

LESSON V.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON. DIED 1767.

Pamela.

HENRY FIELDING. DIED 1754.

Tom Jones.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT. DIED 1771.

Humphrey Clinker.

38. Who are usually classed together as the three most famous British novelists of the eighteenth century?

Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett.

39. Which of these writers comes first in the order of time?

Samuel Richardson.

40. Do you know anything of his life?

It was a common one. He was a prudent and successful English tradesman.

41. In what branch of fiction did Richardson lead the way?

He was the pioneer in that branch of fiction which describes *the common events of life.*

42. Which was his earliest production?

*Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded.**

43. Who next followed in the new path struck out by Richardson?

Henry Fielding, an English lawyer of great genius and loose morals, who jeered at the virtue pictured

see in him a brother, and a suffering one. We live his life on the island; we share his terrible fear at the discovery of the footprint, his courage in destroying the cannibal savages and rescuing the victim. Where is there in fiction another man *Friday*? From the beginning of his misfortunes until he is again sailing for England—after nearly thirty years of captivity—he holds us spell-bound by the reality, the simplicity, and the pathos of his narrative.—*Coppée.*

* Richardson's other works are *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Sir Charles Grandison.*

by Richardson in *Pamela*, and wrote a novel* to make the wicked jeer more lasting.

44. Which is his greatest work?

Tom Jones.

45. How did Fielding particularly excel?

As a most skilled delineator of human life—often in its most degraded forms.

46. For what do his productions deserve severe condemnation?

For their coarseness and gross indelicacy. It is no excuse to say that his tainted pages are but real pictures of English life in his day.

47. Who was Tobias Smollett?

He was a physician, a native of Scotland, and stood third among the old masters of English fiction.

48. Which was the last and best effort of his genius?

Humphrey Clinker, the finest and most humorous of his works.

49. Are Smollett's novels open to censure on the score of immorality?

They are, and justly so. He even exceeds Fielding in vile coarseness, and many of his chapters are shockingly obscene.

50. Sum up the chief points in which Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett each excel.

Richardson is noted for passion and sentimentality; Fielding, for unrivalled humor, satire, freshness, and skill in picturing human nature; and Smollett, for broad humor and comic incidents.† Of the three, Fielding was much the greatest genius.

* *Joseph Andrews.*

† Each of those authors wrote three noted works of fiction.

"Richardson always wrote with a moral purpose, which the other two had not; though that does not hinder much that he wrote from being of an objectionable tendency."—*T. Arnold.*

"Richardson, marked according to our standard, might be set down as licentious. As compared with Fielding, however, and others of his age, his works appear to great advantage, and show a distinct moral tendency. Richardson himself probably never dreamed but that he was furthering the cause of good morals; and the favor with which *Pamela* and *Clarissa* were read and recommended by the best and wisest of the day shows us how careful we must be in our estimates of writers of works of imagination."—*Hart.*

LESSON VI.

ALBAN BUTLER. DIED 1773.

Lives of the Saints.

RICHARD CHALLONER. DIED 1781.

- (1) *Memoirs of Missionary Priests and other Catholics.*
- (2) *The Catholic Christian Instructed.*
- (3) *Revision of the Douay Bible.*

51. Who was Alban Butler?

A native of England and a pious and learned Catholic priest, he was for many years president of the English college at St. Omer, France.

52. Which is his chief work?

The Lives of the Saints.

53. What does this work comprise?

It comprises the lives of the Apostles, Doctors, Fathers, Martyrs, and other principal Saints from the foundation of the Church down to the writer's own time.*

* *The Lives of the Saints* is divided into 12 volumes—sometimes published in 4—corresponding to the months of the year. Each volume contains about 120 lives, together with many notes, critical, historical, literary, and explanatory. The work is truly a vast storehouse of curious learning both secular and ecclesiastical. It was translated into French, Spanish, and Italian.

54. What are its merits?

It is an incomparable production—the result of a life of unwearied piety, labor, and learning. Even Gibbon pronounced it "a work of merit"; and we risk nothing in saying that it is the greatest storehouse of Catholic biography in the English language.*

55. Who was Bishop Challoner?

The Right Rev. Richard Challoner was one of the most learned and best known English Catholic writers of the eighteenth century.

56. What subjects were chiefly enriched by his pen?

Devotional, religious, and controversial subjects.

57. What is his *Memoirs of Missionary Priests and other Catholics*?†

It is a most interesting series of sketches of Catholic missionaries and other faithful men and women who lived, labored, and suffered death in England during the time of the barbarous Penal Laws. An account is given of 180 martyrs who suffered in the reign of Elizabeth alone.

