

**Exhibition : Dr. Samuel Johnson and eighteenth century medicine , 5
January - 2 March 1984 / Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.**

Contributors

Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.
Sutton, H. Brenda.

Publication/Creation

London : The Institute, 1984]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gq47yudk>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.

**wellcome
collection**

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON
AND
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
MEDICINE

1984

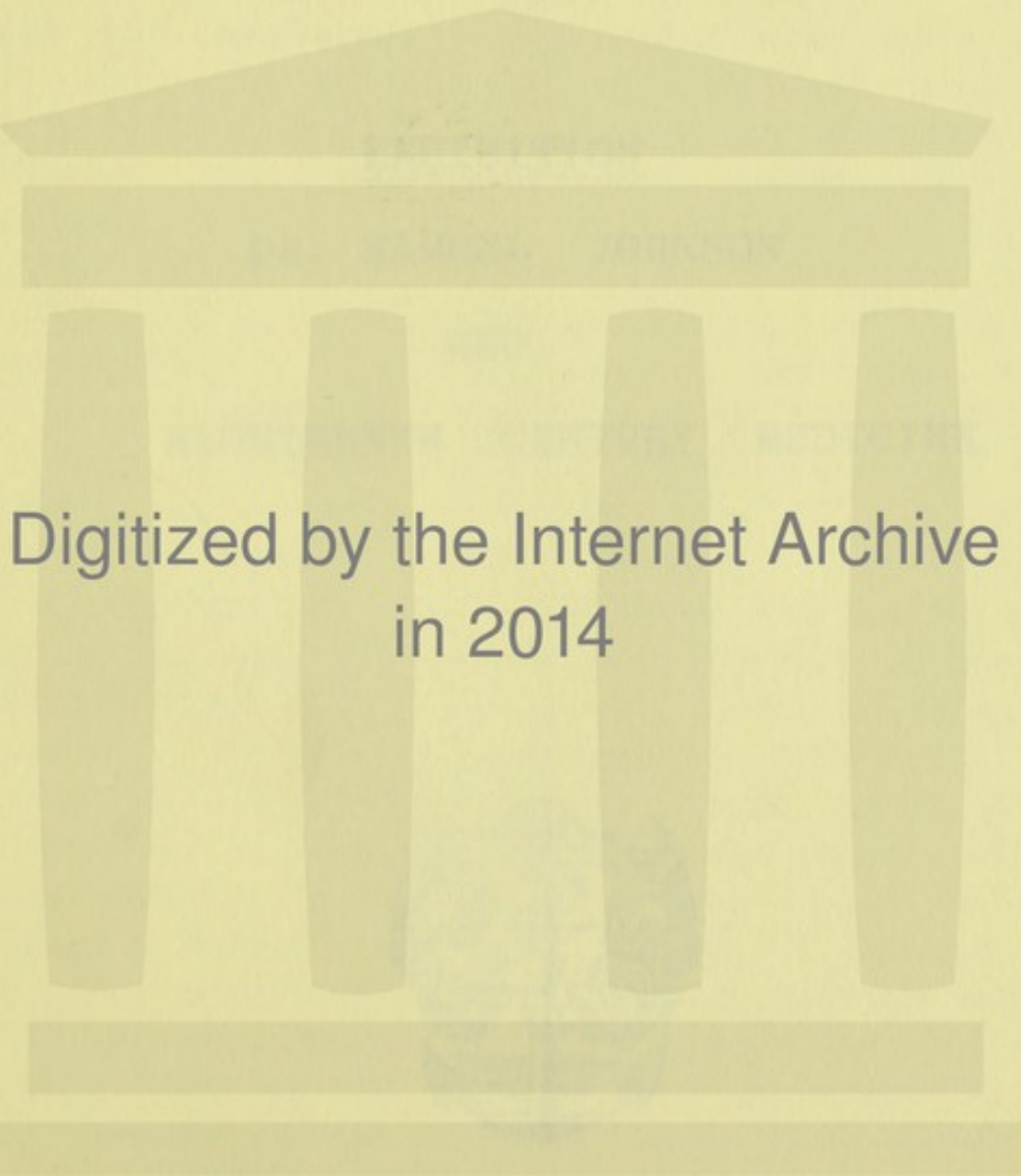
CUB .41 .AA7

CUB. 41. AA7



22101289869

X 72226



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

WELLCOME INSTITUTE

FOR THE

HISTORY OF MEDICINE

EXHIBITION

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

AND

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MEDICINE



5 JANUARY - 2 MARCH 1984

343026

WELLCOME INSTITUTE
FOR THE
HISTORY OF MEDICINE

EXHIBITION

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON
AND



CUB. 41. AA7



Introduction

To display Johnson's connections with eighteenth century medicine is a task which involves the whole life of Johnson and the whole history of eighteenth century medicine and literature. The interrelation of the literary with the medical world and Johnson's involvement with both means that one picks up the end of a thread unaware of where it will lead. An agreement between John Newbery, the publisher and seller of patent medicines, and Mrs Mary Packe [see case 14] can lead to the fact that it was John's nephew Francis to whom Johnson sold the manuscript of 'The Vicar of Wakefield' to pay Goldsmith's rent and rescue him from arrest for debt [see case 12]; but it can also lead to Johnson's visit to Christopher Smart confined as a mental patient in St. Luke's or Bethlem Hospital, since Smart's signature as witness appears on the document and he is known to have worked for Newbery. Equally it can lead to Dr. Robert James, Johnson's Lichfield friend, to whose Medicinal Dictionary Johnson made substantial contributions and whose fever powder the publisher Newbery assiduously promoted even in the children's book Goody Two Shoes in which Margery's father was 'seized with a violent fever in a place where Dr. James's fever powder was not to be had and where he died miserably'. Johnson too was loud in its praises and defended it even after James's death when the legal case concerning its formula still continued. Indeed, the whole of the literary world seems to have had its fevers assuaged by it. Horace Walpole extravagantly averred that he would take James's powder if his house were on fire.

Nor within the literary or the medical world were the boundaries clear-cut. Of the ten members of the Ivy Lane Club founded by Johnson in 1749,

three were physicians: Richard Bathurst, William McGhie and Edmund Barker; and of the later Literary Club the medical and scientific members included Sir Joseph Banks, Oliver Goldsmith, Christopher Nugent, George Fordyce, and Richard Warren. Moreover, many figures regarded now as medical also had a foot in the literary camp: Akenside, Armstrong, Blackmore, and Garth were also highly regarded as poets in their day and conversely Smollett, Arbuthnot and Wolcot ("Peter Pindar") were all medically qualified. However dubious Goldsmith's medical degree may be, there is no doubt that he studied medicine both at Edinburgh and on the Continent and that he set up some kind of practice on his return to London. It was not unusual for a poet or novelist to include medical works in his library. Johnson had a large number of such works, of which three are exhibited. These, supplemented by his day-to-day talk with Levet and most of the leading physicians of his day, must have furnished him with his wide knowledge of medicine.

