

DR. GARTH
THE
KIT-KAT POET
1661-1718

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FROM JACOB TONSON'S MEZZOTINT REPRODUCTIONS OF KNELLER'S PORTRAITS OF THE KIT-KAT CLUB MEMBERS.

DR. GARTH: THE KIT-KAT POET*

(1661-1718.)

BY HARVEY CUSHING, M. D.

IN the reign of Queen Anne, a pasty-cook, one Christopher or Kit for short, 'immortal made by his pyes,' kept a tavern near Temple Bar at the Sign of the Cat and Fiddle. Here was wont to gather a group of the most distinguished men of the time, the patriots that saved Britain, according to the opinion of one who in the succeeding generation bore the name of not the least illustrious of them; leaders of the fashionable world, noblemen, poets, statesmen, soldiers; all fine gentlemen, all earnest Whigs, firmly sworn to support the Protestant succession in the house of Hanover. Of this famous club there were first and last some forty-eight members, including the great Marlborough, Robert Walpole, Godolphin, and Halifax, Addison and Steele, Kneller the artist, and Vanbrugh the builder of Blenheim, Jacob Tonson the famous book-seller—Pope's left leg'd Jacob—and many more besides the subject of this sketch, the popular, the generous, the companionable Garth.

Mary Pierrepont, the daughter of Lord Kingston, one of the noblemen who helped to make up this distinguished coterie, was during her childhood an object of her father's special pride and fondness, and the following incident which in later years she loved to recall has been thus related by her granddaughter. "One day at a meeting to choose toasts for

* Read at a Meeting of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Historical Club, December 12, 1904.

the year, a whim seized him to nominate her, then not eight years old,¹ a candidate, alleging that she was far prettier than any lady on the list. The other members demurred because the rules of the club forbade them to elect a beauty whom they had never seen. 'Then you shall see her,' cried he; and in the gaiety of the moment sent orders home to have her finely dressed, and brought to him at the tavern; where she was received with acclamations, her claim unanimously allowed, her health drunk by every one present, and her name engraved in due form on a drinking glass. The company consisting of some of the most eminent men in England, she went from the lap of one poet or patriot or statesman to the arms of another, was feasted with sweet-meats, overwhelmed with caresses, and," Lady Louisa Stewart adds with a touch of irony, "what perhaps already pleased her better than either, heard her wit and beauty loudly extolled on every side. Pleasure, she said, was too poor a word to express her sensations; they amounted to ecstasy; never again throughout her whole future life, did she pass so happy a day."

It is pleasing to think that Samuel Garth, the single medical member of the club, may have participated in this scene, and that the child toast, whom he, unlike some others, continued to admire throughout his life, was passed to him in turn for a greeting. Little could he then have thought that her name, both in medicine and letters, would almost outshine and outlive his own: for the child heroine of this episode was none other than the Lady Mary Wortley Montague whose gallant struggle against the popular prejudice and professional jealousy of the times, in her effort to introduce

¹Lady Mary, according to recent authority (Firth, Dict. of Nat. Biog.), was born in May, 1689, and the Kit-Kat Club, as such, was supposedly not founded until 1703, so that unless the Club held meetings, as is quite possible, before the designation of Kit-Kats was given them, she was not the child she feigned to have been. There is much confusion in regard to dates of many events of these times, especially in regard to such hearsay ones.

the practice of "ingrafting" against the small-pox, must ever make her an object of interest to medical men.

One may perchance be the more readily excused for plunging into an incident almost in Garth's middle life, inasmuch as there are no details of

How the dim speck of entity began
T'extend its recent form, and stretch to man;
The Dispensary, CANTO I.

and but scant ones of the time intervening until he became the popular and well known figure in the metropolis. He was born of a good family in Yorkshire,² probably in 1661; was at school in the village of Ingleton, a neighborhood of most romantic scenery; a student at Peterhouse, the eldest of the Cambridge Colleges, where he matriculated July 6, 1676, received his B. A. in 1679, and five years later a Master's degree in arts. These are the bare facts which carry us through the first twenty-five years of Garth's life without further illumination from contemporary writings. What induced him to take up Physick for his life's work seems not to be known, unless it was the direct influence of his college,³ and the promise for the better in medicine of Sydenham's and Locke's recent and great reforms. The colleges, however, at the time, had only theoretical instruction in preparation for practice, and it was the custom for those very few students, who like Garth took their degree in arts before entering upon their professional studies, to look elsewhere for opportunities to gain practical knowledge. With this object in 1687 he repaired to Leyden, then approaching the zenith of its medical fame; and there Garth may possibly have touched elbows in

²The eldest son of Wm. Garth of Bowland Forest in the West Riding (Dict. of Nat. Biog.).

³"Among the colleges at least one (Peterhouse) had in past times a laudable custom of urging her fellows to determine themselves in the line of some faculty—going on 'the Law line,' or that of Physic, or of Divinity." Wordsworth's *SCHOLAE ACADEMICAE*; Some account of the studies at the English Universities in the eighteenth century. Cambridge, 1877.

his classes with the young Dutchman who was destined to become the greatest clinician of his time, and whose name made that of his university famous to the ends of the earth. Four years later (July 7, 1691) Garth received from his alma mater the degree of M.D., and repairing to the metropolis he was promptly admitted (June 26, 1693) a Fellow of the College of Physicians.

He must early have distinguished himself, for in the following year he is said to have delivered the Gulstonian Lecture, choosing *De Respiratione* as his text. Although a request was made that he should do so, Garth never published this discourse, and consequently we have lost the only one of his strictly medical writings of which knowledge has come down to us.

A further and still greater compliment was paid the young physician three years later, in 1697, when he was asked to deliver the annual oration in Latin before the College on St. Luke's Day—better known to us as the Harveian Oration.*

ORATIO LAUDATORIA
IN AEDIBUS
COLLEGII REGALIS MED. LOND.
17MO DIE SEPTEMBRIS
HABITA
A. SAM GARTH
COLL. REG. MED. LOND. SOC.
LONDINI
MDCXCVII.

The public tribute that Garth on this occasion paid to William III, as well as the tirade, at the close of the oration, against the professional quackery of the times, proved doubly influential in his career; the tribute, an open demonstration of his political affiliations, bringing him later on his Knight-hood; the tirade, immediately, as it made him the acknowledged champion of the College of Physicians in a famous quarrel: for thus he was led to write the poem on which alone

*An original paper copy of this oration will be found in the Surgeon-General's Library in Washington.

his position among the English poets rests. But to explain this I must retrace my steps.

THE DISPENSARIAN QUARREL.

A CERTAIN lack of sympathy seems always to have existed between those privileged to prescribe, and those who are restricted by law to the dispensation alone of drugs; and at the time of which we are writing a combination of circumstances had fanned latent animosity into a public broil. The apothecaries, for the most part, were uneducated men and at a somewhat earlier period their relation to the community was so loosely controlled that even the grocers and pepperers were privileged to dispense drugs and the fact that they were legalized, under certain circumstances, to perform phlebotomy sufficed to bring them intimately into contact with the people as patients. By a charter, granted early in the reign of James I, they had been made "Freemen of the Mystery of Grocers and Apothecaries of the City of London," but soon such remonstrance was raised on all sides against their incompetence and such scandal over the adulteration of their commodities that in 1617, owing to the intervention of one of the few distinguished members of their fraternity, Gideon de Laune, the apothecaries were separated by charter from their former associates, the grocers. The new grant placed them under the control of the College of Physicians and to this body was given the power of inspecting their wares and regulating their actions. This restraint was far from agreeable; its consequences were inevitable. The medical therapy of the time was based almost entirely on empiricism and the vendors of drugs found therefore that it was a simple matter to compete with the qualified practitioners. They encroached more and more on the physician's province; some of them indeed amassing large fortunes thereby.

So modern 'Pothecaries taught the art
By Doctors' bills to play the Doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.

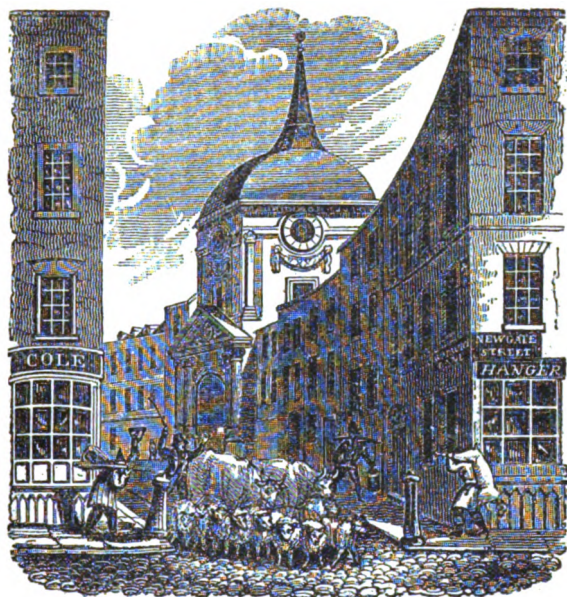
Essay on Criticism.

