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EDWARD GIBBON

*From a photograph of the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds published in the  
'Illustrated London News'*

# Royal Historical Society

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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
GIBBON COMMEMORATION  
1794—1894

*PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY*



LONDON  
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1895

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# Gibbon Commemoration,

1794—1894

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## REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY

EARLY in the year 1894 a proposal to commemorate the centenary of the death of Edward Gibbon was suggested by Mr. Frederic Harrison in a letter addressed to the President of the Royal Historical Society. The matter was brought under the notice of the Council of the Society, and it was resolved to form a General Committee, of which the Council of the Royal Historical Society consented to act as members, the Director and the Secretary being appointed Honorary Secretaries.

Invitations were sent to European and American scholars who have made a special study of the history of the Roman Empire, and thus a large and influential Committee was appointed, including delegates from France, Germany, Italy, Holland, from the United States, and from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Dublin, and Durham. The Committee numbered about ninety members, amongst whom may be mentioned Geheimrath H. von Sybel, Professor Mommsen, Count Ugo Balzani, M. G. Hanotaux amongst foreign delegates, and the Bishops of Oxford and Peterborough, the Deans of Westminster, Salisbury, and

Durham, Lord Rosebery, and Mr. James Bryce amongst English members, with many others. The Earl of Sheffield, in whose family the remains, manuscripts, portrait, and relics of the historian are preserved, consented to become the President of the Commemoration. Meetings of the Committee were held at several dates between May and October and two sub-committees were appointed, one for literary affairs and the other for the purpose of organising the proposed Exhibition and Meeting.

This Exhibition of MSS., Books, Pictures, and Relics was held at the British Museum, by permission of the Trustees. It was opened on Monday, November 12, by Sir M. E. Grant Duff, President of the Royal Historical Society, and remained open for a fortnight. Every possible assistance was given to the Commemoration by Mr. Maunde Thompson, C.B., the Principal Librarian, whilst for the arrangement and classification of the MSS. the Committee had the advantage of the great experience of Mr. G. F. Warner, of the Manuscript Department.

The success of the Exhibition is largely due to the interest and courtesy displayed by the official staff of the British Museum throughout the whole proceedings, and it is very satisfactory to learn, on the authority of Mr. Maunde Thompson, that of the temporary exhibitions held at the Museum few have been so successful or so instructive as the Gibbon Exhibition, if the short time that the Exhibition was on view is taken into consideration.

The Committee must express their thanks for the kind and generous support given by the owners of manuscripts, portraits, and other relics of the historian. By far the most important of these collections was that of the Earl of Sheffield, at Sheffield Park, which included the autograph memoirs of the historian's life, the interesting series of original letters, most of which had not before been exhibited, together with the famous portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Another valuable collection was lent by M. W. de Charrière de Sévery, the descendant of Edward Gibbon's intimate friend at Lausanne,



which included many personal relics of great interest. Other Swiss relics were contributed by General Meredith Read, and Portraits, Miniatures, Books, and Engravings were lent by Mr. Alfred Morrison, Mr. Hallam Murray, Mr. Alfred Cock, Q.C., the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, Mr. J. Milman Brown, the Fine Arts Museum at Lausanne, and the Trustees of the British Museum.

The whole of these exhibits were safely received, and have been safely returned to their respective owners. In respect of the negotiations with exhibitors and delegates abroad, the Commemoration is under obligations to H.M. Foreign Office, H.B.M. Consul at Zürich, M. Henri Angst, to M. Chas. Bourcart, Chargé d'Affaires de Suisse, to General Meredith Read, and to several of the Society's Corresponding Members.

The meeting in the theatre of the Museum of Practical Geology at Jermyn Street took place on Thursday, November 15, at 4.30 P.M., when the Introductory Speech of the President of the Royal Historical Society and the Commemoration Address by Mr. Frederic Harrison were given, with a full audience.

In addition to the Addresses which are printed in the following pages, letters were read from many distinguished foreign scholars, and speeches were delivered by Mr. James Bryce, Professor Pelham, and Mr. Maunde Thompson. Special articles in reference to the Commemoration appeared in the 'Nineteenth Century' for July, 1894, and the 'English Illustrated Magazine' for January, 1895, the 'Times' of November 10, 12, and 16, the 'Athenæum' of November 10, and in other papers, while the 'Illustrated London News' of November 17 devoted a pictorial supplement to the Exhibition at the British Museum.

On Thursday, November 22, members of the Commemoration visited Westminster School by the kind invitation of the Head Master, and inspected several interesting mementoes of Edward Gibbon's school-days.

A large mass of correspondence remaining in the hands

of the Hon. Secretary will be preserved in a separate volume amongst the Royal Historical Society's archives.

In appending to his Report the Financial Statement of Receipts and Payments in connection with the Commemoration, the Hon. Secretary regrets to announce that a considerable sum received by his colleague, the late Mr. P. E. Dove, has not been recovered from the deceased gentleman's private estate, in spite of every effort that has been made for that purpose.

The cheques paid in respect of subscriptions were traced by means of information afforded by the subscribers themselves, or by other means, and it was ascertained beyond doubt that the same had been paid by Mr. Dove into his private account, and the embarrassed state of the private affairs of the deceased made it useless to take any further proceedings in the matter. It has been found necessary, therefore, to write off this sum as a bad debt, but it has been possible, by an economical administration of the fund, to show a balance of 20*l.* after the payment of all expenses connected with the Commemoration. The Petty Cash expenditure incidental to the meeting of November 15, and the cost of printing this volume, have been defrayed by the Royal Historical Society.

HUBERT HALL.

THE HONORARY SECRETARY'S STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH  
THE GIBBON COMMEMORATION

	£	s.	d.
To Subscriptions received by the late Mr. P. E. Dove, Hon. Sec., as by a list in his writing, by the counterfoils of Receipt Book, and by information received from subscribers and others . . . . .	74	13	0
„ Subscriptions received since the death of the above by Mr. Hubert Hall, Hon. Sec., and placed to the account of the Gibbon Commemoration . . . . .	55	15	5
By Mr. H. Angst for Carriage, &c., of Exhibits from Switzerland to the British Museum . . . . .	7	1	3
„ Bradley & Co. for the same returned after the exhibition . . . . .	4	1	5
„ Bradley & Co. for packing, cartage, and insurance of English exhibits . . . . .	6	9	7
„ Carriage paid by authorities of British Museum and refunded . . . . .	0	9	2
„ Clerical assistance . . . . .	5	3	0
„ Spottiswoode & Co.'s account for printing Lists of Members, Notices of Meetings, &c. . . . .	11	9	9
„ Treasurer of Selden Society half Halliday's cheque refunded . . . . .	1	1	0
„ Subscriptions not recovered from the estate of the late Mr. P. E. Dove . . . . .	74	13	0
„ Balance in hand . . . . .	20	0	3
	£130	8	5

NOTE.—The sum of £2 10s. 3d., paid by the late Hon. Sec. for insurance of Lord Sheffield's pictures, &c., is not included in this statement.

The whole of the expenses incurred in respect of petty cash, postages, advertising, together with the expenses in connection with the meeting of November 15, and the whole cost of the Memorial volume of the Commemoration, have been defrayed by the Royal Historical Society.

We have examined this Account, and find the same to be correct, Feb. 7, 1895.  
HENRY R. TEDDER.  
R. HOVENDEN.

# Gibbon Commemoration,

1794—1894

\*† *President*: THE EARL OF SHEFFIELD.

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*Honorary Secretary :*

\*†HUBERT HALL,  
 3 Staple Inn, W.C.

\* Literary Committee.

† Organising Committee.

A SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT HON.  
SIR M. E. GRANT DUFF, G.C.S.I., PRES. ROY.  
HIST. SOC., CHAIRMAN OF THE GIBBON  
COMMEMORATION MEETING, NOVEMBER 15,  
1894

SIR M. E. GRANT DUFF said :

It has been said perhaps with too much truth—

Earth plays the step-dame to her poets ever,  
Then grieves and gives them fame,  
As if they cared to hear by God's great river  
The echo of their name.

I know not whether the disembodied spirits of historians care more for the reputation which they leave behind, though the idea of enduring fame was undoubtedly present to the mind of Gibbon when he took that ever-memorable walk in the *berceau* of his garden at Lausanne. One thing, however, is certain, that whether or not the building of the sepulchres of the prophets is pleasant to the prophets themselves, it is assuredly a very salutary exercise for those who engage in it, and accordingly when Mr. Frederic Harrison wrote to me to ask if the Royal Historical Society would be inclined to support his proposal to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the death of the author of 'The Decline and Fall,' I replied that I should have the greatest possible pleasure in bringing his scheme before our Council. I did so; the project was unanimously approved by all the members present, and a committee was constituted then and there, with power to add to its number. That committee grew, and when I returned to London, after an absence on the Continent, I found it in a state of the most wholesome activity. At our first meeting it was settled that I should apply to Lord Sheffield to request

him to become the president of the commemoration, and to allow us to exhibit the Gibbon relics in his possession. Shortly afterwards he returned from the Northern seas, and acceded, in the most prompt and kind manner, to both our requests.

