BATH IN THE TIME OF RALPH ALLEN:
A CULTURAL SURVEY

BY

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Abstract

The following survey of the changing aspects of life in Bath during the first fifty years of the eighteenth century makes no claim to be an exhaustive study of the subject, but endeavours to show how the personality of one of her citizens did much to influence the development of the city. Bath, seen as a complete picture in miniature of English society of the time, possessed in Ralph Allen a man eager to forward her interests; a man who combined with his vast personal fortune a character and personality which earned him the respect and veneration of many of the most outstanding figures of the age. At his death a unique phase in Bath's history was brought to an end.

In preparing this survey I have consulted the works of various contemporary commentators as well as the writings of a number of modern social historians who have examined in detail the civic, social, and architectural growth of the city during the period under review. Most valuable among these have been Barbeau's *Life and Letters at Bath in the XVIIIth Century*, R.A.L. Smith's *Bath*, Bryan Little's *Bath Portrait* and Willard Connely's *Beau Nash: Monarch of Bath and Tunbridge Wells*. Unfortunately I was unable to use Professor
Benjamin Boyce's *The Benevolent Man: A Life of Ralph Allen of Bath*, which was not published until late in 1967, after the final draft of this thesis had been completed.

In addition to the above, I have also consulted the works of those principal eighteenth century authors who were directly influenced by the cultural life of Bath, and who have given us immediate and vivid impressions derived from the daily life of this extraordinary city. Defoe, Steele, Pope, Fielding, Goldsmith, and Smollett all knew Bath well, and all have incorporated in their works the essence of Bath life. Moreover, Pope and Fielding were much indebted to Allen personally; Pope carried on a constant correspondence with him, and Fielding used him as the prototype for Squire Allworthy in *Tom Jones*. As for Goldsmith, he centred his interest on Beau Nash and left for us the first full length biographical study of this dynamic contemporary of Allen.

In summary, I have attempted to show, through contemporary and later documents, that Ralph Allen, by his manifold activities, contributed greatly to the cultural development of Bath, and that Bath itself was a brilliant mirror, reflecting the ever-changing cultural and social life of England itself.
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# SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

# A PLAN OF 18TH CENTURY BATH

# KEY TO PLAN OF BATH

# A SKETCH-MAP FROM THOMAS THORPE'S ACTUAL SURVEY OF THE CITY OF BATH, 1742

preceeding p. 1
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I am also grateful to Dr. Geoffrey Creigh for all his help.
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**Notes:**
- Numbers correspond to locations on a map of Bath.
- Key features include baths, assembly rooms, hospitals, and theaters, each with dates and architects.
- The Plan of Bath is a detailed map that highlights significant historical sites and buildings.
Sketch map from Thorpe's 1742 Survey

- Mr. Allen's House
- The Lodge
- Mr. Bennet's house
I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BATH AFTER 1702

The development of Bath was not an isolated instance of 18th century city growth. Unique, however, was the extent to which the men of vision involved in the creation of the 18th century city took advantage of their opportunity while, at the same time, the social and cultural milieu which evolved there created a demand for a worthy setting.

At the turn of the century, Bath was still a walled town of no architectural distinction, and no larger in area than the original Roman town. By mid-18th century the city had doubled in area and was completely transformed in appearance. Its good fortune was the coincidence of civic and social development with the period of the flowering of 18th century English architecture.

The extraordinary civic and artistic emergence of an obscure and relatively remote and provincial city can be traced to an almost fortuitous happening.

Although the Roman Baths had long been forgotten, the town was still frequented during the summer months by invalids who sought relief in the "waters;" and gambling had existed in Bath since the time of Charles II's visit. But the city was rustic, provincial and lacking in essential amenities. The turning point in its history
was the decision of Queen Anne to "take the waters" there in 1702, and again in 1703; and whither the Court repaired, the fashionable world would inevitably follow.

London was the social centre of the kingdom, but, since travel abroad had not yet become as fashionable as it was to become in Regency days, a suitable summer resort was completely lacking, and the English countryside of those days was considered excessively boring. London was the only theatre "for pleasure or intrigue," and the pleasures afforded by the provinces were "merely rural, the company splenetic, rustic and vulgar." People of fashion were obliged to spend the summer season "amidst a solitude of country squires, parsons' wives ... or farmers; they wanted some place where they might have each other's company and win each other's money."\(^1\)

Gambling in England, and particularly in London, had by this time reached the proportions of a national disease among the leisured classes of both sexes, the men gathering round the card tables at Almack's, White's and Boodle's, the women in their own drawing rooms.\(^2\) Speculation and risk were a passion sought for, and found,


and fortunes were lost and made "at the turn of a card or a throw from a dice-box."\(^1\)

Naturally, to London, the "great mart of every folly, sharpers from every country daily arrived."\(^2\) Professional gamblers from Aix and Spa flocked to London during the winter,\(^3\) and as soon as people with money to stake began to patronize Bath, the professionals and sharpers lost no time in following in their wake. Among this inevitable crowd of gamesters and their cullies was Richard Nash, a professional gamester who had made a name for himself in London as an organizer of social ceremonies, but who depended for his livelihood upon his gains at the tables.

Nash's arrival at Bath in 1705 was motivated by the hopes of making money, but the outcome of his visit was the making of Bath. No sooner had he arrived than he began to speculate upon the possibilities of converting the city into an attractive resort with himself as leader. Nor did he ever lose sight of the lure of the gaming tables for prospective visitors. From 1705 till his death in 1761, Nash's career was intimately linked

\(^1\)A.E. Richardson, Georgian England (1931), p. 83.
\(^2\)O. Goldsmith, p. 519.
\(^3\)W. Connely, Beau Nash (1955), p. 12.
with the fortunes of Bath and of her sister-city, Tunbridge Wells. Within a very short time his power was such that he was acclaimed "uncrowned King of Bath, the Arbiter of Elegance, Dictator of Manners of polite society."\(^1\)

"Beau" Nash saw the necessity for taking practical steps to introduce improvements in living conditions before he could hope to organize social life on the scale that he envisaged. The city was "mean and contemptible" with "no elegant buildings, no open streets ... the Pump Room was without a director, the chairmen insulted their customers." The only lodgings available to visitors were "paltry tho' expensive ... floored with boards, coloured brown with soot and small beer to hide the dirt." Nash organized the Pump Room where visitors gathered daily to drink the waters, had the streets paved, lighted and cleaned, repressed the insolence of the chairmen and gave facilities to genuine invalids. Houses and promenades soon began to improve, so that, having freed the city from its rustic associations, Nash was able to concentrate upon the organization of social functions likely to attract moneyed and pleasure-seeking visitors.

The actual building of eighteenth century Bath grew out of this necessity for providing accommodation.

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for a generation of people who were learning to demand higher standards of comfort and for whom elegance was now considered *de rigeur*.

Further, the vital importance of adequate communications between London, the source of Bath's prosperity, and the new resort, could not be ignored. Nearly all the eminent people who visited Bath as late as 1710 travelled on horseback,¹ and conditions of road travel at this time were appalling. By mid-century the springless stage coach was in general use on the Bath Road, and later in the century, when regular changes of horses could be made at the posting inns, the post-chaise became a safer and more rapid means of travelling to the West.² But even so, the very thought of the speed that could be attained was a source of alarm to potential travellers. The *Bath Chronicle*, late in the century, warns readers of the dangers of excessive speeding:

> The public were frightened by assurances that if the speed got up to ten miles per hour it would be a clear tempting of Providence, the brain would be injured, dreadful accidents would certainly happen. All who travelled


²The establishment of the mail coach service was the work of John Palmer of Bath, who was also proprietor of the Orchard Street Theatre. (See p. 127). Palmer enlisted the help of William Pitt, and in 1784 the first mail coach was established between London and Bath.
must first make their wills ... Instances were offered ... of passengers who had died suddenly of apoplexy from the rapidity of the motion.¹

In the early century the dangers to be encountered on the Bath Road were somewhat more immediate. The journey from London took two days and nights over unending mud and ruts. If the coach did not get buried in a ditch, or over-turn, there was still the probability of meeting lurking highwaymen as the travellers drew near to Bath.² Since it was not at all in Nash's interest that prospective gamblers should be robbed before reaching the gaming tables of Bath, he undertook to send agents to catch the highway robbers. Thus he eliminated at least one of the hazards of the Bath Road. At the same time, road-building gradually improved, with the result that, already in Nash's time, Bath was so crowded with visitors that the rebuilding of the city in a style befitting the demands of the age became a worthwhile proposition.³

Architectural Developments

Thus it became imperative in the first decades,


²W. Connely, p. 39.

as Bath developed into a resort for the leaders of fashion, wit and public affairs, that its architecture should reflect the spirit of this age of elegance.

This was rendered possible because of the availability of funds, the interest shown by men of taste and resources, because of the determination of a certain citizen named Ralph Allen to employ the local Bathstone for building, and because of the decision of Bath's greatest architect, John Wood the elder, to settle in Bath in 1727.¹

These two men were largely responsible for the creation of the 18th century city. Allen developed the local quarries of soft honey-coloured stone at Combe Down while Wood, an artist "imbued with a passion for classical architecture, planned a city beside the Avon with buildings as harmonious as those with which Palladio had adorned the banks of the Brenta and the Po."² Together they produced

¹John Wood in his Essay towards a Description of Bath (1749) states that his decision was made only after an assurance that roads into Bath were to be improved by Acts of Parliament. He had a plan of Bath sent to him in Yorkshire and there he worked out designs for sections of the city, which he took to London to show to Dr. Gay and the Earl of Essex, both land-owners in Bath. In spite of their lack of enthusiasm Wood proceeded to Bath and decided to modify his first grandiose plan. He was immediately beset by Dame Lindsey, to build her an Assembly House. (from W. Connely's paraphrase of Wood's Essay, pp. 232 - 242, in Beau Nash, pp. 86 - 87). Wood's previous experiences included work on the swiftly developing Grosvenor-Cavendish area of fashionable London (Bryan Little, Bath Portrait (1961), p. 45).

in architecture, one of the most successful expressions of the 18th century spirit. To the elder Wood's building of the Palladian city was added the work of his son, John Wood the Younger after the father's death in 1754. What may therefore be termed "Palladian Bath" includes the architecture of the years between 1727 and 1771.¹

Two buildings essential for the pattern of social life as devised by Nash were a Pump Room and an Assembly Room. Thus the schemes of Nash, too, contributed to the rebirth of the city. Nash decreed that the drinking of the waters be made an essential function of social life. To this end the earlier Pump Room was re-built in 1706 by the architect, Harvey, and subsequently re-built three times before the end of the century.²

Dances had hitherto been held, informally, in the open air, or in the town hall. In order to lend greater dignity to the proceedings, a certain Harrison was commissioned in 1708, to build a set of Assembly Rooms. In 1717 "Dame Lindsey's" ballroom was added to "Harrison's" Assembly Rooms. One of the elder Wood's first projects,

¹See Key to Plan of Bath.
John Strahan of Bristol also contributed to the building of Bath during the 1730's (in particular, the Kingsmead district: see Plan of Bath). Because he was treated "with jealousy and unworthy spite" by the elder Wood (Bryan Little, p. 53) he has always been so much overshadowed by Wood as to be almost forgotten.

²See Plan of Bath, 6.
after his arrival in 1727 was the re-building, in 1728, of the Assembly Rooms, to be known as "Thayer's Rooms" until 1740, when they were taken over by the manager, Wiltshire.¹

Although he was obliged to modify in a drastic manner, his original plans for Bath, the elder Wood was able to fulfill at least a part of his dream in such achievements as St. John's Hospital, his first building (1727)² followed by Chandos Buildings (1727), Queen Square (1728 - c. 1735) and St. Mary's Chapel (1735).³

He also built the General, or Mineral Water Hospital (1738)⁴ in order to carry out the philanthropic scheme of a group of Bath citizens for the treatment of poor patients, for which purpose Nash had opened a public subscription. Among its patrons, the hospital included Ralph Allen and John Wood, whilst its organizer and director was Dr. William Oliver, the physician celebrated for his charity to the poor. William Hoare's painting of "Dr. Oliver examining patients" hangs in the Royal Mineral Water Hospital to this day.

¹See Plan of Bath, ⑦.
These names, deriving from managers and directors, recur frequently in the writings of 18th century visitors to Bath.

²See Plan of Bath, ⑧.

³See Plan of Bath, ⑨, ⑩.

⁴See Plan of Bath, ⑪.
Wood began in 1740 to lay out the North and South Parades, Duke Street and Pierrepont Street. They were completed in 1748, and rose from the gardens where the medieval monks of Bath Abbey had first cultivated the grapes for the celebrated wine of Bath.\(^1\) Wood had always intended to endow the city with a parade befitting the elegance of the fashionable world, where beauty, elegance and finery might display itself for the admiration of all. Yet in the architecture itself "there is a plain unadorned simplicity about the whole work, which is in the most austere tradition of the eighteenth century."\(^2\) With its Corinthian façades Queen Square, likewise an example of classical severity has, on account of its exquisite proportions, been described as "The true consummation of English Palladian style."\(^3\) Until the 1770's when superseded by the Royal Crescent\(^4\) and Bathwick, Queen Square was one of the most fashionable places of residence in Bath and for a time Wood resided there himself.

Leading uphill from Queen Square, Gay Street\(^5\) was built in 1756 by the younger Wood, as a link with the last

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\(^1\)W. Connely, p. 87. See Plan of Bath, (13).

\(^2\)R.A.L. Smith, p. 73.

\(^3\)R.A.L. Smith, p. 70.

\(^4\)See Plan of Bath, (20).

\(^5\)See Plan of Bath, (16).
of his father's undertakings — The Circus.¹ Before the building of the Circus was far advanced, the elder Wood died (in 1754) and the work was carried out by his son during the years 1754 to 1765. Edith Sitwell calls it "the superb Circus, with its fantastic and magnificent houses."² Singular indeed, in this circular structure, is the design of three tiers of continuous frieze supported by columns in the Ionic, Doric and Corinthian orders.

While W.S. Landor was moved to declare that "there was nothing in Rome or in the world to equal it,"³ two 18th century voices were raised in shrill protest against the Circus, that of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, in 1779⁴ and that of Matthew Bramble in Smollett's Humphrey Clinker (1771).⁵

Many of the leading characteristics of the 18th

¹See Plan of Bath, (15).

²Quoted by R.A.L. Smith, p. 71.

³Imaginery Conversations, quoted by A. Barbeau in Life and Letters at Bath in the XVIIIth Century (1904), pp. 283 - 284 and notes.

⁴"... in the inside it is a nest of boxes, in which I would be stifled, if the masonry were not so bad as to let in the wind in many places." (Quoted by Iris Origo in Horizon, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1965, p. 6).

⁵"The Circus is a pretty bauble, contrived for shew, and looks like Vespasian's amphitheatre turned outside in ..." (Humphrey Clinker (1771), Letter of 23 April, Dolphin edition, p. 39).
century city were due to the collaboration of Allen, Wood and Nash. This last had his word to say even in the designs for the Hospital, for the Parades, Queen Square and the Circus.¹ Wood, in addition to his architectural theories, was responsible for introducing to Bath modern methods in construction. From Yorkshire he brought excavators and masons, from London, carpenters and introduced to the West Country the use of the lever, pulley and windlass.²

Wood began his partnership with Allen in working on the latter's town house in Lilliput Alley,³ near to, and conforming in style with The Parades, and so situated as to face sloping gardens, and a view of the hills beyond.⁴ The two men were able to combine their talents and resources to achieve a common purpose. Wood knew how to work the very friable Bathstone⁵ that Allen was determined to launch on


²Municipal Records, quoted by Murch, p. 179.

³See Plan of Bath, D).

Allen, lately made Postmaster of Bath, moved the old post office from its quarters in the nave of an old church in the slums "at the bottom of that dirty and loathsome Bath Street" (Peach, Life and Times of Ralph Allen, pp. 61 - 62) and accommodated it in his new house, in 1728.

⁴W. Connely, pp. 89 - 90.
The house commanded a view of Hampton Down on which Richard Jones later built Sham Castle.

the market, and was responsible for canalizing the River Avon between Bath and Bristol (where others had failed), thus opening a waterway for the exports from Allen's Combe Down quarries.

But the most brilliant example, in its scope and imaginative appeal, of the co-operation between these two men was destined to be the mansion and property of Prior Park. Allen possessed the financial resources and the daring to project the idea of such magnificence, while Wood had the requisite skill and genius to make of Allen's dream a reality.

Ralph Allen and John Wood: Prior Park

Ralph Allen began his career at Bath in 1715, as a postal clerk. The son of an innkeeper in Cornwall, Allen worked as a boy for his grandmother, who was in charge of the post office at St. Columb. A passing inspector noticed the boy and obtained for him a vacancy in the post office at Bath. Although it was thought by many that the family had lived in conditions of dire poverty, Richard Graves, a close friend during the last

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2 Peach, p. 56.
fourteen years of Ralph's life, affirmed that "Mr. Pope's epithet of 'low-born Allen'" was by no means warranted. Allen's father appears to have been a typical landlord of the roadside posting inn of that day; was well-educated and in turn educated his children. Ralph, when a leading citizen of Bath and owner of wide estates, apparently received his sisters at both Hampton and Prior Park.

When he was appointed postmaster of Bath Allen determined upon a re-organization of the system of cross-posts. Hitherto nearly all local and cross-country mail had travelled by way of London, a system of incredible slowness and inefficiency. From the government Allen obtained a concession to work the cross-postal system throughout England and Wales, in return for which concession he had to pay a yearly rent of £2,000, and to defray the expenses of working it. This was the turning point of Allen's career; he held the contract for forty years and it was the source of his great wealth. Much of the

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1See p. 85.

2Quoted by Kilvert, p. 141.

3Peach, p. 56.

4Herbert Joyce, History of the Post Office (1893), p. 147. Quoted by Barbeau, p. 244.

5Peach, p. 60.

6Kilvert, p. 176.
information concerning the sources of Allen's wealth is to be found in the "Diary" of a certain Richard Jones, who became clerk of the works to Allen in 1731, and remained closely associated with him until 1764.¹

A close friend of Allen's at this time was General Wade² whose natural daughter Allen had recently married. Wade and Allen worked together to improve the amenities of Bath. Troops were employed to construct "highland roads" around the city and to clear the slums around the post office which Allen was in process of reforming.

In the early 1730's Allen acquired property on the neighbouring Combe Down with the intention of quarrying the stone there, being convinced of the value of the Bathstone for building purposes, and of the possibility of marketing it. Defoe describes Allen's invention of a machine to convey huge blocks of stone from the top of Combe Down to the Avon, where they were conveyed by water to all parts of England,³ while Richard Jones' Diary mentions Allen's "carriage road" for "the conveyance

¹Kilvert obtained this "Diary" from a Bath bookseller and quotes from it in his Remains in Prose and Verse as bearing "strong internal evidence of truth." (p. 175).

²Wade was M.P. for Bath in 1727.

of stone to ... the Dolmeads."\(^1\) This "tramway" was apparently built some years before work on Prior Park began, and was instrumental in creating a local demand for skilled labour which continued throughout the 19th century.\(^2\) Bathstone was used in building the Bristol Stock Exchange and for St. Batholomew's Hospital in London,\(^3\) and became known locally when used by John Wood in building Queen Square, Wood Street, and the North and South Parades.\(^4\)

But Allen began to encounter prejudices and objections on the part of the London architects, who set their faces against the use of Bathstone.\(^5\) The grand design for Prior Park originated in Allen's desire to prove to all and sundry the qualities of the Combe Down stone, "by exhibiting it to greater advantage, and as applied to a greater variety of uses than it ever had been before."\(^6\)

\(^1\)Quoted by Kilvert, p. 175.
\(^2\)Peach, p. 82.
\(^3\)Defoe, Tour, 7th edition, II, p. 300.
\(^4\)Kilvert, p. 176. Quoting R. Jones.
\(^5\)Peach, p. 100.
The original plan was to display all the different orders of architecture. The first design was for a mansion "where the Orders of Architecture were to shine forth in all their glory; but the Warmth of the Resolution at last abating an humble simplicity took its place" and if the eventual construction was considered by Wood to express this last quality, then his original conception must have been magnificent in the extreme." "This magnificent building stands on a terrace, about 100 feet below the summit of Combe Down, and 400 feet above the city of Bath. It consists of a house in the centre, two pavilions, and two wings of offices, all united by arcades, and making one continued line of building. It is built in the Corinthian style, and crowned by a balustrade. The centre part, projecting from the plane, forms one of the most correct and noble porticoes in the kingdom, supported by six large lofty, and superb columns. At the bottom of the lawn, before the house, is a piece of water, and over it a Palladian bridge at the head of a considerable lake plentifully stocked with fish."

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1 Kilvert, p. 148.
3 Kilvert, p. 148.
The Reverend Richard Graves, Rector of Claverton for over fifty years and author of the *Spiritual Quixote*, wrote: "The pleasure ground of Prior Park, though not extensive, is beautifully romantic, and good use is made of the various rills of water, which appear to issue from a rock stricken by the wand of Moses (a statue of whom is placed above it), and, trickling down the precipice, are collected below into a serpentine river, which is ornamented by a fictitious bridge, designed by Mr. Pope, to conceal its termination," and adds that "there is a gothic building at the top, or rather at one side of the pleasure ground, which was intended for the head gardener, but which is really a comfortable and elegant dwelling for a small genteel family, and has lately been rented by many people of fortune."¹

There is a local legend that still persists, to the effect that Wood was unable to believe that Allen had sufficient wealth to pay for the magnificent mansion he envisioned, until Allen showed him the actual coins. Kilvert's source for this story was H. V. Lansdown, an artist and collector of reminiscences of Bath. Lansdown writes: "When Mr. Allen had determined to build the present mansion at Prior Park, he sent for John Wood the architect

who waited upon him at the post office in Lilliput Alley, where Allen then resided. 'I want you,' said Allen, 'to build me a country house on the Prior's estate at Widcombe.' Allen then described the sort of place he wished erected; but when he entered into the details, and talked about a private chapel, with a tribune for the family; a portico of gigantic dimensions; a grand entrance hall and wings of offices for coach houses, stables, etc. the astonished architect began to think the postmaster had taken leave of his senses. 'Have you, sir, sat down and counted the cost of building such a place?' 'I have,' replied Allen; 'and for some time past have been laying by money for the purpose.' 'But,' said Wood, 'the place you are talking about would be a palace and not a house; you have not the least idea of the money 'twould take to complete it.' 'Well,' rejoined Allen, 'come this way.' He then took him into the next room, and opening a closet door showed him a strong box. 'That box is full of guineas!' The architect shook his head. Allen opened another closet, and pointed to a second and a third. Wood still hesitated. 'Well,' said Allen, 'come into this room;' a fourth and a fifth were discovered. The architect now began to open his eyes with wonder. 'If we have not money enough here, come into this bedroom.' A sixth, a seventh, and, lo! an eighth appears. Chuckling in his turn at the
astonishment of the architect, Allen now inquired if the house could be built. 'I'll begin the plans immediately,' replied Wood; 'I see there is money enough to erect even a palace; and I'll build you a palace that shall be the admiration of all beholders!'

Allen could claim that his costly but determined effort to prove the qualities of Bathstone was justified when Prior Park stood in majesty, commanding the panorama of the city below, and clearly visible from the city, for all to admire. It stood as a tangible proof of Allen's theory. And to the elder Wood, too, it brought reward. "The fame of Bath spread everywhere," and contracts were made for works to be supervised by Wood.

Wood had worked for Allen for a period of five years, but a difference of opinion now arose between the two men. Wood had designed Prior Park with a view to securing unity of architectural effect, but he had also in mind certain features which were intended to be unique. Peach attributes the decision of the two men to separate, to a difference of opinion concerning the roofing of the stables, saying that "on completion of the first part of the work Wood's direct connection with Allen ceased," and

1Kilvert, pp. 178 - 179.
2Peach, p. 101.
that "the Eastern wing, Palladian Bridge and planting were entrusted to other hands, a year or so before Wood's death."¹

Richard Jones replaced Wood c. 1739,² designed the East wing and was responsible for the landscaping. This included a front lawn and a "plentiful spring gushing out of a rock covered with firs ... a cascade ... falling into a lake at the foot of the hill ... below the house."³ Jones says that he built the Palladian bridge over the "pond" in 1755,⁴ and mentions a pedestal to the south of the house, bearing on the four panels, bas-reliefs of the works of Allen's father-in-law, General Wade, "representing the cutting and blasting of the rocks when the roads were formed in the Highlands by him."⁵

The Bathstone and Cotswold stone in general, soon grew in reputation, being dressed to suit the architectural styles now in fashion. In this way, local Bath materials were to affect the development of classical design, even

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¹Peach, p. 88.
²Kilvert, p. 175. Quoting from Jones' "Diary".
³Peach, p. 113.
⁴A copy of the bridge at Wilton (near Salisbury), the property of the Earls of Pembroke.
⁵Kilvert, p. 176. Quoting from Jones' "Diary".
though London continued to be the main source of influence. Further, local craftsmen in such places as Bath still used inventive skill in devising detail in the material used, based on classical prototypes. In fact, so great was the reputation both of Bathstone and Portland stone at this period that they were "considered essential to the appearance and lasting quality of buildings of the first rank."\(^1\)

\(^1\)A.E. Richardson, *Georgian England*, p. 117.
III

SOCIETY, MANNERS AND PERSONALITIES
AT BATH DURING NASH'S REGIME

Beau Nash at Bath

Nash's rapid promotion as "Arbiter of Elegance, Dictator of Manners" was a triumph of sheer force of personality. His biographer, Goldsmith, writing after Nash's death, paints this scene of the early century with Nash as its central figure. Even though the portrait may be larger than life-size, Goldsmith does convey the impression of an extraordinary and highly picturesque figure. "He had too much merit not to become remarkable, yet too much folly to arrive at greatness."¹ His appearance was singular and arresting, a deliberate part of Nash's carefully planned mise en scène in which attention had to be rivetted on his own personality. As the years went by his appearance grew more and more singular. He always wore a white hat (merely "to secure it from being stolen"); his dress was tawdry and he mixed the fashions of the past generation and his own. His equipage was sumptuous, he travelled "in a post-chariot and six greys, with outriders, footmen, French horns and every display of expensive parade."²

²Goldsmith, p. 515.
The then Master of Ceremonies, Captain Webster, was killed in a duel and Nash succeeding to the post, immediately seized the opportunity to put into effect his reforms and plans for the development of the resort.

As soon as he undertook personally the control of the only recognized place of entertainment, the Pump Room, in 1706, the number of "noble" visitors began to increase rapidly; and when, in 1708, "Harrisons" Assembly Rooms were built,¹ entertainments could be properly organized. Such entertainments, which included "drinking the waters," gambling and dancing, continued to be essential features of Bath's social life for the greater part of the century. Nash also brought 6 musicians from London and organized an orchestra.² "Nash's Pump Room Orchestra" survived until the 1940's.