The items here exhibited represent therefore only a small corner of a vast picture. Moreover, the themes of the display cases inevitably overlap. Many of the physicians who treated or were consulted by Johnson were, like Lawrence and Brocklesby, also his close friends. As Boswell said "Dr. Brocklesby...attended him with the utmost assiduity and kindness as his physician and friend" and of Levet he said "he was an old and faithful friend."

The theme of Johnson as a patient begins with his long and difficult birth to a mother already aged forty, continues with his contracting scrofula when still very young (which may have resulted in his poor eye-sight and deafness) and is followed by his continual battle against asthma, gout and

three were physicians: Richard Bannant, William
 Keith and Edward Barker and of the Inter
 literary Club the medical and scientific members
 included Sir Joseph Barker, Oliver Goldsmith,
 Christopher Nugent, George Fordyce, and Richard
 Warren. Moreover, many letters regarded now as
 medical also had a foot in the literary camp:
 Alexander, Armstrong, Bannant, and Gault were
 also highly regarded as poets in their day and
 conversely Bannant, Armstrong and Watson ("Peter
 Plover") were all medically qualified. However
 Dobson Goldsmith's medical degree may be, there
 is no doubt that he studied medicine both at
 Edinburgh and on the Continent and that he set
 up some kind of practice on his return to London.
 It was not unusual for a poet or novelist to
 include medical work in his library. Johnson had
 a large number of such works, of which three are
 exhibited. These, supplemented by the day-to-day
 talk with Lever and most of the leading physicians
 of his day, must have furnished him with the wide
 knowledge of medicine.

The items here exhibited represent therefore only
 a small corner of a vast picture. Moreover, the
 themes of the display cases inevitably overlap,
 many of the physicians who treated or were
 consulted by Johnson were, like Lawrence and
 Brocklesby, also his close friends. As Boswell
 said "Dr. Brocklesby... attended him with the
 utmost assiduity and kindness as his physician and
 friend" and of Lever he said "he was an old and
 faithful friend."

The theme of Johnson as a patient begins with his
 long and difficult birth to a mother already aged
 forty, continues with his contracting scrofula when
 still very young (which may have resulted in his
 poor eye-sight and deafness) and is followed by
 his continual battle against asthma, gout and

dropsy. What was perhaps even more exhausting and preoccupying was his fight against the powers of darkness and the imagination, the feelings of guilt and depression, the paralysing inaction and lethargy and the fear of ultimate insanity, the seeds of which had been sown by Dr. Swinfen as early as 1731. Only the antidote of company, talk and convivial surroundings warded off the sombre clouds which gathered in the night-hours at Gough Square and Bolt Court. It is to the medical members of the company which surrounded Johnson that much of this exhibition is devoted. Each ministered in his own way to soothing his body or stimulating his mind, and most of them added friendship, esteem and love for the huge man who was finally conquered by death on 13th December, 1784, and whose bicentenary we celebrate this year.