To him and to Mr. Frederic Harrison the public is primarily indebted for any interest which may attach to the present meeting and to the exhibition now on view at the British Museum, for if it had not been for Mr. Harrison the idea would not have been started, and without the co-operation of Lord Sheffield, who possesses more valuable Gibbon relics than any one else, it could not have been carried into effect. In carrying it into effect the zeal and activity of our two secretaries have worked wonders.

The most valuable of the relics collected are undoubtedly the journals, letters, and other manuscripts which have been kept with admirable care at Sheffield Park for a hundred years.

Although the first Lord Sheffield took infinite pains and exercised, I doubt not, a most wise discretion in determining what portion of the Gibbon papers should be given to the world, it is highly probable that, circumstances having very much changed since the early days of the century, his grandson may see fit to authorise the publication of many things which were judiciously suppressed even in 1814. In addition, however, to the manuscripts, Lord Sheffield has sent many other things which, if not equally important, on account of the use that may be made of them, are even more interesting. I need only mention the great picture of the historian by Reynolds.

The name of the illustrious painter reminds me of the Club which he really founded, although it is oftener, thanks to Boswell, associated with the name of Johnson, who, like Burke, Goldsmith, and four others, was an original member. Gibbon was elected on March 4, 1774, ten years after its institution, the twenty-third member, and to this day the chairman of the night always announces its elections in a formula suggested by and characteristic of him.

Monsieur de Charrière de Sévery, who represents the inti-



mate friend of Gibbon's latest years at Lausanne, has also sent many treasures, such as the holograph will of the historian and, *mirabile dictu*, two bottles of the Madeira well known to readers of his autobiography and letters, and which he considered necessary 'for his health and his reputation.'

One of the relics which will attract most public attention, lent us by General Meredith Read, is Gibbon's Bible, which is said always to have lain in his bedroom at Lausanne. Undoubtedly his attitude to Christianity is the feature in his great work which has done most to diminish its influence, and all educated men, to whatever school they belong, would now admit with his masterly biographer, Mr. Cotter Morison, that this is a most serious blemish. It is, however, only fair to remember that Christianity, as it presented itself to Gibbon's mind, was something very different from what we are accustomed to associate with the name. It is of the metropolis of Anglicanism, as it was at that period, that the Bishop of Derry makes the genius of Oxford say—

And must I speak at last of sensual sleep,  
The dull forgetfulness of aimless years?  
Oh, let me turn away my head and weep  
Than Rachel's bitter tears—

Tears for the passionate hearts I might have won,  
Tears for the age with which I might have striven,  
Tears for a hundred years of work undone,  
Crying like blood to Heaven.

Things in France, far from being better, were very much worse. The French Church was indulging in all those follies and wickednesses of which Gibbon lived to see the bloody and terrible end. Whatever faults he might now have to find with it, and they would doubtless be many, he would be the first to admit that, ever since its misfortunes began, it has been in many of its aspects a power for good. I have often smiled to think, and the memoirs of our times will make it sufficiently clear, that within a walk of his own house and in sight of the very view of which he was so fond, he

would have found that Church represented in a form which, if he had only come across it early enough, might have proved a formidable antidote to the controversial efforts of the excellent M. Pavillard, and would assuredly have conciliated his respect, though it would not have commanded his assent when he had reached the fulness of his mighty powers.

It would be uncandid to deny that the 'Decline and Fall' has other blemishes, but they are all trifling compared to the one to which I have alluded, and most assuredly if Gibbon had died in 1894 instead of 1794, although his conclusions as to many things might have been precisely the same, his tone would have been absolutely different. He belonged to a time on whose shoulders was laid the burden of a tremendous work of destruction, of destruction which had to be done before even Christianity itself had a fair chance. It was of the greatest man of that period that one who grew up under totally opposite conditions and associations well said, 'Destiny gave him eighty years of existence slowly to decompose the decaying age. He had the time to combat against time, and when he fell he was the conqueror.'

But just because Gibbon was a supreme historical genius he would have seen, had he belonged to our age, that destruction, however necessary, takes one but a little way. He never would have had the folly with the Romanticists to disown the eighteenth century, 'our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century,' as Matthew Arnold called it, but he would have emancipated himself from its idols, have seen how much good there was in many institutions which it rejected, and have written something even greater than the noble work which is the grandest historical achievement as yet accomplished on this planet.

The best of his adversaries have always acknowledged his great merits. Even in his own time the attitude of Bishop Walton towards him was very creditable. Cardinal Newman, as I know from one who conversed with him on the subject near the end of his life, retained to the last the profoundest admiration for the author of the 'Decline and Fall.' We have

on the committee which has organised this commemoration two prelates of the Anglican communion, equalled in learning by few either of their contemporaries or predecessors. We have three deans, men of the very highest accomplishment—those of Westminster, Salisbury, and Durham. Nothing would have been easier, indeed, than to have had a long list of distinguished ecclesiastics, if the presence of these five had not been all-sufficient to show the sentiments of the best and wisest men of their order.

It is gratifying too to observe that the President of Magdalen, but of a Magdalen changed beyond recognition from the Magdalen of the historian's youth, has given us his countenance and co-operation.

Now, however, I will not stand any longer between you and one who is so pre-eminently fitted to address you on the subject of Gibbon, but call upon Mr. Harrison to read his paper.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED NOVEMBER 15, 1894,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GIBBON CENTENARY  
COMMEMORATION

By FREDERIC HARRISON

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON, V.P.R.Hist.S., said :

It is now just one hundred years ago that, in a remote village church under Ashdown Forest in Sussex, and in the most simple manner, were laid to rest, by the loving care of his lifelong friend, the mortal remains of the most famous writer of history in the English language. Edward Gibbon, the immortal author of 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' died in London in January 1794, at the age of 56, after an illness of a few days, almost in the fulness of his intellectual power, at the zenith of his fame, with the great work of his life achieved, in perfect peace of mind, and surrounded by the esteem and affection of all who knew him. His dear friend, we may almost say his brother by adoption, Lord Sheffield, whose grandson to-day presides over this gathering, placed the body in the Sheffield mausoleum in Fletching Church, where it still reposes ; and he collected in the house of Sheffield Place portraits, miniatures, personal relics, manuscripts, diaries, and letters of the historian ; and there, until now, they have been religiously preserved as heirlooms in the Sheffield family. Nor have the literary remains ever been examined since the publication of Lord Sheffield's five volumes of 'Miscellaneous Works' in 1814, except partially by Dean Milman more than fifty years ago.

During these hundred years the reputation of the historian has been continually growing larger and more firm ; his limitations and his errors have been so amply acknowledged

that they have ceased to arouse the controversy and the odium which they naturally invited in former generations ; and the civilised world, making full allowance for differences of party and of creed, has agreed to honour the historian for his grand success, and no longer to censure that wherein he failed. But hardly any Englishman, with a world-wide fame, has received so little of public honour, or has fallen so completely out of the eye of the world as a personality. Our National Portrait Gallery contains not a single likeness of any kind ; there is no record of him in any public institution, no tablet, inscription, bust, or monument ; his name figures in no public place ; and the house which he inhabited in London bears no mark of its most illustrious inmate. Though masses of his original manuscripts exist, our British Museum contains nothing of them but a single letter ; his memoirs, his diaries, his notes, his letters, in his own beautiful writing, are extant in perfect condition. But they are all in private hands, and for some generations they have never been examined or collated by any student or scholar.

It has seemed right to the Royal Historical Society that in this, the centenary year of the historian's death, some public attempt should be made, not, indeed, to rekindle admiration for his splendid work (for that has no need to be stimulated or assisted), but to give the public an opportunity of seeing the relics and mementoes of Edward Gibbon—the fine portrait by Reynolds which has hardly ever before left Sheffield Place, the careful and elaborate manuscripts as he composed them, the catalogue of his library, the diaries of his life, his original letters, the presentation copies of his great work with his manuscript corrections and notes, views of the houses and the spots where his labours were done, and all those personal details and surroundings which serve to define our conception of a great man of letters.

