull, & I hope there will be no occasion for the military proceeding to such extremitys. I do not like to have the soldiery familiars'd to spilling the blood of their countrymen & fellow citizens.

Wedgwood's protest would have been echoed by many contemporaries not at all inclined to deny the duty of government to repress disorder by force. Eight months later London was given up to a raging mob because those who had the power of resisting and preventing crime doubted if by common law they had the right. The amazing contrast between the harshness shown towards a poor woman, robbed of her husband by the press-gang, and the timid inaction before a mob, whose only grievance was that it was
restrained from unjust violence, points to a vague sense that the mob was a part of the vast unrepresented majority of the English people, and might to some degree express the national will. There was an uneasy suspicion that men for whom room was not found on political ground must not be shot down for asserting their claims in the only way that was open to them. The tumult of mob violence, while unduly overawing ordinary persons, forced upon thinkers the necessity of a measure of Parliamentary Reform if Parliamentary government was to become representative in fact as well as in name.

From these various influences emerged the fundamental conviction that the one need of England was a true representation. A brave and honest member could declare in 1782 that "Parliament might as truly be called the representative of France as of England." ¹ The exaggeration rather testified to Sir George Savile's modesty than impaired the value of his epigram, he being himself the representative of the largest English constituency, and a representative of whom any constituency might be proud. Its

¹ These words are from Sir George Savile's speech on Pitt's motion for Reform on May 7, 1782, which was lost by twenty votes. Fox voted for the motion. Pitt repeated it a year later, and was again defeated.

Sir George Savile, 8th baronet, of Rufford in Northamptonshire, was Wilberforce's predecessor as member for Yorkshire from 1759 to 1788, and in many respects as much a predecessor in spirit as in outward function. He was described by Burke as "a true genius . . . illumined with a peculiar and original cast of imagination," and by Walpole as one "whose soul was candid, having none of the acrimony or vengeance of party." His house was burnt and plundered by the rioters of 1780 for his crime of having pleaded the cause of the Catholics, as he had previously done that of the Protestant Dissenters; he urged the abolition of the press-gang, and was the impartial enemy of all injustice.
substantial truth was brought home to men’s minds by facts more telling than epigrams.¹

In spite of all these various and potent expressions of the nation’s desire for reform, that cause itself made little visible progress in the life-time of Wedgwood, and several years before that event the faint beginnings were crushed by the first outburst of the French Revolution. The course of public events earlier in the reign did not tend that way. A great war begun with the full sanction of popular feeling, and ending in disappointment and despair secretly felt by large numbers to be deserved, if it did not slacken reforming zeal, certainly narrowed its scope. Wedgwood’s sympathies remained steadfast with the Americans, but it was under the impression that theirs was the weaker side. While Horace Walpole was assuring Sir Horace Mann that “the Americans can find a troop as easily as we a trooper,” Wedgwood was writing to his partner (January 5, 1775): “All the world are with the Ministers and against the poor Americans.” The discovery of how little the approval of “all the world” availed against them seems to have slackened his interest in the struggle; his allusions to it are scanty. Wesley’s temperate statement

¹ The following account of an election to Sir James Lowther’s nomination borough of Appleby is as typical as it is entertaining. “I was unanimously elected by one Elector,” says Sir Philip Francis, member for Appleby, in 1802, “to represent this ancient borough in Parliament . . . there was no other Candidate, no Opposition, no Poll demanded, scrutiny or petition. So I had nothing to do but to thank the said Elector for the Unanimous Voice with which I was chosen . . . . On Friday morning I shall quit this triumphant Scene with flying Colours and a noble Determination not to see it again in less than seven years.”
of the Government arguments ¹ wins from him the grudging concession (November 4, 1775) that "Westley is not a bad Cats Paw & they seem determined to use him to their best advantage." He asks his partner for any answers to Wesley's pamphlet, but so little does the subject attract him that an eventful year passes without further reference to it, and in a letter to the Rev. Philip Holland, November 6, 1776, the taking of New York by Sir William Howe is commemorated only in his satisfaction that he does not "hear of any abuse being committed [at home] upon the Houses or Persons of those who were not quite in union with the feelings of the Mobility" in their demonstrations of joy on this delusive success. On the other hand, when in the summer of 1777 Bentley, a decided adherent of "the provincials," as the Americans were called in England, sent him a bronze head of Washington, suggesting that it should be used for one of their medallions, Wedgwood demurred. "It would be doing no service to the cause of Liberty in general," he cautiously urges, "at least so it seems to me, & might hurt us very much individually. Nay the personage is himself more absolute than any Despot in Europe, how can he then be celebrated, in such circumstances as the Patron of Liberty?" (July 19, 1777). It was not an unnatural suspicion at that time even to men who followed American affairs more closely than Wedgwood did. The sentence quoted has indeed an odd resemblance—odd because manifestly accidental—to a speech delivered in Congress by

¹ "Calm Address to the Americans."
an ardent Republican five months before this letter was written: "I have been distressed," said John Adams, on February 19, 1777, in response to a proposal that Washington should be allowed the nomination of general officers, "to see some of our members disposed to worship an image which their own hands have molten. I speak of the superstitious veneration which is paid to General Washington."

Wedgwood's next communications on the subject of the war, recording the general reaction from thoughtless enthusiasm to a weary longing for peace at any price, show him occupied mainly with the needs of sufferers.

"The general idea here," he writes on December 20, "is a federal union with America if no better terms can be had, but an end to the war at almost any rate. . . . You may subscribe £10 or £20 or what you please for me towards alleviating the miseries of the poor Captives, under the signature of A.B.C. or what you please. Gratitude to their countrymen for their humanity to G. Burgoine & his army is no small motive for my mite," they having been permitted, when their case was quite hopeless, to march out of their camp at Saratoga with all the honours of war, and thus save needless bloodshed. Wedgwood's caution in withholding his name is somewhat surprising, for the eloquence of Burke and Charles Fox, and above all that of Chatham—now just emerging from his mysterious seclusion—led men of every political creed to join the chorus of reprobation against Lord North. A little later we learn that "some of the most violent Tories here abuse him most heartily & kindly offer me their assistance
in that line to any extent I please. D—n him, they say, could he not resign like a man without exposing himself so shabbily, & meanly filching Lord Chatham’s plan in order to continue himself in place under the next administration. . . . I agree with my dear friend entirely & heartily,” this letter (March 8, 1778) informs Bentley, “that somebody should be made to say distinctly what has been the object of this most wicked & preposterous war with our brethren & best friends.” No similar expression is to be found elsewhere in his letters, which are remarkable for their moderation—even to a fault; but this one, it should be remembered, is a reply to Bentley. He soon takes refuge from the oppressive thought in one of those sallies of which even serious minds sometimes avail themselves to “interpose a little ease” in the midst of grave anxieties. “How could you frighten me so?” he writes to his friend on March 19. “I thought nothing less than some shelves, or perhaps a whole floor of vases & crooks had given way . . . till reading a little further I found it was only the nation was likely to founder in a French war.” Yet the jest would scarcely have occurred to one who fully grasped the momentous nature of the crisis.

Nor does his serious language indicate any overmastering concern. He was prepared in face of the danger to act as an Englishman, but, as the following extract (July 11, 1777) shows, with only half a heart:

If France should declare herself openly an ally &c. &c. I am from that moment an enemy to both, & the
case being very probable, I would not bring myself into so whimsical a situation as you may easily conceive, by throwing these circumstances together a little in your mind, I might add, that as the two Powers may be said to act really as Allies against us, though for political reasons without the form of a public declaration, the event of this conceal'd warfare may be more fatal to us than an open rupture, & I may, as a subject of the British Empire, declare myself an enemy to all its enemies & their Allies though I may curse most bitterly those who have brought us into the dilemma of calling those our enemies, who were, & might have continued to be, our best friends.

Even Chatham's last public appeal, "Let us make one more effort and if we must fall let us fall like men"—words uttered "with the throttling hands of death at strife," and listened to in a silence "in which, if any one had dropped a handkerchief, the sound would have been heard" ¹—touched no chord in his mind. His comment is almost a sneer.

Poor Lord Chatham! How are the mighty fallen! His body & mind seem to keep pace with each other. It was almost a pity to call him into life again he made his exit so much in his own way. He certainly will never again die so much to his own satisfaction.

Wedgwood meant, apparently, that only a mind in its decay could entertain the resolve of encountering, when more than doubled, a resistance pronounced unassailable alone. His opinion is sanctioned by no less an authority than Macaulay, yet some perhaps will feel, with a less distinguished

¹ Seward's Anecdotes.
historian¹ that the words commemorate not the weakness of the body but the strength of the soul. With Chatham at the helm the war might have taken a new turn: we should have had no more heartless reluctant fighting;² we might have had no more surrenders; we might have concluded the war without deserting the Loyalists.

The situation steadily grew more critical, and Wedgwood slowly awakened to its urgency. When, in the summer of 1779, Spain was dragged into the alliance with France to which the Family Compact bound her, and England was confronted by a fleet greater than her own, while her land forces were all wanted in America, he still seems inadequately alive to perils which threw English society at large, as its annals attest, into profound alarm. As early as the 10th of July, the Gazette issued a proclamation reporting a large embarkation from Havre, and foreboding a French landing in England. The popular imagination took fire. Portsmouth and Plymouth were to be destroyed; to some the awful vision of London in flames was a conceivable reality. The Prime Minister was said to have declared, at a dinner party in the beginning of August, that he expected the French in a week.

¹ Mr. Massey, who considers that Chatham's accession to power might have saved the honour, even though it could not have continued the dominion, of England. I cannot cite this writer without adding that, prejudiced and unjust as he often is, he seems to me the most interesting historian of George III.

² "More than one of his (Howe's) proceedings," says John A. Doyle, Fellow of All Souls, Oxon, in the Cambridge Modern History, vll. 211, "can hardly be explained except on the theory that he dreaded a decisive victory."
An incident which shortly ensued must have seemed strikingly to confirm these words in the minds of those who heard them. A niece of the noble host, Lord Hertford, at whose table they were spoken, was taken prisoner between Dover and Ostend by a French privateer, and though she was treated with chivalrous respect and soon set at liberty, we may be sure that the peril of a Mrs. Damer thrilled the heart of London society. Wedgwood turned from the possibility of a French invasion almost as if his withholding attention would render it less probable. Every one has known the impulse, but few show so much self-knowledge in confessing it as Wedgwood does in the following response to a pessimistic letter from his partner.

_Etruria,_  
20th June 1779.

I have now your favor of the 17th before me with so tremendous a state of affairs & situation of poor old England that I do not care to read it again. I find a wonderfull propensity, with the Ostridge, & our wise governors, to thrust my head into a bush, & seeing no danger, believe there is none. However, I must at present leave it to those who have brought the nation into this scrape, to help her out again, & proceed to matters which are more within my reach. If the nation is ruin'd as it certainly must be when our friend Sparrow begins to acknowledge it, what are we to do with Tresizes clay? Must we continue to make pots? To marry, & be given in marriage to the very moment of our sinking all together? Well be it so then, & proceed we to treat about the clay as if nothing at all was amiss.

That one of the precious sheets which Wedgwood was in the habit of sewing up with his own hands should be laid aside after a first reluctant
perusal, implies a longing for that mental silence on a particular subject which is perhaps the most dangerous but also one of the most useful remedies in the pharmacopoeia of mental pathology; and Wedgwood's communication to his friend seems to justify its use. That his attitude, however, was by no means a rigid or reactionary one is proved by an account from his pen of a public meeting held with a view to national defence on August 6, 1779. So careful and elaborate a report, made from memory alone, testifies not only to a very unusual power of attention and recollection, but also to a certain impartiality of judgment which, in persons of his eager temperament, is still more rare.

The meeting was held at Stafford, and though not large, its importance may be gathered from the fact that before it dispersed, its members had subscribed nearly £4000 as a free offering towards the defence of their country. The absence from the subscription list of a name so prominent as Wedgwood's will not suggest, to any one who has read his report, that he was indifferent to its object; it was due to deliberate decision, and implied, in a man of his well-known wealth, considerable moral courage. The following letter to Bentley shows what a struggle it cost him to refuse a contribution, called for in the name of national defence, which might be used in prolonging what he thought a wicked war.

"I wish much," he tells Bentley, "to know your opinion of subscribing at all in the present crisis, & while the present ministry [Lord North's] are to direct the forces raised by such subscriptions. I have read all the
common arguments in the newspapers against subscribing, but am not at present fully convinced by them that it is better to fall a prey to a foreign enemy, rather than defend ourselves under the present ministry. Methinks I would defend the land of my nativity, my family & friends against a foreign foe, where conquest & slavery were inseperable, under any leaders.—The best I could get for the moment, & wait for better times to displace an obnoxious minister, & settle domestic affairs rather than rigidly say, I will be sav'd in my own way, & by the people of my own choice or perish, & perish my country with me. If subscribing would certainly rivet the present ministry in their places, & non-subscribing would as certainly throw them over, the nation at large being in no hazard at the same time from a foreign foe, I should not hesitate a moment what to do—but none of these propositions seem clear to me; & as my personal services would be too lame to offer, I think my purse ought not to be kept back when the state stands in real need of such assistance."

But in fact it was kept back. The sense of immediate danger slackened for the moment, and his distrust of the Prime Minister stayed Wedgwood's hand.

"I fancy," he writes a few days later (18 August 1779), "the idea of an immediate invasion is pretty well subsided & as my idea of subscribing goes no farther at present than to enable us to defend ourselves on our own terra firma, I shall keep back my free-will offerings 'till measures are pursued more agreeable to my political creed."

On the following day, August 19, he writes:

We have no fears of an invasion amongst us here whilst Sir Chas [Hardy] prudently keeps out of the way of danger, & his fleet is in safety.
The carefulness of an Admiral to keep out of danger seems an odd reason for a sense of security, and Wedgwood does not lean on it very heavily.

"I believe the best thing we can do now," the letter concludes, "is to get better men at the helm, if such a thing was practicable, ready to call forth, & direct the force of the state to its proper object in the time of imminent danger, which probably may be at no great distance."

Less than five days, apparently, for on August 23 he is almost afraid to open a letter from his nephew, Tom Byerley:

... as I cannot see why a detachment from the French fleet should not immediately destroy the dock & stores at Plymouth. They can spare ships enough for the purpose, & have strength sufficient in the fleet to guard, & protect them in that & any other enterprise they may be tempted, from our defenceless situation, to undertake.

A fortnight later he quotes a corroborative account from a correspondent, which he cannot have copied without emotion.

"I had a letter from Mr. Soper of St Columb," he writes on Sep. 10th, "who had it seems an opportunity of counting & comparing the combined & British fleets as they saw them both at the same time on Tuesday & Wednesday sevennt. Ours past Falmouth on Tuesday stretching to the eastward with crowded sails, & in 6 hours afterwards the combined fleet appeared in pursuit, but in a close connected body, & consisted of 28 French & 30 Spanish. Instead of marines the Doctor says they have regulars, & fine fellows, but the sailors are miserable. Our fleet was 42 in number, & had been two days at short allowance of water."

What a unique moment was that in the life
of "Mr. Soper of St. Columb!" Forty ships of
the line crowded with canvas dappling those
blue waters was a vision of beauty such as in
these days of ironclads will never be seen again.
But small the admiration the gazer could bestow
on it; those pearly sails were swept towards the
East, and the foe was in their rear. How
anxiously must his telescope have been turned
westward! For six hours no stately ship entered
its field of vision, but then once again the blue
was alive with shipping, and the combined
Bourbon fleets, in close array, passed before the
anxious eyes of the watcher, near enough for him
to count them all. The mariners of England, if
they had sunk their own number of the enemy's
ships, would still have had sixteen sail to
encounter. The peril was to some extent ill-
usory; the excess was inadequate for invasion
and the ships were ill-manned. The threatening
navies retired, and English men and women
could breathe once more. What was called a
naval victory in America came in to strengthen
and stimulate the general sense of relief.

"I thank you," Wedgwood writes to Bentley on
September 16, 1779, "for your early intelligence of our
success in destroying the American shipping. If this
is the road to peace I rejoice we have found it & wish
it may lead to that desirable event."

Walpole took a truer view of the incident.
"Flying from d'Orvilliers, beaten by d'Estaing,
& comforted by gathering a wreath of sea-weeds
at Penobscot," he exclaims to Lady Ossory, on
September 24:
How low is a nation sunk when its understanding may be so insulted! Whenever the King of Prussia was beaten he said he was beaten; he never sang Te Deum for putting to flight a handful of Hussars.

It is interesting to remark the unexpected rapprochement of the two letter-writers. Wedgwood's usual tone is one of cheery optimism, Walpole's of cynical despondency; but at this crisis the latter feeling is almost equally characteristic of both. It was deepened at this moment by a circumstance which touched the potter almost as nearly as the connoisseur—the sale of Sir Robert Walpole's fine collection to the Empress Catherine by his worthless nephew, the second Lord Orford.

"I had seen," Wedgwood writes on September 18th, "in the public prints, & lamented the approaching fate of the Houghton collection of paintings; but that so fine a collection of marbles was taking its flight after them, was new to me, & doubly mortifying. I hope there are casts, or copies of the principal pieces to be left behind, with which we must console ourselves in the best manner we are able. Everything shews we have past our meridian, & we have only to pray that our decline may be gentle, & free from those sudden shocks which tear up empires by the roots, & make the most dreadful havock amongst the wretched inhabitants. Russia is sacking our palaces & museums, France & Spain are conquering our outposts, & braving us to our very doors at home. Holland is trifling with our remonstrances. The petty princes of Germany are filling their pockets at our expence, & all Europe laughing at our folly, & exulting at our downfall; for we have certainly behaved with too much haughtiness, inhumanity & injustice in our hour of insolence to merit, or expect the pity of any of our neighbours."
A year later (October 12, 1780), he writes, in an account of a social gathering: "We closed with a memory in full chorus called Rule Britannia." And on this note of unqualified pessimism Wedgwood’s concern with politics, in the larger sense of the term, never very active, virtually ends. The death of Bentley, a few weeks later, opened a new phase of his career, in which he is found labouring, with far more good-will and immensely greater effect, in the political interests of his craft.
CHAPTER VIII

WEDGWOOD AND POLITICS—II.

1780–1795

The death of Bentley, in December 1780, marked an epoch in Wedgwood’s public no less than in his private life. The loss of his friend contributed directly to the decline of his larger political interest, both by throwing on him an added burden of business cares, and by removing the influence of a mind of wider outlook and more unqualified public spirit, than his own. But other causes concurred. The continual expansion of his business made the claims of every day more and more absorbing; and his labours for the new Chamber of Commerce, quasi-political as they were, tended to withdraw his attention from political issues with which he was less nearly concerned. His political creed itself proved, under the conditions of the day, a sort of blind alley, leading nowhere, and made it excusable to beat time. Reform he believed to be hopeless without annual parliaments; and he had decided, as we know, to take no part in politics until the obstacle was removed. In the field of industry and commerce, on the other
hand, public action was full of possibilities; and precisely in the coming decade these were largely to preoccupy the Government.

Of his own public work in this field he had already lived to see some very definite fruits. The effect of improved communication had answered all his expectations; his own trade had extended so as to include almost every part of the civilised world; and the pottery trade in England generally had benefited by the stimulus thus given.

The changed scope of Wedgwood's public activities must be accepted as a descent, perhaps, but we should be careful not to exaggerate its degree. Class feeling never rises to the heights of patriotism, and often sinks to the levels of individual selfishness, but it has at all times its legitimate sphere. And there never was a time when trade interests might more legitimately fill a large space in the attention of an Englishman than in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Josiah Wedgwood had in his childhood seen Staffordshire a group of straggling villages separated by lanes where the wretched pack-horses sank under their loads, villages where the ale-house formed the only refuge from miserable hovels and gave the only prospect of any cheerful convivial meeting. In the last decade of his life he looked around on a scene of busy, hopeful activity, where trade was fostered by excellent roads and water-ways, and the inhabitants were encouraged by well-paid labour. And it should be remembered that he saw only the good side of the change from rural to manu-
facturing Staffordshire. Leafy lanes spread all around Etruria long after his day; I can remember swinging under tall trees where nothing is now to be seen but oven refuse, and pleasant walks where blackened vegetation now bears witness to the neighbourhood of the Five Towns. The change from agriculture to manufacture in Staffordshire was then pure gain, and where Wedgwood thought its prosperity imperilled he was moved by an anxiety that was not mainly selfish. Etruria was, within its range, an object of devotion as legitimate as England itself.

The strength and the weakness of this attitude are exhibited side by side in two little pamphlets published in the year 1788, if indeed the word published is applicable to the printing of a few copies of an address intended only for the perusal of the workmen for whom it was written. It is startling to come upon utterances from the same source so nearly contemporaneous and so divergent. In the first we find the delusions of hungry workers as to the most elementary principles of trade corrected with clearness, humanity, and good sense. These delusions indeed are obvious, but it is a great mistake to suppose that blunders and prejudices which any one can detect are easy to confute. In order to understand the position we must take some note of the circumstances in which the address was written.

A wretched harvest in 1782 had aggravated the distress due to the long and disastrous war with America; and the discontent among the poor hungry people allied itself with the spirit of
lawless outrage which we have seen exercised at this time in so many forms. A boat, bearing provisions for the Manchester market along the Canal, stopped for a few hours at the Etruria wharf, and was seized and rifled by an angry mob, who sold the contents at their own price, returning, however, the money to the captain. The spirit of mischief was awakened; an attempt was made to set the place on fire, and Etruria might easily have repeated on a miniature scale the horrors of 1780 in London. But Wedgwood, with shrewder tactics than the magistrates of the capital, at once summoned military aid, the Riot Act was read, and the order to charge dispersed the mob. This prompt action saved the potteries, the damage done was trifling, and the immediate subsidence of the riot gave a useful demonstration of the facility with which this may be achieved by the use of strong measures at the right time.

However, the fact that one of the rioters paid for his turbulence with his life shows the alarm that had been awakened, and the passion which must still have agitated the group of workers on whom Wedgwood poured the oil of his wise and temperate address.

If we compare the arguments used to explain the necessity for repressing tumult by force with his letters of 1779 on the Lancashire riots, we see that the experiences of 1780 had had their effect on Wedgwood.

Let me now intreat you to look back for a moment, and reflect coolly upon the late violent proceedings. Can you think that they were the likeliest means of
relieving you under your present distress? Will riot and tumult, accompanied with acts of injustice, incline providence to be more bountiful to us in the next season? Or will the forcibly seizing upon provisions brought to our markets induce the farmers to supply them better for the future? You cannot think it will. These certainly are not the proper means to redress the grievances complained of, and as the corn grown in our own neighbourhood is not at all sufficient for our wants, we should at least permit those, who supply us with this and other necessaries of life from distant parts, to do it with safety to their persons and properties. It is indeed happy for them and us, that we live under the same equal laws, which must and will protect both from the violence offered by either.

I say the laws must protect us both, for if it was not so, there would be an end of all government, an end of the state.—No man could be secure in the enjoyment of the fruits of his labour for a single day.—No man therefore would labour, but the stronger would rob and murder the weaker, till the kingdom was filled with rapine and violence, and every man afraid to meet his neighbour. The land would be untilled, for who would plow or sow without the hopes of reaping for himself, and being protected in his property; famine, and its companion pestilence, must follow, and sweep the miserable remains of the people who had not murdered one another, into an untimely grave, the kingdom itself falling a prey to some foreign invader.

These, my friends and neighbours, would be the inevitable consequences of such proceedings as have lately happened among us, if our forefathers had not wisely provided means of putting a stop to them. If you do not know what these means are, I will inform you, in as few words as I am able. When the justices of the peace, or other civil magistrates, are informed of a riot, it is their indispensable duty to use all lawful means for putting the speediest end to it. For which purpose they
are authorized to press into this service every man, or body of men, they find necessary, soldiers as well as others; and when the soldiers are so engaged in the assistance of the civil magistrate, it is not the war-office as some have erroneously supposed, that has a power to give the soldiers orders respecting their firing, nor even the officers themselves belonging to the regiments called in, but this power is by our excellent constitution, given to the civil magistrates: 'tis they and they alone who have the whole authority in these cases: they must give the word of command to the military officers, and then the officers give that word of command to the men.

Such were the wise and necessary regulations established by our forefathers, and I wish you seriously to think of them, that you may be convinced of the folly, as well with respect to yourselves as the public, of resisting that power in the first instance, which must in the end prevail. If any one doubts of this, I call upon him to name a time or place, in this or any other civilized nation, where a tumultuous rising of the people, obstinately refusing to disperse, has not been quelled either by the civil or military powers of the State. It is indeed impossible, from the nature of things, that it should be otherwise; for if order and obedience to the laws could not be restored, there must be an end of that community.

Wedgwood then proceeds with a calm and reasoned explanation of the necessity of importing foreign corn, and exposes the strange delusions as to exportation without any of the impatience or scorn which makes a refutation of gross fallacies so often unconvincing.

The most obvious and effectual means of remedying the distress is the opening of our sea-ports for the importation of foreign grain. The benefit of this measure
has already been felt in several parts of the kingdom, and will unavoidably reach us in a little time; but ours being one of the most inland counties we cannot so soon receive the advantages of it as those who are situated near the ports. I hear it asked *What shall we be benefited by the importation of corn? The dealers will still contrive to keep up the price, and starve the poor.* It is not in their power to do it. Provisions will rise and fall in their price according to their quantity as naturally as water finds its level; and though this price may be disturbed for a while by combination, where the dealers are too few, experience has shewn that this cannot be lasting; the risque and expence are too great. For if corn is kept in large quantities together it requires to be frequently turned and aired, or it will soon be spoiled; now the expence of doing this, the interest of money lying dead, and the risk of fresh importations rendering the market still lower whilst the dealer is hoarding up to make it higher, must always prevent the corn from being thus kept up to any considerable degree.

I can no otherwise account for what I heard was threatened on a late occasion, to destroy our canal and let out the water, than from the common frailty of human nature, that when the passions are uppermost, a man shall take revenge upon objects which have no relation to the subject in dispute. I may perhaps be told that in the instance alluded to, provisions were carrying *out* of the country by the canal, and not *into* it. The simple fact is that they were passing *through* it, being the product of distant counties (Norfolk and Suffolk) and were passing along the canal to Manchester to be sold there for the support of a numerous body of manufacturers like ourselves; and they were passing by us, only because corn was dearer there than here, for otherwise we cannot suppose that the dealer would have carried it forty miles further, to sell it at the same price he might have had with us: and upon a change of circumstances, the next boat of flour or corn would, for the same reason,
have been sold amongst us; but neither one nor the other could have come into this country from such distant parts by any other than water carriage. Some, I am told, have been weak enough to believe themselves, and to persuade others, that the corn was going to be exported to foreign parts, whilst it was so much wanted amongst our own poor at home. Now you have already been acquainted that our ports are opened for the importation of foreign corn, and that considerable quantities are actually brought to us by that means. The merchants who buy this corn at foreign markets, bring it to England by a long sea voyage, and many other expences attend its importation, besides which they must have an allowance for their profits in trade. They must therefore buy it much lower there than they can afford to sell it in London or any other port: add to this the expences of carriage from such port to the inland parts of the kingdom, to our own county in particular, and we may fairly conclude, that a bushel of foreign corn, if sold for nine shillings here, did not originally cost more than five or six when first purchased abroad. How then can it for a moment be supposed, that any dealer would send corn from hence, where he could sell it for nine shillings a bushel, to the foreign markets, where after the additional expences of sending it thither it would not be sold for more than five or six. The idea is too ridiculous to need any other refutation than this plain statement of facts; but nothing is too absurd to be believed when men's passions overpower their reason.

His conclusion is worth quoting for reasons unconnected with the controversy.

Before I take my leave I would request you to ask your parents for a description of the country we inhabit when they first knew it; and they will tell you that the inhabitants bore all the marks of poverty to a much greater degree than they do now. Their houses were
miserable huts; the lands poorly cultivated, and yielded little of value for the food of man or beast, and these disadvantages, with roads almost impassable, might be said to have cut off our part of the country from the rest of the world besides rendering it not very comfortable to ourselves. Compare this picture, which I know to be a true one, with the present state of the same country. The workmen earning near double their former wages—their houses mostly new and comfortable, and the lands, roads, and every other circumstance bearing evident marks of the most pleasing and rapid improvements. Industry has been the parent of this happy change. A well directed and long continued series of industrious exertions both in masters and servants has so changed, for the better, the face of our country, and notwithstanding the present unfavorable appearances I must say the manners and deportment of its inhabitants too, as to attract the notice and admiration of countries which had scarcely heard of us before; and how far these improvements may still be carried by the same laudable means has been one of the most pleasing contemplations of my life.

