

EDMOND MALONE AND JAMES BOSWELL

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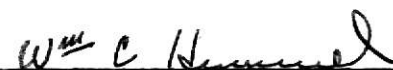
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The second half of the eighteenth century is often referred to as the Age of Johnson. As an embodiment of the political, religious and literary conservatism of the day, Johnson was a latter-day spokesman for neoclassicism, and he deplored many of the new forms, materials, and methods which emerged during this transitional period. An intricately complex person, Johnson could be dramatic, provocative, humane and witty, but he could also be overbearing, prejudice, boorish and violent. The conflicting elements of his personality were unified by a strength of character that gave him a moral authority which remains unequaled by any literary figure. It is not strange then that so many of the great minds of his century found him a fascinating and magnetic personality. Two young men, James Boswell and Edmond Malone, made his acquaintance in the early sixties, and although they had no way of knowing it then, their mutual interest in this literary colossus would bring them together later in their lives. After his death in 1784, Johnson served as a catalyst for one of the closest and most productive friendships in all literary history.

Malone and Boswell were almost exact contemporaries; Boswell was born in 1740 and Malone in 1741. During the ten years of their close association, 1785-1795, Boswell continually relied on Malone for advice and assistance in his personal, political and literary affairs. Although companionship and comradeship were an integral part of the relationship, Malone's role was often flavored with paternal concerns and responsibilities. Boswell had always been erratic and melancholy, but during the last ten years of his life, he experienced severe periods of utter despair in which he viewed his life as a total failure. Advancement of his family name and position was the

greatest success imaginable for Boswell. As he saw all his grandiose ambitions for success at the English bar and a seat in Parliament disappear, largely because of his lack of self-discipline and his dissipated habits, he became a tortured and, in many respects, a pathetic individual.

In contrast to this, Malone, busily engaged in Shakespearean and other antiquarian research, was at the peak of his career during this period. He had chosen a scholar's life and seemed quite content with the diligence and perseverance required of him. Besides his literary pursuits, Malone's other major interest appears to have been his friends, many of whom were leading figures of the age. He was a member of the Literary Club and quite active in it. He gave time and effort to some, like Bishop Percy and Lord Charlemont, from a distance, but Boswell was unquestionably his most time-consuming acquaintance in London during the ten-year period mentioned. A close look at the nature of the relationship and at the type and degree of assistance given to Boswell by Malone reveals the complex personality of Johnson's famous biographer and the remarkable magnanimity of this great eighteenth-century scholar.

Edmond Malone, born in Dublin, was the son of an Irish Judge and the nephew of Anthony Malone, a celebrated lawyer and statesman. Edmond had an older brother, Richard, who inherited Anthony's estates in 1776 and became Lord Sunderlin. Two additional brothers died young; two younger sisters, Catherine and Henrietta, neither of whom ever married, remained devoted to bachelor brother, Edmond. Early records reveal that a great deal of amity prevailed among the members of the family. As Sir James Prior noted, "their letters, as well as surviving testimony, render it apparent that there could not be a more united family."¹

Malone showed an early disposition toward thoroughness and accuracy in

his studies and a certain steadiness of character which led his father to presume he should study law and follow in the family tradition. Edmond senior had been called to the English bar early in his career, but removed from his native environment and influential family ties, he had limited success. After marrying, he moved to the Irish bar and soon gained favor and fame. Malone's mother experienced poor health, and moved to England in 1759. She eventually settled with relatives in Bath and died there six years later. Consequently, young Edmond had ample opportunity for travel to England even before he went to London in 1763 and entered the Inner Temple.

In London, Malone encountered the broadening aspects the cosmopolitan society afforded alert, inquisitive minds. In addition to his legal studies, he sought out literary and dramatic persons, indulged in coffeehouse repartees and enjoyed the metropolitan nightlife. Malone returned to Ireland in 1767 to begin his legal career. Professionally he demonstrated characteristic determination and application, but no true ardor. His interest in London life and letters continued.

Shortly after his return to Ireland he fell in love. Although the girl's name and the circumstances of their romance are not known, enough evidence survives to conclude that the affair was a very serious emotional involvement for Malone. Various letters from family and friends counsel the young man to accept the futility of his love and to seek diversion. Such advice must have been very inadequate consolation, for years later, in 1781, he was still able to write:

You say, my Lord, you will not trouble me with politics, as I am not much addicted to that science. I was once deeply engaged by it; but a most unfortunate attachment, which never could have contributed much to my honour, and has ended most unhappily, has estranged me from that and almost everything else, except a few friends, the recollection of whom is one of the last sentiments I shall part with.

I endeavour to employ my thoughts with books and writing, and when weary of them fly into company; and when disgusted with that return back to the other. But all will not do--there is little chance of getting over an attachment that has continued with unabated force for thirteen years; nor at my time of life, is the heart very easily captured by a new object.

You see how frankly I confess my weakness. But if I am not much mistaken you will make some allowance for the extravagance of this sort of sensation, which is allied, however remotely, to some of the best feelings of the heart. I am a very domestic kind of animal, and not at all adapted for solitude.²

Malone remained in Ireland for about ten years laboring away at law practice and politics and writing newspaper paragraphs and essays. He became a close friend of Lord Charlemont, and in spite of the fact that their professions and politics were similar, they spent most of their time discussing literature, rare books and criticism. In 1774 Malone's father died and left him an inheritance which assured him a moderate financial independence. This plus his uncle's death two years later which gave his brother, Richard, a title and various estates, allowed Edmond to weigh personal preference against family tradition. In 1777, love of scholarship prevailed and Malone withdrew from the Irish bar and migrated to London. Two years later he moved into a house on Queen Anne Street, East, and there he resided until the end of his life.

This brief biographical sketch of Malone's early life furnishes interesting parallels and stark contrasts when compared to Boswell's. Both men were of ancient families from foreign countries; both felt compelled to be educated for a career in the law; both found London full of infinite variety and constant appeal. However, a significant difference in temperament existed; Boswell was not dispositionally suited to demanding legal or scholarly pursuits. He possessed none of the steadiness and discipline of Malone. Unlike Malone, Boswell's financial circumstances and family relationships did not allow him to follow his interests without a suffocating sense of guilt.

Malone surrendered all opportunity for political fame and fortune and diligently worked as a scholar and critic; despite periods of depression and occasional regrets, he never expressed any thoroughgoing discontent with his chosen career. In contrast, Boswell vacillated in his child-like ambitions; he constantly dreamed of political success, but he never effectively evaluated the demands that would be made on his labor or channeled his energies consistently in that direction; he also wanted to achieve literary success, but he could not accept his aspirations in this area as sufficient justification for his existence. Indeed, it is doubtful that without Malone's influence he could ever have sustained his literary efforts with the Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

What is so remarkable about Malone is that he never demanded from Boswell what he could not give; he simply accepted the total personality. A reader of Boswell's journals can easily become impatient with the man's ego and his immature conduct; yet time after time, Malone patiently entertained Boswell's complaints, clarified the issues and gave him rational counsel. He never held it against Boswell when he could not do what seemed obvious and logical. Given Malone's natural tendency toward hard work, his personal detestation of self-pity, and his self-imposed restraint, it is amazing that he never forced his values on Boswell but remained unbelievably tolerant of his friend's failings and constantly appreciative of his virtues.

It is impossible to ascertain just when the two men met for the first time. James Boswell Jr.'s account in the Gentleman's Magazine saying the two men first met in 1785 at Baldwin's printing office has long been recognized as fallacious.³ Both men were introduced to Dr. Johnson for the first time when they were twenty-three, Boswell in 1763 and Malone in 1764. Malone was engaged in his legal studies in London and his rooms in the Inner Temple

were "only a few dozen yards away from Johnson's abode," and Malone visited the scholar who was then completing his edition of Shakespeare.⁴ It is possible that Johnson introduced Malone and Boswell during this early period; it is highly likely that in general conversation with each young friend he at least mentioned his acquaintance with one to the other.