But, mainly and primarily, this simple commemoration of ours will be of use if it be the occasion of making a new and exhaustive examination of the large literary remains of the

historian, which, since the final publication of Lord Sheffield's labour of love exactly eighty years ago, have never received any critical review from any eye whatever. The devotion of the first Lord Sheffield to the welfare of his illustrious friend in life, and to his memory when dead, is as fine an example of generous friendship as any in the whole range of English literature ; and those who have had the opportunity to judge will bear witness to the signal ability, the good taste, the zeal and discretion with which Lord Sheffield carried out his self-imposed task. We owe it to him that the mortal remains of the historian have been preserved to this hour in such religious reverence and stately repose ; we owe it to him that portraits, letters, relics, and personal belongings have been kept, as it were, in a private museum ; but especially we owe it to him that such ample collections from the literary remains of a great figure in English literature have been opened to the public. But what it was quite becoming for Lord Sheffield to do in 1796, with the contemporaries and relations of the historian living, can be no law to us to-day. The readers of the 'Decline and Fall,' of the 'Memoirs' and 'Letters' of Edward Gibbon, now number as many millions as they then numbered thousands. A new era, new problems, new studies absorb us. And we congratulate Lord Sheffield, the grandson, to-day that with such public spirit he has invited the world at large to see the literary treasures that he has inherited, and consents to satisfy the curiosity of the reading world with such new and additional publication of these unknown papers as a careful scrutiny shall suggest.

We are not in England fond of commemorations of any kind ; and our national abhorrence of apodeictic oratory is a very wholesome feeling, though it may be carried to excess. But where a great light in our literature has been by circumstances withdrawn from general attention, where his literary remains and his correspondence, his published and unpublished manuscripts, have been sealed up in private cases for a century, the hundredth anniversary of his death may become a most convenient occasion to place before the present generation

the personality of the man in a more vivid light, and to subject every fragment from his pen to a new and careful review. What would not the world have gained, if in 1421, the centenary of Dante's death, or even in 1521, the bicentenary, the antiquarians of Italy had sought to recover some personal knowledge of their great poet's life? And, ah! what if, in 1716, the centenary of Shakespeare's death, our ancestors had set themselves to collect all that could be reached, in order to put before themselves Shakespeare in the flesh, to recover any fragments of his writing, to compile the most authentic volume of his dramas! Commemorations, alas! are too often delayed until nothing is left but to utter empty praises, and to attempt to recall what we have no longer any means of knowing. A century is not too long a period, nor is it too short a period, at the close of which we may call up the living image and the daily life of some dead glory of our English name, so as to subject to new scrutiny such portions of his authentic and undoubted manuscript as time may have spared and the love of friends has cherished.

This is exactly what we can do now in the case of the historian of the Roman Empire. We come to study Gibbon—not to praise him. It would, indeed, be a vain attempt of mine if I were to presume to add another word to the chorus of admiration, which rises up from every rank of English literature, from the cultured students of the Old World and the New World, when the great historical achievement of Gibbon is named. I shall cast no puny pebble of my own on that vast cairn which the learned of all nations have raised to his memory. If we seek his monument, let us look around—to the historical scholars of Europe and of America who join in one voice of wonder and admiration. How deep and how wide is that unanimous voice we may gather from the list of the foreign historians, led by the venerable Theodor Mommsen, who join our own historians in wishing to do honour to our great writer by sharing in our celebration.

We recall the eloquent words of one of his most eminent successors, Dean Merivale, who says: 'I forbear myself

from entering the lists in which he has long stalked alone and unchallenged.' But if this is not the occasion for any vain panegyric, still less is it the occasion for any incisive criticism. We are not met, I think, to repeat racy anecdotes about the foibles, the defects, it may be the oddities of a great genius ; nor have we any need to enlarge on the patent acknowledged shortcomings of his work. No one now thinks of defending Gibbon's treatment of the rise of Christianity, of the foundation of the mediæval Church, of the work of the Catholic apostles, saints, and statesmen. To myself all this is peculiarly offensive as well as misleading, as is much of his constitutional persiflage about enthusiasts, his sub-cynical humour, and his taste for scandal. We acknowledge, then, that Gibbon is far from being always trustworthy as a philosopher, far from being just to the creed which he despised, and was more than unjust to some of the purest and noblest of mankind.

Much less will any one claim for Edward Gibbon the character of a hero, the name of a great man, the spirit of a martyr or leader of men. No one will ever call him *ultimus Romanorum*, or the thunder-god ; no one pretends that he is one of the great souls who inspire their age. We do not set him on any moral pinnacle, either as man or as teacher ; nor do we rank him with the master spirits who form the conscience of generations. Without unwisely exaggerating his intellectual forces, without weakly closing our eyes upon his moral shortcomings, we can do full justice to the magnificent literary art, to the lovable nature, the indomitable industry, the noble equanimity of the man. We come, then, to-day neither to praise nor to criticise ; we offer round his tomb no idle encomium, nor do we presume to weigh his ashes in our critical scales. We come to meditate again over all that recalls the charm and sweet sociability of a warm and generous friend ; to study with rekindled zest the cherished remnants which friendship has preserved of one of the greatest masters of historical research that has ever adorned the literature of Europe.



It is right, then, upon an occasion like this to dwell on the bright and humane side of the historian's life and character. And what ample materials are before us to show him at his best! This profusion of intimate letters that care has preserved forms one almost unbroken record of a most affectionate nature, of a generous and grateful temper, of quiet and sane judgment; and in his attachment to Lord Sheffield and his family one of the most constant and beautiful types of friendship embalmed in our literature. The long and unvarying tenor of that brotherly union between two men of natures so different, and of circumstances and pursuits so far apart, is a fact most honourable to our public life and to English letters. We can now read in that careful, clear, and measured handwriting, so finely characteristic of Gibbon's mind, those intimate outpourings of friendship and sympathy in the affectionate, generous, if somewhat stately, letters to his friend on the more touching episodes of their lives—such letters as that on the death of young Holroyd, on the death of Lady Sheffield, on the loss of Deyverdun and de Sévery. The inner life of men of letters—alas! too often their outer and public life—is darkened, we know it, by fierce disputes and bitter pains. How refreshing is it to read in this mass of correspondence an even record of contentment, cheerful good nature, warm attachment, and steadfast repose in a great aim! They breathe of peace, friendship, confiding happiness, and magnanimous love of truth. Edward Gibbon had his worries like other men—worries hardly ever the consequence of any error of his own—but how little of repining or of irritation does he display! He was bitterly and unjustly attacked; but how little is there of controversy; and even in his replies to Priestley and to Davies his language is measured, dignified, and calm. No one pretends that Edward Gibbon had any trace in his nature of passionate impulse or of spiritual nobility. His warmest affection is cast into a Ciceronian mould; and his imperturbable good sense always remains his dominant note. Gibbon was neither a Burke nor a Shelley, still less was he a Rousseau or a

Carlyle. He was a delightful companion, a hearty friend, an indomitable student, and an infallible master of that equanimity which stamps such men as Hume, Adam Smith, and Turgot. It is the *mitis sapientia Læli* which breathes through every line of these elaborate letters.

In the manuscript memoirs, journals, and memoranda (now for the first time made public) we have a vivid picture of his placid and laborious life. It is a rare (almost a unique) example in the history of English letters of a life of continual success, fortunate circumstances, tranquil labour on one plan, and entire achievement of a gigantic aim. And this, although his life was abruptly cut short at fifty-six, and his systematic devotion to his studies did not begin till he was upwards of thirty. The agonies, the waste, the tragedies of so many literary careers, have a strange interest for us, and sometimes cast a factitious halo around the story of genius buffeted in a sea of troubles. The life of Edward Gibbon is entirely wanting in such sources of colour and charm. It is a life of monotonous ease and assured contentment. Happy (we know) is the nation which has no history; still more happy is the student who has no biography.

But in the interest of our literature we may rejoice that the years of one great scholar flowed on with the peacefulness of a great fertilising river. His life is in his great book, not in fascinating anecdotes of his sorrows and his failures. As Mr. Cotter Morison has finely said, 'The life of Gibbon is thereby the less interesting, but his work remains monumental and supreme.' In the manuscript of his 'Memoirs' I find this unpublished and most characteristic passage: 'Few works of merit or importance have been executed either in a garret or a palace. . . . Wretched is the author and wretched will be the work where daily diligence is stimulated by daily hunger.' The *aurea mediocritas* which threw its peaceful glow over the life of Edward Gibbon from his cradle to his grave has left but poor materials for his biographers. But it should fill us with satisfaction when we contemplate it in the life as in the Museum we now may do; when we re-



member how greatly it promoted the calm achievement and the perfection of his colossal work.

