AN OLD SOUTHAMPTON NEWSPAPER.

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The paper with which my article deals is the *Hampshire Chronicle*, or *Winchester, Southampton, and Portsmouth Mercury*. Of this I possess a volume containing the issues of two years, namely, from the first number, which appeared August 24, 1772, to the 104th, published August 15, 1774.

It was the first newspaper ever produced in Hampshire;[1] the intelligence of this county had been hitherto furnished by the *Salisbury Journal*, established 1720, but this, as its name implies, had its home in a neighbouring shire.

Southampton, indeed, once a town of considerable importance, had sunk into insignificance from the time of Charles II. to the early part of the reign of George III., when it began to come into vogue as a fashionable watering-place. Our paper records with delight that two princes of the blood (the Dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester) were staying in the town, and attending the balls, that the centre house in the Polygon was taken for the French Ambassador, and that the Duke of Bolton and others of the nobility were putting up at the Polygon Hotel.

Many, too, who had been bitten by dogs were attracted here, as the waters were believed to prevent hydrophobia. Thus, in September, 1773, the *Chronicle* states that in consequence of there being a number of mad dogs about, upwards of 120 persons, besides a good number of dogs and hogs, had been dipped at Southampton since the preceding Christmas. When the tide of prosperity thus set in, it would have been strange, or, to use the strong language of the prospectus, "a

[1] Since writing this, I have been informed by the present editor of the *Hampshire Chronicle* that there was an earlier newspaper published for the county, viz: *Henry's Winchester Journal or Weekly Review*, founded 1744. It survived certainly two years, and perhaps longer. It was, however, printed and published at Reading, and therefore strictly speaking was not "produced in Hampshire."

disgraceful impropriety," if a place so favoured were to have no newspaper of its own. Actuated, therefore, by a pure and lofty public spirit, and relying with confidence on their fellow citizens for support, the proprietors set up this *Hampshire Chronicle* to be printed every Saturday, published every Sunday, and dated every Monday, at the reasonable charge of 2½d. The scheme appears to have been well received, and kind correspondents predict every success for it. A bard from Bishop's Waltham sends the following acrostic on the word Southton.—

"Southton, thou pride and honour of my muse,
On thee we trust to circulate our news.
Unrivalled formerly thy glories stood,
The kingdom's mart, and county's chiefest good.
How does thy situation please the eye!
To thee for health afflicted mortals fly;
Oh then let Southton's reassuming head
No more the voice of vile detraction dread."

In fact, every one seemed pleased that in future greater care was to be taken of "Southton's reassuming head"—everyone, except the Editor of the *Salisbury Journal*. He not only sneered at the *Chronicle*, but even vilified the town, so that our Editor in his second number has to express his great concern that a newspaper in a neighbouring county should have circulated such palpable falsehoods as that in Southampton meat was not to be had under 6d. and butter under 13d. a pound. He begs to say that, notwithstanding the great influx of gentry, there were no such extravagant prices, and that our markets were quite as good and quite as cheap as any in this or in the adjacent county. While on the subject of prices, I may add that a gentleman, writing from Honiton, in Devonshire, in May, 1773, says, according to our paper, that beef, mutton, veal, and pork were sold there on an average at 3½d. a pound; a few months later the butchers in Marlborough had prime meat cried at 2½d.; and under the head of Southampton Intelligence, May, 1774, we have this paragraph: "We have the pleasure to acquaint the public that butter which sold in our market a few days since at the enormous price of 10d. and 11d. a pound is now bought for 6d. and 7d., and some for 5½d. Fish is very plentiful, particularly salmon, which is 6d. and 7d. a pound. A fisherman this week caught 15 salmon at one draught near Redbridge."

The predictions of success for the *Hampshire Chronicle* were not unfulfilled. Established one hundred and thirty-five years ago, it still flourishes, but its headquarters have long been removed to Winchester. It has grown considerably since its birth, as indeed is the case with most of us, if we survive at all. Its present issues contain twelve pages, and are sold at 2d., while its first issue consisted of four small pages, for which 2½d. was charged, the half-penny being for the stamp.

Having thus introduced the paper to you, I will, with the view of preserving some sort of order amid my heterogenous materials, roughly divide what more I have to say into the three classes of news, original contributions, and advertisements.

I.—News.

Europe at this time was tolerably peaceful; the only war was between Russia and Turkey, and Turkey was getting the worst of it. Russia also, in concert with Austria and Prussia, was pouncing upon Poland. Indeed, about a fortnight before our paper began to appear, the partition treaty between Catherine II., Maria Theresa, and Frederick the Great was signed, and the first act of spoliation soon followed, though it was not till 1795 that Poland was finally divided.

In France, Louis XV. was reigning over what the *Chronicle* not very civilly calls his "miserable wooden-shoed subjects," but before the end of the volume we read of his death, which occurred May 10th, 1774. Our journal gives an account of how he was embalmed and lay in state for 40 days; how on each of those days an elaborate dinner was prepared; how the Maitre d'Hotel announced to the corpse that his Majesty was served; how the gentleman-in-waiting gravely replied that his Majesty had had his dinner, and how the same ceremony was gone through at supper. This paragraph is to be admired rather for its imaginative power than for its veracity. Undoubtedly the French Kings were usually embalmed, but Louis had died of confluent small-pox, and the process would have been perilous to those engaged in it. Madame Campan tells us that as soon as the King was dead, the first gentlemen of the chamber said to the Chief Surgeon,

"Sir, I beg to remind you that it is your duty to open his Majesty's body for embalming." "I am quite ready," replied the surgeon, to perform my office, but, Sir, I beg to remind you that it is your duty to hold his Majesty's head during the operation." The other was silent and nothing more was said by anyone about embalming. The remaining details are equally apocryphal. Louis XV. was buried with so little ceremony that even some who hated him thought that insufficient respect had been shown to the position which he had held.

Even had this story of a dinner prepared for the dead been true of Louis XV., as it may have been true of some former Kings, it is scarcely more ridiculous than the custom which prevailed in Hanover, certainly in George II.'s time, perhaps in his grandson's also. Although their Elector, being also King of Great Britain, was usually in England, the Hanoverian courtiers assembled every Saturday at the Palace; the royal picture was put up in an armchair, and to this they paid their respects with as much gravity and deference as though it had been their Sovereign in person. The events of the last 50 years may render us thankful that on the accession of Queen Victoria Hanover ceased to belong to the British Crown, and even in 1773 many regretted a possession which it was so troublesome and expensive to keep, and so difficult to relinquish with honour.