Permit one word more to assure you that the earnest wishes I feel for your welfare and the good order of our neighbourhood have been my only inducements to address you on this occasion; and that if in pursuit of these objects I have found it necessary to blame the conduct of those whom nature binds you to love and reverence I have done it with reluctance, as it is far more pleasing to me to bestow praise than blame upon my neighbours.

These last words were true in no conventional sense of Wedgwood. He did not indeed shrink from blaming, nor is any man's praise worth much who does. Among his workmen he even bore a decidedly formidable reputation. "If you think proper to make use of my name I have
no objection,” he wrote to Bentley in October, 1777, referring to some trouble with a London workman; “but my name has been made such a scarecrow to them that the poor fellows are frightened out of their wits when they hear of Mr. W.’s coming to town, and I perceive upon our first meeting they look as if they saw the D—I.” But his own attitude towards his men was singularly unlike this. He sought to maintain with them the frank individual relation in which man speaks freely to man, equally in correction and approval. The absence of such a relation creates, the letter continues, a barrier felt on both sides, “and must in time put it out of my power to be of any use amongst them.”

There were, moreover, very special inducements for a master-potter, employing a number of skilled artisans, often in secret processes, to maintain a close understanding with his men. Their urgency is evident in the heightened tone of a second pamphlet, printed only a month or two after the first, and addressed: “To the Workmen in the Pottery—on the Subject of Entering into the Service of Foreign Manufacturers.” About the year 1766 it appears that a master-potter named Bartlem, unsuccessful in his own country, emigrated to South Carolina, “and by offers made from thence, very advantageous in appearance, prevailed upon some of our workmen to leave their country and come to him.” He had been offered a State subsidy to encourage the manufacture of pottery, and had therefore some right to hope for success if he could only get enough skilled workmen. The
story of the disasters of all who took advantage of this invitation is given in much detail. The enterprise turned out a complete failure; "the work was abandoned and only one person returned to England"—a certain William Ellis of Hanley, who informed Wedgwood that the workers never received half the promised pay—viz. a guinea a week and their food. A similar attempt in Pennsylvania met with a similar fate, the eight emigrants seduced by brilliant promises were reduced to begging their bread in the streets, and an appeal in the newspapers from Tom Byerley, who happened then to be in Pennsylvania, procured a public subscription, which only staved off their fate for a short time. Attempts nearer home proved no more prosperous. One George Shaw, a deserter, had ventured after a ten years' exile to set foot again in a country where his life was forfeit, as a decoy-duck for a pottery in France. He cannot have been a very effective pleader if, as Wedgwood asserts, "notwithstanding his boasts and pretences the real feelings of his heart have burst through the disguise and have betrayed themselves by the tears, which he shed plentifully even while in the midst of those people whom he was labouring to seduce."

The pamphlet continues in a strain very unlike Wedgwood's usual sober style. There were unquestionable evils enough for the worker in the France of 1783; it was unnecessary to add to the list the description of "a disease of the mind, peculiar to a people in a strange land; a kind of heart-sickness and despair, with an
unspeakable longing after their native country, not to be described, and of which no one can have a just idea, but those who have been under its influence. Most travellers have felt it in a greater or less degree; many have died of it; and those who have recovered declare it to be worse than death itself"—a piece of extravagance which we can only slightly soften by remembering that foreign travel, to the ordinary Englishmen of the eighteenth century, was still a comparatively rare and somewhat formidable enterprise. To Wedgwood himself the Continent was wholly unknown. The pamphlet ends with the following appeal:

Would it have no weight with you to think that you were ruining a trade, which had taken the united efforts of some thousands of people, for more than an age, to bring to the perfection it has now attained?—a perfection nowhere else to be found—an object exciting at once the envy and emulation of all Europe! but they will both ever be harmless to us whilst we are true to ourselves: for Englishmen, in arts and manufactures as well as in arms, can only be conquered by Englishmen: the enemy must first gain over some traitors and renegades from among ourselves, before they can obtain any decisive advantage. Is there a man among you then who will stand forth, and acknowledge himself to be that traitor to his country and fellow-workmen? who will openly avow, that for the sake of a paltry addition to his wages for a few years, he would betray their interests, and wantonly throw away into the hands of foreigners, perhaps of enemies, the superiority we have laboured for and obtained? I wish to entertain a better opinion of my countrymen, than to suspect that there is a single man who can be so base; and am willing to persuade myself it has been owing to want of thought, or of proper
information, that any have thus deserted the cause of their country.

Having now laid before you, in the shortest and simplest way I am able the criminality as well as the bad consequences arising to your country, your friends, and yourselves, from your forsaking your native land and entering into foreign service: let me now show you the sense which our laws have expressed of this crime, and the provision made by them for preventing or punishing it, that so knowing the danger as well as the evil you may avoid them both.

And he goes on to transcribe two Acts of George II. in which penalties of increasing severity are decreed against any one who should induce manufacturers or workmen to leave this country and pursue their trade elsewhere. As Bartlem, who had rendered himself legally incapable of taking any legacy, purchasing any land, or owning any property in England, and liable, should he set foot on her soil, to a fine of £500 for every workman thus seduced, did actually come to England and persuade four workmen to return with him to America, we may take it for granted that these Acts were practically null. But the addition that half the fine should go to the informer shows the resolve of Government to gain a conviction at any price, and we learn with something like shame that the master manufacturers increased this bribe by the amount of fifty guineas.

The importance of the two pamphlets lies in their bearing upon the larger questions of trade policy, in regard to which Wedgwood was shortly to exercise a certain influence on the history of his country. We may discern in the exaggera-
tion and feebleness of the second pamphlet, as compared with the soundness of the first, the confusion which perverted his judgment when called, two years later, to deal with our trade relations with Ireland.

The commercial relations of England to Ireland have long been admitted to be one of the blackest pages in a very dark chapter of English history. In that chapter few pages indeed are illumined by any gleam of brightness, and most are darkened by crime, revenge, greed, prejudice, or strange stupidity. From the time of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 till the ministry of the younger Pitt, Ireland lay crushed beneath the misgovernment of a greedy and corrupt oligarchy, her industry ruined by prohibitive duties on her main products, her religion divorced from citizenship and turned into a badge of servitude. In 1785 the young minister sought for the first time to make Great Britain and Ireland a "United Kingdom" in fact as well as in name. His scheme would have brought sane and health-giving legislation into both the outward and inward history of Ireland. He would have given it Free Trade and religious equality. In the second half of this endeavour he was foiled by the superstition of a King, in the first by the superstition of tradesmen. We have here only to do with the second; but it is impossible to enter upon it without the saddening reflection that we must double all the evil consequences of that failure, if we would realise the full significance of the opportunity of justice to Ireland then thrown away.
Pitt's beneficent proposals were brought forward in February 1785 in the form of ten Resolutions, carefully framed so as to secure to Ireland entire equality with England in the matter of trade. The smaller island was to become, from an industrial and mercantile point of view, practically a part of the larger. The produce and manufactures of continental Europe and almost all British dependencies were to be no more affected by crossing St. George's Channel than by crossing the boundaries of two English counties. It was a large advance towards perfect Free Trade between the two countries, and was expected, on good grounds, to add largely to the wealth of the smaller one. It seemed, therefore, natural and just that some additional contribution should be made by it towards the expenses of their common interest, and Pitt appended to his Resolutions the claim for Irish participation in the expenses of British defence. The condition roused some antagonism, but this was partially removed by the pledge that the claim should never be made on the part of England until the Irish revenue reached an amount adequate to allow of it; and thus amended, the Resolutions passed in the Parliament at Dublin, in spite of a few hostile petitions from Protectionist manufacturers who dreaded English rivalry. In the matter of Free Trade, Mr. Lecky thinks that Irish opinion was somewhat in advance of English, and when the indignation roused by anything like an enforced subsidy from Ireland to England was somewhat appeased, the sane part of Irish feeling seems to have been on the side of the Resolutions.
The circumstances of the time were such as to stimulate both what may be called English and Irish feeling in the matter. The eighteenth century was the epoch of our second age-long duel with France. The defence of our shores presented itself as an urgent and permanent national necessity; Ireland profited by our first line of defence as much as England, and a measure destined for her enrichment might well be coupled with one imposing on her a moderate and well-considered taxation. If Pitt was mistaken in anticipating a large increase of Irish wealth from his measure of Free Trade no claim on Irish revenue would ensue; if he was correct in his anticipation he would be justified in his demand. Nothing, surely, could be more remote from tyranny.

These proposals were judged, however, under the bias created by the most absorbing event of recent history, the ignoble and disastrous American War. No one could forget that that war had originated in a demand not wholly unlike that which was tacked on to the Irish propositions. The proposal for anything of the nature of a subsidy, however just, lent itself readily to cheap denunciation, and this it was destined to meet, not at Dublin, where we might have expected it, but at Westminster. Nor was it in Parliament that the worst foes of a measure designed to heal the festering wound of our nation were to be found. Its introduction, on February 22, 1785, was preceded by an agitation against it among the manufacturers of Great Britain animated and directed by Josiah Wedgwood. He had previously been busy in conference with his
fellow-manufacturers in the great industrial centres, and came up to lodgings in Great George Street, Westminster, in the middle of February 1785, to be ready with the evidence he was prepared to lay before the Privy Council. An attempt which had been made to start a cream-ware factory in Dublin eleven years previously had failed very soon; but Wedgwood feared the effect of cheap labour in Ireland if competition was unrestricted, and seems to have dwelt upon the attempt and forgotten the failure. The antagonism had been foreseen by Pitt. "In departing from the policy of prohibiting duties so long established in this country," he wrote to the Duke of Rutland, then Viceroy in Dublin, "we are, perhaps, to encounter the prejudices of our manufacturing interests in every corner of the kingdom. We are admitting to this competition a country whose labour is cheap and whose resources are unexhausted, ourselves burdened with accumulated taxes which are felt in the price of every necessary of life, and of course enter into the cost of every article of manufacture." This frank recognition of the economic hazards to which Pitt's measure would subject England explains, if it cannot justify, the action of the manufacturers to whom these measures appeared to set at nought the principle that "charity begins at home." Under the presidency of Wedgwood they formed themselves into an association which they called, "The Great Chamber of the Manufacturers of Great Britain," and which undertook the protection of manufacturing interests.
But Wedgwood's zeal was not based upon clearly thought-out principle. His Liberalism drew him to Free Trade, his manufacturing interest to Protection; and he was capable, under different circumstances, of enunciating each creed with perfect sincerity and almost equal emphasis. "I should think we were safer," he said, before the Committee of Council for Commerce, in answer to a question as to the danger of Irish competition, "if earthenware was allowed to be imported free of all duties into both kingdoms." "This was the man," comments indignantly the latest historian of these transactions, "who headed the protectionist Great Chamber of Commerce." 1 Unfortunately, if prejudice is strong enough it need not be consistent. The Free Trade concessions seem to have dwelt in a water-tight compartment of Wedgwood's mind; all that was active and effective in it was on the side of Protection. Under his influence and that of like-minded men this spirit triumphed. Petitions poured in against Pitt's scheme; the low taxes and low price of labour in Ireland, their authors alleged, would drive the trader even out of his own market, and would force him to transfer his capital and his manufactory to Ireland. Faction was not slow to take advantage of frightened self-interest, and when in May, 1785, after twelve weeks devoted to these complaints and fears, the Propositions, clogged with stultifying conditions forced upon Pitt, appeared before the

1 William Pitt and the National Revival, by J. Holland Rose, p. 259 (1911), an admirable work to which large indebtedness must here be expressed once for all.
English Parliament, their doom was ensured by some of the best and some of the worst principles of our nature—by patriotic zeal and corporate greed; by the spirit of true fraternity, and that of thinly disguised spite; by the struggling sense of national unity, and the spirit of fierce and unscrupulous faction. Where these went hand in hand the issue could not be doubtful. The price that Ireland had to pay was immensely increased; the privilege that England offered was proportionately diminished. The gift, thus altered, became a snare. The proposals, carefully drawn up for the financial enfranchisement of Ireland, could be described by Sheridan as "a proposal on the part of the British Parliament that Ireland should surrender her right of external legislation," and by Fox as a barter of English commerce for Irish slavery. "That is not the price I would pay," he exclaimed, with an unscrupulous appeal to party feeling against every impulse of patriotism and humanity, "nor is this the thing I would purchase." Pitt's eloquence overcame the opposition in the English Parliament, but it was successful elsewhere and the Propositions were rejected at Dublin. Mr. Lecky thinks it would still have been to the advantage of Ireland to accept them, "but we can hardly," he adds, "blame the Irish Parliament for its reluctance to do so." So successful were the antagonists of the measure in their attempt to sow jealousy and mistrust, that Dublin was illuminated for the rejection of a measure designed to bring peace and plenty to Ireland.
Although Wedgwood had to excuse himself to his own Chamber of Manufacturers for not having been earlier in getting up a petition and fuller in his evidence against the Propositions, he appears to have been, nevertheless, the life and soul of the opposition, and he had to bear the brunt of the anger of the defeated party. His is the only non-political name mentioned in the Rolliad in connection with this defeat. Lord Thurlow, the Chancellor, is made in a Pindaric ode to single him out for special damnation. Amid

The curses due
To the factious crew,

he is represented as urging:

Be Wedgwood damned,
And double-damned his ware.

And the Morning Chronicle published the following story:

When the Lord C[hancello]r was at Buxton Wells during the late recess, he paid a visit to Mr. Wedgwood’s manufactory in that neighbourhood. Mr. Wedgwood accompanied his Lordship through the whole, pointing out the uses of the machinery, and distinguishing the wares intended for exportation, &c. When the survey was over, the conversation becoming more general, “You see, my Lord,” said Mr. Wedgwood, with something like a sneer, “that the Irish have done more for us than your Lordships were willing to do, by rejecting the propositions.” To which the other emphatically retorted, “But, by G——! Mr. Wedgwood, the Irish would not have done so, if they had believed your evidence given on oath at our bar.”

Some considerations may be briefly suggested
tending to excuse Wedgwood’s part in this lamentable result.

"To expect that the freedom of trade should ever be entirely restored in Great Britain," says Adam Smith, "is as absurd as to expect that an Oceana or Utopia should ever be established in it. Not only the prejudices of the public, but what is much more unconquerable, the private interests of many individuals, irresistibly oppose it." The rise of a Cobden was inconceivable to the author of the Wealth of Nations. A glance backward shows how much reason the state of the general mind afforded for such a judgment. Seven years before Pitt’s proposals a similar but much less comprehensive and equally futile attempt had been made by an Irishman, Lord Nugent. His aim was merely to revise oppressive restrictions on the trade of Ireland, to reconsider, for instance, the legislation which, by forbidding the exportation of Irish wool and enacting that no cattle or dairy produce should be exported from the rich Irish pastures into England, had ruined the two flourishing trades which might have brought a gleam of prosperity to the unhappy country. Such an endeavour engaged the warmest sympathies of Edmund Burke, and drew from him, on May 6, 1778, a great speech, the eloquence of which so far prevailed over selfish prejudice that Lord Nugent’s motion was carried and some Parliamentary action would doubtless have followed, but hostile petitions poured in from the trading and manufacturing towns and the chance was lost. Bristol, hitherto the adoring constituency of the
great statesman, stood unaffected by his eloquence, and its citizens called upon him to support their narrow and selfish policy. He replied with a noble refusal, a magnanimous and courageous act which cost him his seat.

Wedgwood’s attitude, even where he supported Free Trade, was inspired by less lofty ideals. Where large national issues were not obscured by antagonistic business interests, it may be allowed that he was alive to them. But he discerned them with added clearness when his business interests concurred. “I should be ashamed,” he writes to Bentley in February 1776, “to feel anything like a fear in having a free intercourse open’d between Great Britain and all the Potteries in the World.” He is careful, however, to insist on reciprocity, and excludes the East Indies from this universal Free Trade. In the following year (August 22, 1777) he writes to Bentley an account of a conversation with Lord Gower, from which we learn that his views have advanced somewhat further, but still with significant provisos, in the direction of Free Trade. “I told his Lordship,” he says, “that the sale of our manufacture had been greatly extended of late in Germany, Russia, etc., and our business continued good notwithstanding so many prohibitions and high duties had been laid upon it abroad, and I believ’d the demand for it at foreign markets, under all these disadvantages, was owing to its being the best and cheapest pottery ware in Europe, and that we had no objection, as potters, to a free trade with all the world, except the East Indies.”
When, eight years later, Wedgwood’s help was sought in the question of the commercial treaty with France, he appears a more un-equivocal Free Trader. The original suggestion of this treaty had come from the side of France, where, indeed, the very idea of Free Trade first had birth. The treaty of Versailles, which in 1783 ended the war between England and France as the ally of America, provided for the appointment of commissioners to revise and improve the commercial arrangements between the two countries, but the provision remained a dead letter for more than two years. The delay was the natural consequence of the proceedings in Ireland. Pitt wanted to have the United Kingdom a fiscal unit before he made any arrangements with a foreign country, and indeed had no energy to spare from the project so near his heart and so cruelly hampered by selfish or factious antagonism. We trace in all his communications with Eden on this subject the languid and weary tone of one whose dearest project had just been disappointed. It seems surprising that the man chosen for the business should have been Eden, who had been active in opposing the Irish Propositions; but, on the other hand, when a few years earlier he had been Chief Secretary for Ireland under Lord Carlisle, he himself had made an attempt towards the very result which these Propositions were designed to bring about, and there is no doubt that if selfish interests influenced him in deserting

his party to accept the post, they were fortified by sincere convictions.

One person to whom the appointment gave unmixed delight was Josiah Wedgwood. A congratulatory letter from him seemed to Eden to be worth forwarding to Pitt, who says in his reply (December 16, 1785): "I am very glad that you will have an opportunity of following his [Wedgwood's] suggestions." We have no means of knowing what they were, but a letter written to Eden on January 5, 1786, explains Wedgwood's own position.

You have indeed opened to my view a field capacious enough for the ablest politician to range if not lose himself in. My poor head grows giddy on the first entrance & believe me Sir when I assure you that I feel both my knowledge & experience much too limited to venture further than I am taken in the hand of some friend whose abilities & integrity I dare depend on. It is true that I can see difficulties on almost every side; but when the wisdom of a nation is called forth, it will remove mountains. You must not complain of my speaking too generally upon this subject, for being totally ignorant of particulars I cannot go any farther, not knowing at all what it would be wished for us to give up. With regard to our particular manufacture we only wish for a fair & simple reciprocity, & I suppose (but I speak without any authority), that our Manchester & Birmingham friends would be willing to give & take in the same way. I will not take up your time any farther, well knowing that I cannot say anything upon these subjects (except my own particular branch) which you do not either know much better yourself or may have better information upon from others.

The conclusion of the treaty was delayed
many months after the date of this letter, much to the impatience of Eden, who writes sarcastically to Pitt on July 18, 1786, that all his letters since the 10th of June have miscarried. It was "one of the longest and most complex ever signed," and every detail needed investigation and elucidation which had to be carried out in the face of hostile criticism. We may judge of the amount of opposition by two letters, written after the treaty was signed. "I am not so respectful towards my countrymen," Eden wrote to Lord Sheffield in February 1787, "as to deny that it is possible to persuade a great number of them that the Treaty of Commerce has repealed Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, and the Habeas Corpus, and has introduced a universal excise and wooden shoes." And Sheffield answers (February 27, 1787) that the recent death of Vergennes "will be a good excuse for your not appearing in Parliament to defend your infernal treaty." The same sarcastic observer remarks to Eden six months later (August 22, 1787) that "the assertion of the Parliament of Paris that the Commercial Treaty is a bad thing for France may be true in many points, though the true friends of this country have shown that it will be pernicious to this country"—a significant expression of the views of free trade, in relation to the "wealth of nations," which were current in the most cultivated portion of the community eleven years after the appearance of Adam Smith's great work. It is pleasant to turn from that letter of Sheffield's to the following, written by the man he had introduced to Eden, and
showing how confident Wedgwood had now become of the friendly feelings of his correspondent.

Wedgwood to Eden.

ETRURIA, June 16, 1787.

DEAR SIR—I have deferred writing to you for a month or two past, in consequence of the reports in the newspapers that you were expected weekly in London. I have at length desired Mr. Byerley to make inquiry, and though some of the papers still fix your return to the latter end of the present week, the last day of which is now closing, I find from him that I must expect the pleasure of waiting upon you for some weeks to come,—for I intend to do myself that honour on your return to England.

I hope you will be permitted to enjoy a summer's repose before you embark in the fatigues and embarrassments of such another business as that which you have now so happily concluded. But I find your labours will again be called forth in the same way, and I congratulate my country on its having the very important object of a treaty of Commerce with Spain committed to one who has so recently given universal conviction of his abilities and unwearied assiduity in promoting the commercial interests of his country.

I have modelled two bas-reliefs, representing the commercial treaty with France. One of them consists of three figures, Mercury as the god of Commerce, uniting the hands of England and France. On the other bas-relief is represented the temple of Janus shut, and the door bolted by two caducei; Mars in a violent rage is going to burst the door open with his spear, but Peace arrests his arm and says, or seems to say, that the door so bolted is not to be broke open. I hope you will have received the first pair I made, which I sent by the diligence for expedition, desiring M. Daguerre to deliver them to you. When his cargo arrives, if you see anything you should like to present to your friends, you
know I shall esteem myself honoured by your acceptance of them.

But Wedgwood’s promotion of the French treaty inevitably provoked the anger of his fellow-manufacturers. The very man who had so recently led them successfully against the proposal of free trade with Ireland was now hand and glove with the manipulators of free trade with France. The great potter was inevitably accused not merely of treacherous desertion, but of playing a double game in his own interest. Among the loudest in denunciation was Thomas Walker (1749–1817), a Manchester cotton merchant, and the head of the Whig or Reform party in that town.

In the *Morning Chronicle* of March 28, 1787, Wedgwood published a letter in which he endeavours, lamely enough, to explain away Walker’s charge of inconsistency. Another correspondent of the same newspaper pointedly summed up the case against him as it appeared to his enemies in a letter from “the ghost of Friar Bacon,” which has sufficient savour of the situation to be reproduced below.¹

¹ To the Manufacturers.

Was,—is, and is to come.

Mr. Wedgwood was united with men of principle and honor.—He was a principal informing the Chamber of Commerce.—He was the promoter of harmony and union among them.—He was the strenuous and indefatigable supporter of the general, and the reprober of any partial interests of the manufacturing body.—He was the determined enemy of the *Irish Propositions*, in the fate of which he was not personally interested.—He was respected and revered by his fellow manufacturers, and esteemed by the whole nation.

Mr. Wedgwood is connected with, and become the tool of Administration.—He is their instrument in attempting to dissolve the Chamber of Commerce, so much dreaded by them.—He is artfully attempting
By June, however, the outcry had died down, and Wedgwood could write to Eden, at the close of the letter already quoted:

The Chamber of Manufacturers sleepeth for the present, but may be awaked at any time when its services are called for. My late Antagonist, Mr. Walker, has quite lost himself at Manchester, and I may add through the whole island. I am highly flattered by your approbation of my last answer to him, which in my own opinion was the wisest and the best, because it was the shortest I had made. I am told that my conduct has been much approved, at Manchester in particular. I rejoice to find that all croaking against the treaty is at an end everywhere, except now and then a silly paragraph in the Opposition papers.

Wedgwood's inconsistency did indeed admit of some defence. The case of Ireland and of France did not stand wholly upon the same footing. Above all, the treaty, primarily com-}

to sow dissentions, by insidiously attacking a character, indubitably proved to be steadfastly inviolable; and contrary to his private interests, the generous friend, and supporter of the general welfare of the manufacturers.—He is by such means, weakly endeavouring to lessen the consequence of the Chamber in the eyes of the world.—He is the faithless and artful underminer of the general, and the avowed advocate of partial interests among the manufacturers.—He is a friend to the principles of the French Treaty, which though equally inimical to the general interests with those of the Irish Propositions—must infinitely and immediately benefit his own manufacture.

Mr. Wedgwood will be, in all probability, dignified for his present services, with the title of Sir Josiah; and should he continue to let his clay be moulded by Administration, a Peerage will be most likely permitted to grace his brow, that he may rank with his new friend Lord Hawkesbury.

Mr. Wedgwood will be detested and despised by the manufacturers of this kingdom, as their evil genius and reprobated by the nation at large, as a courtly sycophant, an interested deserter of the public cause, and a base betrayer of the interests of his country.

Friar Bacon's Ghost.

Brazen Nose College.
mercial, with France, was widely looked to as a step towards lasting peace between the two countries. Wedgwood himself, as we have seen, shared this hope, expressing it, in terms of his craft, in the Commercial Treaty bas-relief, which represents Mars restrained by Peace from breaking open the Temple of Janus. The question was even mooted whether provisions might not be tacked on to the treaty tending to make war in future more difficult.¹ Pitt had even made a tentative step in this direction by proposing a slight joint diminution of armaments in the West Indies, but France's ablest statesman, Vergennes, withheld his assent and nothing came of the project. Yet Pitt's own language on the subject shows how deeply modern ideas had taken possession of his mind, and forces us to recognise that the path of the two nations at this time, when they were on the verge of a world-conflict of twenty years, came very close to possibilities which the storm of the French Revolution swept away and which have only reappeared in our own day.²

It is a pleasing reflection that the last object which drew Wedgwood into the current of political agitation was one against which no dissentient

¹ "It is to be considered," wrote William Pulteney to Pitt, "whether this is not a good opportunity to engrat upon this treaty some arrangement that may effectually tend to prevent future wars at least for a considerable time. . . . If France and England understood one another the world might be kept in peace from one end of the globe to the other. And why may they not understand one another? Is it impossible to shew them " (the French) "that every object of their intrigue may be better assured by good faith and a proper intelligence with us, and might we not arrange everything together now so as completely to satisfy both? " (quoted by Dr. Holland Rose, op. cit. p. 840).

² Rose, op. cit. p. 842.
voice would now be raised in any quarter. There never was a purer channel for beneficence than the cause of African slavery, and all that we know of Wedgwood would lead us to expect him to throw himself heartily into the cause: his pity for the weak, his hatred of oppression, his sympathy with suffering. He was a prominent and generous member of the Anti-Slavery Society, and a friend, during the last years of his life, of Wilberforce and Clarkson. The fullest expression of his feeling on the subject is, however, contained in a letter to Miss Seward, written in answer to a request for information respecting the slave trade. The "Swan of Lichfield" has been already mentioned in connection with Dr. Darwin; but that friendship brings her forward under auspices so unfavourable that I welcome an opportunity of more kindly reference, for, with all her foibles, she was a warm-hearted and generous woman. She was perhaps attracted to Wedgwood not only as a likely source of information concerning the trade in slaves but also as the late partner of Bentley, for whom she is known to have felt a warm admiration.

ETRURIA, Febr. 1788.

DEAR MADAM—An obstinate headache, which was worse than usual at the time I was honored with your most acceptable letter, prevented my immediate acknowledgment of the favour, and I must still beg your excuse for making use of a younger, and willing hand than my own, to thank you for the pleasure it has given me.

I need no assurance of your sentiments of humanity and mercy to our brethren of every tribe and colour, for a mind like yours cannot be limited by any trivial
circumstances in its benevolent wishes, and exertions too upon all proper occasions. But many objections, and of great seeming weight, have been made by some, and acquiesced in by others, with the best intentions, to the effectual extension of the hand of mercy to our poor African brethren.

It has happened, by my being one of the Society in London, and upon the Committee, for abolishing the slave trade, that the facts and arguments on both sides have pretty generally come to my knowledge, I mean those who are for abolishing, and those who wish only for a regulation of this traffic, for I do not know of any who say there is no necessity for either.

You have mentioned the two principal objections to the former,—that we should sacrifice our West India commerce, and that the slaves would only change their masters, without being able to shake off their bondage.