Brenda Sutton

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank William Schupbach for his help over many practical details and Christine English for drawing my attention to the document of agreement between John Newbery and Mary Packe.

Contents of Exhibition Cases

Case 1 'A poor diseased infant'

1. Johnson's birthplace [the house on the right] in Lichfield where he was born on September 18th, 1709. The family lived over the book-shop.

From an engraving by Cook after E. Stringer 1785.

2. Michael Johnson (1657-1731) Johnson's father, bookseller, bookbinder, and stationer. He also set up a small parchment factory. Among the books he published were the two by Sir John Floyer shown here.

Engraving from the portrait by E. Finden.

3. Sir John Floyer (1649-1734)

A treatise of the asthma. 2 ed. London: R. Wilkin and W. Innys. 1717.

Floyer practised medicine in Lichfield for over fifty years. He was consulted by Johnson's parents and it is thought to have been on his advice that the two and a half year old Samuel was taken to London in March 1712 to be "touched" for scrofula by Queen Anne.

Floyer's book on asthma (he was a sufferer himself) shown here was consulted by Johnson in his later years in an attempt to relieve his own symptoms but he came to the conclusion that "his asthma, I think, is not of the same kind with mine", describing his own as "constitutional and incurable". Of Floyer he said "Sir John Floyer, whom the physical race consider as author of one of the best books upon it [asthma], panted on to ninety".

4. Floyer, Sir John

The touch-stone of medicines. London: Printed for M. Johnson, Lichfield. 1687-91.

Floyer's first book, published in Lichfield by Johnson's father.

5. Floyer, Sir John

The preternatural state of animal humours described by their sensible qualities. London: Printed for M. Johnson. 1696.

Floyer's second book like his first was published by Michael Johnson.

When Johnson was two and a half years old he contracted scrofula and in March, 1712, was taken by his mother to London to be "touched" by Queen Anne for what was known as the King's Evil. It was widely believed that the disease could be cured by the laying-on of hands by the anointed sovereign. The practice died out however after Queen Anne's death. Johnson's poor eyesight and hearing difficulties are thought by some to have been caused by the scrofula.

6. Browne, John (1642-1700?)

Adenochoiradelogia. London: T. Newcomb for S. Lowndes. 1684.

On the engraved frontispiece is a scene depicting Charles II "touching" those suffering from scrofula or the "King's Evil".

7. Johnson's touch-piece given to him by Queen Anne in 1712 after being "touched" by her for scrofula.

[The original is in the British Museum.]

8. Photograph of pen and ink drawing of Johnson by Richard Blagden, M.D., 1774, showing the scrofula scars on the left side where Johnson was operated.

Case 2 Early Works and Library

9. Lobo, Jeronimo (1594-1678)

A voyage to Abyssinia.... with a continuation of the history of Abyssinia down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. [Transl. from the French of le Grand by Samuel Johnson.] London: A. Bettesworth & C. Hitch. 1735.

It was Edmund Hector, the surgeon and nephew of George Hector, the man mid-wife who had delivered the infant Johnson, who suggested to Johnson in 1734 that he should translate this travel book by a seventeenth century Portuguese. He hoped to shake Johnson out of his lethargy and despair. Hector himself had to take down the translation verbatim from Johnson's extempore translation, make a fair copy and read the proofs. The work obviously influenced Johnson's 'Rasselas' both in the country chosen for the setting and even in the name of the chief character. In Lobo he found the character of 'Rassela Christos', Lieutenant General to the Sultan.

10. Harleian Library

Catalogus bibliothecae Harleianae.
[Compiled by S. Johnson, M. Maittaire, and W. Oldys.] London: T. Osborne. 1743-45.
[Vols. 1, 2.]

One of Johnson's early works was this descriptive catalogue of the Earl of Oxford's private library for the bookseller Thomas Osborne. William Oldys had been the Earl's secretary. Within a year about forty thousand titles were listed.

11. Sydenham, Thomas (1624-1689)

The entire works. London: E. Cave. 1742.

This is the first appearance of Johnson's life of Sydenham. It later appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine.

12. The life of Hermann Boerhaave, the famous chemist, botanist and physician from the Gentleman's Magazine, 1739. Boerhaave had died on 23 September, 1738, and this life was translated by Johnson from the Latin of Albert Schultens. It was later printed with additions in James's 'Medicinal dictionary'.

Three medical books, copies of which were in Johnson's library.

13. Aretaeus Cappadox [c. A.D. 150-200]

De causis et signis morborum. Paris: H. Stephanus. 1567.

14. Cheyne, George (1671-1743)

The English malady. London: G. Strahan & J. Leake. 1733.

15. Cheselden, William (1688-1752)

The anatomy of the humane body. 7 ed.
London: C. Hitch & R. Dodsley. 1750.