Nash would tolerate no private parties. Dancing was permitted from 6 o'clock until 11 o'clock in the evening, but no permission could be obtained to continue dancing after that hour. Attendance at Assemblies was made obligatory, and Nash's "Code of Laws," posted in the Pump Room regulating dress and deportment at dances, came to be religiously observed by his "subjects," neither rank

¹See p. 9.
²Goldsmith, p. 521.
nor fortune shielding them from his resentment.¹

Manners, at the time of Nash's arrival at Bath, were sadly in need of reform. The amusements of the place were neither elegant nor were they conducted with delicacy.² "The nobility still preserved a tincture of Gothic haughtiness and refused to keep company with the gentry at any place of public entertainment. Smoking in the Rooms was permitted; gentlemen and ladies appeared in a disrespectful manner at public entertainments in aprons and boots. With an eagerness common to those whose pleasures come but seldom, they generally continued them too long. If the company liked each other they danced till morning."³

Nash's reforms included the outlawing of duels (in which he was only partially successful) and the wearing of swords. In like manner, swearing was also prohibited.

In all matters, Nash had the wit to realize that organized social life would be a stronger force in attracting "society" than the prevalent coarseness or even carelessness of manners. Even the Duchess of Queensberry had her apron torn from her by Nash at a public Assembly,⁴ and

¹Goldsmith, p. 522.
²Ibid., p. 520.
³Ibid., pp. 520 - 521.
⁴Ibid., p. 523.
the fact that she took the rebuke in good part testifies to the prestige that Nash already enjoyed. The principle that underlay Nash's organization was that "healing issued from change of scene, of climate and of society, but that relaxation, to be of benefit, must be disciplined," and the regulation of daily activities was rigidly adhered to. Important newcomers were welcomed by a peal of the Abbey bells, but were expected to pay subscriptions at the Assembly rooms, for the music in the Pump Room, for the use of the private walks, for books borrowed from the booksellers and for pen, ink and paper at the coffee house.2

The day's programme was as carefully organized: bathing in the morning, to which "the lady is brought in a close chair ... in her bathing clothes ... and in the water (is presented) with a little floating dish ... into which (she) puts a handkerchief, a snuff-box and a nosegay."3 The day passes at the Pump Room, at public breakfasts, at concerts. Optional lectures may be attended, that do not "tease the understanding." After church, "some walk in the meadows ... while others are seen scaling some

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1 W. Connely, p. 63.
2 Goldsmith, p. 524.
3 Ibid., pp. 524 - 525.
of those romantic precipices that overhang the city."\(^1\)

Balls, plays or visits conclude the evening, and every Tuesday and Friday there is a subscription ball. "In this manner every amusement soon improved under Mr. Nash's administration. The magistrates of the city found that he was 'necessary and useful' and readily paid the same respect to his "fictitious royalty that is generally extorted by real power."\(^2\)

Bath society and manners as presented by such writers as Durfey, Odingsells, Defoe, and Smollett in the first half of the century, differ widely from Goldsmith's general verdict on Nash's refining influence. But Goldsmith found that "he was the first who diffused a desire of society and an easiness of address among a whole people, who were formerly censured by foreigners for a reservedness of behaviour and an awkward timidity in their first approaches ... That ease and open access first acquired there, our gentry brought back to the metropolis, and thus the whole kingdom by degrees became more refined by lessons originally derived from him."\(^3\)

Coarseness and rusticity of manners did continue

\(^1\)Goldsmith, p. 525.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 525.

\(^3\)Preface to "Life of Richard Nash".
to exist far into the 18th century. But, "if they gradually diminished, and finally disappeared," wrote Barbeau in 1904, "Bath and other social centres of the same class had a good deal to do with the improvement." The reason for such a change lay in the fact that an example was set by a society which had been polished by familiarity with courts and by foreign travel. At the same time, Bath enjoyed facilities of intercourse that existed nowhere else because people from widely differing walks of life were able to meet there on terms of equality that were not generally tolerated in 18th century society. At all events, whether they exercised a refining influence or otherwise, there was hardly a character one can mention in that century but was seen in the famous Pump Room where Beau Nash presided.

Social Life at Bath

Writers of the early 18th century who mention Bath, do tend to stress the less desirable characteristics of social life and of manners to the exclusion of more positive qualities. Nevertheless, there have survived numerous observations made by divers visitors to the city,


2Barbeau, p. 189.
who commented on, described and evaluated the contemporary scene, and whose impressions are by no means all unfavourable. Their opinions, naturally, like those of the purely creative writers, were coloured by personal bias or by what they considered that Bath ought to offer its visitors.

But, however objectively 18th century Bath is regarded in retrospect, it would be difficult to deny that frivolity was, at all times, its most distinctive feature. This frivolity implied an irresponsible attitude towards certain values which would normally obtain during the ordinary course of life at home, but which could with impunity be discarded at a resort of fashion whose raison d'etre was the pursuit of evanescent pleasures. Furthermore, the adoption of a loose code of behaviour by the individual involved a concomitant irresponsibility towards the values and the personalities of other people, and the prevalence of a general attitude of callous indifference to the feelings and the reputations of others. Such an attitude is only too easily discernible in the social life of the earlier part of the century.

Because society existed only so long as "the season" lasted, it was a transient one and the people who composed this society tended to be reckless and to seek pleasure at whatever the cost. The enjoyment of the season depended absolutely upon extracting every last drop of "diversion" that the place, the people and the human situation would yield.
Some visitors went to "the Bath" because they sincerely sought medical help; some used the cure as a pretext for going there, though others went for the sake of congenial companionship. While sharpers preyed upon the pleasure-seekers and quacks upon the invalids, social climbers sought to better their status by mingling on terms of equality with people who would ignore them elsewhere than at a pleasure resort; and, always well-represented, was that "fringe" society invariably found in an environment in which money and social prestige are the key attractions.

By noting what types of people were attracted to the resort, and by reflecting on the impressions they recorded, it is possible to form some idea of the spirit of 18th century Bath, and in what way this spirit changed during the course of the century. By the end of this period, Bath had changed to such an extent, that it was rapidly losing its distinctive "18th century" characteristics and reverting to its former status of a provincial market-town, while it was at the same time in process of becoming a place of residence for those who sought peace, and quiet retirement. When Jane Austen, the last of its 18th century novelists, died, the glamour of Bath had already faded, and with it, the essentially human quality with which its motley crowd of visitors of that century had enlivened it.
The remarks of a very early commentator on the social scene reveal the rapidity with which, during the very first decade of the century, social life in Bath developed its own particular characteristics. In 1709, The Tatler published a letter "from Bath" in which Richard Steele observed that the sharpers were an already formidable element in society there, and expressed indignation at seeing "the noble spirit of gentlemen degenerated to that of private cut-purses." An issue of 8 October, 1709 reveals the fact that London physicians were already exploiting the situation by flocking to Bath during the season, and seizing the practice of local doctors. Steele protests that there will be a sufficient number of physicians in Bath if "there are but two doctors to one patient left in town." He was to return to the attack against medical abuses when he visited the city in person, in 1713.

Two years before this, notable visitors to the spa included William Wycherley, Lady Orrery (who was bored with the social life she found there), and Joseph Addison, who was "gone to Bath with pastoral (Ambrose) Philips for

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1Tatler, No. 65, Sept. 8, 1709.
2Tatler, No. 78, Oct. 8, 1709.
3See pp. 154 - 155.
4Wycherley first visited the city in 1706.
his eyes."\(^1\) Addison recorded in *The Spectator*, the impressions of Simon Honeycomb, who found that:

A sober modest man was always looked upon by both sexes as a precise unfashioned fellow of no life or spirit. It was ordinary for a man who had been drunk in good company, or passed a night with a wench, to speak of it next day before women for whom he had the greatest respect. He was reproved, perhaps, with a blow of the fan, or an Oh, fie! But the lady still preserved an apparent approbation in her countenance . . .\(^2\)

Daniel Defoe also visited Bath in 1711, while collecting material for his descriptive *Tour Through Great Britain*, and had little to say in favour of the new resort: "The best part being but a Barren Subject, and the worst Part meriting rather a Satyr, than a Description." It was formerly a resort for cripples but

... now we may say it is the Resort of the Sound rather than the Sick; the Bathing is made more a Sport and Diversion than a Physical Prescription for Health and the Town is taken up with Raffling, Gameing, Visiting and in a Word, all sorts of Gallantry and Levity. The whole Town indeed is a Round of the utmost Diversion."\(^3\)

He describes the bathing, the

... Walks in the Great Church, and at the Raffling Shops which are kept (like the Cloyster at Batholomew Fair) in

\(^{1}\)J. Swift to Stella, *Journal* (1766), Aug. 24, 1711, quoted by Connely, p. 43.

\(^{2}\) *Spectator*, No. 179, 1711.

\(^{3}\) Defoe, *A Tour*, Everyman's Library (1928), II, p. 34.
the Churchyard and ground adjoining. In the afternoon there is generally a Play, though the Decorations are mean, and the Performance accordingly; but it answers for the company here (not the Actors) make the Play, to say no more.

He mentions the regular evening ball and "dancing at least twice a week ... where there never fails in the season to be a great deal of very good company."

Defoe writes of the hot springs, that the drinking of the waters in addition to bathing in them is considered to be a modern innovation, but adds that "I my self drank the waters of the Bath above fifty years ago; But be it so, ... 'tis a Modern Discovery compared to the former Use of these Waters." ¹

Commentators at this time have much to say on the subject of mixed bathing, which may have been the reason that Nash decided to put an end to such a "scandal."

Steel regarded the practice with considerable misgiving,² while Defoe had this to say:

In the Cross-Bath The Ladies and Gentlemen pretend to keep some distance, and each to their proper side, but frequently mingle here too, as in the King's and Queen's Bath, though not so often; and the Place being but narrow, they converse freely, and talk, make vows, and sometimes Love.³

¹ Tour, 1928 edition, II, p. 35.
² Guardian, No. 174, 1713.
³ Tour, 1928 edition, II, p. 34.
Steele was amused during his visit in 1713 at the sight of dancers on their way to the minuet, and sometimes entertained himself "by observing what a large quantity of ground was hid under spreading petticoats, and what little patches of earth were covered by creatures with wigs and hats," but he was ready to pay tribute to the democratic spirit of Nash's organized social life, when he viewed "the mixed mass of all ages and dignities upon a level, partaking of the same benefits of nature, and mingling in the same diversions."\(^1\) His impressions, however, of some other aspects of social life, were more ironic and much less favourable, and he undoubtedly would have agreed with a later commentator, Doran, who remarked that "the ladies were the only saints some worshippers came (to the Abbey) to adore," and that the sides of some of the pews had had to be raised to stop ogling during services between the sexes, an alteration which did not, however, remove the practice of passing notes from one pew to another.\(^2\)

Concerning the degree to which women at Bath were by this time addicted to gambling, Steele's irony grows more incisive. These were willing, he said, to "sacrifice

\(^1\)Guardian, No. 174, 1713.

\(^2\)Connely, p. 48. Quoting from J. Doran's Memories of our Great Towns (p. 90).
the fortunes of their children like a Spartan or a Roman dame." To cast a dice was the ideal way "to display the well-turned arm, and to scatter the rays of the diamond," and yet, here at the gaming tables, ladies "wore their lilies and roses in tedious watching and restless lucubrations," what they really craved, being, to emulate manhood. To Steele, it was an undoubted argument of their ease of conscience that they would go directly from church to the gaming-table, "and so highly reverence play as to make it a great point of their exercise on Sundays."¹

Alexander Pope paid his first visit to Bath in 1714, when Wycherley and Thomas Parnell were also present. Pope describes to Martha Blount (when he has time to "neglect the company of a great number of ladies" to write to her), his first impressions of the city. From his window he commands the prospect of "twenty or thirty" in one of the finest promenades in the world. If he forgets Martha, his excuse is that he has slid, he cannot tell how, "into all the amusements of the place." His day "is shared by Pump-Assemblies, the Walkes, the Chocolate houses, Raffling Shops, Plays, Medleys, etc.," and he is endeavouring "to become agreeable by imitation." In this same letter he comments on Nash as having an impudent air, and further adds:

¹Guardian, No. 174, 1713.
I have in one week run thro' whatever they call diverting here, and I should be ashamed to pass two just in the same track. I will therefore but take a Trip to Long-leat (which is twelve miles hence) to visit my Lord Lansdowne, and return to London.

Pope was to visit Bath many times in subsequent years, and by 1738 had become an annual patient at the spa. His chief connection with the city after this, however, dated from the beginning of his friendship with Ralph Allen, William Warburton and their circle at Prior Park.

John Gay followed Pope to Bath in 1715, and the Duke and Duchess of Malborough appeared there in 1716, after two years of political exile in Flanders. This was the first of several visits, and was greeted with a peal of bells. Nash was invited to their house and the Duchess found him "a most engaging man," with whom she struck up a sincere, informal friendship; she corresponded with him for many years. The Malboroughs

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1 Longleat House near Warminster, seat of the Marquesses of Bath was built during the 16th century by John of Padua. It is famed for its library, paintings and furniture.


3 See pp. 81 – 110.

4 Connely, p. 49.

5 Ibid., p. 49.

6 Ibid., p. 106.
soon became known to the Bath gambling world; she, as an habituee of the gaming tables, playing high and resenting any interruption while at the tables; the Duke, because he would venture to play no higher than at piquet at sixpence a game. Goldsmith records that the Duchess, "not famed for her generosity," was approached by Nash in the Assembly Rooms, for a subscription to his Hospital.¹ The Duchess hedged, protested that she was "frightened out of her wits -- that she would die," but finally after much altercation, Nash agreed to compound with her for thirty guineas. Her grace however, seemed displeased with the whole evening, and when Nash approached the table where she was playing, she bid him stand farther, crying, "You ugly devil! I hate the sight of you!" But later, after a run of luck, she relented to the extent of adding another ten guineas, "to let him see she was not angry."²

The Malboroughs' first visit occurred at a moment in the history of the city's development when the number of visitors was increasing so rapidly that, in order to accommodate the influx, the Assembly Rooms, under Dame Lindsey's management, had to be expanded,³ and this

¹See p. 10.
²Goldsmith, p. 542.
³See p. 9.
expansion in turn, by increasing the facilities for entertainment, attracted an even greater number of personalities eminent in London society. In 1721, visitors included the Duchess of Queensbury,\(^1\) Congreve, gouty at fifty and losing his eyesight, but "still the foremost comic dramatist of the age,"\(^2\) Lady Bristol for an "hysterical disorder," and Mrs. Peggy Bradshaw who was flirting with John Gay, while the latter danced attendance upon his then patroness, the Duchess of Shrewsbury. Mrs. Bradshaw was careful to record the daily gossip of the place in her correspondence, in spite of her pronouncement that Bath was "all noise and nonsense."\(^3\)

Defoe returned to Bath in the following year (1722) and was more favourably impressed with the social scene than he had been in 1711. "Everything looks gay and serene here ... it's a place of universal sobriety; to be drunk at Bath is as scandalous as mad." He was however, horrified at the spectacle that the baths and the bathers presented: "The smoke and slime of the waters,

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\(^1\)See pp. 26 - 27.  
\(^2\)Connely, p. 66.  
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 66.
the promiscuous multitude of the people in the bath, with nothing but their heads and hands above the water," gave him a lively idea of certain Fra Angelico paintings he had seen in Italy: "Of Purgatory, with heads and hands uplifted in the midst of smoke, just as they are here."¹

Lady Hervey visited the city in 1725, and her remark on the many "well-conducted pleasures"² that she found there stands in marked contrast to the impression of Bath society given in Gabriel Odingsell's satirical comedy, The Bath Unmask'd, written and produced in this same year;³ and whether or not Odingsell's presentation conformed to fact, it was written at the very time when the prestige of Bath was being enhanced by the patronage which royal visitors now began to extend to the city. The first of these was Lady Walsingham, daughter of George I and the Duchess of Kendall,⁴ and Nash took advantage of her visit to accelerate the pace of the diversions in order to encourage further royal patronage.⁵ Before the arrival of Princess Amelia in 1728, which did much to

¹Tour, quoted by Connely, p. 70 from the 1722 edition.
²Lady Hervey to Mrs. Howard Suffolk, quoted by Connely, p. 81.
³See pp. 117 - 119.
⁴She became the wife of Lord Chesterfield in 1732.
⁵Connely, p. 81.
enhance the city's reputation, notable visitors included Fanny Braddock. The disastrous "affaire" of Fanny Braddock, and Nash's unavailing intervention on her behalf, were recounted by both Goldsmith and John Wood, and may have been the basis of Fielding's "History of Mrs. Fitzpatrick" in Tom Jones, an episode which introduces Nash in person into the novel.

In the same year that Princess Amelia visited the city, Swift spent ten days at Bath while the Beggar's Opera was being performed there, Gay himself being present for the occasion; and Lord Orrery arrived in 1730, when Thayer's Rooms were opened for the purpose of accommodating the dancers. But Orrery was not impressed by what he saw of the dancing. He seemed to notice only the elderly, "the Methusalems and Abrahams," who "dance with as much vigour at the baths as if they had flourished in a courant at Charles the Second's restoration." Apart from these, and the "antidiluvians of lesser note and fewer years,"

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1 Barbeau, p. 83.
3 Essay Towards a Description of Bath, xii, pp. 446 - 452.
4 See pp. 188 - 189.
5 See p. 123.
6 See p. 10.
Lord Orrery was struck by little else than the sight of "Mr. Pitt with a swinging cane, and two eyes each looking a different way ... and many lords, pickpockets, broken merchants and disconsolate widows."\(^1\)

Nevertheless, the city continued to develop as a place of entertainment with the re-building of the Pump Room in 1732 in time to welcome Princess Amelia (on her second visit), in that year. The princess bore Nash no grudge for the fact that, on her first visit, he had refused to allow her to continue dancing, in spite of her pleading, after eleven o'clock, "the laws of Bath," he declared, being "as changeless as the laws of Lycurgus."\(^2\)

The Prince of Orange arrived two years later. Goldsmith records that the Prince showed great favour to Nash, followed the cure, and in gratitude for recovered health, presented him with a jewelled snuff-box. Nash responded by having an obelisk set up to commemorate the Prince's visit.\(^3\)

Bath was certainly gaining rapidly in prestige and in reputation, but that this reputation was not for particularly solid qualities is suggested by a French commentator during the same year.

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1Quoted by Connely, pp. 95 - 96.
2Connely, p. 89.
3Goldsmith, p. 542.
The Abbé Antoine Prévost, author of Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité,¹ and translator of many English works including Richardson's novels, had fled to England in 1723 when his Benedictine superiors at St. Germain-des-Prés detained a lettre de cachet against him. In 1733, again in England, he made a tour of the country's watering-places, which he described as "perhaps of all places in the world those in which pleasures are most lavishly multiplied and continue with least interruption."² He visited Bath in 1734, and the impressions he recorded reveal the way in which an experienced and widely travelled Frenchman of that period reacted to the frivolities of Bath life:

We shall find here at all times, Beauties of all ages who come to show off their charms, young girls and widows in quest of Husbands, married women who seek solace for the unpleasant Ones they possess, Players making or becoming Dupes, Musicians, Dancers, Actors, growing rich on the pleasure for which others pay, and sharing it with them; finally, Dealers in all kinds of Jewels, delicacies, and gallantries, taking advantage of a kind of enchantment which blinds every one in these realms of enjoyment, to sell for their weight in gold trifles one is ashamed of having brought after leaving the place.³


²Abbé Antoine Prévost, Le Pour et Contre (1733 - 1740), 20 Vols., No. 38. Quoted by Barbeau, p. 80, note 3.

³Le Pour et Contre, No. 38. Quoted by Barbeau, p. 80.
In spite of so much levity exhibited, the charms of the place were not lost upon the Abbé, who was delighted at the lack of formality that characterized its society. "It is difficult," he wrote, "to imagine anything more agreeable than the easy and familiar life that every one adopts;"¹ and indeed, even the most high-ranking visitors experienced the contagion of the city's gaiety and appeared willing to enter into the spirit of the life there, and this in an age noted for its usually rigid class distinctions.

Those eminent members of the nobility who frequented the spa for reasons of health or pleasure also added colour and vivacity to the scene. Prominent among such personalities was the Earl of Chesterfield whose views and comments on the scene contribute to the sum of contemporary impressions that have survived. Chesterfield paid a yearly visit to the spa, and much of his correspondence is dated from Bath, including a number of the letters to his son.² In addition to taking the cure, Chesterfield

¹Le Pour et Contre, No. 38. Quoted by Barbeau, p. 80.

²Earl of Chesterfield, Letters, ed. Lord Mahon (1892), and Letters to his Son, Philip Stanhope, Esq. (1774). Also dated from Bath are the obituary notices of Montesquieu and Fontanelle, which he sent to the London Evening Post in 1755 and 1765 (Barbeau, p. 86, note 1).
enjoyed the social pleasures of the Assembly Rooms, visited Lady Huntingdon's chapel out of curiosity (his sister was a fervent Methodist), and was so far regarded as a Bathonian as to be appointed one of the first governors of the Mineral Water Hospital. He was patronizing in his attitude to Richard Nash, whom he found a somewhat ridiculous person:

Nash ... gave a ball at Lindsey's ... he wore his gold-laced clothes on this occasion, and looked so fine that, standing by chance in the middle of the dancers, he was taken by many at a distance for a gilt garland.

On his visit of 1734, Chesterfield with his wife, the German-speaking Countess of Walsingham, was welcomed with a peal of bells, and Nash called upon the Earl at his home, where at the time were gathered such notables as Pope, with Martha Blount, Lady Suffolk and Bolingbroke.

Chesterfield's 1738 visit had a political motive. It was a move on the part of Pitt, Cobham, Lyttleton, Bubb Doddington and Chesterfield himself -- all of whom

1See p. 50.
2See p. 10.
4See p. 40.
5Connely, p. 103.
6Ibid., p. 114.
were opponents of the Walpole ministry -- to support Frederick Prince of Wales against the King. The reason given for inviting the Prince and Princess to Bath was to celebrate the birth of Frederick's heir. Chesterfield wrote in connection with the royal visit that the party needed a place to muster anti-ministerial forces, and for planning operations.¹ He mentions that he chose Bath because "this elegant town much resembles the Bajae of the luxurious Romans. Like that, it is distinguished by its waters, its magnificence and its pleasures. It is there that twice a year health, diversions, politics and play, attract what is calculated best company."²

Chesterfield made use of Nash in preparing for the event, a celebration that was to exceed any festivities ever seen at Bath. The royal couple were met at the city gates by the mayor and corporation who preceded them bareheaded in a procession to the Prince's lodging in Queen Square, where the company, including Nash, kissed hands. In the evening a grand ball marked the opening of the festivities, and the town later presented the Prince with an address, whilst the latter presented a silver cup and salver to the city, and a gold-enamelled snuff-box to

¹Earl of Chesterfield, Miscellaneous Works: to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life. By M. Maty (1778), 2 Vols., I, p. 88.
²Miscellaneous Works, I, p. 88.
Nash. Nash's gratitude for this royal favour and for the success of the visit was expressed by an obelisk in Queen Square,\(^1\) twice as high as that erected for the Prince of Orange. Since Nash considered that only a truly great writer could be called upon for an inscription for the obelisk, he decided to ask Pope to write one. The latter finally, and most reluctantly yielded to Nash's insistence, but sent only, such an inscription as "scarce a Common Councilman in the Corporation of Bath but could have done as well."\(^2\) Pope stipulated that his name should not be mentioned.\(^3\)

In the same year Nash, at the height of his glory, was showered with gifts of snuff-boxes from noble visitors and a full-length portrait of him was placed in the Assembly Rooms between the busts of Newton and Pope, which event led to the penning of the following epigram:

Immortal Newton never spoke  
More truth than here you'll find;  
Nor Pope himself e'er penn'd a joke  
Sever' r on mankind.

The picture plac'd the busts between,  
Gives satyr its full strength,  
Wisdom and wit are little seen  
But folly at full length.

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\(^1\)Connely, pp. 115 - 116.

\(^2\)Goldsmith, p. 543.

\(^3\)Pope, Letters to Nash of [? April, 1739] and of [c.15 May, 1739], Correspondence of Alexander Pope, ed. G. Sherburn, IV, p. 170 and IV, p. 176, also quoted by Goldsmith, p. 543.
It has never been clearly established that these lines were actually written by Chesterfield. Goldsmith in his biography of Nash, and Richard Graves claim that they were, and their opinion has received popular support, but Peach attributes the verses to Jane Brereton, a contributor to *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

Chesterfield retained a brilliant place in Bath society even when deafness was making it impossible for him to remain active in public life. Even though he stated in 1752: "Je suis revenu des Bains tout aussi sourd que j'y suis allé; je n'ai plus d'espoirance et me voici biffé pour toujours de la société." Horace


3 A. Barbeau in *Life and Letters at Bath in the XVIIIth Century*, p. 43, note 1, attributes the lines to Chesterfield.

4 "It is clear that Chesterfield has no claim to their authorship." They "are to be found in Vol. I of Southey's *Specimens of Later English Verse*, p. 392 and were written by Jane Brereton, who died in 1740." Peach quotes verse 2, 2 as: "Adds to the thought much strength." He adds that the representation, which was in reality a statue, was not in existence until many years after the verses were written. (*Life and Times of Ralph Allen*, pp. 223-224).

Walpole wrote of him three years later: "While England and France are at war, and Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt going to war, his lordship is coolly amusing himself at picquet at Bath."¹ So fully, indeed, did he remain an outstanding figure in society, that in his old age the younger generation modelled themselves upon him, as a perfect type of the politeness, the fine manners, and the wit of the past.²

Since 18th century Bath was "a complete picture in little of English society,"³ it must inevitably experience to some measure that movement which stirred the whole country and which was essentially antithetical to the main current of 18th century life and thought, that of Methodism.

A band of apostles suddenly appeared among the assemblage of idlers, fribbles and libertines; above the din of this Vanity Fair rise voices, fervent and austere; Wesley elbows Nash on the Parades; and in the public streets, before a mocking or a hostile crowd, unbidden preachers speak of salvation and judgement, of the world that passeth away and of life everlasting.⁴

John and Charles Wesley had lately opened a chapel in Bristol, whence they proceeded to Bath in 1739. John preached there several times before large and mixed crowds,

²Barbeau, p. 87.
³Ibid., p. 152.
⁴Ibid., p. 153.
although Nash tried, without success, to interrupt the meetings. Richard Graves, in his *Spiritual Quixote*, recounts an incident, possibly fictitious, in which Nash even enlisted his Orchestra, reinforced by French horns and kettle-drums to play "God Save the King," secure in the belief that no one would dare to interrupt "so loyal a piece of music."  

But in that same year there arrived at Bath a formidable personage, the great Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, the aristocratic champion of Methodism. Nash, not daring to affront so patrician a convert, went so far as to listen to Whitefield in her house, but found himself at once, and to his great annoyance, the target of broadsides and of satirical verses in the Pump Room. He was to be known henceforth as the Rev. Richard Nash, who had promised his first sermon on the morrow. Nash had now incurred defeat both by opposing evangelism and in countenancing it, and abruptly ceased calling at Lady Huntingdon's house.  

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1See p. 25.


3Her husband was the friend of Ralph Allen, Pope and W. Warburton.