Although Malone returned to Ireland in 1767, he no doubt kept in touch with the relatively small London literary circle. Prior to his return to London in 1777, he edited Goldsmith's works, to which he attached a brief prefatory biography. In 1778 he published his "Attempt to Ascertain the Order in Which the Plays of Shakespeare were Written," and in 1780 he produced his 'Supplement' to Johnson's and Steevens' Shakespeare. Clearly then there was reason enough for members of the London circle to be familiar with Malone and his work.

Malone was elected to the Literary Club in 1782, nine years after Boswell, and so certainly they were acquainted at that time. Boswell's journals indicate that he was familiar with the Shakespearean scholar at least as early as 1780. From July, 1780, to May, 1781, Boswell entered Malone's name no less than five times in his journal. Once he mentioned having read Malone's 'Supplement.' In April, he noted that he dined at Sir Joshua's where Malone was a guest for the first time. On another occasion, Boswell questioned Johnson for his authority of a story concerning Addison and Steele. When the older man dismissed his query saying it was common knowledge, Boswell teased him by saying that he had asked Reynolds, Steevens and Malone, among others, and none of them had heard of it. Still later in April, Boswell recorded his attendance at "Beauclerk's auction" and observed that "Malone [was] there." Later that spring, Boswell visited Johnson and Malone arrived as the old bear was lecturing the young profligate on intemperance.

Whatever the exact date of their first meeting or their previous degree of familiarity, it appears clear that a close association did not begin until early in 1785 when Boswell arrived in London, several months after Johnson's death, with his original journal of the Hebridean tour. In January a letter appeared in the St. James's Chronicle which enumerated Boswell's particular qualifications for writing Johnson's biography. Boswell was thought to have written it himself, but he denied having anything to do with it and published a request that the author reveal himself. "The anonymous correspondent . . . was almost certainly Malone," and it could be that their close association dated from this "interchange of compliments."⁶ Dilly had contacted Boswell requesting a biography of Johnson in six weeks, but Boswell said he wanted to take his time; however, he scheduled the Tour for immediate publication. Friends had led him to believe the Tour could be published with little revision, and he had gone to London to accomplish the task quickly.

At this time Boswell was filled with visions of coming to the English bar and he was seeking advice from everyone. Since his father's death, he had inherited Auchinleck, and he realized that it was not prudent to govern his estates from a distance. His income, though considerable, was not such that he could maintain two households easily, especially considering the calculated risk involved in initiating an English legal career at middle age. His wife was not well, and she did not wish to leave Scotland. Despite the negative factors, if Boswell had been a man of Malone's dedication and perseverance, the bar attempt would not have been such a wild conception. However, as was invariably the case, Boswell failed to adequately evaluate his own limitations and eventually fell victim to his driving ambitions.

In addition to entertaining a political career in England, Boswell spent a month in frantic social activity. It was not until April 29 that he

dined with Malone for the first time. Boswell stayed until two in the morning and Malone encouraged his legal aspirations. This, if nothing else, would have ingratiated the scholar to Boswell. The journal notes of this first meeting only mention Malone's encouragement of his bar scheme; nothing is said of the Tour. They must have discussed it though, for immediately following this meeting, Boswell made arrangements with Baldwin to have the Tour printed. But politics soon distracted him and he wrote his Letter to the People of Scotland concerning the Diminishing Bill which was to reduce the number of Lords of Sessions from fifteen to ten and increase the salaries of the remainder. The pamphlet created quite a controversy in Scotland and England for a number of months because Boswell had introduced his ancestry and private relationships into his lengthy, elaborate document. Many felt he had grabbed at any opportunity to gain publicity. The following November, after the Tour had been published and Boswell had returned to Scotland, Malone wrote: "You cannot imagine how much mischief your own pamphlet has done you and how slow people are to allow the praise of good thinking and good writing to one whom they think guilty of such indiscretions in that pamphlet as a man of sound sense (they allege) would not be guilty of." The tone of this note characterizes the total candor that existed between the two men. Far from taking offense at what Malone had to say, Boswell nonchalantly replied that he would "henceforth to a certain degree be more cautious."⁷

After the three-week interlude originally taken for the writing of the political pamphlet, Boswell began to pursue his revision of the Tour. From May on, he visited Malone daily to gain assistance. Geoffrey Scott wrote that "there is no record of Boswell devoting a single hour of solitary industry to the Hebridean Journal. He works with Malone, usually at Malone's; and, it appears, he never works without Malone."⁸ However, Frederick Pottle claims

that "this is too sweeping." He maintains that although Malone's contribution was great, Boswell retained control and worked alone at least in the early phases of the project. He cites the following interchange of correspondence saying that "these letters undoubtedly continue and exemplify the pattern of their unrecorded oral interchange in the summer of 1785."⁹

P.9, line 4, 'taken along.' I believe this is not legitimate, and that it should be 'along with them.' A lady to whom I read it did not understand it. This is always a good criterion. . . . P.243, line 1. Would it not run neater thus: 'In conformity with this doctrine, though fully persuaded, etc., I yet should have thought, etc., (Malone, 5 October, 1785). P.9, line 4. Most certainly 'along with them.' The criterion of the lady not understanding is infallible. . . . P.243. I like the passage as it stands. I like 'myself,' moi. It is more avowed. So let it remain (Boswell, 13 October 1785).¹⁰

This interchange also reflects the objective critical attitude that prevailed between them which never jeopardized their personal relationship or mutual regard for one another.

During this time Malone began to publish his great edition of Shakespeare and it must have been difficult for him to keep both projects afloat. On July 27, 1785, Boswell recorded that "Malone was busy today with his Shakespeare. So I could not get any of his time." And again in August: "Malone was busy with his Shakespeare. So we did not SIT upon my 'Tour.'" However, at other times he noted: "Malone devoted the whole of this day to me, that we might get forward with my 'Tour.' I breakfasted, dined, drank tea, and supt with him, and sat till near two in the morning. Yet we did not get a great deal winnowed, there was so very much chaff in that portion of it."¹¹

It would be misleading to suggest Boswell was working all day, every day on his Tour. He still found time for various social engagements and an affair with a Mrs. Rudd. Several times he noted that he was too intoxicated to work very well. Certainly Malone had ample opportunity to become aware

of Boswell's shortcomings as well as his virtues during this period.

Frederick Pottle, in his introduction to the Yale edition of Boswell's Tour, outlines what he considers to be the method of revision practiced by Boswell and Malone.¹² They tore the leaves from the original journal and made corrections on them to send to the printers. Whenever the revision was too extensive for this process, the supplements were written on separate sheets and correlated to the manuscript by signs. Pottle feels that Malone imposed a neoclassic sense of organization and elegance of style on the Tour. Scotticisms were removed; sentences and paragraphs were recast and the organization tightened; matter was suppressed, and a large quantity of autobiographical material was excised. In addition, the book began to appear too lengthy, so large quantities of material were tossed out toward the finish that would have been retained had they occurred earlier.

Malone assisted Boswell in other ways too. Boswell wrote: "An addition to my 'Tour' (defending my faculty of writing conversations) occurred to me. So I staid in town and Malone and I laboured as usual."¹³ The critic also helped him read proofs and he advised Boswell that the title page, as it was first set up, had an old-fashioned look and should be revised. It was.

Pottle has observed that much of the journal in which "indirect discourse was changed to direct discourse or to dialogue is in Malone's hand." He contemplates the extent of Malone's help in this dramatic recasting that characterizes both the Tour and the Life; he concludes that "Malone's intervention can have amounted to no more than counsel to make fuller use of a device abundantly illustrated in the original journal before him."¹⁴

Upon completion of the Tour in September of 1785, Boswell prepared to leave for Scotland and Malone gave him a farewell dinner and invited a group of friends to preview the book. Their reaction was favorable and as Boswell

departed his final thoughts were for his "kind and elegant friend Malone." Pottle notes that Boswell's lack of "jealousy of authorship, his lack of confidence in his own private and natural style" is rather shocking.¹⁵ For Boswell in no way tried to conceal his debt to Malone. His journal proves that, and in addition, Boswell dedicated the Tour to Malone.

