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978-1-108-07734-7 - Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century:
Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons, and Intended
as a Sequel to the 'Literary Anecdotes': Volume 1

John Nichols

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Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century

The subtitle of this eight-volume set is *Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons, and Intended as a Sequel to the 'Literary Anecdotes'*, which had been published in nine volumes by the author, editor and publisher John Nichols (1745–1826) between 1812 and 1815, and are also reissued in this series. Like its predecessor set, these 'illustrations' are a useful source of biographical material on authors and publishers at a time when many of the literary genres we take for granted, such as the novel, the autobiography and the analytical history, were first being developed. The volumes were published between 1817 and 1858, the project being continued after Nichols' death by his son and grandson. Among the 'eminent persons' included in Volume 1 are the prime minister Robert Walpole, the actor David Garrick, the radical politician John Wilkes and the cleric and traveller William Gilpin.

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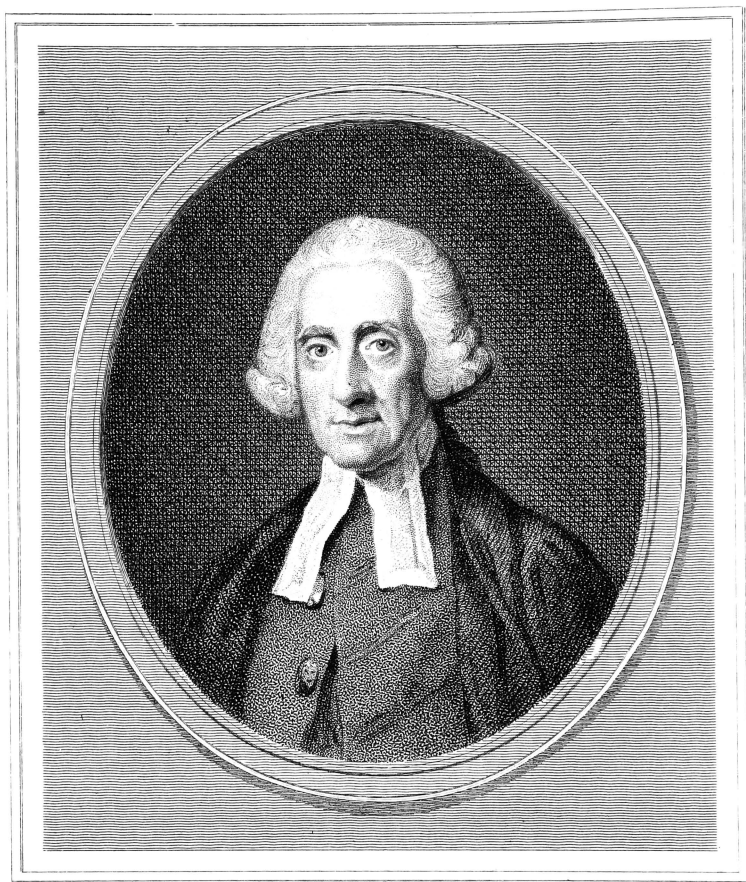
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[More information](#)*Dance Pinx.**Jackson Del.**Meyer Sculp.*DANIEL WRAY, Esq.^r

M.A. F.R.S. & F.S.A.

*Born 1701;**Died 1783.**Copied from the Portrait & Cameo at the Charter-house**Published by J. Nichols & Co. April 2, 1816.*

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The Literary Anecdotes.

By JOHN NICHOLS, F. S. A.

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AFTER the announcement of these "Illustrations" in a Preface to the Ninth Volume of the "Literary Anecdotes," repeated in an Advertisement to the Index; I make no formal apology for offering these Volumes to the candour of the Literary Publick. I arrogate not merit from them: they are the productions of much superior Writers.

To my inestimable Correspondent and much-lamented Friend Mr. Justice **HARDINGE**, I am indebted for the very excellent Memoirs of Mr. **Wray** and Dr. **Sneyd Davies**; the first of which Mr. **Hardinge** scarcely lived to see finished at the press*; and of the latter, he had only given me the conclusion of the MS. a very few days before he set out on that Circuit from which he was never to return alive. He seems, indeed, to have had some forebodings of this melancholy event †.

His worthy Friend the Rev. **Francis ‡ Wollaston**, to whom Mr. **Hardinge** acknowledges his obligations in the Life of **Wray**, died some months before him.

The Memoirs of the respectable Family of Dr. **RICHARD RICHARDSON**, of North Bierley, from

* It is not a little remarkable, that neither Mr. **Hardinge** nor Mr. **Wollaston** lived to see the publication of that Memoir.

† In return for a copy of the separate Memoirs of Dr. **Davies**, which I sent to one of his most justly-valued Friends, I received the following pathetic acknowledgement: "The Memoirs of Dr. **Davies** are a most interesting memento of the abilities and worth of our late excellent Friend Mr. Justice **Hardinge**. It is remarkable, and almost prophetic, that Mr. **Hardinge**, in one of his letters to me a short time before his decease, should express his anxiety to finish the work, in the following words: 'I despair almost of taking leave of **Davies**, until the Undertaker is waiting for me.'—His style was ever playful; but the recollection of this sentence shocked me very much, when I was informed of his almost sudden death. I mention this, as I perceive you have been struck with, and remarked (p. 728) a similar painful idea." A circumstance of the same nature is noticed by Mr. **Hardinge** himself, respecting Mr. **Eustace** in p. 730.

‡ Not Dr. **Thomas Wollaston**, as printed by mistake vol. IX. 494.
the

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the elegant pen of a Female Descendant, Mrs. Dorothy Richardson—and an infinite number of Letters from the principal Botanists of this Country and other distinguished Literati—were handsomely presented to me, with a Portrait of her amiable Ancestor, by the Inheritrix of his fortune and of his virtues, Miss Frances-Mary Richardson-Currer.