(5)

Thus Pope, some years later, described the situation as analogous in a measure to that occupied by the critics who had come to turn their own arms against the poets from whom they had first learned to write. It has been said by Jeaffreson that the doctors of the day knew so little that the apothecaries found no difficulty in learning as much: so there is no cause to wonder at the story that has come down to us of one of Radcliffe's patients who left him preferring to be treated by a well known apothecary. Thus it was not long before the apothecaries grew away from the restraint legally imposed upon them and regardless of the College began to prescribe widely on their own responsibility. Were they threatened with punishment, they retaliated by refusing to call in consultation the physician who had censured them; an action that in many cases might have completely ruined his practice. The dependence that many placed on these consultations, even at a later date, is illustrated by the story of Mead, who in the morning at Batson's coffee-house, in the evening at Tom's, used to receive apothecaries and charge only half-guinea fees for prescriptions written without seeing the patient. The situation was a most entangled one. The apothecaries defended themselves on the ground that they would prescribe and care for the poor who could not afford to pay the physician's fees in addition to the expense of the drugs; possibly a just claim were our beliefs in their charitable pretenses not shaken by a knowledge of what were their actual practices.

In 1687 the first effort to counteract these abuses was made by the College. An edict was unanimously passed by that body (July 28, 1687), requiring all the fellows, candidates and licentiates to give gratuitous advice to their neighboring poor; but the solution of the difficulty was not so simple. It was in the first place, as at the present day, difficult to designate those who were to be considered "poor," and the practice not only led to abuses but was further frustrated by the inordinately high price immediately put upon all drugs by the apothecaries. As the patients had not the wherewithal to get them filled, prescriptions were thrown to the winds. Under the shadow of benevolence, too, there is said to have lurked

animosity toward the apothecaries; a spirit which of itself, if we are to believe the slander, would certainly have been fatal to the successful carrying out of the edict. With the view, however, of rendering it more effectual, it was determined by a vote in the following year (August 13, 1688), to accommodate the laboratory of the College to the purpose of



OLD COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, WARWICK LANE, NEAR NEWGATE.

From a print in the *THE GOLD HEADED CANE*.*

Not far from that most celebrated Place
 Where angry Justice shews her awful Face;
 * * * * *
 There stands a Dome, majestick to the sight,
 * * * * *
 A golden Globe plac'd high with artful Skill,
 Seems to the distant light, a gilded Pill:

The Dispensary. Ed'n. I.

* Especially in Munk's edition there is a full account of the various homes and places of meeting of the College from its establishment in 1518.

preparing medicines; the contributors toward the expense were themselves to manage the charity. Such a philanthropy properly controlled would have effectually done away with the abuses of indiscriminate dispensing of drugs, had the apothecaries submitted to it. Not so. They claimed that it was a money-making scheme on the part of the physicians who aimed thereby merely to undersell them. They even succeeded in raising an opposition in the very College itself^a among those who at heart and for selfish reasons favored the old system; so that Dispensarians found themselves arrayed against Anti-Dispensarians and the design failed of being carried into execution.

At this juncture, with the College in an embroiled state, Garth, fresh from the university, appeared at the metropolis; he was early admitted a fellow and allied himself unhesitatingly with the Dispensarian party. Courageously, too, since for a youth on foot with little more than his diploma in his pocket to take a stand openly against 'affluent tradesmen, rolling by in their carriages,' as Jeaffreson puts it, who might absolutely injure his prospects, must have required the courage of conviction.

In 1694, the College again succeeded in issuing an order demanding from all members strict obedience to the edict of 1688; and in the following year^a this new order was presented

^a Perhaps made the more easy as one of the members, Francis Bernard had formerly been an apothecary; but owing to distinguished services had been elevated to the post of assistant physician to St. Bartholomew's and also elected to the College in 1687. He was an able and very scholarly man and, remaining loyal to his former guild, must have been a formidable opponent to the Dispensarian party. He is the 'Horoscope' of Garth's poem.

^a A Short Account of the Proceedings of the College of Physicians, London, in Relation to the Sick Poor, 1697. See, also, The Copy of an Instrument Subscribed by the President, Censors, Most of the Elects, Senior Fellows, Candidates, etc., of the College of Physicians in Relation to the Sick Poor.

^a Among the names occur those of Sir Thos. Millington, who with Boyle, Wrenn, Willis and others had helped found the

to the city authorities in the hope of gaining their support; a hope unfortunately defeated. Not discouraged, the physicians of the Dispensarian party actually raised a subscription (December 22, 1696) from among those favoring the charity, each subscribing ten pounds, the money to be "expended in preparing and delivering medicines to the poor at their intrinsic value." To disarm the insinuations of their opponents and to show that the undertaking had the sanction of a College act, the names of all the subscribers, fifty-one in number, were appended to a printed sheet which was widely distributed.' Thus for a time, there was an actual distribution to the needy of drugs at cost price, and though the experiment was perhaps poorly conducted, its philanthropic intent was genuine enough; as Garth says, it was managed with an integrity and disinterest suitable to so charitable a design, though the effort sufficed only to make the long standing disagreement "break out to fury and excess." The usual form of warfare—a paper warfare, emanating from Grub Street—arose. There are many references to the controversy, even in the more stable writings of the time, and it is apparent that most of the men of education outside the profession upheld the cause of the Dispensarians. Among them was Dryden, as shown by the following lines inscribed to a relative, who 'blessed led a country life.'

The tree of knowledge, once in Eden placed,
Was easy found, but was forbid the taste;
O, had our grandsire walked without his wife,
He first had sought the better plant of life!
Now both are lost: yet wandering in the dark,
Physicians for the tree have found the bark;
They, laboring for relief of human kind,

Royal Society, and who was then president of the College; of Sir Hans Sloane, a later President of the College, who subsequently served in that capacity for sixteen years, and who founded the British Museum; of Edward Browne, scholar and traveller, eldest son of the author of the *Religio Medici*; Robert Brady, the historian and friend of Sydenham; Charles Goodall, also a later president; Sir Edward Hulse and many others.

With sharpened sight some remedies may find;
The apothecary-train is wholly blind.
From files a random recipe they take,
And many deaths of one prescription make.
Garth, generous as his Muse, prescribes and gives;
The shopman sells and by destruction lives;
Ungrateful tribe! who, like the viper's brood,
From Medicine issuing, suck their mother's blood!
Let these obey and let the learned prescribe,
That men may die without a double bribe;
Let them, but under their superiors, kill,
When doctors first have signed the bloody bill:
He 'scapes the best, who, nature to repair,
Draws physic from the fields in draughts of vital air.*

Garth, seemingly, first became an active belligerent in this warfare from the vantage ground of his Harveian Oration, when, as above mentioned, he took the opportunity of "publically ridiculing the multifarious classes of quacks, with spirit and not without humor." * Though by nature averse to any violent partisanship, his keen mind, ready wit and facile pen must have made him a formidable champion for any cause which he felt himself called upon to support. "In those old days," says Lady Louisa Stewart, "people's brains being more active than their fingers, ballads swarmed as abundantly as caricatures are swarming at present, and were struck off almost as hastily, whenever humor or malice and scurrility formed a theme to fasten upon." One of Garth's chance shafts was winged at this time against another rhyming physician, Sir Richard Blackmore, who, Saintsbury says, has been made

*John Dryden. To my Honored Kinsman, John Driden, of Chesterton. vs. 96-116. Garth well proved his generosity in Dryden's case, as a later incident will show.

*There is some difference of opinion as to the literary merit of this oration. Johnson quotes the single paragraph with which he was familiar and adds sarcastically, "this was certainly thought fine by the author, etc.," but inasmuch as Garth's life was one of the hurried parts of the Biographical Series, Johnson doubtless made no effort to read his writings even were they accessible to him. Chalmers (BIOG. DICT. 1814) says of this speech, "which being soon after published, left it doubtful whether the poet or the orator was most to be admired."

immortal by his satirists²⁰ and seems to have been heartily abominated by all for his pomposity and 'amiable faith in himself.' Garth, ordinarily charitable enough, especially toward his professional brethren and political party, could not overlook Blackmore's anti-Dispensarian attitude and to ridicule him composed the following lines,—“To the Merry Poetaster at Sadler's Hall in Cheapside.”

Unwieldy pedant, let thy aukward muse
With censures praise, with flatteries abuse.
To lash, and not be felt, in thee's an art;
Thou ne'er mad'st any but thy school-boys, smart.
Then be advis'd and scribble not again;
Thou'rt fashion'd for a flail, and not a pen.
If B——l's immortal wit thou would'st descry,
Pretend 'tis he that writ thy poetry.
Thy feeble satire ne'er can do him wrong;
Thy poems and thy patients live not long.

Poor as they are, there is nothing seriously objectionable in the ridicule of these lines and they suffice merely to illustrate the form of these poetical duels. The bad taste in twitting Blackmore with his early life as a school-master is nothing to the vulgarity, even more in accord with the times, which made physical infirmities a favorite object of satire. Dr. Garth, happily may not be accused of this offence.

“THE DISPENSARY.”

GARTH, however, was capable of better things than the writing of doggerel verses. There appeared in 1699, in broadside paper form after the fashion of the times, an anonymous poem in six cantos called *The Dispensary*, in which the history of the attempt to establish gratuitous dis-

²⁰ For example, one of Thomas Moore's epigrams runs:

'Twas in his carriage the sublime
Sir Richard Blackmore used to rhyme,
And if the wits don't do him wrong,
'Twixt death and epics passed his time
Scribbling and killing all day long.

pensation of drugs was put into rhyme. The poem had an immediate and unexpected success; was soon after printed in book form; went through two other editions before the year was out; and was so widely read during the next two decades, when its characters and subject matter were still of public interest, that ten authorized and some pirated editions were issued. There were several factors which must have contributed to its success: first among them, the rapidly spreading popularity of the author, whose touch must immediately have been recognized; the unusual form of versification, also, for Garth was among the first to show the influence which Boileau, the great French versifier, was to have on English poetry; possibly, too, the curiosity that must have been aroused by the fact that so many public characters figured in the poem either under fictitious names or with their actual ones feebly masked by hyphenating the consonants." In his preface to the second edition, the author states his main purpose in writing the poem, for "finding the Animosities amongst the Members of the *College of Physicians* encreasing daily (notwithstanding the frequent Exhortations of our Worthy President to the contrary) I was persuaded to attempt something of this nature, and to endeavor to Rally some of our disaffected Members into

"In the *Spectator* (No. 567, July 14, 1714) Addison ascribes this particular style of writing, so common in Anne's time, to Thomas Brown—the 'I do not love thee Dr. Fell' Thomas Brown—saying, "Some of our authors indeed, when they would be more satirical than ordinary, omit only the vowels of a great man's name, and fall most unmercifully upon all the consonants. This way of writing was first of all introduced by T—m B—wn of facetious memory."