4Connely, p. 144.
This lady soon became an outstanding figure in Bath. She returned there in 1747 and continued to visit the city during the next fifty years. In 1765 she built her famous chapel in the Paragon where, after 1766, Wesley frequently preached. A fearless, domineering, yet sympathetic personality, Lady Huntingdon, whether in London or at Bath, attracted a host of outstanding 18th century personalities to discuss religion and to listen to Wesley and Whitefield. Among these were the Duchess of Malborough, Lady Suffolk, Chatham, Horace Walpole and Chesterfield. Many came merely out of curiosity, but even Chesterfield was moved to offer her £20 towards the building of a "new tabernacle."

In Bath itself the number of converts to Methodism seems to have been considerable, as is attested by the many local scribblers who made Methodism the butt of their facile wit. And, as the century progressed, even

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1Barbeau, p. 162. See Plan of Bath, (26).

2From 1752 onward, Whitefield preached often at Bath. Southey's Life of Wesley (1820), (Barbeau, p. 158 and note 9).

3Quoted by Barbeau, p. 159, and note 1. Barbeau gives as his source, Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, by a member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings, who quotes a letter, Chesterfield to Lady Huntingdon, June 18, 1749, which is not given in the Miscellaneous Works or in Mahon's or Bradshaw's edition of his correspondence.
at Bath, "that centre of frivolity," the far-reaching effects of the movement came to be felt, and began to exercise a sobering influence on its social life. The process was a very gradual one, but by the close of the 18th century, the once dissolute resort may well have undergone the transformation that was to change England itself. Barbeau is of opinion that a reformed Bath may be one of the reasons that "the birds of passage she was wont to attract" then deserted her.¹

The more profound effects of this spirit, however, were by no means apparent in the daily round of amusement that preoccupied the great majority of visitors during the decade following Wesley's appearance at the spa. There loomed, nevertheless, at this time, a serious threat to the prosperity and popularity of Bath, when stringent parliamentary legislation against the evils of gambling was passed in the years 1739, 1740 and 1745. It was a serious threat to a still vital social activity, and spelt, in the long run, disaster to Richard Nash, who began to experience financial losses from which he never recovered. Although gambling gradually ceased to be the paramount attraction that Bath could offer, during the

¹Barbeau, p. 167.
1740's it was still her biggest asset. Ingenious minds began devising methods of circumventing the gaming laws as quickly as the Acts came into force, until finally, a kind of simplified roulette, called E 0 (Even and Odd) was invented at Tunbridge Wells. It side-stepped the law simply by substituting letters for numbers. Nash introduced E 0 to Wiltshire's Rooms, and Bath immediately took on a new lease of life when gamblers from all parts of England flocked to the new game, secure in their belief that it was within the law.

Whether in Simpson's or in Wiltshire's, by the dim light of the candelabra, the rattle of dice, the shuffle of cards, the clink of glasses, the jingle of coin, mingled with the ripple of balls at E 0.¹

At the same time the prestige of the city was maintained because royal visitors continued to extend their patronage to it. In 1740, Princesses Mary of Hesse, and Carolina visited the city; in 1746 Princesses Carolina and Augusta attended a coronation ball there, while 1752 saw the visit of Augusta and the Duke of York. Of much weight in their decision to honour the city was the fact that rapid and striking architectural progress was transforming Bath into an imposing and beautiful city.²

¹Connely, p. 128.
²See pp. 8 - 9.
This development, of the utmost importance to leaders of society in an age of elegance, both quickened the interest of royal visitors, and inspired their patronage.¹

But apart from its elegance, society as a whole, during this period, does not seem to have been distinguished at Bath by any manifestation of talent or wit. All serious subjects of conversation were banished from the Pump Room and the Parades, as having no part in the Bath season. Only trifles were of interest, as is demonstrated by the out-pouring of thousands of pamphlets, miscellanies and verses "valueless in proportion to the slightness of the intellectual effort that produced them."²

Even if one makes allowance for the asperity which characterized her comments on social life, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu's opinion on the matter may be accepted. "I think" she wrote in 1740,

that one may live here (at Bath) at as small expense of wit as in any place I ever was in my life, and by all the rules of economy, the disbursement bearing proportion to the receivings, one ought to lay out very little.³

1Connely, p. 126.
Yet, once again, commentators on the Bath scene of the 1740's and 1750's differ widely in their pronouncements. R.E.M. Peach, writing some one hundred and fifty years later, was shocked at the immorality prevailing at Bath in the 1740's. "The age was truly a vicious one, and the worst of its vices cumulated in Bath." Although it was an age "not altogether incompatible with public and private virtue," "these were difficult amidst so much profligacy and so many shameless vices."¹ G. Monkland, on the other hand, writing in 1852, maintained that Nash, a man of extraordinary ability, to have led and governed Bath at such a time (as the mid-18th century) must have possessed strong sense, sound judgment and wonderful tact.²

In 1752, Lady Luxborough, a sister of Lord Bolingbroke, was trying to persuade her friend William Shenstone, to join her at Bath. Her letter, in marked contrast to the comments of Peach, suggests that there was much in Bath life at the time that was attractive and congenial. "We can offer you," she tells Shenstone:

Friendly conversations, friendly springs, friendly rides and walks, friendly pastures to dissipate gloomy

²G. Monkland, "Literature and Literati of Bath;" an essay read at the Literary Club (1854), p. 86.
thoughts, friendly booksellers who ... will furnish you with all the new books, friendly chairmen who will carry you through storm and tempest for sixpence and seldom less -- for Duchesses tread the streets here unattended. We have also friendly Othellos, Falstaffs, Richard III's and Harlequins, who entertain one daily for half the price of your Garricks, Barrys and Rich's. We can also offer you friendly solitude, for one can be anchorite here without being disturbed by the question 'Why?' Would you see the fortunate Mr. Allen, his fine house and stone quarries? Would you see our law-giver, Mr. Nash, whose white hat commands more respect and non-resistance than the crowns of some kings? To promote society and good manners, and a coalition of parties and ranks, to suppress scandal and late hours are his views, and he succeeds rather better than his brother-monarchs generally do.1

Very similar to the Abbé Prévost's impressions recorded in 1734, to the effect that he was charmed at the easy and familiar mode of life he found at Bath, another French Abbé, Monsieur Le Blanc, in describing his impressions of Bath in 1745, found that, unlike the waters of Bourbon, where only infirm, paralytic and valetudinarian persons were to be seen, Bath was the place in all England, to enjoy good health and to turn it to good account.2 As compared with those of London, the Abbé found that the ladies at Bath were no longer reserved and inaccessible, but gentle and easy with strangers. "As a rule, a party of English women

1Letter to W. Shenstone, quoted by Connely, pp. 152 - 153.

taking tea, is a rather dull assembly" he continued. "The most gallant of men are shy of presenting themselves to such a company who speak very little unless slander loosens their tongues," whereas at Bath, "the Tea-Parties are extremely gay."

The Abbé Le Blanc has a theory as to the reason that women at Bath "are indeed different beings" when, because of the wearisome uniformity of their ordinary life, they leave London for the spa. A visit to the spa is very probably the result of six months of intrigue and consideration. "The fair patient has had to feign illness, to win over the servants, to corrupt the doctor, to persuade an aunt, to deceive a husband," so she naturally seeks compensation for all the trouble she has taken. He concludes that "pleasure is all the more attractive to Englishwomen in that it is unfamiliar to them, and that it costs them a good deal." Their melancholy temperament, which often restrains them from pleasure, must make them more keenly alive to it when they once give themselves up to it."

As for the young men who frequent the spa: they come here "to take a course as it were, in profligacy,"

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1Le Blanc, No. LXXXVIII, pp. 312 - 313. (Barbeau, p. 82).
2Lettres d'un François, LXXXVIII, III, pp. 312 - 313. (Barbeau, p. 82, note 1).
and consider a season at Bath the last training necessary before approaching London.1 "It is here," says the Abbé Le Blanc, "that successful libertines come from all quarters to establish their reputations," and "he who has attracted much attention in the autumn at Bath will infallibly make a season in London the following winter. He excites the curiosity of Duchesses, and is observed of all the women of the Court."2

1Barbeau, p. 108.

2Lettres d'un François, LXXXVIII, III, p. 312. (Barbeau, p. 108, note 3).
IV

SOCIAL LIFE AT PRIOR PARK

Ralph Allen as a Personality

"In the frivolous Bath of Beau Nash Allen repre­
sents the solid qualities and the virtues of private
life." He is at the same time, the great civic figure,¹ and although Mayor of Bath only once, he exercised, until
his death, a commanding influence upon the affairs of the
city.²

Although the buildings and grounds of his great
mansion, Prior Park, were not completed before 1743,³ the
house was opened in 1741, and in this same year Ralph
Allen established a particular pattern of social life
for himself and for a number of outstanding 18th century
personalities, a pattern which was to last until his death
in 1764. With the passing of the Maecenas of Bath, a
unique phase in her social history also ended. R.E.M.
Peach says that the social life at Prior Park, in addition
to being unique in character, was of a "special and peculiar

¹R.A.L. Smith, Bath, p. 66.
³See pp. 21 - 22.
historical significance."¹ That it could exist at all, let alone continue at such a high level of excellence for 22 years, was due to the combination of prodigious material means, with the rare personality and the extraordinary qualities of the master of the house. A realization of why this life was unique is impossible unless it is interpreted as an expression of Allen's personality.

Henry Fielding's thinly disguised "likeness" of Allen, as Squire Allworthy in Tom Jones² is that which has made the widest appeal to the imagination of posterity, and was everywhere regarded as a portrait by those who knew him personally.³

Francis Kilvert, writing a hundred years later, declared, "at the distance of a century he still stands out in bold relief as 'The Man of Bath',"⁴ while Peach says that the marvellous charm of Allen's personal character was "established by a large and varied body of competent and independent witnesses."⁵

¹Life and Times of Ralph Allen, p. 129.
²See pp. 167 - 182.
⁵Life and Times of Ralph Allen, Preface.vii.
Kilvert can find only one dissenting voice among contemporaries of Allen who commented upon his character. Philip Thicknesse, author of the Prose Bath Guide for the Year 1778, a man notorious for his irritable, vindictive and sometimes malevolent spirit charged Allen with affecting a simplicity of manners and address, saying that he was "deeply charged with pride, and without address enough to conceal it," even though his "plain-quaker-coloured suit of clothes and shirtsleeves with only a chitterling up the slit, might and did deceive the vulgar eye." Nevertheless, having been invited to "a most magnificent dinner at (Allen's) table," Thicknesse concedes that the man was not mean and "seemed to take infinite pains to show his munificence in all respects." Kilvert, commenting on Thicknesse's criticism of Allen's dress, is convinced that, far from being deceptive in intent, his apparel corresponded with the general sobriety of Allen's character, since his countenance denoted a steady and sedate demeanour. His dress, in an age delighting in gay colours and expensive materials, consisted in a

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1Barbeau, p. 288, note 4.
3Kilvert, Remains, p. 171. This description corresponds with William Hoare's drawing of Allen now in the possession of the Corporation of the City of Bath.
plain suit of broad-cloth, generally of a dark colour, with linen equally plain. In strong contrast, a taste for elegance was seen in his "equipage," in which he "maintained a certain state and dignity suitable to his mansion, his visitors, and his general style of living; driving commonly into Bath, as is reported, in his coach and four."¹

The testimony of Bishop Hurd, who knew Allen well, being a friend of long standing and a frequent visitor at Prior Park, seems to bear out the general impression that Allen made upon his contemporaries:

Mr. Allen was a man of plain good sense, and the most benevolent temper .... He was of that generous composition that his mind enlarged with his fortune; and the wealth he so honourably acquired he spent in a splendid hospitality and the most extensive charities. His house, in so public a scene as that of Bath, was open to all men of rank and worth, and especially to men of distinguished parts and learning, whom he honoured and encouraged, and whose respective merits he was enabled to appreciate by a natural discernment and superior good sense, rather than any acquired use and knowledge of letters. His domestic virtues were above all praise. With these qualities he drew to himself universal respect.²

Samuel Derrick, writing shortly before Allen's death, confirms Hurd's opinion, and dwells upon Allen's gravity and courtesy, and his amiable character, saying that he and his wife were "the parents of the industrious

¹Kilvert, Remains, p. 171.
²R. Hurd, Life of Bishop Warburton, quoted by Kilvert, pp. 171 - 172.
poor, the protectors of the really distressed, and the nourishers of distressed genius."¹ William Warburton studied in vain "to find where Allen's weakness lay,"² and when Allen died in 1764, his friend of many years' standing, William Pitt, paid the following tribute to him in a letter to Mrs. Allen: "In Mr. Allen, mankind has lost such a benevolent and tender friend as, I fear, not all the example of his virtues will have power to raise up to the world again."³ There seem to have co-existed in Allen two apparently contradictory tendencies: on the one hand, a personal modesty and simplicity, suggesting a desire to avoid publicity, and on the other, a desire for the spectacular as seen in his mode of living, which he made possible by building up a great fortune used deliberately for a display of magnificence. What Hurd calls his "splendid" hospitality achieved dimensions scarcely equalled elsewhere at that time in England even in the houses of the landed Whig aristocrats, and this

¹S. Derrick, letter of May 10, 1763, quoted by Kilvert, Remains, p. 166. See also p. 91.


³William Pitt to Mrs. Allen, 4 June, 1764, quoted by Peach, Preface ix, from the Chatham Correspondence (1838 - 40).
splendor was frequently matched in the great names or the great merits of the guests who were only too willing to be invited to his house and table.

The reception was lordly, and Allen always expected all guests from Bath who were invited for concerts or to dinner, to sleep at the mansion; and in winter, he would have them accompanied by private watchmen or by link-boys. Yet, despite the scale upon which entertaining was maintained, there was no stately or repelling ostentation towards guests, who felt always the warmth and sincerity of the welcome extended to them. Allen, having no particular preference for rank or wealth, succeeded in bringing together men and women of widely differing walks of life, thus effacing what Peach calls "the stiff and preposterous barriers and conventionalities by which society was kept asunder."  

It becomes apparent that Prior Park was an indispensable component of that unique phenomenon that was 18th century Bath. Whilst the city could offer multifold opportunities for encounters between eminent 18th century personalities, it was, of necessity, a transient society and a loosely organized community, whereas Allen deliber-

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1Peach, Life and Times, p. 130.
2Ibid., p. 130.
3Life and Times, p. 129.
ately created a gracious and elegant and, in spite of all, exclusive environment to which leading figures in art, literature and politics brought a contribution, and enriched the whole by the fact of their presence there.

Visitors to Prior Park

Among the eminent 18th century figures, one of the earliest to visit Prior Park on its opening in 1741, was Alexander Pope, who, already a well-known figure at the spa, had formed a friendship with Allen. Pope was instrumental in introducing William Warburton to Prior Park, also in 1741. Warburton, a country parson from Lincolnshire, who became Pope's literary executor, editor of Pope's works (in 1751), and who published an edition of Shakespeare (in 1747) was always a controversial figure in the Prior Park scene. "Tall, robust and large-boned," Warburton soon became a familiar figure in the household, and such was Allen's regard for him that he gave Warburton his favourite niece in marriage in 1746; procured for him through the influence of William Pitt the Deanery of Bristol and subsequently the Bishopric of

1See pp.81 - 84.
2See pp.94 - 95.
3Dudden, I, p. 409.
Gloucester (in 1760); and as a final gesture, the reversion of his estates of Claverton and Prior Park after the death of Mrs. Allen.

Kilvert is of opinion that all these benefits resulted from the way in which Warburton successfully cultivated to advantage his initial introduction. At all events, he appeared to have been a difficult character. He was nearly always of the party and was wisely permitted to do as he pleased. He was deficient in humour, arrogant and opinionated and would brook no arguments. Peach, however, maintains that Warburton was bound to Allen by more than selfish interest, admired him inordinately, and was his faithful champion. Isaac D'Israeli claimed that the arrogant and vituperative Warburton was only such in his assumed character; "in private life he was the creature of benevolence, touched by generous passions." And Richard Graves, always kindly, always alert to the better side of a man's character, on his first visit to Prior Park found Warburton one of the

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1 Remains, pp. 152 - 153.
2 After his marriage to Miss Gertrude Tucker in 1746, he became a permanent member of the Prior Park household.
3 Life and Times, p. 140.
4 I. D'Israeli, Quarrels of Authors (1814), I, p. 134, quoted by Kilvert in Remains, p. 160.
5 See p. 71.
politest men he had ever seen, who was "attentive to everyone who spoke," paying "deference to his inferiors, as most of the company were." Graves seems to find as sufficient reason for Warburton's superiority, the fact that: "he was then Dean of Bristol."¹

In this same year of 1741, a notable group of personalities at Prior Park included John Arbuthnot, John Gay, Chesterfield, Bolingbroke and Charles Yorke. In 1743 Bolingbroke and Chesterfield were again at Prior Park, and it was in this year that Pope and Martha Blount cut short their stay, and left the Allens abruptly as the result of a "quarrel."² In 1749, when Henry Fielding and his sister were almost daily guests at Prior Park, "the amiable and accomplished" Bishop Hurd was also present.³ A friend and disciple of Warburton, and already well-known as a critic and theologian,⁴ he was to become

¹Quoted by Kilvert in Remains, pp. 159 - 160. Fielding praised Warburton's vast and varied learning (see p.180). But Dr. Johnson, although appreciating "the wonderful extent and variety" of Warburton's knowledge, declared that it was "too multifarious to be always exact" (S. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, Oxford University Press (1906), 2 Vols., II, p. 275).


³Kilvert, Remains, pp. 163 - 164.

⁴Barbeau, p. 275.
Bishop of Lichfield, Coventry and Worcester, in turn. With a reputation for being "precise and fastidious," he was, at the same time "held in high and deserved esteem at Prior Park." At the Abbey Church where daily morning services were held, could be heard "the silvery periods of the excellent Bishop" whom his admirers fondly called "the Beauty of Holiness."

Another guest at this time was William Hoare, a predecessor of Gainsborough as a painter whose name is intimately connected with Bath. Hoare was one of Allen's friends, and stood for many years at the head of his profession in that city. Among the personalities of the century whom he painted were Richard Nash, William Pitt (twice), Samuel Derrick and Christopher Anstey; and it was probably at Bath that Camden, Chesterfield, the Dukes of Grafton and Newcastle, Pope, and Allen sat to him.

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1Dudden, I, p. 410.
2Kilvert, Remains, pp. 163 - 164.
3Austin Dobson in Preface to A. Barbeau's Life and Letters, ix.
5The engraving appears in the 1762 edition of Goldsmith's Life of R. Nash (Barbeau, p. 287, note 4).
6Master of Ceremonies at Bath in 1763.
7Barbeau, pp. 287 - 288. The portraits of Pitt, Camden and Allen were hung in the Town Hall, and that of Derrick in the Assembly Rooms (Barbeau, p. 287, note 5).
Peach says of Hoare, that he was "an accomplished artist, a ripe scholar, and a very gracious man,"¹ and Richard Graves, who met Hoare at Prior Park, wrote that he was "not only one of the most virtuous, friendly and inoffensive men, but one of the best classical scholars, both in Greek and Latin, with whom I was ever acquainted."²

James Quin, the actor, on his retirement from the London stage, settled at Bath, where he spent the last sixteen years of his life.³ Quin met Warburton frequently at Prior Park. They were not on good terms, but Quin's gift for prompt repartee generally gave him the victory in verbal battles. On one occasion Warburton, apparently seeking to degrade Quin from the social equal to the inferior status of a "player," asked him to give a specimen of his dramatic art. Quin, looking first at Allen, then at Warburton, in such a manner that the reference was understood by all the company,⁴ recited, from Otway's Venice Preserved:

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Honest men
Are the soft and easy cushions on which knaves repose and fatten.⁵
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¹Life and Times, p. 134.
²Quoted by Kilvert, Remains, p. 157.
³i.e., from 1751 to 1766.
⁴Barbeau, p. 276, note 2.
⁵Peach, Life and Times, p. 139.
An occasional visitor was Thomas Edwards, the critic, who also aroused Warburton's enmity. "Since" writes Kilvert, "literary subjects formed the usual conversation" and the controversy was running high, Edwards incurred Warburton's mortal hatred through an unexpected display of erudition. "To this circumstance," Kilvert adds "is attributed Edwards' Canons of Criticism (a keen satire upon Warburton's edition of Shakespeare) which was followed up by Warburton with incessant attacks; in every new edition of Pope, in the Essay on Criticism, and in the Dunciad."

The Countess of Huntingdon was another visitor at this period, as also were John Wood, Lady Luxborough (in 1752), Marshal Wade (father of the first Mrs. Allen) and Sir John Cope, commander of the royal army defeated at the battle of Preston Pans; he who "outrid the express" to inform the King of the event. His Majesty observed that "he was the first general he ever heard of who brought the news of his own defeat" and immediately turned his back upon the general. Richard Graves who recounts the

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1Edwards also contributed to Pope's grotto. See pp. 88 - 90. Pope's desire for "minerals" is mentioned in their correspondence.

2Kilvert, Remains, pp. 156 - 157, quoting D'Israeli's Quarrels of Authors, I, pp. 91 - 92 note.

3See pp. 50 - 51.

incident, must have been present when the story was told at Ralph Allen's table, and Cope said: "Aye, so it is written, but you must never believe anything you read in the newspapers."¹

Royalty was also represented at Prior Park. In 1750 the Prince and Princess of Wales with their daughter, Augusta, were entertained "to tea at Prior Park" before attending a command performance at the theatre in Bath.² Two years later Princess Amelia and her brother, the Duke of York, were also entertained by Allen, who offered them Prior Park during his absence at Weymouth.³

It was in 1750 that Richard Graves, one of the most picturesque characters in the Prior Park scene, appeared in person. He was made Rector of the neighbouring parish of Claverton, and from 1750 till his death in 1794, was never absent for a month together from his parish. He knew Bath intimately, was uniquely conversant with the local history and tradition⁴ and is one of the most authoritative sources of information concerning personalities in the neighbourhood whom he knew, or

¹Quoted by Kilvert in Remains, p. 159.
²S.M. Rosenfeld, Strolling Players and drama in the Provinces 1660 - 1765 (1939), p. 183. See p. 129.
³Peach, Remains, p. 130.
⁴Dudden, II, p. 593.
about whom he learnt at first hand.\(^1\) Peach says that Graves was one of the best-known and most esteemed of neighbours. "A wit, and a most voluminous writer,"\(^2\) he soon became a highly popular figure at Prior Park and an intimate friend of Allen's.\(^3\) Kilvert refers continually to the authority of "this amiable and gifted person, whose ... good humour and sprightly sallies ... must have been a welcome addition to the circle of Prior Park."\(^4\) This great favourite with Allen and his guests is described by Peach:

> A peculiar-looking man with a singular gait ... dressed in the clerical style of the period — black-and-all-black ... He always carried a black baggy umbrella, which he held before him ... His features, while pleasant and intellectual, wore an eager expression, and he never walked but trotted.\(^5\)

Graves was the friend of Lady Luxborough, and of William Shenstone whom he introduced to Prior Park where they met William Hoare, the painter.\(^6\) This was in 1752, the year in which Graves mentions meeting another celebrity

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\(^1\)Dudden says that R. Graves' testimony cannot be disregarded. *Henry Fielding*, II, p. 593.

\(^2\)*Life and Times*, p. 134.

\(^3\)Allen bought Claverton Manor in 1758 and dined there regularly once a week.

\(^4\)*Remains*, p. 161.

\(^5\)*Life and Times*, p. 134.

\(^6\)Peach, *Life and Times*, p. 134.
then on a visit to Bath. "I met Mr. (Samuel) Richardson in Mr. Leaks, the bookseller's, parlour (whose sister Richardson had married)." Graves describes Richardson's delight at being honoured by an invitation to Prior Park: "He told me he was going to dine with Mr. Allen, at Prior Park. 'Twenty years ago' he said, "I was the most obscure man in Great Britain; and now I am admitted to the company of the first characters in the kingdom'."¹

"The company of the first characters" may have been all that impressed such a man as Samuel Richardson. The impact upon his circle, of the man, Allen, and the gracious setting Allen had created, is expressed in a more sensitive vein by the talented, but unfortunate, Charles Yorke, whose sudden and mysterious death on attaining the office of Lord Chancellor (in 1770) "hor-rified the public mind, and wrung the hearts of so many admiring friends."² After a visit to Prior Park in 1746, Yorke wrote: "The natural beauty ... makes it one of the most delightful spots I ever saw." He wonders at:

The elegance and judgement with which art has been employed, and the affectation of false grandeur carefully avoided ... but even scenes of this kind ... were the least of its charms to me. I soon found those scenes animated

¹Graves, quoted by Kilvert, Remains, p. 159.
²Kilvert, Remains, p. 154.
by the presence of the master; the tranquility and harmony of the whole only reflecting back the image of his own temper, an appearance of wealth and plenty with plainness and frugality, and yet no one envying, because all are warmed into friendship and gratitude by the rays of his benevolence.¹

The Fielding connection with Prior Park

The author of the Dunciad and the author of Tom Jones — these are the two guests whose presence sheds an undying lustre on the splendid domain of Prior Park, whose memory lingers round all its stately rooms, its avenues, its terraced garden; the two whom the imagination best loves to picture there in all their diversity of mind and body ... Fielding — tall, broad-shouldered, robust, overflowing with life and spirits; chatting heartily with everyone he comes across ... keeping the rest of the company in good humour ... the serene figure of Allen, amiable, yet gravely dignified, or Warburton, with his massive head and naturally imperious manner.² Tripping gaily up to them comes the excellent Graves ...³

Fielding's close association with Prior Park, and the result of this connection upon the structure of Tom Jones, was at least in part due to the fact that his sister had been living at Widcombe⁴ within view of Prior Park, probably since 1739.⁵ Peach⁶ describes Sarah Fielding

¹Quoted by Kilvert, p. 155.
²According to Hoare's portrait in Warburton's complete works.
³Barbeau, pp. 273 - 274.
⁴Peach, Life and Times of R. Allen, p. 133.
⁵R.E.M. Peach, Historic Houses in Bath and Their Associations (1883), p. 32.
⁶Peach, Life and Times, p. 133.
as "a handsome well-bred lady" with whom Allen had formed a close friendship. Sarah, author of the novel, David Simple, was unmarried and had no private means. Over the years Allen, with characteristic consideration, not only gave her financial aid,¹ and thus a great measure of security, but always bestowed upon her his "chivalrous attention, kindness and bounty."² Daily, Allen would pass her door on his way to and from the city, and cheer her somewhat dull existence by a kindly word. She was seldom omitted as a guest at his table, and would be conveyed to Prior Park in his carriage.³

It is not known at what date Allen made the acquaintance of her brother, Henry. Sarah may have been the means of bringing them together.⁴ In the winter of 1741 - 1742, Pope and Warburton spent several weeks together at Prior Park.⁵ "There too," writes Wilbur Cross, "at near the

¹R. Graves, The Triflers, p. 77, stated that Allen gave her an allowance of £100 a year. Sarah undertook to publish (as a sequel to David Simple), The Familiar Letters ..., in 1747, to which her brother contributed a Preface and 5 of the letters. Among the subscribers (who included Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and S. Richardson), Allen characteristically ordered 5 sets (Cross, History of Henry Fielding, II, pp. 46 - 47).

²Peach, Life and Times, p. 133.

³Ibid., p. 133.

⁴Barbeau, p. 267.