Case 3 Robert James and his dictionary

16. Robert James (1703-1776)

James (of James's fever powders) was educated at Lichfield Grammar School, a few years senior to Johnson. In 1743 he published his three-volume 'Medicinal Dictionary' to which Johnson contributed many of the biographical entries (free translations from other works), particularly for the first two letters of the alphabet, as well as writing the dedication to Richard Mead.

Line engraving by W. Walker (1778) after a sculpture by Scheemakers.

17. James, Robert

A dissertation on fevers. 6 ed. London: J. Newbery. 1764.

Johnson was sceptical about some of James's compound medicines: "his ingredients appeared to me sometimes inefficacious and trifling, and sometimes heterogeneous, and destructive of each other". But he vigorously defended the fever powder, and after James's death added a paragraph to the 'Vindication' prepared by James to combat an attack on his formula.

18. James, Robert

Pharmacopoeia universalis: or, a new universal English dispensatory. London: J. Hodges and J. Wood. 1747.

19. James, Robert

A medicinal dictionary. 3 vols. London: T. Osborne and J. Roberts. 1743-45.

Volume one open to show Johnson's biography of Aretaeus.

20. Hawes, William (1736-1808)

An account of the late Dr. Goldsmith's illness, so far as relates to the exhibition of Dr. James's powders. London: W. Brown, etc. 1774.

Hawes maintained that Goldsmith had insisted on taking James's fever powder against his advice and that it had contributed to his death. The profits of the pamphlet went towards establishing The Royal Humane Society.

See cases 13 and 14 for more information on Goldsmith.

Case 4 The Great Lexicographer

21. A dictionary of the English language. London: W. Strahan for J. and P. Knapton. 1755.

22. Dr. Johnson's house, Gough Square. The garret workshop where Johnson compiled his dictionary.

There were up to six amanuenses who worked at small tables copying out the quotations on to slips of paper. Johnson himself wrote the definitions of over 40,000 words and included about 114,000 quotations in the two volumes. The whole work took nine years to complete.

23. Photograph of an engraving from the portrait of Johnson, 1756, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. [In the National Portrait Gallery.]

Case 5 Vigorous Remedies

In this case can be seen some of the pharmacopoeias and materia medica text-books of Johnson's day, showing the remedies and treatment administered to him by his physicians, not always to his liking. For example, Johnson always remained opposed to excessive bleeding ('I shall try to escape another bleeding; for I am of the chemical sect who hold phlebotomy in abhorrence') but was willing to experiment with most of the other forms of treatment. He was dosed with ipecacuanha, squills, opium, Peruvian bark, and diascordium, and, following his stroke in 1783, Heberden and Brocklesby treated him with ammonia, blisters, nutritive diet and wine. He was not averse to prescribing for himself, and worked out a regimen for himself (and often for others). Fanny Burney wrote "Johnson has been very unwell but he continues his strange discipline - starving, mercury, opium; and though for a time half demolished by its severity, he always in the end rises superior both to the

disease and the remedy - which commonly is the more alarming of the two."

24. Brookes, Richard (fl.1750)

The general dispensatory, containing a translation of the pharmacopoeias of the Royal College of Physicians of London and Edinburgh. London: J. Newbery and W. Owen. 1753.

The entry for squills followed by that for the leaves of water-germander (from which diascordium was made) and recommended here for catarrhs of the breast, obstinate coughs and dropsy.

25. Pharmacopoeia. Royal College of Physicians of London. London: J. Johnson. 1788.

Prescription using powdered ipecacuanha.

26. Quincy, John (d.1722)

Pharmacopoeia officinalis et extemporanea: or, a complete English dispensatory. 15 ed. London: T. Longman. 1782.

Shown here are the properties and uses of squills and ipecacuanha, the former to be taken for dropsy, asthma and all obstructions of the lungs, the latter a preferred emetic.

27. Cullen, William (1710-1790)

A treatise of the materia medica. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: C. Elliot. 1789.

In the last year of his life Johnson asked Boswell to obtain the opinion of the Scottish physicians on his case and Sir Alexander Dick, Drs. Gillespie, Cullen, Hope and Monro were all consulted by letter. Shown here is Cullen's account of the squills as a diuretic. It was in 1782 that Johnson began to take vinegar of squills.

See also the portrait of Cullen on the wall above.

28. Pharmacopoeia of the Royal College of Physicians of London. 5 ed. London: T. Longman. 1791.

Prescription for decoction of Peruvian bark.

29. A late 18th century scarificator.

William Cruikshank (see case 6) was called in to scarify Johnson's legs to relieve the dropsy. Property of the Wellcome Trustees. Lent by the Science Museum.

30. Pharmacopoeia. Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Edinburgh: J. Paton. 1735.

Prescription for diascordium, prepared from germander, which Johnson took for asthma.

31. Lewis, William (1708-1781)

An experimental history of the materia medica. 3 ed. London: J. Johnson and R. Baldwin. 1784.

The properties of opium.