This same Brown, in a broad-side—"Physic lies a Bleeding"—published in the heat of the Dispensarian quarrel, had himself a fling at the apothecaries!

Physic lies a Bleeding: or, The Apothecary turned Doctor. A Comedy acted almost every Day in most Apothecaries Shops in London. And more especially to be seen, by Those who are willing to be cheated, the First of April, every year. Absolutely necessary for all Persons that are Sick (or) may be Sick. (Quot. from Juvenal) by Tho. Brown. Dedicated to that worthy and Ingenious Gentleman Dr. J. B. 4to, 1697.

a sense of their Duty, who have hitherto most obstinately oppos'd all manner of Union; and have continu'd so unreasonably refractory, etc.," much such a purpose as an editorial in the *Times* or *Lancet* might have served today.

The poem, mock heroic in kind, opens with a description of the College "Rais'd for Use as Noble as its Frame," but in which the God of Sloth had made his lair; disturbed out of his lethargy by the enterprize attending the building of the Dispensary, the slumbering God sends his Phantom to summon *Envy* "to blast their Hopes and baffle their Designs."

In CANTO II, *Envy*, the famish'd Fiend, rejoicing at the task, assumes the form of one Colon (Mr. Lee, Warden of Apothecaries Hall) and appears before Horoscope (Dr. Bernard) in his apothecary shop, where "Mummies lay most reverently stale" etc., and where Horoscope was found environed by a crowd of gullible people, promising them future Health for present Fees. Into his breast the Fury breathed a storm of envy against the Dispensarian movement and left it there like a Brood of Maggots to develop.

Horoscope, in CANTO III, through his coadjutor, 'officious Squirt,' calls for a meeting of the Apothecaries at their Hall in Blackfriars; meanwhile he invokes to their aid the Harpy, *Disease*, "Begot by Sloth, maintain'd by Luxury," through a burnt offering of drugs and old prescriptions. Ill omen attends this sacrifice. The apothecaries meet; one advocates friendly advances to the Faculty; another, a bold fight at Honor's call; another, Askaris, more slyly urged a consultation with their friends the disaffected members of the Faculty, "who Int'rest prudently to Oaths prefer." The assemblage was scattered by an explosion in the laboratory of Apothecaries Hall.

CANTO IV. At a tavern near Drury Lane, frequented by the apothecaries and where "want of Elbow-room's supply'd in Wine," the company again gather, together with some unprincipled members of the College whom they propose to use as their unwilling accomplices as "Boys hatch Game-Eggs under Birds o' Prey." There an altercation takes place between those advising caution and those clamoring for war. It ends in Horoscope being wafted away to the Fortunate Isles to consult the Goddess there. In oracular fashion she tells him that "Wars must insue, the Fates will have it so."

"Dread Fates shall follow, and Disasters great,
Pills charge on Pills, and Bolus Bolus meet:
Both sides shall conquer and yet Both shall fall;
The Mortar now, and then the Urinal."

(13)

CANTO V. Mirmillo, one of the traitorous physicians, begins to feel alarm for his safety in this alliance and is on the point of withdrawing when the Fury, *Discord*, appearing before him frightens him into joining the fray. The apothecary legions meet, the contestants in all manner of armament. Thus, Querpo

“A Pestle for his Truncheon, led the Van
And his high Helmet was a Close-stool pan.”

Rumor brought the news of the intended attack to Warwick Hall where preparations are hurriedly made to receive the assault. In mock heroic fashion the clash takes place with caustics, emetics, cathartics, syringes and what not, as weapons, while “Pestles peal a martial Symphony.”

CANTO VI. In the midst of the battle the Goddess of *Health* appears, calls “enough” and bids Machaon (Millington, President of the College) send a messenger to the Elysian Fields to consult the immortal Harvey as to the best method of terminating their woes. Carus (Garth) is chosen for this mission and, Dante-fashion, with *Hygeia* as his guide, he visits the lower regions. There, together with all sorts of wondrous subterranean phenomena, he sees old Chaos, an awkward Lump of shapeless Anarchy, with dull Night, his melancholy Consort; pale Fear and dark Distress; parch’d Eye’d Febris; bloated Hydrops; meagre Phthisis; Lepra the loathsome; as well as other Sights that go to “make up the frightful Horror o’ the Place.” They are at last ferried across the Styx and in the delightful Plain, “where the glad Manes of the Bless’d remain” the Shade of Harvey is found. The Venerable Sage addresses himself to *Hygeia* on the dissensions of the Faculty

“Where sick’ning Art now hangs her Head,
And once a Science, is become a Trade.”

He finally turns to her companion, Carus, with the admonition, that by attending to Science more, and to Lucre less, and by letting Nassau’s (that is King William’s or England’s) health be their chief aim, the College could once more become restored to the position it held under Willis and Wharton, Bates and Glisson.

A storm of unfriendly criticism was aroused by the first appearance of the poem. The design was bad. The execution was poor. The best part of the poem was in imitation of Boileau’s *Lutrin*¹²—and much more besides. Garth, however,

¹² Nicolas Boileau, or M. Despréaux as he was usually called in the memoirs of the time, was one of the favorite writers of the

in the preface written for the later editions, gracefully disarms all of these animadversions of his critics. He was proud of the imputation of imitating Boileau and points out the very lines in which he had done so; he defends his scheme on classical authority and modestly said, "However, I shall not be much concerned not to be thought excellent in an amusement I have very little practiced hitherto, nor perhaps ever shall again."

A dedicatory letter addressed to the gifted Sir Anthony Henley," appropriately introduces these later editions, for Henley, judging from Garth's words must openly have expressed his approval of the poem when it first appeared. "Your approbation of this poem, is the only exception to the opinion the world has of your judgment, etc."

As was the custom, too, the poem in its later editions, is prefaced by commendatory verses by friendly hands." And

day and his poetry exercised great influence, not only over French, but also over later English verse. *Lutrin* was possibly his best poem. There is an interesting allusion to him and to the Sir Richard Blackmore referred to above, in Lord Hervey's letters. He writes to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Oct. 28, 1728, "Boileau can write a *Lutrin* what one can read with pleasure a thousand times, and Blackmore cannot write upon the *Creation* anything that one shall not yawn ten times over, before one has read it once."

At the hands of his own countrymen Boileau did not escape animadversions or at least until Voltaire's *mot*, "Don't say harm of Nicolas, it brings ill-luck," passed into a proverb.

"Henley is noted for having been 'fed with soft dedications' by authors to whom he had been generous. He was one of the foremost wits and was a quasi friend of Swift in so far as the Dean could occasionally get a dinner out of him. "He has not seen me for some time in the Coffee-house, and asking after me, desired Lord Herbert to tell me I was a beast forever, after the order of Melchisedec. Did you ever read the Scripture? It is only changing the word priest to beast." *Journal to Stella*.

"Among them were the Earl of Orrery (C. Boyle) and C. Codrington. It was Boyle whose struggle with Bentley, the Oxford scholar, over some manuscripts led to Swift's "Battle of the Books." He was a member of Swift's 'The Club.' Codrington,

Garth, referring to those that might feel the sting of his satire, says "If I am hard upon anyone, it is my reader: but some worthy gentlemen, as remarkable for their humanity as their extraordinary parts, have taken care to make him amends for it, by prefixing something of their own."

Of the literary merit displayed in *The Dispensary*, liberally though it was applauded at the time, diverse opinions have been given by later critics. All of them, however, are unanimous in according to it an important position through the influence that it exercised upon the poetical style which continued into the following century." Garth seems, as it were,

a soldier, born in the Barbadoes, friend of the poets, left a large library to Christ Church. He says of Garth:

"Thou hast no faults, or I no faults can spy,
Thou art all beauty, or all blindness I."

"Oliver Goldsmith (*The Beauties of English Poetry*, 1767) commends highly Canto VI. It is interesting to note that in 1767 he was unable to find a first edition. He says "the praises bestowed on this poem are more than have been given to any other; but our approbation at present is cooler, for it owed part of its fame to party."

Johnson, in the *Lives*, characteristically says of Garth, "his poetry has been praised at least equally to its merit," and of *The Dispensary*, "no passages fall below mediocrity, and a few rise much above it." He continues in a more commendatory strain; "the composition can seldom be charged with inaccuracy or negligence. The author never slumbers in self indulgence; his full vigor is always exerted, scarcely a line is left unfinished; nor is it easy to find an expression used by constraint or a thought imperfectly expressed."

Henry Hallam (*Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, 1837-1839) says, "Garth, as has been observed, is a link of transition between the style and turn of poetry under Charles and William, and that we find in Addison, Prior, Tickell and Pope during the Reign of Anne."