You have obligingly taken the trouble to peruse the original manuscript of this Tour, and can vouch for the strict fidelity of the present publication. Your literary alliance with our much lamented friend, in consequence of having undertaken to render one of his labours more complete, by your edition of Shakespeare, a work which I am confident will not disappoint the expectations of the publick, gives you another claim. But I have a still more powerful inducement to prefix your name to this volume, as it gives me an opportunity of letting the world know that I enjoy the honour and happiness of your friendship; and of thus publicly testifying the sincere regard . . . with which I am . . . your . . . obedient servant. . . .¹⁶

Some have felt that this dedication does not accurately reflect the scope of Malone's aid, but Geoffrey Scott was the first to note that the rather restrained acknowledgement was not "an unworthy silence" on Boswell's part, but rather "a deliberate abnegation by Malone."¹⁷ That Malone genuinely cared for Boswell and for the memory of Samuel Johnson there can be no doubt; his motives were totally unselfish.

Malone was involved with Boswell's dynamic personality on all levels, not just a limited literary plane. After two months in Scotland, Boswell returned to London. Soon after his return he received an unsigned letter from Lord MacDonald, a Scottish Laird, complaining of Boswell's treatment of him in the Tour. Boswell had removed some passages from the original draft because he felt he had been too harsh on the old gentleman; however, what remained clearly implied that both Johnson and Boswell were disgusted with the Laird's ultra-frugality and lack of warm hospitality. Boswell took the letter to Malone and he and Jack Courtenay, a parliamentary wit and friend, agreed that Boswell

should not take notice of an unsigned letter. Later they decided that MacDonald might circulate or publish the letter and force Boswell to call him out. Therefore, they counseled him to obtain MacDonald's promise that he would not do so, or if he would not promise, for Boswell to call him out before he was placed in a defensive position.

The three men drafted a letter to MacDonald. Then an elaborate, strategic, but pathetically amateurish, diplomatic battle evolved in which each side vied for the dominant position. MacDonald kept Boswell's go-betweens busy--more letters were drafted and carried to the Lord; conferences were held--while the old man pretended to procrastinate and Boswell agonized. The ludicrous aspects of the whole affair become apparent when one reads that after a cultivated evening at Malone's, the obliging Courtenay showed the tormented and reluctant Boswell how to use a pistol. It was finally perceived that MacDonald meant to keep Boswell in uncertainty for as long as possible, so a final letter was sent demanding a reply or requesting a duel. The renunciation finally arrived and the trio celebrated their victory. Boswell later collected all the correspondence concerning the affair, carefully filed it, and gave it to Malone.¹⁸

On December 1, 1785, Malone and Boswell breakfasted together to read the reviews of the Tour. This initiated a custom of meeting the first of every month to review recent periodicals which lasted until Boswell's death. The Tour met with instant popularity and a second edition was requested immediately. Consequently, Boswell continued to be a daily drop-in at the Malone household, and he received assistance in setting up a table of contents and in revising proof sheets for the second edition. When this was done and before leaving for another visit to Scotland, Boswell acknowledged his appreciation of and confidence in Malone by adding a codicil to his will

stipulating that in case of his death "all materials for the Life of Johnson should be left in the sole charge of Malone."¹⁹

As the literary and personal friendship prospered, Malone offered increased counsel as to Boswell's legal career. Boswell had decided by this time to try the English bar. Malone spent a great deal of time trying to see to it that he made a proper start. For instance Boswell wrote:

. . . I called again on Malone, who luckily was to dine at home by himself and kindly asked me to dine with him. We were cordial. But I shrunk from the english bar, as he suggested how I should study. Came home about ten and read some english law. Was very sad.

On February 11, 1786, Boswell recorded: "Malone walked with me to the Temple and subscribed by Bond as my Surety. My two bretheren and I took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy before the Benchers. I dined most comfortably and drank coffee tete a tete with Malone." Several nights later, Malone attended Boswell's inauguration dinner at the Inner Temple. Boswell now ceased his daily visits, but scarcely a week went by that he did not call on or see Malone several times. The conviviality of the friendship did not cool: "Called on Malone . . . and most luckily found roast beef and hearty welcome. Conversation never fails between him and me."²⁰

Malone, having few illusions about his friend, wanted to do everything he could to get Boswell started off well. He probably felt the hours they had spent in rigorous revision had been good discipline for Boswell and would be of service as he entered such an exacting profession. But Boswell's enthusiasm for the law soon cooled. He was given his first brief, and he lost the case through sheer legal ignorance; thereafter, his practice was virtually nothing. He was forced to become a junior on the circuits, and he became the brunt of practical jokes by lawyers twenty years his junior.²¹ As he became more disturbed with his circumstances, his visits to Malone increased: "Wondered

how I should be able to do my DUTY as a LAIRD. Malone's for relief; he not at home." But on June 3, 1786, Malone was at home and Boswell wrote:

I dined at Malone's, and at first was in a very gloomy frame. But good eating and wine and conversation revived me. . . . After supper Malone, Courtenay, and I got into a good conversation upon human life, and Malone with ability shewed me that I had no reason to be discontented, and that making a trial in London was right. He raised my spirits to a manly pitch, and I came home at 3 in the morning quite resolved to stay in London at least a term or two more.²²

Although Boswell recorded nothing about his *Life of Johnson* at this time, it seems apparent that it must have been discussed too, for two days later, on June 5, he said: "At home all forenoon sorting materials for Dr. Johnson's Life." Again finding himself faced with a bulky and time-consuming assignment, he sought out assistance: "Malone's a little, and got advice as to my Life of Dr. Johnson: to make a Skeleton with references to the materials, in order of time." Boswell didn't make many demands on Malone's time at this point. He attended King's Bench and Westminster Hall less and less and began to socialize more and more. He dined and partied with various people, Malone included, but he did his sorting at home, alone. That this was often a laborious task, the journal provides ample evidence: "Resolved to sit all day sorting Johnsonian materials. . . . Returned home and sorted till I was stupified."²³

Malone was still hard at work on his voluminous edition of Shakespeare. However, he found time to help Bishop Percy with his collection of Goldsmith materials, and another Irish friend, Lord Charlemont, frequently requested assistance in procuring certain rare books. A young Irish playwright by the name of Jephson repeatedly sought help with his tragedies. Yet despite all the demands, Malone never seemed to deny Boswell any time when he asked for it, whether it was to discuss his book or his personal and professional problems.

Boswell became more and more depressed over the shape his legal career was taking. He could rationalize that he needed to study and apply himself, but somehow he never related the necessity to reality or accepted it as cause for his failure. He seemed to view legal success as a happy circumstance which fate bestowed on some and not on others. Malone obviously tried to help him as much with his personal life as he had with his literary endeavors. On June 23, 1786, Boswell had spent a distracted day and landed at Malone's in something of a stupor. Courtenay was there and Boswell observed:

They were entertained with my dissipated day, so different from what I had planned. They gave me a strong impression of the error of my fancy in wishing to live so as that it may tell. I ought to do what I found most agreeable. I came home inclined to go to Auchinleck, as all my english bar scheme was chiefly with a view to how it would tell in my life in the Biographia.

Still miserable, Boswell wrote a few days later:

He [Malone] argued clearly with me not to be uneasy, for that I might be at the english bar, or the scotch bar, or no bar at all, and nobody would trouble their heads about what I did. . . . Remember how well Mr. Malone made you. You saw that London and Auchinleck may be united. If you go there every year, the distance will be nothing. Your records and memorandums of the Inner Temple will be in the Family Archives, and you may have a fortunate display and get a brilliant fortune. Be firm, then, & see what time will produce.

But despite this moment of confidence and hope, inspired by Malone, Boswell's moods fluctuated so erratically that only a few days later he despaired:

Was very ill in K.B. and so restless that I could not stay. . . . I was distracted between making a further trial of the english bar and quitting it at once. . . . I sauntered into various Coffeehouses "seeking rest and finding none. . . ." I grew somewhat weary. . . . When I got into the streets again I was so depressed that the tears run down my cheeks.

After this point Boswell talked more and more of returning to Scotland, to the extent that he did not really give his English scheme an honest effort.