⁵See pp. 94 - 95.
same time had been 'courteously entertained' Henry Fielding.\(^1\) Fielding and Pope may never have met at Prior Park, but Allen must have contributed to an understanding between the poet and the novelist. Thereafter Fielding began to praise the scholarship of Warburton also.\(^2\) At all events, after the summer Assizes of 1742, Fielding went to Bath, probably accompanied by his wife, to drink the waters.\(^3\) It is probable that this visit was the beginning of a residence there, sometimes for several months of each year\(^4\) and possibly at Allen's instigation.\(^5\) According to tradition, Fielding's first residence was at Twerton-on-Avon, on the lower Bristol road, and a mile and a half from Bath, in a house since known as "Fielding's Lodge."\(^6\) At a later date, tradition has it, Fielding settled at Widcombe, in the lodge belonging to Widcombe Manor, an estate which Allen had recently purchased.\(^7\) Widcombe Manor and Lodge are situated below

\(^1\)H. Fielding, I, p. 377. See also p. 163.
\(^2\)Cross, I, p. 377.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 377.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 379.
\(^5\)Dudden, I, p. 412.
\(^6\)Cross, I, p. 379. Twerton is now part of an industrial quarter of Bath.
\(^7\)Cross, I, p. 379. See sketch map from Thorpe's Survey: "Mr. Bennet's house."
Prior Park and the view with which Fielding must have become very familiar was destined to play a part in *Tom Jones*.¹

It is doubtful whether Fielding would have lived for any length of time in such a neighbourhood without being in contact with his sister, and although only a tradition that cannot be confirmed, it is highly probable that Sarah, like her brother, lived at Widcombe Lodge and "that Allen permitted the Fieldings to occupy the Lodge, whenever they so desired, and that it eventually became Sarah's home."² Peach states that "her brother Henry ... lived with his sister at Yew Cottage."³

That *Tom Jones* (published in 1749) was partly written while Fielding was living at Twerton is stated by his contemporary, Richard Graves,⁴ who may or may not have met Fielding in person but who dined more than once at Claverton Manor after 1757 with Sarah Fielding.⁵ The garrulous Mr. Graves, who knew all about the local

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¹Cross, I, p. 379.
²Cross, III, p. 113.
³*Life and Times*, p. 133.
⁴See p. '71.
celebrities,¹ says that Fielding "dined almost daily at Prior Park, while he was writing his novel, *Tom Jones,*" and lived at Twerton "in the first house on the right hand, with a spread eagle over the door."²

Wilbur Cross asserts that the first books of *Tom Jones*, and some of the later chapters, were composed at Twerton and it may be assumed that, after he had relinquished *The True Patriot*, and was editing the *Jacobite's Journal*, Fielding spent the summer and autumn of 1746 at Twerton and returned for briefer periods the two following years. But before the novel had passed through the press, he had permanently settled at Bow Street as a justice of the peace.³

In *The Triflers*, Richard Graves mentions, among his friends in the Prior Park circle, several persons of distinction who came incidentally into the life of Fielding, including Lord Camden, Shenstone, Lady Luxborough and Warburton.⁴ In *Tom Jones* Fielding was generous in his praise of Warburton's learning, yet, not until two years

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¹Cross, II, p. 112.
³Henry Fielding, II, p. 111.
⁴Cross, II, p. 110.
after the publication of this novel did Warburton condescend to notice Fielding's merits as a writer.¹

By the year 1751, Fielding's health was already failing. Only those immediately associated with him were aware to what extent illness, and his experience as a police magistrate were taking their toll of him. There were members of Ralph Allen's circle who could not, or would not, understand how the strain was taxing Fielding's powers to maintain his outward jocularity. Richard Hurd, for example, writing to a friend, from Prior Park, thus contrasts Allen and Fielding:

I wish you had seen Mr. Allen. He comes up to my notion of my favourites in Queen Elizabeth's reign; good sense in conjunction with the plainest manners -- simplex et nuda veritas. I dined with him yesterday, where I met Mr. Fielding -- a poor, emaciated, worn-out rake, whose gout and infirmities have got the better even of his buffoonery.²

Presumably, "this divine of formal morals," as ignorant of Fielding's works as of his life and the vast public services he was then performing,³ felt cheated of the jests he expected on such a social occasion. And Thomas Edwards, who must have heard much from other Prior


³Wilbur Cross, II, pp. 310 - 311.
Park friends about Fielding, even if he never met him, so little knew or understood the real import of the *Voyage to Lisbon*, and the courage which its "trifling" masked, as to write to his friend, Samuel Richardson, of his indignation. "That a man who had led such a life as he (Fielding) had, should trifle in that manner when immediate death is before his eyes, is amazing." Hurd was confirmed in his opinion that, "with all his parade of pretences to virtuous and humane affection, the fellow has no heart. And so—his knell is knolled."¹

But, when Fielding died in 1754, Ralph Allen, ever loyal, continued to show great solicitude to Sarah Fielding as also to her brother's second wife and her children. He had been appointed executor of Fielding's will, but, although renouncing the execution of the will, he contributed to the children's education and bequeathed to the widow, her children, and to Sarah, £100 apiece, at his death.² Of the few likenesses of Fielding that were made, Allen possessed a portrait based on Hogarth's drawing of him. It now hangs in the Royal Mineral Water Hospital in Bath.³

¹Correspondence of Richardson, ed. A.L. Barbauld (1804), 6 Vols., III, p. 135, quoted by Cross, III, p. 97.

²Dudden, II, p. 1059. John Fielding was given the guardianship of the children.

³Dudden, II, p. 1057.
Sarah Fielding during her later years spent much of her time at Bath. Apparently Allen allowed her to make Widcombe Lodge her permanent home, and continued to extend to her his protection.¹ She died in 1768, and was buried in the stone church at Charlcombe near Bath. It was the very church which Henry Fielding and Charlotte Cradock, the "Sophia Western" of Tom Jones and heroine of Amelia, had chosen for their marriage.

Alexander Pope's connection with Prior Park

Standing in the long gallery, once the library of the house, one can call up the frail, slightly deformed figure of Pope, his delicate expressive face; he appears in his morning undress -- a dark grey waistcoat and blue dressing gown² -- he discusses the plan of the last book of the Dunciad with Warburton. Or again, the centre of a chosen group, he retails some anecdote; less brilliant, however, in conversation than in writing,³ he falls readily into silence or abstraction, seldom going 'beyond a particular easy smile',⁴ laughing very rarely, and 'never ... very heartily'.⁵

Barbeau is of opinion that the friendship between

¹See p. 77.
²See his pastel portrait by W. Hoare in the National Portrait Gallery, London. (Barbeau, p. 274, note 2).
⁴J. Spence, Anecdotes, V, p. 206. Although published only in 1820, the Anecdotes were well known and much quoted during the 18th century.
⁵J. Spence, V, p. 206 quoting Mrs. Rackett. (Barbeau, p. 274).
Ralph Allen and Pope dated from about the year 1732, quoting in support of this, a fragment of a letter from Pope to Allen which appears in Ruffhead's life of Pope published in 1769. George Sherburn, on the other hand, states that:

No important new correspondents emerge (in 1732) but the year is notable for the Swift-Gay correspondence as well as for Pope's letters to his noble lords Bathurst, Burlington, Peterborow, and Oxford. It is a year of literary labour rather than of social amusement.

Sherburn also mentions that Pope's first "known" visit to Bath (after that of 1716) took place in 1728 and was to be the last until the death of his mother. Pope was also discouraged by the realization that the waters did his health no good. His mother died in 1733; and in the following year he paid a short visit to Bath.

Sherburn makes no mention of Allen's name in connection with Pope until his foreword for the year 1736, and this, in connection with the publication of Pope's

1Life and Letters, p. 251.
3Correspondence of A. Pope, ed. G. Sherburn, III, p. 264. (Hereafter referred to as Correspondence).
4Correspondence II, p. 467.
5Correspondence III, p. 399.
6i.e., Correspondence IV, p. 1.
letters the year before. This first edition of the letters was an elaborate plot contrived by Pope, "so as to make it only right in self-defence to publish his own edition of his letters."\(^1\) But it was from the perusal of his first edition that Allen conceived the desire of knowing Pope.\(^2\) This publication, says Samuel Johnson: "Filled the nation with the praises of his candour, tenderness and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship."\(^3\) And Bonamy Dobrée: "The letters were acclaimed; everybody said what a great and good man Mr. Pope must be: and among them was the great 'good man' of the time, Ralph Allen ..."\(^4\) When Pope told Allen of his intention "to vindicate his own property, by a genuine edition," with so much zeal did Allen cultivate the friendship, that he offered to pay the cost of a new edition.\(^5\)

Sherburn writes that at the time of meeting Allen, Pope was presumably preparing the "authentic" edition, and was desirous -- though not too hopeful -- of receiving a subscription that would enable him to avoid excessive

\(^3\)Lives of the Poets II, p. 270.
\(^4\)A. Pope, p. 84.
indebtedness to his new admirer and "angel," Ralph Allen.¹

In April of 1736 he wrote to Allen, and Sherburn states that this was the first of Pope's letters to Allen.² Writing from Twickenham, Pope thanks Allen for his very kind visit and yet more for the extreme zeal and friendship he has manifested on the occasion of the "letters," "in so warm a Desire that I should be justified even during my life which truly is less my concern than yours ..."³

From this sentence it seems evident that Allen had just visited the poet and offered financial assistance.⁴

By the following year (1737), the friendship had apparently extended to include Mrs. Allen, who "obliges me much by what you tell me, & has a great Right in me, because I am very much yours." Pope regrets having to be in Bath, instead of joining the Allens at Widcombe.⁵

But even though not under the same roof, they presumably met at Bath and Pope had already told Lyttleton that: "Were it not for a hankering ... after some friends," he

¹Correspondence IV, p. 1.

²Correspondence IV, p. 9, note 1. No letters from Allen to Pope have been preserved.

³Pope to Allen, 7 April [1736], Correspondence IV, p. 9.

⁴Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 9, note 1.

⁵Pope to Allen, 8 June, 1737. Correspondence IV, p. 74.
"could live with honest Mr. Allen all his life."\(^1\)

In 1738, of the new correspondents, Allen and Lord Orrery, were the most notable.\(^2\) The Epilogue to the Satires was published in this same year, and so great an esteem had Pope by now conceived for Allen, that, anxious to make this evident even in his works, he begged Allen's permission to mention his name in one of the two poems of the Epilogue, "provided I say ... for example that you are no Man of high birth or quality?"\(^3\) The couplet, well-intentioned, but scarcely tactful:

Let low-born Allen, with an awkward shame
Do good by stealth & blush to find it fame\(^4\)

might well have caused some offence to the man whose obscure origins were a matter of common knowledge. Be it as it may, in November Pope offers amende honorable by changing the epithet "low-born" to "humble," assuring Allen that every one will be told that the change was not made at Allen's or any friend's request, but by the writer's

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\(^2\)Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 91.

\(^3\)Pope to Allen, 28 April [1738], Correspondence IV, pp. 92 - 93.

knowledge that he merited it. He explains this change by declaring:

I have found a Virtue in You, more than I certainly knew before, till I made Experiment of it: I mean Humility: I must therefore in justice to my own Conscience of it, bear testimony to it, & change the Epithet I first gave you ... ¹

So great was the attraction that Allen exercised on Pope by this time as to be at least comparable with that of his "demi-god," Bolingbroke. In this year (1738), Pope wrote to Allen that should Bolingbroke be obliged to visit the Bath, he (Pope), will have "Two Temptations to go Thither;"² and, some few weeks later: "When the Bath grows a private place, such as it was in the Court of King Bladud,³ I will come & live with you."⁴

The general pattern of existence that Pope had evolved since the death of his mother in 1733, began to

¹Pope to Allen, 2 Nov. [1738]. Correspondence IV, pp. 144 - 145.

²Pope to Allen, 19 Aug. [1738]. Correspondence IV, p. 119.

³A legendary British King said to have been the great-grandson of Aeneas. The story runs that Bladud, after bathing in the muddy swamp by the river Avon, was cured of leprosy. This induced him to clean the muddy, but healing springs there, and construct baths, thus laying the foundations of the city of Bath (R.A.L. Smith, Bath, pp. 11 - 12).

⁴Pope to Allen, 10 Oct. [1738]. Correspondence IV, p. 134.
show a variation from winters spent at home with but brief excursions to London, and a month-long "ramble" in July. By the autumn of 1739 there were two deciding factors: his health, and his new-found friendship with Ralph Allen. Both of these considerations led him to Bath.\(^1\) Whether at Hampton Manor, Allen's villa at Bathampton, or later on, at Prior Park, Pope was a familiar and constant guest, ever-expected, ever-welcome.\(^2\) Richard Graves, Allen's intimate friend, wrote: "Mr. Pope was an almost constant intimate in the family during the Bath season for many years."\(^3\) But Pope would have another call upon his attention, when the Dowager Duchess of Malborough, a difficult lady, would sometimes keep him away from his Bath friends.

Both your Grace & Mr. Allen have done for me more than I am worth; he has come a hundred miles to fetch me; & I think in gratitude I should stay with him for ever, had I not an equal Obligation to come back to Your Grace.\(^4\)

In mid-November, 1739, Pope attempted a cure

\(^{1}\) Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 157.

\(^{2}\) Barbeau, p. 253.

\(^{3}\) The Triflers, pp. 66 - 67.

\(^{4}\) Pope to the Duchess of Malborough [\(? June, 1743\)], Correspondence IV, p. 457.
at the Bristol Well,¹ but the accommodations for taking the waters there were so unsatisfactory in cold weather that after a fortnight he returned to Widcombe, to be with the Allens. He was advised by Dr. Oliver² and Dr. Cheyne,³ both eminent Bath physicians, to mix the Bristol water (brought by carrier on the Avon Canal) with the hot water of Bath. If this prescription failed, he was to try the water of the Lyncombe Spa, discovered the previous year, the well being on the Lyncombe hillside not far from Allen's house.⁴

Pope's connection at this particular time, with Allen and Allen's neighbourhood, was to be of importance with regard to the building of his grotto at Twickenham. Allen at the time was quarrying the Bathstone in the Combe Down area for his building projects and for export.⁵


³See pp. 157 - 159.


⁵See pp. 16 - 17.
and Pope probably came to know something about the strata of rock under the surface of this area. He may have visited one of Allen's quarries. Although he had considered his grotto "finished," about the year 1725, his enthusiasm was aroused anew, and he now envisaged a type of "grotto" bearing some resemblance to an actual quarry (like those on Combe Down) and the natural rock formations of the Cotswolds.

Dr. Oliver was an eager friend of Pope's and "must have been an important abettor in the new plan." He enlisted the help of a Cornish relative named Borlase, who was an amateur geologist. Early in 1740, Borlase began sending shipments of stones, "Mundicks & Minerals" and written advice to Twickenham, and Allen sent contributions from his Combe Down quarries. Pope was delighted with these gifts which gave a new impetus to his "grotto-fying," but at the same time begged Allen not to think: "That when I thank you for Water, Wine, Alabaster, Spars & Snakestones, they were the best things I have ever had from you."
If the resulting grotto at Twickenham was more "domestic" than its West Country models that had aroused Pope's enthusiasm, Boyce remarks that it was nevertheless "true to nature" in the way Pope had planned it in the winter of 1739 - 1740, "with encouragement from a cheerful Bath doctor, an amateur Cornish geologist, and a generous quarry owner." ¹

But, back in the cold winter of 1739 at Bath, Pope, in spite of his good friends' medical advice, and friendly solicitude, had grown weary and disillusioned with the city of Bath. As time passed, he grew actively to dislike the place, and the presence of Allen there was finally his sole inducement to stay in the neighbourhood. "But for your News of my quitting Twitnam for Bath," he was to write to Jonathon Richardson:

Inquire into my Years, if they are past the bounds of Dotage? ask my Eyes, if they can See, & my nostrils if they can smell? To prefer Rocks & Dirt, to flowry Meads & silver Thames, & Brimstone & Fogs to Roses & Sunshine? When I arrive at these Sensations, I may settle at Bath; of which I never yet dreamt, further, than to live just out of the Sulphurous Pit & at the Edge of the Fogs, at Mr. Allen's for a month or so. I like the place so little, that Health itself should not draw me thither, tho Friendship has, twice or thrice. ²

¹"Mr. Pope in Bath ...," p. 153.
²Pope to J. Richardson. Elwin & Courthope in Works, IX, p. 508, date the letter: 21 Nov. 1739, but Sherburn, Correspondence IV, p. 484 maintains that it was dated 21 Nov. [1743].
To Hugh Bethel, in November of 1739, he writes that he will be very little at Bath, but that a letter will find him:

At Ralph Allen's Esq's. at Widcomb, where I shall live, read and plant away my time, leaving the Madness of the Little Town beneath me, as I've done the Madness of the Great Town behind me.¹

The winter of 1739 - 1740 was bitterly cold and kept Pope at Bath until February of 1740.² Pope noted that Allen's great charity to the country people who suffered so intensely during that winter, led him to employ some hundreds of labouring men by opening a quarry for which he had, as yet, no real use:

Whoever is lame, or any way disabled, he gives weekly allowances to the wife or children ... (and) to other Poor. God made this Man rich, to shame the Great, & wise to humble the Learned ... I have past this Christmas with the Most Noble Man of England.³

If Pope was paying a glowing tribute to his friend,⁴ Dr. Oliver, writing only nine days earlier to Borlase, had, in his turn, paid a great tribute to both of these men with

¹Pope to H. Bethel, Bath 27 Nov. 1739. Correspondence IV, pp. 205 - 207.
²Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 157.
³Pope to Fortescue, 23 Jan. 1740. Correspondence IV, pp. 221 - 222.
⁴Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 222, note 1, finds a parallel in this tribute, to Fielding's portrayal of Allen in Tom Jones.
whom he was on terms of intimate friendship. Of Pope, he writes: "He is the freest, humblest, most entertaining Creature you ever met with" whose friendship with Allen will deliver the latter's name "in the most amiable light to Posterity." They are extremely happy in each other, he continues:

The one feeling great Joy in the good Heart, & Strong Sense of his truly generous Host, while the other, with the most pleasing attention, drinks in Rivers of Knowledge continuously flowing from the Lipps of his delightful Stranger.¹

Before returning to Twickenham to continue working on his grotto, Pope remained for a while at Allen's, in some hopes that he had of serving him "a little in laying out his garden etc."² The garden referred to, is that of Prior Park which was in process of building during these years.³ Pope had mentioned in a letter of November, 1739, his intention of "living, reading & planting away his time at Allen's,"⁴ and his letter of May 15, 1740 to Allen, suggests that by this date, the laying out of the grounds

¹Borlase Correspondence (Penzance Library) Vol. I, fol. 119, quoted by Boyce, p. 147. A portion of this letter is also quoted by Sherburn, Correspondence IV, p. 222, note 1.

²Pope to Fortescue, 5 Jan. 1740. Correspondence IV, pp. 216 - 217.

³See pp. 18 - 19.

⁴See p. 91.
of Prior Park had reached an advanced stage:

It is my firm resolution to inhabit the Room at the end of your Gallery one Fortnight at least in September, & as much longer as I can, to see your Gardens finished (ready for Mrs Allen's Grotto & Cascade in the following years).

He enquires after the health of the Allens: "After that of the Elms we planted on each Side of the Lawn? and of the little Woodwork to join one wood to the other below, which I hope you planted this Spring." Kilvert says that the taste of Pope was exerted both within and without the house, and that "the impress of his suggestive mind is still traceable there." Kilvert also mentions a lingering tradition that assigns the name of "Pope's Study" to a rustic building, later used as a cattle-shed, and "Pope's House" (so-called), to a cottage at the foot of Beechen Cliff.

There is a ruined grotto, of which one of three arches survives, below the west wing of Prior Park, where Pope's dog was buried, and which may be "Mrs Allen's Grotto" referred to in the letter of 15 May, 1740. One

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1Pope to Allen, 15 May, 1740. Correspondence IV, pp. 238 - 239.

2On a footpath through the "Mile-field." (Kilvert).

3F. Kilvert, "Prose Essay on the Connection of Pope with the West of England ... and Bath ..." in Remains in Prose and Verse (1766), p. 124.

4Prior Park Magazine, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1965, p. 27. In May, 1738, Pope had given Allen a Great Dane puppy, one of "Bounce's" progeny. (Boyce, p. 145).
of the walks to the lake below the house is still known as "Pope's Walk."

Although no meeting seems to have taken place between Pope and his future friend, Warburton, until April, 1740, so far as Pope was concerned the major publication of 1739 had been Warburton's *Vindication of the Essay on Man*. The fact that his "rival mentor," Bolingbroke, had withdrawn to France in 1739, aided the increasing ascendancy of Warburton over Pope's mind. And Pope's desire of bringing together this new friend, and Ralph Allen, was decisive to the future career of Warburton. Late in 1741 Allen took Pope down to Prior Park for a long visit, and the latter soon prevailed upon his host to invite Warburton to join them. Pope's intention (which he realized) was to work there under

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1 *Prior Park Magazine*, p. 27. Barbeau states that it is of later date than the poet's sojourn in the neighbourhood. (*Life and Letters at Bath*, p. 274, note 1).

2 Sherburn, in *Correspondence IV*, p. 214.

3 *Correspondence IV*, p. 157. Warburton had defended Pope's Essay against Crousaz's attacks so well, "that Pope fell into his arms and ... established him as a kind of protector." (B. Dobrée, *A. Pope*, p. 80).

4 See p. 75.
Warburton's guidance, at the Fourth Book of *The Dunciad;*
and he wrote in glowing terms of the ideal surroundings
and conditions for work that Prior Park offered. "This
house would be an inviolable asylum to you," he told
Warburton,

and the worthy Man who is the Master of it invites you
in the strongest terms, & is one who would treat you
with Love & Veneration, rather than what his World calls
Civility & Regard .... You'll want no Servant here, your
Room will be next to mine ... Here is a Library, and a
Gallery ninety foot long to walk in and a Coach whenever
you would take the air with me."

Ten days later, he further presses the point, and,
incidentally, makes a prophetic remark: "You will owe me
a real Obligation by being made acquainted with the Master
of this House; and by sharing with me, what I think one of
the chief Satisfactions of my Life, His Friendship."  

Thus did Warburton become an intimate of Ralph Allen's
circle, and, so far as Pope's career was concerned, their
reunion in the winter of 1741 - 1742 resulted in the plan-
ning of Book IV of the *Dunciad* at Prior Park.  

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1And possibly at the revision of the first three books
(Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 323).

2Pope to Warburton, 12 Nov. 1741. Correspondence IV,

3Pope to Warburton, 22 Nov. 1741. Correspondence IV,
p. 373. See also pp. 65 - 66.

4"A great part of the new poem was read and highly
approved; the rest was finished in the year 1742." Warburton,
wrote the chief part of the notes on Dunciad IV. (Barbeau,
p. 259, note 2).
Dobree, describing Warburton as a dull, heavy, ambitious, bullying man, "whom nobody seems to have liked while he lived, and most have contemptuously loathed since he died," regrets that this leaden-minded man should have become guardian of Pope's memory and works, and George Sherburn finds little of genuine worth in their association:

The two men were at once so transparently aware of their serviceable potentialities to each other that the association -- one hesitates to call it friendship -- became permanent. It took longer for Pope (in good King George's golden words) to make Warburton a bishop than it did for Warburton to make Pope a Christian: but such were the rewards of their connexion.

During the summer of 1742, Warburton visited Prior Park while Pope's entanglement with the Dowager Duchess of Malborough prevented him from joining his friend there until October. The death of his landlady led to some talk of his settling at Widcombe with Allen, while Martha Blount might settle at Hampton Manor, but no definite plans were made. Meanwhile, his literary labour consisted of the

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1See pp. 66 - 67, 69.

2Instead of "the amiable and sensitive, but too modest Spence, who would have done it all so much better." (A. Pope, p. 80).

3Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 214.

4Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 375. Also, Pope to Allen, 8 Dec. [1742], pp. 430 - 431.
final revision of the *Dunciad*, and the preparation of a definitive edition of his works, with commentary by Warburton. Pope's letters of 1742, principally of course, those addressed to Warburton, seem to prove that he was by now convinced that the former's authority as a commentator was indispensable; and their close contact during the long visit to the Allens in the winter of 1741 to 1742 firmly established the authority of Warburton over the poet.

The problems of the poet, Richard Savage, which absorbed much of Pope's attention at this time, also touch

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1 Pope to Allen, London, 8 Feb. 1741, refers to the printing of the "Widcomb" Poem, "which must be *The New Dunciad* (i.e., Book IV), upon which Pope evidently worked at Allen's house. It was published 20 March, 1742." (Sherburn, in *Correspondence IV*, p. 387, note 3).

2 Sherburn, in *Correspondence IV*, p. 375.

3 At least 9 in the Sherburn edition for that year.

4 Pope to Allen, 27 Dec. [1742]: "When you write tell Mr. W. how much it is owing to him that (Dunciad IV) is complete, & how much I think it advantaged by his Notes & Discourses before it." (*Correspondence IV*, pp. 432 - 433).

upon the latter's relations with Allen, insofar as, writing
to his friend in September, "Savage plagues me with his Misunderstandings, & Miseries" he asks Allen to act as intermediary in adding to a letter to Savage, "an order for five guineas," & to "inquire whether he be in any particular misfortune, or in prison?" With this final remittance, Pope confesses to his friend: "I can really assist him no further, nor will it be in that case to any purpose."

At the time when Allen was elected Mayor of Bath and while Warburton was staying at Widcombe, Pope had expressed anxiety to be with them, but his letter of 23 September (1742), reflects the increasing frailty of his health:

I am so crazy, & see a Journey with so much Apprehension & so little pleasure, that were it not we are unfortunately so far asunder, I would never more go twenty miles from home. The least cold I catch takes from me all Enjoyment of my Life & all comfort of Conversation.

He did journey to Widcombe in October, "which ... no man could do with a better Heart, or a more jaded Body,"

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1Savage was imprisoned for debt in Bristol, in 1742. Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen.
3Pope to Allen, Correspondence IV, pp. 420 - 421.
4Pope, in the same letter, p. 421.
but by the following year, could undertake no further travel in winter, so paid his visit to Allen in July of 1743, together with Warburton and Martha Blount. Pope, writing to another friend, early in July, mentioned dining "en malade," with Chesterfield ("there is not one man at Bath besides whom I know"), and declared that he "was never more at ease in his life than at this place." Yet, within a month, the whole situation was to change, and Pope was to leave Prior Park for the last time.

There may have been two reasons for Pope's abrupt departure. On the one hand, Pope appeared somewhat annoyed at Allen's refusal to lend one of his houses to himself and his friend, George Arbuthnot. Pope seemed

1 Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 436.