If we make a long jump from one of our dependencies to another, and alight in India, we shall find Warren Hastings working his way to the attainment of the enormous power which he afterwards acquired as first Governor General, while Lord Clive was defending himself in Parliament from charges less grave, indeed, than those which Hastings afterwards had to meet, but somewhat of the same nature. Some thought that Clive's virtual acquittal was helped by judicious presents of diamonds and rubies to the wives of men high in office. "It is said," writes our journal, "that Lord Clive read the defence he was about to make to Lord North (then Premier) and his lady." "Her ladyship said it was a *jewel* of a speech." Wedderburn, subsequently Lord Rosslyn, but then Solicitor General, was a personal friend of Clive's and spoke ably and warmly in his behalf, on which there is this

comment: "A correspondent remarks that since a famous speech by the Solicitor General in favour of English nabobs, many Eastern brilliants have been moved into Lincoln's Inn Fields (where Wedderburn then resided), as a present to a certain lady." These insinuations, however, were mere calumnious gossip.

While the British Empire was at this time being pushed in India, it was destined to recede in another quarter. The American Colonies were on the eve of revolt. In November, 1773, Boston city made that famous brew of cold tea in its harbour, and so we read in April, 1774, of the 4th and the 23rd Regiments embarking at Southampton for America.

To come nearer home, Ireland, of course, at this time had its own Parliament, but the project of the Union, to be realised nearly thirty years later, had begun to be entertained. Lord Townsend, the Viceroy, being known to be in favour of that measure, was very unpopular, although otherwise he seems to have possessed that light heartedness and *bonhomie* which might have recommended him to the people whom he had to govern. He was recalled at the end of 1772. His successor, Lord Harcourt, arrived at the Castle about two or three o'clock on a cold December morning, and was surprised to find the windows blazing with light, and a considerable noise going on inside. On entering he found the Viceroy very jovially engaged with some of the great officers of State and of the household. The latter were rather disconcerted, but Lord Townsend, having given his substitute a cordial welcome, said "Whatever your Excellency may think of us you cannot say that you caught us napping."

England itself was comparatively tranquil; the storm excited by the proceedings on the Middlesex Election had nearly died away; Jacobitism had been for years virtually extinct, though some who were very good and quiet subjects, yet regarded Charles Edward as their rightful Sovereign, and refused to pray for George III. by name. The King was not unpopular. I call him the King for the sake of brevity, though in so doing I depart from the actual phraseology of my newspaper. There he is almost always "a certain great Personage," and Queen Charlotte is "a certain great and

amiable lady," for our Editor is not such a niggard of his type as to put off his subscribers with a shabby couple of words, when he can manage to bring in half-a-dozen.

But though George III. was personally liked, public discontent was not asleep; everything bad, however, was ascribed to Scotch influence, especially to Lords Bute and Mansfield. The latter, of course, held a prominent position, but Bute had retired altogether from political life at this time, and the Princess mother, with whom his power had been so great, died six months before the *Chronicle* was started. The nation, however, believed that he still pulled the strings. One of the poets in the *Hampshire Chronicle*, after speaking of how Englishmen were distracted by faction, says:—

"One remedy is yet in store,
Which will the madmen save,
Tell them that Mansfield is no more,
And show them *Stewart's grave."

It had been the custom on March 1st (St. David's Day) for some Welsh noblemen and gentlemen to wait on the Prince of Wales, who was wont to receive them graciously, and to present them with 100 guineas for some Welsh charity. In 1773, however, the Prince, for some reason or other, was unable to see them on this anniversary, though he sent the usual donation. Our paper at once ascribes the supposed slight to Scotch influence. It says: "The Scots are so delicate in their nostrils, that they cannot bear the smell of a leek."

The King at this period was happy in his immediate family, for he and the Queen were strongly attached to each other, and his heir being only ten or eleven years old; the scandal and trouble which his behaviour and that of some of his brothers caused were still in the future. But George III. was disturbed by the conduct of his own sister and brothers. It was just about this time that his sister, the Queen of Denmark, was divorced and imprisoned for conjugal infidelity, and suspected—I believe quite wrongly—of having conspired to murder her husband. The Duke of Cumberland, again, son of the Culloden Duke, had incurred the Royal displeasure by marrying a Mrs. Horton, an Irish widow, and sister of Colonel Luttrell. This took place in 1771, and was

*Stewart, or Stuart, was Lord Bute's family name.

announced in 1772. Immediately after this the Duke of Gloucester, another brother, declared and proved that he also had married a widow, as long as five years back, namely, Lady Waldegrave, a natural daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, son of the well-known minister. Both alliances were highly displeasing to the King. The Chamberlain had to intimate to the two Dukes that they were not to present themselves at Court; and those who went to pay their respects to the King's brothers were desired not to attend at St. James's. A more enduring result was the passing of the Royal Marriage Act, which forbids any descendant of George II., if not of foreign birth, to marry, without consent of the Sovereign, until the age of 25. After that time such consent is unnecessary, if a year's notice be given to the Privy Council, and if Parliament during that period make no objection to the proposed match. This measure—which obviously provides either too much or too little, since it lays a heavy restriction on all English descendants of George II., many of whom have, humanly speaking, no more chance of wearing the British crown than you or I, while it leaves the actual occupant of the Throne free to contract any marriage he pleases, so that it be not with a Roman Catholic—received the Royal Assent in 1772, and, not inappropriately, perhaps, on the 1st of April. As the Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland frequently stayed at Southampton, the *Hampshire Chronicle* takes a lively interest in their quarrel with "a certain great Personage." Since no Parliamentary allowance had been made them, they were not very well off, and were obliged to sell everything that had been left them by their mother. The sale lasted two or three days, and our paper sarcastically mentions some of the valuable lots, as, for instance, a garnet necklace, which fetched 18d., a silver teaspoon, an asses'-skin book, two tambour needles, two combs, a paper toothpick case, an almanack, a washhand bason, a soap-box, a dog collar, and a shaving-box without razors. The *Chronicle* does not blame the Princes for the scandal which this sale caused, since their circumstances rendered it necessary, but it considers it matter for regret that the anger or parsimony of the Court should have driven them to such straits.