George Saintsbury (*English Poets*, 1880, Vol. III, p. 13) comments, "Garth is mainly interesting at the present day because he was the first writer who took the couplet, as Dryden had fashioned it, from Dryden's hands, and displayed it in the form it maintained throughout the Eighteenth Century. In some respects it may be said that no advance in this particular mode was

to have introduced Boileau to Alexander Pope and Pope's praise of the poem, it will be remembered, was unstinted. In *The Dunciad* appear these lines,

Be thine, my stationer, this magic gift;
Cook shall be Prior, and Concanen, Swift;
So shall each hostile name become our own,
And we too boast our Garth and Addison.

and in the foot-notes,—Pope's own,—it is said, "nothing is more remarkable than our author's love of praising good writings. . . . It must have been particularly agreeable to him to celebrate Dr. Garth, both as his constant friend and as his predecessor in this kind of satire."

Equally unanimous is the opinion of the later critics, that this once celebrated poem after fifty years of celebrity has ceased to excite common interest. To the medical profession, however, if not to the community in general, it must always remain of historic import, commemorating as it does the first attempt to establish those out-patient rooms for the dispensation of medicines, which since have become such a universal charity. And whatever may be the actual merits of the poem, Garth, seemingly with no particular literary ambition, nevertheless with this single effort placed himself forever high in the ranks of the English Poets. There are other physicians who have courted the Muses and who, unlike Garth, have become renowned more as poets than physicians. Horace Walpole, as a rule none too lenient in matters of literary criticism, in one of his letters, while most flatteringly commending some poetry of Dr. Darwin's, continues, "Is it not extraordinary, dear Sir, that two of our very best poets, Garth and Darwin, should have been physicians? I believe they have left all the lawyers wrangling at the turnpike of Parnassus"¹⁶

ever made on *The Dispensary*. * * * Except for its versification, which not only long preceded Pope, but also anticipated Addison's happiest efforts by some years, *The Dispensary* is not now an interesting poem."

¹⁶ *The Letters of Horace Walpole*. Cunningham's Ed'n. 1877, Vol. IX, p. 372. Letter to Thos. Barrett Esq. May 14, 1792. Cun-

THE DRYDEN EPISODE.

A FEW months after Garth had so abruptly stepped into his place in the ranks of English poets, there died the man who had succeeded Ben Jonson in the post of literary dictator and who was to be followed after a fashion by Addison, Pope and the great lexicographer in turn. From John Dryden, Garth had borrowed the form of couplet which he had so improved, and from him Garth, the physician, 'generous as his Muse,' had received the immortal tribute of praise in verse. It is pouring old wine into new bottles to attempt anew the relation of a story, of which so many versions have come down to us that it is now difficult to tell wherein lies the truth." Authentic, however, seem these facts. John Dryden died in the house still standing on Gerrod Street in narrow and neglected circumstances on the Mayday of 1700, at three o'clock of a Wednesday morning. His body lay in state, twelve days later at no less curious a place than the Hall of the College of Physicians, where on Monday, May the 13th, Garth pronounced his funeral oration and with many others, 'fifty carriages of friends and fifty more besides,' attended the body to Westminster where it was interred between the graves of Chaucer and Cowley in the Poets' Corner.

Garth is generally considered to have rescued Dryden's body from a supposedly ignominious burial, but whatever part he may actually have played in the matter, certain it is that he obtained permission from the Board of Censors to allow the funeral exercises to be held at the College." Invitations, specimens of which are still extant," were issued to attend the ceremony at this place.

ningham's note on this passage says "We had two better poets physicians, Akenside and Armstrong; but this Walpole would not have admitted."

"Arbuthnot, in *The Gold Headed Cane*, tells the story as commonly related, in an imaginary conversation at Mead's.

"Annals of the College of Physicians; May 3, 1700.

"They must be very rare. There is no example preserved among the archives of the Royal College of Physicians; none in

S I R,



*YOU are desired to Accompany the Corps
of Mr. John Dryden, from the
College of Physicians in Warwick-
Lane, to Westminster Abby; on
Monday the 13th of this Instant May, 1700.
at Four of the Clock in the Afternoon exactly,
it being resolved to be moving by Five a Clock.
And be pleased to bring this Ticket with you.*

Dyd April 30th

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CARD OF INVITATION, ISSUED BY GARTH FROM THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, TO ATTEND DRYDEN'S FUNERAL.

That there is any truth in the wild story of the vexatious events that happened at his funeral, as told in Johnson's Lives and elsewhere, there is no trustworthy evidence. Misstatements, long passing as genuine,^m were founded on a jocular letter by Farquhar, the comic dramatist, addressed to 'his Dear Madam,' and a poemⁿ by Tom Brown, and were revived thirty years later for a monetary consideration, seemingly, by the unfortunate Mrs. Thomas ('Corinna'), then a prisoner for debt. The sources are equally unreliable. Farquhar, indeed, begins the very letter^m in which his infamous burlesque appears, with,—“I was so fuddled, that I hardly remember whether I writ or not,”—certainly an indifferent authority. According to Johnson, who, it must be confessed, accepted the story somewhat unwillingly, a private interment was to have been held at the expense of Lord Halifax—the Mæcenas of Garth's day. So on the Saturday following his death, the funeral procession with a 'velvet hearse' was about to leave Dryden's door, when Lord Jeaffries with some rakish companions, happening by, interrupted the proceedings on learning whose private burial it was, promising a large sum for a public funeral and a monument in the Abbey. Reluctantly the company was persuaded to disperse while the body was sent to an undertaker's. On the morrow, Jeaffries excused his action as part of a drunken frolic. Lord Halifax also, naturally disgruntled, refused to concern himself further with the matter after once having had the Abbey lighted and prepared. The chagrin of the family may be imagined. Their

the British Museum. A copy recently came under the hammer at Sotheby's among some Dryden manuscripts and was secured by Mr. Harold Peirce of Philadelphia, to whom I am greatly indebted for the accompanying photograph.

^m Until refuted by Malone (*Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, 1800, pp., 355-382). Sir Walter Scott (*Life of John Dryden*) also accepted the tale as a romance and gives references for those who wish to consult them.

ⁿ A Description of Mr. D——n's Funeral.

^m The Works of Mr. George Farquhar. Edn. IX. Lond., 1760. Vol. I, p. 73.

circumstances were such as to make it impossible for them to bear the expense of a funeral; and this is the less to be wondered at when one considers what formidable functions they were at this time. At this embarrassing juncture, Garth, as Johnson says, "withal a man of generosity and great humanity sent for the corpse to the College of Physicians in Warwick Lane and proposed a funeral by public subscription to which he himself set a noble example." Though the improbability of much of this story was pointed out years later by Malone, the fact of Dryden's actual interment on the second of May at St. Anne's in Soho has only recently come to light by the chance discovery of an entry to that effect in the parish register.* The circumstances of the disinterment, of the embalming at Russel's and of the transfer to the College continue to be obscured by uncertainties and the finale of this marvelous structure of fable as Johnson relates it, is too absurd to credit;† that Garth delivered his oration with much good nature from the top of a beer barrel the head of which fell in during the course of the proceedings; that confusion and ribald disorder reigned during the ceremony, at the College, at the Abbey, and on the march thither. For all of this we

* A Burial Mystery. Soho Monthly Paper. June, 1904, p. 143. Also, The Athenaeum of July 30, 1904.

† Those who wish to peruse this memorable romance will find it in Dryden's Works, Vol. XVIII, p. 200. It was first published in Wilson's Life of Congreve, 1730. Mr. Malone has pointed out the falsity of the tale in almost all its parts. Independently of the extreme improbability of the whole story, it is clear from Ward's account, written at the time, that Lord Jeaffries who, it is pretended, interrupted the funeral, did, on the contrary, largely contribute in helping Garth subsequently to bring it about.

In a letter from Doctor, afterward Bishop Tanner, dated May 6th, 1700, quoted by Malone, there appears the following paragraph: "Mr. Dryden died a Papist if at all a Christian. Mr. Montague had given orders to bury him; but some Lords (my Lord Dorset, Jeaffries, et al.) thinking it would not be splendid enough, ordered him to be carried to Russel's; there he was embalmed; and now lies in state at the Physician's College and is to be buried with Chaucer, Cowley, etc., at Westminster Abbey, on Monday next." MSS. Ballard in Bibl. Bodl. Vol. VI, p. 29.

are probably indebted to the fanciful imaginings of the befuddled Farquhar. It is perhaps worthy of note that Garth's share alone of the proceedings did not suffer burlesque from his pen for he said,—“The oration indeed was great and ingenious, worthy the subject and like the author; whose prescriptions can restore the living and his pen embalm the dead.”

There is one feature of the ceremony, as related by Thomas Hearne,²⁸ that deserves passing mention, indicating as it does a side of Garth's character of which more will be said anon. “Mr. John Dryden, the great poet, was buried in Westminster Abbey among the old poets in May, 1700, being carried from the College of Physicians, where an oration was pronounced by the famous Dr. Garth, in which he did not mention one word of Jesus Christ, but made an oration as an apostrophe to the great god Apollo, to influence the minds of the auditors with a wise, but, without doubt, poetical understanding, and, as a conclusion, instead of a psalm of David, repeated the 30th ode of the third book of Horace's odes beginning “Exegi monumentum, etc.” He made a great many blunders in the pronunciation.” Hearne is not the only one who has thus commented on Garth's apparent irreligion; but why should he have been expected to deliver a sermon under those unusual circumstances? That the proceedings were dignified cannot be doubted and Garth's selection of the Ode to Melpomene, which was sung to music, was certainly a fitting and beautiful one.