If our curiosity regrets, our humanity may welcome, the sunshine which fortune continued to pour around the life of Gibbon. He was born to wealth and good position; he retained ease throughout his life; and he early gained access to all that was most brilliant in Europe. He had exactly the society he loved, and he knew every one of importance of his time. He divided his life between a beautiful country and some famous cities. He travelled far; he sat in Parliament; he was a trained soldier; he lived in the most cultured centres; and he knew the foremost men and women of his age. 'His temper,' he said most truly, was 'not susceptible of envy'; and I hardly know why we need grudge to a kindly and generous man of genius that Fortune gave him almost everything that she could offer. He never professed to be a hero; he neither asked his fellow-men to pity his sorrows nor to bow down to his greatness. He took the goods the gods provided with open-hearted gratitude; he warmed both hands before the fire of life; and, as it sank, he avowed himself ready to depart. He did not affect to deny that he was a man of birth, of breeding, almost of fashion; and, insatiable student as he was, he always makes us feel that he is withal a man of the world and a gentleman. Such as he was, we may see him to-day in our British Museum—cheery, obese, placid, good-natured, a little the fine gentleman in spite of his bulk; precise, courteous, and ceremonious in his habits; living in some of the most lovely spots of Switzerland and of Southern England; at home in the stately court and the magnificent woodland park of his friend; welcomed in the most eminent circles of his age. And now, after a hundred years, he sleeps peacefully in his undisturbed coffin, beside his friend and the wife and child of his friend, in the old twelfth-century church of Fletching, with its memorials of Nevills, Dalyngrudges, and Leches, near the dust of men who fell in the battle of Lewes under Simon de Montfort.

In his 'Memoirs' the historian complains that it was not until past the age of thirty that he was really free to devote his whole life to the task he had first conceived some years before. It was not completed till he had passed the age of fifty. But as we study the diaries now before us in the Museum, we need not regret the time that was given to soldiering and to Parliament. He served in the Hampshire Militia altogether for eleven years, ultimately retiring as colonel at the age of thirty-three. During this period, his regiment, of which he was captain of the grenadier company, was permanently embodied for two years and a half; and during this training it reached the efficiency of a first-rate regiment of the line. It is clear from the interesting study, just published by Major Holden, that Captain, Major, and Colonel Gibbon made himself a thorough officer of more than ordinary intelligence, and with real aptitude for service in spite of his physical defects. He made himself master of scientific tactics, and of the practical organisation of a camp; and he spoke, as Major Holden remarks, with real modesty about himself when he said: 'The captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers' had not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire.'

Even during this time of military service, in camp, at his father's country house, in Parliament, whilst travelling, and in the whirl of society in London, it is most plain, from the unpublished diaries now in the Museum, that Gibbon was always a most voracious and systematic student. With him *nulla dies sine linea* meant—study some solid book every spare hour of every day. In this, as in so many other things, he resembles Macaulay. Both were always reading, reading on a plan, and reading to good purpose. To Gibbon, as to Macaulay, the life in Parliament, the converse with statesmen, the charge of great public duties, and to Gibbon the experience of serious, though not bloody military service, was of inestimable use in preparing the historian for unravelling the confused records of state and of war. Like Thucydides and Polybius, like Cæsar and Tacitus, like de

Comines and Voltaire, like Clarendon and Macaulay, Gibbon had passed years of his life in the intimacy of statesmen, in the inner circles of political life, and in the very centre of acute crises both in war and in policy. There is hardly an instance of a great historian (unless we count Carlyle as such) who has studied the annals of the past as seen entirely from the books upon his library shelves.

The most valuable result of this centenary commemoration will be found, as I have already said, in a thorough examination of the original manuscripts which now for the first time, by the public spirit of our President, the present Earl of Sheffield, have been given to view. The famous 'Memoirs of My Life and Writings,' as published by Lord Sheffield in 1796, and enlarged and re-edited in 1814, forms one of the masterpieces of English literature, and has been frequently pronounced to be the best Autobiography in the language. Lord Sheffield states that this was carefully selected and put together from six different sketches. But perhaps few persons know the extent and the mode of this 'selection.' The six pieces, in Gibbon's beautiful and exact handwriting, are all now in the Museum. They were written apparently at different dates in the five years between 1788-93. They are not continuous narratives of different periods of his life; they all are more or less detailed sketches of his life from the beginning. No one of them is a complete whole; no one of them seems final; nor can any one of them be taken as plainly superior to the rest. They do not observe the same order of narration; they sometimes repeat the same phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs; sometimes they give a slightly variant reading; sometimes they recount the same incident, or work out the same thought, in a totally new form, and even in a slightly different tone. It is not at all clear that the historian had the other drafts before him whilst composing any one. It seems as if he were writing partly from memory of what he had written before; partly as if he wished to try a new form, and even another method.

The result is that the published life as we read it to-day

does not follow any manuscript of Gibbon at all. It is made up of passages pieced together with singular skill, first from one, then from another of the six manuscripts. The order is constantly inverted; paragraphs, sentences, phrases are omitted; whole pages disappear, and many characteristic points drop out altogether. The printed 'Memoir' is really a *pot-pourri* concocted out of the manuscripts with great skill, with signal tact, but with the most daring freedom. There are few pages where a complete recasting of some passage has not been made; there are not many pages in which the text follows on continuously in accordance with any single manuscript; and there are not many paragraphs in which *some* phrase is not deleted or varied.

But there is more than this. Entire episodes are suppressed. Passages of Gibbonian humour or irony are omitted. Long and important paragraphs which are in the *text* of the manuscript drop into the *notes* of the print. Epigrams are cut out of one manuscript and are inserted in the middle of a passage taken out of a different manuscript. And of course these liberties cannot be taken without changing the form of the sentence, adding connecting words, and sometimes varying the whole character of a phrase. It is obvious that the task of making a continuous narrative out of six more or less synoptic versions was one of singular difficulty; and it was done by the editor with curious felicity and great judgment. Whilst Gibbon's relations and contemporaries survived, and amidst the storms of religious passion in the year 1796, it was natural, indeed, that Lord Sheffield should suppress, soften, and vary much. But the extent to which this has been done would startle many lovers of the inimitable 'Memoirs.' Possibly a third of the manuscript is not printed at all; some of the most famous passages are varied; and unsuccessful attempts are made to shield the author of the fifteenth chapter from the reputation of being unorthodox. As we take up the manuscript and compare it with the text, it looks as if some Able Editor had been

at work in what they call 'boiling down' and 'softening' the copy of some daring tiro.

I proceed to give some examples of this process. In the first paragraph Gibbon wrote, 'after the completion of a *toil-some* and successful work'; but the printed text gives it as an 'arduous' work. The first paragraph, as printed, is followed by a series of paragraphs taken from a totally different manuscript. In the printed text the long and vivacious account of William Law and of his convert, Mrs. Hester Gibbon, whom he commemorated as 'Miranda,' is greatly curtailed. Gibbon wrote that the author of 'The Serious Call' 'died in the house, I may not say, in the arms of his beloved Miranda.' The printed text runs: 'died in her house.' I have already cited the passage which is omitted after his diatribe on 'the labour and the luxury of a superfluous fortune.' It is not clear why such characteristic sentences as these are suppressed. 'There was a time when I swallowed almost as much physic as food, and my body is still marked with the scars of bleedings, issues, and caustics.' Again: 'The dynasties of Assyria and Egypt were my top and cricket-ball.' Scores of such truly Gibbonian epigrams are erased as unworthy the gravity of history.

It is obvious why Lord Sheffield omitted the highly-Gibbonian remark on 'The Serious Call,' that 'it is indeed somewhat whimsical that the Fanatics who most vehemently inculcate the love of God should be those who despoil Him of every amiable attribute.' He naturally deletes also the last sentence in the manuscript 'Memoir' about 'the mere philosophers who can only speculate about the immortality of the soul'—'the Christians who repeat, without thought or feeling, the words of the Catechism'—and 'the gloomy fanatics who are more strongly affected by the fear of Hell than the hopes of Heaven.' It was natural enough that Lord Sheffield should shrink from closing the serene autobiography of his friend with these fierce and somewhat trite invectives. But the readers of Gibbon have long been accustomed to language of the kind, or worse. And it is a question if any-

thing is really gained by thus bowdlerising or exorcising the plain words of the incorrigible sceptic.

But the most startling instance of transposition of the text is to be found in the famous and fascinating passage where the historian recounts, after thirty years, his love affair, at the age of twenty, with Mdlle. Curchod, afterwards Madame Necker. Every reader knows that delicious passage beginning: 'I hesitate, from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love.' It is one of the gems of autobiographic candour which has seriously coloured our estimate of Gibbon's mind and character. Imagine my surprise when I came to this historic passage in the original manuscript and noted that the proverbial epigram—'I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son'—is not in the passage at all! The manuscript runs thus: 'After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate; the remedies of absence and time were at length effectual; and my loss subsided in friendship and esteem.'