32. Autograph letter from Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, 26 May, 1775.

Case 6 Johnson's Doctors

33. Thomas Lawrence (1711-1783)

Lawrence was friend as well as physician to Johnson, as were Brocklesby and Heberden. seven years he was President of the Royal College of Physicians. He was described as a man 'of strict piety and profound learning' but also as having 'certain convulsive movements of the head and shoulders' which must have endeared him to Johnson who was similarly affected. Lawrence also became permanently deaf and Johnson lamented 'Poor Lawrence has almost lost his sense of hearing, and I have lost the conversation of a learned, intelligent, and communicative companion, and a friend whom long familiarity has much endeared. Lawrence is one of the best men whom I have known'.

Photograph of the bust of Lawrence from the monument in Canterbury Cathedral.

34. Lawrence, Thomas

Praelectiones medicae duodecim, in Theatro Collegii Medicorum Londinensium habitae. London: J. Whiston and B. White. 1757.

35. Photograph of Thomas Lawrence's 'De natura animalium' with Johnson's manuscript corrections.

[Original in the library of the Royal College of Physicians]

36. Richard Brocklesby (1722-97)

Brocklesby practised medicine at Norfolk Street, the Strand, and so was a near neighbour of Johnson, and became a close friend. He attended him assiduously and when Johnson was away from London kept a close watch on Mrs. Williams who was living in Johnson's house. It was he who wrote to Johnson to tell him of her death. He was well-known for his generosity and offered Johnson £100 a year to winter in a warm climate and rooms in his own house when Bolt Court was thought to be injurious to his health.

Soft ground etching by William Daniell after George Dance, 1795.

37. Brocklesby, Richard

Oeconomical and medical observations
From . . . 1758 to . . . 1763 London: T.
Becket & P.A. de Hondt. 1764.

38. William Cruikshank (1745-1800)

Cruikshank, an Edinburgh graduate, went to London as anatomical assistant to William Hunter but also had a large surgical practice and it was as a surgeon that he was called in to scarify Johnson's legs. It was to

Cruikshank that Johnson shouted "Deeper, deeper; I will abide the consequence; you are afraid of your reputation but that is nothing to me!"

Line engraving by J. Corner, 1787.

39. Cruikshank, William

The anatomy of the absorbing vessels of the human body. London: G. Nicol. 1786.

40 Robert Levet (1704-1782)

Levet was a curious "irregular practitioner" of medicine of no education who trudged miles through the London streets visiting his patients all of whom were poor and unable to pay any fees. Johnson sheltered Levet under his roof for forty years. In spite of his uncouth manner and silent habits Johnson seems to have valued him as a stabilising influence. Hawkins in his life of Johnson says of Levet "him he [Johnson] consulted in all that related to his health, and made so necessary to him as hardly to be able to live without him". On his death Johnson published this poem in his memory.

On the death of Dr. Robert Levet.
Gentleman's Magazine, August 1783.

41. Mark Akenside (1721-1770)

Poet and physician, it was on his recommendation that Johnson took ipecacuanha. On 23 August 1777, he wrote to

Mrs. Thrale "I have been trying a great experiment with ipecacuanha, which Akenside had inclined me to consider as a remedy for all constrictions of the breast." However the experiment did not work and Johnson concluded "I shall therefore take truce with ipecacuanha". Of Akenside's odes he said "one bad ode may be suffered; but a number of them together makes one sick."

42. Akenside, Mark

The poems of Mark Akenside. London: J. Dodsley. 1772.

Case 7 Johnson's Doctors

43. Percivall Pott (1714-1788)

The surgeon Percivall Pott was consulted by Johnson towards the end of 1783 when the pain from a sarcocele which had previously been punctured, flared up again. Pott insisted an operation was necessary but before it could be performed the sarcocele burst and the inflammation subsided.

Stipple engraving by J. Heath, 1790, after Sir Joshua Reynolds.

44. Pott, Percivall

Practical remarks on the hydrocele...and some other diseases of the testicle.... London: C. Hitch and I. Hawes. 1762.

45. Sir Richard Jebb (1729-1787)

Appointed to King George III in 1786. He attended Johnson when he was living at Streatham with the Thrales. After examining him he told Mrs. Thrale that there was no immediate danger but he was certainly fast approaching the end. It was this opinion when related to Johnson by Mrs. Thrale which occasioned the outburst "And this is the voice of female friendship I suppose, when the hand of the hangman would be softer!"

Photograph of the Zoffany portrait in the Royal College of Physicians.

46. Jebb, Sir Richard

Oratio anniversaria in theatro Collegii Regalis Medicorum Londinensium ex Harveii instituto habita...1774. London: W. Griffin. 1775.

47. Sir Lucas Pepys (1742-1830)

Sir Lucas Pepys was President of the Royal College of Physicians from 1804 until 1810. He attended George III in 1788-9 when he was severely ill, and later became physician-general to the army. He treated Johnson and Mr. Thrale. "If you were tractable, sir, I should prescribe for you" he once said to Johnson in exasperation. In a letter to John Taylor the day after his stroke in 1783, he said that he had decided not to be bled any more on the recommendation of Pepys.