“I have reared a monument, my own,
More durable than brass.
Yea, kingly pyramids of stone
In height it does surpass.”

It is almost prophetic of the fact that the spot where Dryden was interred long remained undistinguished by mark of any kind. Not until thirty years later did the Duke of Buckingham place a tablet there inscribed simply with Dryden's name.²⁹

²⁸ *Reliquiae Hearnianae*, Edn. Bliss, 1726. Vol. II, p. 267.

²⁹ In his preface to the translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1717) Garth says of Dryden, “The man, that could make kings

ANNE'S REIGN AND THE KIT-KAT CLUB.

ALMOST coincident with Dryden's death and the birth of a new century, Anne came to the throne and with her reign began what has been called the Augustan era in England. There are, as Goldwin Smith has pointed out, certain grounds that substantiate the comparison. Peace, at home at all events, for Marlborough's operations leading up to Blenheim constituted largely a war of the allies and happily a victorious one; poetry and literature in the persons of Pope, Swift, Addison, Steele and DeFoe; the restoration of classical learning under Bentley's scholarship; and statesmen who almost with uniformity were patrons of letters. But underneath there was much vulgarity, ignorance and excess. Even in literature, good breeding as evidenced by such as Addison and Garth, was rare and barely sufficed to safeguard even them against the coarse demands of the popular taste. The Queen, when she felt so disposed, resumed the practice of touching for the evil. Marauders after nightfall, calling themselves Mohawks, terrorized the citizens by their depredations, and animosities, resultant to party feeling, seem to have been almost equally disturbing to the peace.

The period, too, at least for the fine gentlemen, was one of the tavern and coffee-house, where in lieu of the daily press the news of the day and the gossip of yesterday were washed down, often with so many bottles that the resultant conviviality commonly saw the day become the morrow. Thus ductile people like poor Dick Steele were led to send late messengers with lanterns to their Dear Prues, begging them to go to bed and promising to come home "within a pint of wine,"—a bibulous way of recording the hours.

Many hearsay incidents of these coffee-house festivities have come down to us, some of them hardly acceptable to modern ears. Of Garth there are numerous anecdotes,

immortal, and raise triumphal arches to heroes, now wants a poor square foot of stone, to show where the ashes of one of the greatest poets, that ever was upon earth, are deposited."

indicative for the most part of his readiness and wit. He was sitting one day in the coffee room of the Cocoa Tree Tavern, near his home in St. James Street, conversing with two persons of quality, when the poet Rowe, a vain fellow, fond of being noticed, entered the door. He sat in a box nearly opposite to Garth, looking frequently around in the hope of catching his eye. Not succeeding in this, he desired the waiter to ask the Doctor for the loan of his snuffbox, which he knew to be a rare one, set with diamonds and the gift of royalty. After taking a pinch and returning it without Garth's deigning to notice him, he sent again for it, and soon again. Finally Garth, who knew him well and saw through his purpose from the beginning, took out his pencil and wrote on the lid the two Greek characters,— ϕP —, Fie! Rowe! The mortified poet ceased his persecutions.

It was a coffee-house custom for every one to pay his share of the entertainment, to contribute his club, as it was expressed,^m and it was not long before this term, coupled with some appropriate adjective, became commonly used in designation of one or another coterie of friends. Gastronomy was at first the chief reason for a club's existence. "Our modern celebrated clubs" Addison says, "are founded on eating and drinking, which are points wherein most men agree." Somewhat later Dr. Johnson gave his properly indefinite definition of "An assembly of good fellows meeting under certain conditions." The number of these organizations multiplied enormously; many of them, in addition to mere conviviality, fostered objects of a more lofty nature, as literature and the fine arts. A few of them ultimately developed into powerful political machines and of these there are two that continue to be of considerable historical interest; one of them made up

^m Thus Swift writes to Stella, Oct. 13, 1710, "The fine fellows are always inviting him (young Harrison, the poet) to the tavern and make him pay his club. Henley (that is Anthony Henley, to whom Garth dedicated *The Dispensary*) is a great crony of his: they are often at the tavern at six or seven shillings reckoning, and he always makes the poor lad pay his full share."

largely of active Whig members; the other, the October Club, comprising those desirous of the Stewart succession, the active members of the Tory party.

Garth's Harveian Oration, with its reference to William III, had early been the straw to show the direction of his political tendencies, and though never a violent partisan at a time when political partisanship meant intolerance, his culture, wit and elegance doubtless made him a companion eagerly sought for by the clique forming the famous Kit-Kat Club, in which, as Macaulay says, were gathered all the various talents and accomplishments which then gave lustre to the Whig party.

The early beginnings of this society, its purpose and the source from which its name was derived are all shrouded in some obscurity.* It seems probable, however, that Jacob Tonson, the celebrated book-seller, one of the dwellers in 'Little Britain,' was its prime mover; some have said that for selfish reasons he gathered the young and budding wits of his own party at his own expense to the mutton-pie feasts, hoping through this association with them to obtain the refusal of their youthful publications. Tonson seems to have been no more deserving of affection than other publishers of his time, so bitterly stung by the 'Wasp of Twickenham' in the Dunciad, especially if we are to judge from the stories of his

* According to Ward, in a curious old book,—“The Secret History of Clubs”—the name took its origin from Christopher or 'Kit,' whose tavern, the first place of meeting, was at the Sign of the Cat and Fiddle; later on the Club moved with him from his original humble surroundings, to the Fountain Tavern in the Strand.

“The Kit-Cat Club came to be so-called from one Christopher Catting (a pudding pye-man) with whose puddings and conversation the first founders of the society were well pleased.” *Reliquiae Hearnianae*. Edn., Bliss, I, 74.

In the *Spectator*, No. 9, Addison, who, being a member, should have known, says,—“The Kit-Cat itself is said to have taken its original from a mutton-pye.” Thus the pies were called kit-cats long before the club was so named.

“The fact is, that on account of its excellence it was called a Kit-Cat as we now say a Sandwich.” Malone.

relations with Dryden, a triplet from whose pen portrays him, physically at least, in no very favorable light.²³ He had acquired wealth partly, it is said, by a lucky stroke in the Mississippi Scheme, partly, also, through success in his trade; for during the Whig administration he was stationer, binder, book-seller and printer to the Crown. After the change in government in 1710, it was largely through his influence that the club held together and out of its peaceable origin grew into an organization that exerted a powerful influence in political affairs. It was no longer at a tavern but at his country home in Barn Elms, Surrey, that the meetings ultimately became held,—

“ One night in seven at this convenient seat
Indulgent Bocaĵ (Jacob) did the Muses treat.”²⁴

and it was to decorate their convivium that Godfrey Kneller painted the celebrated portraits²⁵ of the members, exerting himself, it is said, as he seldom did at other times.

²³ With leering looks, bull-faced, and freckled fair,
With two left legs and Judas colour'd hair,
And frowzy pores, that taint the ambient air.

²⁴ Sir Richard Blackmore. *The Kit-Cats. A Poem.* London H. Hills, 1708.

²⁵ These portraits in Horace Walpole's opinion, (*Anecdotes of Painting*, Vol. II, p., 204.) possess great sameness and no imagination. “ See but a head, it interests you—uncover the rest of the canvas, you wonder faces so expressive could be employed so insipidly.” Faint praise indeed; others have not so damned them.

Inasmuch as the room in which these portraits were to be hung was quite low, the usual half-length (thirty guinea) size could not be used, so that Kneller had to content himself—except in the case of his own portrait which was half-length—with the head and one hand. Thus it was that this particular size and arrangement became known as a ‘Kit-Kat portrait.’ They measured 28 by 36 inches. While they were at Barn Elms mezzotint engravings were made of the entire series and were published in 1723 by Tonson (cf. Frontispiece). They were republished in 1795 by J. Faber and were reproduced in 1821 in a volume entitled “Memoirs of the Celebrated Persons comprising the Kit-Cat Club,”—a volume not to be commended for its accuracy of

As described by Steele in the *Tatler*, the custom of making toasts of the fashionable beauties of the time was peculiar to and originated with the society out of which the Kit-Kat Club was formed and the scene with which this sketch opened was an instance of the annual election. The 'toasts' were formally determined by balloting and when elected they reigned, says the *Tatler*, indisputably, like the Doge in Venice. One finds mentioned in many a paragraph or letter the names of those who were thus forever celebrated by the attention of that illustrious gathering. When the 'toasts' for the year had been chosen it was customary for their names to be scratched with a diamond on a drinking glass and, ballads being the fashion of the day, rhymes were often added as well. Garth seems to have had an especial facility for turning out these jingles and many of the verses have been attributed to his fancy; one illustration, however, will suffice to show what doggerel rhymes they were. The stanza is dedicated to Lady Hyde,—Prior's Kitty, beautiful and young,—and runs,

The God of wine grows jealous of his art;
He only fires the head, but Hyde the heart.
The Queen of love looks on and smiles to see
A nymph more mighty than a deity.

No one would have lamented more than Garth the perpetuation of such vapid lines as these and on a later occasion he excused them as having been spontaneously struck off to meet post-prandial demands. They led nevertheless to his being designated as the Kit-Kat poet. The whole custom suffered ridicule at the hands of Pope or Arbuthnot, one of whom wrote,

facts. The collection of portraits is said to have been kept intact by Tonson's descendants and is now at Bayfordbury in Herts. A portrait, supposed however to be Kneller's original Kit-Kat portrait, was presented in 1763 by Dr. Chauncey to the College of Physicians and now hangs in the Censor's Room at the left hand just as you enter the door. It is certainly a very good picture, though possibly a copy. It looks the opposite way from the mezzotint which was possibly reversed by the engraver. In the national Portrait Gallery there is another portrait supposedly by Kneller—a head alone.