2 Pope to the Earl of Marchmont [July, 1743], Correspondence IV, pp. 458 - 459.

3 J. Spence thinks that reasons for his quarrel were: The refusal of Bathampton Manor to M. Blount; the refusal of Allen's carriage to take her to the Roman Catholic Chapel, and Mrs. Allen's suspicions as to the nature of the intimacy between M. Blount and Pope. (Anecdotes, pp. 358 - 359, quoted by Barbeau, p. 262, note 3). R. Warner gives as the reason, the refusal to lend the Manor to M. Blount, "which so exasperated the little wasp, that he quitted his house in disgust," this remark is quoted by Peach, who observes: "There is not one word of truth in this statement" (Life and Times, p. 94).
to be growing restive under Allen's kind, but persistent hospitality. Allen, he tells Arbuthnot, "absolutely declares you shall be his guest at his own house .... I told him both you & I should be Easier at the other house ... but all to no purpose." He doubts whether Arbuthnot will care to stay so long at Allen's, adding, "I owne I should not."¹

At the same time, the presence of Martha Blount at Prior Park may not have been conducive to harmony in the household. Pope, ever anxious on her behalf, had asked the Allens to extend their protection to Miss Blount, by inviting her to stay. Her mother had recently died, and the "tenderness" of Miss Blount's disposition and a "Dejection of Spirits" had thrown her into so weak a condition, that Pope dreaded the consequence of her being left at home. "She is in Terrors at every thing," wrote Pope and: "All my present Care is for this poor, foolishly-tender, but exceedingly honest, Woman ... for indeed Many Dangers compass her round at this time."²

Martha Blount's evident state of tension may well have precipitated a quarrel that, according to several

¹Pope to S. Arbuthnot, 23 July, 1743. Correspondence IV, pp. 461 - 462.
²Pope to Allen, 12 Apr. [1743], Correspondence IV, pp. 452 - 453.
historians, broke out between her hosts and Martha Blount. Pope had already left the Allen's house, to travel with George Arbuthnot¹ to Bristol.² Sherburn suggests that "Miss Blount has perhaps been blamed too much," and that the "quarrel" has largely been presented by historians through the eyes of Pope's biographer, Ruffhead, who was prejudiced in favour of Warburton and the Allens.³

Kilvert states that Ruffhead's *Life of Pope* is thought to have been sanctioned by Warburton, so that it thereby constitutes "reliable evidence,"⁴ and quotes Ruffhead as saying that Miss Blount: "Behaved herself in so arrogant and unbecoming a manner that it occasioned an irreconcilable breach between her and some part of Mr. Allen's family."⁵

Peach asserts that:

The truth is that both Martha Blount and Mrs. Allen were women of high temper; that Pope was in some way the

¹Evidently in some annoyance because of Allen's refusal to lend them a house. (Sherburn, in *Correspondence IV*, p. 436).

²*Correspondence IV*, p. 463, note 1.

³Ibid., p. 463, note 1.


cause of the difference between the two women, and that
the poet and Miss Blount at once left Prior Park.¹

In Remains in Prose and Verse, Kilvert quotes
Polwhele's Biographical Sketches in Cornwall (1831) to
the effect that old Mrs. Elliot, a sister of Ralph Allen
(with whom Polwhele was well acquainted, as a boy in
Truro)² affirmed that both Pope and Miss Blount occasioned
much uneasiness to her brother "in consequence of what Dr.
Johnson called her 'indecent arrogance'," and that the
quarrel lay between Mrs. Allen and "that insolent lady."³

"Dr. Johnson unhappily follows Ruffhead"⁴ in stating
that: "Mrs. Blount ... comported herself with such indecent
arrogance that she parted with Mrs. Allen in a state of
such irreconcileable dislike, and the door was for ever
barred against her."⁵

Certainly Miss Blount's letter to Pope after his
departure reveals a state of extreme agitation, accusing
the entire household of "much greater inhumanity than I
could conceive any body should show;" she is bent on

¹ Life and Times, p. 94.
² The Allens were a Cornish family.
⁴ Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 463, note 1.
⁵ Lives of the Poets II, pp. 292 - 293.
leaving at once, "for I really do think, these people would shove me out, if I did not go soon" and adding that her present state is "deplorable."\textsuperscript{1}

Pope's reply was equally agitated, urging her to leave Prior Park at once:

All I beg is, that you'l not stay a moment at the only place in England (I am satisfyd) where you can be so used; & where ... I will never set foot more -- however well I might wish the Man, the Woman is a Minx, & an impertinent one.

Warburton too, comes under attack. Pope says he dare not direct this letter to Miss Blount herself because: "I should not wonder if listeners at doors should open Letters. W. is a sneaking Parson, & I told him he flattered."\textsuperscript{2}

But he takes the blame upon himself for being the cause of the trouble: "The bitter Reflection that I was wholly the unhappy cause of it."\textsuperscript{3} Nevertheless, his animosity towards Allen is revealed by a remark to the Duchess of Malborough when he asks her to write to Lord Chesterfield at Bath,\textsuperscript{4} because he fears that her

\textsuperscript{1}M. Blount to Pope [28 July or 4 Aug. 1743], \textit{Correspondence} IV, p. 462.

\textsuperscript{2}Pope to M. Blount [early Aug. 1743], \textit{Correspondence} IV, pp. 463 - 464.

\textsuperscript{3}Pope, in the same letter, p. 463.

\textsuperscript{4}Through which Pope was passing en route for Bristol. Miss Blount apparently reached London by 16 August.
letter "under Mr. Allen's Cover," had been opened.¹
But Pope was evidently embarrassed at the necessity he
felt in avoiding Allen,² and asked Dr. Oliver not to
reveal his presence for one night at Bath, "or Mr.
Allen will take it ill."³

Very soon after this, a reconciliation with Allen
began, and for the rest of the year, letters to Allen (and
doubtless from him -- not preserved) worked gradually
towards this end.⁴ Nevertheless, in view of the increasing warmth in the tone of Pope's letters to Allen, and
the apparent renewal of the friendship on its earlier footing, the will made by Pope and published after his
death in May, 1744 insofar as it concerns Allen, seems
to suggest that there subsisted in Pope's mind, some
lingering resentment over the "quarrel." Pope orders
his executors to pay Allen £150, as being, "to the best
of his calculation," the sum that he had received from
Allen. Should the latter refuse the payment, he is asked
to bequeath the money to the Bath Hospital. Pope also
bequeaths some of his books to Allen.

¹Pope to the Duchess of Malborough, 6 Aug. 1743. Correspondence IV, p. 465.
²Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 470, note 1, and Pope to Dr. Oliver, 28 Aug. 1743, IV, p. 470.
³Pope to Dr. Oliver, 18 Aug. [1743], Correspondence IV, p. 469.
⁴Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 436.
The will, according to Sherburn, was made on 12 December, 1743.¹ Courthope likewise mentions December of that year.² And yet in Pope's letters written between September, 1743 and the end of the year,³ concern for Allen's health, and professions of admiration and affection are manifest. Three weeks before making his will, Pope appears anxious to reciprocate Allen's evident tender of friendship: "I would not let the Post go, without thanking you for yours, and assuring you, You are not wrong, to imagine that I would preserve (not only the Form, but) the Strictness & Essence of our Friendship." And as regards Mrs. Allen: "It is with all the sincerity in the world, that I say, I wish her as well as your Self ...;" terminating with: "Acquaint me as usual with any thing ... that concerns you, as One who takes part in that Concern."⁴ The wording of the first sentence quoted in the above letter points to either a hope, or an

¹Correspondence IV, p. 501, note 1.
³Pope to Allen, 13 Sept., 30 Oct., 8 Nov., 17 Nov., 23 Nov., 1743, Correspondence IV.
⁴Pope to Allen, 23 Nov. [1743], Correspondence IV, pp. 485 - 486. His letter to J. Richardson (quoted on p. 90) shows that he even contemplates a return to Bath.
affirmation expressed by Allen, that the essential nature
of their friendship had not been destroyed. In spite of
the protestations, can a certain reserve on Pope's part,
be detected from a reading of the entire letter?

When Allen was acquainted with the content of
Pope's will, after the latter's death, there is a tradi­
tion, according to Dr. Johnson, that he observed simply,
that Mr. Pope "was always a bad accomptant, and if to
the £150 he had put a cypher more, he had come nearer
the truth," and thereupon turned the £150 over to the
Mineral Water Hospital in Bath.¹ Johnson also lays the
blame for the will upon Martha Blount, averring that Pope,
having long been under her domination, and now tottering
in the decline of life and unable to resist "the violence
of her temper ...," complied with her demand and "polluted
his will with female resentment."² In this connection
Johnson is following Ruffhead's lead. The latter quotes
the will in his biography of Pope³ (published in 1769),
and makes Martha Blount responsible for such an "ostenta-
tious reimbursement" of all that Pope owed to Allen.⁴

¹Lives of the Poets II, p. 293.
²Ibid., p. 293.
³O. Ruffhead, Life of A. Pope, Esq., p. 546.
⁴Ruffhead, quoted by Barbeau, p. 265, note 3.
whereas Joseph Spence, who knew Pope personally, quoted Martha Blount as saying she had never read the will, and that when Pope mentioned to her the clause in question, she begged him, in vain, to omit it.\(^1\) Barbeau points out, that if Ruffhead is the source of all the bias against Martha Blount, it is an open secret that Ruffhead's *Life* was written under the inspiration of, if not in collaboration with Warburton, who on more than one occasion shows (in the posthumous edition of Pope's *Works*) that he was ill-disposed towards Miss Blount.\(^2\)

Whatever the reason commentators suggest as motivating Pope in this "petulant & contemptuous mention"\(^3\) of Allen in his will, all their accounts of the affair agree in stating, or at least, implying their disapproval. Pope's friend, Orrery writes in June, 1744 of Allen's being "extremely enraged;" and avows that the whole matter

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\(^2\)Barbeau, p. 262, note 2, gives as an example, Warburton's attempt to deprive her of the dedication of Pope's Epistle "Of the Characters of Women," citing Elwin and Courthope, III, pp. 10 - 11 in support of this remark.

is indeed a perfect mystery to him.  

However, during the last few months of Pope's life, there was nothing to indicate such an eventuality. His health was declining so rapidly that his activities were confined to concentration upon the edition of his works, with Warburton's commentary, and upon his friendships. As regards his relations with Allen, in this spring of 1744, the letters still express esteem and affection, "from a Man, whom you will find ... wholly disinterested, & upon generous Principles, Your Friend." Allen planned a visit to London in March, 1744, and it was at Twickenham that the two friends met for the last time. The Allens visited Pope on Good Friday, and during this

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1 Lord Orrery to Mallet, 14 July, 1744: "I find people in general seem surprised at the last act of one departed friend ... It is reported that Mr. A(llen) is extremely enraged at his share of money ... or rather at the manner in which it is given, and which is indeed a mystery to me" (Works, ed. Elwin & Courthope, VIII, p. 523).

2 Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 488.

3 Pope to Allen, 25 Feb. [1744]. Correspondence IV, 502 - 503, written from Chelsea Hospital.

4 The Act forbidding Catholics to reside within 10 miles of London, now invoked because of the threatened Jacobite invasion from France, would have made a meeting in London difficult (Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 504, note 3), had not Pope's state of health made it impossible for him to travel at the time. Pope to Warburton [March, 1744], IV, pp. 505 - 506.
meeting they discussed openly and freely the recent "misunderstanding," and parted, apparently, on the best of terms. On Easter Sunday Pope wrote a "coloured report" of the meeting to Martha Blount. If writing had not been so difficult Pope says, he would have told her "everything that past between Mr. Allen & himself."\(^1\) Sherburn finds that the letter was both physically and psychologically difficult for Pope because he had gone much further towards reconciliation with the Allens than he found it diplomatic to confess to Martha.\(^2\) Allen had strongly vindicated himself and his wife against the reproach of wishing to offend the other couple, and attributed the trouble to a misunderstanding between the two women, and "never in his life was so sorry at any disappointment."\(^3\) "I thought her (Mrs. Allen's) Behaviour a little shy" Pope observes, "but in mine I did my very best to show I was unconcerned ..." At parting, Allen had invited himself "to come again at his return in a fortnight."\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Pope to Martha Blount (25 March, 1744), \textit{Correspondence IV}, pp. 510 - 511.

\(^2\) \textit{Correspondence IV}, p. 510, note 1.

\(^3\) Whether the difficulty had arisen over Bathampton Manor (p. 99) or the refusal of Allen's carriage (p. 99 footnote 3), Sherburn concludes that the quarrel had affected the ladies more than it did the two men. (\textit{Correspondence IV}, p. 510, note 1).

\(^4\) Pope to Martha Blount [25 March, 1744]. \textit{Correspondence IV}, p. 511.
but they were not destined to meet again. Pope had hoped he might meet and dine with them "on the road," on their return to Widcombe, but could not do so.1 His last letter to Allen, dictated but signed by Pope, from "Chelsea College"2 says: "I am now not able to express a great part of my good sentiments for you, much less to write," and concludes: "I must just set my hand to my heart. Yours / A. Pope."3

1 Pope to Allen [? 9 April, 1744], Correspondence IV, p. 517.

2 i.e. Chelsea Hospital, where he was staying, probably for his last treatment from Dr. Cheselden (Sherburn, in Correspondence IV, p. 522, note 2).

3 Pope to Allen, 7 May [1744], Correspondence IV, p. 522. This is also the last letter from Pope to be included in Sherburn's edition of The Correspondence.
V

THE CULTURAL MILIEU OF BATH DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Bath played a conspicuous part in the artistic life of England during the first fifty years of the century, on the one hand as she figured in the writings of the period, on the other, to the extent that the singular development of the Bath way of life gave opportunity for artistic achievement there. It is in the novel\(^1\) that she has figured most prominently. Although the representation of Bath society in the dramatic works of the period is inconsiderable,\(^2\) the development of theatre in the city, made possible by existing conditions and by the presence of gifted men and women was a remarkable achievement and gave to Bath the brilliant position she has occupied in the history of the English stage.\(^3\) She was in truth, "the Queen of the West".

The poetic tradition is less distinguished. In the *Dunciad* the shade of Settle points out to Cibber:

\(^1\)See Chapter VI.

\(^2\)See pp. 115 - 119.

\(^3\)See pp. 119 - 134.
"Each cygnet sweet of Bath and Tunbridge race ...."1 Pope is alluding to the "tuneful whistling" of the would-be poets who in their multitudes had descended upon Bath. During the whole of the 18th century the charms of Bath called forth a torrent of panegyrics, of descriptive pieces, of satires, of conundrums and acrostics. The most favoured themes were the fair women and their cavaliers, the pangs of love, or, in another vein, local scandal and the absurdities of individuals.2 "This farrago of stale compliments, of silly and pretentious gallantries, of pointless epigrams, acrostics and bouts rimes, is the dullest reading in the world."3

So numerous were the poetasters in 1713 that Richard Steele styled them the "Water Poets" (a title which they by no means resented) and mentioned them in Guardian No. 174 as

... an innocent tribe .... who never write out of the season, and whose works are useful with the waters .... There are an hundred topics put into metre every year, viz. 'The lover is inflamed in the water; or, 'the nymph feels her own pain, without regarding her lover's torment'. These being for ever repeated, have at present a very good effect; and a physician assures me, that laudanum is almost out of doors at the Bath.4

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1Pope, Dunciad, III, 154.
2A. Barbeau, Life and Letters, p. 221.
3Ibid., p. 224.
430 September, 1713.
"A Dream: or the Force of Fancy" the oldest local poem yet discovered, was a collection of short poems each eulogising one of the ladies then taking the waters, and set the pattern for an interminable series. These were followed by portraits, of no greater literary merit, which were published separately or with epigrams and madrigals in the keepsakes and miscellanies of the period. One such selection called the "Bath Miscellany" expresses the hope "by showing these specimens of concealed Genius's ... to convince Pope and Swift that there are more poets in England than themselves."

Monkland, however, mentions a local poet who seems to have enjoyed a greater reputation during the early part of the century:

In the days of Beau Nash, Mary Chandler, the sister of Dr. Chandler, proved herself as accomplished with her pen as with her needle — she was practising as a milliner, and wrote a spirited poem, descriptive of Bath which she dedicated to the Princess Amelia.

However, it was not until the 1760's that any poetry worthy of survival appeared in connection with

1Barbeau (p. 222) writing in 1904, states that it was printed in 1710. The British Museum Catalogue gives 1719 as the date of printing.

2The Bath Miscellany for the Year 1740: Wrote by the Gentlemen and Ladies of that Place. Containing all the Lampoons, Satyrs, Panegyrics, etc., for that Year. Bath: 1741. (Barbeau, xviii).

3G. Monkland, Supplement to Literature and Literati of Bath (1855), p. 25.
Bath, when Christopher Anstey was to produce his *New Bath Guide* in 1766. But the poetasters had not died out. At Batheaston Villa, two miles from Bath, a certain Lady Miller began organizing in 1769, social and literary gatherings intended to emulate the London salons of such "bluestockings" as Mrs Elizabeth Montagu. Poetic contests were held regularly at Batheaston in an earnest if somewhat ludicrous attempt to establish a high level of "refinement." Even Horace Walpole attended the contests at which, as he mentions in his letters: "... all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes." "A Roman vase, dressed with pink ribands and myrtles receives the poetry" and the writers of the "brightest compositions" — "kneel to Mrs Calliope, ¹ kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle .... Be dumb, unbelievers!

The collection is printed, published — "² Lady Miller and her "Ciceronian urn" ³ writes Monkland "added to the literary notoriety of Bath, if not to its fame, as in truth, her poetical conceits were rather the jest than

¹ i.e., Lady Miller.

² *Letters of Horace Walpole*, edition of 1891, VI, pp. 170 - 172. These statements are borne out by Richard Graves, a constant visitor to the house, in *The Triflers*, pp. 11 - 12. (Barbeau, p. 226).

the admiration of men of real talent."¹

Drama of the early period does not present a flattering image of the spa. In two comedies written during the first quarter of the 18th century the action, or some part of the action, takes place in Bath itself. Both plays are intended as direct reflections of contemporary manners and society there.

Barbeau states that at this period manners were nowhere in England so dissolute, liaisons so easily formed nor vice so public as in the watering-places.² In 1700 the anonymous writer of A Step to the Bath declared that Bath is "as eminent for wickedness as London, 'bating its magnitude ... 'tis a Valley of Pleasure, yet a Sink of Iniquity, Nor is there any intrigue or debauch acted in London, but is mimick'd there."³

Since professional gaming and fortune hunting were two major reasons at the time, for frequenting Bath, both avocations were popular as subject matter for writers who used Bath as a setting. As has already

¹Literature and Literati of Bath, p. 20.
²Life and Letters at Bath, p. 105.
³A Step to the Bath with a Character of the Place (1700), quoted by Barbeau, p. 106.
been shown,¹ the importance of cards and dice in the
daily life of visitors to the spa was primordial, and
such pursuits culminated, only too frequently, in scenes
of violence.² Quarrels arising from dishonest play led
in many instances to duels in spite of Beau Nash's
attempts to avert these last, and suicides were often
caused by losses at the gaming tables.

It is this atmosphere of violence that particularly
attracted the attention of both the writers of these early
comedies, and both comedies include a scene between players
in a gaming house.

Thomas Durfey's The Bath or The Western Lass, a
licentious comedy written in 1701 and performed at Drury
Lane in the following year, seems to have enjoyed some
success. The setting of the opening scene of The Bath
is the King's Bath³ or a room adjoining it. Genest calls
it "a tolerable comedy,⁴ but it reflects the coarseness

¹See pp. 35 - 36, 52 - 53.
²The actor-dramatist, Samuel Foote, whose Maid of Bath
(1771) also reflected manners and society in that city in
his day, remembered an occasion on which a trickster was
hurled from an upper window by his victims. (Memoirs of
³See Plan of Bath, 5.
⁴J. Genest, Some Account of the English Stage from
the Restoration in 1660 to 1830 (1832), 10 Vols, II, p.
236.
and brutality that prevailed in such places. The opening scene of Act IV takes place in a gaming house. The only character of any originality in the play is the "Western Lass" herself. All the other personages belong to the current repertory of the day, "the male and female rakes of English comedy at the turn of the century," but, apart from two specific scenes, the manners and speech reflect the society and life of Bath only in a very general way.¹

The Bath Unmasked, by Gabriel Odingsells, written in 1725, first performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields on February 27, 1725 and acted about seven times, does not suggest any refinement in morals and manners during the years that had intervened since the appearance of Durfey's Bath.

The same disreputable society and the same lax manners are depicted in this mediocre play. Odingsells' work shows little power of observation or of description, but its suggestion of a frivolous and equivocal society seems to reflect the idea that London audiences entertained of Bath at this time.²

In the Lincoln's Inn Fields production a leading role as Sir Captious Whiffle, was played by John Hippisley who some years later undertook the building of the Orchard

1Barbeau, p. 178.

2Ibid., pp. 178 - 179.
Street Theatre in Bath.  

The theme of this satirical comedy is the havoc wrought by gaming amongst people who could not afford to lose, and a typical scene is that of the opening of Act I, Scene ii. In a gaming room: "Lady Ambs-ace rising from a table in a fury, whilst the sharpers divide her money:

FIRST SHARPER: I profess we would not refuse your Ladyship a few pieces, but cash runs low at this time - and this is such an Iron age that a gentleman has a villainous time of it to live upon credit. Your Ladyship cannot want money. Whenever you are prepared we will give you your revenge.

LADY A: Get you gone for a set of bloodhounds! .... here are my deities (takes up dice) though I have no sacrifice to offer them .... Yet such is the power of your charms that rather than want offerings for you I'll keep a set of bravos in pay, who shall cut throats and rob altars to adorn your shrine.

Other scenes of The Bath Unmasked take place in Harrison's Gardens, The Grove, before the Abbey and in various lodgings. In Act I, Scene ii Pander remarks of Bath manners:

People always come to the Bath with the same happy Disposition for Idleness and Pleasure. Men of large fortunes come to spend 'em. Those of small ones expect some lucky cast of Chance to raise them; the Wise and the Witty are content to play the Fool and Fools pass

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1See p. 126.
2Connely, p. 80.
3i.e., hired assassins
4The Bath Unmasked (1725), Act I, Scene ii.
for Wits .... Lords and Pickpockets consort very amicably together; and a profound Statesman shall sit and look diverted at a Puppet-show, or a Match of Whistling, as if he was projecting a Scheme to cheat the Nation or buy himself a Title.

Odingsells' opinion of the ladies at Bath is expressed by Pander, who volunteers that:

Coquettes enlarge their conquests, prudes indulge in a corner, and are demure in public (though thanks to spreading libertinism that class diminishes daily); professed ladies of pleasure find cullies in abundance.1

These dramatic works are of little interest except as satirical commentaries on the social scene. It was not until R. B. Sheridan produced The Rivals (in 1775) that, using as material for comedy the types, the absurdities and intrigues, the gaiety and vitality of Bath society of which he had much personal knowledge, he made that city immortal on the stage.2

By that time Bath was already renowned throughout the kingdom for her theatre and for the quality of production and acting there. In fact, the history of the

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1The Bath Unmasked, Act I, Scene ii.

2B.S. Penley, The Bath Stage: a History of Dramatic Representations in Bath (1892), p. 55 states that portions of the School for Scandal (1777), undoubtedly had their origin in the gossip of Pump Room scandal-mongers. For the Bath production, which was highly acclaimed in the city, the author himself superintended rehearsals, and took immense pains with the production.
Bath stage "may be said to be a history of the English stage in miniature."¹

A 1694 plan of Bath shows that a stable had been transformed into a rudimentary theatre, and the municipal archives, although incomplete, record that mysteries and miracles were acted in Bath, and also that numerous actors and visitors visited the city, from Elizabethan times onward.² But it was only after Richard Nash's arrival in 1705, that a real theatre was built.³

The building of theatres, as such, in the provinces, actually dated from the second half of the 18th century. Before this time, strolling players used tents or booths while travelling, while "stock" or repertory companies would make use of any available hall, and did not offer regular performances.⁴ Bath was somewhat of an exception in this matter, however, because an interest in the development of theatre resulted from the second visit of Queen Anne in 1703, and it was recorded at the time by Colly Cibber that the Drury Lane Company went

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¹B.S. Penley, The Bath Stage, Preface, vii.
²Barbeau, pp. 62 - 63.
³S. Rosenfeld, Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces: 1660 - 1765, p. 166.
down to Bath to entertain the Queen there.\textsuperscript{1} Additional evidence that an interest in theatre existed at this early date is the fact that, in this same year, Mrs. Nance Oldfield appeared at Bath as Lenora in Crowne's \textit{Sir Courtly Nice} (1665). She was the first of a long line of actresses who were to make their name on the Bath stage.\textsuperscript{2} By 1727, Mrs. Oldfield had made such a reputation in London that for Colly Cibber's production of Vanbrugh's \textit{Provoked Husband}, the theatre was filled on account of her wonderful acting in the part of Lady Townly.\textsuperscript{3}

John Wood, the architect, mentions that a theatre was built in Bath as early as 1705, by subscription supported "by people of the highest rank, who permitted their names to be engraved on the inside of the house" as a public testimony of their liberality towards it.\textsuperscript{4} This theatre appears on Wood's map of Bath of 1735. It

\textsuperscript{1} Rosenfeld, p. 168.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp. 168 - 169.

\textsuperscript{3} Wilbur Cross, \textit{History of Henry Fielding}, I, p. 61. Fielding, in \textit{Tom Jones}, writes as if he were present on the first night. The leading part in Fielding's \textit{Wedding Day} (1743) was intended for Mrs. Oldfield but she died before the play could be produced. (Wilbur Cross, I, p. 74).

\textsuperscript{4} Essay towards a Description of Bath, quoted by Rosenfeld, pp. 169 - 170.
stood on the site of the present Mineral Water Hospital and was erected for the Company of John Power, who were known as "the Duke of Grafton's servants." Power was a former comedian of the King's Company in London.¹ His Company was suppressed in 1706, but it is recorded that Farquhar's Recruiting Officer, produced in this same year, was acted at Bath "before the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort and other people of quality," the occasion being the reception of the news of Prince Eugene's victory.²

A very popular feature at this time in the city, were the puppet shows, and The Tatler. mentions the rivalry that existed between players and puppets.³ Ladies of quality in their turn made use of the players for their own aggrandizement and in the cause of their own petty jealousies.⁴ Both of these conditions suggest that theatre at Bath still lacked stability and any degree of independence.

The first actor of note to make his name on the Bath stage was Henry Giffard, who appeared there in 1719.