Stipple engraving by J. Godby after a drawing by H. Edridge. 1809.

48. William Butter (1726-1805)

A treatise on the kinkcough. London: T. Cadell. 1773.

William Butter, an Orkadian and Edinburgh graduate, attended Johnson in the last stages of his life.

Case 8 Johnson's Doctors

49. William Heberden (1710-1801)

One of the most eminent and well-loved physicians of the eighteenth century, Heberden was a friend as well as physician to Johnson who called him 'ultimus Romanorum'. It was Heberden whom Johnson asked for the morning after his stroke in 1783. When writing to Rev. John Taylor on 17 June he says 'I am very desirous of Dr. Heberden's assistance, as I think my case is not past remedy'. Heberden, together with Brocklesby, Warren and Butter attended him during his last days without accepting any fees as did William Cruikshank, the surgeon.

Mezzotint by James Ward, 1796, after Sir William Beechey.

See case 13 for Heberden's case notes.

50. Heberden, William

Commentaries on the history and cure of diseases. London: T. Payne. 1802.

51. Richard Warren (1731-1797)

Warren had a large lucrative practice, attending Johnson in his last illness without fees. On one occasion when Warren was leaving his house Johnson said to him "Sir, you come at the eleventh hour, but you shall be paid the same as your fellow-labourers. Francis, put into Dr. Warren's coach a copy of the Lives". Warren was a member of the Literary Club founded by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Johnson in 1764. Other members were Burke, Dr. Nugent, Goldsmith, Sir John Hawkins (first biographer of Johnson), and George Fordyce.

Mezzotint by J. Jones after Thomas Gainsborough.

Case 9 Medical Friends

52. William Hunter (1718-1783)

Hunter, the eminent teacher of anatomy and obstetrics, was converted to medicine by William Cullen and lived with him for three years. In London he was the pupil of Frank Nicholls, the anatomist. In spite of Johnson's antivivisectionist views ("I know not, that by living dissections any discovery has been made by which a single malady is more easily cured", Idler, No. 17) he was on terms of friendship with Hunter.

Line engraving by J. Collyer, 1783, after Mason Chamberlin.

53. Hunter, William

Two introductory lectures.

London: J. Johnson. 1784.

54. Christopher Nugent (d.1775)

An essay on the hydrophobia. London: J. Leake and W. Frederic, 1753.

Nugent, a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, was one of the original nine members of the Literary Club, which met at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street once a week. His daughter married Edmund Burke.

55. Richard Mead (1673-1754)

Mead was a fellow-student of Boerhaave at Leyden where he studied medicine for three years. He became one of the most eminent physicians of the eighteenth century, attending George II until his own death, and amassing a yearly income of between six and seven thousand pounds. It was to Mead that Robert James dedicated his 'Medicinal dictionary' (the dedication being written by Johnson) and it was of Mead that Johnson said 'He lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man.'

Line engraving by H. Cook after A. Ramsay, 1847.

56. Mead, Richard

The medical works. London: C. Hitch and L. Hawes. 1762.

57. Robert Anderson (1750-1830)

M.D.(Edinburgh), editor and biographer. Anderson's life of Johnson was one of the first, published in 1795, eight years after Sir John Hawkins' biography.

Photograph of a line engraving drawn and engraved by W.H. Lizars. Original in the Royal College of Physicians.

Case 10 Medical Friends

58. Frank Nicholls (1699-1778)

Anatomist, physiologist and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (1732). In 1743 he married the youngest daughter of Mead.

Photograph of the line engraving by J. Hall after I. Gosset. Frontispiece to the Latin edition of his life by Thomas Lawrence (Wellcome Library copy lacks this plate). Original in the Royal College of Physicians.

59. Nicholls, Frank

De anima medica. London: H. Hughs, for J. Walter, 1773.

Johnson thought highly of this work. He mentions it in a conversation with Dr. William Butter reported by Boswell, in connection with the effect of the mind on the body. Nicholls said that whatever man's distemper he could not attend him as a physician if his mind were not at ease, for he believed that no medicines would have any influence.

60. Sir William Browne (1692-1774)

Sir William Browne was President of the Royal College of Physicians and famous for his eccentricities. He went about London carrying a muff, a copy of Horace, and a quizzing glass. Mrs. Thrale described him as "an odd mortal, with more genius than understanding, and more self-sufficiency than wit". He was the only person ever to oppose Johnson when he extolled Oxford at the expense of Cambridge.

Etching signed T.O. 1777.

61. John Coakley Lettsom (1744-1815)

Lettsom studied medicine in London, Edinburgh, Paris and Leyden before returning to London where he built up a very large medical practice. He was on terms of friendship with most of the distinguished figures of the day. Of Johnson he wrote to Dr. Cuming - soon after his death: 'In company I neither found him austere nor dogmatical; he was certainly not polite, but he was not rude; but his language in conversation was sententious; he was sometimes jocular, but you felt as if you were playing with a lion's paw...he had a heavy look; but when he spoke it was lightning out of a dark cloud.'