The Letters of Mr. (afterwards Bp.) WARBURTON to Dr. STUKELEY are now first printed from the Originals, in the possession of the Rev. J. Fleming St. John, Prebendary of Worcester; as are most of the Letters to Dr. Stukeley from many Noblemen and Scholars of high distinction.

Dr. Warburton's Letters to Mr. Des Maiseaux, Dr. Birch, and Dr. Jortin, are preserved in the British Museum.—For those addressed to the Rev. Dr. N. FORSTER and Dr. DODDRIDGE, I am particularly obliged to the Rev. Thomas Crompton, of Cranworth, Norfolk; and the Rev. THOMAS STEDMAN, the venerable Vicar of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury.

The Correspondence between THEOBALD, THIRLBY, and WARBURTON, was many years ago presented, by Mr. Theobald's only Son, to Edward Roberts, Esq. of Ealing; by whom the Letters are still possessed, and by whose indulgence a copy of them is here given.

The Memoirs of the Family of WOLLASTON, written by William Wollaston, Esq. the celebrated Author of "The Religion of Nature Delineated," with the accompanying Portrait, were given to me by the late Dr. Frederick Wollaston, through the medium of his two worthy sons, Frederick-William Wollaston, Esq.; and the Rev. John-Henry Wollaston.

The materials which have furnished the Lives of Bp. TALBOT and Mr. WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, and the many curious Letters which accompany them, I owe to the steady friendship of George Allan, Esq. M. P. for the City of Durham.

The Anecdotes of Dr. DEERING, compiled by himself, are from the Original, in the possession of James Dowland, Esq.

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The brief notices of Dr. LETTSOM* are the result of a sincere regard, arising from a very long and uninterrupted friendship.—The short account of Mr. NEILD, the Visitor of Prisons, has the same origin.

The Portrait of Dr. Lettsom had been engraved under his own immediate direction, but was never till now used: I purchased it at the sale of his Library and Curiosities.—The striking resemblance of Mr. Neild has been kindly contributed by his only surviving Son.

The Memoir of Mr. CAPELL is by my late very accomplished friend Samuel Pegge, Esq.

The Life of the Rev. JOHN CLARKE was presented to me by the late truly venerable Prebendary of Durham, Dr. Thomas Zouch; who, after refusing a Mitre, died universally honoured and respected.

With the Memoirs of Mr. MIDGLEY and Mr. Archdeacon PEARSON, and the Portrait of Mr. Midgley, I have been favoured by my worthy and intelligent Friend the Reverend William Layton.

The Memoir of Dr. BURTON (with his Portrait) is extracted from the "History of Surrey" by the late Rev. Mr. Manning and Mr. Bray; that of Mr. BARNARD from Dr. Whitaker's "History of Craven." Mr. FARRER's was communicated by J. Hixon, Esq.

The brief outline of the character of Governor ELLIS was furnished by Francis Ellis, Esq. his immediate Representative.

* Subsequently to the printing of my Memoir, but previous to its publication, a much fuller account of that very excellent Man and skilful Physician has been published, from authentic materials, by his intelligent young Friend Mr. Pettigrew; who has also given a more ample Memoir of Mr. Neild, from a Letter written by himself in 1806 to Dr. Lettsom.—Mr. Neild was born May 24, 1744, at Knutsford in Cheshire, where he received his education; was placed apprentice to a Jeweller in London, and began business for himself in St. James's Street in 1770. He married, in 1778, the eldest daughter of John Camden, of Battersea, Esq. In 1791 he lost his wife; and, in the next year, "having only two sons to provide for, retired from business with an ample fortune." His zeal for visiting Prisons commenced in his boyish days, and continued to the end of his life; which had been much endangered in 1781 by the Gaol Fever, leaving behind it a perpetual asthma. He died Feb. 14. 1814. aged nearly 70.

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The well-written Characters of Mr. WINDHAM and Mr. WILLIAMSON, with the Portrait of Mr. Windham, are borrowed from Mr. Archdeacon Coxe's Life of Benjamin Stillingfleet, Esq.

The Portrait of Lord Chief Baron SMITH I owe to my very good Friend William Collins, Esq. of Greenwich; who gave it me as an ornament to the "History of Leicestershire."

The articles not above enumerated are either acknowledged in the places where they appear, or are to be answered for by the Editor.

I cannot conclude without once more offering my acknowledgements to the friendship and advice I have constantly received from that true Friend, and generous Patron of Literature, James Bindley, Esq.

But, after all, my stores of information, let me proudly add, are far from being exhausted.

To the illustrious Luminary of Science, Dr. PARR, I look with confidence for a Memoir of Dr. ROBERT SUMNER, and Anecdotes of many of his Contemporaries; which, from the capacious mind of the benevolent Writer, I venture to predict, will delight, instruct, and improve, the rising generation.

And, though I have deeply to deplore the loss of Mr. Justice Hardinge, his spirit survives in his very respectable Relatives; and I still hope to preserve some pleasing fruits of his ingenuous and elegant studies; accompanied by a Biographical Memoir of Mr. Hardinge, a good Portrait of him by Dance, and a specimen of his Epistolary Correspondence.

It remains only to request that indulgence, at the opening of my *seventy-third year*, which I have happily experienced in the reception of the literary exertions of more than half a century *. J. N.

Highbury Place,

Feb. 14, 1817.

* "In a variety of Readers, some will be pleased with what others will despise; and that man who presumes to give a public dinner, must provide, as well as he is able, a dish for each particular palate; so that if I have given too much, it is at my own risk, and from an earnest desire to satisfy every one." NORTHCOTE.