¹Rosenfeld, p. 170.
²Rosenfeld, p. 170, quoting The Daily Courant, Sept. 24, 1706.
³Tatler, May 14, 17, 1709.
⁴Rosenfeld, p. 171.
and later left to make his reputation in London, ¹ where he became manager of Goodman's Fields, bought half the shares of Drury Lane in 1733, and removed to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1736, where he produced Fielding's Pasquin.² But Giffard's renown lay still in the future. In Bath itself, theatre at this time seems to have done little more than survive, and Defoe, visiting the city in 1711, made the remark that "the Company here (not the Actors) make the Play."³

However, a turn in the players' fortunes came about in 1728, when the situation was -- at least temporarily -- improved by the performance at Bath, of The Beggar's Opera, John Gay himself being present, and supervising the whole operation. The Bristol News commented, concerning the great success of this production: "We don't indeed much wonder at their (the players') performing of it so well, when we hear, that Mr. Gay hath taken so much Pains to instruct them."⁴ Jonathan Swift wrote in the same year: "I have been at the Bath about ten days .... the Beggar's Opera is acted here; but our Polly

¹Penley, p. 32.
²Wilbur Cross, I, pp. 148, 178, 217.
³Defoe, Tour Thro' Great Britain, 1928 edition, II, p. 35. See p. 34.
has got no fame, though the actors have got money."¹

At this period plays were also being performed in some of the great houses of the neighbourhood, as for instance, at Longleat,² where Lord Weymouth, father of the first Marquess of Bath, sent, in 1733, for the players from the spa to entertain his guests. Scenes were mounted for the players in the great parlour, and when they arrived an eye-witness remarked that "This was as entertaining a part as any, and put her in mind of Scarron's comical romance."³

As regards the Bath theatre itself, players and audiences were continually labouring under the disadvantage of being housed in small and inconvenient premises; audiences were, of necessity, limited, and actors ill-paid. During

¹Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Walter Scott (1814), XVII, p. 221.
²See p. 37, footnote 1.
³From the Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Delaney (1861), I, p. 424, quoted by Rosenfeld, p. 177. Mrs. Delaney (who in 1786 introduced Fanny Burney at court), stayed at Bath also in 1736, and wrote to Swift in that year: "I think Bath a more comfortable place to live in than London ... You are at liberty to partake of all the entertainment, or let them alone just as it suits your humour." (Mrs. Delaney, letter to Swift, April 22, 1736, Autobiography, I, pp. 553 - 554, quoted by Barbeau, p. 49, note 3).
the 1730's theatre at Bath was at a very low ebb. Plays were "bespoken"\(^1\) by individuals (including Richard Nash), and Chesterfield, during his 1734 visit,\(^2\) commented on the poor attendance at theatrical performances: "The Countess of Burlington bespoke the play .... the audience consisted of seventeen souls, of which I made one."\(^3\)

Following the closure of provincial playhouses when the Licencing Act of 1737 came into force, the Bath Theatre was promptly demolished by order of the trustees of the new Hospital,\(^4\) and the players were offered asylum under the ballroom of the Assembly Room. They now styled themselves "The Bath Company of Comedians,"\(^5\) and somehow contrived to survive in spite of the shortcomings of their new surroundings.\(^6\) There was no proscenium and no scenery, and audiences who had to sit in a cellar with their heads only four feet below the ceiling were expected "to endure the noise of dancers above, and

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\(^1\)To "bespeak": a term used at this period meaning to "order" or "request" the performance of a particular play.

\(^2\)See p. 45.

\(^3\)Chesterfield, letter to Lady Suffolk, Oct. 31, 1734, quoted by Connely, p. 103.

\(^4\)Rosenfeld, p. 178. See also p. 10.

\(^5\)Penley, p. 29.

\(^6\)They were also encouraged by Nash, who was anxious to keep as many forms of entertainment as possible, alive in the city.
the smell of tallow candles below."

But the premises proved so highly inadequate that in 1747 the players moved to the Globe Inn in Kingsmead Square, thence to the George Inn near the Cross Bath.

Shortly after this, a scheme for the building of an independent and adequate theatre was proposed by a Bristol theatre manager. This was John Hippisley, who was an actor of repute, in addition to being an experienced manager. The importance of Hippisley's project lay in its giving Bath an opportunity to develop a stage peculiarly its own, and in keeping with the unique social conditions that prevailed there, and proved to be a vital factor in the city's future as a resort for appreciative theatre-goers. Hippisley argued that the profits from the existing arrangement would not support "a larger or a better Company of Actors. And nothing can be more disagreeable than for Persons of the first Quality, and those of the lowest Rank, to be seated on the same Bench together."

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1 Jerom Murch, Bath Celebrities, p. 411.
2 Rosenfeld, p. 179. Source: The Bath Journal during the years 1745 - 1747. See Plan of Bath, 2, 12.
3 See p. 117.
4 The Bath Journal, Nov. 30, 1747, quoted by Rosenfeld, p. 181.
John Wood remarked that Hippisley's scheme met with such approval from "People of Rank and Distinction,"¹ that although Hippisley died in 1748, the scheme was proceeded with.

The enterprise was now taken in hand by a local brewer and chandler named John Palmer, who bought up all the shares of the old acting company and built a new theatre in Orchard Street which opened in October, 1750. He was assisted, and succeeded, by his son (also John Palmer), who became the Orchard Street's very able manager; and later, its proprietor, until 1785.² The younger Palmer was also the manager of a group of theatres in Bristol and neighbouring towns, with circulating companies in which many of the leading actors and actresses of the day made their names.³ In his quest for good actors, Palmer was in the habit of paying yearly visits to the principal theatres of England, and as a result of such journeying, realized that the existing methods of transportation must be improved if he was to succeed in attracting talent. He did succeed, after obtaining government support, in replacing the primitive one-horse carts then in general use, by

¹John Wood, Essay, p. 166.
²Penley, p. 64.
faster carriages, thus transforming the whole system of
cross-country transportation,\(^1\) whilst his work also
extended to the establishment of the mail coach service
throughout England.\(^2\) In this way, Palmer was responsible
for improving conditions of travel and, at the same time,
enhancing the social reputation and popularity of Bath
on account of the high standard of acting and of plays
which could be offered by the Orchard Street Theatre.

The successful opening performance at this
theatre was that of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Part I,\(^3\)
which was followed during the next few years, by most
of the comedies and tragedies that were in favour at
Drury Lane or Covent Garden at this period.

Chetwood, a contemporary historian of the theatre,
went in 1749, that already at that time Bath had a repu-
tation for audiences highly exacting in their demands:
"An audience as difficult to be pleased as that in London,
being generally Persons of the higher Rank that frequent
these diversions in the Capital."\(^4\) That Bath was considered


\(^2\)See p. 6.

\(^3\)Barbeau, p. 66.

\(^4\)W.R. Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage, from its origin in Greece to the present time* (1749), quoted by Penley, p. 32.
at this time, a centre whence actors might hope to graduate to the London stage, also appears from Chetwood's remark that a certain actor, had had "the Fortune to give satisfaction there (at Bath), insomuch that several Persons of Distinction and Taste promised to recommend him to one of the established theatres in London."\(^1\)

The Palmers had been much encouraged in their plans to build, on account of the brilliant audiences that had attended theatrical performances during the two preceding seasons. It can be seen that Bath theatre had been patronized by "Persons of the higher Rank" even before the opening of the Orchard Street Theatre from an item in the *Bath Journal* to the effect that on July 16, 1750, Nicholas Rowe's *Tamerlane* was performed at the Kingsmead Theatre at the command of the Lady Augusta. "The Prince and Princess of Wales attended after drinking tea at Ralph Allen's."\(^2\)

The Orchard Street Theatre flourished for fifty years and became a training ground for great actors during the second half of the century, although, until 1755, the Assembly Rooms (now known as "Simpson's" from the name of

\(^1\)Chetwood, quoted by Penley, p. 32.

\(^2\)Bath Journal, July 16, 1750, quoted by Rosenfeld, p. 183. See also p. 71.
its manager), continued to offer theatrical performances and was even considered a rival, even though actors would shift between the two theatres. In 1755, however, on the death of Mr. Simpson, Palmer succeeded in securing for the Orchard Street Theatre, the monopoly of all dramatic performances.¹

At this period, since dramatic performances were under the Licencing Act illegal, some companies took to circumventing the law by the subterfuge of "concerts," in order to avoid threats of prosecution. A play would be given (gratis) between two sections of a concert, which last was permitted by law.² That the Methodist element sought to have the law enforced is suggested by Mrs. Charke, an actress and daughter of Colly Cibber, who played at Chippenham in 1749, and later at Bath,³ but, apart from a few instances of attempted enforcement of the law,⁴ theatres were, on the whole, left unmolested.⁵

¹Penley, p. 31.
²Rosenfeld, pp. 9, 197.
³"A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke" (1755), Constable's Miscellany (1929), Rosenfeld, pp. 182, 197.
⁴Mrs. Charke decided to leave Bath when both playhouses were shut down "consequent upon information lodged against them under the Licencing Act." Simpson's re-opened three weeks later as "The Concert Room." (Rosenfeld, pp. 196 - 197).
⁵Rosenfeld, pp. 8 - 9, 196.
Indeed, such was the hold that the drama had at this time that the Act was, for the most part, ignored, and the strollers by their persistence won their way, in spite of it, from vagabondage to the recognition of Theatres Royal.¹

In 1768, through the efforts of John Palmer, the Orchard Street Theatre was granted, by Act of Parliament, the status of "Theatre Royal." The Bath Theatre became the first royal theatre of the provinces.²

Contemporary local newspaper items are an indication of popular taste in theatre at Bath in mid-century. Even before the building of the Orchard Street Theatre in 1750, while premises were so inadequate to the needs of both players and theatre-goers, such records nevertheless show a wide range in the choice of plays. Barbeau, drawing his information from the Bath Chronicle for the years 1746 - 1751 says that although the performances were rare, the repertory at Simpson's Rooms³ "was not ill-chosen;" that Shakespeare was represented by Othello, The Merchant of Venice, Richard III and Romeo and Juliet. Restoration drama included Otway's Orphan (1680) which was performed at a hall in Kingsmead Street,⁴ Nathaniel Lee's Theodosius

¹Rosenfeld, p. 9.
²Hitherto, only Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres had been granted royal patents. (Penley, p. 35).
³See p. 129.
(1680), Thomas Southerne's *Oroonoko* (1695) and Farquhar's *Constant Couple* (1700), while 18th century drama included Steele's *Constant Lover*, Mrs Centilevre's *Gamester* (1705), Addison's *Cato*, Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, Garrick's *Albumazar* and *Miss in her Teens* and Lillo's *George Barnwell.*

An impression of those theatrical items which were popular in the years immediately following the opening of the Orchard Street Theatre may be gained from S. Rosenfeld's mention of the actual number of performances given during the "season" for the years 1750 to 1755. Those performances she mentions for 1755 include both the Orchard Street and Simpson's Rooms as fully advertised in the newspapers.

The popularity of different items may be deduced from the following table composed from Rosenfeld's figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1750</th>
<th>1751-1752</th>
<th>1753-1754</th>
<th>1755</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabethan &amp; Jacobean, of which: Shakespearian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th Century</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Afterpieces&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1Rosenfeld, p. 203.

2Barbeau, p. 65.

3*Strolling Players*, pp. 203 - 204. In 1755 Palmer secured the monopoly for dramatic performances. See p. 130.
The above table shows clearly the sudden increase in the number of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays performed in 1755\(^1\) whereas the popularity of Shakespeare had increased steadily after 1751. Eighteenth century plays seem to have enjoyed greater popularity than did Restoration drama. There is a noticeable increase in the popularity of "Afterpieces" during these mid-century years. Bath followed faithfully the prevalent 18th century tastes in theatrical oddities which cannot be classed as regular drama. It has been seen that early in the century puppet shows had actually constituted a threat to the development of true drama in the city\(^2\) and Rosenfeld records that in 1715 puppet shows at Bath included nine different items which were "mightyly frequented by all sorts of Quality, and Punch, with his Gang soon broke the Strolers, and enjoyed the City of Bath by themselves" the traditional Punch having by this time changed from a "roaring, lewd, rakish, empty Fellow" to a speaker "of choice Apothegms and sterling Wit."\(^3\)

\(^{1}\)By 1760 the number had dropped to five.

\(^{2}\)See p. 122.

\(^{3}\)Rosenfeld, p. 171 quoting a Satire on Harley (Oxford): "A Second Tale of a Tub: or the History of Robert Powel the Puppet Show-Man" (1715).
Homes Dudden comments on the evolution of the "Afterpiece" as a highly popular item in 18th century theatre where Pantomime, also known as "Entertainment" was presented as a rule, not in the place of regular drama, but along with it as the "Afterpiece." So popular did this become that often the play had to be curtailed in order to leave time for the Afterpiece. Although allowance must be made for a probable increase in the number of performances which would be given in Bath while Simpson's Rooms and the Orchard Street Theatre were both in operation and a certain rivalry existed, the fact that in 1755 the number of Afterpieces practically doubled that of the previous year is striking evidence of its appeal to the highly exacting audience of "Persons of Distinction and Taste" in Bath to whom Chetwood alludes in his General History of the Stage.

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3See pp. 129 - 130.

4See p. 129.
VI

BATH AND THE NOVEL IN THE FIRST HALF
OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Fortune-hunters at Bath in the
novels of Defoe and Smollett

While gambling at Bath is portrayed by the drama­tists Durfey and Odingsells,¹ fortune-hunting as a reason for frequenting this city is a favourite theme of other writers of the first half of the century. Throughout the 18th century Bath was to be a recognized centre for match-making, but gradually a more romantic approach tended to replace the sordid mercenary motives which the writers of the early years suggest.

Defoe's unfavourable impression of Bath during his 1711 visit as recorded in his Tour Through Great Britain² is also expressed in fictional form when he allows his Moll Flanders³ to make a sad comment upon her personal disappointment as a fortune-hunter in this city. When, after her return from Virginia she was obliged to take a journey to Bristol, she "took the diversion of going to the Bath,"⁴ expecting "something or other might

¹See pp. 116 - 119.
²See pp. 33 - 34.
³D. Defoe, Moll Flanders (1722).
⁴Moll Flanders, p. 109.
happen her way that might mend her circumstances."¹ Moll admits that she did go there "in the view of taking anything that might offer," but protests that she "meant nothing but in an honest way." She was soon to discover that "Bath is a place of gallantry enough; expensive and full of snares" where after spending the whole latter season, she contracted some unhappy acquaintances, which, she reflects, "rather prompted the follies I fell afterwards into than fortified me against them." She lived pleasantly enough keeping "fine company," but with the depletion of her stock of money her hopes of advancement also vanished. "I was in the wrong place" she says sadly, for here was no "honest sea captain or other" who might have proposed matrimony: "But I was at the Bath, where men find a mistress sometimes, but very rarely look for a wife."²

Such was the probable destiny of a woman fortune-hunter; but male adventurers there were who did indeed descend upon Bath in search of a wife, although interested exclusively in procuring a wife with sufficient money to support a husband. In contemporary fiction the most celebrated fortune-hunters to visit Bath were Smollett's

¹Moll Flanders, pp. 109 - 110.
²Ibid., p. 110.
Roderick Random, Fielding's Mr. Fitzpatrick,¹ and later in the century, Christopher Anstey's Captain Cormorant.²

Tobias Smollett in his capacity as a physician, occasionally resided at Bath during the season in the hope that visiting invalids might call him in professionally.³ There is no record of the date of his presence in the city before 1752⁴ but his familiarity with the Bath scene in Roderick Random (1748) and Peregrine Pickle (1751) is evident.

Smollett's works suggest "the nightmare of an outraged hygenist."⁵ In his "Essay on the External Use of Water With Particular Remarks on the Mineral Waters of Bath" of 1752 he contended that the therapeutic properties

¹See p. 188.

²In the New Bath Guide of 1766. This is described by Horace Walpole as: "A set of letters in verses ... describing the life of Bath ... so much wit, so much humour, fun and poetry ... never met together before." Letters (1891), IV, p. 50, quoted by Barbeau, Life and Letters at Bath, p. 231. (See also p.156). Although, unlike the work of Smollett, Anstey's aim was light and good-humoured satire, Barbeau finds that the scene of the New Bath Guide -- either by accident or design -- was adopted by Smollett for his Humphrey Clinker (1771) ¼ (Life and Letters, p. 233).

³L.S. Benjamin, Life and Letters of Tobias Smollett (1927), p. 79.

⁴Ibid., p. 80.

of the waters had been greatly exaggerated,\textsuperscript{1} an argument which did nothing to attract patients at Bath, and in 1753, after the publication of \textit{Ferdinand Count Fathom} and his failure as a medical practitioner he abandoned medicine for letters.

It is in his fiction that Smollett has succeeded in conveying his protest against what he saw of life in the watering places. But his satire is not directed solely against the malpractices of his confrères, or what he considered to be the appalling conditions under which cures were undertaken.\textsuperscript{2} In \textit{Roderick Random} and \textit{Peregrine Pickle} the scenes connected with Bath are equally a satire upon the follies, affectations and vices of society in general. Like those episodes in the first novel describing life at sea and in fashionable London, the Bath scene are "relentless, savage cartoons inhabited by caricatures."\textsuperscript{3}

The picaresque adventures in the manner of Le Sage's \textit{Gil Blas} include a number of episodes at Bath, whither Smollett sends the unprincipled Roderick Random

\textsuperscript{1}L.S. Benjamin, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{2}This attitude finds expression in \textit{Humphrey Clinker} (1771). Particularly violent on this subject are the judgments passed by Matthew Bramble in the letters of April 20 from the Hot Well, and of April 28 from Bath. (Dolphin edition, pp. 26 - 28, 51 - 54).

\textsuperscript{3}W. Allen, \textit{The English Novel}, p. 70.
as a fortune-hunter to win the hand and fortune of the wealthy Miss Snapper. Intelligent and witty, Miss Snapper is however a cripple, and characteristically, Smollett brings to bear his powers of accurate observation combined with intense passion, upon the description of Miss Snapper's ordeal on entering the Bath Assembly Rooms. Here, where she is exposed to the callousness and brutality of manners of the assembled company Smollett introduces the reader to the Bath scene:

We no sooner entered, than the eyes of everybody present were turned upon us; and when we had suffered the martyrdom of their looks for some time, a whisper circulated at our expense ... accompanied with many contemptuous smiles and tittering observations.

The unmannerly behaviour of the whole company "seemed to be assumed merely to put her out of countenance."\(^1\) At this point Richard Nash, present on the occasion, comes under attack from the author. The celebrated Mr. Nash, says Smollett "perceiving the disposition of the assembly, took upon himself the task of gratifying their ill-nature still further, by exposing my mistress to the edge of his wit."

In wit, however, he was matched by Miss Snapper whose retort "raised such an universal laugh" that Nash

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lost his composure and "was obliged to sneak off in a very ludicrous attitude" whereas Miss Snapper was applauded to the skies for the brilliancy of her wit "and her acquaintance immediately courted by the best people of both sexes in the room."¹

Oliver Goldsmith accepts this incident as being authentic and mentions that it "is told in a celebrated romance."² While Smollett uses the incident to suggest a disagreeable character whose former imperturbable assurance and freedom of manner had "degenerated into impertinence"³ Fielding's mention of Nash in Tom Jones and his commendation of him in the Covent Garden Journal are both generous and sympathetic.⁴ The last mentioned works appeared within three years of the publication of Roderick Random.

On yet another occasion the Assembly Rooms give Smollett an opportunity to portray an aspect of contemporary manners at Bath. On receiving an insulting billet

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¹Roderick Random, lv, p. 331.


³Barbeau, p. 45.

⁴See p. 189, footnote 2.
at the door of the Long Room, the hero affronts the writer of it, reduces a young lady present\(^1\) to tears of spite and vexation, receives a challenge from the sneering Lord Quiverwit, whom he "meets, engages and vanquishes" in a duel.\(^2\) In consequence of this victory Random is acclaimed in the coffee house next day "by a great many of those very persons who had shunned me the preceding day."\(^3\)

A number of episodes in *Peregrine Pickle* also occurring at Bath enable Smollett to extend even further his satire upon the society and manners of that city.

Peregrine Pickle also sets out for Bath when the season begins, "panting with the desire of distinguishing himself at that resort of the fashionable world."\(^4\) He proceeds to direct his attention to "gallantry." His reputation for being "of a good family and heir to an immense fortune, reinforced with sprightliness of conversation, and a most insinuating address" renders him so irresistible that he has soon "set all the ladies by the ear and furnished all the hundred tongues of scandal with full employment," whilst meeting "with such advances from

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\(^1\)Melinda, Random's former love.

\(^2\)Roderick Random, lix.

\(^3\)Ibid., lx, p. 361.

some of the fair sex ... rendered him extremely fortunate in his amours. 

The fair sex, as depicted here by Smollett range from "those inamoratas who were turned of thirty" with whom there is no "necessity of proceeding by tedious addresses," to

... those who laboured under the disease of celibacy, from the pert miss of fifteen, who with a fluttering heart tosses her head, bridles up, and giggles involuntarily at sight of an handsome young man, to the staid maid of twenty-eight, who ... moralizes on the vanity of beauty, the folly of youth ... and expatiates on friendship, benevolence and good sense, in the style of a platonic philosopher. 

"In such a diversity of dispositions" Peregrine's conquests "were attended with all the heart burnings, animosities and turmoils of jealousy and spite."

The younger class mortified their seniors in public, "treating them with that indignity which ... is by the consent ... of mankind, levelled against those who are called old maids," these last retorting "in the private machinations of slander, supported by experience and subtility of invention." 

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1Peregrine Pickle, I, lxx, p. 342.
2Ibid., p. 343.
3Ibid., p. 343.
Among the rivals, not a day passed without there being circulated some scandal "whispered as secrets among those who were known to be communicative, so that in a few hours, it became the general topic of discourse."¹

This novel also gives an instance of the prevailing cruelty towards those who were thought to be at a disadvantage. Peregrine, at the house of Lady Plausible, witnesses a scene in which a "wit" among the guests, spurred on by his hostess, torments a deaf old man to the general delight of the company who "burst out into a loud fit of laughter." Peregrine learns that the old man is invited because of the entertainment that his misanthropy and infirmity afford the company.² In a subsequent chapter, the old man -- one Cadwallader Crabtree -- reveals to Peregrine that he is in reality, feigning deafness in order to turn the tables upon his tormentors.

Smollett, the essentially embittered and disappointed man, puts into the mouth of Crabtree, the one clear-sighted man among this horde, the following words: "I have learned that the characters of mankind are everywhere the same; that common sense and honesty bear an

¹Peregrine Pickle, I, lxx, p. 344.
²Ibid., lxxi.
infinitely small proportion to folly and vice."\(^1\) Crabtree is, nevertheless, no more morally elevated than others. He describes himself as appearing in the world, not as "a social creature, but merely as a spectator, who ... banquets his spleen in beholding his enemies at loggerheads." By feigning deafness, he is able to become master of a thousand little secrets, and the ladies "divest their conversation of all restraint before him," and this same method he practices upon the supercilious pedant, the petulant critic, the fawning tool, sly sharper and every "species of knaves and fools with which this kingdom abounds."\(^2\)

Smollett dwells frequently on the practices of the "sly sharper" in this novel. Peregrine and his companion on the way to the spa learn "all the political systems at Bath."\(^3\)

Smollett describes in detail the London organization which furnishes Bath with fortune-hunters and sharers.\(^4\) London adventurers were in the habit of employing agents throughout England to whom they paid a certain proportion

\(^1\)Peregrine Pickle, I, lxxii, pp. 356 - 357.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 357.
\(^3\)Ibid., lxvii, p. 337.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 337.
of the profits, equipping them and making good losses sustained by them. Some agents were delegated to "making love to ladies of fortune" on condition of handing over a part of the dowries received on the day of marriage. Others would be carefully trained to "frequent all those places where games of hazard are allowed." In addition, experts in "billiards, tennis and bowls" would be continuously lying in wait for the ignorant and unwary, and yet others would attend horse-races. Even women adventurers were employed for the extortion of money from unsuspecting victims. But the most important returns were made by those sharpers who frequented the card-tables, "at which no sharper can be too infamous to be received and even caressed by persons of the highest rank and distinction," and in the case of Bath, "those agents, by whom their guest was broke, and expelled from Bath, had constituted a bank against the sporters, and monopolized the advantage in all kinds of play."¹

Peregrine and his companion project a scheme "for punishing those villainous pests of society," which permits Smollett to describe a scene at Bath in which a whole company of sharpers are seen at work at the billiard table and are vanquished by an opponent who assumes the

¹Peregrine Pickle, I, lxvii, p. 337.
air of a "self-conceited dupe." As Smollett recreates the atmosphere of the gaming-room, the total absorption of those who stood to gain much, or to lose more than they dared imagine, the tension mounts and the onlookers join in the excitement as the sharpers begin to realize that the tide is turning in favour of their supposed victims. While the sharpers waited in intolerable suspense: "The blood forsook their cheeks, and the interjection zounds! pronounced ... in a tone of despair, proceeded from every mouth .... They were overwhelmed with horror and astonishment." At every hazard their opponent had taken the visages of the "sharpers" had adopted different shades of complexion from pale to yellow, which degenerated to a mahogany tint. And now that "they saw seventeen hundred pounds of their stock depending upon a single stroke, they stood like so many swarthy Moors, jaundiced with terror and vexation" while the complexion of the player appeared as livid as if a gangrene had already set in, and he was fain to swallow a bumper of brandy to steady his nerves. But this proved his undoing. He aimed so badly as to lose the game. There arose at this point "an universal groan as if the whole universe had gone to wreck." Of the adventurers, "one turned up his eyes to heaven and bit

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1Peregrine Pickle, I, lxix, p. 338.
his nether lip; another gnawed his fingers ... a third blasphemed with horrid imprecations" while the player sneaked off, grinding his teeth together, with a look that baffles all description, and, as he crossed the threshold, exclaiming, "A damned bite, by G—d."¹

Physicians at Bath in Smollett's novels

Peregrine Pickle had also much to learn concerning another aspect of Bath life. While still directing his attention to gallantry, he began to perceive that among the secret agents of scandal, none were so busy as the physicians: "A class of animals who live in this place, like so many ravens hovering about a carcase, and even ply for employment, like scullers at Hungerford Stairs."²

Most of these had correspondents in London, who furnished information concerning prospective patients coming to Bath, with particular reference to the fees that might conceivably be charged. These Bath physicians also had local agents, apothecaries and nurses, who would inform them of the private affairs of each family, thus enabling the physicians "to gratify the rancour of malice, arouse the spleen of peevish indispositions and entertain the eagerness of impertinent curiosity."³ Peregrine also

²Ibid., lxx, p. 344.
³Ibid., p. 344.
learned that it was a common practice among physicians at Bath to dissuade their patients from drinking the water "that the cure, and in consequence their attendance, might be longer protracted."¹

Although Peregrine remains throughout the novel entirely in character as a picaresque hero, he serves, in addition to being an independent personage following a destiny of his own, the function of a literary device permitting Smollett to express a highly personal opinion of prevalent folly and vice. As in the episode of the billiard players, Peregrine is made to play a farcical trick upon the Bath physicians, a trick designed to draw ridicule upon the malpractices and absurdities of the medical profession "and practice a pleasant Project of Revenge upon the Physicians of the Place."² To this end Peregrine summoned every doctor available to the bedside of an invalid, "an old officer, whose temper, naturally impatient, was, by repeated attacks of the gout ... sublimated into a remarkable degree of virulence and perverseness."³

Each doctor made a different diagnosis of the

¹Peregrine Pickle, I, lxx, p. 345.
²Ibid., p. 342.
³Ibid., p. 345.
malady "supported by a variety of quotations from medical authors, ancient as well as modern" but, since these were not explicit enough to decide the dispute "the contention rose to such a pitch of clamour" as to wake the patient from the first sleep he had enjoyed in the space of ten whole days. When the patient rang his bell the doctors erupted into his room and the colonel, seeing himself "surrounded by these gaunt ministers of death," sprang out of bed "with incredible agility" and laid about him with a crutch until he fell exhausted upon his bed. When, finally, it dawned on the physicians that they had been made victims of a hoax, nothing remained for them but to sneak "silently off with the loss they had sustained" and subject "to the ridicule of all the company in town."\(^1\)

In Ferdinand Count Fathom Smollett's denunciation of medical malpractices is still more ferocious in its satire. If Bath is not actually the scene of those parts of the novel connected with the medical profession, the satire is directed against English watering places in general.