How mortifying is it to be assured that even the latter, a mere change of masters, would be a blessing of no small magnitude to these poor wretches! Turn them over to a Spanish master, and a ray of hope, unknown to our West India Slaves, breaks in upon their poor benighted minds; for here you put them within the sight, within the reach, and even within the probability of liberty. They have at first two days of the week to themselves: when they have, by their labor on these free days, acquired one-fifth of the amount of their first cost, they bring it in their gladdened hands, and can demand another day of liberty,—and so on, till they have bought all the five, and are as free as their masters.

What labour will not hopes like these enable them to endure, when every exertion brings them nearer and nearer to that state which they must be so earnestly looking after, and of which they have numberless encouraging examples before them. Contrast this chearing state but for a moment with the absolute despair of a West Indian slave, wearing out by immoderate and
incessant labor, with known and calculated certainty, in the course of a few years, and we cannot but confess that a change of masters would, in this instance be to him a blessing most devoutly to be wished for.

The slaves in the French W. India islands meet with that protection from the code noir which ours are utter strangers to, and with respect to the state of slavery in Africa, compared with that in our islands it does not deserve the name, if you will believe those who have long resided upon the spot. You will see what Mr. Newton says,—page 27. Mr. Moore says in his Travels, "that it is thought so extremely wicked to sell a family slave (those which we purchase are generally procured by fraud or violence on purpose for sale) that he never heard of but one person who ever did so, except for such crimes as would have authorised its being done had he been free;—that there are many slaves in a family, and that if one commits a crime, the master cannot sell him without the joint consent of the rest;—and that they live so well and easy, that it is sometimes difficult to know them from their masters and mistresses." So that a change (where shall we hide our heads while we confess it !) to any other master, would certainly be a blessing.

I am afraid, Dear Madam, of wounding your feelings too much, and of intruding farther than I ought upon your time and patience, if I should go on to relate an hundredth part of what has come to my knowledge of the accumulated distress brought upon millions of our fellow-creatures by this inhuman traffic. I will not therefore trouble you much farther, for I am persuaded that the little tracts I have taken the liberty of sending you will clearly shew, that we are already possessed of a stock of negroes fully sufficient (under mild treatment, and with such assistance as might be procured from the introduction of machines and free labour) for every purpose of the cultivation and trade of our plantations; and consequently that our West India commerce could not
be materially injured by prohibiting further importation; which prohibition appears to be the only probable means of withholding the heavy hand of cruelty and oppression from those who now groan under it. And even if our commerce was likely to suffer from the abolition, I persuade myself that when this traffic comes to be discussed and fully known, there will be but few advocates for the continuance of it. With what force and efficacy—how divinely—might the truly pathetic pen which wrote A Monody, etc., be employed upon the present subject! But I have no right to say half as much as I have already done, nor should I have ventured, if it had not been in the cause of humanity, and to Miss Seward. May I hope that you will have the goodness to pardon this unprovoked persecution, and believe me with the highest regard, Dear Madam, Your much obliged and faithful humble Servant,

Josiah Wedgwood.

Miss Seward’s answer, though a terrible example of her inflated and egoistic style, deserves quotation—in excerpt—here, both for the light it throws on Wedgwood’s letter, and as indicating clearly some insidious difficulties which the opponents of slavery had—and still have—to encounter.

Lichfield, Feb. 18, 1788.

I am honoured and obliged by your endeavours to enlighten me on a subject so important to human virtue and human happiness. They have not been vain; and I blush for the coldness my late letter expressed, whose subject demanded the ardour of benevolent wishes, and of just indignation.

Let me, however, do myself the justice to observe, that my heart always recoiled with horror from the miseries which I heard were inflicted on the negro slaves; but I have had long acquaintance with a Mr. Newton of this place, who made a large fortune in the East, where slavery pervades every opulent establishment.
He constantly assured me, that the purchase, employment, and strict discipline of the negroes were absolutely necessary to maintain our empire, and our commerce, in the Indies. As constantly did he affirm, that they were of a nature so sordid and insensible, as to render necessary a considerable degree of severity, and to make much lenity alike injurious to the indulger and the indulged; that the accounts of the cruelties practised upon the slaves by their masters were false, or at least infinitely exaggerated. He observed, that the worst people will abstain from vice, when it is against their interest to practise it; that the high price and value of the subjugated, inevitably preserves them from the dire effects of this imputed barbarity.

When I sighed over the severe discipline, for the necessity of which he pleaded, I was desired to remember the fate of the Ashwells.¹ . . .

The last mentioned Mr. Ashwell uniformly confirmed to me, for I have often conversed with him, all Mr. Newton had told me of the generally treacherous, ungrateful, and bloody temper of the negroes. Impressed with these ideas, I was led to consider the present efforts for their enfranchisement as fruitless and dangerous, though just and humane; that the Scriptures, which often mention slavery, bear no testimony against it as impious; that, in some countries, the subjection of beings, that form the latest link in the chain descending from human to brute animality, was an evil inevitable, as war between nations has always been found in every climate.

Beneath the force of that melancholy conviction, I avoided reading any thing upon the subject; flattering myself, that if the abolition of a traffic so lamentable could be safely effected by our legislators, they, as Englishmen and Christians, would listen to merciful remonstrance, and feel themselves impelled to abolish it.

¹ A case of murder and cruelty on the part of some slaves which she seems to suppose an argument in favour of the deportation of other members of their race.
Your letter, and the tracts which accompanied it, have changed my ideas on the subject. They have given me indignant convictions, decided principles, and better hopes that the flood-gates of this overwhelming cruelty may be let down without ruin to our national interests.

Miss Seward proceeds to reply very gravely to her correspondent’s closing suggestion, by giving many reasons why she should not “commit this theme” to her “muse.” But neither her decision nor her reasons for it concern our present purpose.¹

Miss Seward’s letter illustrates a confusion widely prevalent then and later, and one which the advocates of the slave trade insidiously fostered to the utmost of their power. The object of the abolitionists, at this date, was to destroy the commercial exportation of slaves from West Africa to America. For the emancipation of the slaves already there the abolitionists had in 1788 no hope, and many, perhaps most of them, no desire. It seemed at all events to lie outside practical politics, and to represent it as the aim of the society was to expose them to certain defeat. Even Clarkson, a much less tactful and cautious abolitionist than Wilberforce, began his arduous endeavours with the hope that by stopping the fresh supplies from Africa, and thus raising the value of every slave, they would secure humane treatment for those who would thenceforth become the irreplaceable instruments of West Indian prosperity. The logic of events

¹ Four years later Wedgwood sent her some copies of his anti-slavery medallion, which she acknowledged (Oct. 30, 1792) with characteristic effusiveness.
confuted the hope and made every ardent opponent of the slave trade an opponent of slavery; but in the earliest stages of the movement the imputation of being so was regarded as an injurious calumny, and was repelled by Wilberforce as such.

To the furtherance of the cause Wedgwood made a characteristic contribution in the shape of a medallion of a chained and kneeling negro, designed by him from the society's seal. It became one of his best known pieces, and was largely reproduced as an ornament. Some of these medallions were sent, as has been seen, to Miss Seward; others crossed the Atlantic on their way to a more illustrious correspondent, Benjamin Franklin. The latter were accompanied by a letter addressed to him by one "who wishes to be considered, Sir, among the number of those who have the highest veneration for your virtues, and gratitude for the benefits you have conferred on society." Wedgwood goes on:

I enclose for the use of yourself and friends a few cameos, on a subject which I am happy to acquaint you is daily more and more taking possession of men's minds on this side of the Atlantic as well as with you. It gives me great pleasure to be embraced on this occasion in the same great and good cause with yourself, and I ardently hope for the final completion of our wishes. This will be an epoch before unknown to the world, and while relief is given to millions of our fellow-creatures immediately the objects of it, the subject of freedom will be more canvassed and better understood in the enlightened nations.

But his influence and wealth were no less freely
used. Our glimpses of his intercourse with the two leaders of the movement are few and brief, but they illuminate very pleasantly, in very different ways, the mind and heart of Josiah Wedgwood in the evening of his life. Wilberforce was the senior of the two emancipators by rather more than a decade. When Thomas Clarkson, a boy of sixteen, gained a prize at Cambridge for a Latin essay on Slavery, Wilberforce had already been charged with the conduct of a Parliamentary Reform Bill, and had thus as a mere youth the advantage of being an important member of Parliament; while that social tact and charm which later made Mme. de Stael wish to know "l'homme le plus aimé, le plus considéré, en Angleterre," had already made him a popular member of society. Clarkson had none of these advantages. The son of the master of a grammar school, he had no platform of wealth and position from which to urge their common cause, nor did he possess those engaging personal qualities which do much to disarm opposition and win pardon for the zeal of an enthusiast. But he had more important qualifications for his great task. We read with astonishment of the labour he went through in his endeavour to collect evidence of the horrors he brought before a Committee of the House of Commons. He has left a moving description of his feelings at the first sight of an empty slave ship with its disclosure of the exact dimensions of space left for each individual negro; and the account of the perseverance with which he tracked an important witness, whose very name and abode were un-
known to him, is a marvellous narrative of patient watchfulness maintained through difficulties that might have daunted the most persevering. But the expenses and exertions in which the work involved him broke down his health and consumed a considerable part of his small fortune. It is important to remember these sacrifices when we read his somewhat ungracious and almost imperative appeals to the wealthier members of the society for compensation. The following was addressed, among other "plainer friends" of his, to Wedgwood:

**London, April 18, 1794.**

Dear Sir—It has been now resolved that the 1500£ (now 1600) expended by Me in pursuing the Question of the Abolition ought not to be allowed to fall upon Me, to the Impairment of my Health and Injury to my little private Fortune; but that it should be considered as a Debt, to be divided among the affluent friends of the Cause. A Subscription therefore has been opened for this Purpose. Mr. Wilberforce has given 100£. Mr. Wm Smith 50. Mr. M. Montague 50£. Mr. Henry Thornton 50£. Mr. Samuel Thornton 50£. Mr. Whitbread 100£, and two others have subscribed 50£ each, making 500£ out of 1500£.

But here, I am sorry to inform You, the matter stops. The Tryal of Devereux and Dowlin having cost 1700£ stands much in the Way of this Subscription; for those, who have given to the one, do not like so soon to give to the other. Add to which, that entertaining the Notions of Liberty I do, and having totally left the Church, I am considered as such a political Apostate, that even those, who know my Labours in this Cause, and are even friends to the Abolition would not subscribe a single Shilling to anything that personally related to Me.
This being the Case I am obliged to trouble a few of my plainer friends, who coincide with Me in Sentiments on other Topicks, and therefore I take the Liberty of asking you, if you have any Objection to put down your Name as a Subscriber to this reimbursement and for what Sum.

If it may not suit you to become a Subscriber, you may probably know some one among your affluent friends and friends to the abolition, who would put down 50£, or three or four, who would put down 100£ between them. Whatever however, is done, must be done under a Promise of Secrecy: for if the Sl. Merchants were to get hold of it, I should never hear the last of it. They would not fail to misinterpret the Transaction, and I might be called to the disagreeable Task of publickly stating it, in order to set it right.—I Remain dear Sir, Very sincerely,

THOS. CLARKSON.

Wedgwood's reply may be inferred from Clarkson's rejoinder.

LONDON, April 30, 1794.

DEAR SIR—I received your letter to Day. I feel much obliged to you for the Promise of your Subscription, but more if possible for the kind Manner in which You express Yourself towards Me. The Advice you give Me I will endeavour to follow.

I have the Pleasure of informing you that I am better, and I believe it is a good deal owing to the Prospect, which now opens itself, of these Embarrassments being taken off my Shoulders, for while they continued, they hurt the Mind, and affected the Constitution. Since I wrote to you Mr. Shore has subscribed 50£, and Sr Charles Middleton 100£.

You may, if you please, send the Draft for the 50£, directed to Me at James Phillip's. I beg my respects to your Son and Family and remain, very sincerely,

THOS. CLARKSON.

The loss of Wedgwood's reply to the first
letter is much to be regretted. To respond to a peremptory demand for money followed up by the suggestion, so familiar and so distasteful to most of us, that the desired donor should beg if he cannot give, with a letter felt more valuable than the material aid it provided, is not within the compass of every man’s virtue, even when the applicant is a fellow-worker.

His relations with Wilberforce were of a different order. The one glimpse we have of them—regrettably brief—is singularly pleasant. It occurs in Wilberforce’s notice, in his journal, of a visit to Etruria Hall on November 16, 1791. “With Gisborne to Wedgwood’s,” he wrote under that date,

Etruria, got there to dinner—three sons and three daughters, and Mrs. W.—a fine, sensible, spirited family intelligent and manly in behaviour—situation good—house rather grand. Pictures &c.¹ Discussed all evening.

This was the first of three evenings which Wilberforce spared for this visit, a considerable toll upon his scanty leisure. Etruria was in these later years the scene of many such hospitable meetings, but its doors can never have opened to a more honoured guest. We can imagine what it must have been to Wedgwood to receive under his own roof one to whom Mme. de Stael had paid the tribute cited above, and with whom he was united by the indissoluble bond of a common and a lofty aim.

¹ Wedgwood was no picture collector, but the house contained Sir Joshua’s portraits of the master and mistress, besides several by Stubbs, and one or two pictures by Wright of Derby.
With these brief, bright glimpses we may conclude this review of his connection with the public life of his country. That connection was marked, as is evident now, by some grievous errors, but Wedgwood remained through them all the man of generous endeavour, helpful companionship, and cheerful steady hope whom these final passages suggest.
CHAPTER IX

WEDGWOOD AND HIS FRIENDS

WEDGWOOD was a good friend, and friendship from first to last played a large part in his life. His warm and hearty nature demanded, and in general readily found, response in his associates of all classes. And his friendships were inseparable from his work. He found his best friend, as we have seen, in his partner; and it would be equally true and no less characteristic to say that he found his partner in his best friend. Some account, then, of his friendships, beyond what has incidentally been given, belongs to any portrayal of the man.

First in intimacy, if hardly in significance, was Dr. Erasmus Darwin. The fame of Darwin’s grandson has recalled attention to the man of multifarious ingenuity who first made that name illustrious. His long career (1781–1808) touches Wedgwood’s at many points. They first met, apparently, during the early years following Darwin’s settlement at Lichfield, as a physician, in 1756. He had there, by a sensational cure, leapt into instantaneous and lasting success. Both his exceptional skill in medicine, however, and his remarkable gift for experiment were
overshadowed in his own milieu by his reputation as a poet. "I flatter myself," wrote Horace Walpole to Hannah More, after the publication of *The Botanic Garden*, "you will agree with me that the author is a great poet"; and he greeted the second instalment with an outburst of enthusiasm unique from his pen: "The verses which describe the creation of the universe out of chaos are in my opinion the most sublime passage in any author." Cowper addressed to him a copy of eulogistic verses, as unpoeitic indeed as anything he ever wrote, but undoubtedly sincere. And Charles Darwin, in his discreet account of his grandfather, tells us that he had himself "met with old men who spoke of his poetry with a degree of enthusiasm quite unintelligible at the present day." Among his Lichfield neighbours he enjoyed fame as a poet long before he had published anything, on the strength of occasional verses admiringly handed about in the "literary" circles of the old cathedral town.

Wedgwood, had he been a man of finer literary culture than he was, could hardly have avoided expressing approbation of *The Botanic Garden*, which, as we know, contained a well-deserved allusion to himself. Without doubt he shared the general opinion of Darwin's poetic gifts, and though his account of his way of perusing his friend's poem does not indicate any uncontrollable ardour in reading poetry, it is likely that Darwin's

1 *Erasmus Darwin*, by Ernst Krause. Translated from the German by W. S. Dallas, with a preliminary notice by Charles Darwin (1879), p. 92.

2 "Though I have read the page on the Slave-trade, and the eulogy on the divine philanthropy of a Howard, and a little more; yet I have
unhappy plan of dressing up scientific ideas in a garb of figure and personification exactly hit his notion of what poetry ought to be. For the strongest bond between the two men was clearly their common interest in every kind of scientific "improvement." Their earlier correspondence turns habitually upon Wedgwood’s experiments and schemes. Darwin took a vigorous part in promoting the Trent and Mersey Canal Scheme and its extension to Birmingham; it is in this connection that, in 1765, his name first occurs in Wedgwood’s extant correspondence. A little later he is designing a new type of windmill for grinding colours, "if it sh’d happen to grind anything," comments Wedgwood, in reporting this, with the half-scepticism of the practical man; ¹ a few days later, however, after a close examination of it at Lichfield, he finds it "a very ingenious invention," and has "some hopes it will answer our expectation." ² Later on, as we have seen, it was to Darwin that Wedgwood confided one of the earliest copies of the Portland Vase. Still later we find him designing a new type of lamp, which Wedgwood proposes to

not finished this delectable morsel, and indeed I am afraid of devouring it too hastily, and thereby shortening a pleasure wh. I wish to be as lasting as it is exquisite." To Darwin, March 7, 1789.

¹ March 8, 1768, to Bentley.

² Ibid., March 15. This invention of Darwin’s was afterwards taken in hand by Edgeworth and James Watt (Wedgwood to Bentley, July 25, 1779), and erected at Etruria. Darwin himself had long before given up wind as a motor power in favour of Watt’s idea of steam. "Your windmill sleeps at my house, but shall be sent you, if you wish it; but I sh’d advise you to wait the Wheel-Fire-Engine, wh. goes on slowly." Darwin to Wedgwood, October 1771 (quoted, Meteyard, ii. 210).
BAS-RELIEF MEDALLION OF ERASMUS DARWIN.

Dr. Hooker's Collection.
execute. A common interest in coach-building first drew Darwin and another member of the Wedgwood circle together; and in 1772 the latter writes to Bentley obviously fascinated by Darwin’s device of spring-spokes, “each in the shape of the line of beauty,” and thus combining easy motion with “a most elegant appearance,” which had just been carried out by a Lichfield coach-builder. Few of his inventions were permanently adopted, but his mind teemed with projects, and he left a huge commonplace book crowded with sketches and descriptions,—a manifold writer, a knitting loom, a weighing machine, a flying bird, and many more.

In studies more akin to his own special province of medicine Erasmus had original ideas, in which modern biologists have recognised prognostications of the discoveries of his grandson. “Almost every single work of the younger Darwin,” says Krause (p. 182) in the little treatise to which the Memoir cited above is a preface, “may be paralleled by at least a chapter in the works of his ancestor.”

Much of Darwin’s contemporary celebrity was due to his vigorous and somewhat formidable powers of self-assertion. At Lichfield he was the centre of an effusive coterie of admirers. Miss Seward, who might be called their leader if she were not suspect of desiring to pose rather as a rival literary magnate, has drawn his portrait in her grandiose manner, and in particular described his conversation, which was of high repute. She has not the pen of a Boswell, and

1 To Darwin, Dec. 27, 1786.  
2 Ibid., Dec. 31, 1772.
her specimens of his wit are chiefly specimens of ill-nature, but they show a power of prompt repartee, and in general a ready command of both the pepper and the salt of talk. One surmises that the power was as often used to give pain as pleasure. "Conscious of great native elevation above the general standard of intellect," she says, "he became, early in life, sore upon opposition, and always revenged it by sarcasm of very keen edge. Nor was he less impatient of the sallies of egotism and vanity, even when they were in so slight a degree, that strict politeness would rather tolerate than ridicule them. Dr. Darwin seldom failed to present their caricature in jocose but wounding irony."¹ That paints a conversationalist almost as formidable as his great fellow-townsman, and without the reactions of tenderness which soften the asperity of Samuel Johnson. The mutual animosity of Johnson and Darwin perhaps testifies to that neighbourhood of taste to conscience by which we dislike another person's faults most when they are also our own, even though we do not recognise them in ourselves.

But if his talk sometimes wounded, he carried into the whole of his active life the aims and habits of the healing profession. "The term benevolent," says Charles Darwin, "has been associated with his name, almost in the same manner as that of 'judicious' with the old divine, Hooker." "Diligently," says Miss Seward, "did he attend to the health of the poor and supplied their necessities of food, and

¹ Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin, by Anna Seward, pp. 2, 8 (1804).
all sorts of charitable assistance." Strange stories were told of the gratitude of some recipients of his benevolence; a highwayman bent on robbery let him pass as soon as he recognised him, and informed him when the Doctor paid him a subsequent visit in prison: "You saved my life many years ago, and nothing could make me rob you." A less romantic, but better authenticated, story is that of a jockey, who, when Dr. Darwin was attending one of the Cavendish family at Newmarket, came to his bedside at dead of night and said: "I durst not come to speak to you during the day. I have never forgotten your kindness to my mother in her bad illness," and then proceeded to give him information as to the coming race which, he learned subsequently, would have enabled him to make heavy gains if he had betted upon it.¹

Darwin was twice married, and both marriages were in the sequel important for posterity, as well as, incidentally, for Josiah Wedgwood. His first wife, Mary Howard, a girl of seventeen, died before she was thirty, in 1770. Their three sons were all of intellectual distinction; one of them, Robert, became the father of Charles Darwin. Eleven years after her death, Darwin married Mrs. Chandos-Pole, a young and wealthy widow whom he had professionally attended and also, in his capacity of local laureate, platonically sung. Mrs. Darwin declining to live at Lichfield, they moved first to her seat at Radbourne Hall, and then to Derby, his home for the remainder

¹ This story was carefully examined by Charles Darwin, and allowed to stand in his Memoir.
of his life. Here other children were born, of whom one, Violetta, became the mother of Francis Galton. And here he enjoyed, in the later 'eighties and 'nineties, the sweets of literary renown, which even Canning's famous parody damaged but did not destroy.

The second Mrs. Darwin was not an intellectual woman. Miss Seward describes her with a favourable pencil, which is magnanimous if, as there is reason to believe, she had wished to take her place. It is from the sub-acid tolerance of a younger friend, and one who was to succeed to her name, that we gather a rather less attractive impression of her. Susan Wedgwood (b. 1765), before her marriage to Robert Darwin, visited much at Derby, and we find her extricating herself from invitations to Radbourne with the expressive decision of seventeen: "Mrs. Darwin's hours do not suit me." The elder lady persevered, however, and the two became friends, but the curtain of Wedgwood's death falls between us and them before their closer connection.

Dr. Robert Darwin lived till 1849 and is, with one exception, the only person in this book whom the present biographer can be said in any sense to have known. His character left a vivid impression on every one with whom he came in contact. It was not always an agreeable impression; he was irascible, sometimes unreasonable and exacting, often formidable to his juniors, and capable of making himself so to his patients, —a power which he often used to their great advantage. He certainly could inspire dislike. As all readers of his son's biography know, he
could also inspire warm love. I remember well the glow with which one of his daughters, who had preferred remaining with him to entering a home of her own, said to me, in a somewhat lonely old age—"But I am glad my happy time came in youth, when I had my father." And I remember an expression of his enjoyment in his son's company, which strikes me as more like maternal than paternal love. "I must have Charles for my own private eating," he said to this daughter when there was a question (I suppose) of some other visit coinciding with that of the well-beloved son, of whose fame he never lived to know, and who heard of his death with poignant grief. For my own part I remember the days I spent under his roof and in the beautiful garden as the happiest of my childhood; and when I went again after his death, still almost a child, much as I felt the charm of the place and its inhabitants, I had a sense, very rare after the death of an aged person, that the spirit of the house was gone.

The elder Darwin's friendship with Wedgwood only grew more intimate with years. Both before and after his removal to Derby the two households were in frequent intercourse, and Wedgwood's letters often interpose in the midst of their technical discussions, playful details about wives and daughters, plum puddings and mince-pies; and "the Etruscans" at large send friendly messages to "the Darwinians." Darwin was also, as will be seen, chief adviser, with Bentley, in all educational matters. The following letter of Darwin's may illustrate their
friendship at the moment of Wedgwood’s most harrowing loss:

**Lichfield, Nov. 29, 1780.**

**Dear Sir—** Your letter communicating to me the death of your friend, and I beg I may call him mine Mr. Bentley, gives me very great concern; and a train of very melancholy ideas succeeds in my mind, unconnected indeed with your loss, but which still at times casts a shadow over me, which nothing but exertion in business or in acquiring knowledge can remove. This exertion I must recommend to you, as it for a time dispossesses the disagreeable ideas of our loss; and gradually their impression or effect upon us becomes thus weakened, till the traces are scarcely perceptible, and a scar only is left, which reminds us of the past pain of the united wound.

Mr. Bentley was possessed of such variety of knowledge that his loss is a public calamity, as well as to his friends, though they must feel it the most sensibly! Pray pass a day or two with me at Lichfield, if you can spare the time, at your return. I want much to see you; and was truly sorry I was from home as you went up; but I do beg you will always lodge at my house on your road, as I do at yours, whether you meet with me at home or not.

For my own part, too sensible of the misfortunes of others for my own happiness, and too pertinacious of the remembrance of my own [i.e. the death of his son Charles in 1778], I am rather in a situation to demand than to administer consolation. Adieu. God bless you, and believe me, dear Sir, your affectionate friend,

E. Darwin.

Fifteen years later Darwin had to write a similar letter on the death of Wedgwood himself. It will be seen that the curious experimenter, who crept insidiously into the earlier letter,
breaks out openly in the later. On March 13, 1795, he wrote to his friend Lovell Edgeworth:

DEAR SIR—I beg your pardon, for not immediately answering your last favour, which was owing to the great influence the evil demon has at present on all affairs on this earth. That is I lost your letter and have in vain looked over some scores of papers.

The telegraph you described, I dare say, would answer the purpose. It would be like a giant wielding his long arms and talking with his fingers; and those long arms might be covered with lamps in the night. You should place four or six such gigantic figures in a line so that they should spell a whole word at once; and other such figures within sight of each other all round the coast of Ireland; and thus fortify yourselves.

The death of Mr. Wedgwood grieves me very much, he is a public, as well as a private loss. We all grow old but you! When I think of dying it is always without pain or fear.

Adieu, your sincere and affectionate friend,

E. DARWIN.

Eight years after this, on April 18, 1803, Darwin himself died suddenly, leaving a characteristically light-hearted letter to Edgeworth unfinished on the table.

Of all the group of friends we are now considering the life of Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744–1808) was the most varied and most full of incident. The following extract from his garrulous but interesting Autobiography places us in the midst of the society of keen and curious intellects in which both he and Wedgwood moved.

"It was a society," he says, "which combined Mr. Bolton, Mr. Watt, Dr. Darwin, Mr. Wedgwood,
Mr. Day, and myself, together—men of very different characters, but all devoted to literature and science. This mutual intimacy has never been broken but by death; nor have any of the number failed to distinguish themselves in science or literature. Some may think, that I ought with due modesty to except myself. It is not my object to write the lives of the gentlemen, whom I have named as my particular friends; but I cannot refrain from noticing the great variety of intellect, which they possessed. Mr. Keir, with his knowledge of the world, and good sense: Dr. Small, with his benevolence and profound sagacity: Wedgwood, with his unceasing industry, experimental variety, and calm investigation: Bolton, with his mobility, quick perception, and bold adventure: Watt, with his strong inventive faculty, undeviating steadiness, and unbounded resource: Darwin, with his imagination, science, and poetical excellence: and Day, with his unwearied research after truth, his integrity and eloquence:—formed altogether such a society, as few men have had the good fortune to live with; such an assemblage of friends, as fewer still have had the happiness to possess, and keep through life."

In this group Edgeworth, although belonging to a somewhat different class of society, moved on intimate, and, as he certainly never doubted, on equal, terms. He was an Irish landowner and M.P., but also, in desultory succession, carpenter, clock-maker, machinist, telegraphist, and engineer, and in all these arts he must have gained a respectable facility. His mechanical inventiveness came to his aid repeatedly, if we may trust his own report, as a resource in emotional crises. He beguiled the repentant leisure which followed an undergraduate marriage by making an orrery; and when a hopeless love further complicated
the situation, he went abroad and offered his services to the authorities of Lyons for carrying out a diversion of the river channel. But in 1773 the unloved wife died, and Edgeworth, still young, promptly married Honora Sneyd and settled down at Lichfield. It was during the next year that he made the acquaintance of Wedgwood.