In July of 1786, Malone suggested to him:

. . . my not going next circuit looked like quitting the english bar, and thought I did not give it a fair trial. He talked of the success I perhaps might have in such spirited terms that, though I timidly shrunk and was ashamed, I had yet some stirrings of Ambition, which distracted me. . . .²⁴

Although there is almost no mention of the Life during this portion of Boswell's journal, it seems clear that Malone's intense concern for Boswell's political career and his suggestions and encouragement concerning it were influenced considerably by his conviction that Boswell had to be in London to complete the biography of Johnson. For early in July of 1786, Boswell wrote to his wife:

My next consideration is Dr. Johnson's Life, which it is necessary I should get ready for the press soon, that the publick attention may not be diverted to some other object; and as I have collected a great variety of materials, it will probably be a Work of considerable value. Mr. Malone thinks I can write it no where but in London. But I feel that it is almost impossible for me to settle to it here. . . .²⁵

Several days later, on July 9, 1786, he confined himself to the house, fasted for three days, and launched what he began to call his Magnum Opus.

He wrote:

. . . this discipline made me quiet, and I did the first part of Dr. Johnson's Life and made arrangements for more of it. My resolution now was to put it in such a way that I could carry it on at Auchinleck, and as soon as I had it so, I was to set out. . . . Fortunately Malone called on me on tuesday, and with his judicious and elegant spirit roused me from despair. He urged that I must act rationally, that I must not appear so ridiculous as to fly off from Westminster Hall before there was time for its being well-known that I was in it; that I must fulfill what I had proposed, and must certainly be at least one winter at the bar; that going no circuit was a kind of declaration that I did not mean to continue in the profession, therefore I must go to the Home Circuit. He did not insist upon my going to every one of the towns, but I must go to one or two of them, so as that it might be said I went the Home Circuit. That I might then go to Scotland and bring up my Wife and two eldest daughters for the winter and live upon a very moderate scale; and that all my notions about inferiority were pride, which ought to be repressed. He thus saved me from acting in a way of which I

must have repented grievously. When the fit of melancholy was off I should have seen the despicable fickleness of my conduct, and been vexed by the ridicule with which I should have perceived myself looked upon.²⁶

Malone's visit and persuasive oratory appear as a kind of last-minute desperation attempt to persuade Boswell to remain in London. Assuredly that was his prime motive. When he could not convince Boswell that only London provided the atmosphere necessary for the completion of his book, he made a last-minute entreaty to Boswell's political ambitions, and succeeded.

The next day Malone and Courtenay took him to the country to cheer and divert him. Then on July 13, Boswell went to Malone and they traced Dr. Johnson's publications chronologically in the periodicals. For a few days the eccentric's spirits remained high and he worked long hours at the Life. He wrote to Margaret Boswell informing her of his change in outlook and said he had been "fixed by . . . [his] friend Malone."²⁷

During this same week, Boswell received an invitation to dine from Lord Lonsdale, a powerful nobleman who could offer him the political preferment he so desired. However, the request was somewhat irregular and Boswell feared a trick. He rushed to Malone, who advised him to conduct himself with dignity and restraint and not to appear overly eager. So Boswell declined the invitation and said he would call on Lord Lonsdale at a later date.²⁸

In August of 1786, Boswell returned to Scotland, and after two months there, brought his entire family back to London. For the next five years he labored spasmodically at the Life and periodically attempted to establish himself at the English bar. By far the most consistent thing about this period was the Scotsman's increased sense of misery. Almost immediately after his return he noted: "I shrunk from the practice of the law of England;

I read almost nothing and went on very slowly with Dr. Johnson's Life." This statement reflects the main trend and emotional tenor of the next few years of his life. Boswell must have been fearful when he wrote: "my mind could not perceive the distinction between what was excellent and what not. . . ." ²⁹

Boswell's conduct was erratic and capricious, and the journals reveal that his behavior was often the outer manifestation of an abnormal mental state. He frequently made reference to his constitutional affliction, melancholia. Throughout the eighteenth century, melancholy or melancholia connoted a disease of the mind, a kind of mental illness. It was still associated in medical science with the concept of an imbalance of one of the four humors, and certain causes and symptoms could be diagnosed. Within the last century, psychology has approached the illness more scientifically and provided terms, such as neurosis or more severely psychosis, for the type of emotional disorder Boswell suffered. Much of the London society of that day believed Boswell affected the symptoms of the disease in an effort to emulate Dr. Johnson. However, Malone comprehended the genuine nature of his friend's temperamental disorder; this is shown in Boswell's recorded comment: "he [Malone] said if I should quit London and return to Scotland, I would hang myself in five weeks. . . ." ³⁰

In London, Malone faithfully administered the consolation and assistance Boswell needed. He had him to dinner many times, and Boswell recognized his debt to Malone when, in a characteristic passage, he wrote:

I had leisure to see Malone. . . . His conversation never fails to console and cheer me. He encourages me to go on with Johnson's Life. One morning we revised a part of it, which he thought well of, and dispelled my vapourish diffidence; and he surprised me another day with a page of it on two different types, that we might settle how it was to be printed. ³¹

Always concerned with his friend's mental state, Malone tried to cheer Boswell, yet he applied constant pressure on him to work at the Life. Malone was of tremendous assistance in gathering materials for the book. Boswell once referred to him as a "Johnsonianissimus" and certainly the critic had been interested in Johnson since his student days in London.³² After moving to London, Malone began to keep a record of conversations and anecdotes in a packet he labeled "Maloniana."³³ Many of the entries related to the great moralist whose principles Malone so highly esteemed. In addition, Malone had made comments in various notebooks and letters about Johnson and he apparently gathered these and turned them all over to Boswell. In March of 1787, Boswell recorded the following supervisory suggestion concerning material for his book: "Malone, who had dined at Sir Joshua's the day before, advised me to push him to get Johnson's Diaries from Sir J. Hawkins, that I might see them. I breakfasted with him [Reynolds] today and he promised to write for them."³⁴ Later that same year, Malone gave him Johnson's manuscript dairy of his 1775 visit to France which he had gotten from one of Johnson's literary executors.³⁵

Neither Boswell nor Malone were deluded as to the significance of their working relationship. Boswell realized he depended upon Malone's pressure, and he boyishly patronized his need by seeking expiation when he had been lax. For example, after an idle day Boswell wished to go out with friends and he appealed to Malone for permission. Malone agreed, saying he would let him off his "task of Johnson's Life" for the day. But Malone's paternal duties were not always restricted to literary matters or performed in so mild a manner. He sometimes found it necessary to reprimand Boswell publicly as well as privately for his intemperate habits. At one Club meeting in June of 1787, Boswell drank too much wine even though "Malone admonished . . . [him] to stop." As Boswell began to drink more and more to alleviate his mental aberrations

and doubts, his work habits became increasingly irregular. He noted: [Malone] "lectured me upon my intemperance and on my delaying Johnson's Life, on which I was to rest my fame."³⁶ This occasional sternness from his colleague did not, however, alter Boswell's behavioral patterns. But then neither did it affect the predominantly warm, good-natured reception Malone always offered him.

Boswell had brought his family to London in September of 1786 and his wife was already consumptive. During her nearly two-year stay in London, her condition further deteriorated. Although Margaret Boswell seldom complained, this must have been a very painful period in her life, for Boswell was not then, nor had he ever been, a good husband. He was unfaithful and inconsiderate to her on numerous occasions. She, like Boswell's brother, saw the debauched image he projected to the public and was no doubt embarrassed for him. Coupled with his profligate social behavior, his lack of professional resolve and will power made Boswell a pathetic figure to many. People shunned him, laughed at him, pitied him. She could not understand why he did not return to Scotland and forsake such a dependent state before he lost the respect of his own countrymen. She never forced her will on him, but due to her weakened condition, she could not help him direct his energies more productively either. For his resolve he depended almost solely on Malone.