Line engraving by T. Holloway 1787.

See also the painting of John Lettsom and his family.

62. Lettsom, John Coakley

The natural history of the tea-tree, with observations on the medical qualities of tea, and effects of tea-drinking. London: E. & C. Dilly. 1772.

Case 11 Medical Friends

63. George Fordyce (1736-1802)

Fordyce, a pupil of both Cullen in Edinburgh and William Hunter in London, was another of the medical members of the Literary Club. He was physician to St. Thomas's Hospital and the author of a students' text-book of medicine shown here which passed through many editions.

Mezzotint by G. Keating after T. Phillips

64. Fordyce, George

Elements of the practice of physic, in two parts. 4 ed. London: J. Johnson. 1777.

65. Hawkesworth, John (1715?-1773)

An account of the voyages undertaken ... for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere...drawn up...from the papers of Joseph Banks. Vol. 1. London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell. 1773.

66. Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820)

Banks presided over the scientific community of England in the same way as Johnson presided over the literary community. He was a member of the Literary Club, a pall-bearer at Johnson's funeral, and served on the Committee which erected his monument. When Boswell enquired of Johnson whether he would have liked to have gone on one of Banks' botanical voyages Johnson replied: "why yes, but I soon laid it aside. Sir, there is very little of intellectual in the course. Besides, I see but a small distance. So it was not worth my while to go to see birds fly, which I should not have seen fly; and fishes swim, which I should not have seen swim".

Line engraving by N. Schiavonetti after Thomas Phillips.

Case 12 Two nineteenth century group engravings

67. Doctor Johnson rescuing Oliver Goldsmith from his landlady by taking the manuscript of 'The Vicar of Wakefield' and selling it to a bookseller (Francis Newbery, nephew of John) for sixty pounds to pay his rent.

Engraving by Samuel Bellin, 1845, after E.M.Ward.

68. Imaginary scene at Reynolds' house of some members of the Literary Club founded by Johnson and Reynolds in 1764. From left to right: Boswell, Johnson, Reynolds, Garrick, Burke, Paoli, Burney, Warton and Goldsmith.

Engraving by William Walker, 1848, after James E. Doyle

Case 13 'I will be conquered, I will not capitulate'
1783-1784

69. Autograph letter from Johnson to Dr. Burney, 2 August, 1784.

70. Matthew Baillie (1761-1823)

A series of engravings...to illustrate the morbid anatomy...of the human body. 2 ed. London: W. Bulmer. 1812.

According to Dr. Latham "the plate of emphysema of the lungs in Baillie's 'Morbid anatomy' was taken from the lungs of Dr. Johnson". [Lond. J. Med., 1849, 1, 621]

71. Photograph of deathmask of Johnson showing the scars caused by his childhood scrofula. [Originally owned by his surgeon William Cruikshank, now in the National Portrait Gallery.]

72. Wilson, James

Account of the post-mortem on Johnson. [Manuscript in Wilson's own writing. From the Library of the Royal College of Physicians.]

73. Heberden, William

Index historiae morborum. [From the Library of the Royal College of Physicians.]

The cases described form the basis of Heberden's 'Commentaries on the history and

cure of diseases' compiled in 1782 and published in 1802. But Heberden continued to record case notes in his index until at least 1787. Shown here are 4 case records, 2 unnamed but almost certainly the patient was Johnson from the dates and the conditions described, and two named written after Johnson's death. We know Heberden attended Johnson the day after he suffered a stroke. Here under the heading "Paralysis" is the record of the case of a seventy-four year old man on 17 June 1783: "Voice suddenly went in man aged 74, mind and limbs unimpaired; voice almost restored in a few days. 17 June 1783".

74. Under "Asthma" on page 32 is an account of part of the postmortem at which Heberden was present:

"when the body of an asthmatic was cut into, the lungs remained stiff, inflated, after the chest was opened, their surface was quite covered by small bullae of air, standing out to some extent, enclosed by a very thin membrane. One of these was opened without the others collapsing. No other disease in lung or chest detected. In the case of Dr. S. Johnson, serious asthma, preventing his lying flat, he experienced frequent pleurisies, and daily palpitations of the heart."

75. Under "Testiculus"

In the autumn of 1783 Johnson noted an increase in size of a testicular swelling that had been present since 1781. In August 1783

William Cruikshank and Percivall Pott performed a paracentesis but within a few weeks following the initial drainage of the sarcocele inflammation developed with pain and further swelling. Johnson wrote to Heberden and we know he saw Heberden on or about 24 September but the sarcocele spontaneously drained through the previous puncture site. Here is Heberden's entry for 24 September:

"Testicle. Old sarcocele was explored by paracentesis; scanty fluid continued to drain from the wound, and swelling lessened with abatement of all symptoms."