That is how Gibbon wrote in calm and tender reminiscence of his only love: and I learn, from an unpublished letter of Miss Holroyd's, that this passage was privately shown to Madame Necker just before her death (May 1794). It is true that the famous epigram is really his; but it occurs in another draft and in a different connexion. Apparently, in a later piece, as if half ashamed of his sentimental effusion, he tried another account of his boyish flame, and cast it in sharper outlines into Gibbonian antitheses. In this later draft he writes: 'The romantic hopes of youth and passion were crushed on my return by the prejudice or prudence of an English parent.' It will be seen that these words are not in our printed text. Then he goes on: 'I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son: my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life, &c.' This phrase is taken out of its context, and by the editor is dextrously inserted into the midst of the other narrative, which is pitched in a rather more pathetic key.

• I admire the skill, but I tremble at the daring, with which



Lord Sheffield thus dissected the remains of his eloquent friend. It is like performing a critical operation on a vital organ. I will not venture to say that it could have been better done, much less will I pretend to suggest any other way of doing it. The six Gibbon manuscripts stand side by side as synoptic versions of the same story. Each adds or omits some touch ; no one is complete or final. Every one knows the life of Alfred in synoptic chronicles—the Saxon, Asser, Florence, and so forth. Now Gibbon's autobiographic manuscripts stand side by side like that. To fuse them into one is like an attempt to throw the four Gospels into one narrative. It seems inevitable, and no one can doubt the fine sense of literary effect with which it was done.

There is a tradition in the family that it was partly the work of Lord Sheffield's daughter—that Maria Holroyd, afterwards the first Lady Stanley of Alderley—of whom the historian speaks with such affection and admiration, as uniting 'the strong sense of a man' to the 'easy elegance of a female,' as 'endowed with every gift of nature'—she whose numerous descendants are so well known to-day, and who certainly inherit no small portion of her intellect and gifts. Now, the manuscripts seem marked, corrected, deleted, and noted for the copyist by a woman's hand, and her marks and her often vehement erasures correspond with the changes in the text as printed. This handwriting in the margin exactly corresponds with that in Miss Holroyd's extant letters. No doubt rests in my mind that the first Lady Stanley of Alderley had no small hand in editing the 'Memoirs' of the historian, in expunging many eighteenth-century cynicisms and some sceptical sarcasms, in shortening, softening, and perhaps in giving a lighter touch to this piquant work. One of her descendants informs me that the extant letters of this lady make frequent mention of her literary work in conjunction with her stepmother, the second Lady Sheffield. In one letter she says : ' My lady and I are working busily at the Memoirs, and are excellent devils.' In another letter Miss Holroyd writes : ' There are passages in the

Memoirs which would be very unfit to publish.' Again she writes : 'If the letters had fallen into the hands of a Boswell, what fun the world would have had.' The account of his first publication is told in a Gibbonian phrase ('the loss of my literary maidenhead'), which in the published version becomes 'the petty circumstances and period of my first publication.'

The yet unpublished manuscripts consist of the six 'Memoirs,' of which perhaps one third has not been printed, a few letters, at least one of which has a curious interest, and five Diaries or *Ephémérides*, of which small excerpts are inserted as notes in the published 'Memoirs' and in a few other parts of the 'Miscellaneous Works.' These Diaries fill no less than 720 pages of quarto and folio in Gibbon's very close handwriting. Three of them are in French, one in English, and one partly in French and partly in English, the latter being an account of his tour in Rome. His habit seems to have been to write in English when in England, and in French when he was abroad. The shortest and earliest Diary is a tour in Switzerland in 1755, at the age of eighteen. Then comes his 'Journal of my Actions, Studies, and Opinions,' beginning August 1762, at the age of twenty-five, during his military service and life in Hampshire. This gives very lively details and a full account of his reading, studies, and ambitions. Next is the French journal, from August 1763, at Lausanne, on his second visit, after an interval of five years. The fourth is in French, written in 1763, giving his Italian journey. The fifth continues the journey in Italy in 1764 (ætat. 27), written in French until he reaches Rome; but curiously enough at Rome he passes into English.

The Journals, or Diaries, are not continued later than 1764, and they thus range over the nine years from 1755 to 1764. They, of course, have not the literary grace or the elaborate polish of the 'Memoirs'; they have not the rattle and *verve* of Byron's diaries, nor the artless candour of Pepys' diary. But as a picture of keen observation, indomitable industry, omnivorous reading, and the mastery of a powerful

intellect amidst all the distractions of a busy and changing life, they are well worth giving to the world. I will not presume to prejudge the question of the form publication should take. But I do most earnestly plead for, at any rate, the most careful scrutiny of these manuscripts of the 'Memoirs' and of the Diaries, with a view to their being given to the public. And I cannot resist expressing a hope that Lord Sheffield himself will take up and crown the work of his eminent ancestor by issuing a new volume of those remains which our great historian confided to his executor one hundred years ago.

In the meantime let every admirer of our great historian go to the Museum and try to recall him in the life as he lives on the glorious canvas of Reynolds, in the early likeness by Warton, which Lord Sheffield pronounced to be the best, even in the *silhouettes* and caricatures which give some features of his curious person. Let them examine that refined and careful handwriting which puts to shame our modern scrawls, the exact catalogue of his library, his warm and stately letters to his friends, and the long record of a life of indomitable industry, of literary activity, and of minute grasp of the most microscopic detail. It reminds us of those marvels of scientific invention, of that Nasmyth's hammer which can mould ten tons of metal or crack a nut. And the learned editor of the forthcoming new edition of the 'Decline and Fall' informs me that the more he examines the work the more his admiration of its minute accuracy of detail is increased by its combination of brilliancy with accuracy.

His monumental work still stands alone, in the colossal range of its proportions, and in the artistic symmetry of its execution. It has its blemishes, its limitations, we venture to add its misconceptions; it is not always sound in philosophy; it is sometimes ungenerous and cynical. But withal it is beyond question the greatest monument of historical research united to imaginative art, of any age in any language.

And to think that, one hundred years after his death, we have not as a nation made the smallest recognition of this

light in our literature whom foreign nations combine to honour. Our National Portrait Gallery, with between one and two thousand portraits of great and small, has no likeness of our great historian. Let us hasten to supply this conspicuous *lacuna*. No memorial, inscription, cenotaph, bust, or monument of any kind exists, I think, in any public place or institution. The houses in which he lived and died in London are not marked by any tablet; and his body lies in a private mausoleum in a remote country church, little known, I may say, even to antiquarians and students, and wholly unknown to the general public. For my part I would venture to suggest that the house in Bentinck Street in which he wrote the first volumes of the 'Decline and Fall' might be marked by a tablet; and perhaps the great house of Portland would consent to the renaming of the street in which he lived; that an effort be made to procure for the nation an adequate portrait; that the British Museum should be urged to obtain what it can of his books, autograph letters, memoranda, and papers; that Lord Sheffield should be invited to give to the public those of the writings which still remain unpublished.

Might we do more? Perhaps not! But as a personal wish I will conclude by uttering my own hope that the bones of one who is so great a name in English literature should not for ever remain in any private mausoleum. As it is, his body is not buried: it is not under ground; it is not in any way inclosed or cased in. It rests on a slab above the level of the ground in what is really a part of Fletching Church. It may be that our great national mausolea have no space that is available. But opinions no longer divide our ashes. And another thought occurs to me. Edward Gibbon was once a member of Magdalen College, Oxford, to which he owed, as he says, no obligation; but which herself shamefully and wantonly neglected perhaps the greatest literary genius who ever graced her registers. He renounced his college and his University: but the faults were on both sides; and death and a hundred years have effaced even angrier feuds. University College has at last taken back to her fold the memory

of Shelley, who had sinned against academic decencies even more than Gibbon. Is it, then, beyond the bounds of charity that Magdalen College should, as a second century opens, receive, I will not say more than a cenotaph, a memorial, a tablet whereon may be inscribed the name of one of the most profound scholars, one of the most learned historians, one of the most splendid imaginations in the grand roll of English literature? It would be worthy of that illustrious college, worthy of Oxford, worthy of English scholarship and learning.

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION OF MANUSCRIPTS,  
BOOKS, PORTRAITS, AND RELICS AT THE  
BRITISH MUSEUM, NOVEMBER 1894

**Autograph Memoirs**

1-6. Six sketches [A-F] of E. Gibbon's autobiography, all *holograph*, written between 1788 and 1793; being the materials from which the 'Memoirs of My Life and Writings,' published by Lord Sheffield [*Misc. Works*, vol. i.] in 1796, were 'carefully selected and put together.'