With Edgeworth, Wedgwood carried on during the last twenty years of his life an intercourse analogous to that with Darwin. In his case, too, a friendship originating in common scientific interests quickly grew into an intimacy in which both families shared. They first met, it is probable, at the Birmingham "Lunar Society," the focus of "philosophic" inquiries in the Midlands in the 'seventies and 'eighties. His name first occurs in Wedgwood's correspondence in 1771, when Wedgwood, writing to Bentley, declines "with thanks to Mr. Edgeworth" a modeller whom the latter had recommended to his partner. At this date Edgeworth was evidently more nearly acquainted with Bentley than with his friend, and may not have been personally known to the latter at all. But in August 1777 Edgeworth and his wife spent some days at Etruria Hall, and Wedgwood, after the visit, communicates his impressions to Bentley, in terms which suggest that he was now making his closer acquaintance for the first time.

"Mr. Edgeworth you know, and his turn for mechanics. He is very sensible, acute, and lively. Has many excellent notions of education, and manners in general, with the nicer refinements and delicacies
necessary to give the last finish and gout to the agreeables and pleasures of human life. He entertain'd me very much with an account of Mr. Elers's family,"—in particular with the sensational story of the marriage of his first wife's father, which Wedgwood retails at length to Bentley.¹

Return visits at North Church, Edgeworth's home, follow; in December of the same year Susan ("Sukey") Wedgwood, a child of twelve, is their guest, and Edgeworth delights the parents with "flattering and pleasing" opinions of their daughter's disposition and gifts;² while she herself, in a letter to her father, gives us a vivid glimpse of her host "singing all the day from morning to night," in his new-found happiness as the husband of Honora Sneyd.³ A little later we have a momentary glimpse of Edgeworth's eldest daughter, the future novelist, who, in January 1781, was a guest of the Wedgwoods.⁴ Edgeworth's matrimonial vicissitudes from time to time give him occasion for condolence or congratulation. The potter was not a great hand at these performances, but neither was the recipient an inviting subject for them. Few would have found it easy to congratulate a man on marrying the sister of his second wife six months after her death; or to condole with him on that death when it was announced to him in a sort of postscript to an order for her medallion.⁵

¹ Wedgwood to Bentley, Aug. 29, 1777.
² To Bentley, Dec. 29, 1777.
³ Ibid., Dec. 27, 1777.
⁴ To Edgeworth, Jan. 27, 1781.
⁵ The letter, as quoted by Wedgwood to Bentley, May 10, 1780, is something of a curiosity. After explaining that he has been deterred from ordering "Etrurian" pottery because he has "not been treated in two different capacities, as a stranger and a friend," he proceeds:
In return, Edgeworth's son, Lovel, wrote a set of verses on the Portland vase (1791) by which Wedgwood seems to have been much gratified.

Of their exchanges of "philosophical" ideas, without which no correspondence in this circle of eighteenth-century virtuosi would have been complete, a few letters only bear record. The most important (in October 1791) subjects to good-natured demolition two of Edgeworth's tentative projects;—that of "aerating" the Matlock waters, by which he thought they might be made equal in medicinal value to those of Pyrmont; and a like ingenuous scheme for using pottery as roofing material, coloured to resemble slates or tiles. On one subject, at least, however, Edgeworth's virtuosity was based upon genuine, extensive, and varied practice,—the bringing up of children. His theories of education, with the books for children in which they were applied, reflect, like the more famous Sandford and Merton of his friend Day, the educational ideals with which Emile in 1762 had captivated progressive men and sensitive women in England as in France and Germany. Wedgwood mentions the enterprise to Bentley, again with a touch of his good-natured sarcasm.

"Let me address this letter to the firm of W. & B. to ask whether I can have 12 profiles of my dear Mrs. Edgeworth done in white on pale blue from a profile by Mrs. Harrington and an excellent picture by Smart. I lost her Sunday. And you both know she is a real lose to Yr frd R. L. E."

In November of the same year he married her sister Elizabeth at the earnest solicitation, it is said, of Honora; but only after difficulties with the clergy.
Mr. Edgeworth has begun upon a suite of books for little children. The first is in the press at Lichfield. He begins with them at 6 years old, how far he means to proceed with them I do not know—whether to 10, 20 or 60 I know not.\(^1\)

Darwin and Edgeworth, though of better education and higher social standing than Wedgwood, were, in mechanics and industry, merely clever amateurs. But his circle of friends included also some of the most brilliant and original inventors of that inventive age. Two of them, Matthew Boulton and James Watt, were also practical manufacturers like himself, who turned their ideas to account, as he did, for his own and eventually for the world's industry. The third, whose field of practice was only his own laboratory, but who evolved there results which made his name famous throughout Europe, stands between the groups, and may serve to connect them.

The name of Joseph Priestley is always mentioned by Wedgwood with a certain reverent enthusiasm. "I must only think of snatching a taste of such highly flavoured viands" as a visit from Priestley at Etruria, "once or twice in an age or so," he writes to Bentley in March 1779. Their friendship had originated, apparently, in a common interest in Warrington Academy, where Priestley from 1761 to 1767 held office, an institution which in its brief existence of thirty-two years (1757–1789), probably drew to itself more illustrious names than any other in eighteenth-century England within the

\(^1\) Wedgwood to Bentley, Dec. 19, 1779.
CAMEO MEDALLION OF DR. PRIESTLEY.

Mayer Collection.
same space of time.¹ It had been founded by the Liberal Dissenters of Lancashire and Cheshire—a highly cultivated body of men—to provide a quasi-university training in default of that from which they were still excluded. Priestley, as tutor, was already on friendly if not intimate terms both with Bentley, the foremost of the Liverpool supporters of the Academy, and with Wedgwood, before the friendship of the two latter began. In 1765 we find Wedgwood concerning himself to get notices of Priestley’s work inserted in the leading journals.

In September, 1767, Priestley quitted his tutorship at Warrington, to resume the ministerial calling at Leeds, where he continued his chemical experiments. The position was financially unsatisfactory, and he exchanged it after six years for that of librarian and literary companion to Lord Shelburne. Wedgwood viewed the change with some concern.

“I am glad to hear of Dr. Priestley’s noble appointment,” he wrote to Bentley, October 4, 1772, “taking it for granted that he is to go on writing and publishing with the same freedom he now does otherwise I had much rather he still remained in Yorkshire. I rejoice too on your account, as you will have one more of your friends within reach, to enjoy and converse with occasionally.”

¹ The students from first to last numbered only 898 all told. The teaching was carried on by a group of scholarly and unworliday persons: Dr. Taylor of Norwich, Dr. Aikin, and a little later, Joseph Priestley, who set an example of plain living and high thinking to an extravagant and sensual age. They attracted visitors eminent as themselves; Howard, the prisoners’ friend, sought literary aid at Warrington from the younger Dr. Aikin; Roscoe, the biographer of Leo X., acquired there a taste for Botany. It was there that Priestley himself—who held the Chair of Polite Literature—was drawn to science by the lectures on Chemistry given by Dr. Matthew Turner of Liverpool, the eminent surgeon who later attended Wedgwood after his accident.
Wedgwood's anxiety concerning the influence of Priestley's position at Bowood and Berkeley Square on his pneumatic researches was happily needless; his time was much at his own disposal; and some of his most memorable discoveries were made here. In Lord Shelburne's company he enjoyed some of the best advantages of an aristocratic position—foreign travel, association with all that was distinguished in French society, where his scientific eminence won pardon for his earnest Christianity—and at home the wide and varied circle of his own friends already described. But the position was not altogether congenial to him, and one surmises that amid grand company and sumptuous surroundings he often sighed for his evenings with Aikin at Warrington. After seven years, the peer and his "literary companion" dissolved their partnership without bitterness, but, on Priestley's side, without regret, and he refused subsequent appeals to return to it.

Then came, in 1780, that memorable settlement, nominally as a minister at Birmingham, which Priestley tells us that he considered "the happiest event in his life." He here at once became the most eminent member of the group of scientifically-minded men who formed the "Lunar Society" already referred to. Besides Birmingham residents like Boulton and Watt, its meetings drew kindred spirits like Enfield and Darwin from places as distant as Lichfield; and Wedgwood from Etruria occasionally attended. At times a famous stranger came to the meetings. Priestley himself has left the most heartfelt
tribute to the intellectual zest of these meetings, written when, for him, their memory alone remained.

"There are few things," he wrote in 1798, "that I more regret in consequence of my removal from Birmingham, than the loss of your Society. It both encouraged and enlightened me; so that what I did there of a philosophical kind ought in justice to be attributed to you almost as much as to myself. From our cheerful meetings I never absented myself voluntarily, and from my pleasing recollection they will never be absent. . . . Politicians may think there are no objects of any consequence besides those which immediately interest them. But objects far superior to any of which they have an idea engaged our attention, and the discussion was accompanied by a satisfaction to which they are strangers." 1

No Boswell recorded the talk; but a letter from Watt gives us a glimpse of the course of discussion on one, as it happens, of those less profitable occasions to which every informal gathering is liable, where there is no President to check irrelevance, or silence a bore. On an October night in 1782 the Lunar Society had a distinguished guest—John Smeaton, whose great work, the Eddystone lighthouse, had then withstood the storms of nearly a quarter of a century.

He [Smeaton] grows old, & is rather more talkative than he was, but retains in perfection his perspicuity of expression and good sense. He came to the Philosophers' meeting at my house on Monday, & we were receiving an account of his experiments on rotatives and some new ones he has made, when unluckily his facts

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1 Preface to his Experiments on the Generation of Air from Water, dedicated to the Society.
did not agree with Dr. Moyes the blind philosopher's theories which made Moyes contradict Smeaton & brought on a dispute which lost us the information we hoped for, & took away all the pleasure of the meeting, as it lasted 2 hours without coming half an inch nearer to the point.

Such trials were the shadow side of a brotherhood, more gossipy perhaps, but also more genial and neighbourly than the scientific associations of a later day.

Wedgwood had regarded Priestley's settlement at Birmingham, as he had done his previous appointment, with some anxiety on his behalf. If he had more leisure he was likely to have narrower means, and the claims of the pulpit might withdraw his attention from science to "studies less worthy of his genius." ¹ His faith in Priestley's powers of discovery had recently been fanned to an extreme pitch by the chemical lectures of Warltire, at Etruria, who spoke of him and his experiments in the highest terms and pronounced him "the Newton of his age." ² When, in June of the following year, Priestley had settled in Birmingham, his new friends there formed a plan for a subscription which might contribute to safeguard his precious leisure. Wedgwood heard of this from Bentley with the liveliest joy.

I need not say to you how much I am rejoiced to hear of the liberal plan adopting by his friends in order to

¹ To Bentley, June 1780.
² Ibid., March 1779. These lectures were organised by Wedgwood, who brought "his Jack" and Robert Darwin to hear them; both boys caught the infection of the new science.
place the Dr’s mind in the situation it is best suited to, & best for us all it sh’d be in—nor that I shall be happy in throwing in my mite, nay I shall think myself very highly honor’d in being permitted to unite with this illustrious band, & methinks the only difficulty they can be likely to meet will arise from the restraint they will find themselves under the necessity to put upon the currents that must be open’d & flow in upon them on this glorious occasion.

Their common zeal for the Priestley “subsidy” also drew closer the bond between Wedgwood and his distinguished fellow-manufacturer, Boulton. He explains his mind more fully in the following letter to him, March 10, 1781:

Our good friend, Dr. Darwin, agrees with us in the sentiment, that it would be a pity that Dr. Priestley should have any cares or cramps to interrupt him in the fine vein of experiments he is in the midst of, and is willing to devote his time to the pursuit of, for the public good. The Doctor will subscribe, and has thought of some friends who he is convinced will gladly do the same. You will see by the enclosed list that one cannot decently exceed ten guineas [i.e. as an annual subscription] unless it be under cover of a friends name, which method I shall take if I think it necessary to write more than ten; but that is the subscription I shall begin with and for three years certain. Dr. Darwin will be very cautious who he mentions this affair to, for reasons of delicacy which will have equal weight with us all. I mentioned your generous intention to Dr. P., and that we thought of £20 each; but that you will perceive cannot be, and the Doctor says much less will suffice, as he can go on very well with £100 per annum.

Boulton replied with hearty sympathy, but his more delicate tact evidently demurred to
Wedgwood’s frank explanation of the intended subsidy to the object of it:

I have never yet spoken to him on the subject, & wish to avoid it. I beg that you will manage the affair so that we may contribute our mites to so laudable a plan without the Doctor knowing anything of the matter.

"The Doctor" was, however, naturally well aware of what was going on. It was with a desire to acknowledge these efforts of his "friends and benefactors" that he wrote, as he tells us, his Autobiography. In the list of them given in the Preface, Boulton's name does not occur. He is evidently referred to among those "who without choosing to be known as such, contributed no less to my support, and some considerably more." ¹

To Wedgwood’s energetic initiative Priestley pays a warm tribute: "Mr. Wedgwood who has distinguished himself by his application to philosophical pursuits, as well as by his great success in the improvement in his machinery, was very zealous to serve me, and urged me to accept of a much larger allowance than I chose."

Priestley’s actual work at Birmingham Wedgwood probably did not, however, follow very closely. But the Etruria works continued to supply, free of cost, whatever apparatus of earthenware Priestley required. Of his experiments and discoveries Wedgwood received early reports; but the letter of October 19, 1788, in which he thanks him for them remains isolated,

¹ *Life of Priestley*, by Rutt, i. 215.
and one may surmise that in spite of the play there made with "phlogiston" and other conjuring terms of eighteenth-century chemistry, he scarcely followed Priestley's thought.

Nine months after the date of that letter occurred the first thunder of the storm which was eventually to break up this circle of "philosophers," and banish the chief among them from his adopted town and the ruins of his home.

Up to the date of the fall of the Bastille there was no conspicuous divergence on questions of politics between Priestley and any large portion of his countrymen. His position, if democratic on the whole, was in no sense extreme. He was, as a Dissenter, necessarily hostile to the Anglican Church, but in the earlier part of his life his Nonconformity was not aggressive. His moral energy had too absorbing pre-occupations in other directions. During his sojourn in France with Lord Shelburne an abbé declared that he was the only person he had ever known who was both a believer in Christianity and a student of science. Throughout his Warrington period, at all events, whatever passion he manifested in the cause of his co-religionists, was provoked rather by their exclusion from the universities than from any deeper ground of division.

The great events of 1789 abruptly changed all this. New emotions, new hopes, new hatreds suddenly started into life. Men were no longer Englishmen or Frenchmen so much as for or against the Revolution. Before the second anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, Tom Paine had formulated in his Rights of Man a new
theory of the morals which France was translating into action, and the contagious nature of which was being recognised alike by those who exulted in it and by those who abhorred it. It was the celebration of this second anniversary at Birmingham which resulted, as is well known, in the destruction of Priestley's house, with its priceless contents—library, manuscripts, and scientific apparatus. The raging and plundering mob, many of them too drunk to escape from the flames they themselves had kindled, cannot have been deeply concerned with the controversy between Burke and Paine, but the remembrance of 1780 should have taught both sides that much inflammable rubbish may be as full of danger as a little gunpowder. Priestley had indeed on the advice of his friends absented himself from the memorial dinner in 1791, but his whole previous demeanour made his attitude unmistakably clear.

Wedgwood's sympathies were, of course, substantially with Priestley. But I think one may detect a certain embarrassment or wariness in his letter of condolence. He laments the loss his friend has sustained "from the brutality—or rather let us hope the temporary insanity of your neighbours."

If they had arisen merely from the ungovern'd madness of a mob from the lowest order of our species one would then lament its effects like those of a hurricane, but if there is reason to believe that the rabble were acted upon and encouraged to such proceedings by those who should be their superiors, one cannot but perceive the too evident spirit of the times, or of the place
at least, by which you and so many of your worthy neighbours have suffered.

But any doubt as to Priestley's wisdom was far from bringing a chill into his sympathy.

"Instruct me in the means of being of service to you," he exclaims, "and I shall esteem it one of the strongest instances of your friendship."

"Your very kind and acceptable letter was very welcome to me," writes Priestley in answer. "The shock was very great, but I thank God I have been able to bear it without any loss of health, or indeed of spirits. I begin to suffer most from want of employment and absence from my family. My wife behaved with the greatest heroism at the time but continuing in the neighbourhood and hearing continually of the bad spirit that prevails in the place her mind begins to be affected by it."

Later, he wrote consulting Wedgwood as to the policy of publishing his Appeal on the subject of the riots.

Some of my friends in Birmingham, viz. Dr. Withering, Mr. Keir and Mr. Galton, think that it had better be suppressed, or published with many alterations by way of softening. In this state of suspense I beg your perusal of it and your free opinion. I think that if I write at all it should not be with less spirit than I have usually shown, and that there is nothing more violent or offensive in this than in several of my preaching publications. But as others are interested in the event of this publication I am willing to be guided by them.

Wedgwood's answer to this letter seems to me marked by so much wisdom and courage, as well as true friendship, that I think it worth while to give the bulk of it here.
As you desire my free thoughts, I will give you them as they arise in the course of my reading, only begging you will not expect me to enlarge upon, or even to mention, the parts which I admire, for in that case I should have a volume to write; I shall only point out a few instances where, if I had been present at the time of writing, I might have ventured to propose some alteration.

"Nothing now remains but to charge me with a robbery or house-breaking; and then, on such evidence as that on which the preceding & many equally false allegations gained credit, I may by a Warwickshire jury, be legally convicted & executed; the principal people of Birmingham not interposing to procure me a pardon." In works of mediocrity, & where the subject is not of itself highly interesting, such a species of spirit as this paragraph contains might not be amiss; but here both the author & his subject are above it, & I hope therefore that those parts of the paragraph which contain either general reflection or what may be deemed sarcasm, will be omitted or new modelled.

Ibid. "If I be so formidable an enemy to the Church and the state as I have been represented, let those who call themselves the friends of the Church & the king invent their lies, & forge their letters, for this purpose, & not merely for burning my house, my library & laboratory. This was like shaving the lion's beard, which will grow again, when with the same razor, & with much less trouble, they might have cut his throat."

May not this idea give a mischievous hint to some future mob? We only shaved his beard before, they will say; but now we will take his own advice, & do the business effectually.

54. "When the dissenters were friendly to what is usually called government, our rulers were glad enough to avail themselves both of our pens and our swords." I am not certain that I understand this passage. Govern-
ment, it is true, has not been so kind to dissenters in some instances as to grant their requests, which we think it not only might have done with perfect safety, but ought to have done, we having a claim to it as a matter of right: we therefore say that government has not been friendly to us in these instances; but is it the same thing to say that government is not friendly to us, as that we are not friendly to government? I think it will not be understood so, & that this will be considered as an acknowledgement of our not being now friendly, & consequently of our being inimical to the present government; & when this is said by a person of Dr. Priestley's importance among the dissenters, it will be taken for granted that he has good grounds for the assertion, & that the majority at least of dissenters are of this description. I must therefore say, that I either mistake, or disapprove, this expression.

69. "If a small part of the community be held out, or imagined to be held out, as unworthy of protection, they will be considered as in a state of proscription, & proper objects of persecution, exposed to every insult; & they will have no resource but in temporary self-defence & final emigration. Measures, I hear, are actually taken by the dissenters in some parts of the kingdom to provide themselves with arms, & emigrations are seriously intended by many." I know nothing of the facts; but in my opinion the bringing of the idea forward can do no good, & may be productive of much mischief. "What! our enemies will be ready enough to say, are they begun to provide arms! then it is time for us to follow the example," &c., &c. so that this single paragraph may serve for a declaration of war, & I hope it will be omitted.

84. "The worst that my enemies can say of me is that I wish to set up a republican form of government; but this is at least some form of government, whereas those who planned, & directed the proceedings at Birmingham went by no sort of government at all." You
cannot mean to admit that your enemies may with truth say this of you, for that must imply, that you wish our present constitution not reformed, but overturned, as one cannot be set up, without the other being first set down, & I am, as I believe you are, very far from wishing to see either. I know there must be a mistake, either in the text or in my understanding of it, & I should be glad to know where the mistake lies.

I hope you will pardon the liberty I mean to take of keeping your Appeal a few days longer, that I may have time to read some parts over again. I have taken the liberty you gave me of offering my thoughts freely, as they are intended for your own inspection only.

Priestley modified several of the sentences to which his friend objected. His position during the following months grew only more isolated. The distinctions he received from France—in particular the invitation, in September 1792, three weeks after the massacres, to accept a seat in the National Convention, did not contribute to his relief. In the neighbourhood of London he found no sympathy, even from a fellow-explorer of gases. His heart turned to his home at Birmingham. "One of the things I most regret in being expelled from Birmingham," he writes to Withering, "is the loss of your company & that of the Lunar Society. My philosophic friends here are cold and distant. Mr. Cavendish never expressed the least concern on account of anything I had suffered, though I joined a party with which he was and talked with them some time." If Cavendish knew of Priestley's reply to the National Convention, courteously declining the honour on the ground of his imperfect knowledge of French, and written only a fortnight
before this complaint, his coldness is explicable. The emotions of horror and compassion roused by every post from Paris at that time were hardly consistent with much sympathy even with the just claims of men who made terms with the Revolution. There is no reason to suppose any estrangement between Priestley and Wedgwood. But no further record of their intercourse, if any there was, during the remaining three years of Wedgwood's life, remains.

The name of Matthew Boulton, whose share in organising Priestley's subsidy has been noticed, holds a place in the annals of Birmingham not less distinguished than his own. Wedgwood, at a moment when he was feeling his rivalry keenly, called him the first manufacturer in the kingdom; and whether we look to enterprise, originality, thoroughness of method, or care for his men, he deserves the title beyond question. In 1765, when his name first occurs in the Wedgwood-Bentley correspondence, he appears as the chief promoter, with Samuel Garbett, in the Birmingham district, of the Trent and Mersey Canal. He was already one of its leading men. The son of a wealthy maker of trinkets, he had received a good education, and afterwards made an aristocratic marriage. In 1759 he began to build, on the barren slopes of Soho, the great factories which in 1765 were just complete. Here he turned out an immense variety of metal products,—bronzes, vases, candelabra, gold and enamel ware,—of an artistic and technical
excellence then unapproached elsewhere. It was his honourable ambition to wipe out the bad reputation of Birmingham as a producer of shoddy goods. He studied the tastes and fashions of other countries, and largely achieved the desire which he expressed to the traveller Wendler of manufacturing for the whole of Europe. A brilliant offer to settle in Sweden was unhesitatingly declined. He anticipated by several years the fame of Wedgwood in Russia.

With such a man, akin to him in work and aims, with yet larger horizons, and a personal magnetism to which, with all his engaging geniality, the homely potter could hardly lay claim, Wedgwood was bound to make acquaintance. In May 1767 he spent a few days with Boulton at Soho.

"He is very ingenious, philosophical, & agreeable," he writes to Bentley. "You must be acquainted with him. [Bentley therefore at this date was not.] He has promis'd to come to Burslem, & w'd attend our congress [a meeting of W. and B.], but this year he is too much immers'd in business to indulge he says in anything else. There is a vast difference betwixt the spirit of this man & . . . , though both of them have behaved exceeding generously to me in offering me every improvement they could furnish me with."

Boulton no doubt appreciated the importance of Wedgwood's work, for in the following spring he propounded to him a scheme for combining their forces.

"On Friday morning," he reports to Bentley, "I arrived at Soho, & spent that day, Saturday, & half of Sunday with Mr. Boulton, where we settled many important matters, & laid the foundation for improving
our manufacture & extending the sale of it to every corner of Europe [clearly a Boulton trait!]. Many of our ornamental articles will be finished to great advantage with works of Metal, printing upon them with Purple & Gold, which he will undertake to execute, & shew'd me some specimens of his printing with Gold which are really admirable.”

By November the scheme is matured; the two manufacturers are together in London, and Wedgwood betrays some uneasiness in the masterful grip of his colleague. He writes to Bentley in Liverpool:

Mr. Boulton is picking up Vases, & going to make them in Bronze. . . . He proposes an alliance betwixt the Pottery & Metal branches, viz. that we shall make such things as will be suitable for mounting, & not have a Pott look, & he will finish them with the mounts. What do you think of it?—Perhaps you wd rather he wo'd let them alone. Very true, but he will be doing, so that the question is whether we shall refuse having anything to do with him, & thereby affront him, & set him of doing them himself. . . . If we join with him in this scheme, I apprehend we can always bind him to us by making him such things as nobody else can, & thereby making it his interest to be good.

Mr. Boulton & I go a curiosity hunting all day to-morrow, we begin with a visit to Ld Shelbourne & shall then proceed—the Ld knows where, for I cannot yet tell you. . . . Mr. Boulton has not yet sent any of his things to St. James's. He soars higher, & is scheming to be sent for by his Majesty! I wish him success,—he has a fine spirit, & I think by going hand in hand, we may in many respects be useful to each other.²

March 15, 1768. ² Wedgwood to Bentley, Nov. 21, 1768.
In the end, nevertheless, the scheme broke down. Early in 1769 Boulton ordered some vases from Etruria. Wedgwood accepted the order with evident reluctance, and delays apparently occurred which led Boulton, in February, to cancel it, take the matter into his own hands, and make the vases himself. Originally, these were to be of enamel, a branch of his own manufacture. But by September Boulton was proposing to make them of earthenware, to become a potter himself, and building works for the purpose. It was this report, received from one of his subordinates who had just visited Soho, that called forth one of Wedgwood’s most characteristic letters, and his most heartfelt tribute to his great rival:

They [Boulton and his men] talked . . . in the style & manner of Rivals to us, big in their own conceits, with some mighty blow their uplifted hands were prepared to let fall upon us,—so stand firm my friend, & let us support this threatened attack like Veterans prepar’d for Every shock, or change of fortune that can befall us—if we must fall,—If Etruria cannot stand its ground, but must give way to Soho, & fall before her, let us not sell the victorie too cheap, but maintain our ground like Men, & indeavour, even in our defeat to share the Laurels with our Conquerors.—It doubles my courage to have the first Manufacturer in England to encounter with—the match likes me well—I like the Man, I like his spirit.—He will not be a mere snivelling copyist like the antagonists I have hitherto had, but will venture to step out of the lines upon occasion, & afford us some diversion in the combat.  

1 Wedgwood to Bentley, Jan. 8, 1769.
2 Wedgwood to Bentley, Sept. 27, 1769.
Here for the present the closer relations of the two men ended. But each respected the other too highly to quarrel. Towards the end of 1770 both firms were proposing to take showrooms in the Adelphi. Boulton was reported to “have expressed a good deal of pleasure that we were likely to be such near neighbours.” Wedgwood, with his usual caution, weighed somewhat anxiously whether the close conjunction would be to the advantage of his own wares, expressing very succinctly the strong points of both as they appeared from the latitude of Etruria:

We agreed that those customers who were more fond of show & glitter than fine forms, & the appearance of antiquity, w’d buy Soho vases, & that all who could feel the effects of a fine outline & had any veneration for antiquity w’d be with us.¹

Wedgwood’s contrast between the rival wares, though doubtless somewhat too unfavourable to Soho, answers in some degree to the contrast between the two men themselves. Each had set the stamp of his own mind upon work consciously devised only to hit the tastes of the world. Wedgwood, though no recluse, and the most hospitable of men, had simple tastes, and disliked the show and glitter of society in which Boulton, with his seigneurial disposition and connections, moved at ease. Some years later, after paying a chance visit to Soho, he wrote to Bentley:

Found Mr. Boulton at home, but was just going to drink Tea, & spend the evening at Mr. Fothergill’s. . . . They were to have Music & very grand doings which he

¹ Wedgwood to Bentley, Dec. 24, 1770.
press'd me very much to partake of, but I prefer'd a quiet evening at the Castle, & a little Conversation with my dear Friend. . . .

They had, however, much common ground. During the next decade they stood side by side in promoting both one of the most generous and one of the most perverse of Wedgwood's aims: the Priestley subsidy, as already noticed, and the resistance of the manufacturers to the Free-Trade Resolutions of Pitt.

Among the influences which brought about the vast development of Wedgwood's business, the stimulus of the enterprising genius of Matthew Boulton must certainly be reckoned. Though little older he came into the field far better equipped both with educational and material resources, and from the first led the way. Soho served in many points as a model for Etruria. In one remarkable feature Wedgwood, however, failed to follow Boulton's admirable lead. He was apparently the first to carry out a systematic plan of industrial insurance. Every workman at Soho had to contribute a fixed proportion of his wages as insurance in case of accident or need. The scheme seems to have worked excellently; "it was only," says Smiles, "in the case of irreclaimable drunkards that any member of the Soho Friendly Society ever came upon the parish."