No account has appeared of Malone's and Mrs. Boswell's regard for one another, but reading between the lines of the journal, one can sense that she felt Malone's constant optimistic encouragement of her husband's legal career, whatever his motives, could only serve to Boswell's ultimate disadvantage. For his part, Malone seemed strangely indifferent to her needs and Boswell's responsibility to her. The scholar took a personal interest in helping Boswell plan suitable educations for his children, but he seemed

almost oblivious to her. Often plagued by guilt feelings because of his neglect of her, Boswell must have confided in his friend, but Malone apparently never criticized or advised him concerning his marital relations. Boswell frequently stayed out late when she wasn't feeling well, and often he was with Malone. On Tuesday, June 5, 1787, Boswell observed that

. . . Malone, Kemble and I grew so cordial that time passed insensibly. I once or twice endeavoured to get away, but was persuaded to sit down again. When two struck, I thought my Wife would now be quiet, and I resigned myself to my fate. We sat till near five. I felt great remorse when I got home and found my dear wife sitting up.³⁷

On another occasion he and others were at Malone's house. The party lasted until nearly five in the morning, at which time Boswell elected to walk the streets the rest of the night with Courtenay. Without going home, they returned to Malone's house for breakfast. Boswell learned there that his wife had called for him, but he stayed until noon before going home.³⁸

Malone's silent endorsement of Boswell's inconsiderate behavior seems peculiar for two reasons. First, Malone was a very thoughtful man who in nearly every other circumstance displayed acute sensitivity toward others, especially women. Once Boswell was discourteous in a company of ladies when asked to play whist which he did not wish to do. Sir Joshua and Malone both took him to task. Boswell said: [they] "shewed me that I was in the wrong to be so uncomplying, the very essence of politeness, by which Society gains so much, being to do what we do not like, that we may please others."³⁹ In addition, Malone idealized marriage and he remained so romantically naive as to suppose that a man, after many years of marriage, still desired his wife in the same manner and to the same degree as when he first met her.⁴⁰

Malone never stopped hoping that he would one day marry and have a family. When Sir Joshua died in 1792, he was named an executor of the will and given

one of the artist's paintings about which he remarked: I consider [the gift] as a great honour, and hope my children if I should have any, will carefully preserve that memorial of his friendship. . . ."⁴¹ In 1794, at the age of fifty-four, Malone fell in love with a Miss Bower, but once again his proposal was refused. Boswell commented to R. A. Farington at the time that Malone was "'too soft in his manners . . . to be a favourite of the Ladies.'"⁴² By 1797, it was a desperate bachelor who wrote: "How therefore should I ever get a wife? Or what ground have I to expect after all that has happened that any but a mere dowdy will accept my hand? Yet I still keep on hoping that something may happen. . . ."⁴³

Perhaps Malone subconsciously envied Boswell's marital status, an ironic situation, if true, since Boswell constantly bemoaned it. It could be that Malone was simply unaware that he was in any way contributing to Margaret Boswell's unhappiness. More likely, however, Malone was simply being discreet in not interfering in such matters. Besides, his overriding concern was that Boswell should finish the Life, and he did everything in his power to keep the man in London and at work on the project. Literature, after all, was Malone's real love and his unbending devotion to it probably accounts for his apparent lack of concern for Mrs. Boswell.

As work on the rough draft of the Life went slowly forward, many began to doubt that Boswell would ever finish. Others, such as Steevens, felt that if he did finish there would no longer be much of a market for the book because the press had been flooded with Johnson accounts. In May of 1787, Sir John Hawkins released his Life of Johnson, and the next March, Mrs. Piozzi published her Letters to Dr. Johnson. Neither Boswell nor Malone cared for their efforts. Both Hawkins and Mrs. Piozzi violated Malone's principles of scholarly integrity. If a reader tends to exalt Malone for his tolerant

good will toward Boswell, he has only to read his remarks about Hawkins to discover that Malone could be just as outraged, indignant and caustic as the next person. He took Hawkins' poor scholarship so personally that he could scarcely write an objective word concerning him. He referred to "the malignant prejudices of that shallow writer," and suggested to the members of the Literary Club that they should draw up a "solemn Protest . . . declaring that Hawkins's was a false and injurious Account."⁴⁴ He took the pains to make a list of needed cancellations of the book; he corrected factual errors and commented on the book's "inaccuracy," "bad taste," and "misrepresentations." He even enumerated Howkins' bad writing habits under the title, "His Own Bad Style."⁴⁵

Boswell, at least initially, took greater offense at Mrs. Piozzi's account than Malone, for she published some letters in which Johnson did not have totally favorable things to say about his Scottish friend. Boswell was obviously hurt when he wrote: "this publication cooled my warmth of enthusiasm for 'my illustrious friend' a good deal."⁴⁶ He took the letters to Malone immediately; however, he and Sir Joshua "thought better" of them than Boswell. But Malone did not remain so neutral; he later wrote that the "flippant and malicious Mrs. Piozzi . . . miscoloured and misrepresented almost every anecdote. . . ."⁴⁷

During Mrs. Boswell's two-year stay in London, Boswell completed the greater part of his rough draft. In the spring of 1788, he took her back to Scotland where he stayed until July; he then joined the Northern Circuit. By this time he had obligated himself to the powerful Lord Lonsdale in the hope that it would lead to further advancement. On request, Lonsdale had used his influence to have Boswell elected Recorder at Carlisle. After

dispensing his duties as Recorder that term, he returned to London for the winter of 1789 and worked despondently on the Life. The task began to appear endless to him. His children were scattered in various locations; Mrs. Boswell was dying at Auchinleck, and he was getting nothing accomplished in his legal career. He went to Scotland to see his wife once, but he was little comfort to her; he got drunk and fell off his horse and injured his shoulder. As before Lonsdale called him to Carlisle from Scotland, and as before, Boswell went on to London from there, this time in order to prepare a case that was coming to trial for the great nobleman. He received word that his wife was failing rapidly and he left London with his two sons on June 4, 1789, but they did not arrive in time. Boswell was haunted for the rest of his life with a feeling of guilt for his neglect of her. However, given his character, it is doubtful that he could or would have conducted himself any differently if given another chance.

After his wife's death, Boswell spent several months in Scotland in grief and drunken idleness. He wrote to Malone and complained:

. . . done nothing to Dr. Johnson's Life--Literally nothing--not a single line of the remaining part of the first draught which I hoped and trusted should be completely finished here. It will require an exercise both of your philosophy and indulgent friendship to make allowance for me. I see that the Whole will be of London Manufacture. I . . . shall proceed to town. . . . I shall then set myself doggedly to my task. . . . I am however seriously uneasy at this delay, and beg of you to comfort me, instead of scolding me. I have always found you a mild Confessor.

Malone at moments like this must have felt extreme exasperation with his friend, but when he replied to the letter, he did not scold; he simply said: "Your neglect of Johnson's Life is only what I expected. Scotland is not the place for it."⁴⁸

Malone's contribution to the Life to this stage had been to help Boswell gather material and to keep him at the rough draft. Months before, in January,

Boswell had written to his friend Temple explaining Malone's projected role for the future. "Whenever I have completed the rough draft, by which I mean the work without nice correction, Malone and I are to prepare the one half perfectly, and then it goes to press, where I hope to have it early in February, so as to be out by the end of May."⁴⁹

Boswell apparently felt the revision would go quite rapidly with Malone at his side, but he did not complete the rough draft until November 10, 1789. By then the Irish scholar was in the last stages of his Shakespearean edition and working day and night to finish it. However, his generosity with his time was incredible. On November 23, 1789, Boswell first indicated he was at Malone's in the evening revising. The journal entries show that for the next year he was there revising frequently. He often dropped by unannounced and stayed long hours. Malone even devoted whole days and evenings to the book. In December Boswell leased his house on Queen Anne Street, East, for another six months as he thought it "might do well to keep near Malone." On one occasion he dropped by, but could get "very little revise" done because Malone "had a Dulcinea with him."⁵⁰ That Boswell, of all people, should begrudge his friend such an uncharacteristic pastime is humorous. One can just imagine Malone trying to entertain or perhaps seduce a woman in the living room with Boswell in the study waiting like a spoiled child for attention. That Boswell could expect so much from his friend was remarkable; even more remarkable was Malone's capacity for tolerance; he always rewarded the genius in Boswell and ignored the weaknesses.