Whence deathless Kit-Cat took its name,
Few critics can unriddle;
Some say from pastry-cook it came,
And some from Cat and Fiddle.

From no trim beaux its name it boasts,
Gray statesmen or green wits;
But from this pell-mell pack of toasts,
Of old "Cats" and young "Kits."

There are many stories, oft told, of Garth and his friends at these meetings. Some of them are neither credible nor creditable. One night while lounging over his wine he was jokingly rebuked by Steele for neglecting his patients. "Nay, nay, Dick," said he, pulling out his consulting list, "it is no urgent matter after all, for nine of them have such bad constitutions that not all the physicians in the world could save them; and the other six have such good constitutions that all the physicians in the world could not kill them."

After some twenty years of life, together with the thinning which death made in the Club's ranks, the gatherings themselves died away. In 1725 Vanbrugh wrote to Tonson, "You may believe, when I tell you, you were often talked of, both during the journey and at home; and our former Kit-Cat days were remembered with pleasure. We were one night reckoning who were left, and both Lord Carlisle and Cobham expressed a great desire of having one meeting next winter if you came to town; not as a club, but as old friends that have been of a club, and the best club that ever met."

GARTH THE PHYSICIAN AND FRIEND.

Whenever Garth shall raise his sprightly song,
Sense flows in easie numbers from his tongue;
Great Phoebus in his learned son we see
Alike in Physic as in Poetry.

JOHN GAY. *Poems* 1714. To Bernard Lintot.

FEW indeed have been the disciples of Aesculapius who have climbed 'the severe ascent of high Parnassus' and at the same time been faithful to their vocation. Too often has this divided allegiance meant the unqualified sacrifice of Physic upon the shrine of the Corycian nymphs: for

the public has ever been shy of the physician who allows his mind to soar above the level of most practical and mundane things, and a genius so inclined, has, in reciprocation, not uncommonly failed of success in his profession from an equal shyness of the public. As indicated by Gay's lines, such a fate was not meted out to Garth, for he continued throughout life to be for the members of the Whig party what his equally talented contemporary—the author of *John Bull*—was for the Tories; the fashionable and honored medical consultant. "Never," says Leigh Hunt, "were two better men sent to console the ailments of two witty parties, or show them what a nothing party is, compared with the humanity remaining under the quarrels of both." Their intolerance of one another was said to have been such that a Whig invalid seemed to think it impossible that he could derive any benefit from the advice of a Tory physician and upon the same principle a Tory patient industriously avoided calling on a Whig practitioner. Garth, however, much like Addison in his charitableness and tolerance, seems to have stood aloof from petty professional jealousies and political rivalries and though zealous for and constant to his party, yet he was very far from having the narrow and malicious spirit, so characteristic of the times, and which led, often enough, to hatred of those holding opposite political beliefs. Even Dr. Johnson acknowledges that Garth imparted his kindness equally among those who were and those who were not supposed to favor his principles. But even had he shared in these rivalries, the change in government that followed Anne's death in 1714, with Swift's fall and the reinstatement of the Whigs, would have placed him on the top wave of political preference.²³

With the inauguration of the Hanoverian dynasty, Garth was made the King's Physician in Ordinary, Physician General

²³ Radcliffe, it will be remembered, died a few months after Anne (Nov. 1, 1714), having been unable or unwilling to answer the call to her bedside; frightened to death, 'twas said, by the threats of the Tories, who blamed him for not keeping her alive. "You know your doctor (Radcliffe) is gone the way of all his patients, and was hard put to it how to dispose of an

to the Army, and in the same year was knighted with the hero of Blenheim's sword, so the story runs; presumably the famous diamond-hilted sword, which in after years Marlborough's widow, the celebrated Sarah, plead for in Chancery lest she should live to see her profligate grandchild, who had succeeded to the title, squander for cash the jewels with which it was adorned."

These honors, according to Chalmers, were no more than the just rewards of his medical merit though there need be no doubt that they were influenced by his known political affiliations. His social position, his oratorical and poetical success, coupled with the philanthropic spirit that led up to the latter, possibly, too, the part played in the Dryden incident, as well as his natural ability and popularity, all combined to lead him rapidly into an extensive and profitable practice. Cibber says, "He had the happiness of an early acquaintance with some of the most powerful, wisest, and wittiest men of the age in which he lived. He attached himself to a party, which at last obtained the ascendant, and he was equally successful in his

estate miserably unwieldy and splendidly unuseful to him." (Pope to Martha Blount.) When Garth learned what disposition Radcliffe had made of his property, he said that for him to establish a library was as inappropriate as for a eunuch to found a seraglio.

Arbuthnot had been Physician in Ordinary to the Queen—she had always been a Tory at heart—and the change in government removed him, too, permanently from the political horizon. In Swift's correspondence (*Unpublished Letters of Dean Swift*. Birkbeck Hill. 1899) there is a letter from Arbuthnot on "the terrible shock" which the Queen's death had given him. "I consider myself as a poor passenger; and that the earth is not to be forsaken nor the rocks removed from me." Reason enough for Arbuthnot's downfall has been given by 'the immortal Titmouse' in the description of the part he played in the conspiracy to place the young pretender on the throne—he who preferred Beatrice to the crown.

"That sword," said she, "that sword, my Lord would have carried to the Gates of Paris. Am I to live to see the diamonds picked off one by one and lodged at the pawn-brokers?" *Introductory Anecdotes*. Stewart.

fortune as his friends. Persons in these circumstances are seldom praised, or censured with moderation." In 1702, Garth became a Censor of the College, practising always, 'tis said, 'in strict regard to the honor and interest of the faculty; never stooping to prostitute the dignity of his profession through mean and sordid views of self interest by courting even the most popular and wealthy apothecaries'—a stand which contrasts badly with the story of Mead, the succeeding luminary in the medical sky, and his half guinea prescriptions. In strong contrast also to Mead's predecessor in possession of the Gold Headed Cane, does Garth stand out as one who endeared himself to his patients as well as to his friends by his politeness, accomplishments and consideration. He was one who knew that the

Same nerves are fashion'd to sustain
The greatest pleasure and the greatest pain.

The Dispensary. CANTO I.

In contemporary writings there are many references to his professional skill and reputation. Lady Mary Wortley Montague writes in 1714 to her husband, "But I should be very glad if you saw Dr. Garth if you would ask his opinion concerning the use of cold baths for young children," and again, "I hope the child is better than he was but I wish you would let Dr. Garth know—he has a bigness in his joints, but not much; his ankles seem chiefly to have a weakness. I should be very glad of his advice upon it and whether he approves rubbing them with spirits, which I am told is good for him." In the collected works of the notorious Mr. Thomas Brown appears the following epistle addressed:

TO DOCTOR GARTH:

Whether your letter or your prescription has made me well, I protest I cannot tell; but this much I can say, That as the one was the most nauseous thing I ever knew, so the other was the most entertaining. I would gladly ascribe my cure to the last; and if so, your practice will become so universal you must keep a secretary as well as an apothecary.

The observations I have made are these: that your prescription staid not long with me, but your letter has, especially that part of it where you told me I was not altogether out

Y^e 20th Feb; Banks.

1716
S^r Samuel Garth

527

in Repayment of Loan on
the Sixteenth 4th s. Aid,
Anno 1716.

Ord^r is taken this ^{20th} Day of
Feb^ry 1715 by Vertue and
in Purfuance of an Act lately passed in
Parliament, (Entitled, *An Act for Granting
an Aid to His Majesty, by a Land-Tax in
Great Britain, for the Service of the Year
1716.*) That you deliver and pay of such
His Majesty's Treasure as remains in your
Charge, arising by Vertue of the said
Act, unto S^r Samuel Garth

or his Assigns, the Sum of Two
hundred pounds

in Repayment of the like Sum by him lent
upon Credit of the said Act, and paid into
the Receipt of His Majesty's Exchequer
the said ^{20th} Day of Feb^ry 1715
as by a Talley bearing Date the same Day
appears; together with Interest for the
same, after the Rate of Six Pounds per Cent.
per Annum, at the End of every Three
Months, from the Date of the said Tal-
ley, until the Repayment of the Principal.
And these, together with his or his
Assigns Acquittance, shall be your Dis-
charge herein

7 March 1716

Paid in full

John Garth

This document, which is reproduced chiefly for the sake of showing Garth's signature as it was inscribed two years before his death, is interesting as well from the indication it gives of an income sufficient to let him respond generously to Walpole's call for a national loan to meet the government expenditures connected with the Rising of 1715.

Dr. Steiner has called my attention to a paragraph in Dowell's History of Taxation in England, Vol. II, p. 87, where it is stated that "the expense incurred in the suppression of the attempt of the Pretender rendered necessary the grant of a 4s. land tax in 1716." It is evident that Garth loaned the Government February 20th, 1715, the sum of £200, and was given as security the proceeds of this special tax (the 16th 4s. Aid), of which security this document is the certificate. On March 7, 1716, the loan was repaid and the Signature attached.