1 Wedgwood to Bentley, Oct. 25, 1776.

2 Cf. Wedgwood's significant letter of July 14, 1776, reporting Boulton's energetic and successful dealings with the Russian court, as described by his partner Fothergill. "You see," he comments a little enviously, "they have carried into execution what we have only talked about, and will profit by it, so surely as Princes love flattery."
A vivid portrait of Wedgwood's great rival has been left by Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, an aunt of Francis Galton, who, as a little girl, met the members of the Lunar Society in the house of her father. "Mr. Boulton," she says, "was one of those whose characteristics I clearly recollect. He was in person tall and of a noble appearance; his manners were eminently open and cordial; he took the lead in conversations, and with a social heart had a grandiose manner like that arising from position, wealth and habitual command. He went among his people like a monarch bestowing largess. . . ." ¹ He had, moreover, and it was one of the secrets of his success, the gift of discerning, often under unpromising exteriors, the qualities he wanted in his helpers. Two men of genius owed a great part of their success to Boulton's insight and faith. William Murdock, the builder of the first locomotive and the inventor of lighting by gas, came to him a shy and awkward youth, twirling his hat as he asked for an engagement. And he provided the conditions which made available for the industrial world the unassuming genius of Watt.

James Watt, two years younger than Wedgwood, was already over forty when, so far as we know, they first met. His great invention, in its first crude form, had been effected by 1764; his first patent was taken out in 1769, but thirteen years of experiment and improvement were to elapse before he could patent his further

¹ Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck, p. 40 (1858).
discovery, the application of steam to circular motion, which finally opened the way to steam machinery. Despondent, shy, and with small resources, it was his good fortune to encounter two men who perceived the value of his ideas and were ready to devote their capital and machinery to putting them in operation. His first association with John Roebuck led to the erection of the first steam-engine, near Edinburgh, in 1769; but further progress was cut short by Roebuck's bankruptcy in 1778. It was now that Matthew Boulton stepped in. More efficient driving power was a chief need at Soho, and Boulton, already interested in Watt's scheme, proposed to Roebuck to take his place in the partnership. In 1774, accordingly, Watt and his engine removed to Soho. The enterprise proved immensely costly; only the large profits of the older branches of Boulton's manufacture enabled him to support them, and the firm was more than once in danger of bankruptcy. Vexatious litigation added to the embarrass-ment. Finally, in 1781, the new engines began to attract wide and eager attention: "The people in London, Manchester, and Birmingham are steam-mill mad," Boulton wrote to Watt; and by 1786 the firm had fully recovered its position.

Watt first met Wedgwood, probably, in 1770. He was already acquainted with Boulton, Darwin, and others of the Birmingham philosophers, and had so far indoctrinated the inventor of the colour-grinding windmill with his ideas that Darwin wrote to Wedgwood, as we have seen,
advising him to wait till wind was superseded by the greater power of steam. Wedgwood was, however, slow to grasp the possibilities of the new power. So late as 1779 Darwin's abandoned windmill-grinder, reconstructed by Watt, was set up at Etruria; and it was only in 1790 that a steam-engine of a few horse-power was at length installed there. Of Wedgwood's intercourse with him few important traces remain. One of these concerns the year 1781, when Watt was in Cornwall, contending with the reluctance of the Cornish mine-owners to introduce his new steam-pumps, and their still greater reluctance to pay for them. Wedgwood, who had investments in Cornish mine property, visited him there in October, not without an eye to by-products of value for his own craft. He found Watt even more than usually preoccupied with the defects of the human instruments he had to employ. "I cannot now leave Wheal Virgin a single day," he wrote to Boulton, "without running the risk of some vile blunder. Wm. Murdock was at Wheal Virgin one day this week, and that day was taken up with Mr. Wedgwood so that it was partly lost." A day or two later (October 18) the visit was repeated. Wedgwood had been "in this country some days hunting clays and soap rocks, cobalt, etc. I have had two visits of him at the expense of a day and a half. Nevertheless I don't grudge that, as I am glad to see a Christian."

To the genial and buoyant mind of the potter the brooding and pessimistic genius of Watt was clearly something of an enigma, and he was not
among the few who penetrated to its sequestered recesses,—to the unsuspected accomplishments, for instance, of the seemingly unpolished man. The impression which Watt left upon ordinary observers is well given by Mrs. Schimmelpenninck in her contrasted portraits of the two partners, as she saw them at the Lunar Society.

"Watt," she says, "was one of the most complete specimens of the melancholic temperament. His head was generally bent forward or leaning on his hand in meditation, his shoulders stooping and his chest falling in; his limbs lank and muscular, and his complexion sallow. Whilst Mr. Boulton's eye and countenance had something of radiance, Mr. Watt's were calm, as if patiently investigating or quietly contemplating his object. His utterance was slow and unimpassioned, deep and low in tone with a broad Scotch accent; his manners gentle, modest, and unassuming. In a company where he was not known he might have tranquilly passed the whole time in pursuing his own meditations." "Tranquillity," however, ill-expressed the temper of the man. He saw life as a continual battle, in which he was continually being worsted. It was his mission to fight with Nature, a jealous and grudging power, whose "weak side" it was his business to find out; and his doom to fight with men, who regularly made him their dupe. He surveys his own brilliant achievements with the bitterness of one looking back over a wasted life. In 1769, when

1 Huxley similarly conceived the operations of the man of science as "a game of chess" with Nature, whom it was his business to outwit. Cf. Mr. Jacks' discussion of this attitude in the *Alchemy of Thought*, p. 244.
he was about thirty-three, and had half a century
of fruitful activity before him, he writes dolefully:
"I am not near so capable as I was once. I
find that I am not the same person I was four
years ago when I invented the fire-engine. I was
at that time spurred on by the alluring hope of
placing myself above want, without being obliged
to have much dealing with mankind, to whom I
have always been a dupe." In March 1770 he
writes in the same strain: "It is a damned thing
for a man to have his all hanging by a single
string. If I had wherewithal to pay the loss I
don't think I should so much fear a failure, but
I cannot bear the thought of other people becom-
ing losers by my schemes, and I have the happy
disposition of always painting the worst."

Wedgwood had his own prescription for his
friend. In a letter of 1782 he conveyed it to him
in his frank and kindly way. "Your mind, my
friend," he wrote, "is too active, too powerful
for your body, and harasses it beyond its bearing.
If this was the case with any other machine under
your direction, except that in whose regulation
your friends take so much interest, you would
soon find out a remedy. For the present permit
me to advise a more ample use of the oil of delega-
tion through your whole machinery. Seriously,
I shall conclude in saying to you what Dr.
Fothergill desired me to say to Brindley, 'Spare
your machine a little, or like others under your
direction, it will wear out the sooner by hard and
constant usage.'"

This, be it remembered, was the counsel of a
man who had never spared himself, and knew
how to "throw" as well as the best of his hands. Yet his skill in using the "oil of delegation," when needed, was one of the secrets of the smooth efficiency with which on the whole the wheels of Etruria ran.

Wedgwood's personal relations were determined, in the main, by common zest for the practical arts. But ardent as his professional interest was, he had too large a share of genial and robust human nature to be incapable of friendship where this common ground was absent. Ralph Griffiths, publisher and editor of the *Monthly Review*, was ten years his senior (b. 1720), and became known to him first as an intimate friend of his brother John. He is now remembered only as the hard employer and rather sordid host who in 1757 took Goldsmith into his house for a few months as hack-writer for the *Review*. The angry eloquence of a man of genius has left an indelible stain upon the memory of Griffiths; but it ought not to be allowed alone to determine our impression of him. A shrewd man of business, with little feeling for letters, but a keen eye for men, he yet had the gift of friendship, and the warm affection in which he was held by men of such intellectual and moral calibre as Thomas Bentley and Josiah Wedgwood, must be held to qualify appreciably the inferences we are inclined to draw from the humiliating experiences of Goldsmith. The *Monthly Review* itself, which he carried on for more than half a century, performed services to English literary

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1 He founded it in 1749, and handed its conduct over to his son in 1800.
opinion for which the man who organised its publication and controlled its policy, must be allowed some credit. Dr. Johnson, moreover, himself a political antagonist and supporter of its rival, the Critical Review, paid a deliberate tribute to its excellence. In the course of the conversation in 1767, between two old-fashioned Tories, George III. and Dr. Johnson, "the King asked him," says Boswell, "if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the Monthly and Critical Review, and on being answered there were no other his Majesty asked which was the best. Johnson answered that the Monthly Review was done with most care, the Critical upon the best principles; adding that the authors of the Monthly Review were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear."

Griffiths may have known the Wedgwood family all his life, for he began life as a watchmaker at Stone within a drive of the Potteries, and the earliest mention of his name in the Wedgwood correspondence suggests an old friendship with the family. "I hope," Josiah writes to John on February 16, 1765, "you will carry Mr. Bentley to Turnham Green [the residence of Griffiths] & am well assured those two Geniuses will be highly delighted with the interview. I insist whenever that happens that I am considered as present in spirit though alas absent in body. I can hardly conceive a Scene I sho'd be better pleased in partaking of, but I am going to be very busy." Not too busy, however, to follow these London meetings with unfailing
interest. "Your feast at Turnham Green," he writes on March 11, "was just what I expected from the meeting & collision of such Geniuses as were there assembled. How happy sho'd I have been in partaking of so instructive & elegant an Entertainment! but alass I must be content with fashioning my clay at an humble distance from such comp'7. And live, breathe, and dye among animals but one remove above the earth they are teazeing." Not certainly a deliberate expression of his view of life, but a vivid utterance of a passing mood in which the interests of a more intellectual and leisurely career glimmered before him and drew his fancy into a realm higher and finer than that where in fact he was well content habitually to dwell.

Griffiths, as has been said, was an intimate friend of John Wedgwood, and the letter he wrote upon his death to Josiah, as we gather its contents from the latter's moving reply, could not have come from a man of cold or shallow heart.

"My dear friend," Wedgwood wrote from Burslem, July 4, 1767, "I am very thankful for your most friendly & affectionate letter (it has answer'd the purpose you kindly meant it to do, that of comforting your friend in distress) which I read over many times a day, & esteem it as a pledge of the most valuable offer you could make me—a larger share in your Generous & Benevolent heart. —And will you then admit me into that circle of your friends, who are the fewest in number, but who have the greatest share of your affection?—No other will now content me, or do anything towards repairing that breach, the late Melancholy event has made in mine. . . . Our worthy & amiable friend Thomas Bentley too must
be one with us in the closest bonds of Amity, let us be nearer & dearer to each other than ever."

Even Bentley came second at that moment; the last words included him, but did not start from him; some knowledge, some regret, was common only to the other two. Every scrap of intercourse of which any record remains testifies that the promise was faithfully kept. It is seldom that a friendship between two busy Englishmen exhibits such capacities for sympathy both with profound grief and with healthy commonplace happiness.

For the most part their extant correspondence touches the latter mood. With none of his friends was Wedgwood so entirely at ease. Of Bentley's finer culture and higher station he stood, even at the height of their intimacy, a little in awe; but Griffiths had risen to importance from small beginnings, like himself, and he lets loose his vein of homely chaff upon him without restraint. The following, to Bentley, is a pleasant example of Wedgwood's humour. Griffiths had been paying a visit to the Potteries, but found himself unexpectedly detained.

Burbslem, 19th Sept. 1766.

Our dear friend Griffiths hath left this dirty spot of Earth (as it appeared to his elevated mind) & this morning took his flight to the realm above.

The rainy weather we have had for some days past affected him greatly, & increased the malady which we expected would seize him about this time, & by his frequent desire of being shifted from place to place, attended with sudden starts, & other bad symptoms, plainly indicated that he could not continue long with us.
We spent the evening with him at Newcastle last night when he appeared to be much better, but this alas! was only the last blaze of an expiring Taper, for this morning his disorder return'd upon him more violently than ever, & a violent fit he was seized with held him, as we say, from seven O'Clock in the morning till near two in the afternoon when he departed suddenly, & left us to lament the loss of our much lov'd friend.

The plain matter of fact is, he waited, impatiently enough, so long for your Machine, which not appearing at seven hours after its usual time, he got into a Chaise, determining to be at any expence rather than be kept another day from his beloved Turnham Green.

A few later letters remain to us, all in the vein of this last one. They repeat the humorous urgency with which Bentley had been entreated to enter the marriage state, and glow with sympathy in his friend's happiness when this has been achieved. His first daughter is bespoken for the second Josiah Wedgwood, now an infant in his mother's arms, and the letters overflow with the careless banter of intimate confidence.
CHAPTER X

WEDGWOOD AND HIS CHILDREN

We have now reached the most important but the least fully recorded relationship of Wedgwood's life—that to his children. And here, although not one word remains from either father or children that is otherwise than affectionate, and every mention of the young people's education bears token of his wise and sympathetic care, it is with something of disappointment that we look back on the lives of his three sons. None of them carried on his work; the eldest, John, quitted it for banking; the other two, Josiah and Tom, though nominally remaining in the business, lived the lives of country squires. That, it may be said, was their fault, not his. Opinions will differ as to the responsibility of parents for such deviations; but considering what Wedgwood was, the position he had gained, and the energy and spring of his character, I cannot but feel that his ample endowment of his sons with material wealth might have been accompanied by conditions binding them more definitely to the work which he had created.

Whatever the cause of the failure, indolence
and indifference had no part in it. Wedgwood’s management of his sons’ education was as unlike as possible to that of the conventional British parent, who, having chosen a good school, gives himself no further trouble beyond paying school bills till the time comes for choosing a college. Having found reason to believe that school life was unfavourably affecting the health of his sons, he forthwith brought them home, and undertook the task of arranging for their education there.

The three boys were, at the date of this decision, in 1779, respectively thirteen, ten, and eight years old. They had all been sent in succession to the same school, one of high repute kept by Philip Holland, at the busy manufacturing town of Bolton. Holland was a Unitarian minister, for some years previously known to Wedgwood and, like himself, of strong “American” sympathies. He was one of those, we gather, who refused to illuminate their houses for the capture of New York, November 1776, at the risk of violence from the “patriotic” mob. John, at this date, had been for some little time with Holland, and the father, in a letter of the previous August, had desired that he should “proceed in the way he is in, with Latin, French, writing, and drawing.” “Joss” was to follow in the ensuing year, and even little Tom, in after life the most brilliant of the sons, and already, it would seem, in advance of his five years, “wished

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1 Cf. letter of May 1772, when Wedgwood visited the school where he meant to send “Jack” “when there was a vacancy”; carrying Holland and his wife back to tea with other friends at Manchester. Also one of July 15, 1774, describing a hospitable day at Etruria, when Holland and his wife were among the twenty guests.
THE WEDGWOOD FAMILY.
Painted by George Stubbs. 1780.
to accompany his brothers, and will be a pretty little sort of a scholar by midsummer."  

In October 1779, Wedgwood heard from Mr. Holland of Joss's illness. He and his wife started immediately, notwithstanding the machine-breaking riots then rife, and brought the invalid, together with his younger brother, home. They were three days on the road, "as our poor fellow could not bear travelling expeditiously," and the leisurely journey afforded opportunity for serious reflection. What was school doing for the sick boy? It had clearly done little for his body: was it doing any real service to his mind? Above all, was it fitting him for the work of life? It seems to have been the first time such questions had presented themselves to the father at all urgently, and he resolved to take time to consider them. The schoolboys' trunks were sent for, the remaining seven or eight weeks of the term were given up, and the next three months at any rate were to be passed at home. But Josiah Wedgwood would not contemplate a quarter of a year's idleness for his sons. Home and school were to be combined; and almost immediately it occurred to him that the arrangement might be permanent. "I believe," he writes to Bentley on October 9, 1779, saying curiously the opposite of what he means, "the truth is that they have more business, confinement, and phlogisticated air than their machinery can dispense with, and how to remedy this evil,

1 Nov. 1776.  
2 i.e. deoxygenised, exhausted. "Phlogiston," "the combustible principle," was conceived as a sort of negative of oxygen, combined with it in the composition of the air.
and give them such an education as the fashion of the day requires, I am utterly at a loss to determine. . . . You are an adept in this science, and if you will have the goodness, some time at your leisure, to communicate a few hints to me I shall be very thankful for them." Bentley was to Wedgwood an oracle on every subject; and he apparently approved the home school plan, for the boys did not return to Bolton, nor apparently to any other school.

Wedgwood intended his boys to go into the business, and his educational ideals, even relative to that end, were far from ambitious. "Mr. Byerley," we learn, was to be "prevailed upon to give them some lessons in Latin; and for english, french, writing, accounts, and drawing, we must make the best shift we can amongst ourselves." "Riding, running, and other bodily exercises," one is glad to hear, "make a considerable part of our schooling and entertainment." Perhaps Wedgwood remembered the Warrington Academy, a pioneer in physical exercise as in some other things.

Bentley's approval of this plan was soon confirmed by the yet weightier sanction of Darwin. And he, the only scholar among the three men, pronounced strongly against the inclusion of Latin.

"He thought it a very idle waste of time," Wedgwood tells Bentley, "for any boys intended for trade to learn Latin as they seldom learned it to any tolerable degree of perfection, or retain'd what they learnt.—Besides they did not want it and the time wd be much better bestowed in making themselves perfect in French and
accounts. He advises me not to send them again to Bolton but to teach them what we can at home and then send them to some French academy, unless we can get a French prisoner or some such opportunity of teaching them the French language here."¹

Dr. Darwin's advice in regard to Latin clearly reinforced the natural bias of a self-made man of business against "ornamental studies." But Bentley, a man of business like himself, was apparently in favour of some Latin, and Wedgwood revolved the problem with conscientious care for many days. The following letters disclose some of his reflections; they also indicate the smooth and healthy working of the home-study plan.

ETRURIA, 21st Nov 1779.

I am very much oblig'd to you for your kind and friendly letter of the 11th. The subject (the education of my boys) is a very interesting one to me, and more particularly at this time when decisive measures are become necessary in that respect, and I own I am not fully prepar'd at present to determine upon the propriety or probable utility, of making them such Latinists as to induce them to read, and relish the classics in their own language. I am convic'd of the advantage such an education might be of to them and am only weighing what it would cost to acquire and keep it up. I need not tell you that when I talk of cost money does not enter into my ideas. No it is far more precious stuff, which I have neither paper nor time to state to you in the manner I wish to do.

ETRURIA, 23rd November 1779.

My boys are quite stout and well, and we have form'd a pretty regular school.

¹ Nov. 8, 1779.
Before breakfast we read English together in the newspaper, or any book we happen to have in the course of reading. We are now reading Ferber's travels, with the globe and maps before us. After breakfast they go and write an hour with Mr. Swift and with this small portion of time, and writing their French exercises and entering some experiments which they make along with me: all which I insist upon being written in a fair legible hand, they have improv'd more in writing in these few weeks here, than they did in the last twelve months at Bolton. After writing, if the weather permits, they ride, or drive their hoop, or jump over a cord, or use any exercise they please for an hour, and the remainder of the day is fill'd up with two French lessons, and Mr. Swift attends them here an hour in the evening for accounts, in which their sister joins with them; and we have agreed to add four Latin lessons a week to the above business, for which Mr. Byerley, and Mr. Lomas have kindly offer'd their assistance. This last is intended only to prevent their losing what they have already learnt, till I have decided upon this part of their learning.

I believe a school education has many advantages over a family one, for boys in general, but this, like other general rules, admits of many exceptions, some of which take place with my young men. Their constitutions are not of the Herculean stamp, and tho' pretty well in general, require more attention than can be paid to them at a public school. They must there be dosed alike in their learning, food, and confinement with boys of the most athletic make, whether such doses be too little, or too much, too weak or too strong, and whether they agree or disagree with them: but at home I can regulate the food and exercise both of their bodies and minds (I beg the minds pardon) as I find they can digest it, and add to, or diminish from either as I find it necessary.

Another material consideration for me in favor of an Etruscan education is, that their morals will be in better hands than at a public school, and one may daily, and
imperceptibly be furnishing their tender minds, as they expand and open for instruction with such raw materials as one wishes them to improve and cultivate in future life. Besides, I can be instructing them, even by way of play and amusement, in the rudiments of chemistry and give them a turn to such studies, and enquiries as are most likely to be of use to them in their particular occupations; or if these are not determin’d, find out the bent of their minds, and what walk in life may be most suitable for them.

ETRUBIA, 28th Nov 1779.

I will just mention a few of the advantages and disadvantages of a latin, and classical education as they occur to me, for boys intended for genteel business, or manufacturers, but not for what are called the liberal professions of Law, Physic, Divinity or the Army.

They would know their own language as well as the latin grammatically. May not this be acquir’d in English? The acquisition of classical knowledge is another advantage which I apprehend may be obtain’d from our excellent translations.

The opportunity of reading all the untranslated Latin authors would perhaps be no great object, and the German wou’d still be locked up to a mere Latin scholar.

The additional knowledge of the derivation of words, and some assistance in spelling, is acknowledged; but this is learning a thousand things to make use of one.

That a knowledge of the classicks is highly ornamental, in classical company and conversations, and that it may be usefull in the knowledge of inscriptions, motto’s, and Latin quotations I grant in its fullest extent; but diamonds may be too dearly purchas’d, nay, may become ridiculous, when ostentatiously display’d, out of place, and character; and even pernicious, when they take up that time and attention which should be bestow’d upon more substantial objects.

I estimate the learning of a language equal to an apprenticeship, or learning a business at least; and
therefore a serious matter where time is properly estimated. Seven years, a lawyer would tell us, is a large portion of a life, and should not be misapplied.

That time must be employ'd in education which should be devoted to learning a business, I mean from about 14 to 20, and what is more unfavorable still to the latter, the ideas of a long school and classical education, and the company kept, and habits acquir'd there, are almost incompatible with a life of drudgery, as it might be deem'd by a fine classical gentleman, and application to business afterwards.

It seems probable that in answer to the last letter Bentley may have touched on the future social position of the youths. Would they, without classics, find it easy to hold their own as "gentlemen" in the conventional sense? If this was his suggestion his partner hardly took in his full meaning. Wedgwood was always somewhat indifferent to such considerations, and his answer shows a certain ignorance of their real value. "To clear the ground so far," he continues (December 19), "we will suppose that Jack is to be settled as a gentleman farmer in some desirable situation. Joss & Tom to be potters, & partners in trade. Tom to be traveler and negociator, and Joss the manufacturer." He looked upon his sons as succeeding to much the same position as he had reached himself, and there is no sign that he ever for a moment felt the want of a classical education—not even when he narrowly escaped impressing a grotesquely ungrammatical Latin motto on the seal which was to celebrate the completion of the Trent and Mersey Canal. Not that he was wanting in respect for literature; on the contrary,
as we have seen, he bought books eagerly. "My wife says that I must buy no more books till I build another house: and advises me to first read some of those I have already. What nonsense she talks sometimes," he laughingly concludes.¹ But the "nonsense" was not very untrue to his own thought. A classical education meant for him, in the main, access to a number of other books, which the owner of an English library, well filled but unread, could easily do without. His own eminence in his art enabled him largely to triumph over the disabilities of his own education. But to ordinary men, in days when government and administration were wholly in the hands of men of public school and university training, to be without a tincture of the classics was to be heavily handicapped in society and in politics. If Wedgwood hesitantly dropped classics from the educational curriculum of his sons, he made with confident enthusiasm a far bolder innovation. Thirty years before Shelley stole precious hours for the forbidden study of chemistry at Eton, Wedgwood had openly organised lectures on it at Etruria. Professional interest quickened scientific curiosity in him; for chemical analysis promised, even then, to furnish the potter both with new materials and new processes. In February of this year, 1779, accordingly, he and Dr. Darwin arranged, as we saw in Chapter IX., to interpolate a short home study of the new and fashionable science in the school lives of their sons, then still at Bolton. Wedgwood, it will be recalled, had

¹ To Bentley, Dec. 1779.
induced a friend and coadjutor of Priestley, Warltire, to deliver a course of lectures at the Potteries, and had succeeded in obtaining for him a pretty good audience, whose zeal, however, to his great disappointment, did not go beyond three lectures a week. He would have liked one every day! John, then about thirteen, was sent for from school, and was joined at Etruria by Darwin's son Robert.

"My Jack & this young Doct [that] is to be," Wedgwood writes to Bentley on February 25, "have both taken the infection very kindly. They both attend Mr. Warltire every morning for private instruction which is of much greater consequence to them than the public lectures. I too am a lecturer in my turn, & have the place of sec[retary] to their private experiments. . . ."

"The boys drink in knowledge like water," he writes triumphantly on March 7. "Jack is very deep in chemical affinities, & I have no fear of his making a tolerable progress of the science, for it is much pleasanter to him than grammar."

Towards the close of the year the equipment of the little home school of cousins and friends at Etruria received an important addition by the appointment of a young Frenchman as tutor. Darwin, who strongly advocated French studies, as we have seen, had the largest share in bringing this step about. In December the boys had gone for a return visit to his house in Lichfield. Several French prisoners of war were then living on parole in the town. One of them, a M. Potet, was engaged by Darwin to teach French and drawing to his children and his young guests. Shortly before Christmas Wedgwood went to
fetch his sons home, and was so far impressed by the young tutor that he sought to engage him for Etruria. He gives Bentley an amusing account of young Potet's qualifications.

Their French master is a young man not twenty, was surgeon of a merchantman, but fell in with two of our privateers before he had been five days at sea, & that being his first voyage he is no very old sailor. He knows about as much of surgery as sailing, & had no relish for the sea. He therefore wishes for another situation, & has no objection to staying in England. He teaches French I believe, & can draw very tolerably. . . .

Bentley appears to have had misgivings. The young Frenchman might corrupt the morals of Etruria, or steal its trade secrets. On the latter head, at least, Wedgwood was entirely at ease. "I should be as little afraid of this young man as any I ever saw as a spy upon a manufactury: because I do not think he has a single manufacturing idea about him." As a teacher of French, however, he had already achieved results which deeply impressed the Etruria household. "Joss has learnt so much French chiefly under him in three weeks at Lichfield that he construes the language & reads it in English to the astonishment of his sister Susan & us all."

Potet, accordingly—who had meanwhile got an "exchange," but preferred to accept his English post—returned with the family to Etruria, as tutor at fifty guineas a year. In letters of about the same date to Darwin and to

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1 To Bentley, Dec. 18, 1779.
2 Ibid., Dec. 27, 1779.
3 Ibid.
Bentley, Wedgwood describes his plan in detail; and it is clear that he meant his tutor to be both liberally treated and fully employed. Potet doubtless boarded, but did not sleep in the house. His scheme for the day's work is worth reproducing:

One day's schooling for our own five scholars.¹
Rise at 7 in winter when I shall ring the school bell & at 6 in summer. Dress and wash half an hour.
The boys write with Mr. Swift one hour along with Mr. T. Wedgewoods.
The little girls an English lesson with their nurse in the school, which happens to be a room near the nursery.
Breakfast—as school boys.
9-10 French.
10-11 Drawing.
11-1 Riding or other exercise which will include gardening, Fossiling experimenting &c. &c.
Susan fills up these intervals with music besides her exercise.
From 1 to dinner at half past 1, washing, &c. in order to be decent at table.
Half past 2 Latin one hour.
Then French one hour & conversation in the same in the fields, garden or elsewhere as it may happen half an hour to 5 o'clock.
From 5 to 7 exercise, bagging,² &c.
At 7 Acc¹⁸ &c. one hour—Supper & to bed at 9.
The little lasses I had forgot they must have two more English lessons in the school, & Kitty as much French as she can bear.

¹ Besides Wedgwood's five children, Potet was to attend four at Mr. T. Wedgewood's close by, while two clerks were also to go for French lessons to his rooms.
² "'Bagging. Used in the northern counties of England for food eaten between regular meals; now, especially in Lancashire, an afternoon meal, 'afternoon tea' in a substantial form" (New English Dictionary, s.v.).
The plan was arranged on the assumption, and with the view, as we have seen, that the sons were to be business men, Joss and Tom in their father's works. But the habits of business—the fixed hours, punctually observed, in a place sharply distinguished from home—were to be impressed no less on the "little lasses."