It is difficult to be as precise about the nature of Malone's actual participation in the revision of the Life as it was with the Tour because of the condition of the original MS. Among the papers from Auchinleck that were found at Malahide Castle was a "heap of pulverized paper" containing fragments

the size of coins. In the middle of this perished mass were sixteen sheets of a MS of the Life. According to Geoffrey Scott, these sheets are Boswell's rough draft with the "nice corrections" made on them. It seems somewhat strange that Malone's handwriting does not appear on these sheets, but Scott believes that "Boswell worked on his own MS, with Malone at his elbow advising him."⁵¹ The sole controversy consists over conjecture that Boswell made a subsequent draft for the printer. If the first proof sheets for these sixteen pages existed, the question could be settled by checking variants. However, of the portion of the MS that survived, only the second or revised proofs are available. Perhaps when Frederick Pottle completes his research edition of the Life for the Yale series, he will be able to offer some clarification of Malone's involvement in the revision.

Besides revision of the rough draft, Malone helped Boswell make other critical decisions. When Boswell considered a folio rather than two volumes, Malone responded that he "might as well throw it in the Thames, for a folio would not now be read." Boswell took Malone's advice here, but he rejected his printing plan which called for one thousand quarto volumes for immediate release and one thousand octavo volumes (printed by "over-running" the types) to be ready when the quarto was sold. Mr. Nichols, the printer, convinced Boswell it was a bad plan and persuaded him to print fifteen hundred quarto volumes and no octavo.⁵² One wonders if Malone was ever hurt or resentful when Boswell casually rejected one of his carefully devised plans. After investing too much time and effort in the project, certainly it would be a very human response for Malone to feel he had some rights concerning critical decisions. But as every parent learns eventually, such rights are often imaginary. Boswell took what he needed from Malone and appreciated it, but what he didn't like he never hesitated to dismiss.

As Boswell and Malone continued to revise into the spring of 1790, Boswell's political and social affairs took a critical turn for the worse. He had long since been shunned as a drunken sot and self-seeker who endangered reputations by much of the society he so adored. Now Lord Lonsdale, from whom Boswell had accepted small political favors, began to humiliate and degrade the biographer. He insisted that Boswell go to Carlisle to perform his duties as Recorder even though Boswell asked to be excused because his good friend Temple was visiting him and because of the revision of the Life. Boswell considered resigning on the spot, but Malone thought differently.

" . . . I went to Malone who insisted that as I had asked the office, I should go down, resolutely discharge my duty, see whether it was meant to bring me into Parliament or not, and if not, to resign some time afterwards and withdraw from so disagreeable a connection."⁵³ Also, about this time Boswell fell victim to one of his frequent bouts with venereal disease, so it was a sad, depressed and sick man who left London for Carlisle. Boswell subjected himself to Lonsdale's senseless cruelty "in a stunned state of mind but calm and determined." Lonsdale, in his most inflammatory attack on Boswell's character charged: "'You have kept low company all your life. What are you, Sir?'" Malone would have been proud of Boswell's restrained reply: "'A gentleman, My Lord, a man of honour; and I hope to shew myself such.'"⁵⁴

After this trip, Boswell severed all connections with the nobleman.

Boswell returned to London to Malone's hospitable reception and was surprised to find that his friend, sensitive to his partner's distress, had continued work on the Life during his absence: "Had found that by my kind and active friend Malone's aid my Book had gone on in my absence five sheets. I was quite pleased to see another proof and to be put in train again." This generous assistance helped Boswell discard his feelings of deep personal

injury and injustice. Malone tried to point out to him the futility of his connection with Lonsdale and consoled him concerning the outcome.

Malone said that both L. [onsdale] and I had been deceived; he had concluded that a man who had praised him so highly, when all the world abused him, was willing to be his dependent, and would think it an honour . . . and I had flattered myself that this powerful Lord would exert his influence particularly to promote me."⁵⁵

So ended the Lonsdale episode and with it all Boswell's dreams of political advancement. However, the revision continued; the book began to be printed by August, 1790, so the two men were simultaneously preparing copy and reading proof sheets. But despite the progress, Boswell's pace was typically slow. He dined out nearly every evening, drank constantly, and played an incredible amount of whist. He chastized himself on September 10, when he wrote: "I merely attend to the progress of my Life of Johnson, and that by no means with great assiduity, such as that which Malone employs on Shakespeare."⁵⁶

Malone's eleventh and final volume of his Shakespeare edition was through the press in November and he left almost immediately for Ireland on a visit he had long delayed. That Boswell felt lost without him is evident from the letters that survive, but Malone continued to guide him from a distance. About Christmas time Malone cautioned him on his style. "'Pray take care of colloquialisms & vulgarisms of all sorts. Condense as much as possible always preserving perspecuity & do not imagine the only defect of stile, is repetition of words.'"⁵⁷ Malone also helped him settle on a title for the book and he made suggestions pertaining to certain cancellations.

Shortly after the first of the year the second volume was being printed and Boswell hoped he could publish on Shrove Tuesday (March 8). But circumstances compounded to further delay release. At one point the press ran out of paper. But more significantly, with Malone gone Boswell found it hard to

persevere even though he was near the end. He wrote to Malone in January saying, "Your absence is a woeful want in all respects. You will, I dare say, perceive a difference in the part which is revised only by myself and in which many insertions will appear." Later the same month he added: "Your absence has been a severe stroke to me . . . I am at present quite at a loss what to do. . . . As I pass your door I cast many a longing look."⁵⁸

In addition to this usual difficulty in disciplining himself to his work, Boswell expressed concern that he was not being a good parent and that his children showed little respect for him. But his greatest concern was an impending financial crisis. His sense of family pride and loyalty caused him to over-extend himself. He had purchased a piece of property that had been in the Boswell family for many years to leave to his second son, James. In addition, a loan he had incurred on behalf of a cousin fell due and he found himself without sufficient resources to cover both burdens. He wrote to Malone begging for advice. Should he, he asked, sell his book for £1000 to relieve the pressure on him? It is uncertain to what degree Malone endorsed such a policy, for Malone, along with Sir Joshua Reynolds, constantly raised his hopes of the book's success; while others, such as Steevens, did not. But when Boswell directly solicited financial assistance, Malone turned him down. Boswell harbored no ill-feelings about this and fortunately soon floated a loan from Dilly and Baldwin that relieved the immediate pressure and allowed him to retain the rights to the book.⁵⁹

Boswell's nearly constant melancholia during this period of Malone's absence evidently attracted notice and caused concern among his other friends. On February 22, 1791, Courtenay wrote to Malone:

Poor Boswell is very low, & desperate & . . . melancholy mad, feels no spring, no pleasure in existence & is so perceptibly altered for the worse that it is remarked everywhere. I try all I can to

revivify him, but . . . I despair of effecting a cure. Doctors Warren and Devaynes very kindly interest themselves about him, but you wd be of more service to him than anyone.⁶⁰

Shrove Tuesday came and went and no Life. Boswell then decided to release the book on May 16, the twenty-eighth anniversary of his first meeting with Johnson. The date was met, but Malone was not there; he did not return to London until later that summer. When he did, he must have been pleased with the following portion of Boswell's "Advertisement" to the first edition:

. . . I cannot sufficiently acknowledge my obligations to my friend Mr. Malone, who was so good as to allow me to read to him almost the whole of my manuscript and made such remarks as were greatly for the advantage of the Work; though it is but fair to him to mention, that upon many occasions I differed from him, and followed my own judgement . . . there is no man in whom more elegant and worthy qualities are united; and whose society, therefore is more valued by those who know him.⁶¹

On release, the book found an eager public and sold well, but not everyone who read the book appreciated Boswell's new approach to biography. Dorothea Gregory Alison wrote to Mrs. Montagu that she thought the book was "a disgrace" and she did not blame people for turning Boswell out of their homes. She concluded: "Before I read his Book I thought he was a Gentleman who had the misfortune to be mad; I now think he is a mad man who has the misfortune not to be a Gentleman."⁶² In June, Sir William Scott was to have him to dinner, but his other guests expressed concern that Boswell would take down their talk. The lonely Scotsman turned down the invitation even though the host assured him that he still desired his presence.⁶³ No doubt many such instances occurred and served to further depress the socially affable Boswell.