It will be remembered that the Calendar-Amendment Act establishing January 1st as the beginning of each year (instead of Lady-Day, March 25) was not adopted until 1752, so that the dates on this document refer to the Julian or old style calendar.

of your memory; you'll find me much altered in everything when you see me, but in my esteem for yourself: I that was as lank as a *crane* when I left you at *London*, am now as plump as an *ortolan*. I have left off my false calves, and had yesterday a great belly laid to me. A facetious widow, who is my confident in this affair, says you ought to father the child; for he that lends a man a sword is in some part accessory to the mischief is done with it; however, I'll forgive you the inconvenience you've put me to. I believe you were not aware you were giving life to two people. Pray let me have a consolatory letter from you upon this new calamity; for nothing can be so welcome, excepting rain in this sandy country where we live. The widow saith, she resolves to be sick on purpose to be acquainted with you; but I'll tell her she'll relish your prescriptions better in full health, and if at this distance you can do her no service, pray prescribe her

Your humble Servant.

And so the Churchills, and Lady Hervey—beautiful Molly Lepel—the Walpoles and others among those, who, through their letters, are still well known to us, despite the gap of almost two hundred years, often make mention of Garth the Aesculapian as well as of Garth the companion. But intimate as he seems to have been with those who were socially and politically among the great, his benevolence and true professional kindness toward the needy seems in no way to have suffered. His reputation for charitableness, as one learns from many sources, was well deserved. "No physician knew his art more nor his trade less."

Poor Dick Steele never forgot his own indebtedness to Garth. He dedicated his play, *The Lover*, to him, saying, "The pitiful artifices which empyrics are guilty of, to drain cash out of valetudinarians, are the abhorrence of your generous mind; and it is as common with Garth to supply indigent patients with money for food, as to receive it from wealthy ones for physic." And, hardly in accord with the story of the consultation list related above, Steele says farther on, "This tenderness interrupts the satisfaction of conversation, to which you are so happily turned; but we forgive you that our mirth is often insipid to you, while you sit absent to what passes amongst us, from your care of such as languish in sickness.

We are sensible that their distresses, instead of being removed by company, return more strongly to your imagination, by comparison of their condition with the jollities of health. But I forget I am writing a dedication * * * .”

The best of all of Steele’s tributes to his friend and physician I cannot help quoting still more at length. The genuine and warm-hearted gratitude which it displays as well as the gracefully indirect method in which this has been expressed make it an acknowledgment of services such as even the most deserving rarely receive. In the *Tatler*, No. 78, Saturday, October 8, 1709, Isaac Bickerstaff records that he has received the following letter :

“ Sir,

I am just recovered out of a languishing sickness by the care of Hippocrates, who visited me throughout my whole illness, and was so far from taking any fee, that he inquired into my circumstances, and would have relieved me also that way, but I did not want it. I know no method of thanking him, but recommending it to you to celebrate so great humanity in the manner you think fit, and to do it with the spirit and sentiments of a man just relieved from grief, misery and pain, to joy, satisfaction and ease; in which you will represent the grateful sense of your obedient servant,

I. B.”

“ I think the writer of this letter has put the matter in as good a dress as I can for him; yet I cannot but add my applause to what this distressed man has said. There is not a more useful man in the commonwealth than a good physician, and, by consequence, no worthier a person than he that uses his skill with generosity even to persons of condition, and compassion to those who are in want: which is the behavior of Hippocrates, who shows as much liberality in his practice, as he does wit in his conversation, and skill in his profession. A wealthy doctor, who can help a poor man, and will not without a fee, has less sense of humanity than a poor ruffian who kills a rich man to supply his necessities. It is something monstrous to consider a man of a liberal education tearing at the bowels of a poor family, by taking for a visit what would keep them a week. Hippocrates needs not the comparison of such extortion to set off his generosity, but I mention his generosity to add shame to such extortion.”

(32)

Many years later when writing of Garth in his *Lives of the Poets*, Johnson, as will be remembered, was led for similar reasons and in like vein, to pay the medical profession one of the most appreciated bits of praise it has ever received. "Whether what Temple says be true, that physicians have had more learning than the other faculties, I will not stay to enquire; but I believe every man has found in physicians great liberality and dignity of sentiment, very prompt effusion of beneficence and willingness to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre."*

CHARACTER AND PRIVATE LIFE.

IT is regrettable that we have so little information, beyond that conveyed by anecdote, of Garth's private life; regrettable too that much of what we know serves merely to indicate the character of the day rather than of the individual. The customs, the fashions, the morals were not our own and our judgment upon them must be given with a light hand. There are some things held up against him—notably irreligion and libertinism—which only the coarseness of the times enables us to excuse as being less bad in him than in the company he kept. Garth's own reflection upon Ovid's writings, we may, however, appropriately turn upon his own character. He says,

*It is interesting to note that Boswell quoted this paragraph in the letters to Cullen, Munro and Hope of the Edinburgh School, when he appealed to them for advice in Johnson's last illness. To which letter and "its venerable object, all of them paid the most polite attention" as would have been expected even without the quotation.

Through the many illnesses of his life as well as in this last one, had Johnson been considerably cared for by many distinguished medical men. "A few days after his departure, Dr. Brocklesby and Mr. Cruikshank who with great assiduity and humanity (and I must add generosity for neither they, nor Dr. Heberden nor Warren, nor Dr. Butler would accept any fees) had attended him, signified a wish that his body might be opened." G. Birkbeck Hill; *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, 1897. Vol. II, p. 136.)

“It must be granted that when there appears an infinite variety of inimitable excellences, it would be too harsh and disingenuous to be severe on such faults, as have escap'd rather thro' want of leisure, and opportunity to correct, than thro' the erroneous turn of a deprav'd judgment.”

During his early life in London, Garth is said to have resided in humble quarters in the Haymarket—according to the Rate Books of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, ‘on the East side six doors from the top.’ It was in a garret of this same street that Addison lived when he wrote *The Campaign*, the poem that started his political fortune rolling, and it is quite probable that both of them were among the distinguished company present at the laying of the corner stone of the Queen's Theatre—now the Haymarket Opera House—designed by their friend Vanbrugh. Another bystander was the much abused laureate Colley Cibber, who subsequently wrote, “of this theatre I saw the first stone laid on which was inscribed THE LITTLE WHIG in honor of a lady of extraordinary beauty, then the celebrated Toast and Pride of that party.” This was Lady Sunderland, Marlborough's second daughter, and it was to her and Vanbrugh that Garth referred in the line, “By beauty founded and by wit designed,” which occurs in his Prologue, subsequently read at the formal opening of this famous Opera House.”

In the same year—1705—Garth removed to more fashionable quarters, to St. James in fact, where he resided near his friends the Churchills, whose particular favor and esteem he always enjoyed. Here he was married to Martha, the daughter of Sir Henry Beaufoy, and here, so far as is known, he continued to dwell until later in life a country home at Harrow-on-the-Hill was taken by him for Lady Garth and Martha, his only daughter.

Though his professional labors must have kept him much in town, his affection for ‘The Hill’ where many delightful

* The Haymarket Opera House opened April 9, 1705, with a performance of Dryden's ‘Indian Emperor.’

social hours were passed with his friends, was such that he determined it should be his final resting place and a vault was prepared in the church for the purpose.*

The visitations between neighboring country houses, then as now, were many and Garth's companionship, whether as guest or entertainer, must have been eagerly courted. "On the morrow I am engaged to go to Harrow-on-the-Hill with company," writes Pope in a note to Kneller, and in return we find Garth at the Twickenham Grotto, whence Pope sends word to Lady Mary Wortley Montague (October, 1717), who is still in Constantinople and still an object of Pope's fickle admiration,—“Dr. Garth makes epigrams in prose when he speaks of you.” It is perhaps but another evidence of that desirable quality for which Garth was so distinguished—his good nature—that his friendships endured so long. It is a quality to which so many allusions are made and with such a unanimity of opinion that one would weary of it were it not for the realization that two hundred years ago the designation had a widely different meaning from that into which it has now become corrupted—with a suggestion of complaisance and the mental inactivity that accompany ready adjustment to the moods of others, and that too often belong to a wearisome though amiable personality. Of all his contemporaries not even Addison seems to have been so universally liked. In Steele's dedication, from which I have already so freely borrowed, he says, “As soon as I thought of making the *Lover* a present to one of my friends, I resolved without distracting my choice to send it to the BEST NATURED MAN. You are so universally

* In Hay's *Religio Philosophi* the circumstances of Garth's ordering a vault for himself and his wife in Harrow Church is spoken of as the result of some accidental whim. His will is dated 20th May 1717; and his property including Edgemoor in Bucks he bequeaths to his daughter, Martha Beaufoy Boyle (Cunningham). This will was made shortly after the death (May 1st, 1717) of Lady Garth, he being himself in ill health at the time. The daughter had become the wife of Col. William Boyle, son of the Hon. Col. Henry Boyle, uncle of the last Earl of Burlington of that name.

known for this character, that an epistle so directed would find its way to you without your name; and I believe nobody but yourself would deliver such a superscription to any other person."

The adulation of soft dedications of the 18th century must of course be taken into account in this eulogy, though there need be little doubt of the genuineness of Steele's feeling; but there were others notoriously of less kindly instincts who had the same regard for Garth. Eminent among them was "he, who hardly drank tea without a stratagem." Garth's friendship with Pope began when the latter was a mere boy and although Arbuthnot and Swift may at one time have been his closer intimates, nevertheless cordial relations with Garth were continued with a constancy which the younger man rarely exhibited. The ease with which Pope's animosities were aroused on seemingly the most trivial grounds makes it all the more creditable that Garth remained among the few who first or last suffered in no way from the stings of the poet's satire. His 'Pastorals' were written by the stripling minstrel of Binfield when only sixteen and the second of them—Summer—was dedicated to Garth."