I would instil an early habit of *going to school at stated times* in the youngest of our scholars, as it will make it so much easier to them as it seems a necessary and connected part of the routine or business of the day. My young men are quite orderly in this respect, since I let them know that it was indispensible, & they are very good in keeping my eleventh commandment—*Thou shalt not be idle.*

The plan was not entirely adhered to, for John went back to Bolton for six months, and possibly learnt some Greek there. It will be seen that Wedgwood had not persisted in his doubts about Latin, and he gladly accepted a little later the offer of Mr. Lomas, the Unitarian minister at Newcastle, to take this class.

The school, as might be expected from the composition of its staff, did not work quite smoothly. Potet, like many later French masters, had difficulties with his English boys. In February 1780 we find Wedgwood writing to Bentley:

Our French master wants very much to be set right in his behaviour to his pupils. He plays his authority away in a boyish manner & then is oblig'd to establish it again for want of knowing a better way by thrashing the boys. I shall endeavour to reclaim him with all the temper I am master of but if I do not succeed I am
determined to part with him as I will not admit of his striking the boys again upon any pretence though I do not mean to tell them so much.

But ten days later he writes: "My french master has promis’d me to be more regular, & at the same time looks so good that I am apt to believe him." At the same time he reports general progress in French: "We have begun that language at table, & shall introduce it in a few days at school. We already market in french, & we shall certainly be great adepts before Mr. Potet leaves us." ¹

The paucity of letters after Bentley's death at the end of this year prevents our tracing the later progress of the "School." But in September 1785, it was still in vigour, all six children attending it, and the sole tutor—Wedgwood's secretary, Alexander Chisholm—being far too valuable to be spared.² Between that date and 1790 Joss and Tom were students at Edinburgh.

This account of the home school at Etruria will not, I think, seem too lengthy to any one who will consider how much it unfolds of Wedgwood's character. For a busy and self-made man to plan all the details we have reviewed, and to watch over their practical execution, implied no little both of independent thought and of will; he had his reward in the enjoyment by his sons of some happy and healthful years, at a time when many of their contemporaries

¹ To Bentley, Feb. 27, 1780.
² To Dr. Austin, Oxford, Sept. 27, 1785. Chisholm was a practical chemist.
groaned under a brutal tyranny. On the other hand, one is conscious that with all his educational ardour, he takes his task somewhat lightly. The search for a teacher, which might well have formed the occupation of weeks, issues in the adoption of the first convenient stop-gap; he chooses his sons’ instructors with less scrutiny and delay than he would have thought well spent in the selection of a skilled workman. His own schooling had ended at nine years old, and the active mind which had enabled him to make good so many of his early disadvantages, blinded him to the fact that there are defects in educational method which cannot be repaired.

Of all the six children of Josiah who grew to maturity,¹ the only one lacking in some kind of impressiveness was his eldest son. Yet John has left a monument of himself in the Royal Horticultural Society, of which he was the founder.² In March 1804 there met at his suggestion, in Hatchard’s shop, a little gathering of whom the most distinguished was Sir Joseph Banks. From their discussion sprang a society, formally incorporated in 1809, and destined to confer on the art of plant culture something of the dignity of a fine art.

The next brother, Josiah, was a man of much

¹ Two, Richard and Mary Ann, died in infancy.
² He is described in The Life of Sir Joseph Banks, by Edward Smith, pp. 260-261, as “John Wedgwood of Betley in Staffordshire, a gentleman devoted to horticulture and a good naturalist, a friend of T. A. Knight”—the latter a man of similar interests and larger means of gratifying them, as he became the owner of 10,000 acres on which he tried many experiments to the advantage of the orchard and kitchen garden. Betley was the village in which the John Wedgwoods took a small house on the loss of their fortune.
stronger character than John. But what is most interesting in what remains to be said of his subsequent life is closely involved with the life of his younger brother Tom, whom he loved with devoted affection, and will be best told in that connection. Theirs, while Tom lived, was almost a dual life. An episode of his early manhood, however, has an interest of its own, in which Tom played no part, and may be told mainly in his own words. It belongs to the short period of his participation in his father's business, towards the close of the most brilliant chapter in its history, that which was occupied with the reproduction of the Barberini or Portland vase. In June 1790 Joss and Tom Byerley were despatched on a tour among the Courts of Holland and Germany with the object of exhibiting the vase, and obtaining orders for other copies. The quest was not very successful; in the first year of the French Revolution royal personages were disinclined to spend even £50 on a replica of a relic of antiquity, however beautiful. But the young men were amiably treated, and saw much society, largely through the kindly offices of Lord Auckland, the English ambassador at the Hague, with whom, as William Eden, Wedgwood had had friendly relations in connection with the French treaty four years before.

A slight difference arose at the outset between the father and son. A friend of the latter, a Mr. William Sneyd of Belmont, had offered to join the expedition. He had evident linguistic and other qualifications, and the young man urged his father to accede.
JOSIAH WEDGWOOD (II.)

From a plaque modelled by Hackwood.
He would be very useful in travelling, for from his long residence in Berlin he speaks German and I believe that he speaks it well. You know too that he is of mild and gentlemanly manner, and I think there are no objections to him that would not be equally strong against any third person not connected with the business.

A more temperate, not to say tepid recommendation could not be, but the elder Josiah foresaw difficulties in the presence of a man of family in the party, and beneath the deference of his son's reply I think we see a little annoyance at the strict distinction drawn by his father between himself and "a gentleman." The letter brings out much that is fine, as well as something that is weak, in the character of the younger man. Like most sons of self-made men, he showed himself sensitive to social distinctions, to which his father was robustly indifferent.¹

Josiah Wedgwood, Junior, to Josiah Wedgwood, Senior.

ETRURIA, June 7, 1790.

DEAR SIR—I have no more desire myself to make our journey a journey of pleasure, than you have that it should be so, and I am very sensible of the strong distinction kept up on the continent & especially in Germany, between men engaged in business & gentlemen—but I do not at present see that all those disagreeable consequences which you are afraid of, would follow our having a gentleman in our company. Even if they did follow I think W. S. is more concerned in them than Mr. B. & myself. In the first place I have no wish to go into any company where I must assume any other

¹ "The students here," he had once written to his father from Edinburgh University, "are not very genteel; the Divinity students are the dirtiest set I ever saw; a company of old potters look like gentlemen compared to them."
character than my own, to be treated with respect, and I see very little probability in a tour of business of our having much opportunity of entering into the society of the little gentlemen—I say little in opposition to the Princes and greater nobility.

W. Sneyds intention is certainly to accompany us in the whole of the tour and he is fully apprized of our views. He has been long enough in Germany to know whether he chuses to go along with us in the character of manufacturers and consequently to submit to all the inconveniences attending such a character.

I should think that a strong representation of the dryness of such a journey to him might perhaps cause him to decline it—if it did not I should feel myself in an awkward situation & should hardly know how to refuse his company without giving him offence which I should be extremely sorry to do. Perhaps you and Mr. Sneyd might settle that matter better than W. S. and myself.

Give our love to all & believe me, Your affect & dutiful son,

Josiah Wedgwood.

Probably the elder Josiah acted on the opinion of the last sentence, for we hear no more of Will Sneyd of Belmont.

The two cousins, Joss Wedgwood and Thomas Byerley, started, then, at the end of June 1790 for the Hague. Even so short a voyage might be, in those days, a very unpleasant experience. Joss, though very sick, preferred spending the night on deck under the shelter of the Etruria travelling-chaise to seeking that of the cabin, and another sick passenger, the subsequent Lord Liverpool, of fourteen years’ premiership, now a youth of twenty, was thankful to accept his hospitality in the chaise and the self-denial of Byerley, who made way for him and lay on deck in the rain. The two young men had afterwards
an opportunity of pursuing their acquaintance in more propitious circumstances at the ambassador’s table. Joss seems to have been impressed by his cousin’s unselfishness, and “has the pleasure to say that he has caught no cold.”

The second part of the voyage from Helvoet to Rotterdam was more agreeable. Their experiences at the Hague may be told in his own words.

Josiah Wedgwood, Junior, to Josiah Wedgwood, Senior.

HAGUE, July 4th, 1790.

DEAR SIR—We arrived very safe at an excellent inn & acquainted Lord Auckland immediately of our being here & asked him when we should wait on him. He desired to see us immediately or early in the morning. I mean to be very particular in my account of his behaviour to us as I am sure you will be much pleased to find that he acts here as well as else where as a very good friend to you. We found him & Lady A. at breakfast & both very well. Lady A. looks I think better than she did 4 years ago. We shewed the vase & they were both very well pleased with it & Ld A. began very soon to form a plan for shewing it in the most respectable manner. He wrote immediately to the Princess of Orange inclosing a catalogue & begged to know when he might bring us to her to shew the vase. She appointed this evening at ¼ past 7 which Ld A. says is a great favor as this is a week of devotion when I believe they are very strict as they are in Scotland in the sacrament weeks. His Lordship asked us to dine with him on the same day Mr. B. did not go having a headache but I met there Mr. Jenkinson who came over in the same packet, Mr. Stanley to whose father you had shewn the vase in London & Mr. Crawfurd the British minister at Rotterdam. He invited us to dine with him again to-day which we did & met Lord Henry Spencer & Mr. Jenkinson. In the evening Ld A. took Mr. B. & myself
in his carriage to the Princes summer retreat about a mile from the Hague, called the house in the wood—where we shewed the vase to the Prince, Princess,¹ & their eldest son & daughter. Lord Auckland took upon himself the office of Cicerone & gave a very good dissertation upon it, insisting much upon the merit of the nuances. The princess of Orange said a few words to me about the journey that we were to make & asked if we had any thing else with us. The Prince on coming in spoke in english & either took Mr. Byerley or me for you—he said "I have known you by your works but not personally before." He afterwards asked me in French where the Manufactory was—how far from London & how long it had been carried on to all which I answered in french & Ld Auckland told me I spoke pretty well for a beginner. Lord Auckland then begged of the Prince & Princess to breakfast with Lady Auckland tomorrow which they have promised to do & he has invited about 50 of the first people here to breakfast at the same time & there is to be a display of the Vase in one room & of the rest of our patterns in another.

It is impossible to conceive more friendly behaviour than that of Ld A. to us & we must be very suspicious not to believe that he is sincere. He has a copy of our route & will give us letters to as many as he can. He introduced us to a Dr Maclaine pastor of an English congregation of dissenters of some sort here who is a great lover of the arts & very much admires many of your productions. He has given us a letter to Mr. Hope & Ld A. will give us another. I believe you have seen Dr Maclaine at least he has seen you & says a great deal more in praise of your works than I can repeat.

¹ The Princess, Wilhelmina, was a niece of the great Frederick. A vivid glimpse of the pair is given in a letter from Sir James Harris, ambassador five years earlier at that Court, to Lord Carmarthen (Aug. 28, 1785): "He is so jealous of her sense and power that he would not even go to Paradise by her influence; and she has that kind of contempt a high spirited woman feels for an inferior male being" (quoted by Holland Rose, William Pitt and the National Revival, p. 308 (1911)).
I forgot to mention that we took with us a couple of the heads of the present king of Prussia which Lord Auckland presented to the princess & which she said were very like. She knew the drawing that they were done from, Mr. Poggi has it.

Be so good as to make some more & let them be sent as soon as possible to Hamburg.

The prince and princess both spoke very highly of the vase though I believe the latter only had much feeling for it. The princess has the look of a very clever woman & I believe she is so.

Ld Auckland says that some friend tells him that Virgil gives a description of the gates of death, & that one of the pillars is black the other white. Lord A—thinks that if this is the case it will apply very aptly to the different colors of the vase & that Virgils having said so will not at all go to prove that the vase is of work as modern at least as Virgil, for Virgils mythology is certainly much more ancient than the Æneid. But his Lordship thinks that there is a mistake in ascribing this passage of Virgils to the gates of death—he thinks Virgil gives a description of the gates of sleep. Mr. Chisholm will look at it & as soon as I can get a Virgil I will do the same.¹

July 5th, 1790.

I now am to give you an account of our exhibition. About half after 10 Mr B & myself went over to Lord Aucklands & disposed all our chaise seat full upon 4 tables, one of which the collection of cameos filled. In this room there were upon the chimney piece 7 jasper vases belonging to Ld Auckland so that altogether we cut a very respectable figure. We had some few cameos mounted very handsomely in necklaces, bracelets & eardrops which we also displayed. We had a ther-

¹ Mr. Chisholm probably disposed promptly of this engaging fancy. Virgil (Æn. vi. 898 f.) does indeed describe the two gates of Sleep, and distinguish them, but not as black and white. The one is of horn, the other of ivory.
mometer also which was much looked at & people seemed to be very inquisitive about it.

In another room was the Vase by itself & in a third & 4th, the company breakfasted. All the first people that are at the Hague were there but as the fashion is here to go into the country as it is in England there were not above 60 or 70. The prince & princess with their daughter who is to be married to the Duke of Brunswick came about half after 11 & said every thing that was to be expected. The prince talked to me a little about the time that the Etruscan vases had been made and seemed to have noticed them from the beginning. There was a gentleman there who has made Antiques his study & he was extremely pleased with the vase but he did not agree with the explanation which you have given as to the parts though he thought the general idea was true. He thought that the figure of the man in 1st comparʿ from its attitude was a betrothed person who is very much concerned to die & leave his spouse & that this will account for the Amour who leads him into elysium—the figure with a staff in 1st comparʿ he supposes to be the genius of Mercury that waits to lead the shade to Elysium & the figure with the serpent he calls the genius of Ἐsclapius who not having been able to save his life receives him & encourages him to enter Ἐlysiun—the figure of Pluto he supposes to be Minos, Ἐacus or Rhadamanthus as the gods never were represented in human attitudes and the muscles seem too strongly marked. But all this is I think much too fanciful & part of the merit of the vase is lost by restricting its signification to the particular story of a new married man.

The Princess desired to have a pair of bracelets which come to 14 guineas but they neither of them desired to subscribe to the vase. The Secretary Fagel who is an officer of state & has a great Cabinet will I believe write a desire to be a subscriber to the vase.
Almost all the ladies had cameos mounted in one way or another.

I am going to dine with Lord H[^1]v. Spencer but Mr. Byerley declined it as he must call on the Spanish ambassador who wants some ware.

When you write next to L[^2]d. Auckland I hope you will express to him how much we are obliged to his Lordship for his very kind behaviour to us which nothing can exceed. His Lordship lives here in very great splendour & represents our nation with very great credit.

A few lines from the Ambassador himself perhaps brought a greater thrill of pleasure to the heart of Josiah than even the full and happy accounts of his son. At the close of a letter occupied with a discussion of the interpretation of the figures on the vase, he writes:

But I will use the two or three minutes which I can further dispose of to say a few words on a subject which with all your enthusiasm for arts and sciences probably interests you much more. I mean your son. We all agree—and in this respect the people of the Hague are not bad critics—that your son is a very fine young man, with every appearance of having profited fully by the excellent education you have given him, and I have not a doubt he will prove a source of great happiness and credit to you.

Yet perhaps this visit to the Courts of the Hague and Berlin may have somewhat accentuated a sense of distance which I suspect to have sprung up between the father and son. The strain of fastidiousness which we trace in the character of Josiah, junior, comes out a little unpleasantly in the following letter. His refined
nature and cultivated mind had found its place easily among peers and princes. He had more difficulty in making himself at home in his father's shop.

Josiah Wedgwood, Junior, to Josiah Wedgwood, Senior.

ETRUBIA, April 12th, 1791.

DEAR SIR—As Mr Byerleys unfortunate state of health obliges him to live in the country & as it is necessary for him to go immediately it appears to be necessary that some person of confidence should immediately come into the house in Greek Street. As I do not at present know of anybody that would answer the description & that is disengaged I offer myself to stay in London untill some proper person can be procured if you think I should be more useful there than here.

What I mean is that I would live in the house and take care of the correspondence while Mr B. is unfit for it, and do what other business I could, except attending in the rooms any farther than waiting upon some particular people, for I have been too long in the habit of looking upon myself as the equal of everybody to bear the haughty manners of those who come into a shop.

He probably felt, vaguely, the awkwardness of reminding his father of what was in fact a social difference between them, and annoyance at having to put such a condition into words.

There were occasions, one must confess, when this feeling of fastidiousness laid him open to a suspicion of what, in our time, we should call snobbishness. It was not a word known to the eighteenth century, nor had they any synonym for it. We may say, from different points of view, that this was from their not knowing the temptation as we do, or that it was from not knowing
it as a temptation. As I have tried to show on a former occasion rank was a more ultimate thing then than it is now. The habit of deference was commoner. The distinctions of social life were both more really important, and more jealously insisted on. The craving for social distinction is probably as common in one generation as in another, for it is rooted in the perennial weaknesses of humanity; but it takes different forms in different periods and in different characters. A nature more refined than robust, like Joss Wedgwood's, was exposed to its influence on all sides.

It would be gravely unjust to him, however, to regard only in this light the supreme good fortune of his life, his marriage in 1792 with Elizabeth Allen of Cresselly. This was the beginning of the alliance between the Wedgwoods and an old county family which claimed descent from the Cecils. Two years later, as we have already seen, John married another sister. But though the alliance gratified young Wedgwood's social ambitions, and no doubt precipitated his retirement the following year from the Etruria partnership, and his rapid and final transformation into a country squire, this was but a small measure of what he won in his wife.

Of the nine Cresselly sisters, several were beautiful and all in some respects remarkable.\(^1\) Elizabeth's beauty is attested by the charming portrait by Romney; but she had yet rarer gifts of character and heart. Sir James Mackintosh,

\(^1\) The family tradition ascribes the conversational brilliance for which they were reputed to paternal castigations administered when they failed to shine in company.
her brother-in-law, said of her that he thought the affection of her brothers and sisters idolatry till he came to know her himself. Her husband’s letters sufficiently express, in spite of all the restraints of Wedgwood reserve, what she was to him, and the youngest of his daughters, wife of Charles Darwin, once told me that in the only conversation she could remember with him which could be called anything like an outpouring on his part, he expressed to her his delight in her mother’s character and charm.

Josiah, who had already in 1790 betrayed disdain of the shop, was in speech, manner, and education fully equipped for the part of a country squire, and long before 1800 he was playing it with effortless ease. After his father’s death in 1795 he settled in the south, first at Stoke d’Abernon in Surrey; in 1800 he bought the estate of Tarrant Gunville, in Dorset, and two years later also that of Maer, in Staffordshire, the home of his later years. In 1800 his income-tax of 2s. in the pound amounted to £874.1 And he had acquired a pride of class fully corresponding to these social claims. Not only himself but his entire family were invested, to his mind, with the status of the Allens, and might reject pretensions to alliance put forward by “persons in business” with the hauteur which the Allens had not exhibited towards the junior partner in Wedgwood & Co.

Such at least is the inference we must draw from his correspondence in 1800 with Thomas Poole. The Dorchester tanner is remembered

1 Emma Darwin, i.
as one of the wisest, most helpful, and most long-suffering of the friends of Coleridge. Their relations exhibited on the whole the rare spectacle of a friendship begun in enthusiasm and through the shocks of grievous disappointment never driven into injustice. He was in truth the most consistently honourable of men, and one of whom we meet with but one opinion in all the memoirs where his name is mentioned. A few odd mistakes of judgment on his part exhaust the possibilities of blame in a character of rare and beautiful simplicity. Yet it is clear that Thomas Poole was one of those good men who are not attractive in proportion to their goodness. His manners and aspect were homely, and he spoke a rather strongly marked Dorsetshire dialect. The only two women with whom Poole wished to share his life declined what might well have been felt an honour. The first was a cousin of his own, the second was Catherine Wedgwood, a younger sister of Joss and Tom.

Coleridge had met Poole as early as 1794. In 1797 he was introduced by Poole to Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood, probably at Bristol, where Thomas was under treatment by the physician Beddoes. Early in 1798 the two brothers made Coleridge their offer of a pension of £150 for the study of philosophy. Common interest in the poet had brought them by this time into friendly, even intimate, relations with Poole. He thus became acquainted with their sister Catherine. In November 1800 he wrote to her proposing correspondence, evidently a cautious preparation

1 Dykes Campbell, *Coleridge*, p. xxi.
for an offer of marriage later on. It was bad tactics, but had they been better, Catherine, who saw in Coleridge only a man of disagreeable manners and provincial accent, was not the woman to marry homely Thomas Poole, whatever his charms of mind, and she returned through her brothers a "peremptory" refusal. They fully concurred, and Josiah conveyed the decision to Poole. Poole replied to him (November 20) with a very long and detailed explanation of his action, conceived and expressed with beautiful serenity of temper—a mirror of the spirit which bore so generously with the vagaries of Coleridge. A few sentences will suffice to indicate something of what Josiah lost and what Catherine inspired.¹

I do not see that the proposal to which you allude was the inevitable consequence of Miss Wedgwood's answering my letter—certainly if on further acquaintance the Woman whom I believe I should have found had been realized, I should have been a madman not to have made it. But without finding that Woman I do assure you most truly that no considerations should have tempted me to have done it. My notions of love are very high. I would no more marry a woman whom I did not prefer to all the world for herself alone, and who did not possess the same feeling towards me, than I would put myself to death. To promote the happiness of such a one every faculty of my being should be devoted—and I am confident that this notion of love would not with me be the mere fabric of imagination, as I have never yet felt an impermanent affection towards a human being. My imagination is my heart,—and it is I thank God with gratitude, warm and steady.

¹ It is printed at length in Mrs. Sandford's excellent Poole and his Friends.
No further consequence, so far as is known, followed this episode in the relations of the two men. It was otherwise with the action by which Josiah, shortly before, had intervened in the fortunes of the great poet whose friendship with both is now their chief hold upon the general memory. The offer of the annuity to Coleridge was, however, almost certainly inspired by the younger and more remarkable brother, Tom, of whom, relatively famous as he is, something must now be said.

The precocious child of five who had been allowed to join his brothers at the Bolton School was now, in 1798, a man of twenty-nine, whose spiritual beauty of character and person fascinated his contemporaries, but tormented by chronic ill-health. His death at thirty-five left his promise incomplete, and his personality is to us in many ways baffling, even after Mr. Litchfield’s admirable monograph, to which the reader is referred.\(^1\) With his claim to be “the first photographer” we are not here concerned: it amounts, in the view of his scrupulous and impartial biographer, to the discovery of the means of taking pictures by the chemical action of light, but not of retaining them. Tom had, like his brothers, studied at Edinburgh, and he was a far more genuine student than either. They boarded with Dr. Blacklock, one of the leading literati of the capital, and Joss and Tom were still with him at the time when he wrote the famous letter which was put into the hands of Burns in October 1786, as he was about to sail

\(^1\) RB. Litchfield, *Tom Wedgwood, the First Photographer.*
for Jamaica, and was the means of saving for Scotland her greatest poet. Chisholm, the master of the house-school, had probably introduced Tom to chemistry, and in 1738 he had the aid at home of a distinguished mathematician, John Leslie, afterwards professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh. Leslie lived in the house as tutor; but the business and social distractions of Etruria Hall unfitted it to be the "pensive citadel" of students, and Tom proposed to his father to establish Leslie and himself in a separate house where they might give themselves up to philosophy and virtue. Of his philosophic studies not much can be gathered, but he read Hartley, that early psychologist who appeared to mediate between the studies of natural science and of mind, and appealed so powerfully to those who felt the spell of both. Coleridge, already in boyhood "metaphysician" as well as "bard," who at Christ's Hospital had eagerly watched surgical experiments, and was soon to hang entranced over the crucible of Davy, was as we know one of these; and young Wedgwood had other affinities with the more brilliant man three years his junior. Tom Wedgwood, too, could expound philosophical ideas with delicacy and power. The poet, Campbell—no extravagant admirer of contemporaries—speaks of him as "a strange and wonderful being . . . a mind

1 In a letter to his elder sister, a month later, Josiah delivers a neat and highly favourable character of Dr. Blacklock.

2 After Leslie's departure Tom corresponded with him for some years, and he had so far won the confidence of the family as to be invited, after the elder Josiah's death, to write his life. His gifts proved, however, not to lie in this direction.
TOM WEDGWOOD.
TO Vиру
AIRPORT
stored with ideas, with metaphysics the most exquisitely fine I ever heard delivered—a man of wonderful talent, a tact of taste acute beyond description.” Sir Humphrey Davy gave him a more sober but weightier tribute when he said that “his influence has often caused me to think rightly.” And while Coleridge had defects of person which his hearers forgot, as Dorothy Wordsworth says, as soon as he began to speak, Tom Wedgwood’s noble presence seems to have enthralled them before he opened his lips. Wordsworth—again no idolator of the men of his day—wrote that Tom’s appearance on entering the room “produced in me an impression of sublimity beyond what I ever experienced from the appearance of any other human being.” And an often quoted-story tells how Dugald Stewart, chief exponent of the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense, was heard to say, at a gathering met to look at a head of Christ by Leonardo, “You are all looking at the picture,—I cannot keep my eyes from the head of Mr. Wedgwood, it is the finest head I ever saw.” And to all these expressions of the outward and inward quality of the man must be added the fervid tribute of Coleridge himself to his memory—a eulogy heightened doubtless by gratitude and sorrow, but impressive nevertheless from such a man.

He is gone, my friend; my munificent co-patron, and

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1 A mass of jottings on psychology and education written by Tom Wedgwood were found at Etruria in 1888. These evidently formed no part of the MSS. taken to India by Sir James Mackintosh. They have since been published with an introduction by my friend, Mrs. Boole, explaining what she supposes to be the value of Tom Wedgwood’s method of analysis.
not less the benefactor of my intellect! He who, beyond all other men known to me, added a fine and ever-wakeful sense of beauty to the most patient accuracy in experimental philosophy and the profounder researches of metaphysical science; he who united all the play and spring of fancy with the subtlest discrimination and an inexorable judgment; and who controlled an almost painful exquisiteness of taste by a warmth of heart, which in the practical relations of life made allowances for faults as quickly as the moral taste detected them; a warmth of heart, which was indeed noble and pre-eminent, for alas! the genial feelings of health contributed no spark towards it.  

The first meeting of Coleridge and Tom Wedgwood cannot be accurately dated, nor are its precise circumstances known. It was certainly not later than the early months of 1797, but probably sooner, perhaps by 1795. John Wedgwood, with whom Tom often stayed, had after his retirement from the works in 1793, made his residence at a country-house within an easy walk of Bristol, where Coleridge was living throughout the year 1795. Although John Wedgwood was probably incapable of appreciating either poetic or metaphysical genius so astonishing to eighteenth-century standards as that of Coleridge,

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1 Perhaps even the tribute of Coleridge might be thrown into the shade if I could recall from my own dim memories the words as well as the voice of Dorothy Wordsworth. I was waiting at the door of Rydal Mount in the summer of 1840 when her chair drew up bearing the little shrunken figure from her daily excursion, and I looked into those "wild eyes" which kept all their life and light, though the mind had grown dim. There was no dimness in her interest when she heard my name. "From whom are you sprung?" she enquired eagerly. My father's name meant nothing to her, and his uncle's, alas, meant then nothing to me, but her allusion to the latter clothes him with a halo perhaps more vivid for my eyes because the vision is so absolutely untransferable.
he would always have welcomed any friend of his brother's, and it seems unlikely that Coleridge and Tom Wedgwood could be within a walk of each other for any time amid a sociable circle without meeting. One of Tom's memoranda records a five days' visit to the Wordsworth's at Alfoxden in September 1797, and he was therefore then, if not before, a friend of the brother-poet at Stowey. Most probably it was through Coleridge that he made the acquaintance of Wordsworth, by whom however he was much less impressed.¹

Towards the close of the year Coleridge was preaching frequently in Unitarian chapels at Bristol and elsewhere. In December he received an invitation to preach as a candidate for the pulpit of the chapel at Shrewsbury at a salary of £150. The sum tempted him, already a father and dependent entirely on his earnings, to accept the post. But Tom Wedgwood, on hearing of the transaction, immediately sent him £100, apparently with the condition, implied or expressed, that he should abandon preaching and devote himself wholly to poetry and philosophy.² Coleridge returned it, on the ground of its inadequacy to the support of a family. It was on receiving this letter that Josiah wrote as follows:³

¹ Cf. Hazlitt's report of Coleridge's talk to him in January 1798. Coleridge added that Mackintosh and Tom Wedgwood (of whom however he spoke highly) had expressed a very indifferent opinion of his friend Mr. Wordsworth, on which he remarked to them—"He strides on so far before you that he dwindles in the distance."