After the publication of the Life, Boswell's and Malone's relationship took on a different perspective. To a limited extent they drifted apart. Boswell left for Scotland shortly after Malone returned from Ireland. That fall they lost a mutual companion, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell's gloom became

worse. In addition, he no longer lived on Queen Anne Street, and his opportunities for dropping in on Malone were reduced. But he did make an effort to visit his confidant frequently and their first-of-the-month breakfasts continued. Boswell kept a chamber open in the Temple and attended Westminster Hall, but he had little or no business. To fill up his idle hours, Boswell began to socialize with a relatively new group of friends. Malone, to the contrary, was constantly busy, never idle. Among other things, he was gathering information for a publication on stage history and a possible biography of Shakespeare; he took a trip to Oxford; he visited frequently with Burke; he helped young Jephson with a poem. In general he maintained his scholarly activities with active industry. As their life styles grew further apart, the continued warmth of their personal regard did not diminish; when Malone's edition of Shakespeare was attacked in the Gentleman's Magazine, Boswell submitted a defense of it.⁶⁴ Malone, for his part, helped to mediate a misunderstanding between Bishop Percy and Boswell relating to a cancel in the Life that Percy requested.⁶⁵

There is, however, evidence that with the publication of the Life Malone became less patient with Boswell than he had been previously. Also, Boswell began to feel somewhat ill at ease with his studious friend. Malone found it more difficult to put up with Boswell's chronic complaints about his situation when he alone was primarily responsible for his failures. Evidently Malone no longer felt the necessity to encourage his friend's political illusions; he now advised him to face reality. On December 8, 1792, Boswell recorded the following:

Dined tete a tete with Malone. As he had been one of my encouragers to try my fortune at the English bar, I lamented to him my want of success. He said if I had confined myself to it, I possibly might have had practice. But I had chosen a wide and varied course of life. I had no reason to complain. This was just enough, but I could not help being vexed.⁶⁶

Throughout 1792, Boswell struggled with his deepest fit of hypochondria. He felt idle and useless; he thought he was losing his "faculty of recording," and was "destitute of intellectual relish." Malone's perpetual energy and activity only served to make him more acutely aware of his present lethargy and past failures. Boswell revealed this in a passage from the journal written on December 21, 1792.

I often called on Malone, and found him fully occupied in his historical and biographical researches, on which he was intent while I had absolutely no pursuit whatever. The delusive hope of perhaps getting into some practice at the bar was now dead, or at least torpid. The printing of my second edition of Dr. Johnson's Life was the only thing I had to do.⁶⁷

As Boswell found himself increasingly incapable of enjoying the intellectual climate offered by his old friends because he felt himself sadly inferior, he turned increasingly to sensual diversions. His social improprieties unquestionably led to his further exclusion by many persons, and it is astonishing that his old friends remained as loyal as they did.

In July of 1793, Boswell published the second edition of the Life. He had hurriedly thrown together the old and new materials, and although Malone supplied some help, he did not have time to supervise the edition. When Malone accidentally ran across the following addition to Boswell's 'Advertisement' for the second edition, he unleashed the frustration he had carefully suppressed for years. Boswell's proposed addition read:

It is impossible for me, an enthusiastic Tory, not to tell the world what I feel, and shall express with that reverential fondness which characterises a true royalist. Soon after the death of my illustrious friend, HIS MAJESTY one day at the levee after observing that he believed Dr. Johnson was as good a man as ever lived; was graciously pleased to say to me, 'There will be many lives of Dr. Johnson: do you give the best.'--I flatter myself that I have obeyed my SOVEREIGN's commands.

This pathetic attempt by the despondent and rejected biographer to enhance his ego by promoting his greatest effort as a command from the King so enraged

Malone that he exploded:

You have an undoubted right over your own reputation, and to expose yourself in any way you think proper; but you certainly have no right whatsoever over the reputation of others. If therefore you should persevere in printing the wild Rhodomontade which by accident I yesterday saw at the press, as an addition to your new Advertisement, I entreat, not as a favour, but a right, that you would cancel whatever relates to me in the former Advertisement: for noscitur a socio is a very true adage, and you cannot degrade yourself without injuring at the same time the characters of those whom you mention as your friends. Poor Sir Joshua is in his grave, and nothing can touch him further; otherwise he could but blush, that his name shd appear at the head of a dedication, followed by such an Advertisement as the compositor has now in his hands.

Yours always very sincerely in private, but by no means wishing to be pilloried with you in publick.

Somewhat overwhelmed by this unnatural outburst from Malone, Boswell reacted with sincerity and without loss of poise.

I knew that Steevey's stabs had hurt you; but I did not apprehend to that degree of irritation which your hypercritical letter indicated. I could make no answer to it; but just let it cool.

Jack Courtenay however came yesterday and talked with calm and kind earnestness on the subject. I assured him as I do yourself, that I was fully satisfied you acted with real friendship towards me, but I could not help thinking very erroneously; for surely every man is at liberty to put himself forward in the style he likes best and his praise of his friends in a very different style must not be confounded with his own personal Rhodomantade. But since mine for my second edition has struck you so strongly, I am to submit the proof to John of Sarum and let him decide.

I depend on your dining with me tomorrow with some good men and true, who will be disappointed if they do not meet the commentator on Shakespeare as I should exceedingly be, for I ever am 'blow high blow low' with true regard very faithfully yours.⁶⁸

Evidently John of Sarum also disapproved for the passage was suppressed.

But Boswell continued to feel a certain degree of discomfort in Malone's company for on September 6, 1793, he wrote:

Malone had come to town the day before and sent me a note, which I found on my return from Dilly's. I this morning found him busily engaged in arranging old papers which he had found at Stratford upon Avon, in hopes of illustrating Shakespeare's history more or less. I envied him the eagerness with which he examined them. . . .

A few days later he further complained that although Malone's conversation revived him somewhat, he still "felt a grievous inferiority from . . . low spirits."⁶⁹

Malone continued to invite Boswell to his home often and received him with warmth and good humor, but he ceased lecturing to him about his intemperate habits. He probably realized that it would do no good, that Boswell was beyond help. Besides, the Johnson biography had been completed and since Malone's personal commitment seemed almost as great to the project as to the author, he probably watched Boswell's debaucheries with some degree of detachment. At least he knew that he had helped him accomplish the task that would gain him a place in literary history. In addition, Boswell sapped the energies of those who became too involved in his personal life, and Malone probably realized he could not continue the intensity of his parental concern indefinitely. Consequently, Malone encouraged Boswell to content himself with his fame as a writer and not to dwell on his failures. Also at this time, Malone was emotionally involved in his second unrequited romance and he was no doubt preoccupied to a great extent with his own personal problems.

Boswell visited Scotland for the last time late in 1794. He returned to London in January of 1795 and in April he fell suddenly ill at a meeting of the Club. Evidently he suffered from a tumor in the bladder, and after a month of severe pain he died. Since Malone was in London at the time, he probably visited Boswell often during his final illness. After Boswell's death, he expressed the strength of his attachment and his sense of irreplaceable loss in a letter to Windham:

I suppose you know poor Boswell died on Tuesday Morning, without any pain. I don't think he at anytime of his illness knew his danger. I shall miss him more and more every day. He was in the constant habit of calling on me almost daily, and I used to grumble sometimes at his turbulence, but now miss and regret his noise and

his hilarity and his perpetual good humour, which had no bounds. Poor fellow, he has somehow stolen away from us, without any notice and without my being at all prepared for it.⁷⁰

Malone's repeated reference to "poor" Boswell shows that he was quite conscious of the pathetic aspects of his friend's existence. But if he pitied him, he also loved him. Malone knew he would miss Boswell's youthful exuberance and his genuine affection, for if Boswell demanded much from his friend, he also gave much. He gave the kind of happiness that inspired loyalty and encouraged tolerance. His absence created an emotional void that Malone never filled.