*The passages exhibited refer to different stages in his career.*

1. A. 'THE MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF EDWARD GIBBON, with various observations and excursions by himself.' Written in 1788-9, but only giving particulars of his family. The opening paragraph (exhibited), as printed in *Misc. Works*, appears in this sketch only. The silhouette opposite, by Mrs. Brown, is engraved as the frontispiece of *Misc. Works*, 1796.

2. B. 'MY OWN LIFE'; written in 1789-90, and ending in April, 1764, just before his tour in Italy. The opening paragraph (exhibited) is made the fourth in the printed Memoirs, p. 3.

3. C. 'MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF EDWARD GIBBON'; written in 1790, and brought down to Oct. 1772. The pages exhibited describe the author's childhood and school-days down to his matriculation at Magdalen College, Oxford, on 3rd April, 1752.

4. D. MEMOIRS, without title; written in 1790-91, and brought down to Oct. 1772, when he 'bid an everlasting farewell to the country' and removed to London.

The pages exhibited describe his life at Oxford, where he arrived 'with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a Doctor and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed,' and where he found the fellows of his college 'immersed in Port wine and Tory politics.'

5. *E.* 'MY OWN LIFE'; dated at the end, 'Lausanne, March 2, 1791,' and ending with the death of his friend Deyverdun in July, 1789; with notes added in 1792-3. The pages exhibited refer, among other matters, to his love for Mlle. Curchod, his service with the Hampshire Militia ('The Captain of Grenadiers has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire'), and the first conception of the idea of writing his History: 'It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed fryars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter,' &c.

6. *F.* MEMOIRS, without title; written in 1792-3, but only brought down to the date of his leaving Oxford in June, 1753. So far as it goes, this is the most copious of the sketches, and was taken by Lord Sheffield as the basis of his edition of the 'Memoirs.' The pages exhibited end with the passage: 'At the conclusion of this first period of my life, I am tempted to enter a protest against the trite and lavish praise of the happiness of our boyish years,' etc.

### Journals. Commonplace Books. Note Books. and Miscellaneous Works

7-11. Journals of Edw. Gibbon, 1762-1764; the first in English, the rest in French. *Holograph*. Partially printed in *Misc. Works*, 1796.

7. 'JOURNAL DE MON VOYAGE dans quelques endroits de la Suisse,' 21 Sept. - 20 Oct. 1755. As far as 15 Oct. *autograph*, the rest a transcript.

8. 'EPHEMERIDES, or Journal of my actions, studies and opinions': vol. ii. 17 Aug. 1762 – May, 1763. The pages shown enumerate the books he read during 1762.

9. 'EPHÉMÉRIDES, ou Journal de ma vie, de mes études et de mes sentimens': vol. iii. Aug.–Nov. 1763. The pages shown contain remarks upon Juvenal, made after finishing the perusal of the Satires.

10. JOURNAL, without title, including the tour in Italy; Dec. 1763 – June, 1764. The page shown describes a meeting, in Feb. 1764, with Mlle. Curchod: 'Elle a du voir cent fois que tout étoit fini sans retour.'

11. JOURNAL, without title; written in Italy, June–Dec. 1764. The page shown includes remarks upon busts of Julius Cæsar and Cicero at Florence.

12. 'COMMON PLACE BOOK, in which I propose to write what I find most remarkable in my Historical Readings. Begun at Lausanne, March 19, 1755.' The entries are chiefly in French, and those in English are full of Gallicisms. The pages shown include entries on 'Knights,' 'Chimæra,' 'Chrestianisme' (*sc.* Julian the Apostate), and 'Cid.'

13. OBSERVATIONS on various subjects, written in French, at Lausanne and Buriton, 1756–1758. *Holograph.* The page shown is the beginning of 'Remarques critiques sur le nouveau système de chronologie du Chevalier [*sc.* Sir Isaac] Newton.'

14. 'OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.' *Holograph.* Written (in Gibbon's early hand), between 1758 and 1763. (*Misc. Works*, 1814, iii. p. 1.) The page exhibited concludes the survey of the 12th cent., the author remarking on the spread of liberty, and how 'with the liberty of Europe its genius awoke.'

15. 'EXTRAITS RAISONNÉS DE MES LECTURES,' beginning with general remarks upon Reading; written at Dover, 14 Mar. 1761. *Holograph.* (*Misc. Works*, 1796, ii. p. 1.)

16. CRITICISM OF HURD'S EDITION OF HORACE 'DE



ARTE POETICA,' ETC.; written 8 Feb. – 18 Mar. 1762. *Holograph*. (*Misc. Works*, 1796, ii. p. 27.) The page shown contains remarks on Comedy and Tragedy.

17. 'RECUEIL de mes observations et pièces détachées sur différens sujets'; the earliest entry made at Lausanne, 23 Dec. 1763, and the latest at Rome, 29 Dec. 1764. *Holograph*; in Gibbon's early hand. Printed, *Misc. Works*, 1796, ii. p. 313.

18. NOTE BOOK, containing four pages of 'Materials for corrections and improvements for the 1st vol. of my History,' followed by two pages of 'Materials for the fourth vol. of the history of the decline & fall of the Roman Empire,' November 8th, 1781. *Holograph*.

19. 'ANTIQUITIES OF THE HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK': an investigation of the 'origin and story of the House of Brunswick, which after an alliance with the daughters of our kings has been called by the voice of a free people to the legal inheritance of the crown.' *Holograph*. Written in 1790, but not completed. (*Misc. Works*, 1814, iii. p. 359.) The pages exhibited, from Ch. 1 § 1, include an eulogium of Leibnitz, author of the *Origines Guelphicæ*.

20. 'On the position of the Meridional Line and an Inquiry into the supposed circumnavigation of Africa by the Ancients.' *Holograph*. Written in 1790 or 1791. (*Misc. Works*, 1814, v. p. 170.) The page exhibited throws doubt upon the account given by Herodotus (iv. 42) of the voyage round Africa of the Phœnician mariners sent by Neco.

21. 'AN ADDRESS, ETC.,' advocating the publication, under the editorship of John Pinkerton, of the Latin Chronicles and Memorials of English history: 'It is long, very long indeed, since the success of our neighbours and the knowledge of our resources have disposed me to wish that our Latin memorials of the middle age, the *Scriptores rerum Anglicarum*, might be published in England in a manner worthy of the subject and of the country,' etc. *Holo-*

*graph.* Written in 1793. (*Misc. Works*, 1814, iii. p. 559.) The scheme was abandoned on Gibbon's death in the following year.

### Correspondence

22. E. Gibbon to his aunt, Mrs. Porten, announcing his re-conversion to the Protestant faith: 'I have at length good news to tell you: I am now [a] good protestant and am extremely glad of it. . . . I do assure you I feel a joy extremely pure, and the more so as I know it to be not only innocent but laudable.' He proceeds to explain that he had lost a large sum of money at cards, and to ask his aunt for a loan to enable him to pay his debt, as he was unwilling to apply to his father. On the first page is a note by his step-mother: 'Pray remember this letter was not addressed to his Mother-in-law [step-mother] but his Aunt, an old Cat as she was to refuse his request.' Written from Lausanne, Feb. 1755.

23. E. Gibbon the elder to his son, announcing his second marriage: 'I have never yet grudged you any reasonable expences, notwithstanding the many unjust and undutiful things you have said of me to the contrary. The news that you have heard of my being married again is very true . . . but if you behave as you ought to do, it shall [not] make any difference to you.' Dated, Buriton, 14 Dec. 1755.

24. Mdlle. Susanne Curchod [afterwards Mdme. Necker] to E. Gibbon, in French, after his father had refused to consent to their marriage, reproaching him for his silence and begging him to explain his intentions: 'Après une des lettres les plus tendres qui est peut être été jamais tracée par un cœur ulcéré et par une tête échauffée par les larmes, votre silence m'étonnoit sans doute. . . . Par pitié tirés moi de l'incertitude où je suis, en me l'apprenant sans ménagements; je ne sai si sans cela j'aurois de longtems la force de prendre aucune résolution.' Dated, 5 Nov. [1758].

25. E. Gibbon to J. B. Holroyd [afterwards Lord

Sheffield], then at Edinburgh: 'You tell me of a long list of Dukes, Lairds, and Chieftains of Renown to whom you are recommended; were I with you, I should prefer one David [*i.e.* Hume] to them all. . . . I hope you will not fail to visit the Sty of that fattest of Epicurus' Hogs, and inform yourself whether there remains no hope of its recovering the use of its right paw.' A reference to the historian Robertson follows. Dated, London, 7 Aug. 1773.

26. E. Gibbon to his step-mother, with reference to a scheme for his marriage to a lady un-named: 'There is only one part of it which distresses me, *Religion*. It operates doubly, as a present obstacle and a future inconvenience. Your evasion was very able, but will not prudence as well as honour require us being more explicit in the *suite*?' Signed 'Benedict Gibbon'; and dated, London, 17 Dec. 1774.