58. Which is the most popular of all Dr. Challoner's works?

The Catholic Christian Instructed, which was first published in 1737. It is in the form of question and answer, and is one of the very best and shortest works on the *Sacraments, Holy Mass, Festivals, Ceremonies, and Observances of the Catholic Church.*

* It is to be regretted that Butler's notices of the *Irish Saints* are so extremely meagre and imperfect. Even such illustrious personages as St. Patrick, St. Bridget, and St. Columbkille are dismissed in short, dry sketches that can barely claim the merit of accuracy.

† First published in 1741. The full title is *Memoirs of Missionary Priests and other Catholics of both Sexes who suffered Death in England, on Religious Accounts, 1577 to 1684.* A new edition has recently been issued.

59. What was his chief Scriptural labor?

A much-esteemed revision of the Douay version of the Catholic Bible.*

60. What may be said of the style of Butler and Challoner? They both wrote in pure, calm, elegant English.

LESSON VII.

DAVID HUME. DIED 1776.

(1) *Essays.* (2) *History of England.*

WILLIAM ROBERTSON. DIED 1793.

(1) *History of Scotland.*
(2) *History of Charles V.*
(3) *History of America.*

61. Who were the British historians of the eighteenth century?

Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon.

62. Do you know anything of Hume's career?

He was a native of Edinburgh, and led a studious and retired life.

† It is commonly called the *Douay Bible*, because it was first published at Douay, in France. The English college at Douay was established in 1568 by the famous *Cardinal Allen* and other learned Catholic professors who had been banished from Oxford and Cambridge by the fanatics of the English Reformation. The translation of the whole Sacred Volume was completed in 1582, and the New Testament was printed at Rheims in that year. This is why the English Catholic Bible is sometimes called the *Rheims-Douay Bible*. Owing to want of funds, however, the Old Testament was not published until 1609, in which year it was issued at Douay. The burden of translation fell mainly upon *Dr. Gregory Martin*, renowned as one of the greatest Greek and Hebrew scholars of that age; and his work was revised by *Cardinal Allen*, *Dr. Richard Bristow*, and *Dr. William Reynolds*. The notes to the New Testament were from the pen of *Dr. Bristow*, and the notes to the Old Testament were the work of *Dr. Thomas Worthington*. This version has the approval of the Faculties of the Universities of Rheims and Douay, but it has never received a Roman approbation. The *Douay Bible* is a direct translation from the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome. The first edition of Challoner's revision is dated 1750.

63. Which were the first works he gave to the world?

Essays on various moral, political, and philosophical subjects.

64. To what dangerous class of thinkers did Hume belong?

He was a free-thinker and a thorough-going infidel, who sneered at the Christian religion.

65. What period does his *History of England* cover?

From the earliest period to 1688.

66. What may be said of the style of this work?

The style is flowing and graceful, but is very far from being idiomatic. Hume was a Scotchman, and this, together with his French studies, gave a wrong turn to his phraseology.

67. How is this once-lauded *History* now estimated by the best scholars?

It is acknowledged to be weak, one-sided, and untrustworthy. Hume was a careless, dishonest, bigoted, and superficial writer. He is no longer an authority on English history.*

68. Who was William Robertson?

He was a native of Scotland, a Presbyterian minister, and for some time head of the University of Edinburgh.

* Speaking of the historical writers of the eighteenth century, Henry Reed says: "Of these historians *Gibbon* is the only one whose history preserves to this day its authority, on the score of such extensive research and deep learning as were required by his large theme. With regard to *Hume* and *Robertson*—the two most popular historians—the labors of later students of history have demonstrated that their works are of that indolent and superficial character which destroys their authority as trustworthy chroniclers. I do not suppose that any careful and conscientious inquirer after historic truth would at the present day consider a question of history determined by a statement in the *Histories* of either *Hume* or *Robertson*."—*Lectures on English Literature*.
"One object, always uppermost with *Hume*, is to malign the Catholic religion."—*Cobbett*.

69. Name his chief works.

(See list at the beginning of the Lesson.)

70. Which of these do you consider Robertson's most important work?

The History of America.

71. What does it contain?

The History of America, in eight books, contains an account of the discovery of the New World and of the progress of the Spanish arms and colonies on its shores down to the latter part of the eighteenth century. It covers the most splendid portion of early American history.*

72. What may be said of the once-admired style of this writer?

His style, though stately and elegant, is too cold, wordy, affected, and rhetorical.