² This cannot be held certain, as the letters are not extant. But Hazlitt's report makes probable that this condition was contained in the original proposal though not in the letter to which he ascribes it.

³ First printed by Mrs. Sandford, T. Poole, i. 259.
To S. T. Coleridge.

Penzance, January 10th, 1798.

Dear Sir—In the absence of my brother, who has an engagement this morning, I take up the pen to reply to your letter received yesterday. I cannot help regretting very sincerely that, at this critical moment, we are separated by so great a length of the worst road in the kingdom. It is not that we have found much difficulty in deciding how to act in the present juncture of your affairs, but we are apprehensive that, deprived of the benefit of conversation, we may fail somewhat in explaining our views and intentions with that clearness and persuasion which should induce you to accede to our proposal without scruple or hesitation, nay, with that glow of pleasure which the accession of merited good fortune, and the observation of virtuous conduct in others, ought powerfully to excite in the breast of healthful sensibility. Writing is painful to me. I must endeavor to be concise, yet to avoid abruptness. My brother and myself are possessed of a considerable superfluity of fortune; squandering and hoarding are equally distant from our inclinations. But we are earnestly desirous to convert this superfluity into a fund of beneficence, and we have now been accustomed for some time, to regard ourselves rather as Trustees than Proprietors. We have canvassed your past life, your present situation and prospects, your character and abilities. As far as certainty is compatible with the delicacy of the estimate, we have no hesitation in declaring that your claim upon the fund appears to come under more of the conditions we have prescribed for its disposal, and to be every way more unobjectionable than we could possibly have expected. This result is so congenial with our heartfelt wishes, that it will be a real mortification to us if any misconception or distrust of our intentions, or any unworthy diffidence of yourself, should interfere to prevent its full operation in your favour.

After what my brother Thomas has written I have only to state the proposal we wish to make to you. It
is that you shall accept an annuity for life of £150, to be regularly paid by us, no condition whatsoever being annexed to it. Thus your liberty will remain entire, you will be under the influence of no professional bias, and will be in possession of a "permanent income not inconsistent with your religious and political creeds," so necessary to your health and activity.

I do not now enter into the particulars of the mode of securing the annuity, etc.—that will be done when we receive your consent to the proposal we are making; and we shall only say that we mean the annuity to be independent of everything but the wreck of our fortune, an event which we hope is not very likely to happen, though it must in these times be regarded as more than a bare possibility.

Give me leave now to thank you for the openness with which you have written to me, and the kindness you express for me, to neither of which can I be indifferent, and I shall be happy to derive the advantages from them that a friendly intercourse with you cannot fail to afford me. I am very sincerely yours,

Josiah Wedgwood.

It was this letter, forwarded by Poole from Stowey, which Coleridge, according to Hazlitt's famous account, received at Wem on Wednesday morning (Jan. 18), following the sermon at Shrewsbury which the young devotee had gone through ten miles of wintry roads to hear.¹ Coleridge at once closed with the proposal. Though its terms left him free to occupy himself

¹ Hazlitt's account (My First Acquaintance with Poets), written some twenty years later, is inexact in two particulars. He speaks of this letter as from "his friend T. Wedgwood," and as coupling the offer with the condition that Coleridge should "waive his present pursuit, and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy." Hazlitt does not distinguish this, evidently the original proposal of Tom, from the unconditional offer now conveyed in the name of both by Josiah.
as he chose, he did in effect, after completing his engagement at Shrewsbury, abandon the Unitarian pulpit. The scheme, though it had the entire concurrence of Josiah, doubtless emanated from the philosophic enthusiasm and unworldly idealism of Tom. "High benevolence is something so new," Coleridge wrote of it to Poole, "that I am not certain that I am not dreaming." Initiative was at no time the strength of Josiah.

Before dealing with the sequel, it will be convenient to dwell for a moment upon the brief remainder of Tom Wedgwood's friendship with Coleridge. He visited the brothers in January 1798, and was introduced to Cresselly and its galaxy of daughters, now reduced by marriage to three or four.

A reminiscence of a visit there in 1802 is extant, dictated by a daughter of the house when seventy more years and many sorrows had sobered her mirthful spirits but not dulled her bright humorous intelligence. It has been preserved by the niece to whom she dictated it. It illustrates vividly Tom's attraction for very different ages—the squire, a ci-devant officer, now over sixty, his merry daughter, Fanny, then under twenty, and lastly Tom's niece, the scribe who, at the time of which her pen recorded the memory, was a child in the nursery, but even then, as she has told me herself, fond of her poor invalid uncle. She writes of her aunt as "Fanny." It is given in full by Mr. Litchfield. Some salient passages may be reproduced here.

Fanny says there was a great charm in Uncle Tom's manner; it was gracious and elegant, . . . in every-
thing he said there was sympathy and great sensibility, . . . he was a very keen observer, and his fine taste was easily shocked. But he judged calmly and sweetly. When he arrived at Cresselly, they were all set down to dinner before Mr. Allen, who was a great invalid, came in; and Fanny says she never can forget the beauty of his manner when he rose and took Mr. Allen's hand with so much respect and feeling. Mr. Allen said afterwards he had never seen so fine a manner. . . .

One day at Cresselly Mr. Coleridge was saying something about the Ten Commandments which T. W. thought would shock Mr. Allen, and he tapped him (Coleridge) on the arm and took him out of the room and stopped him. . . .

Another day at Cresselly, Coleridge, who was fond of reading MS. poems of Wordsworth's, asked Fanny whether she liked poetry, and when she said she did, came and sat by her on the sofa and began to read the Leechgatherer. When he came to the passage, now I believe omitted, about his skin being so old and dry that the leeches wouldn't stick, it set Fanny a-laughing. That frightened her, and she got into a convulsive fit of laughter that shook Coleridge, who was sitting close to her, looking very angry. He put up his MS., saying he ought to ask her pardon, for perhaps to a person who had not genius (Fanny cannot exactly remember the expression) the poem might seem absurd. F. sat in a dreadful fright, everybody looking amazed, Sarah looking angry; and she almost expected her father would turn her out of the room, but Uncle Tom came to her rescue. "Well, Coleridge, one must confess that it is not quite a subject for a poem." Coleridge did not forgive Fanny for some days, putting by his reading aloud if she came in. But afterwards he was very good friends with her, and one day in particular gave her all his history, saying, amongst other things, "and there I had the misfortune to meet with my wife."

In 1805, Tom Wedgwood's short life ended.
Illness had pursued and thwarted him with little intermission throughout. As a boy of twelve he had closed a letter to his father with the words: "I would have written this letter well but have got the headache," and the sentence might stand as the motto of his life. His death evoked expressions of grief tender and poignant as for the loss of a young girl. Those of Wordsworth and Coleridge have already been quoted. His brother Josiah loved him with a passion of which his nature shows few signs elsewhere. "I feel like Aeneas embracing the shade of Creusa," he wrote to Tom after a separation; an expression which, in Josiah's letters, is like the discovery of a hot spring under the snow. A few simple, heartfelt lines may be given from the letter in which Josiah's wife, Bessy, told her sister Emma of Tom's end.

The more I think of him the more his character rises in my opinion; he really was too good for this world. Such a crowd of feelings and remembrances fill my mind while I am recalling all his past kindnesses to me and mine, and to all his acquaintance, that I feel myself quite unfit to make his panegyric, but I trust my children will ever remember him with veneration as an honour to the family to which he belonged.¹

Not unnaturally, an attempt was made by Josiah to procure some record of his brother's life and thought. He applied first to Coleridge, who found the proposal impracticable. The task was later undertaken by Sir James Mackintosh; but ill-health, and the engrossing business of an Indian judge, proved insuperable

¹ Litchfield, Tom Wedgwood, pp. 178-179.
obstacles to its fulfilment. It was thus reserved for a younger kinsman by marriage to supply the want, almost a century after its subject's death.

Few traces remain of any further relations between the elder brother and Coleridge after Tom's death. Seven years after that event, in 1812, Josiah, as is well known, withdrew his half of the annuity. This step has drawn upon him great and natural blame. He withdrew a pension he had solemnly promised for life, and never paid it again. Whatever can be said in his defence is admirably urged by Mr. Litchfield, in the volume to which I have already referred the reader. I once asked my father (Josiah's fourth son) if he could give any explanation of the problem, but he answered that his father would never discuss it with any one, and to all enquiries answered only that he had good reasons. The annuity had been given, as we have seen, with the express assurance that it was "independent of everything but the wreck of our fortune." Josiah's reasons, we are bound to suppose, were grounded in Coleridge's failure to carry out the splendid promise of his youth. At the beginning of 1798 Coleridge's finest poetry was still unpublished and in great part unwritten; but he was already known as the author of the Religious Musings, which Tom Wedgwood doubtless admired far more. And he was in the full heyday of his ravishing powers of philosophic talk. To provide such a man with leisure and adequate support was to perform a signal service to the world.

The fourteen years in which he enjoyed the pension had notoriously produced little to justify
the expectations of his benefactors, and it is probable, as has been hinted, that the philosophic soul of Tom Wedgwood and the cool intelligence of Josiah, regretted the use of the writer's great powers on pieces of irrational legend lore like the *Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, or *Kubla Khan*. Coleridge's abuse of opium from 1801 onwards, and the nervous prostration in which it had resulted, were notorious. Was a promise morally binding which supplied him with the means of more lavish indulgence? Would not the very sense of trusteeship which had occasioned the offer urge its recall, so that to break the word might even be to fulfil the spirit?

Josiah was a just man. "I do not believe," wrote Charles Darwin, "that any power upon earth would have made him swerve an inch from what he considered the right course." But his absolute rectitude of intention was fortified by a kind of massive inertia, which held him obstinately in a course he had once accepted as right. In February 1810, he had written to Poole: "It seems the Friend is at an end . . . I fear Col. is a lost man. . . . I see the wreck of genius with tender concern, but without hope." Had the withdrawal followed at once or in the course of the same year, we could not have doubted that Josiah felt himself justified in refusing to waste

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1 An interesting glimpse of his ideas about poetry is given in Coleridge's letter of Oct. 20, 1802. Coleridge expresses great regard for his opinion of "the sentiment, the imagery, the flow of a poem"; "but in point of poetic diction I am not so well satisfied that you do not require a certain aloofness from the language of real life, which I think deadly in poetry." He evidently favoured the abstractions of the eighteenth century.

2 Quoted Litchfield, *u.s.* p. 258.
money in support of a wreck; or, possibly, that he imagined that the diminished income would stimulate him to energetic effort.

But nearly three years elapsed, and the moment, the close of 1812, chosen for withdrawal, was one at which the theory of Coleridge's hopeless collapse was far more difficult to entertain.

Since October 1811 he had shown extraordinary mental vigour, and made contributions of the highest rank to literary criticism. The lectures on Shakespeare and Milton were given in London between October and January, those on the drama of the Greek, French, English and Spanish stage in May and June, 1812; while in October was issued a prospectus of a third series "on Belles-Lettres." In addition, his poetic drama Remorse was, through Byron's influence, in October 1812, accepted at Drury Lane. The lectures were very brilliant, and attended by Byron, Rogers, and Wordsworth, as well as by the throng of London society. They founded the higher criticism of Shakespeare in England. This, in substance, could not remain unknown to Josiah. But it was not likely to affect, in a man of his temperament, a resolve towards which he was steadily gravitating. Yet the end of December, 1812, was clearly an unhappily chosen time for putting it in practice. One consideration cannot here be overlooked, unwilling as we must be to face it. The Etruria works suffered heavily during the great war. In 1812 Josiah, for reasons of economy, moved from Maer Hall to Etruria, where they remained till 1819.¹ "The

¹ H. E. Litchfield, Emma Darwin, i. 85.
wreck of his fortune” had been expressly laid down as justifying the discontinuance. In the Europe of 1812, such a contingency was clearly in view. Is it out of the question that a perfectly upright man, weighing this together with his unshakable conviction that Coleridge was “lost,” might act as he did? Neither Coleridge nor his wife, who suffered most from the diminished income, complained. On the contrary, the former addressed to his old friend Poole a letter comparable in beautiful serenity of temper to that with which Poole had met a graver rebuff from the same hand twelve years before.

_February 18, 1818._

You will have heard that, previous to the acceptance of “Remorse,” Mr. Jos. Wedgwood had withdrawn from his share of the annuity! Well, yes, it is well!—for I can now be _sure_ that I loved him, revered him, and was grateful to him from no selfish feeling. For equally (and may these words be my final condemnation at the last awful day, if I speak not the whole truth), equally do I at this moment love him, and with the same reverential gratitude! To Mr. Thomas Wedgwood I felt, doubtless, love; but it was mingled with fear, and constant apprehension of his too exquisite taste in morals. But Josiah! Oh, I ever did, and ever shall, love him, as a being so beautifully balanced in mind and heart deserves to be!

"Tis well, too, because it has given me the strongest impulse, the most imperious motive I have experienced, to _prove_ to him that his past munificence has not been _wasted_!

Josiah lived thirty years longer; a great squire, allied in politics and in the sources of his wealth with the Whig manufacturers, in his way
of life with the Tory country-gentlemen. He stood for Parliament twice, in 1831 for the Duke of Sutherland’s pocket-borough of Newcastle, in honourable but futile opposition to the Duke’s nominee, and in 1832 successfully for the new Reform borough of Stoke-on-Trent. But it is the unsuccessful contest which his descendants have most cause to remember with pride. The workmen employed at Etruria made a contribution to his election expenses. The Address in which he acknowledged this handsome tribute is still preserved.\(^1\) After saying that he is glad to think that the workmen’s contribution is a tribute not to himself but to the Reform Bill, he goes on, perhaps not quite consistently, to add:

But your donation has given me a satisfaction which is purely personal. You & I well know that in the long run our interests agree—but it may often have appeared to some of you, & must sometimes have been the case, that in taking care of my own interest I have not been sufficiently regardful of yours. Now your unsolicited, unexpected and free gift, is a proof that my conduct during the very long period of our connection has been such as, on the whole, to have obtained for me your esteem and regard, which I prize as among the most valuable of my possessions.

The candour and simplicity of this Address give it a kind of distinction which a more brilliant effort would have missed. It is the speech not of a master to workmen, not of a philanthropist to the needy, but of a man to men. There is here a marked respectfulness not only towards

\(^1\) In the possession of Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood, in whose *History* it is reprinted, p. 187.
human beings but towards facts. He would not be thought by any means an ideal employer of labour according to our standard. His standard was one we have left behind us, one to which the most reactionary would not now wish to return. Humanitarian enthusiasm, such as was beginning to clamour for the reform of our factories, was hardly known to Josiah Wedgwood. But he stood for liberty and justice, as he understood them, fully convinced that they were substantially realised in the industrial, though still defective in the political, world of his day. Yet he admits, as only a just-minded man would, that in detail he has sometimes been unjust. The same respectfulness towards facts is manifest in his address at his successful candidature a year later.

"My daddy," writes his eldest daughter to an aunt on August 11, 1882, "is attending Reform dinners, & getting his little speeches ready. He did not think the last he made was particularly relished. It was not at all in the triumphant style, but saying that though we are reformers we have no right to think we have a monopoly of wisdom and virtue on our side, but that the other party are no doubt actuated by love of their country as well as ourselves."

"My principles," he had told the electors, "are those of the Reform Bill. If they are yours you will send me to represent you, otherwise not." In his ideal of representation he followed the high doctrine and memorable example of Burke:

If you want me I am ready to serve you to the best of my power, deciding as circumstances arise what in my judgment is the best course to take in your interests; but it must be as a representative in whose judgment you
have confidence that you send me to Parliament not as your delegate bound to a particular course whatever the circumstances that may arise.

He thus expressly repudiates the view of the representative as a delegate, which we have seen urged in its extreme form by his father.

He was a silent member of the first Reform Parliament, and did not seek re-election in any other. Indeed, wherever he was he must have been rather a listener than a speaker. I remember him as an almost dumb member of a circle of children and grandchildren, but one whose presence, however, did not inspire, as far as my childish recollection goes, any of that sense of oppression sometimes felt in the presence of very silent people. His sons turned to him without hesitation in any difficulty, and if they did not find sympathy, which he had not to give, they always found help. He lived to see grandchildren and great-nephews and nieces about him. And it was my own keenest enjoyment, as a child of nine, to sit proudly by his side at the nightly card-table at Maer.

Josiah Wedgwood's relations with his grown-up sons were cordial, but hardly intimate; and all, as we have seen, withdrew, as soon as they were free, from active participation in the work of his life. With the one daughter who had grown to maturity at the time of his death, it was otherwise;¹ their close friendship, reflected

¹ The second, Catherine, was twenty at that date, the third, Sarah, eighteen. The fourth, Mary Ann, had died in 1786.
in a delightful correspondence, is for us particularly fortunate, since this daughter, Susan, may well interest posterity more than all her brothers and sisters together, for she became later the mother of Charles Darwin.

To all his children in their early years Wedgwood showed deep affection. But even then it went out most fervently and uncontrollably towards his "little lasses." The year of Bentley's death (1780) was one of the most perilous in the life of modern England. Hostile armies threatened our coasts, turbulent mobs attacked our workshops; the nation was threatened from without and within. Both these dangers, we have seen, were appreciated by Wedgwood, but neither occupies anything like so much space in his correspondence as a heavy anxiety in his nursery. I should think no other letters from a man of business ever contained so much information about children's illnesses as those which describe the teething troubles of his youngest little girl. "Thank God!" he exclaims a month later, after an account of her convulsions and delirium, "these frightful symptoms have disappeared. She is, by the help of some good sweet sleep grown mild and herself again, and recovers her little words and natural wonted motions one after another." These records of a little child's sickness, poured out to his busy partner, bring home to us his confidence in Bentley's inexhaustible interest, but even more the tender love which sought his sympathy.

Susan's letters to him extend over almost their entire common life. He kept letters from
TO VIRI
AMICI
LIAO
her as child, girl, and woman, so that we trace a growing comradeship in their relation, we may say a growing equality, for at the outset the little girl is something of a tyrant. He bestowed no less care upon her education than upon that of her brothers. She was sent to school before she had completed her seventh year; and the effect on health was watched as carefully in her case as in theirs. In May 1772 she was sent, with two Willett cousins, to a school at Manchester kept by a Mrs. Holland. The busy father himself escorted the children, the women of the two families being out of health, and sent an amusing account of the trip to Bentley. In June 1778, we find him again leaving his business to convey her and a little cousin to lodgings at some suburb of Liverpool for the sake of sea-bathing.

"I am going to Liverpool this week with poor Sukey," he writes to Bentley, June 14, 1778, "who after sitting & sewing at School for 12 months is so full of pouks, & boils & humours, that the salt water is absolutely necessary for her."

She could not have been much pulled down by all these ills, for at the inn where they stopped, at Knutsford:

... My poor girl was in high spirits, playing her pranks upon a high Horse Block, missed her footing, & pitch't with her head upon a stone which was sharp enough to make a wound, but I hope no other harm will insue.

Happily her skull turned out "rather of the thick than paper species"; and the accident did not delay the travellers. Sukey had a
decided will of her own, and somehow made it prevail. Her father informs Bentley that he was "not able to persuade the little lasses to bathe." Even with a child of eight years old he did not attempt more than persuasion. However, his wish was not long disregarded. "It is with great pleasure" that Sukey sits down to thank her "dear & honoured papa" for his kind letter and good advice, and to inform him among other satisfactory facts that "I have bathed four times & bathe again to-morrow."

Female education had been the first common interest of Wedgwood and Bentley at the opening of their friendship. It was natural that the friend should be constantly consulted in the upbringing of Wedgwood's eldest daughter, and watch its course with the keenest sympathy. This sympathy now took a practical form vividly expressive of the harmony of aim and ideal between the two. In the summer of 1775 the question of a school became again urgent. The parents had decided not to send her again to the Manchester school, possibly on grounds of health, notwithstanding the almost alarming proficiency of its teaching of English geography.\(^1\) Bentley had contracted a second marriage, happy in all but its infertility, and it occurred to the childless pair to seek the privilege of caring for their friend's child, now eleven years old. Josiah was deeply touched by their kindness, great as was his own sacrifice; and at the close of a pleasant fortnight spent with the Bentleys and other friends at Matlock, the child was handed over

\(^1\) Cp. To Bentley, June 1775.
to them and taken back to their home at Chelsea.¹

"The parting scene," he writes on Oct. 26, 1776, "was far from being indifferent to us, but knowing to whom we had resigned our precious charge, we were comforted, & our sorrow gave way to the pleasing effusions of love & gratitude to our dearly beloved Friends. . . .

"When, or how shall we be out of debt? Never—so we can only be grateful to our lives end. At present our dear girl cannot know the extent of her obligations, but I trust she will love & honour you & your good Lady, with a childlike affection the longest day of her life."

Her residence with the Bentleys lasted several years, till they left London for Turnham Green, but was combined with instruction administered by "two amiable ladies" who kept a school at Chelsea called Blacklands House. Here she seems to have been very happy, as indeed it was her nature to be anywhere. She thanks her father

... for your rejoicing (as usual) on my birthday & hope to make a return for it in my improvements as I know that is the best way & now is the only time for if I do not do it while I am young, I am sensible I never shall when I am old.

I am glad to hear you & my Mamma are pleased with my Improvements, as it will always be my utmost endeavour to make them happy.

Many such "Sandford and Merton" letters were prized and kept, and the answers are in

¹ The detailed diary of this tour written by the father to his eldest son (aged nine) is one of the most agreeable and characteristic of his letters. Everywhere we see his alert and eager mind noting all the signs of industrial and agricultural progress. Some quotations from it have been given in the Introduction.
the same style. Her father enters into every little difficulty and success, is full of regret that some mistake about lesson books loses a day's schooling, and of eager gratitude to Bentley for his helpful sympathy with her desponding moods.¹

Her letters are full of a readiness to enjoy which made her everywhere welcome. At the close of 1777 she paid a visit to the Edgeworths at Northchurch, Herts. One of her letters thence, already referred to, may be here somewhat more fully quoted. Edgeworth had recently, it will be remembered, become the husband of Honora Sneyd:

"It is with pleasure I inform my dear Papa," she writes, "how very happy I am here. It is impossible to be otherwise in Mrs. Edgeworth's company. I think Mr. E. is very different to what I always thought him to be. I took him to be a very grave sedate man & now I think him to be just the contrary, he sings all the day from morning till night. Mrs. E.'s sister is here who is my bedfellow, all the children are here except Miss E. who is at Derby."

"Miss E.'s" absence is regrettable; we should otherwise have had a sketch of Maria Edgeworth as a schoolgirl from Sukey's lively pen. However, it is pleasant to find the young girl drawn into Honora Sneyd's circle of devotees, which included, besides her husband, persons so various as Major André, his unsuccessful rival, and Anna Seward, who has done most to make her name and story known to posterity.

¹ To Bentley, March 17, 1776. "Our poor girl," he writes, "was always apt to be discouraged at first attempts."
Sukey and her host were, as often happens, writing each other's characters at the same time. His is as flat as hers is lively, but Wedgwood thought it worth copying for his friend. Edgeworth had assured him

... that we may depend upon his sincerity in telling us that our daughter possesses an extremely good solid understanding, & is capable of learning anything we may please to teach her ... & that her obliging behaviour & good disposition give much pleasure to himself & Mrs. Edgeworth.

And her fond father thought this kindly tribute so impressive as to feel no scruple in leaving her longer with the Edgeworths than they had apparently expected to keep her.

This is the last letter from Sukey to her father before the close of the correspondence with Bentley, whence we derive most of our more intimate knowledge of her and her family. But a letter to him, in the following year, gives a charming glimpse of the free healthy home life of Etruria, and of his eldest daughter's place in it.

ETRURIA, 17 July 1778.

Sukey is now very well, & is pretty strong which I attribute very much to riding on horseback. We sally forth half a dozn of us by 6 or 7 O'Clock in a morning, & return to breakfast with appetites scarcely to be satisfied. Then we are very busy in our hay & have just made a new garden. Sometimes we try experiments, then read, & draw a little, that altogether we are very busy folks, & the holidays will be over much sooner than we could wish them to be. Poor Sukey is quite out of patience with her old spinet & often asks me when her new one will come ... my girl is quite tired out with her
present miserable hum strum, & it takes half her masters time to put it into tune.

It is disappointing, and somewhat surprising, that no scrap of writing survives which throws any light on the sad time which immediately followed Bentley’s death. We hear everything at some distance from the shock. It leaves a chasm on the hither side of which our knowledge is all desultory and incomplete. Susan’s letters, however, do carry on a little of the earlier continuous interest as far as family life is concerned, and we will follow the feeble and uncertain trickle which replaces the full stream.

When we meet with Sukey’s handwriting again, in 1788, she has passed from childhood to a somewhat womanly maidenhood; we have to glance back at the date of her birth to remind ourselves that she is only eighteen.

"I am extremely obliged to you for beginning a correspondence which shall not be neglected on my part," she writes to her father (Mar. 8th). "I was just going to take the same bold step which you have done of asking How do you do?"

The letters remaining from the correspondence thus playfully opened are mainly from Derby. The town, like many others in those days of difficult communication, had social and intellectual attractions which it hardly offers to-day —its Philosopich Club of intellectuals, and the studio of a considerable artist, Wright. Sukey’s link with Derby was at first through Mrs. Bentley, who was the daughter of Mr. Stamford, an engineer in the town—the Mrs. Stamford who
appears as her hostess in the following extracts being doubtless a near connection of hers. But in 1780 the Darwins moved into the neighbourhood, and a few years later into the town, after which she was, as already noticed, frequently their guest, up to the date of her marriage, in 1796, with Robert Darwin.

The following letter gives a lively picture of the amenities of Derby society in the last year of the American War.

My dear Father—'Tho the last letter that passed between us, was written by me, still I consider myself in your debt, & it is a debt which I shall pay with great pleasure. You would not at any time expect either a studied or well digested letter from me, but more particularly now, when I tell you I am surrounded by gauze. Ribbon &c &c: which naturally lead young ladies to think of balls, dancing &c &c—which are very flighty things & as uninteresting to you, as canals, & improvements upon the River Trent are to me. The Assizes are on Monday next when there is a dancing Assembly & a Card Assembly on Tuesday, with a dance after it. Sir Edward Every is the Sheriff & is expected to make a very grand appearance, we go to see the judge come in on Saturday, which will be quite a new sight to me. I called upon Mrs. Darwin the other day she does not intend to dance any more in public after the Assizes. She is often very indifferent, seldom gets up till ten or eleven o'clock, and sometimes goes to bed between eight & nine. As there is no other Lady & I am not used to these hours, it would be very unpleasant to me, so I got myself excused in as genteel a manner as I was able, upon condition we would come a large party the next summer, to take leave of Radbourne, after that time she means to leave it entirely. Miss Stamfords are desired to be of the party. This I ventured to promise in the name of you all. On Tuesday
we drank tea with Mrs. French, she appears to be a very amiable, well bred Lady, a very mild engaging manner, tho very different to Mr. French. He is very entertaining 'tho in a quite different style, there is no want of conversation wherever he is. He has mentioned to me several times a young man who can turn his hand to anything. He is particularly fond of Chemistry, which Mr F. thought would be very useful to you, & at the same time draws well. Mr. Wright is now giving him some instructions, & lends him busts to draw after. Doctor D. has told him you do not want any person in either of these capacities. Do you remember a picture in the exhibition last Year of the night mare, it was sold to a young man of this town for a mere trifle who has engraved it. Mr. F. thinks it the best picture in the exhibition, & says he made Sir Joshua stare by telling him so, upon his asking him which he liked best. I think Sir Joshua might well stare. The Philosophical Club goes on with great spirit, all the ingenious gentlemen in the town belong to it, they meet every saturday night at each others houses. The last meeting was at Mr Streets. Miss S——s keep their brothers house, & consequently were obliged to make tea & preside at the supper table, they did not like this at all, but Doctor D. with his usual politeness made it very agreeable to them by shewing several entertaining experiments adapted to the capacities of young women, one was roasting a tube, which turned round itself. Miss S. is a Lady of strong understanding, but so much sensibility, that she is often affected & low, with things, that other people never think at, at least after the present moment. We see her often as she comes here to learn french with Miss Stamfords. Mrs Stamford continues much the same, & joins with the young Ladies in Compliments to you.