Fathom, at one stage in his picaresque career,

\(^1\)Peregrine Pickle, I, lxx, pp. 346 - 348.
repaired to the Bristol Spring.\textsuperscript{1} Here, as was his wont
"Fathom ... formed the ... nucleus of the beau monde ... 
the soul that animated the whole society."\textsuperscript{2} Because
he was an object of admiration it followed that "his 
advice was an oracle." One day, before a large audience
in the room he defeated in argument an old physician who 
plied at the well. Fathom was accorded the victory since 
he was "infinitely superior in every acquisition but that 
of solid learning, of which the judges had no idea" so 
that henceforward he was to be solicited by every valetudini
narian in the place until "the poor doctor was utterly 
deserted by his patients."\textsuperscript{3}

Shortly afterwards Fathom decided -- "wisely"
says Smollett -- to become a physician. In this capacity
his adventurer's instinct told him he would be in a position

\textsuperscript{1}"The Bristol Hotwells, though important and much 
frequented by people of the same rank as Bath's more 
eminent patrons, were complementary to Bath and not its 
real rival." (Bryan Little, Bath Portrait, p. 35). 
Matthew Bramble and his family stayed at the "Hot Well" 
before visiting Bath (Humphrey Clinker, three letters 
of April 20 and 21). 
A. Pope attempted a cure at the Bristol Well in 1739 
(See p. 88).

\textsuperscript{2}T. Smollett, Ferdinand Count Fathom (1751), Novelist's 
Library 1821 edition, 10 Vols., III, xxxv, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 80.
"to learn the secrets of his patients or to captivate the heart of an heiress or a rich widow." To this end he bought a few medical books, studied them and repaired to Tunbridge Wells to practise. There by a combination of deviousness and sheer bluff, he succeeded in triumphing over a medical rival.

When later in London, "in consequence of a lucky miscarriage," Fathom effected a true cure "his fame soon diffused itself into all the corners of the great capital" and his future seemed assured. "When a physician becomes the town talk" remarks Smollett,

... he generally concludes his business more than half done, even though his fame should wholly turn upon his malpractice: insomuch that some members of the faculty ... complain ... that they never had the misfortune to be publicly accused of homicide.

At this point in the adventures of Fathom, Smollett interpolates a passage which is an enlightening commentary upon prevailing manners at the watering places, and specifically, at Bath. Notwithstanding his fortunate experience

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1Ferdinand Count Fathom, III, 1, p. 116.
2Ibid., p. 116.
3Ibid., 1i.
4Ibid., liii, p. 125.
5Ibid., p. 124
in London, Fathom had left Tunbridge Wells fully realizing that success in a provincial spa was not necessarily a passport to success in London. This knowledge...

... was grounded upon a maxim which universally prevails among the English people, namely, to overlook and wholly neglect, on their return to the metropolis, all the connections they may have chanced to acquire during their residence at any of the medical wells; and thus social disposition is so scrupulously maintained, that two persons who lived in the most intimate correspondence at Bath or Tunbridge Wells, shall, in four and twenty hours, so totally forget their friendship, as to meet in St. James's Park without betraying the least token of recognition; so that one would imagine those mineral waters were so many streams issuing from the water of Lethe, so famed of old for washing away all traces of memory and recollection.¹

Such episodes and commentaries found in Smollett's novels have been quoted in some detail in order to present this novelist's case. Smollett had considerable knowledge of Bath life, but it is difficult to determine to what extent his view was a biased one, and to what extent he may have distorted the image because he derived a personal

¹Ferdinand Count Fathom, III, li, p. 121. According to Sir Walter Scott, this situation still obtained one hundred years later. "The society of such places is regulated by their very nature" and whatever degree of intimacy and sociability may exist among people of differing ranks "it is not understood to imply any duration beyond the length of the season. No intimacy can be supposed to be more close for the time, and more transitory in its endurance than that which is attached to a watering-place acquaintance." (St. Ronan's Well (1824) Introduction).
satisfaction from imaginary situations wherein the physicians might be completely discomfited. That is to say: did a personal grudge impel him to wilful distortion? David Hannay, in his biography of Smollett questions the idea that the novelist ever did try to obtain a medical practice at Bath and maintains that he was genuinely fond of the city: "The medical life of the place, and in particular its quackery, had an endless attraction for him, but his descriptions are enough to account for his failure as a doctor."¹

Barbeau maintains that Smollett, failing to attract patients himself, would not have forgiven his successful rivals at Bath,² but Walter Allen points to the preface to Roderick Random as revealing Smollett's reason for a crude and brutal exposure of a crude and brutal society. Allen describes Smollett as

... a man born with a skin too few, and affronted in all his senses by life as he has experienced it; and he flings back at society, with all the contempt and indignation he can muster, rather more than he has got.³

In this preface Smollett pays homage to Cervantes

¹D. Hannay, Life of Tobias Smollett (1887), p. 112.
²Life and Letters at Bath, p. 94.
³The English Novel, pp. 68 - 69.
who, "by an inimitable piece of ridicule, reformed the taste of mankind" and pointed out "the follies of ordinary life." Whilst also acknowledging his debt to Le Sage for his general plan, Smollett seems to suggest his own basically serious purpose when he criticizes Le Sage for inciting the reader to mirth rather than to indignation. "The disgraces of Gil Bias" he writes, are "for the most part, such as rather excite mirth than compassion."

"This conduct, in my opinion, not only deviates from probability, but prevents that generous indignation which ought to animate the reader against the sordid and vicious disposition of the world."¹

Whether or not Smollett's indictment of the medical corps at Bath was justified might be determined by a comparison with opinions voiced by other responsible contemporaries. Both Richard Steele and Christopher Anstey are satirical, in a more good-natured vein than is Smollett, in their attitude to the physicians. As has already been mentioned, Steele was attacking medical abuses and the behaviour of physicians at Bath as early as 1709.² In a 1713 issue of the Guardian he avers that such was the "oppression of civilities" that he underwent from "the

¹Roderick Random, Preface, 4 - 5.
²See p. 32.
sage members of the faculty" as to frighten him "from making such inquiries into the nature of these springs, as would have furnished out a nobler entertainment upon the Bath" than the loose hints he has given. Thanks to these "charitable gentlemen" Steele claims that he was cured in a week's time "of more distempers than he ever had in his life," the physicians almost killing him with their humanity. The solicitude of which Steele found himself the object included the prescription of "a little something, at his first coming, to keep up his spirits" by one of the faculty, whilst another, the next morning, ordered him to be bled for his fever. A third proffered a cure for the scurvy, another a recipe for the dropsy. "In vain did he modestly decline these favours," for early the next morning he was awakened by an apothecary who brought him a dose from one of his well-wishers, which Steele paid for "but withal, told him severely that he never took physic." His landlord, Steele concludes, hereupon took him for an Italian merchant that suspected poison, but the apothecary, "with more sagacity, guessed I was certainly a physician myself."¹

Christopher Anstey at a later date contributes his satire upon the Bath physicians in several "letters"

of his *New Bath Guide*. Letter VI, refers to the legend of the founding of Bath, and the healing powers of the springs:  

Since the Day that King Bladud first found out the Bogs,  
And thought them so good for himself and his Hogs,  
No one of the Faculty ever has try'd  
These excellent Waters to cure his own Hide ...  

But such satire does not represent the views of all reliable commentators upon conditions at the spa. Many of these genuinely sought relief from their ailments in the medical treatments available there.  

Barbeau, who inclines to the view that Smollett's denunciation was motivated by some personal grudge, points out that the latter either did not see, or did not choose to mention that there also existed learned and honourable practitioners, among whom Barbeau names Dr. Moysey, Dr. Hartley, the friend of Pope and Warburton, and Dr. Henry Harington. This last is mentioned by Jerom

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1See p. 86 and footnote 3.  
3Life and Letters at Bath, pp. 94 - 95. Chapter lxx of *Peregrine Pickle* (I, p. 342) describes "a pleasant Project of Revenge upon the Physicians of the Place."  
4Mentioned with "affection and esteem" by Chesterfield in his correspondence. (Barbeau, p. 94).  
5Barbeau, p. 95.
Murch as a Bath Hospital physician known "to the country round" for his benevolence and for his love of literature, while George Monkland refers to him as "a true son of Apollo, skilled alike in music and medicine" who "for sixty years of his life contributed to the welfare, the harmony, and the delight of our city."²

Perhaps the most eminent names are those of Dr. Oliver and Dr. Cheyne if only on account of the long association of both men with Ralph Allen and with Pope. Barbeau is of opinion that although these doctors, and others of the same class, were ignored by the satirists, the fault lay with the invalids of Bath. If the invalids occasionally became the prey of the "ravens," it was by no means of necessity but through their own folly and imprudence.³

Henry Fielding refers to "Dr. Harrington" and Dr. Brewster by name in Tom Jones.⁴ He also composed some extempore verses in the Pump Room during his 1742 visit to the spa, which verses were addressed to a young lady, and conclude with a tribute to the skill of Dr.

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¹Bath Celebrities, xv, p. 148.
²Literature and Literati of Bath, p. 29.
³Life and Letters, p. 95.
Brewster, who may have been prescribing at the time, for Mrs. Fielding:¹

But say, sweet maid, what waters can remove
The pangs of cold despair, of hopeless love?

The pains (of love) which ... we endure
Not Brewster, glory of his art, can cure.²

These lines were published in the Miscellanies³
to which both Brewster and Harington subscribed.⁴

Few men of letters who had experience of the medical resources in Bath were more in need of skilful physicians than was Alexander Pope and no man would have been more ready to criticize had he thought his physicians were mere charlatans. Yet his correspondence reveals again and again his appreciation for, his intense gratitude to eminent Bath doctors who were likewise contemporaries of Tobias Smollett's.

As early as 1738 Pope mentions Dr. Cheyne⁵ in a letter to Allen: "If ever I change my Religion it shall

²Quoted by Wilbur Cross, I, p. 378.
⁵Dr. George Cheyne was an authority on hypochondria: ⁶Sherburn, Correspondence IV, p. 449, note 3. Sherburn here states that Cheyne was first mentioned in Pope's letter to Allen of 27 Dec., 1742.
be to his (Dr. Cheyne's), or to the Quakers, I am not determined to which."\(^1\)

Beau Nash, also a patient of Cheyne's, would engage with the doctor in spirited disputes at Morgan's coffee house, the Beau designating the portly doctor as "the most sensible fool he ever knew" for living on a diet of fruit and vegetables, and for his faith in the complete efficacy of external and internal use of the Bath waters,\(^2\) and George Lyttleton, in a letter to Pope (1736) gives an admirable description of Cheyne's character:

The Immortal Doctor Cheney ... is the greatest Singularity, and the most Delightfull I ever met with. I am not his Patient, but am to be his Disciple, and to see a Manuscript of his which comprehends all that is necessary, salutary, or useful, either for the Body or the Soul.\(^3\)

That Pope was to become deeply attached to Dr. Cheyne is shown from the following passage in a letter to Lyttleton from Bath:

Tho I enjoy deep Quiet, I can't say I have much Pleasure or even any Object that obliges me to smile, except Dr. Ch. who is yet so very a child in true Simplicity of Heart, that I love him; as He loves Don Quixote, for the Most Moral and Reasoning Madman in the World.

\(^1\)Pope to Allen, 19 Aug.[1738]. Sherburn, Correspondence IV, p. 120.

\(^2\)W. Connely, Beau Nash, p. 69.

\(^3\)Lyttleton to Pope, 4 Dec.[1736]. Correspondence IV, p. 46.
He is, says Pope, "an Israelite in whom there is no Guile," or, in the language of Shakespeare, "as foolish a good kind of Christian Creature as one shall meet with."¹

To another acquaintance Pope wrote in 1740:
"I am glad you found the Benefit I promised my self you would from Dr. Cheyne's Care .... There lives not an Honester Man, nor a Truer Philosopher."²

Dr. Oliver, who played such an important part in the civic development of Bath in connection with the Mineral Water Hospital³ was a very close friend of both Pope and Ralph Allen⁴ and the former mentions Dr. Oliver in connection with Dr. Moysey and Dr. Hartley in his letters.⁵ Writing to Dr. Oliver in 1743 Pope says:

Pray make my compliments to Dr. Hartley .... I have had such obligations to the best of your faculty, during my whole life, that I wish all others, both my Friends and my Enemies, were their Patients.⁶

And it was to Dr. Hartley that Pope turned for help when, 

¹Pope to Lyttleton, 12 Dec., 1739. Correspondence IV, p. 208.
²Pope to S. Gerrard, 17 May, 1740. Correspondence IV, p. 242.
³See p. 10.
⁴See pp. 91 - 92.
⁵As for example, that of 27 Dec. [1742] to Allen. Correspondence IV, p. 433.
⁶Pope to Dr. Oliver, 28 Aug., 1743. Correspondence IV, p. 470.
distraught with anxiety about the state of Martha Blount's health in the spring of 1743, he put her in the care of the Allens at Prior Park. Pope wrote to Allen: "I beg you ... to ingage Dr. Hartley's Particular Care of her at her first Coming, for I am alarmed at the Apprehension of her Distemper, which is more and more fatal ..."2

That Ralph Allen, who was certainly in a position to know the capacities of the Bath physicians, was also treated by Oliver and Hartley while "extremely ill of an Inflammatory Fever" in 1743, is suggested in a letter from Pope who expresses great relief at his friend's recovery.3

It was in his last letter to Ralph Allen dictated from "Chelsea College" shortly before his death4 that Pope expressed once more his gratitude to Oliver and Hartley and paid his generous tribute to the medical faculty:

Pray give him (Dr. Hartley) my thanks for his kind prescription and likewise to Dr. Oliver for another ... there is no end of my kind treatment from the Facultie they are in general the most Amiable Companions, and the best friends as well as the most learned men I know.5

1The consequences of this visit to Prior Park have been discussed in connection with the quarrel between Pope and the Allens. See p. 100.

2Pope to Allen, 12 April [1743]. Corresponedence IV, p. 453. Part of this letter is also quoted on p. 100.

3Pope to Allen, 30 Oct. [1743]. Correspondence IV, pp. 476 - 477.

4See p. 110.

5Pope to Allen, 7 May [1744]. Correspondence IV, p. 522.
Bath Neighbourhood and Local Characters
Reflected in Fielding's Writings

While mentioning him in the other two novels, it is in *Tom Jones* that Fielding makes extensive use of an actual personality, that Ralph Allen of Prior Park who was such a determining force in 18th century Bath's social life and manners, and in her architectural and artistic development; and it is thanks to the rapport between these two men that an eminent Bath character has come to fill a place of outstanding importance in the literature of 18th century England.

The first mention of Ralph Allen, in *Joseph Andrews* published in February 1742, occurred at a time when the author was in considerable financial difficulties, was borrowing money, and was unable to pay his debts. Although as was mentioned in "The Fielding connection with Prior Park"\(^2\), it is not known at what date the two men became acquainted, Fielding certainly did receive unsolicited assistance from Allen before the publication of *Joseph Andrews*.\(^3\) Samuel Derrick, in a letter of 1763 stated that before the two men met, Allen had sent

\(^1\)See pp. 15 - 23, 59 - 65.
\(^2\)See pp. 75 - 76.
\(^3\)It is not known whether the gift was made before or after a personal acquaintance, Wilbur L. Cross, *History of Henry Fielding*, I, p. 377.
Fielding "a present of 200 in consideration of his merit." At all events, Fielding made an allusion in *Joseph Andrews* to Allen's "charitable actions," as though inferring that he had had personal experience of them.

Fielding first mentions Allen as one of two examples of "high people" who, whilst they are an honour to their high rank, make their superiority "as easy as possible to those whom Fortune hath ... placed below them." And Wilbur Cross identifies as Allen, the man described in this same chapter as:

> The commoner, raised higher above the multitude by superior talents than is in the power of his prince to exalt him; whose behaviour to those he hath obliged is more amiable than the obligation itself.

Fielding further alludes to this man's hospitality towards even "The lowest of his acquaintance" in "that palace where they are so courteously entertained" as though

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2Wilbur Cross, I, p. 377.


6Ibid., p. 168. See pp. 76, 175.
speaking from personal experience. The picture of this commoner Fielding declares, "must be known" it is "taken from the life, and not intended to exceed it." ¹ Allen's house is also mentioned by the hero, Joseph, during a moral disquisition on "The few instances of charity among mankind" ² to which Fanny listens eagerly while Parson Adams stretched on his back, snores loudly. "Nobody scarce doth any good" says Joseph, "all men consent in commanding goodness" yet none endeavour to deserve that commendation. "All rail at wickedness, and all are eager to be what they abuse." "Are all the great folks wicked then?" asks Fanny, and Joseph replies that there are some exceptions, and to this effect, quotes "Squire Pope, The great poet" at Lady Booby's table (where Joseph waited as footman) telling stories of such. One of these, "a man that lived at a place called Ross," and "mentioned in the book of verses" is, of course, the "Man of Ross" of Pope's Moral Essays. ³ And another such man, "at the Bath," continues Joseph:

² Ibid., vi, pp. 209 - 211.
³ A. Pope, Moral Essays (1731 - 35), Epistle III, 250 - 290.
One Al- Al- I forget his name, but it is in the book of verses. This man hath built up a stately house too, which the squire (Pope) likes very well; but his charity is seen further than his house, though it stands on a hill, aye, and brings him more honour too. Wilbur Cross says that in this passage Fielding attributed to Allen all the qualities that Pope had bestowed on the "Man of Ross" in the book of verses. "It was his charity" says Joseph, in the same passage,

... that put him to the book where the squire says he puts all those who deserve it, and to be sure, as he (Squire Pope) lives among all the great people, if there were any such, he would know them.

AMELIA appeared at a time when once again, Fielding's finances were running low, so that he turned yet again to literature while carrying on with the duties of his court. The novel was dedicated to Ralph Allen Esq., from whom he had received so much pecuniary assistance and valuable counsel. Fielding expressed

1See p. 191.
2Joseph Andrews, III, vi, pp. 210 - 211.
4Joseph Andrews, III, vi, p. 211.
5Wilbur Cross, II, p. 303.
7F. Kilvert, Remains in Prose and Verse, p. 158.
his great debt to Allen when he observed that this novel "was sincerely designed to promote the cause of virtue, to expose some of the most glowing evils, as well public as private, which then infested the country." He had chosen Ralph Allen, because "The best man is the properest patron of such an attempt," and he is sure that "the public voice" will agree to this appellation. "Should a letter, indeed be thus addressed, DETUR OPTIMO, there are few persons who would think it wanted any other direction."¹

Ralph Allen does not play a part in the novel itself, unless, as Wilbur Cross suggests Dr. Harrison's action parallels the intervention of Allen in the life of Fielding and his wife, by making his appearance at the opportune moment to aid a young couple in financial straits. Allen perhaps took Henry and Charlotte to Bath. "Certainly he gave them a house to live in near his mansion,"² just as Dr. Harrison aided Booth and Amelia in similar circumstances.

Wilbur Cross sees in Dr. Harrison a learned brother of Squire Allworthy in Tom Jones, "Conservative in his opinions, bent upon aiding his friends in distress, easily imposed upon by a rogue, and sometimes blinded by his

¹Amelia, dedication.
²Henry Fielding, II, p. 333. See also p. 76.
prejudices, "but adds that in his opinion, "This close
kinship extends no further."

Of the Dedication of *Amelia* to Ralph Allen, Kilvert remarks that, strong as the expressions may appear "they flowed from the heart of the writer, and if applicable to any human being they may fairly be taken to have been so to the noble-minded personage to whom they were addressed" and Wilbur Cross:

Dr. Harrison became Fielding's mouthpiece .... Almost always, whether Fielding spoke through his characters or in his own person, his thought and emotion rose to the highest plane .... The dedication to Ralph Allen is among the finest memorials ever erected to friendship.

The "portrayal" of Ralph Allen as Squire Allworthy has been a subject of discussion since the first appearance of the novel, but most of the attention has been devoted to deciding to what extent "Allworthy" is or is not, a portrait of Allen, and whether this portrait is "successful" or not, both from the standpoint of fidelity to the original, and of its literary merits.

Arguments restricted merely to the question for or against the "success" of Allworthy are, unless *Tom Jones*

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2Ibid., p. 324.
3Remains, p. 158.
be considered as no more than a piece of entertainment in the form of a novel of manners, beside the point. The reason that he chose to portray Allen was that the latter furnished an illustration of Fielding's ethical theory of the "truly benevolent mind," a theory which he formulated as such, only in 1752, but which is implicit in his earlier writings.

Certain papers of Fielding's **Covent Garden Journal** of 1752 contain what amounts to a clear statement of the conclusions he had reached as the result of a life-long study of his fellow men, and those "virtues" in man which, he considered, are most greatly to be admired.

Although its apparent object was, to be "A Paper of Entertainment and News," the prime object of the **Covent Garden Journal**, says Fielding, was, "to correct and reform" the age.\(^1\)

The "virtue" which Fielding admired above all others was what he called "good nature," which he identified with "benevolence, or the love of doing good."\(^2\) He described it as

\[\ldots\text{a quality in which, though there is little of glaring pomp and ostentation, there is much of solid and intrinsic}\]

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\(^1\)Quoted by Wilbur Cross, II, p. 364.

worth .... If it be not admirable, it is in the highest
degree, amiable. If it doth not constitute the heroic,
it adorns the human, and is essential to the Christian
character.¹

Fielding stressed the most strongly "the most exquisite
pleasure" which attends the performance of a beneficent
action,² "the secret comforts which a good heart may
dictate from within even when all without are silent."³
this supreme "happiness" deriving from the consciousness
of "having relieved the misery or contributed to the well-
being of one's fellow-creatures."⁴ In the Dedication of
Tom Jones he speaks of "that solid inward comfort of mind,
which is the sure companion of innocence and virtue."⁵

Charity, in the sense of liberality to those in
need, is the most obvious form of doing good, and since
Charity is enjoined both by the Law of Nature, and by
the Divine Law as formulated in the Jewish and Christian
scriptures, Fielding draws the conclusion "that a person
void of charity is unworthy of the appellation of a Christian;
that he hath no pretence either to goodness or justice, or
even to the character of humanity." In addition to this a

of 1915.

²Ibid., 25 Feb., 1752.

³Ibid., 14 March, 1752.

⁴Ibid., 2 June, 1752, quoted by H. Dudden, II, p. 917.

⁵Dedication, p. 37.
man without charity is not only a knave, but "a downright fool."¹


The Dedication of Tom Jones is no mere dutiful passage of vague moralizing considered appropriate to mid-eighteenth century literary modes. It is essential to an understanding of the purpose of the novel, so long as this last is considered in the light of the Covent Garden Journal statements.

Although Fielding states that for the "purposes" he has in mind he has employed all his wit and humour "to laugh mankind out of their favourite follies and vices,"³ the underlying motifs are deeply serious.⁴ His "sincere endeavour" he writes, has been "to recommend goodness and

¹Covent Garden Journal, 16 May, 1752, quoted by Dudden II, p. 918.
²See p. 179, footnote 4.
³Tom Jones, Dedication, p. 38.
⁴How little Fielding's seriousness of purpose was understood by some of those associated with him during the Prior Park years, in particular by Bishop Hurd and Thomas Edwards, the critic, has been demonstrated in "The Fielding connection with Prior Park," pp. 79 - 80.
innocence," to "display that beauty of virtue which may attract the admiration of mankind,"¹ to which end he has employed the fictional form -- that is to say -- illustration of his theme: "For an example is a kind of picture, in which virtue becomes as it were an object of sight, and strikes us with an idea of its loveliness."²

In the light of these passages from the Dedication it becomes clear that Fielding was aiming at much more than a novel of manners on a level on which "real" characters, events or settings were used for no better reason than that they were ready to hand, familiar and convenient "copy." Therefore, the didactic purpose inherent in Tom Jones obliges the critic to consider the Allen-Allworthy portrait in a larger context than that of the novel itself since it ought to be related to the body of Fielding's thought. This entails a shifting of the emphasis from a purely literary consideration to that of a Ralph Allen who figures in Fielding's writings both as himself, and as a fictitious character.

Even though Fielding claims in the Dedication that the character of "Allworthy" is inspired by three men:

¹Tom Jones, Dedication, p. 37.
²Ibid., p. 37.
George Lyttleton, his patron and benefactor, the Duke of Bedford, and Ralph Allen, Wilbur Cross maintains that the inclusion of the first two men was an afterthought only, and intended by way of compliment, whereas it was Allen's virtues that Fielding wished to immortalize. Fielding never quite asserted that Allworthy was a portrait of Allen, but when the novel was completed, the character displayed so many of Allen's traits as to be regarded as such by those who knew him. "In Allworthy's kindliness, generous spirit, hospitality, and charities, they at once saw their friend at Prior Park." Fielding encourages the reader to identify Allworthy with Allen. "Allworthy's mind, he said in substance ... was but a copy of Allen's," and in the Dedication, addressing Lyttleton, Fielding writes: "As a great poet says of one of you, ... you Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame" which line is a quotation from Pope's Epilogue to the

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1In his Dedication, Fielding acknowledges his debt to Lyttleton, to whom he partly owed his existence "during great part of the time" of writing the novel. Without Lyttleton's assistance "this history had never been completed." (Dedication, p. 35).

2Henry Fielding, II, p. 162.

3Wilbur Cross, II, p. 162.

4Ibid., p. 162.