73. What, perhaps, prevented Robertson from being a great historian?

He was bigoted, frigid in feeling, and careless in research.† He lacked that industry, that deep love of truth, that absorbing interest in his subject, and that marvellous life-giving power which are the property of true genius, and the real secret of success in the work of historical composition.

* Robinson's work does not touch the French or British colonies in America. Mexico and Peru receive the largest share of attention.

† Here is one instance out of many. Robertson, while engaged in writing his *History of Scotland*, had consulted Hume about the trial of Mary Queen of Scots. The bigoted, easy-going Hume sent him a version which was at once used. But in the mean time a gentleman who went more deeply into such things showed the historian of England that his version was false. It was too late. Robertson's work had just gone to press, and the publisher refused to have any changes or corrections made. And thus, says a late writer, "the blind led the blind, and *The History of Scotland*—whole sheets of which ought to have been re-written, and scattered passages founded upon theory erased—was given to the world because the printer refused to disturb the press and the author was disinclined to demolish such a fair creation!"

LESSON VIII.

EDWARD GIBBON. DIED 1794.

Chief works: (1) *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*
(2) *Autobiography.*

74. Who was Edward Gibbon?

He was the greatest British historian of the eighteenth century.

75. In a few words, tell us something of his career.

He was a native of England, studied for a time at Oxford,* then in Switzerland, and at the age of twenty-eight, while on a visit to Rome, he conceived the idea of writing his famous history.† He died six years after its completion.

76. What period of time is embraced in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*?

It begins with the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98, and ends with the fall of the Eastern Empire, A.D. 1453.

* It was while at Oxford that Gibbon became a Catholic. He was led to this step by a careful reading of the works of Bossuet and Parsons. His displeased father at once sent the young student to Lausanne in Switzerland, to be under the training of a Protestant minister. With such influences brought to bear upon him, the unstable Gibbon soon ceased to be a Catholic. But he did not return to Protestantism. He became an unbeliever. Speaking of the famous work that had most to do in directing his course toward the Catholic Church—Bossuet's *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*—he says: "In the *History of the Variations*, an attack equally vigorous and well-directed, Bossuet shows, by a happy mixture of reasoning and narration, the errors, mistakes, uncertainties, and contradictions of our first Reformers, whose variations, as he learnedly maintains, bear the marks of error; while the uninterrupted unity of the Catholic Church is a sign and testimony of infallible truth. I read, approved, and believed."—*Gibbon's Memoirs.*

† "It was at Rome," he writes, "on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the Barefooted Friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind."

77. What is your opinion of the *style* in which *The Decline and Fall* is written?

It is elegant and powerful, but in Gibbon's style we miss the charm of simplicity. All is pompous and elaborate. He can say nothing in plain terms. He is always trying to shine.

78. Is this famous History, then, a work of great merit?

It is, in many respects, a great historical composition. Sweeping over a vast field in the annals of the world, it exhibits astonishing industry, and wide and varied learning skilfully handled. But in spite of its many merits, it must be said that it is a very dangerous and offensive work.

79. How so?

Gibbon was destitute of moral feeling and nobility of sentiment. He was dead to the moral grandeur of the Catholic Church. And though nowhere professing unbelief, he takes care on every occasion to mock at the beauty, power, and purity of the Christian religion. He has praises only for paganism. He cannot be just, because he will not believe.*

80. Is there any other feature that is especially offensive in *The Decline and Fall*?

There is; its pages are often stained by that wo-

* The very fact that Gibbon could not appreciate the heavenly action of the Catholic Church on those peoples which she converted, civilized, educated into national greatness, and stimulated to all kinds of noble and heroic deeds, is in itself a proof conclusive that he was wholly wanting in the very first qualification essential to the historian of the long, eventful period covered by the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon had no spiritual aspirations himself, and he could neither appreciate nor understand them in others. His soul was contracted, his heart deprived of feeling, his moral nature stunted, and his mental eyesight dimmed by the cold, withering influence of infidelity. Those who wish to know more about the fallacy of Gibbon's arguments, and the true history of the rise of Christianity, may consult Morison's *Life of Gibbon*, Cardinal Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, and Father Thébaud's *Church and the Gentile World*.

ful depravity of imagination which delights in the description of scenes disgusting and licentious.