I hope you will soon have finished your business in London, for it appears to me a long time since we have met.
My Brother Tom was so good to write to me the other day & I hope they were all well as he says nothing to the contrary. My love & Complts to Mr & Mrs Byerley. I need not tell you how happy I always am to hear from you—farewell & believe me ever your dutifull & affectionate daughter, S. Wedgwood.

A week later she describes a visit to the studio of the "Mr. Wright" here referred to. He was a painter of considerable reputation in his own day, and well remembered in ours under the name of "Wright of Derby." The local epithet—which serves to distinguish him from more than one other painter of his name—illustrates what has been said of the amenities of the small county town; for certainly none of his equals would to-day be found residing out of London or one of the few provincial capitals of art fame. Yet he made little concession to fashionable tastes. It was the day of "the Picturesque"—a cult of the romantic aspects of scenery, proclaimed in the Essay of Sir Uvedale Price, illustrated by a host of books of travel in the eighties and nineties, and finally caricatured in Dr. Syntax's Tour. But Wright's landscapes, like Wordsworth's, are the antithesis of the "picturesque." Painter and poet alike turn away from the exceptional and romantic aspects of Nature to her more homely and habitual ones. This is at least the charm I find in the only one of his pictures that is familiar to me, one which he presented to our ancestor—a scene in which everything is commonplace, and which yet leaves on the mind of the gazer an effect of quiet twilight meditation akin to Wordsworth and to Gray. However, this
was not the aspect of his genius which most impressed the imagination of his day, or that of Miss Susan Wedgwood when she had wheedled her way into his studio past a forbidding servant, on the plea that the artist was then engaged on a portrait of her father. Wright was always more interested in effects of light than in details, and as we should expect, it was the more unusual and ingenious of these effects, such as the combination of sun and moonlight, which chiefly took the fancy of the public. This feature was illustrated, on the present occasion, by a moonlight and torchlight picture of Hero and Leander, which she thought it worth a journey to Derby to admire. She herself did not, I am afraid, admire it very intelligently; for she confutes Byron’s “What maid does not the tale remember?” by supposing Leander to swim across a river. Her enjoyment of the picture is, however, unquestionably sincere.

Mar. 21, 1783.

We have this morning been paying a visit to Mr. Wright. The servant shew’d us two rooms of excellent pictures which ought to have satisfied anybody but we were not content having heard a good deal of two pictures, The Story of Hero & Leander, which he is now painting upon. How to contrive to see them we did not know but thought there could not be any impropriety in sending her Comp’ts that I was along with her & wished to know whether he had begun your picture. This message had the desired effect & he sent for us into his painting room. I saw the sketch he has sent you, but cant say I admired it much there appeared such a squareness in the grouping the figures. If you come to Derby you may perhaps get a sight of these two charming pictures. One of them is the meeting of the two lovers,
the moon shining extremely bright & a flaming torch at
the top of the Castle where Hero had been watching for
Leander & had left the torch there in her haste to meet
her lover, who swims across a river every night to see her.
He has one foot in the water and the other out to shew
his impatience, & the lovers are embracing. This is
a beautiful piece but the other is quite sublime. The
scene of the piece is the same but in this the moon is
overcast & the lightening is flashing about particularly
in one part which discovers Leander holding out his
hand just expiring amongst the waves. Hero is running
to the sea shore with the torch extended in one hand
behind her, which lights the Castle. It is a most affect-
ing picture and worth your while to come and see as I
am sure it would give you great pleasure. Mr. Wright
begged us not to mention these pictures as he does not
intend shewing them at present. He has sketched out
William & Margarets ghost which is quite a new subject
& has not been painted before. Mr. W. intends painting
eight or nine large pictures & having an exhibition of his
own in London, I believe he does not think himself well
used at the other.

The Assizes are now over, we had two very agreeable
evenings, I danced both nights which was rather too
much for me. My joints resent it & are stiff yet. To-
morrow we take a ride to Kedleston to take all the stiff-
ness away but am a little afraid it will have a contrary
effect. Yesterday we drank tea with Colonel and Mrs.
Heathcoate & spent a very merry afternoon, we were
fifteen in number—six Military Beaux. You see my
accounts of routs are rather more particular than yours
as I am at the trouble to go to them, you only suppose
what is going forward.

To this young spectator the pictures of Joseph
Wright doubtless gained an added spice of attrac-
tion from the secrecy enjoined and the pride of
being herself in the secret. Wright was evidently
a sensitive, irritable being; he was now beginning his quarrel with the Royal Academy; in the following year he declined its highest distinction, and for four years more sent no pictures to its Exhibition. He opened the private exhibition here referred to in 1785. Sukey's visit to it must have been her birthday in Art. Her interest in the subject seems to have been stimulated by conversation with the Mr. French whose remarks she recites to her father in the letter quoted above, and who was sufficiently well acquainted with Sir Joshua Reynolds to "make him stare" with the information that the best picture at the Exhibition of 1782 was one (afterwards engraved) called "The Nightmare." Nothing else is known of him.¹

Sukey's next letters from Derby are nearly two years later; the Darwins are now resident there, and Mrs. Darwin has, after many vain attempts, succeeded in securing her as a guest. The letters are entirely occupied with a "plot" of Sukey and the Darwins to inveigle her father to take her to London for a week. The particular lure she holds forth to him is that "Mrs. D. and I will be content to go two solitary females together in order that you and the Dr. might enjoy one another's society and settle the plan of this new fire engine and a great many &c. &c." Darwin, as we have seen, was keenly interested in devices for supplying motor power, and had himself invented an application of the windmill. He would be glad, she reports, "to hear a farther

¹ An amusing criticism of Wright's "Corinthian Maid" was offered by Wedgwood himself to the painter in a letter of April 29, 1784.
account of this new engine; he knows it is possible to raise water 30 feet high without pump and valve. Mr. Whitehurst did it many years ago but failed in the application.” She goes on to tell of a governess she has heard of for her three little sisters. The letter crossed one from him which leads to the vindication: “You see I am not the flirt you take me for but more like the young women of former times”—a little touch which does not need our knowledge of the previous attack to bring out the happy, easy vein of banter that prevailed between the father and daughter. The journey to London seems still not quite secure. “Do consider,” she goes on to urge him, “how happy you will be with the Doctor all the way! Such a deal of talk! You may never have such another opportunity as long as you live again.” Another letter of the same year enters with a sympathy, alas! misplaced, into his opposition to Pitt’s benevolent plans for Ireland, and gives the information that “Mr Strutt has been here to say that he cannot get any petition,” i.e. against Pitt.

The next letter, of a year later, throws many sidelights on the family history, and may be given almost entire. Her little pleasantry at the expense of the brilliant Mrs. Crewe, and her playful anxiety about the “French clerk’s” prospects, illustrate her vein of quiet unassuming fun.

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1 The youngest, Mary Ann, died in the following year.

2 Mr. Strutt was William, father of the first Lord Belper, and a notable man. His descendants will be the first to rejoice that he failed in this endeavour; indeed there is hardly any one, of any party, who would now feel otherwise.
22 November 1786.

My dear Father—Business is at a very low ebb, and your French clerk has very little to do. There has only been three letters since you left us, so that instead of having her salary increased as you mention she has only to petition it may not be taken away & she discarded. Jos & Tom are very good in writing so often to us & their letters are a great amusement in our solitary state. They seem very happily situated at Dr Blacklocks. In a letter last night Jos says “Dr B is a very agreeable, very learned & a very good man & a poet: He says but little, but all that little is excellent.” This is a very charming character in a few words & they cannot fail of improving with such a landlord.

I have been spending four or five days at Fenton with the Jervises from Netherseale; & while I was there Mr. Charles Crewe sent an invitation to my brothers & I to a ball, as the family from Crewe were to be there. This was very polite & obliging but I could not help being diverted at the reason given for it: but being unfortunately from home I could not give my intimate friend Mrs. Crewe the meeting. Yesterday the Jervis's Smiths & Fletchers dined with us & we had a very good Concert in the evening. Both the musical & the whist party wished much to have had you with them, we had even some of us the vanity to think you would have been as happy with us as at great London town.

In the next letter, of the following year, 1787, their positions are reversed. Susan is staying with the Clives in town and Wedgwood is at Etruria. Her hosts are quiet people. “We are seldom up at half after ten at night”; and her chief news is about his own doings.

The paper we take is very quiet & your name never appears in it. I heard it proved lately that you are a turncoat—1st you certainly were on the D. of Portlands
side & now are not—2ndly the newspapers abuse you. Is not this proof positive? So dont pretend to deny it. Lady E. Clive is your accuser & is quite serious, my private opinion is that that was the reason she would not invite me to dinner the other day. She asked Miss R. only & Mrs. C. & I for the afternoon, but our spirits were too big to let us go. She has another charge against you—your religious principles cannot be right or you would not be acquainted with such a man as—as—Dr Darwin—as for her Ladyship she would rather die than have his advice if there was not another physician in the world.

A later sentence from this letter brings out the light and delicate critical spirit which she had at command:

The Blairs are civil but not intimate so that Mrs Clive is well convinced Blairina has made out some pretty little histories; & indeed without having recourse to invention if she told parts of stories & left out her own behaviour that of others would often appear in a strange light.

A sentence which lifts the veil from a dramatic situation, and holds it, for a moment, suspended in a firm but cool grasp. Few girls of two-and-twenty could say as much as this, and no more.

The last letter we possess of hers was perhaps the last which her father received from her. She was now staying with her eldest brother and his beautiful wife, and may have held in her arms the first of her father’s grandchildren.

April y° 8 [1794].

My dear Father—I feel particularly obliged for your very affectionate letter & for the wish you express of
hearing again from me; I should certainly have written both sooner, & oftener to you, had I not known that my letters home are all public, & that by writing to my Sisters I spared you the trouble of writing which I know you are not very fond of.

Your Pedometer is indeed a sad story teller & will well deserve to be discarded if he gives so melancholy an account of your exertions—the reason of its not acting must be owing to your pocket being either too deep or too shallow—the little gold chain ought to be part of the way out, when the pedometer rests at the bottom of your pocket, & then every motion of your leg must make it tick. I shall be glad to hear you succeed with it, as it will be a very nice thing now you are become so great a walker to know what feats you perform. I have not seen Mrs Crewe lately but will not forget your thanks the next time we meet.

We dined on Tuesday at the Rabys & had a very pleasant day. The young ladies did not exert themselves much more than last year, for our amusement, but the old ones were as gay & good humoured as usual. We met there Sir Sidney Smiths father who was very full of the affair at Toulon, & much delighted with his sons bravery. He gave us a curious account of his house at Dover which is built in or on the rock & the roof of it is a boat—there are two large caves part of this edifice, where he spends most of his time—he chose this situation in order to live retired but by making it so whimsical a place, he has defeated his own purpose, as there is not a day passes without many people coming to see it, & he is too good natured to refuse them permission.

We met there also 2 Mr Carnacs (I dont know how to spell their name) great friends of Mrs Rabys, but all her geese are swans—they are fine lively Irishmen, very fond of port & potatoes. I sat by one of them at dinner & had great difficulty to keep tolerably sober, they were so very pressing.
John says Dr Priestly appears to him in very good spirits & Mrs P. is very animated in the affair. Mr Wm Wilkinson called here yesterday, he says he shall certainly go over & make the Dr a visit, he thinks the voyage nothing & talks of staying about a year & then returning. Mrs Finch wishes much to go, but cannot yet persuade her husband, 'tho it would be the best thing he can do, as he understands farming & has lost pretty considerably by the Iron trade. When they married he had about 600 a year & it is now reduced to 2 or 8.

I am much obliged by your enquiries after my finances which are very good in somuch that I hope to be able to treat myself with a grand pianoforte as nothing else is now played upon & peoples ears are become so refined that I could not think of shocking them by the jarring sounds of a harpsichord.

We have not yet begun to think about leaving town. John & Jane desire to join in very affectionate remembrances to My Mother & yourself & believe me to be, Yr ever affectionate daughter, S. Wedgwood.

I have just now seen Mr Wilkinson who says he never saw Dr Priestly in better spirits as well as Mrs Priestly. They are both in very good health. They have heard from their Sons who are entered into a scheme with a Company to buy 800,000 acres of land. They are to keep 8000 acres to their own share. They sail tomorrow.

Susan Wedgwood became Susan Darwin in 1796 and lived twenty years more under that name. Strange to say, I have only come upon it twice in all the letters I have seen of that period. The first mention is a complaint, from Emma Allen, sister of the wives of John and Josiah Wedgwood, of her tiresome and engrossing devotion to her babies. The second is the
remark by another of the same family on hearing of her death: "She was the most agreeable woman I ever knew." We need not exaggerate the import of the words, but it was no mere banal phrase. Although I never heard it applied to her by any one else, I can readily credit it, partly on the evidence of her letters, partly because a charm, such as the words suggest, was the common endowment, in varying degrees, of her children, all but one of whom were intimately known to me. Her famous son would have been welcome always and everywhere, had his social qualities been his sole distinction. The sweet, serious, and yet humorous expression of his mother's miniature tells the same story as her letters—a nature full of sober cheerfulness and ready enjoyment, kindly, faithful and sincere.

None of Susan's three younger sisters is known to us by any such intimate correspondence with their father as hers. So easy and equal a friendship as that between Wedgwood and his first-born is rarely possible between a father and more than one of his children. Mary Anne, the youngest child, whose illness is so tenderly commemorated in the latest correspondence with Bentley, died in 1786, and her death, like his, has left no trace in the scanty record of those years.

Catherine ("Kitty") and Sarah, the second and third sisters, were both under age at their father's death in 1795. Both were women of strong character, not without a touch of hardness. It may be unjust to infer this from "Kitty's"
peremptory rejection of Poole. But there is less equivocal evidence in a letter of hers to Tom upon the character of Coleridge. Coleridge's character had palpable and grave defects, and some of her shafts undoubtedly go home. But she need not have been so impervious to his genius. One recalls Dorothy Wordsworth's beautiful summary of her impression: "At first I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes. He is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips. . . . But if you hear him speak for five minutes, you think no more of them. . . ."

[No date—endorsed Cote, 1808.]

We shall do everything to make your bedroom warm and Mr. Coleridge's comfortable, though it cannot be smart, as he must ascend to the tower. I don't know whether we shall ever agree in our sentiments respecting this gentleman, but I hope if we do not that we may agree to differ. I have never seen enough of him to overcome the first disagreeable impression of his accent and exterior. I confess, too, that in what I have seen and heard of Mr. Coleridge there is in my opinion too great a parade of superior feeling; and an excessive goodness and sensibility is put too forward, which gives an appearance at least, of conceit, and excites suspicion that it is acting; as real sensibility never endeavours to excite notice. I will tell you sincerely my opinion of him, whether it is well or ill founded. He appears to be an uncomfortable husband, and very negligent, of the worldly interest at least, of his children; leaving them in case of his death to be provided for by his friends is a scheme more worthy of his desultory habits than of his talents. I think a sturdy independent spirit is so very admirable that, to be extremely candid, I have never recovered his so willingly consenting to be so much
obliged to even you. You see I have not much to say, but 'tis the impression I have of his thinking himself much better than the world in general that inclines one to look more closely into his own life and conduct; and as his judgments of others are not inclined to the favourable side, he does not from his own conduct claim lenity.

I am almost afraid to let you see this letter, but it does as clearly as I can express contain my present opinion of Mr. Coleridge. I think I am not so rivetted to this opinion but that I can change, if upon seeing more of him he gives me sufficient grounds.

Sarah, the youngest surviving sister, lived till 1856; and with her I reach my own definite and vivid recollections. I remember her not as a faint shadowy figure (as I remember her brothers, my great-uncle John and my grandfather), but as a strongly impressive, and to me, attractive human being. I am afraid I was alone in this taste for her society in her old age. To her contemporaries, and even to her nephews and nieces in the generation immediately below her, she was somewhat alarming. "Sarah always crows me," said once Erasmus Darwin, whom I have already cited as the most sociable of men. "One gets along better with Aunt Sarah when one knows nothing of the hidden rocks," was the response of her niece, Mrs. Darwin, to some similar remark. The rocks were her own strong and high principles in alliance with a certain lack of humour, so decided as to need a positive name, which, however, our language does not afford. I remember how, the last time I saw her, wishing to amuse her, I repeated an entertaining piece of impertinence from a beautiful cousin
who presumed a little on her personal advantages over less favoured relatives. I shall never forget the invasion of tragedy into my little farce as she sat up more straight than usual (and she was always upright), or the strenuousness of her exclamation: "I never heard anything so unfeeling in my life." Her lack of humour was remarkable, for it was certainly a quality possessed by both her parents.

Possibly personal appearance might be a sore subject to her, for she was not well favoured, and according to some accounts was sensitive on the subject. However, she had many lovers, and for a time was engaged to Basil Montagu, the natural son of Lord Sandwich and Miss Ray, and author of the edition of Bacon which called forth Macaulay's well-known Essay. The engagement was broken off by herself, and she declined all others. She was a woman of a noble though somewhat forbidding character, winning respect from every one, and love from her intimates.

She was inflexibly veracious, and disdained the language of compliment. "Is not Mary beautiful?" her oldest friend asked her one day, speaking of her own daughter, and elicited a decided negative. "Oh, I beg your pardon," said the amiable mother; "I know I ought not to have asked that question, but I thought everybody must think Mary beautiful." The girl was quite sufficiently pleasant to look at to have excused a warm response even from a candid critic, but Sarah could not soften truth ever so little. Like most persons who feel this impossi-
bility, she had some difficulty in expression. "I have sometimes feared," she wrote to her brother Tom in 1804, "[that] I must have appeared insensible to your sufferings, when my taciturnity has really been owing partly to the family infirmity." A few lines which passed between her brothers, which I like to think she must have seen, would amply relieve this fear:

"I find," Tom writes to Josiah, Nov. 4, 1804, "that yourself & Sally always move me most to think of a love more than mortal, which cannot flourish in this chilling world, and must survive it. Your deep affection, & Sally's angelic kindness, give a certain value to life in its most trying moments."

The foregoing sentence is the only one from the pen of Tom Wedgwood which opens any vista towards a life beyond the grave. To have been the one to suggest it to such a sufferer as Tom Wedgwood would be enough to soothe the memories of the lonely years which were her lot.

With this notice of Josiah's last surviving child, his great-granddaughter proposed, reluctantly, to "bid him farewell." And it is not unfit that the book should close with the reminiscence of those meetings in the 'fifties when Sarah Wedgwood's lonely and reticent old age was cheered by the visits of her great-niece, then in the first flush of her brilliant womanhood. That intimacy brought the future author of these pages nearer to the famous potter than any other could then do; and if others in the great Wedg-
wood cousinry more vividly recalled his intellectual energy and fertility, she may well have found in his youngest daughter's stern veracity a reflection of his masterful thoroughness, and in her "angelic goodness" the issue of his large human heart.
Sacred to the Memory of
Josiah Wedgwood F.R.S. & B.A.
of Etruria in this County.
Born in August 1730. Died January the 3rd 1795.
Who converted a rude & inconsiderable manufactory into an elegant art
and an important part of national commerce.
By these services to his country he acquired an ample fortune,
which he blamlessly & prudently enjoyed
and generously dispensed for the reward of merit & the relief of misfortune.
His mind was inventive & original yet perfectly sober & well regulated.
His character was decisive & commanding without harshness or arrogance.
His prosperity was inestimable; his kindness unwearying.
His manners simple & dignified and the cheerfulness of his temper
was the natural reward of the activity of his pure & useful life.
He was most loved by those who knew him best
and he has left indelible impressions of affection & veneration
on the minds of his family who have erected
this monument to his memory.

Memorial to Josiah Wedgwood in Stoke Church, Staffs.
APPENDIX

WEDGWOOD AS AN INDUSTRIAL CHEMIST

By J. W. MELLOR, D.Sc., Principal of the School of Technology, Stoke-on-Trent

To-day it is difficult to realise the state of chemistry at the time when Josiah Wedgwood flourished. There was no Dalton's atomic theory; the systematic investigation of gases had barely commenced; coal gas was not in use; the combustion of coal in pottery ovens was said to be due to the escape of phlogiston from the coal rather than to the union of the coal with the oxygen of the air; and chemistry itself was autocratically dominated by the old king Phlogiston. In Paris Lavoisier's invincible balance and merciless experiments were heralding the coming of a successor; in England Priestley was fighting valiantly for the doomed monarch. The influence of Lavoisier's victorious revolution upon the subsequent development of chemistry has been so great that several modern writers exaggerate the effect, and state that the science of chemistry was itself inaugurated by Lavoisier. In any case the orthodox chemistry of Wedgwood's day was pre-Lavoisierian, and his chemistry must be judged accordingly.

Priestley and Wedgwood furnish an interesting contrast of temperaments, and I think each one is shown up more vividly when contrasted with the other. While both men were keen, enthusiastic, and grimly in earnest, Priestley was restless, hasty, and disorderly, with little or no commercial instinct; on the other
hand Wedgwood was calm, cautious, and methodical, with the commercial instinct highly developed. Priestley quickly rushed to press with accounts of his work, and he had the *cacoethes scribendi* in an aggravated form. Wedgwood was more secretive, and his private notebooks teem with records of experiments in ceramic chemistry which would be creditable were they published to-morrow. This contrast recalls W. Ostwald’s *Grosse Männer*, in which an ingenious attempt is made to arrange men of genius in two classes which he calls respectively romanticists and classicists. He places Davy, Liebig, and Gerhardt among the former, and Faraday, Mayer, and Helmholtz among the latter. Had Priestley and Wedgwood been included in Ostwald’s list, the former would have been called a romanticist and the latter a classicist. Ostwald’s classification is based on mental reaction-velocity—or mental temperature, so to speak. The romanticist has a high and the classicist a low mental reaction-velocity. The latter is inclined to be phlegmatic and melancholic, and the former sanguine and choleric. The romanticist, with his agile mind, reads everything; he is interested in everything and everybody; and, as a result of his enormous consumption of facts, he soon feels the need of publication. On the other hand the classicist works more silently and more alone, he is less inclined for publication, and he does not obtain recognition so easily.

Josiah Wedgwood was not a trained chemist, neither was Priestley. However, both had the necessary instinct and natural aptitude of a chemist, and both quickly developed their special gifts when they received their respective calls. It is very fortunate that these two men were intimately associated; the one must have been of great assistance to the other. I do not refer to the material fact that Wedgwood annually contributed one-eighth of the two hundred guineas which were subscribed by a number of benefactors of Priestley; nor to the constant reference in the Priestley-
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Wedgwood letters to the receipt of packages of tubes and retorts from Wedgwood's factory. I refer rather to the mutual help which each received from the other in the development of his own peculiar talents.

Robert Boyle, in a little-known essay entitled "That the Goods of Mankind may be much increased by the Naturalists insight into the Trades," begins with these words: "To make out what is proposed in the title of this discourse, I shall endeavour to show two things, the one that an insight into trades may improve the Naturalist's knowledge, and the other, that the naturalist as well by the skill thus obtained, as by the other parts of his knowledge, may be enabled to improve trades." This is a clear statement of a modern problem now being much discussed. Wedgwood astutely realised the importance of this same problem, and he paid much attention to those sciences bearing upon pottery. His commonplace books are loaded with excerpts and translations from foreign and home books and journals dealing with substances and processes having a direct or indirect bearing upon his own industry. For example, his notes about Scheele's observations of fluorspar were supplemented by experiments on the behaviour of various mixtures of clay and fluorspar, of flint and fluorspar, and of whiting and fluorspar in the potter's oven. He obtained what would be called to-day an eutectic mixture with clay and fluorspar in approximately equal parts by weight.

The pure chemist sometimes nurses the belief that pure chemistry is on a higher plane and requires higher faculties than work in technical or industrial chemistry. The direct converse is nearer the truth. The industrial chemist is restricted by many limitations, the most important of which regulates the cost of the processes of manufacture and the supplies of raw materials. The pure chemist is not hampered and restricted in the same way, and, in consequence, the industrial chemist works under the greater difficulties. There is also
the problem of managing men. These points were recognised by Wedgwood, and an unpublished brochure, in Wedgwood’s own writing, has some shrewd and interesting remarks on the art of managing men so as to get them working most efficiently.

When a new mineral or earth came under Wedgwood’s notice, he naturally sought for applications in pottery manufacture—colours, glazes, or bodies. In his quest for new facts, he seems to have ransacked those parts of the Earth available to him; he had clays and earths sent to him from many places. He tried all promising samples in different parts of the oven, and then tried them mixed with different proportions of other materials. Priestley was probably of much help to him in this work, for there are numerous references to the action of heat on various minerals, earths, and rocks in the Priestley-Wedgwood letters; and Wedgwood’s notebooks bear witness to the eagerness of his quest. For example, at the beginning of his notes, dated 1781, there is a formidable list of “specimens to be fired.” It includes clays from Cornwall, Brassington, Flukin, Purbeck, Finsmouth, Mold (Flintshire), Stourbridge, Penzance, our Sagar Clay, Maryland, Ross (Herefordshire), Ireland, Bermudas, Reading, Gloucestershire, Exeter, Dean Forest, Norfolk, Muscle Heath (Norwich), Hyde Park, Swan Pool, Jamaica, Paris, Middleton, and a number of other places, together with eighteen samples of steatites from different places. In another place there is an elaborate record of experiments on cobalt oxide, purified by different methods. This is most interesting in view of the fact that the purification is now conducted in chemical works which pride themselves on the purity of their products. As a result, modern cobalt-refineries eliminate traces of impurities which were not formerly removed, and the modern manufacturer accordingly complains that his colours appear harsher and wanting the warmth of the tint which characterised the earlier less pure cobalt blue colours.
Too often in a pottery the recipe is an autocratic tyrant, the master of the works, before whom all must bow down and worship. Wedgwood could not rest in bondage, and he accordingly spared no pains to make the recipes his servants. His method of investigation is interesting; it is very similar to that which would be followed to-day. First, mixtures in different proportions of two different materials, then three, then four, and so on. These were tried in different parts of the oven so that he could observe the effects of different temperatures on the properties he had under observation. The metallurgist is to-day following precisely the same plan with respect to the properties of what he calls binary, ternary, and quaternary alloys of the different metals. The number of possible combinations involved in this method is appallingly large, and the enormous mass of trials, still preserved in the museum at Etruria, bears eloquent testimony to the thoroughness with which Wedgwood did his work. It is difficult to see how it can be abbreviated. No science, no theory can take its place. The facts so gleaned may be empirical or rule of thumb, but the first aim of true science must be the accumulation of such primary facts. After the simple empirical facts have been discovered, it may or may not be possible to disentangle natural relations among the facts, but the facts must first be hunted down with unwearied diligence and accuracy. In the pseudo-sciences alone is the attempt made to ambitiously proclaim general rules and laws without first studying the varied character of the simple primary facts. Misunderstandings and errors arise when scientific men stretch their hands beyond the facts. For instance, observations show that under a given set of conditions, the glaze in an under-flinted body will craze; this does not mean that because the glaze crazes, the body is necessarily under-flinted. An erroneous statement of this kind is the result of prematurely basing rules upon an imperfect collection of primary facts.
Reference has been frequently made to Wedgwood's published work on estimating the work done by the heat in pottery ovens from its effect on the contraction of "clay." In addition to Wedgwood's original process, some modifications have been introduced involving mere superficial variations in the method of measuring the contraction, but there is no essential difference between the original method proposed by Wedgwood and the various "contraction bits" employed to-day. Wedgwood has some unpublished work on the squatting of various mixtures of felspar, clay, etc., moulded in the form of prisms or cones, and thus Wedgwood's cones antedated those now called Seger's cones by almost a century. Attention was first drawn to this fact by Mr. William Burton about three years ago.

It is a pity that a great mass of work done by Wedgwood in what might be called the theory of pottery has not been published, since all will have to be repeated. If Wedgwood's work were available the newer school could start where Wedgwood left off instead of spending decades in arriving at the same stage as he had attained. For example, the recent "lead versus leadless glaze" controversy would probably have been simplified had Wedgwood's notes on this subject been published. More than a century ago he appears to have reached a stage to which we have but recently arrived after much labour. As a matter of interest his celebrated mortar body, immortalised as the "Wedgwood mortar," has been imitated in Germany by an inferior mortar body in hard porcelain; and the climax was reached by ignorant dealers asking British manufacturers to make an imitation of the imitation because of the failure of German supplies during the Great War.
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