27. E. Gibbon to J. B. Holroyd, on the composition of the first volume of the History: 'Your apprehensions of a precipitate work, etc., are perfectly groundless. I should be much more addicted to the contrary extreme. . . . The first chapter has been composed *de nouveau three times*, the second *twice*, and all the others have undergone reviews, corrections, etc.' Dated, London, 1 Aug. 1775.

28. Horace Walpole to E. Gibbon, on the first volume of the History: 'You have unexpectedly given the world a classic History. The Fame it must acquire will tend every day to acquit this panegyric of Flattery.'" Dated, 14 Feb. [1776].

29. David Hume to E. Gibbon, thanking him for the gift of the first volume of the History: 'Whether I consider the Dignity of your Matter or the Extensiveness of your Learning, I must regard the work as equally the Object of Esteem; and I own, that if I had not previously had the Happiness of your personal Acquaintance, such a Performance from an Englishman in our Age wou'd have given me some Surprise.' Dated, Edinburgh, 18 March, 1776.

30. E. Gibbon to his step-mother, in answer to objec-

tions urged by her against his revisiting Madame Necker, his former fiancée, in Paris: 'The constancy and danger of a twenty years passion is a subject upon which I hardly know how to be serious. I am ignorant what effect that period of time has produced upon me, but I do assure you that it has committed very great ravages upon the Lady, and that at present she is very far from being an object either of desire or of scandal.' Dated, London, 14 April, 1777.

31. E. Gibbon to his step-mother, on the reception of the 2nd and 3rd volumes of his History: 'The progress of these two volumes has hitherto been quiet and silent. Almost everybody that reads has purchased, but few persons (comparatively) have read them. . . . The Clergy (such is the advantage of total loss of character) commend my decency and moderation, but the patriots wish to damn the work and the Author.' Dated, London, 13 April, 1781.

32. William Robertson, the historian, to E. Gibbon, thanking him for the gift of the second and third volumes of his History: 'I can recollect no historical work from which I ever received so much instruction, and when I consider in what a barren field you had to glean and pick up materials I am truly astonished at the connected and interesting story you have formed.' Dated, Edinburgh, 12 May, 1781.

33. E. Gibbon to Lord Sheffield, on the break-up of Lord North's government, with a pencil list of Lord Shelburne's probable Ministry in the margin: 'Every hour teems with a new lye. . . . In short, three months of prosperity has dissolved a Phalanx which had stood ten years adversity. Next Tuesday Fox will give his reasons, and possibly be encountered by Pitt, the new Secretary or Chancellor at three and twenty.' Dated, London, July, 1782.

34. E. Gibbon to Dr. Priestley, declining to enter into controversy with him on the subject of the religious opinions expressed in the History: 'Once and once only the just defence of my own veracity provoked me to descend into the Amphitheatre, but as long as you attack opinions which I

have never maintained, or maintain principles which I have never denied, you may safely exult in my silence and your victory.' He proceeds to recommend Dr. Priestley to abandon Theology and confine himself to Science: 'Remember the end of your predecessor Servetus; not of his life (the Calvins of our days are restrained from the use of the same fiery arguments), but I mean the end of his reputation.' London, 28 Jan. 1783.

35. E. Gibbon to his step-mother, acquainting her with his intention to resign his seat in Parliament and retire to Lausanne: 'Your vain hope (a kind and friendly vanity) of my making a distinguished figure in that assembly have (*sic*) long since been extinct, and you are now convinced by repeated experience that my reputation must be derived solely from my pen. A seat in parliament I can only value as it is connected with some official situation of emolument: that connection which had fortunately subsisted about three years is now dissolved.' In the rest of the letter he gives reasons for preferring life in Lausanne to London, and ends with confessing that the decisive reason is the necessity of economy.' Dated, London, 26 July, 1783..

36. E. Gibbon to his step-mother expressing his satisfaction with his retirement to Lausanne: 'Since I formed and executed this plan of retiring into Switzerland I have not once repented, I have not felt a single moment of disappointment, and my only regret is the having so long neglected to obey the dictates of my reason; a more early obedience would have saved me some years of dependence, of anxiety, and of indiscretion.' Lausanne, 27 Dec. 1783.

37. E. Gibbon to Lady Sheffield, describing his life at Lausanne with his friend Deyverdun: 'Should you be very much surprized to hear of my being married? Amazing as it may seem, I do assure you that the event is less improbable than it would have appeared to myself a twelve month ago. . . . Not that I am in love with any particular person; I have discovered about half-a-dozen *Wives* who would please me in

different ways and by various merits. . . . Could I find all these qualities united in a single person, I should dare to make my addresses and should deserve to be refused.' Lausanne, 22 Oct. 1784.

38. E. Gibbon to Lord Sheffield on his life at Lausanne, and describing the last stages of the composition of the History: 'I can now repeat at the end of three years, what I soon and sincerely affirmed, that never in a single instant have I repented of my scheme of retirement to Lausanne, a retirement which was judged by my best and wisest friend a project little short of insanity. . . . I am building a great book, which besides the three stories already exposed to the public eye will have three stories more before we reach the roof and battlements. . . . By this extraordinary industry which I never practised before, and to which I hope never to be again reduced, I see the last of my history growing apace under my hands.' Lausanne, 20 Jan. 1787.

39. E. Gibbon to his step-mother on the conclusion of his History: 'I now feel as if a mountain was removed from my breast; as far as I can judge, the public unanimously applauds my compliment to Lord North (*see No. 58, below*), and does not appear dissatisfied with the conclusion of my work. I look back with amazement on the road which I have travelled, but which I should never have entered had I been præviously apprized of its length.' London, 28 May, 1788.

40. E. Gibbon to Lord Sheffield, describing Sheridan's speech in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, which included 'a compliment much admired to a certain historian of your acquaintance. Sheridan in the close of his speech sunk into Burke's arms: but I called this morning; he is perfectly well. A good actor!' London, 14 June, 1788.

41. E. Gibbon to his aunt, Mrs. Hester Gibbon, on his return to Lausanne: 'You will not disapprove my chusing the place most agreeable to my circumstances and temper, and I need not remind you that all countries are under the

care of the same providence. Your good wishes and advice will not, I trust, be thrown away on a barren soil; and whatever you may have been told of my opinions, I can assure you with truth, that I consider Religion as the best guide of youth and the best support of old age; that I firmly believe there is less real happiness in the business and pleasures of the world, than in the life, which you have chosen, of devotion and retirement.' Dated, Sheffield Place, 30 June, 1788. [Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 34,436, f. 31.]

42. Adam Smith to E. Gibbon, thanking him for the gift of the last three volumes of the History: 'I cannot express to you the pleasure it gives me to find, that, by the universal assent of every man of taste and learning whom I either know or correspond with, it sets you at the very head of the whole literary tribe at present existing in Europe.' Dated, Edinburgh, 10 Dec. 1788.

43. E. Gibbon to his step-mother, on the French Revolution: 'You will allow me to be a tolerable historian, yet on a fair review of ancient and modern times I can find none that bear any affinity with the present. . . . This total subversion of all rank, order, and government could be productive only of a popular monster, which, after devouring everything else, must finally devour itself.' Lausanne, 1 Aug. 1792.

44. E. Gibbon to the Hon. Maria Holroyd [afterwards Lady Stanley of Alderley, b. 1771; d. 1863]: 'That amiable author [Miss Holroyd] I have known and loved from the first dawning of her life and *coquetry* to the present maturity of her talents, and as long as I remain on this planet I shall pursue with the same tender and even anxious concern the future steps of her establishment and life. That establishment must be splendid, that life must be happy, if she will condescend to apply her good sense to restrain some sallies of imprudence, to soften some energies of character which are the source of our virtues and talents, but which may sometimes betray us into error and mischance.' Dated,

Lausanne, 10 Nov. 1792. In editing Gibbon's correspondence, Miss Holroyd omitted the words from 'if she will condescend' to 'mischance.'

*Lent by Miss Adeane.*

45. E. Gibbon to Lord Sheffield, propounding a scheme for a series of 'lives or rather the characters of the most eminent persons in arts and arms, in Church and State, who have flourished in Britain from the reign of Henry VIII. to the present age.' He desires Lord Sheffield to introduce the scheme to a publisher as his own, and to suggest that the publisher should invite Gibbon to undertake it, 'as it is most essential that I be solicited and do not solicit.' Dated, Lausanne, 6 Jan. 1793.

46. E. Gibbon to John Pinkerton, with reference to a scheme for a collection of the Early Chronicles of England, to be superintended by Gibbon and to appear under his name (*see above, No. 21*); commending the scheme and promising his support, but hesitating to undertake superintendence. 'My name (*qualecumque sit*) I could not lend with fairness to the public, or credit to myself, without engaging much farther than I am either able or willing to do.' Copy, in the hand of T. Pinkerton. Dated, 25 July, 1793.