81. What is Gibbon's *Autobiography*?

As the title indicates, it is his life written by himself. It is one of the most interesting autobiographies in our language. *RDW*

"When a Christian bishop or doctor, or a religious king, comes before his field of vision, it is not in Gibbon to be just: he cannot or will not believe that such a man was anything more than a compound of enthusiasm and superstition, in whom morality was always ready to give way to ecclesiastical considerations; and his sneering cavils seem to leave their trail upon the purest virtue, the most exalted heroism, which the times that he writes of produced for the instruction of mankind. He is in thorough sympathy with no one except Julian the Apostate!"—*Thomas Arnold*.

"Gibbon is a writer full of thoughts. In general, his language is powerful and exquisite; but it has, to great excess, the faults of elaboration, pomposity, and monotony. His style is full of Latin and French words and phrases. That elaborate and half-Latin manner of writing by which Gibbon is distinguished had before him been brought very much into fashion by the example of the critic Johnson; in principle at least the English have now departed from it, and speak of it as a false kind, and one hostile to the spirit of their language. The work of Gibbon, however instructive and fascinating it may be, is nevertheless at bottom an offensive one, on account of his propensity to the infidel opinions and impious mockeries of Voltaire."—*F. Schlegel*.

Edm. Tom

Edm. Tom

LESSON IX.

SAMUEL JOHNSON. DIED 1784.

Chief works: (1) *Dictionary of the English Language*
(2) *Lives of the English Poets*.
(3) *Rasselas, a Tale*.
(4) *The Rambler, and The Idler*.
(5) *Journey to the Hebrides*.

82. Who was Dr. Samuel Johnson?

He was an English poet, critic, essayist, novelist, dramatist, and lexicographer, who holds a central

place among the writers of the second half of the eighteenth century.

83. Tell us something of his life.

It was a life of many ups and downs. In youth he had a hard battle with poverty and disease. He was nearly fifty before he became well known.* But care and industry raised him from the condition of a hungry, penniless wanderer to the rank of Great Mogul of English letters.

84. What was Johnson's most important contribution to English letters?

His great *Dictionary of the English Language*, which was published in 1755.†

85. What does the volume on the *Lives of the English Poets* comprise?

It comprises the lives of *fifty-two poets* and *thirteen eminent persons*. He begins with Cowley, and writes of the leading poets down to his own day. The work gives us Johnson's estimate of many of the names in English literature, and is the last important volume that came from his pen.

86. What story did Johnson write during the evenings of

* In his poem called *London*, Johnson thus gives expression to his own long struggles:

"This mournful truth is everywhere confessed—
Slow rises worth by poverty depressed."

† The first English dictionary was John Bullokar's *English Expositor of Hard Words*. It was published in 1616, the very year that Shakespeare died, and contained about 5000 words. Johnson's *Dictionary* contained about 43,000 words. Since that time, great advances have been made in English lexicography.

Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary* (edition of 1880) contains 118,000 words. Worcester's *Dictionary* (edition of 1881) contains 116,000 words. Ogilvie's *Imperial Dictionary* (edition of 1881) contains 130,000 words.

But the greatest of all English dictionaries—only a portion of which has yet been published—is the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, edited by Dr. James A. H. Murray.

one week, in 1759, in order to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral?

Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.

87. What were *The Rambler* and *The Idler*?

They were periodicals from Johnson's pen somewhat on the plan of *The Spectator*. Each lived about two years.

88. What was the origin of his famous *Journey to the Hebrides*?

During a tour through the western islands of Scotland, Johnson gave charming descriptions in a series of letters to a lady-friend, which he afterwards prepared for publication. The work has many eloquent passages.*

89. What may be said of Johnson's style?

It was neither simple nor natural. It was a style marked by "words of learned length and thundering sound." But it seems there was some strange sympathy between Johnson's bulky frame† and the ponderous terms that fell from his pen.

* Here is one. It exhibits Johnson's style at his best. It is his reflections on landing at Iona, which had been blessed by the life and labors of St. Columbkille:

"We are now treading," says Johnson, "that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavored, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warm among the ruins of Iona."