Let us now glance at some of the social customs as pourtrayed in these colums. The references to duelling are very frequent. Lord Townsend was challenged by the Earl of Bellamont. They met in Marylebone Fields, and behaved to each other, says our journal, with the greatest politeness. Lord Townsend, being requested by his antagonist to fire first, immediately complied, and in the most obliging manner lodged a bullet in the Earl's body, which brought him to death's door. Lord Townsend may be considered lucky in having had only one duel. The *Chronicle* mentions a report that all the Irish gentlemen, whose requests he had refused when Lord Lieutenant, were coming over to challenge him one after the other, and it hazards the not unreasonable supposition that if this became the general custom, it might in time be difficult to get anyone to take the post of Irish Viceroy.

Another duel that made some noise was fought between Captain Scawen and Mr. Fitzgerald, the latter having been struck by the former. Fitzgerald fired first without effect, and his second pistol went off accidentally but harmlessly just as Scawen was taking aim, who, upon this, refused to proceed, but said that he did not mind owning that he had been in the wrong all through, and that unless he had been drunk he never would have insulted Mr. Fitzgerald, whom he highly esteemed. Then taking a cane from the surgeon in attendance, he handed it to his adversary, and begged him to use it in any way he chose. Fitzgerald slightly raised the cane, then lowering it, expressed his opinion that Capt. Scawen was a gentlemen of the highest honour, for whom he had a profound admiration. They then spent a social evening together. The seconds drew up a report of the affair, which they said reflected the greatest credit on the gallantry, and, I suppose, on the good sense of all the parties concerned. The announcement rather recalls that speech in Canning's *Rovers*, "A sudden thought strikes me! let us swear an eternal friendship."

Many of these duels ended harmlessly. The *Chronicle* says that in Ireland it was no longer fashionable to fight in the Phœnix Park, as there the bullets might go astray; gentlemen of that country preferred to see their friends in sand-pits or

gravel-pits, where there was more hope of a fatal result. The Hibernian love of duelling at this time was evidently a constant subject for jest. You may remember that in Sheridan's Rivals, which was produced in 1775, Sir Lucius O'Trigger cannot understand why magistrates or constables should interfere, and bitterly complains that there is no such thing in England as being allowed to fight in peace and quietness.

Another matter that strikes one in looking over a journal of this date is the extreme severity of the punishments inflicted. Thus, on Friday, July 1, 1774, three men were hanged at Newgate: William Hawke for robbing Charles Hart of 1s. 9d., near Knightsbridge; John Charles for robbing Charles Errington on the highway of about 2d.; and William Jones for stealing linen in the house of Mr. Hogg. It is, of course, only reasonable to suppose, though it is not so stated, that the offences for which these men were convicted were by no means all of which they had been guilty. Under the Winchester Intelligence of May 7; in the same year, it is stated: "Ann Carter, convicted on Thursday last at our Sessions on two indictments for felony, was publicly whipped this day in the Market Place according to her sentence." Again, in January, 1773, we read: "A private man of the Regiment quartered at Salisbury received 500 lashes last week for desertion. His sentence was 700, but the number he received was thought sufficient at one time." With all this, crime was very frequent, especially clipping and coining. Our journal declares, though here, again, I suspect some exaggeration, that the sixpences in circulation are generally not worth more than 3d., and that the shillings are, nine parts out of ten, counterfeit. In April, 1773, a gang was apprehended in Birmingham, many of whom, says the *Chronicle*, were people of property, and living in good repute. The information was laid by a Mr. Bacchus, who had himself been arrested for coining a few months before, but had escaped by turning King's evidence against his own son, who, in consequence, was hanged at Tyburn.

If the prisoners were severely dealt with, the Judges and the Juries had their own risks to run. A low malignant fever, called the gaol fever, very frequently made victims in

the close, ill-ventilated, or non-ventilated, Courts of Justice, into which were introduced batches of prisoners who were ignorant of the virtues of cold water, except when a stern law compelled them to use it, and then only as a beverage. Our paper says that in consequence of the Old Bailey Sessions, 1772, Mr. Justice Ashurst, who sat there, is seriously ill; his clerk, the foreman, and two others of the jury, a barrister who was engaged in one of the cases, and a prisoner who was convicted, are already dead; several others are more or less unwell. Three or four weeks later we are told that prisoners were to be tried in a sort of thick smock frock to keep off the infection. Sir Henry Gould, the sitting Judge, was much alarmed at first, but nobly preferred, so says the *Chronicle*, his public duty to his personal safety, which, if he did not want to resign his post, was perhaps as well.

The British spirit of enterprise was not altogether idle at this otherwise somewhat stagnant period. In 1773 Captain Cook was sailing on his second voyage; Bruce was returning from his Abyssinian travels; Dr. Johnson was making his tour in the Hebrides, which, under the circumstances, was really an adventurous undertaking; and the Government fitted out an expedition to discover the North-West Passage under Captain Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave. Though this failed in its object, the two ships got somewhat farther than any of their predecessors, and then the thick icebanks closed in around them. Captain Phipps called a council of his principal officers, and they agreed that, as their ships seemed in imminent danger of being crushed, their best hope was to drag their smaller boats across the ice, and trust to them. This hazardous experiment they had begun to put in practice, when on a sudden that happened which they had scarcely dared to hope for, the wind changed, the vessels began to make some little progress through the ice, which gradually broke away more and more, until at last the good ships Racehorse and Carcase were in blue water, and, with their gallant crews, on their way to England. Many valuable lives were thus preserved; perhaps not the least valuable to his country was that of the coxswain to Captain Lutwidge, the second in command; he was only a lad of fifteen, but his name was Horatio Nelson.

The local news is singularly scanty, and, even when there is something to say, little is made of it. Thus, in October, 1773, our paper informs us that the new Market and the Audit House, built by the Corporation at an expense of £7,000, were opened; but no details of the ceremony are given, though surely the event was worthy of more lengthened notice in a local journal.