76. Under "Hydrops" on page 200 is the following entry:

"Dropsy. anasarca yielded to purges and to a small vesication [blistering] on the thigh and vinegar of squill. Dr. Sam. Johnson - and Wimberley - when the dropsical corpse was cut into, the legs, thighs and loins were distended with water, yet scarcely any was found in the belly. Dr. S. Johnson - suffered from an old cough, which had ended in asthma. Infusion of digitalis leaf, 2 ounces of leaf to 8 ounces of water, taken in a spoonful every hour for 9 hours, and 5 ounces of urine were yielded without any nausea, but not without some stomach trouble. He died suddenly in the evening."

Case 14 John Newbery

77. John Newbery (1713-1767)

Newbery, bookseller, publisher and medicine seller, was fortunate to be the promoter of James's fever powder one of the most popular of 18th century patent medicines. He also published James's book on fevers (see case 3) as well as the 'Idler' and 'Rambler' and Johnson's 'Lives of the poets'. Goldsmith wrote his 'Life of Beau Nash' for Newbery and contributed to his 'Literary Magazine'. It was to his nephew Francis that Johnson sold the manuscript of 'The Vicar of Wakefield' in 1763 to help to pay Goldsmith's debts. In the novel there is a portrait of Newbery as a 'red-faced, good-natured little man who was always in a hurry'. From Newbery's account books it seems likely that both Johnson and Goldsmith assisted Newbery in his children's books.

Shown here is a document of articles of agreement (1755) between John Newbery and Mary Packe, widow of Dr. Edmund Packe, concerning medicines invented by his father Christopher Packe, a chemical physician.

The agreement is witnessed by Christopher Smart, the poet, who married Newbery's step-daughter, and Thomas Carnan, Newbery's step-son.

Christopher Smart (1722-1771)

Christopher Smart, the poet, became one of Newbery's literary hacks at the end of 1749 and this must be his signature appended to the Agreement.

Johnson is known to have visited Smart when confined as a mental patient in St. Luke's Hospital or Bethlem, and is reported by Boswell as saying 'I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and 'I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as anyone else'.

Johnson also filled in for him, writing contributions to 'The Universal Visitor' when Smart fell ill.

In Smart's 'Jubilate Agno are the lines: 'Let Johnson, house of Johnson rejoice with Omphalocarpa a kind of bur. God be gracious to Samuel Johnson'.

Smart's 'Hymn to the Supreme Being' published in 1756 was dedicated to Dr. Robert James and states that James had rescued him three times from the grave.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)

The poet and novelist also studied medicine at Edinburgh where he arrived from Ireland in 1752. But by the end of 1753 he had decided to finish his studies at Paris and Leyden. However it is thought he did neither, wandering instead throughout Europe but there is a tradition that he obtained an M.B. degree at either Louvain or Padua. On his return to London he certainly practised medicine for a time but made no money and was extremely poor. On 21 December 1758 he was examined at Surgeons' Hall for a certificate as 'hospital mate' and found 'not qualified'. He henceforth turned whole-heartedly to literature, formed a

connection with John Newbery and in 1760 began to contribute to Newbery's 'Public Ledger'. In 1764 he became one of the original members of the Literary Club founded by Johnson and Reynolds. He became a close friend of Johnson who had early recognised his literary qualities and who continued to support him. For the story of how Johnson rescued Goldsmith from arrest from debt and a nineteenth century depiction of the scene (see Case 12) and for a similar depiction of Goldsmith attending a patient see the painting above.

Paintings

1. William Cullen by John Russell, R.A.
2. Dr. John Lettsom and family. Attributed to Philip Wickstead (fl. 1772-1780's).
3. William Cheselden giving an anatomical demonstration in the anatomy theatre of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, London, c.1735. By Charles Philips.
4. Hall, Thomas P. (fl. 1837-1867)

An incident in the life of Oliver Goldsmith. Goldsmith is represented dressed in the clothes of a fashionable physician. The patient is a Mrs. Sidebotham. Goldsmith examines her and writes a prescription which the apothecary refuses to administer. After a heated argument the patient decides to follow the advice of the apothecary, who

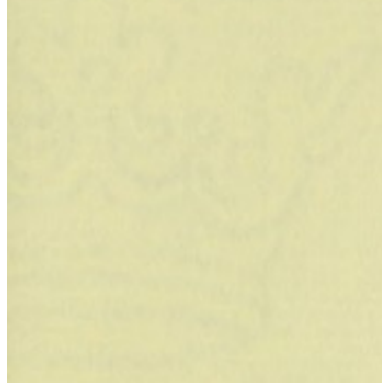
triumphantly holds the bottle of medicine while Goldsmith glares at him in fury.

5. Sir John Pringle (1707-1782) by an unknown artist.

"Sir John Pringle...between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance." Boswell.

6. Blood-letting scene. Antwerp school, early 18th century. The man on the left is examining a flask of urine.





1862-1863

1864-1865



