

THE LIFE OF  
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.  
BY JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

..... Quo fit ut OMNIS  
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella  
VITA SENIS. HORAT.

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M DCCC XXVI.

the king and queen at dinner.—We saw the other ladies at dinner—Madame Elizabeth, with the princess of Guiméné.—At night we went to a comedy. I neither saw nor heard.—Drunken women.—Mrs. Th. preferred one to the other.

“ Oct. 20. Friday. We saw the queen mount in the forest—Brown habit; rode aside: one lady rode aside—The queen’s horse light grey;—martingale.—She galloped.—We then went to the apartments, and admired them.—Then wandered through the palace.—In the passages, stalls, and shops.—Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out.—We saw the king’s horses and dogs.—The dogs almost all English.—Degenerate.

“ The horses not much commended.—The stables cool; the kennel filthy.

“ At night the ladies went to the opera. I refused, but should have been welcome.

“ The king fed himself with his left hand as we.

“ Saturday, 21. In the night I got round.—We came home to Paris.—I think we did not see the chapel.—Tree broken by the wind.—The French chairs made all of boards painted.

“ N. Soldiers at the court of justice.—Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates.—Dijon woman <sup>t</sup>.

“ Fagots in the palace.—Every thing slovenly, except in the chief rooms.—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

“ Women’s saddles seem ill made. Queen’s bridle woven with silver.—Tags to strike the horse.

“ Sunday, Oct. 22. To Versailles, a mean town. Carriages of business passing.—Mean shops against the wall.—Our way lay through Sêve, where the china manufacture.—Wooden bridge at Sêve, in the way to Versailles.—The palace of great extent.—The front long; I saw it not perfectly.—The menagerie. Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame.—Halcyons, or gulls.—Stag and hind,

<sup>t</sup> See p. 340.

young.—Aviary, very large: the net, wire.—Black stag of China, small.—Rhinoceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches 'cross; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips; a vast animal, though young; as big, perhaps, as four oxen.—The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing.—The brown bear put out his paws;—all very tame.—The lion.—The tigers I did not well view.—The camel, or dromedary with two bunches called the *huguin*<sup>u</sup>, taller than any horse.—Two camels with one bunch.—Among the birds was a pelican, who, being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish. His feet well webbed: he dipped his head, and turned his long bill sidewise. He caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

“ Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles. It has an open portico; the pavement, and, I think, the pillars, of marble.—There are many rooms, which I do not distinctly remember.—A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Louis the fourteenth by the Venetian state. In the council room almost all that was not door or window, was, I think, looking-glass.—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house.—The upper floor paved with brick.—Little Vienne.—The court is ill paved.—The rooms at the top are small, fit to sooth the imagination with privacy. In the front of Versailles are small basons of water on the terrace, and other basons, I think, below them. There are little courts.—The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrours, not very large, but joined by frames. I suppose the large plates were not yet made.—The playhouse was very large.—The chapel I do not remember if we saw.—We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon.—The foreign office paved with bricks.—The dinner half a louis each, and, I think, a louis over. Money given at menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

“ Oct. 23. Monday. Last night I wrote to Levet.

<sup>u</sup> This epithet should be applied to this animal with one bunch.—BOSWELL.

—We went to see the looking-glasses wrought. They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate upon another with grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told. Those that are to be polished, are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal: they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder, which is used last, seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aqua fortis; they called it, as Baretti said, “marc de l'eau forte,” which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and salt-petre. The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver. To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites. Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which, by its mutual [attraction] rises very high. Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is滑ed till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it. It is then, I think, pressed upon cloth, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury: the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

“In the way I saw the Grêve, the mayor's house, and the Bastile.

“We then went to Sansterre, a brewer\*. He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at 6d. a bottle. He brews 4,000 barrels a year. There

\* The detestable ruffian who afterwards conducted Louis the sixteenth to the scaffold, and commanded the troops that guarded it during his murder.—MALONE.