There was great excitement at Portsmouth in 1773, when George III. came down to review the fleet, and stayed there five days. There were 20 ships of the line, besides frigates, while about 300 yachts and other boats, unconnected with the Royal Navy, were also present gaily decorated. The French Ambassador, who was there, is reported to have said that he had now seen the two finest sights in the world—the King of Prussia[1] at the head of his army, and the King of England at the head of his fleet. On the first evening of His Majesty's visit the Jewish Synagogue at Portsmouth was illuminated and beautifully adorned with the choicest flowers. The Jews of the place met there in the evening to pray for the King and his family, after which they walked in procession to the Dock, each man carrying in his hand a lighted wax taper, and all singing "God save the King!"

There are one or two things mentioned in the Local Intelligence of the time which we may be thankful are less frequent now than then. Highway robbery, for instance. I do not mean that we should prematurely congratulate ourselves on being better than our ancestors, although I hope something may be due to the spread of education, and to the greater efforts made for the moral and spiritual advantage of all classes of society; but, at all events, our police system is better organised. Here is an instance of feminine prowess. In June, 1773, a poor sailor was coming from Salisbury to Southampton; between Whiteparish and Romsey he lay down to sleep; from this he was aroused by a man and a woman; the man robbed him of five guineas, and the woman gave him a black eye. I suppose the most sentimental penny-a-liner would scarcely call this female one of the gentler sex.

But our paper, as befits the organ of a fashionable watering-place, is more concerned with the arrival of distinguished

[1] The King of Prussia at this time was Frederick the Great.

visitors, and with the amusements provided for them. In September, 1773, there was a grand Masked Ball in the great room in the Polygon, which was attended, we are told, by a very polite and genteel company. The politeness and gentility seem to have been chiefly inside, for the mob without sent some stones through the window, one of which narrowly missed the Duchess of Gloucester's temple; and a gentleman, who was walking from the rooms to his lodgings in the dress of a shepherd, was seized by the sportive populace, who made a football of him. But for a timely rescue he would probably have been kicked to death. There were musical attractions also at Southampton. Mr. Storace, a native of Naples, announces a public breakfast at ten o'clock, to be followed by a concert at half-past eleven: principal vocalist, Miss Storace, aged seven years. Between the parts of the concert the spirits of the audience to be recruited with lemonade, orgeat, and capillaire. Tickets, including breakfast, concert, and refreshments, 3s. 6d. I fear that this did not answer, for a lady writes in a subsequent number to say that she was sorry to see such a small audience, as Miss Storace was a very fine singer, and she hoped that more would be present on the following Wednesday, when the concert would be repeated. The letter is anonymous, but I cannot kelp thinking that Mr. Storace could have given a good guess at the writer's name. I may mention, however, that this little girl, who was English on the mother's side, eventually attained to sufficient reputation in London, as a singer and actress, to obtain a place in the Dictionary of National Biography, where further particulars can be seen about her.

Another Neapolitan visited the town; in fact, the following advertisement bears internal evidence that its author was not an Englishman:—"To the nobility in general. Mr. Rossigeat, Italian musician to the King of Naples, just arrived at Southampton, purposes giving a concert entrancy which he accompanies with his wind pipe, the music open; for which accommodation he has chosen for its superior eloquence the Ballroom at the Polygon."

I must notice a few of the births, deaths, and marriages. On February 24, 1774, the Queen had a son, who was afterwards Duke of Cambridge, and father of the Duke who was

for so many years Commander-in-Chief. As this was their Majesties' tenth child, an impression got about that the King would signalise the event by paying the debts of those who were in prison for small sums. It is said that just before the Queen's confinement more than 300 persons in the Metropolis got themselves arrested in order to reap the benefit of the act of grace. This new way to pay old debts did not answer; perhaps George III. thought that a large family was a reason rather for saving money than spending it; nor do I know whether the 300 speculators found it as easy to get out of gaol as it had been to get in.

"December 19, 1772, the lady of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, brother to Lord North, of a son and heir." This child as Mr. North, and subsequently Earl of Guildford, was for many years Rector of St. Mary's in this town, and held much other ecclesiastical preferment in the neighbourhood, his father having been translated to Winchester in 1780. The only marriage of a notable person that I see is that of Sheridan to Miss Linley, April, 1773; his second wife was a Southampton lady, Miss Ogle, daughter of Dr. Ogle, who was at the same time Dean of Winchester and Rector of St. Mary's, since whose time the rectorial residence has been styled the Deanery. But, according to our paper, many eminent and celebrated persons were married even in this county, although their fame has not kept so well as Sheridan's. Thus, in the first number, under the Portsmouth news: "This morning, was married at Kingston Church, near this place, John Ballard, Esq., an eminent wine merchant of this place, to the celebrated Miss Polly Morgan, daughter of Mr. Morgan, who keeps the Fountain Inn in this town." There is usually some little notice of the lady beyond her mere name. Here is a lucky carpenter made blest at the same Church: "Monday last, was married at Kingston Church, Mr. Moore, house carpenter on Portsmouth Common, to Miss Rood, of Cosham, a young lady of a genteel fortune, and endowed with that sweetness of temper, and every other accomplishment to render the married state happy." Frequently there is greater particularity about the fortune, and the bride is described as possessing every amiable quality and £2,000. Occasionally details are mentioned which the

parties concerned may, perhaps, have thought superfluous: "At Ham, in this county, Mr. Kimber, builder, to Mrs. Watson, of the same place. This is her fourth husband." Or, to come to my own parish, there seems an unnecessary minuteness about age in announcing the following union on March 2, 1774:—"On Wednesday last, by the Rev. Mr. Davies, Lionel Jurd, of Itchen Ferry, aged 70, to Martha Adams, of the same place, aged 75." Surely it might have sufficed to say that they were both of full age. To avoid misconception, I may say that, though I have been Vicar of Pear Tree a good many years, it was not I, but my great grandfather, who married this youthful couple.

Among the deaths the *Chronicle* has, of course, to record the decease of many persons of rank and fashion, but I have only observed three names which would be much known beyond their own generation. Brindley, the great engineer, died September 30, 1772, and the famous Lord Chesterfield in March, 1773. A few months later our journal hints that a volume of letters from this nobleman to his natural son will soon be published, and adds: "These letters contain, among many other particulars, a complete system of education." You may remember that when this son died, in his father's lifetime, the Earl discovered that he had long been secretly married. Unwilling that his letters should be made public, Chesterfield bought them of the widow for a considerable sum. The lady accepted the money, and gave up the originals, but she had previously taken copies; these, as soon as the Earl was dead, she sold to the booksellers.