† A huge and slovenly figure, clad in a greasy brown coat and coarse black worsted stockings, wearing a gray wig with scorched foretop, rolls in his arm-chair long past midnight, holding in a dirty hand his nineteenth cup of tea. As he pauses to utter one of his terrible growls of argument, or rather of dogmatic assertion,

90. What celebrated work has done much to spread the name of Johnson and to immortalize his fame?

Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.*

"In massive force of understanding, multifarious knowledge, sagacity, and moral intrepidity, no writer of the eighteenth century surpassed Dr. Samuel Johnson. His various works, with their sententious morality and high-sounding sonorous periods—his manly character and appearance—his great virtues and strong prejudices—his early and severe struggles—his love of argument and society, into which he poured the treasures of a rich and full mind—his wit, repartee, and brow-beating—his rough manners and kind heart—his curious household in which were congregated the lame, the blind, and the despised—his very looks, gesticulations, and dress—have all been brought so vividly before us by his biographer, Boswell, that to readers of every class Johnson is as well known as a member of their own family."—*Chambers*.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER V., BOOK II.

1. Four English sovereigns reigned during the eighteenth century—*Anne, George I., George II., and George III.*
2. The union of England and Scotland took place in 1707.
3. France ceded Canada to England in 1763.
4. The American colonists achieved their independ-

commencing invariably with a thunderous "Sir," we have leisure to note the bitten nails, the scars of king's evil that mark his swollen face, and the convulsive workings of the muscles round mouth and eyes which accompany the puffs and snorts foreboding a coming storm of ponderous English talk. Such was the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson in his old age, when he had climbed from the most squalid cellars of Grub Street to the dictatorial throne of English criticism—such the man who wrote *Rasselas* and *London*, who compiled the great *English Dictionary*, and composed the majestically moral pages of *The Rambler*.—*Collier*.

* "Homer," says Lord Macaulay, "is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakspeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than *Boswell* is the first of biographers."

ence and founded this Republic between 1776 and 1783.

5. Prose developed in this century, and took possession of new fields in fiction, history, and periodical literature.

6. English fiction, newspapers, and periodical literature date from this age.

7. Great Britain produced no great dramatist during the eighteenth century.

8. Pope is the most famous name in the literature of this period. He is one of the great refiners of our language.

9. Burns stands at the head of the song-writers of Scotland, and, indeed, of Great Britain.

10. Addison is among the greatest English prose-writers of this century.

11. De Foe's *Robinson Crusoe* may be called the first English novel.

12. De Foe was followed in the field of fiction by *Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett*.

13. *Butler* and *Challoner* were the principal Catholic prose-writers of this age.

14. The British historians of the eighteenth century are *Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon*. Robertson was a Presbyterian minister. Hume and Gibbon were infidels.

15. Dr. Samuel Johnson is one of the most famous names in our literature. The English language is indebted to him for its first great dictionary.

16. His style of writing has received the name of *Johnsonese*. It is marked by "words of learned length and thundering sound."

17. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* holds the first place among English personal biographies.

18. *Bird's-eye view of the chief British writers and works of the eighteenth century*:

POETS:

Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*.
Robert Burns, *Songs*.
William Cowper, *Poems*.

PROSE-WRITERS:

Joseph Addison, *Essays in The Spectator*.
John Arbuthnot, M.D., *The History of John Bull*.
Daniel De Foe, *Robinson Crusoe*.
Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*.
Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*.
Tobias Smollett, M.D., *Humphrey Clinker*.
Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*.
Richard Challoner, D.D., *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*.
David Hume, *History of England*.
William Robertson, D.D., *History of America*.
Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.
Samuel Johnson, LL.D., *Dictionary of the English Language*.

19. For the other British writers of the eighteenth century most worthy of mention—namely, *Matthew Prior, John Gay, Ambrose Philips, Thomas Gray, James Thomson, William Collins, Mark Akenside, M.D., Allan Ramsay, Edward Young, James Beattie, Sir Isaac Newton, Joseph Butler, D.D., Lady Montagu, Charles Dodd, James Boswell, James Macpherson, Hannah More, William Paley, D.D., Adam Smith, and Sir William Blackstone*—see **SHORT DICTIONARY** at the close of the volume.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRITISH LITERATURE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

A.D. 1800 to 1880.

THE AGE OF SCOTT, NEWMAN, AND TENNYSON.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

1. GREAT BRITAIN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—The nineteenth century is our own age, and is, perhaps, too near to write its history. But we may glance at some of the most important events that influenced British literature. Since the year 1800, four rulers have occupied the English throne—*George III., George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria*. Towards the close of the last century the *French Revolution* led to a dreadful social, irreligious, and political upheaval. It rocked France like an earthquake. The shock was felt in England and throughout Europe. It involved France in war with the other great powers, and raised up the most brilliant military genius of modern times. For years the gentle voice of peace was drowned by the tramp of armies and the thunder of artillery. Again and again England and her allies grappled with *Napoleon*,* and

* Born 1769, died 1821.