5Dedication, p. 36.
Satires, Dialogue I, l. 136, and addressed by Pope to Ralph Allen.\(^1\)

Although very few details of Allen's actual life were used in *Tom Jones*, Fielding draws a very close parallel between Allworthy and Allen. As an example:

> Above all others, men of genius and learning shared the principal place in his favour ... for though he had missed the advantage of a learned education, yet being blest with vast natural abilities, he had so well profited by a vigorous, though late application to letters, and by much conversation with men of eminence in this way, that he was himself a very competent judge in most kinds of literature\(^2\)

and another, when Squire Allworthy walked out on his terrace\(^3\) on a May morning as the sun rose:

> Than which one object above in this lower creation could be more glorious, and that Mr. Allworthy himself presented: a human being replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator, by doing most good to his creatures.\(^4\)

"That was certainly Ralph Allen" writes Wilbur Cross, "walking on the terrace of Prior Park to enjoy the fresh air ... and the distant view of Bath."\(^5\)

\(^1\)See p. 85.
\(^2\)*Tom Jones*, I, x, p. 74. See also p. 62.
\(^3\)See p. 18, for Kilvert's description of Allen's mansion.
\(^4\)*Tom Jones*, I, iv, p. 59.
\(^5\)*Henry Fielding*, II, p. 163.
If a slight pomposity is detectable in the Allworthy described by Fielding in the foregoing passage, Wilbur Cross suggests that, like many self-educated men of humble birth, Allen had acquired from reading "a stately and pompous manner of speech, as if that were the style among the learned, which Fielding consistently imitated, often with a touch of quiet humour,"¹ and further illustrates this by citing the example of the long oration (two and a half pages in length) which Squire Allworthy, sitting up in bed, delivered to his family when he thought he was going to die of a severe cold.²

Although very few details of Allen's life were used in Tom Jones, there are a sufficient number of points upon which the Allen-Allworthy characters are found to be parallel. Both were men of great wealth, "both agreeable in person, of good constitution and solid understanding." Both were slow to detect a rogue, so ingenuous were their own characters. "Both were benevolent to the point where benevolence becomes a weakness, having a comic aspect when imposed upon by adventurers."³

Allen, like Allworthy, favoured men of genius and

¹Henry Fielding, II, p. 163.
²Tom Jones, V, vii, pp. 226 - 229.
³Wilbur Cross, II, p. 163.
learning: "Neither Mr. Allworthy's house, nor his heart were shut against any part of mankind, but they were both more particularly open to men of merit."¹ Squire Allworthy's hospitality was similar in all points, to that dispensed by Ralph Allen: "To say the truth, this was the only house in the kingdom where you was sure to gain a dinner by deserving it."² Nor did Mr. Allworthy "bountifully ... bestow meat, drink and lodging on men of wit and learning" in return for "entertainment, instruction, flattery, and subserviency." On the contrary, "every person in the house was perfect master of his own time" and free to follow his inclinations "within the restrictions only of law, virtue and religion." Not only those who were Allworthy's equals in fortune, and whose presence might be considered a favour, were so treated by their host, but even those "whose indigent circumstances makes such an eleemosynary abode convenient to them, and who are therefore less welcome to a great man's table because they stand in need of it."³ This last remark cannot but be read with Fielding's experience of Allen's hospitality towards himself in mind.⁴

¹See Tom Jones, I, x, p. 74. See also p. 62.
²Ibid., p. 74.
³Ibid., p. 75.
⁴See pp. 76, 163 - 164.
Wilbur Cross is of opinion that Fielding has dealt in "correspondences" between Allen and Allworthy rather than in copying an exact original, and suggests that the writer amused himself by imagining how an Allen who received into his household all kinds of people would behave "if they should happen to be Blifil, Tom Jones, Square, Thwackum, and the rest of that motley company."\(^1\) Taking incidents and traits of character together, Wilbur Cross concludes that "Allworthy appears as a shadowy counterpart of Allen -- a likeness rather than a portrait."\(^2\)

Homes Dudden, in his biography of Fielding, sees the latter, in his desire to portray an "ideally good man," and in his attempt to do so by presenting a "glorified portrait" of his friend and patron, as labouring under the disadvantage of "painting such a likeness as would be acceptable to the living original." The result he says, "is not successful" since he finds the figure of Allworthy "stiff and wooden, and lacking in lifeliness."\(^3\) This ideally good man is "too dull and unintelligent to be altogether admirable,"\(^4\) and because lacking the sense

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\(^1\)Henry Fielding, II, p. 163.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 164.
\(^3\)Dudden, H. Fielding, II, p. 646.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 646.
to confine his benefactions to deserving objects, he becomes the dupe of plausible hypocrites and adventurers. And as he is wanting in sagacity, so also is he deficient in humour. Dudden criticizes the solemn seriousness, the gravely decorous behaviour and ponderous, high-toned discourses which seem to ape the style of the perfectly philosophical man, as conceived by the stoic writers. Allworthy, he concludes, can command respect but as an earthly pattern of heavenly goodness, "the glory of the human species," he is inadequate.

Barbeau finds that the over-simple, over-conventional figure of Allworthy suffers from the literary point of view and that the rather weak and credulous kindness of Allworthy does not render the energetic, active, practical side of the original Allen, while R.E.M. Peach

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1Henry Fielding, II, p. 646. Dudden cites as an example of lack of perspicacity, Allworthy's dismissal of Tom without an examination of the charges brought against him (VI, ii). As further examples he suggests: IV, i; VII, xii; II, v; V, vii; XVII, iii; XVIII, x.

2"Heaven only can know him, can know that benevolence which it copied from itself, and sent upon earth as its own pattern." (Tom Jones, VIII, ii, p. 370).

3XII, x, p. 583.

4Henry Fielding, II, p. 646.

5Life and Letters at Bath, p. 270, note 3.
makes Fielding largely answerable for the notion that Allen was "deficient in the stronger elements of character" but excuses this on the grounds that it would have been inconsistent with Fielding's general plan to portray anything beyond the softer and more amiable qualities of his model, "just as it would be absurd to wholly identify the domestic scenery amidst which Squire Allworthy moves, with the scenery of Prior Park." Maintaining nevertheless, that Allworthy was capable of firmness and resolution "on supreme occasions," Peach finds in him "the conception of gentleness and strength harmoniously blended in a beautiful character."

Wilbur Cross concedes that Allworthy is "not altogether successful." His head is sacrificed to his heart, "but he is saved from being a fool by a certain quiet humour and a determination, when once undeceived, to punish the rascals that have fed upon him." While Wilbur Cross finds a complete contrast as regards character drawing in Squire Western, he considers Allworthy a character of one consistent piece from beginning to end of the novel, a "stationary figure," whose kindness, simplicity and generous nature "shine in the varied lights

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1 Life and Times of Ralph Allen, Preface, xiv - xv.
2 Henry Fielding, II, p. 207.
turned upon him." And this, Wilbur Cross concludes, was inevitable for the very reason that Fielding began the portraiture with Allen definitely in mind.¹

Wilbur Cross's conclusion seems to bear out the argument that the Allen-Allworthy portrait should be accepted in the wider context of Fielding's criticism of life;² and still further grounds for arguing the intention of Fielding to present Allen-Allworthy exactly as he did can be found in Cross's suggestion of Allworthy as a Cervantes type.³ Partridge in *Tom Jones*, never fathoms, despite hard experiences, the motives of men and reads life in the light of his whimsical dreams just as Parson Adams in *Joseph Andrews*⁴ reads it in the light of ancient literature, and Don Quixote in that of romances of chivalry. Likewise Squire Allworthy (writes Wilbur Cross), with a difference, is in line with the knight and the parson:

¹Henry Fielding, II, p. 209.
²See pp. 168—171.
³Walter Allen writes: "Fielding was indebted largely to Cervantes for his conception of the novel." *The English Novel*, p. 69.
⁴In the Preface (xxvi—xxvii), Fielding states that "Adams ... is designed a character of perfect simplicity, and ... the goodness of his heart will recommend him to the good-natured."
He is blinded by the glare of an unblemished character into taking hypocrites and pretenders for what they seem; only the most conclusive evidence can induce him to change his favourable opinion of men by whom he has been grossly deceived.  

If Fielding endowed his fictitious Squire Allworthy with an "unblemished character," his opinion of the prototype, Ralph Allen, is made abundantly clear on two occasions. In the introductory chapter to Book XIII he mentions Allen (coupled with Lyttleton) by name:

And thou ... Humanity, bring all thy tender sensations. If thou hast already disposed of them all between thy Allen and thy Lyttleton, steal them awhile from their bosoms .... From these alone proceed the noble disinterested friendship ... and all those strong energies of a good mind ...  

and in the prologue to Book VIII, "Concerning the Marvellous," there is no suggestion that the man here described is the fictitious Allworthy, since the passage occurs in an introductory chapter interpolated into the novel and having no connection with the story.  

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1Henry Fielding, II, p. 205.  

2Pp. 608 - 609. In this same chapter, Fielding also mentions William Warburton, to whom he generously pays homage as the keeper of the key to all the treasures of learning (p. 609). See pp. 78 - 79.  

3Only a few of the introductory chapters have any organic connection with the story, and include, as in VIII, i, independent essays on the art of fiction. Although he makes no specific mention of VIII, i, Cross says that it was clearly the novelist's custom in revision, to insert such references or allusions to persons and events as would give point to his narrative. (H. Fielding, II, pp. 103 - 104).
affirms that he has known a man whom he describes as being endowed with a penetrating genius which had enabled him to raise a large fortune "where no beginning was chalked out to him," possessing his integrity without injustice or injury to any one, with "the highest advantage to trade, and a vast increase of the public revenue;" a man who spent one part of his fortune "in discovering a taste superior to most, by works where the highest dignity was united with the purest simplicity," and another part "in displaying a degree of goodness superior to all men, by acts of charity to objects whose only recommendations were their merits, or their wants."

Possibly with his own debt to such a man in mind, Fielding speaks of the object of his admiration as being "most industrious in searching after merit in distress, most eager to relieve it, and then as careful, (perhaps too careful) to conceal what he had done." Of this man's house and hospitality, "all denoted the mind from which they flowed, and were all intrinsically rich and noble, without tinsel or external ostentation." In

1See pp. 162 - 163.
2See p. 172.
3See pp. 64; 74.
glowing terms Fielding speaks of this man's "virtue," as a Christian, "a most tender husband ... a warm and firm friend, a knowing and a cheerful companion, indulgent to his servants, hospitable to his neighbours, charitable to the poor, and benevolent to all mankind." 1

"Quis Credet?" asks Fielding, and replies: "and yet I know a man who is all that I have here described." 2

Fielding claimed that all his characters are in harmony with human nature and, "to keep them true to life" says Wilbur Cross, "he let his memory ... play about persons he had known, they were his models, so to speak." But Cross adds that, if based on observation, this does not mean that Fielding was free from traditional and rather artificial methods in moulding his observations. 3

Not so in the drawing of Squire Western's character, which takes shape and evolves, (unlike Squire Allworthy's) as the novel progresses. Squire Western emerges as the most colourful character in Tom Jones, "a veritable whirlwind of contending passions." 4 Neither Western

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1 Tom Jones, VIII, i, p. 365.
2 Ibid., p. 365.
nor his home is ever described, as though Fielding wished to conceal the identity of this Jacobite squire, whose character, he knew, would be resented by his political opponents, but he is given a local habitation—in Somerset—and a name. According to Wilbur Cross no one has quite found out the original. With regard to local Somerset characters employed by Fielding for the setting in the neighbourhood of Bath, a tradition says that he was Sir Paulet St John, or Mildmay, whom Dudden describes as a bluff old Tory sportsman, a friend of Bolingbroke and Pope and, as owner of estates near East Stour and near Glastonbury was possibly known to Fielding in person. However, Dudden inclines to the view that Fielding did not confine himself to one single model but gathered his material from the personalities of several other squires whom he had met while hunting in Somerset and Dorset. Squire Western, with his broad Somerset dialect, his volley of oaths and curses, his extravagant "caperings" and

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1 Wilbur Cross, II, p. 166.


5 Tom Jones, VI, ix.

6 Ibid., VI, vii; XVI, ii; XVII, iii; XVIII, xii.
"hallowings," his uncouth manners, was a sportsman of the old school and the final and perfect embodiment of Fielding's studies of the typical "booby squire." A.S. Turberville mentions that the typical squires of this time (citing Sir Roger de Coverley as another example), lived on their own rural estates and seldom went beyond their immediate county town. The rural boorishness of the squirearchy, of which Western is a typical example, came in the process of time, to be mitigated. They no longer confined themselves to "interests in the trencherboard, the hunting fields and prize pigs." Fielding's West Country Squire had not yet undergone the refining influence of contact with the metropolis, which says Turberville, increased as the century advanced and travelling became more rapid and more comfortable with the result that this kind of provincialism was corrected.

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1Tom Jones, V, ii; VII, iii, vi; X, vi; XVIII, xii.
2Dudden, II, 642. Preliminary sketches were Squire Badger and Sir Gregory Kennel.
3English Men and Manners in the 18th Century, pp. 72, 130.
4English Men and Manners, pp. 129 - 130.
Peach is quoted by Barbeau\(^1\) as asserting that Philip Bennet, the owner of Widcombe House,\(^2\) was the prototype of Squire Western. Barbeau also quotes G.H. Wright, as stating in 1864:

> It is singular, yet satisfactory, that no personal designation has been given by biographers; local is sufficient. But this may be asserted, 'A sporting squire' 'of high degree,' and a neighbour of Ralph Allen's, had a daughter ... and the fair lady did marry a foundling, and thus she became possessed of two adjoining estates.\(^3\)

Of all of this, of course, Barbeau adds, not the slightest proof is offered.\(^4\) G. Monkland mentions that "many of the scenes in this highly-wrought 'History' are identified with Bath and its neighbourhood" and that "a gentleman of the name of Bayley, I have ascertained, then lived at the house close to the church at Widcombe, the supposed residence of Squire Western."\(^5\)

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\(^1\)R.E.M. Peach, Bath Old and New (1888), pp. 225 - 226, quoted by Barbeau, p. 269, note 1. In Life and Times of Ralph Allen, p. 206, Peach also states that the second wife of R. Allen was the sister of Philip Bennet of Widcombe House, who was MP for Bath, 1741 - 1747.

\(^2\)See p. 76 and footnote 7.

\(^3\)G.H. Wright, Historic Guide to Bath (1864), quoted by Barbeau, p. 269, note 1.

\(^4\)Life and Letters, p. 269, note 1.

\(^5\)Literature and Literati of Bath, p. 13.
Monkland states that many of the scenes are identified with the Bath neighbourhood.¹ Fielding also draws many of his characters (apart from those of Allworthy and Western) from real men and women. Not every one of them had an exact original, not every incident occurred as recounted in the story, nor is there absence of pure fiction, so that it is impossible to say how far fact is mingled with fiction in a novel that reads as though it were all true.² But Fielding called it "a history," having as its motto: Mores hominum multorum for the very reason that it was so largely based on personal reminiscences of real men and women.³ There are some two hundred characters, either with fictitious names, or no names, but probably all drawn from memories associated with London and the West Country.⁴ Of his friends and acquaintances, some bear their real names, without entering largely into the story. In most cases they are mentioned in order to receive a compliment from the author.⁵

Among those who are identifiable with originals in

¹Literature and Literati, p. 13.
²Wilbur Cross, II, pp. 161 - 162.
³Ibid., p. 161.
⁴Ibid., p. 172.
⁵Ibid., p. 173.
the vicinity of Bath is Mr. Whitefield, landlord of the Bell Inn at Gloucester and "brother to the great preacher."¹ Fielding had stayed many times at the Bell Inn, and upon no other minor character in the novel "did he dwell with more pleasant recollections."² There is also "The Man of the Hill"³ (whom Tom encounters after leaving the Bell Inn), a local character born, says Fielding, in 1657 at Mark, near Glastonbury in Somerset.⁴

In Book XVIII, the "philosopher" Square, knowing he is about to die, writes to Mr Allworthy to make amends for his past treatment of Tom. The letter is written from Bath whither Square had resorted to drink the waters and to consult Dr. Brewster and "Dr. Harrington" who were actual, and well-known physicians of that city.⁵

Fielding does not mention his sister Sarah by name, but the book that Sophia Western is reading when she is interrupted by her aunt is evidently David Simple,⁶ "the production of a young lady of fashion, whose good

¹Tom Jones, VIII, viii, p. 387.
²Wilbur Cross, II, p. 175.
³Tom Jones, VIII, x - xv.
⁴Ibid., xi, p. 404.
⁵Ibid., XVIII, iv, p. 823. See pp. 156 - 157.
"understanding" thinks Sophia, "doth honour to her sex, and whose good heart is an honour to human nature." To this sentiment Mrs Western replies: "Yes, the author is of a very good family; but ... is not much among people one knows." She has never read the book she adds, "for the best judges say, there is not much in it." ¹

"The History of Mrs. Fitzpatrick," ² interpolated into Tom Jones, has been mentioned in connection with "Social Life at Bath" ³ as being, in all probability, based on the story of Fanny Braddock, an actual person whom Beau Nash counselled in vain when she became the victim of a fortune-hunter at Bath. Harriet Fitzpatrick's predicament closely parallels that of the original Fanny Braddock, her husband being "among the gay young fellows" who spent the season at Bath, ⁴ and a typical fortune-hunter, ⁵ ready to accept whichever of two women, the niece (Harriet) or her aunt (Mrs. Western), might produce

¹ Tom Jones, VI, v, p. 265.
² XI, iv, v, vii.
³ See p. '41.
⁴ Fielding comments on the subject of manners at Bath that "people of quality at this time lived separate from the rest of the company, and excluded them from all their parties." (Tom Jones, XI, iv, p. 518).
⁵ "His designs were strictly honourable, as the phrase is; that is, to rob a lady of her fortune by way of marriage." (XI, iv, p. 519).
the "ready money" he so much needed. Fielding also introduces Richard Nash by name into the novel at this point. "I cannot omit expressing my gratitude to the kindness intended me by Mr Nash" declares Harriet, "who took me one day aside, and gave me advice, which if I had followed, I had been a happy woman." Fielding "quotes" the words of Nash, who mentions his "pretty Sophy Western" with sympathy, but has little use for the old aunt, Mrs Western: "I never advise old women: for if they take it into their heads to go to the devil, it is no more possible, than worthwhile, to keep them from him."

Harriet and her cousin Sophia meet at the inn at Upton whither the former had journeyed from Bath in a coach "belonging to Mr. King of Bath," an actual character

1XI, v, p. 523.

2X, iv, p. 521. W. Connely remarks that whether or not Fielding was making use of the actual story, he took advantage in Tom Jones, of saying a good word for Nash at a time when the Master stood in need of it (Beau Nash, p. 142). Nash is also commended in the Covent Garden Journal of August 24, 1752, for his "well-known prudent management ... with regard to the regulation of the diversions, the accommodation of persons resorting to Bath and the general good of the city." (Quoted by Connely, p. 156). The occasion was the unveiling of the statue of Nash in 1752 in Bath, at which Fielding assisted. "Fielding ... saw in Nash what Smollett had chosen to disregard" (Connely, p. 140). See pp. 139 - 140.

3Tom Jones, XI, iv, p. 521.
described by Fielding as: "One of the worthiest and honestest men that ever dealt in horse-flesh, and whose coaches we heartily recommend to all our readers who travel that road."¹ It may also be noted that Bath is specifically mentioned by Harriet as having been her intended destination in her flight from Ireland and her husband "in order to throw myself into the protection of my aunt Mrs Western, or of your father,"² which detail places Squire Western's residence definitely in the neighbourhood of Bath. Further, witnessing the arrival of Sophia and her maid at the Upton inn, Partridge exclaims: "I warrant neither of them are a bit better than they should be. A couple of Bath trulls, I'll answer for them."³

In the allegory, "A Journey from This World to the Next"⁴ a satirical account of a journey to Elysium, the travellers reach a bifurcation of two roads, the one

¹Tom Jones, X, vi, p. 488.
²Ibid., XI, vii, p. 536.
³Ibid., X, v, p. 483. Barbeau states that the establishment of loose women at Bath seems to have been proverbial (Life & Letters, p. 106, note 6). See also p.114.
leading to greatness and the other to goodness. They take the second one, "the most delightful imaginable," which leads through lovely flower-spangled meadows, but with scarcely a building in sight except for one: "A handsome building ... greatly resembling a certain one by the Bath."¹

In the same year (1743) that volume II of the *Miscellanies* was published; Pope, wrote in a letter to Ralph Allen:

> Fielding has sent the Books you subscribed for by ye hands imployed in conveying ye 20 ll. to him. In one Chapt of ye Second Vol. he has paid you a pretty complement upon your House."²

The passage, quoted above, may well have been a reference to Prior Park.

*Joseph Andrews* contains one specific reference to Allen's house, and with it, a mention of Pope. Speaking of Allen during his discourse on "charity,"³ ("one Al- Al- I forget his name"), he adds that "this gentleman hath built up a stately house too, which the squire Pope likes very well" and "It stands on a hill."⁴

¹Quoted by H. Dudden, I, p. 430, and by W. Cross, I, p. 383.


³See p. 164.

In *Tom Jones* there is little description of any outdoor scenery and of details constituting the make-up of interiors, none at all.\(^1\) And yet Fielding is very precise in giving information with regard to roads taken by his travellers on their way to London from Glastonbury in Somerset, using existing hostelries and inns and quoting distances between places with which he was obviously familiar. He was not indifferent to the charms of natural scenery,\(^2\) but like the majority of his 18th century contemporaries, he seems to have preferred nature "improved" by art, to nature unadorned. His ideal was a finely situated, elegantly cultivated estate;\(^3\) where "art" and "nature" were combined:

> At Eshur, at Stowe, at Wilton, at Eastbury, and at Prior's Park, days are too short for the ravished imagination while we admire the wondrous power of art in improving nature,

and yet, in "Prior's Park" nature seems to triumph, and appears:

\(^1\)Dudden, II, p. 703.

\(^2\)Of the natural scenery best known to him he says: "The same taste, the same imagination, which luxuriously riots in ... elegant scenes, can be amused with objects of far inferior note. The woods, the rivers, the lawns of Devon and Dorset, attract the eye of the ingenious traveller ...." *Tom Jones*, XI, ix, pp. 545 - 546.

\(^3\)Dudden, II, p. 703.
In her richest attire, and art dressed with the modestest simplicity .... Here nature indeed pours forth the choicest treasures which she hath lavished on this world.¹

In the first part of the novel which lays in much detail, the foundation for the main action of the rest of the story, there occurs what is, for Fielding, a lengthy description of Squire Allworthy's estate, its situation, and the "prospect of the valley beneath." The house is described as being in the "Gothick stile" which could produce nothing nobler than the Allworthy house, having "an air of grandeur in it, that struck you with awe, and rival'd the beauties of the best Grecian architecture."²

He describes a lake at the foot of the hill, "a quarter of a mile below the house" which "filled the centre of a beautiful plain" and out of which issued a river which meandered through an amazing variety of meadows and woods, "till it emptied itself into the sea; with a large arm of which and an island beyond it, the prospect was closed."

To the right of this valley he continues, opened another, "adorned with several villages, and terminated by one of the towers of an old ruined abbey, grown over with ivy." To the left lay "a very fine park ... agreeably

¹Tom Jones, XI, ix, p. 545.
²Ibid., I, iv, p. 58.
varied with all the diversity that hills, lawns, wood, and water, laid out with admirable taste, but owing less to art than to nature, could give." Beyond this, he concludes, "the country gradually rose into a ridge of wild mountains, the tops of which were above the clouds."\(^1\)

The readers of *Tom Jones*, having identified Squire Allworthy with Ralph Allen, have always been puzzled by the discrepancies between the above description and the real Prior Park and its prospect. Among contemporary critics, *Old England*,\(^2\) eager to point out what a sorry performance was *Tom Jones*, called attention to Fielding's "error" in thus describing Allworthy's estate,\(^3\) while Coleridge was to regard the description as a chorographic mistake and wonder from what point of vantage Fielding saw those wild, cloud-covered mountains, since the so-called mountains of Somerset here are only hills;\(^4\) and the city of Bath fills the prospect as seen from the actual Prior Park.

\(^1\) *Tom Jones*, I, iv, pp. 58 - 59.

\(^2\) A newspaper established in 1743 by the Broad Bottom Administration, and to which Chesterfield contributed (Cross, II, p. 13).

\(^3\) "To reconcile this Description with Probability will be the Difficulty .... A most extensive ken indeed! and shows the accurate Author endued with more than a second-sighted Mind." (Old England, May 27, 1749, quoted by W. Cross, II, 153).

\(^4\) Cross, II, pp. 152, 164.
In point of fact, Fielding's description is a composite one, but Cross remarks that no detail of this composite scene appears to have been fictitious.\(^1\) Ralph Allen's house is of the Corinthian order,\(^2\) but Fielding apparently preferred the "Gothick stile" or, thinks Cross, may have wished to pay a compliment in *Tom Jones* to his friend, Sanderson Miller, who, in the 1740's was adorning his Tudor house at Radway, with Gothic turrets.\(^3\)

Factual in *Tom Jones*, was the description of the spring gushing out of the fir-covered rock, falling in a cascade, and finally reaching the lake at the foot of the hill, as depicted by Fielding's contemporary Richard Graves and quoted in "Ralph Allen and Prior Park."\(^4\) Both Wilbur Cross and Homes Dudden have identified Fielding's description of the "prospect" from the house\(^5\) with the view from the top of Tor Hill to the northeast.

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\(^1\) *Henry Fielding*, II, p. 166.

\(^2\) See p. 18.

\(^3\) *H. Fielding*, II, 164. Miller, a conspicuous, mid-18th century squire, "skilled" in Gothic architecture, entertained Fielding, Lyttleton, and Pitt while *Tom Jones* was still in MS form. "By common report" Pitt and Lyttleton bore a hand in the revision of the novel, and helped spread abroad its fame. (W. Cross, II, pp. 112–113, 114).

\(^4\) See p. 19.

of Glastonbury, which does correspond with that in Book I, chapter iv, in every detail. This summit, writes Dudden, Fielding must frequently have visited.\(^1\) From this height on a fine morning, he could clearly have beheld the scene he describes; the "meandering river" being the Brue; the "sea," the Bristol channel; the "island," Stert Island in Bridgewater Bay; while the "ruined abbey" would be Glastonbury and "the ridge of wild mountains," The Quantocks and Mendips. In this way Fielding transferred the site of Prior Park, Combe Down, Bath to Tor Hill, Glastonbury in a not so distant part of Somerset.\(^2\) For this reason the narrative of the earlier stages of the journey of Tom and Sophia, "conceived as having their homes in the neighbourhood of Glastonbury," exactly agrees with this conclusion.\(^3\)

While Monkland suggests the house close to Widcombe church as the "supposed residence" of Squire Western,\(^4\) it has been suggested by G.H. Wright\(^5\) that

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\(^1\) When staying with relatives at nearby Sharpham Park (Henry Fielding, II, p. 602).

\(^2\) Dudden, II, pp. 602 - 603.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 603.

\(^4\) See p. 185:

\(^5\) Historic Guide to Bath, p. 381.
the scene of the "battle" in the churchyard during which Molly Seagrim is rescued by Tom, is that of Claverton.  

A final identification of an actual locality in *Tom Jones* may be that of a certain "little parlour" mentioned in the "Invocation" to Book XIII. When Fielding speaks of "The little parlour in which I sit at this instant," he may have been giving a clue to the reader as to the place in which he was writing *Tom Jones*. The passage is an invocation to future fame "when I shall be read with honour, by those who never knew nor saw me." It is in this passage that he speaks of "The real worth which once existed in my Charlotte" who is presented in the novel "under the fictitious name of Sophia," and of "the prattling babes, whose innocent play hath often been interrupted by my labours." The assumption that *Tom Jones* was partly written while Fielding was

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1 *Tom Jones*, IV, viii.

2 The neighbouring parish. R. Allen bought Claverton Manor in 1758. See p. 72, footnote 3.

3 *Tom Jones*, XIII, p. 607.


5 *Tom Jones*, XIII, i, p. 607.

6 Ibid., p. 607.

7 Ibid., p. 608. These are his children, Harriot and William (Cross, II, p. 109).
living at Twerton-on-Avon, near Bath, has already been
discussed in "The Fielding connection with Prior Park."¹
At "Fielding's Lodge," writes Wilbur Cross, "as one enters
through the quaint doorway, there is 'a little parlour'
... with an ancient fireplace, unchanged since Fielding
sat and wrote there."² It is clear however, Cross adds,
that even though the little parlour at Twerton exactly
fits the situation as Fielding describes it, "it must be
left undetermined where he composed the most eloquent
passage that ever came from his pen."³

¹Ibid., p. 111.
²H. Fielding, II, p. 111.
³Ibid., p. 111.
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**PERIODICALS**