The third name to which I referred is that of a man who now, in literary reputation, is as superior to Chesterfield as he was inferior to him in worldly position and social graces. In our paper for April 4, 1774, it is said: "We are extremely sorry to acquaint our readers that the celebrated Dr. Goldsmith now lies dangerously ill, and that the physicians have not the smallest hope of his recovery." On this very day the chequered earthly career of poor Goldsmith was brought to a close, and so in the next number we read: "At his chambers in the Temple, the celebrated Dr. Goldsmith." Neither then nor afterwards does the *Chronicle* make any remark about him.

But there is plenty to say about others less known to fame; about Mrs. Lee, who always pleaded poverty, yet had made nearly £1,500 by washing; about Mr. Horton, of Grub-street, who left a fortune of £2,000, amassed by the curious expedient of letting out wheelbarrows to the poor; or about Philip ap Morice, Esq., who died at the age of 92, in consequence of an unbotanical cook unfortunately dressing his boiled chicken with hemlock by mistake for parsley. This gentleman ordained by will that on every 21st of September, being his birthday, 31 calves' heads should be given to the poor of Cardigan. There is no accounting for tastes; else one would have fancied that he might have found a memorial more suggestive of complimentary associations than a calf's head is usually taken to be. In February, 1773, died Mr. George Arms, aged 96, supposed to be the oldest man in the Isle of Wight. He well remembered Charles II., when that monarch was on a visit to Sir Richard Worsley, at Appuldurcombe—96 is a respectable age in our eyes, but as compared with some of whom the *Chronicle* tells us, Mr. Arms may be regarded as cut off almost in the flower of his youth. Thus: "At Hagley, May 1774, Mr. John Tice, aged 125, born in the year of Charles I.'s execution." A younger brother of his, who was perhaps of a weakly constitution, died prematurely some years before, at the early age of 102. Mr. John Tice, indeed, did not after all succumb to old age, but to grief for the loss of his friend, Lord Lyttelton. In the same year we read of the decease of William Beaty, aged 130, he carried a pair of colours at the battle of the Boyne; of Henry Phillips, carpenter, aged 127; and of two soldiers in Dublin, of 113 and 103 years respectively; while another, who still survived, was 110. Some of these centenarians were so hearty that they remind one of the famous Countess of Desmond, of whom the song says:—

> "She lived to the age of 110,
> And died by a fall from a cherry tree then,
> Such a frisky old girl!"

Thus Mr. Jones, of the County Mayo, when 100 years old, was out shooting wild duck in December. One of the birds fell into the middle of the lake, and the dog, who should have fetched it out, had strayed. Mr. Jones, determined that his

bag should not suffer, plunged into the water, swam out to the bird, and brought it to the bank in triumph. He is not said to have suffered from this, but he died two years after; and, indeed, I think there is a time for all things, and that when people get much past 90, they should give up climbing cherry trees and swimming lakes, at all events, in December.

Some of these accounts are rather perplexing. In January, 1773, I found a record of the death of "Elizabeth De Val at Brussels, aged 101, who had never eaten a bit of meat, nor tasted broth or soup during her life." I made a note of this as scoring one in favour of vegetarianism, but I started, almost as though I had seen a ghost, when in January, 1774, I came across this irrepressible old lady dying over again as freshly as possible, as though nothing had happened to her twelve months before, and stranger still, during those twelve months she had managed to grow two years older. "Elizabeth De Val, aged 103, at Brussels. What is remarkable she never ate any meat in her life."

There is another case of unexpected resuscitation mentioned in our paper as occurring in Yorkshire. A young man in a fit of jealousy cut his sweetheart's throat. The girl's mother, coming into the room at the moment, was so horrified that, says the *Chronicle*, "she fell down in a fit, remained dead for several hours, and still continues seriously ill." I should say, however, that dead was sometimes used formerly in the sense of a dead faint; the word is so employed by Pepys, Fielding, and others.

The three following considerations may, I think, account for some of the cases of longevity that I have named. Anyone who has the custody of registers must have often come across persons who, wanting a baptismal certificate, for instance, evince the very haziest notions as to what their own age really is. Sometime ago a woman asked me to look up her record in the Pear Tree books, for, said she, some of my neighbours declare that I am older than I ought to be. I did not quite see, if this were so, how I could rectify that error, but, at all events, I discovered that she was three or four years younger than she professed to be, which in the case of a woman was, I thought, rather remarkable. Secondly, we may

observe that very old people frequently have a pardonable pride in their advanced years, and in what they are able to accomplish in spite of them, and this sometime leads to a little half-unconscious exaggeration; and thirdly, it is possible, or at least it was possible in those days, that newspaper statements might not be always strictly accurate. Thus, Mr. John Tice, who is said to have died at 125, was interred at Hagley, the burial register of which gives his age as 98. So the *Chronicle*, or rather the *Gentleman's Magazine*, from which the *Chronicle* copied, added 27 years to what was already a remarkably long life.

II Original Contributions.

I come now to the original contributions. There are no leading articles, but in the midst of the news a sly little paragraph is occasionally inserted, containing, in our paper usually, a fling at ministers. Thus, "The easy candour and judgment with which a certain noble lord is said to perform the duties of his office, is a striking testimony that to be a man of spirit it is not necessary to be irreligious, and to be a man of integrity it is not necessary to be a fool—the two most remarkable features in the characters of our ministers for many years past."