So later, in his 'Epistle to Arbuthnot,' he refers to Garth's early encouragement of his work in the lines—

"But why then publish? Granville the polite
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well natured Garth, inflamed with earthly praise;
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd by lays."

Good reason indeed had he to feel gratitude toward this patron of his youth, if we are to credit—as we should, for it comes through the Rev. Jos. Spence from Pope's own lips—the story of how Garth with Addison and Congreve brought him before Lord Halifax for a reading of the first sections of his translation of the Iliad, how his Lordship criticised several

"Of this, Wharton says, "It is unfortunate that this second pastoral, the worst of the four, should be inscribed to the best of all Pope's four friends to whom they were addressed"—to Sir Wm. Trumbull, Garth, Mr. Wycherley and Mrs. Tempest.

passages, requesting that they be altered and how Garth, who took Pope home in his chariot, laughed at his embarrassment and told him to leave them as they were, but to thank his Lordship and then go and read them again to him after a few months, which he did to the gratification of Lord Halifax who cried out, "Ay now, Mr. Pope, they are perfectly right! Nothing can be better."

During their town life they were found together at Button's Coffee House, where they were immortalized by Hogarth's pencil,²⁸ and they continued to fraternize after Pope left the dear, damn'd distracting town to pass the remainder of 'that long illness, his life,' at Twickenham. And there Garth, no longer needed as literary patron, probably did more to encourage the poet's feeble body than his verse. Indeed the tables were so turned, that Pope became the advocate of his friend's Muse, announcing to Richardson "that there was hardly an alteration in *The Dispensary* of the innumerable ones through every edition that was not for the better; and that he took Garth to be one of the few truly judicious authors." For Garth did not live up to his threat of writing no more. The most pretentious as well as the last work in which he engaged was the editing of a beautiful great folio of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.²⁹ Of this Wharton says, "About this time it became fashionable among the wits at 'Button's,' the mob of gentlemen that wrote with ease, to translate Ovid. Their united performances were published in form by Garth, with a preface written in a flowery and lively style, but full of strange opinions." And soon after its appearance Pope wrote to Curyll, August 6, 1717,—“Dr. Garth has published a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by several hands with

²⁸ I do not know, in this sketch, who can be the third person who stands by the table at the artist's right. Another similar sketch, also attributed to Hogarth, is reproduced in B. W. Richardson's *Disciples of Aesculapius*. In this one a figure, undoubtedly Arbuthnot, appears sitting between Garth and Pope. "You may know Arbuthnot because he can only sit," says Swift, in the *Journal to Stella*.

²⁹ Published by J. Tonson in 15 books, 1717.

a preface and a dedication in a new fashion, Folio, price 20s. I advise you to borrow it." Between *The Dispensary*, his first, and this, Garth's last literary venture, there appeared several minor poems, one of which must needs be mentioned, as an incident arising from it seems to show how well the author deserved his epithet of good nature. In 1710 when the Government changed hands, Garth wrote a short poem of kindly address dedicated to Lord Godolphin on the reverse of his political fortunes. In the Tory paper, the *Examiner*, No. 6, this poem was attacked by Prior, not only for its sense but for its versification and with all the outrage of party virulence. Garth had poise enough not to retaliate, but his satisfaction must have been great at the appearance of an unanswerable defence made for him by Addison, who concluded by observing that "the same person who has endeavored to prove that he who wrote *The Dispensary* was no poet, will very suddenly undertake to show that he who gained the battle of Blenheim was no general."

With like restraint Garth had not deigned to reply to the accusation of an earlier time that *The Dispensary* was really the product of another's pen, a slander, raised by the envy of authorship, that would now be forgotten were it not for Pope's lines :

With him most authors steal their works, or buy;
Garth did not write his own Dispensary.

Essay on Criticism.

It was the lack of just such good nature that led to the sorry breach between Addison and Pope, which arose out of the jealousies engendered by Pope's and Tickell's translations of the Iliad. We find the fat, cringing Gay adding fuel to the fire in a letter addressed to Pope, July 8, 1715 :—

"I have just set down Sir Samuel Garth at the Opera. He bids me tell you that everybody is pleased with your translation but a few at Button's; and that Sir Richard Steele told him that Mr. Addison said Tickell's translation was the best that was ever in any language. He treated me with extreme civility, and out of kindness gave me a squeeze by the forefinger. I am informed that



D. Garth

Pope

D. Garth del.

S. Ireland fecit.

Characters who frequented Bullon's Coffee-house about the year 1720

at Button's your character is made very free with as to morals etc., and one Mr. Addison says that your translation and Tickell's are both very well done, but the latter has more of Homer. I am etc."

The extreme civility Garth doubtless gave to all, but his companion deserved it little more than the squeeze by the forefinger.

GARTH'S RELIGION, ILLNESS AND DEATH.

IT must have seemed odd to all who have interested themselves in Garth's life that, considering the scant notes which are accessible, there is so much said on the subject of his religion or irreligion. It naturally brings to mind the sorry publicity thrust 150 years later upon the beliefs of another agnostic, to whom might also be applied the sentiment in Pope's oft repeated statement that "if ever there was a good Christian without knowing himself to be so it was Dr. Garth."* His presumed hostility to every form of Christian faith seems to have been due partly to the irregularity of the exercises at Dryden's funeral, over which he presided, as well as to an early epitaph on St. Evremond, accredited to him and intended for Westminster Abbey, in which he commended him for his indifference to all religion. It does not seem to have been Garth's practice, however, to parade his personal beliefs or disbeliefs, for the tale has come down to us that being one day questioned by Addison upon his religious creed, he replied that he was of the religion of wise men, and being asked to explain himself further, he added that wise men kept their

* The same expression Pope put in verse when, shortly before Garth's death, he wrote his farewell to London "Dear, damn'd distracting town, farewell."

"Farewell Arbuthnot's raillery
On every learned sot;
And Garth, the best good Christian he,
Altho' he knows it not."

Here in the same stanza Pope links his two distinguished medical friends—Tory and Whig.

own secrets. Whatever may have been these secrets, his friends knew that, as his days became numbered, doubt and uncertainties arose in his mind and as he neared the end Addison made a futile effort to console him with the hope of a life hereafter, but was turned off with the reply that the doctrines of Christianity were incomprehensible. If, however, we are to believe the story which came from Mr. Blount, the father of Pope's Martha, to Pope, and through him to be recorded among the first of Spence's anecdotes, he repented this attitude on his deathbed. "It was usual for him to say: 'That if there was any such thing as religion 'twas among the Roman Catholics.' Probably from the efficacy we give the sacraments. He died a Papist; as I was assured by Mr. Blount, who carried the Father to him in his last hours." He did not take any care of himself in his last illness; and had talked for three or four years as though tired of life; in short, I believe he was willing to go."

Indeed, not only did he take no care of himself in his last illness, but he actually essayed to have his end hurried, if we are to place further credence on the hearsay anecdotes of the time. I cannot do better than quote again from Spence, who says:

When Dr. Garth had been for a good while in a bad state of health, he sent one day for a physician with whom he was particularly intimate and conjured him by their friendship and by everything that was most sacred (if there was anything more sacred), to tell him sincerely whether he thought he should ever be able to get rid of his illness or not. His friend, thus conjured, told him that he thought that he might struggle on with it perhaps for some years, but that he much feared that he would never get the better of it entirely. Dr. Garth thanked him for dealing so fairly with him, turned the discourse to other things and talked very cheerfully all the rest of the time he staid with him. As soon as he was gone, he called for his servant, said he was a good deal out of order and would go to bed; he then sent him for a surgeon

"On which Johnson observes that "a mind wearied with perpetual doubt willingly seeks repose in the bosom of an infallible Church."

to bleed him. Soon after he sent for a second surgeon, by a different servant, and was bled in the other arm. He then said he wanted rest, and when everybody had quitted the room, he took off the bandages and lay down with the design of bleeding to death. His loss of blood made him faint away, and that stopped the bleeding; he afterwards sunk into a sound sleep, slept all the night, waked in the morning without his usual pains, and said if it would continue so he would be content to live on.

It was perhaps this acknowledged attempt to speed the end of his sufferings, coupled with the playful remark accredited to him that he was glad he was dying, for he was weary of having his shoes pulled on and off, which led "ill tongues and worse hearts," as Pope said, "to brand even his last moments as wrongfully as they did his life with irreligion." Can we not commiserate him? A physician who held not the layman's fear of death; wifeless, for Lady Garth had been buried at Harrow the year before; not having the solace brought by religious faith; and doomed to linger on with a painful illness. It was a Baconian saying that man fears not being dead, but only the stroke of death; but to Garth and many others of his kind, necessarily familiar with death, not even the event is fearful—Garth's "friendly stroke."

To die is landing on some silent shore
Where billows never beat, nor tempests roar,
Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 'tis o'er.
The Dispensary.

Memorable are the words of William Hunter to Dr. Combe. "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die."

Beautiful as the view still remains, the pointed spire of St. Mary's of Harrow-on-the-Hill no longer looks out, as in Garth's day, on unbroken woodland and country side, but on the smoke and roofs of approaching London, apart from whose

strife and turmoil he had hoped forever to rest. Forgotten and half hidden by some modern furnishings, in the corner of the chancel one may find a large gray flag stone, on which a part at least of this simple inscription may still be read :

IN THIS VAULT LIES YE BODY
OF YE LADY GARTH LATE WIFE
OF SAMUEL GARTH, KT.
WHO DYED YE 1 OF MAY,
IN YE YEAR 1717.

SIR SAMUEL GARTH
OBIIT JAN. THE 18, 1718.

*read
this*