### Personal Documents

47. 'State of the Account of Mr. Gibbon's Roman Empire, 3rd edition, No. 1000'; dated 30 April, 1777.

48. Agreement between E. Gibbon and his publishers, Messrs. Strahan and Cadell, for the publication by the latter of the last three volumes of the History, at the price of £4,000. With autograph signatures. Dated 16 Aug. 1787.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

49. Bills for books supplied to Edw. Gibbon at Lausanne, 1786 and 1788-9; certified by Gibbon for payment, 18 April 1787 and 24 May 1789.

*Lent by Mons. W. de Charrière de Sévery.*



50. Will of Edw. Gibbon, 'written and subscribed with my own hand at Lausanne,' 1 Oct. 1791. *Holograph.*

*Lent by Mons. W. de Charrière de Sévery.*

51. Grand-Lodge Certificate of Edw. Gibbon's initiation as a Freemason, of the 'Lodge of Friendship No. 3'; dated, 19 Dec. A.L. 5774, A.D. 1774. Annexed is a certificate from the Officers and Members of his Lodge of his attainment of the degree of a Master Mason; dated, London, 8 Mar. A.L. 5775 [A.D. 1774]. Signed by [Thomas Noel, Viscount] Wentworth, Master, and others.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

52. Note of invitation from E. Gibbon to M. de Sévery, jun., written at Lausanne, without date, on the back of a playing-card.

*Lent by Miss A. Butler.*

53. Blank forms of invitation to dine with Mr. Gibbon at Lausanne.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

54. Four notes of hand for various sums of money, written by Edward Gibbon on the backs of playing cards.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

55. Slip-Catalogue of Edward Gibbon's Library at Lausanne, written on the backs of playing-cards, chiefly in his own hand.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

56. Catalogue of Edward Gibbon's Library at Lausanne arranged under Folios, Quartos, Octavos, and Duodecimos. The total is 1,978 volumes, of which 200 are folios, 474 quartos, 438 octavos, and 866 duodecimos.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

### Printed Works

57. Edw. Gibbon, *Essai sur l'étude de la littérature*, London, 1761, 8vo. Gibbon's *first work*, published in French. With dedication to his father, dated 28 May, 1761.

58. Edw. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Vol. I. London, 1776, 4to. *The first edition.*

59. Edw. Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London, 1777-1788, six vols., 4to.: copy presented by the author to John Baker-Holroyd, Lord Sheffield, 'as a memorial of friendship and esteem,' with an *autograph* inscription on the fly-leaf of vol. I.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

60. Edw. Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London, 1782-1788, six vols., 4to.: *the author's own copy*, with a few marginal notes and emendations by himself (in vols. i., iv., vi.) The page of vol. i. here shown (p. 2) gives an amended form of the concluding sentence of the first paragraph. At the bottom of page 1 Gibbon has written, 'Should I not have given the history of that fortunate period which was interposed between two Iron Ages? Should I not have deduced the decline of the Empire from the civil wars that ensued after the fall of Nero, or even from the tyranny which succeeded the reign of Augustus? Alas! I should: but of what avail is this tardy knowledge? Where error is irretrievable, repentance is useless.'

Page iv. of the Preface to vol. iv. (1788) is also shown, where the language used of Lord North is slightly altered and the note is added, 'In the year 1776 when I published the first volume, in 1781 when I published the second and third, Lord North was first Lord of the Treasury. I was his friend and follower, a Member of parliament and a Lord of trade: but I disdained to sink the Scholar in the politician.'

*Lent by Mons. W. de Charrière de Sévery.*

61. 'Istoria della Decadenza e Rovina dell' Impero Romano, tradotta dall' Inglese di Edoardo Gibbon,' Pisa, 1779. An Italian translation of the 'Decline and Fall,' by Fabbroni and Foggi, of which Gibbon wrote in his 'Memoirs': 'The piety or prudence of my Italian translator has pro-

vided an antidote against the poison of the original,' etc. In 10 volumes, but the 10th, although printed, was never published. The present copy of vols. 1-9 bears Gibbon's own book-plate.

62. Edw. Gibbon, *Mémoire justificatif pour servir de réponse à l'Exposé, &c., de la cour de France*, 1779. 4to. Written for the Government, and published anonymously.

63. Edw. Gibbon, *Miscellaneous Works*, London, 1814, 8vo. ; vol. iv. of Lord Macaulay's copy, with notes by him in the margin, made in 1836-7.

*Lent by Sir George Trevelyan.*

### Relics

64. QUILL PENS used by Edward Gibbon and taken from his Writing Desk after his death.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

65. A SWORD belonging to Edward Gibbon.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

66. GOLD WATCH belonging to Edward Gibbon, with his initials engraved on the back of the case.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

67. GOLD SNUFF-BOX belonging to Edward Gibbon.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

68. PURSE belonging to Edward Gibbon, containing eight silver pieces, being 'New Year's Jetons' of the Procureurs de la Cour [Paris Law-Courts] struck in 1713.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

69. GOLD COIN belonging to Edward Gibbon—Five Ducat Piece of Charles, Duke of Lichtenstein, Bishop of Olmütz, 1664-1695.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

70. COPPER PLATE for visiting cards engraved with the address—

MR. GIBBON,

Lord Sheffield's,

Downing Square.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

71. A LOCK OF EDWARD GIBBON'S HAIR.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

72. THE FAMILY BIBLE OF EDWARD GIBBON used by him at his residence, La Grotte, Lausanne, Switzerland.

The Holy Bible from the version of 1611 with an Index, Tables and the Book of Psalms collected into metre by Sternhold and Hopkins. London: Printed by Chas. Bill, etc., 1703.

*Lent by General Meredith Read.*

**Portraits, Water-colour Drawings and Miniatures.  
Caricatures, Engravings and Photographs**

73. PORTRAIT OF GIBBON'S FATHER, Edward Gibbon.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

74. PORTRAIT OF GIBBON'S MOTHER, Judith Porten.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

75. PORTRAIT OF GIBBON'S MOTHER, Judith Porten.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

76. PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH GIBBON, wife of Sir Whitmore Acton.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

77. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON in 1756, aetat. 19.  
By Sir Joshua Reynolds.

*Lent by Alfred Morrison, Esq.*

78. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

79. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON, by Romney.

*Lent by the Master of Balliol College.*

80. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

81. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON in water-colour.

*Lent by Alfred Cock, Esq., Q.C.*

82. ENGRAVING OF EDWARD GIBBON from the

original portrait by Warton [? Walton]. Engraved by James Fittler, A.R.A. This portrait of the Historian is also engraved in Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works (ed. 1814), vol. i.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

83. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON in pastel, described as by the Swiss painter Piot, but apparently after the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

*Lent by the Fine Arts Museum, Lausanne.*

84. PORTRAIT OF EDWARD GIBBON in pastel, described by the owner as by an unknown artist, but apparently after the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

85. MINIATURE of E. Gibbon, Esq., after Sir J. Reynolds, by E. Godwin, 1794.

*Lent by Alfred Morrison, Esq.*

86. MINIATURE of Edward Gibbon on Enamel, by Bone, from the original portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, lent by him to the artist.

*Lent by Hallam Murray, Esq.*

87. MINIATURE of Edward Gibbon, apparently after Sir Joshua Reynolds, set in pearls as a locket and containing a lock of his hair.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

88. MEDALLION-BUST of Edward Gibbon by Wedgwood.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

89. SILHOUETTE—Edward Gibbon, Esq., taking Snuff. By Mrs. Brown in or about 1794. Figured in Gibbon's Misc. Works (ed. 1796), vol. i.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

90. SILHOUETTE—Edward Gibbon, Esq., taking snuff. Probably by Mrs. Brown in or about 1794.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

91. CARICATURE of Edward Gibbon the 'Luminous Historian.' London. Published by W. Holland, Printseller, No. 50 Oxford Street, August the 12th 1788.

*Lent by M. de Charrière de Sévery.*

92. WATER-COLOUR DRAWING of Edward Gibbon's Pavilion and Terrace at Lausanne, by L. Dor, after the original drawing by Lady Elizabeth Fauten [Foster].

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

93. WATER-COLOUR DRAWING of Edward Gibbon's House at Lausanne. By L. Dor, 1793.

*Lent by the Earl of Sheffield.*

94. PHOTOGRAPHS of Buriton Manor, Hampshire, the home of Edward Gibbon, senior, during the later years of his life, and of Buriton Church, in the churchyard of which he is buried.

*Lent by J. Milman Brown, Esq.*



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