Part of the paper is taken up with essays, unexceptionable in their drift, but perhaps a little dull. They mostly go to prove such theses as that benevolence is a good thing, and that calumny is a bad thing; that a gambler's income is uncertain, or that a thoroughly contented person will be seldom heard to complain. The style, indeed, is sometimes magnificent. One writer puts forth "Meditations on a Table," and from observing a crack in that article of furniture, draws the obvious moral that "true fame must be built on the inconcussible rock of virtue." He further says, *apropos* of a table, "a blazing imagination is the effect of our cogitative faculties revolving elliptically." I must, however, quote no more from this author, lest, lost in the profundity of his speculations, our cogitative faculties should decline to revolve at all. There are also a great number of letters. A guardian complains that his ward thinks herself old enough to marry, though she is not yet 30; and a benevolent gentleman is

sorely troubled at the risk which women run in thunderstorms, owing to the quantity of pins and wires with which their hair is propped up. He proposes that every lady should have a portable lightning conductor, which she could hook into her head-dress as soon as the storm begins. A Copernican states that he was in a barber's shop, when the conversation turned on the earth's motion. The majority thought that this was nonsense, laughed Newton to scorn, and said that anyone could see that it was the sun which went round. In fact, they were as firmly convinced of the truth of their own theory as was Galileo—only on the other side of the question. The Copernican himself was clearly staggered, being literally quite uncertain whether he stood on his head or his heels, and he earnestly asks the *Chronicle* to set his mind at rest on this point. Anti-Ptolemaic replies by sending him an extract from Salmon's Geographical Grammar, which it is to be hoped convinced the gentlemen who had refused to believe in Newton.

Some of the communications are on local topics. At this time there was a certain Alderman Carter at Portsmouth who had two sons in the Council, one of them being Mayor. What they had done, or had not done, I cannot say, for the Hampshire correspondent is so intent on abusing them that he forgets to state their offence. However, he tells these unfortunate Town Councillors: "Your triumvirate will make no small figure in the annals of history, and every philanthropic reader will blush when he finds such sordid wretches ever filled a seat of justice within the British realms." A gentleman, using the curious Anglo-Latin name, *Abovebarriensis*, declares that there were more pestilent beggars in Southampton than in any other town. A London Rider is loud in his complaints against our roads; he congratulates himself on having got out of Hampshire without being lost in the mire between Southampton and Wickham. He adds: "From West End to Botley is bad enough, but Curdridge Common exceeds every road I go."

In 1773 the town was about to build a Poor House, and this, of course, gives plenty of matter to our correspondents. One suggests St. John's Hospital (now occupied by the Old Theatre) as the site; another, Bugle Hall; a third, unmindful of the proverb, "*Qui s'excuse s'accuse*," writes to say that

although he *did* lately buy a very nice house and garden in East Street, it was not with the object of selling it to the town at a profit for the new building. When at last it was agreed to buy the land in St. Mary's Street, much difference of opinion was aroused, though, perhaps, one correspondent goes rather far in styling the proposed purchase "diabolical."

Phico, who announces himself as the dexter lion on the Bargate, moralises on the degeneracy of the times. When he was first put up, he says, in Queen Anne's reign (Phico is a little wrong in his date, but this is a detail), it was a pleasure to see the quiet and orderly citizens, the decent tradesman and his wife walking arm-in-arm to Church, with the apprentice behind carrying the Family Bible; now he declares they are all beaux and macaronis, lounging about on the right side of the High Street (which, it appears, was the fashionable side), and scenting the air with musk as they go along. Then, becoming more directly personal, he comments on the way in which a particular lady vaults into her saddle, and observes that a certain midshipman may be seen any afternoon gallanting two agreeable young gentlewomen about the place instead of being with his ship. In the next number an angry correspondent says to Phico: "Vain fool, pester not the public with nonsense neither they nor yourself understand."

Indeed, the scurrilous language of some of these letters, and the gross personalities which they contain, are rather startling. An unhappy man had tried for the post of Parish Clerk of St. Helier's, Jersey, and in this candidature was assisted by a relative, who was a Scotch druggist. This proceeding arouses the wrath of Philalethes, who is not at all mollified by the fact that the poor wretch failed in his endeavour. Addressing him by the pleasant name of "Mr. Praise-God-Barebone," Philalethes begins by saying: "I am your friend, though, perhaps, the prejudices of self-love will not suffer you to acquiesce in this declaration." Really, if Mr. Barebone had entertained doubts on the point, he might have alleged for them some plausible excuse, inasmuch as the last sentence of this friendly letter runs thus: "I shall draw aside the veil behind whose friendly shade you, viper-like, darted your venom; I shall open to the world the mysteries of villainy which have so long been the objects of your practice, and

which your ungovernable disposition, chafed and irritated by your late disappointment, has carried to that stupendous height, that a doubt of your sanity has been whispered abroad by your nearest friend and relation, the headlong and impetuous Scotch druggist. I am, Mr. Praise-God-Barebone, your friend Philalethes." Save me from my friends! So also might have said the then Vicar of St. Michael's, who is made the subject of a violent attack on some question of burial fees in a letter subscribed, "A Friend to the Clergy."

Even sex was no protection. A lady observed that someone unnamed had appeared at a ball to which neither his birth nor position ought to have admitted him. The cap thus thrown down was at once taken up and worn by the person referred to, who, by the way, I suppose, of showing that he was a perfect gentleman, addresses his female antagonist as "Offensive Minx!" But, perhaps, the most truculent epistle is one in which the writer, after loading the subject of his wrath with unlimited abuse, concludes by expressing surprise and disappointment that the dogs had "not yet devoured his filthy carcase." No wonder this gentleman signs himself Blister.

But we have poetry as well as prose. Some are inspired by the Queen's birthday; one bard addressing Her Majesty a good, but I should think rather common-place woman, as "Amazing Charlotte!" while another avers that her character was better than that of Catherine of Russia, which is about as great a compliment as it would be to tell a man that his disposition was milder than Nero's, or that he was more honest than Jack Sheppard. A gentleman addresses a copy of verses to a lady who had promised to marry him in the summer. They begin, "Roll on ye days, speed swift, O tardy Spring!" The Spring does seem to have been remarkably tardy that year, for this poem appears on July 11. Why the writer signs himself by the female name, Juno, is one of those things which no man can be expected to understand.

At this time, apparently, ladies did not object, as I suppose they would now, to being celebrated by name in the poet's corner, with a full description of their personal and mental charms, for almost every number of our paper contains something of the sort. I dare say that Miss Nancy Boyes, of Alton, was

not displeased when she found in the *Chronicle* five stanzas, each of which concluded with her name. Here is the last of them:—

"Then toss off a bumper to Nancy, sweet lass,
Whose company pleases, ne'er cloys,
May he that refuses be reckoned an ass,
And unworthy of pretty Miss B——s."

There is another effusion in honour of Miss Poor, of Southampton, the gist of which is that, whilst most men are trying to get rich, it is the highest ambition of the writer to get Poor. The worst of this sort of thing is that it provokes comparisons, which are proverbially odious. Miss Green, for instance, may have been very proud when she saw in the first number of our paper this elegant quatrain:

"For different beauties different men declare,
Some praise the brown, some black, and some the fair;
The loveliest in Southampton I have seen
Is neither fair, nor brown, nor black,—but Green."

But her triumph must have been considerably dashed when in subsequent issues one gentleman said that she could not be compared to Miss Scott, while a third preferred Miss Bellamy, a fourth Miss Anne Yalden, and a fifth thought that no Hampshire beauty came anywhere near Miss Polly D., of Portsmouth Common. Thus the various champions, each brandishing his quill, and shouting the name of his Dulcinea, enter into the conflict, the conflict that is attended with such immense blowing of trumpets, and such profuse shedding of ink.

On October 5, 1772, there was an Assembly Ball at Lymington. A University man who was there—at least he signs himself Cantab—sends a poem on the occasion. After remarking that, though the old Greek and Roman bards had celebrated the Cyprian isle, they had somehow or other made no mention of Lymington, he proceeds to repair the omission:—

"Here Shepherd claims the wreath and pleads her eyes
By which each day some new adorer dies;
While Molly's easy and unpractised air
Gains without art and governs without care."

And he goes on to turn out some neat couplets about all the other ladies present; about "Harwood, dear Harwood," and "bright Beckley," and "good-natured Burrard," and "sweet

Foster," and "charming Hicks," and "engaging Reynolds," and "modest Morrissey," and "meek Hackman," and "innocent Wright."

Not to be outdone, a lady responds with some lines on the gentlemen, and in the orthodox manner invokes the nine:—

> "Hear me, ye Muses, your assistance bring,
> 'Tis of the Lymingtonian swains I sing—"

She begins with the Master of the Ceremonies, and we hear how

> "To regulate the dance with studious care,
> Obliging Trattle does each night appear;
> Where with complacency he pleases all,
> At once the leader of the sprightly ball.
> Majestic Butler with a steady pace,
> Joins in the dance with an unequalled grace.
> Burrard, in whom each manly grace appears,
> With sense by far superior to his years,
> Must sure attract each virtuous female mind,
> The sex is ever to a soldier kind."

And so forth about many other "Lymingtonian swains." These verses have at least the merit of putting some sort of picture before us. We can fancy "obliging Trattle," his many-ribboned shorts and clocked silk stockings, and diamond buckled pumps; his blue or claret-coloured coat and embroidered vest; his snowy ruffles and natty solitaire; his powdered hair rising in a pointed toupée, the back part confined in a bag, and hanging gracefully on his shoulders like a porter's knot; and his *chapeau bras* held to his breast, or tucked under his arm, doing the honours of Lymington; while ever and anon, perhaps, he revolves in his anxious bosom some important question, as, for instance, whether the top of the set was to be accorded to the Earl's second cousin once removed, or to the Viscount's great niece by marriage. Neither does it require any great stretch of the imagination to fancy young Ensign Burrard "with sense by far superior to his years," yet for all that not unaware of the sensation created by his brand new uniform and regulation pigtail; while who that has remarked the constant operation of the law of contraries can doubt that "majestic Butler of the steady pace" had for his partner Miss Molly of the "easy and unpractised air"?

Most of the other original contributions consist of rebusses, enigmas, and exercises of that description, not particularly brilliant or entertaining. Some of the subscribers, indeed, begin to complain that too large a share of the paper is occupied with these matters. One gentleman addresses the Editor on the point in a poetical epistle; perhaps his two most powerful lines are:

"Ænigmas, rebusses,
All draw down our curses."

III.—Advertisements.

Of the advertisements nearly half are those of quack medicines, which appear to have been so universal in their scope, and so unfailing in their operation, that the only wonder is anybody ever died. Perhaps the difficulty was which to choose, for I suspect that a person who read and believed all that is stated about these various nostrums would be led to the somewhat bewildering conclusion that every one of them was immeasurably superior to any of the others.

Books also occupy a considerable share of the advertising columns. The Southampton people seem to have been a most jocose set, if we may judge by the literary provision made for them. There are "Jemmy Twitcher's Jests," "Chesterfield's Witticisms," "The Luscious Jester," "Women's Wit," and the "Macaroni Jester, or Pantheon of Wit."

The last recommends itself by a stanza, which, if we may judge of the bulk by the sample, gives us no very exalted idea of its contents:

"Let us read the Macaroni,
Filled with mirth for little money,
Let us view the gay Pantheon,
Which enough we ne'er can see on."

We all know how close is the alliance between humour and pathos. It is not surprising, therefore, that the sentimental element in the Southampton character is well cared for. A gentleman, with a taste for recitation, could obtain a collection of the most telling scenes and speeches, together with a treatise on oratory, and a medallion representing the tragic

and comic Muse looking at Shakespeare, by investing 18d. in the "Sentimental Spouter." Ladies, who might be sentimental, and yet disinclined to spout, have their wants supplied by the "Sentimental Magazine," which contained, I should think, some very pretty reading, especially a "Sentimental History," which, in the language of the advertisement, "at the same time that it forces the tear of sensibility from the eye, will inspire the heart with the love of virtue."

There are plenty of volumes advertised in our journal showing you how to be your own doctor, lawyer, farrier, etc. Mr. Cooke, gardener, of Overton, in Wiltshire, publishes a book, by which he says:

> "You may instructed be, if you take heed,
> Fowls, ducks, geese, turkeys, pigeons, rabbits breed,
> Your table with delicious foods supply.
> And clear your house of vermin by-the-bye."

There is also the "Lover's Instructor," which, besides ingenious letters both in prose and verse, contains, so says the advertisement, "the most polite personal conversations between lovers." It is difficult to see how these could be used, unless a lady and gentleman were each to buy the book, and agree to meet when they had got up their respective parts. I should have been afraid that this might give a somewhat formal air to the proceedings.

Children, too, have their own works provided for them, though some of those classed under the head of "Juvenile Literature" are rather surprising—Fielding's novels, for example; nor, unless I had discovered it from the advertisement, should I have supposed that a book "tending to guard young minds from the allurements of vice, and the paths that lead to destruction," was to be found in the Newgate Calendar or Malefactors' Bloody Register.

The young, however, were not left merely to educate themselves out of these improving pages. There were several schools at very reasonable prices. Mr. Taylor and Miss Polly Taylor, of King's Worthy, provided board and tuition at £12 a year; not a very large sum, especially as Miss Taylor is modestly announced as "a complete teacher, endowed with every virtue requisite to an example to youth";

while Mr. Taylor has "taught several young gentlemen to read, when others have declared it impossible to be done." Moreover, if the parents were not satisfied at the end of the year, the money was to be returned. Mr. Taylor considers himself peculiarly adapted to be an instructor, because he had discharged the office of an exciseman in various places where there had been very good schools. One does not exactly see the *sequitur*. It is as though a man were to pretend to be a first-rate cutler because he had once kept a tripe shop in Sheffield. Mr. Taylor, however, prospered, for I find him soon advertising that a young man "who understands accompts, strikes capital letters well, writes an extraordinary good copy hand, and will confine himself closely to the business of the school, equal in company with Mr. Taylor himself (who, I hope, by the way, did not personally undertake the grammatical department), may depend on meeting with every reasonable encouragement."

Miss Easom, of 79, High Street, is more expensive; 16 guineas, besides extras. She explains that ladies must pay 7s. 6d. quarterly for tea and sugar, or drink milk and water. A gentleman, who writes from West Meon, and wants a situation as usher, makes the rather bold assertion that he has read *all* the classical authors, both Greek and Latin; perhaps he found an engagement with the schoolmaster who, in another number, desires to meet with an assistant "thoroughly conversant of Greek and Latin, and if French also the more agreeable." The advertiser does not appear to be thoroughly "conversant of" English. Another gentleman promises his usher "a genteel salary." I suspect that in "a genteel salary," as in "a genteel waist," the gentility would be found to consist mainly in its slender proportions.

Nor are the lighter accomplishments neglected. Mr. Gosnold, who seems to have been a dancing master with a good school connection, announces his yearly ball at the White Hart, Petersfield, at which Mr. Figgs's and Mr. Wells's young gentlemen, assisted by the young ladies and gentlemen of Petersfield, are to perform Minuets, Cotillons, Country Dances, Louvres, Allemands, Passepieds, and Matloots. I wonder if anybody nowadays ever dances a

Matloot, or executes a Passepied; such matters, I dare say, were known well enough to "majestic Butler" and the rest of them in the Lymington Assembly Rooms 130 years ago.

We know the bad effects of "all work and no play," so we will turn from the schools to the amusements. Football was almost unknown in the South, except when the mob got hold of a gentleman in fancy dress, but cricket held quite as prominent a place as now, and the matches were often for large sums. Hambledon, which then had a famous Club, played the County of Kent for 1,000 guineas. A guinea a man, however, was the usual stake.

Here is a Winchester advertisement that, happily, would not appear in an English paper of the present day: "The Annual Subscription May Cocking will take place on Tuesday next, May 10, 1774, at the White Hart Inn; to go to pit at 11 and 3 o'clock. Many battles will be fought, as there is a number to match. They weigh on Monday, the 9th." Shrove Tuesday was the great day for cock fights. It is to the honour of our paper that in each of these two years, on the approach of that day, letters appear in its columns strongly deprecating the barbarous practice. Ordinances against it were made by some of our Sovereigns, but it is only within the last 60 or 70 years that it has been strictly prohibited, as has been the case also with another diversion of a similar character, which I find advertised to take place at Stubbington. There will, it is announced, be a bull-baiting; "the dog that pins the bull fairest to have half a guinea." Rather more than a century before this Pepys took his wife to such an entertainment. We shall probably concur in the verdict that he pronounces in his diary: "It is a rude and very nasty pleasure."

A few words on the advertisements of public conveyances must bring my paper to a close. Southampton was now so important that it had a daily communication with London. In 1647, Taylor, the water poet, gives a description of a journey which he made from the Metropolis to our town. The coach went only once a week, and took three days to accomplish the distance; the passengers slept two nights on

the road, viz., at Staines and Alton. He describes his arrival in this poetical fashion :—

> "Our horses, with the coach which we went into,
> Did hurry us amain through thick and thin too;
> With fiery speed the foaming bits they champed on,
> And brought us to the Dolphin at Southampton."

But even the improved facilities of 1774 might not strike us as very great. If, for instance, you wanted to go to London, you would probably have to secure your place some days before in Collyer's Southampton, Winchester, and Farnham Machine, for it held only six persons. This vehicle left the Star Inn, Southampton, every morning at 5.30 a.m., and called at Winchester, Alresford, Alton, and Farnham; as to the hour at which it was to reach the Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, the advertisement is judiciously silent.

Or if you wished to send country fruit and flowers, or perhaps a little fish or butter of special excellence to a friend in town, how nice it must have been, when you booked them by the Stage Waggon at the Vine Inn early on Friday morning, to feel certain that, unless the roads were particularly heavy, your hamper would be sure to reach its destination some time or other on the Monday evening following.

Or you might want to go in another direction, to the Isle of Wight, for example. In that case you had only to embark in the new Southampton Packet Sloop, which sailed for Cowes three times a week; and you need not stay more than one night in the Island, for the sloop returned on the following day.

Again, there is quite an Arcadian simplicity in the announcement that the Lymington balls will take place on Tuesday instead of Monday, because on Monday, being post night, many gentlemen are unable to attend. What halcyon times must those have been, when there were, at all events, some evenings in the week on which you were not expected to write letters!

I have been endeavouring to set before my readers, not a picture of the early part of George III.'s reign, but of a provincial newspaper of that period; yet, of course, in doing so something of the manners of the age has been shown. I

think that such comparisons as we may institute between that time and this is, in many respects, gratifying. Although I do not mean that we have let go of nothing which we might have done well to keep, yet our gain, as it seems to me, largely outweighs our loss. Still less would I say that there is not an immense number of things still capable of improvement, and some which might with advantage be improved off the face of the earth. Rather, I trust that if one hundred and thirty-five years hence anyone should write on the Hampshire journals of to-day, as many signs of advancement and progress may be visible to him, and to his readers as, I think, we must have observed from our review of this old Southampton newspaper.