After Boswell's death, various damaging accounts appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine. An anonymous response, attributed to Malone, revealed the devotion that arose from a just evaluation of the controversial Boswell. Beginning with the biographer's "candour and liberality of sentiment," Malone went on to give a brief history of the author and to enumerate his virtues. He said, "he had not only an inexhaustible fund of good humour and good nature, but was extremely warm in his attachments, and as ready to exert himself for his friends as any man." Malone's most penetrating comment showed that he perceived the essence of Boswell's genius that was to go largely unrecognized until this century. He wrote:

Mr. Boswell undoubtedly possessed considerable intellectual powers, for which he has not had sufficient credit; many supposing him to be a mere relator of the sayings of others: but it is manifest to every reader of any discernment that he never could have collected such a mass of information and just observation on human life as his very valuable work contains, without great strength of mind and much various knowledge; as he never could have displayed his collections in so lively a manner as he has done, had he not possessed a very picturesque imagination, or, in other words, had he not had a very happy turn for poetry as well and for humour and for wit.⁷¹

Quite reasonably, Boswell had named Malone as one of his literary executors along with Sir William Forbes and Reverend William Temple. Boswell left

directions that his MSS and letters were "to be published for the benefit of my younger children, as they decide; that is to say they are to have a discretionary power to publish more or less."⁷² Until many of the papers were recovered this century, tradition held that the executors never met and the entire collection had been burned. Evidently some papers were burned, but others obviously were not. Temple probably did not participate, but surviving correspondence shows that Malone and Forbes at least approached the task. Forbes wrote to Malone seeking his aid, and Malone's handwriting appears on several folders of MSS suggesting that he at least began sorting materials. However, the executors were to confront opposition in Alexander Boswell, James' eldest son, who felt his father had "lowered himself" by patronizing Johnson. He therefore did not wish to see anything published. On June 30, 1796, Forbes wrote to Malone:

I much approve of your idea of our doing nothing in regard to the publication of any of our late much regretted friend's papers at present, but rather to wait till his second son be of an age fit for selecting such of them as may be proper for the public eye.⁷³

When James Jr. came of age in 1799, he probably decided to withhold publication until after all Boswell's contemporaries were dead. Neither Malone nor James Jr. can be criticised for this decision since by contemporary standards many of the papers were "unsuitable" for publication. And when Malone died in 1812, he probably thought young James would carry on the responsibility. But both of Boswell's sons died suddenly ten years later and as a result Boswell's papers remained in seclusion and many of Malone's papers, given to James by Malone's sisters, were lost.⁷⁴

During the seventeen years Malone outlived Boswell, he continued to contribute to his friend's memory by editing successive editions of his masterpiece. Boswell had begun to prepare a third edition before he died. Malone

followed Boswell's marked copy to insert additional material and revise notes. He also "added a great deal silently on his own, and exercised his editorial judgement in many places."⁷⁵ This edition is considered the definitive one by Hill and Powell. Malone prepared a fourth edition in 1803, a fifth edition in 1807 and a sixth edition in 1811. In the preface to the third edition, Malone clearly stated that he did not read the proof sheets.⁷⁶ Nor did he read the proofs of any of the remaining editions. Consequently, the number of printing errors increased with each edition. At first such a careless policy seems like negligence when practiced by a scholar of Malone's integrity. However, when one considers the numerous demands on his time and his rapidly failing eyesight, his decision appears more reasonable.

After his father's death, James Boswell Jr. became a close associate of Malone. There is a certain ironic fitness that the childless bachelor received assistance and comfort in his old age from the son of his paternally dependent friend. Young James had always been his father's favorite, and his efforts with the successive editions of the Life and his posthumous edition of Malone's Shakespeare (1821) served as a monument to the Malone-Boswell friendship. After Malone's death in 1812, young Boswell described the unique quality of his character which made him such a valued friend.

He was indeed a cordial and a steady friend, combining the utmost mildness with the simplest sincerity and the most manly independence. Tenacious, perhaps, of his own opinions, which he had seldom hastily formed, he was always ready to listen with candour and good-humour to those of others. That suppleness of character which would yield without conviction, and that roughness of temper which cannot tolerate dissent, were equally foreign from his nature. ⁷⁷

During the last few years of his life, Malone suffered from a stomach ailment and failing eyesight. Unable to maintain his healthful productivity, the great scholar and critic experienced periods of severe depression. At

such times he must have thought often of his old friend Boswell, but he did not need to harbor regrets. More than anyone else in Boswell's troubled life, he had exercised a magnanimous understanding of his friend when it counted, when he was alive, and he thereby assured the completion and publication of "one of the most instructive and entertaining works in the English language."⁷⁸

FOOTNOTES

1. Sir James Prior, Life of Malone (London, 1860), p. 8; hereafter cited as Prior.
2. Ibid., p. 33.
3. John I. McCollum Jr., "The Indebtedness of James Boswell to Edmond Malone," New Rambler, Ser.C1 (1966), 29-45; hereafter cited as McCollum. (McCollum's article covers the same period of time and is primarily concerned with Malone's assistance with the Tour and Life. This paper attempts a more comprehensive analysis of the nature of the relationship between Malone and Boswell.)
4. James M. Osborn, "Edmond Malone and Dr. Johnson," Johnson, Boswell and Their Circle (Oxford, 1965), p. 2; hereafter cited as Osborn.
5. Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle in the Collection of Lt.-Colonel R. H. Isham, ed. Geoffrey Scott and Frederick A. Pottle (New York, 1928-1934), XIV, 95, 197, 198, 210, 217; Hereafter cited as Boswell Papers. (The entire body of material discovered this century at Malahide Castle and Fettercairn House is now in the possession of Yale University and being published in two series, a "research" edition and a "trade" edition. The trade edition, under the general editorship of Frederick A. Pottle, has to date reached its eighth volume, covering the years 1762-1776. The first volume of the research edition was published in 1966.)
6. Frederick Pottle, The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq., reprint (Oxford, 1965), p. 162.
7. Frank Brady, Boswell's Political Career (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 129.
8. Boswell Papers, VI, 168.
9. Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D., 1773, ed. Frederick Pottle and Charles H. Bennett, 2nd ed. (New York, Toronto, London; 1961), p. xiv-xv; hereafter cited as Tour.
10. Ibid., p. xvi.
11. Boswell Papers, XVI, 113, 118, 119.
12. Tour, pp. xix-xxi. (see note 5)
13. Boswell Papers, XVI, 124.
14. Frederick Pottle, "James Boswell, Journalist," The Age of Johnson, ed. Frederick Whaley Hilles (New Haven and London), p. 23.

15. Tour, p. xii.
16. McCollum, p. 31.
17. Boswell Papers, VI, 171.
18. Ibid., XVI, 139-141.
19. Osborn, p. 12; Mr. Osborn (p. 1) says he will be the editor of the "forthcoming Boswell-Malone Correspondence" to be published by McGraw-Hill. To date, the book has not been published.
20. Boswell Papers, XVI, 141, 163, 168.
21. Ibid., XVI, iv.
22. Ibid., XVI, 185, 189.
23. Ibid., XVI, 190, 192, 197.
24. Ibid., XVI, 197-198, 198, 199fn, 200-201, 203.
25. Ibid., XVI, 285-286.
26. Ibid., XVI, 204-205.
27. Ibid., XVI, 206.
28. Ibid., XVI, 209-210.
29. Ibid., XVII, 3, 5.
30. Ibid., XVII, 14.
31. Ibid., XVII, 7.
32. Letters of James Boswell, ed. G. B. Tinker (Oxford, 1924), II, 381; hereafter cited as Letters.
33. Prior, pp. 333-472; the original manuscript has been lost.
34. Boswell Papers, XVII, 16.
35. Osborn, p. 12.
36. Boswell Papers, XVII, 20, 37, 27.
37. Ibid., XVII, 35.
38. Ibid., XVII, 98-99.
39. Ibid., XVIII, 82.

40. Ibid., XVII, 88.
41. Prior, p. 434.
42. D. B. Wyndham Lewis, The Hooded Hawk (New York, 1947), p. 152.
43. Prior, p. 240,
44. Prior, p. 419; Boswell Papers, XVII, 57.
45. Bertram H. Davis, Johnson Before Boswell: a Study of Sir John Hawkins' 'Life of Samuel Johnson' (New Haven, 1960), p. 195, 188, 166.
46. Boswell Papers, XVII, 75.
47. Prior, p. 393.
48. Osborn, p. 15.
49. Letters, p. 354.
50. Boswell Papers, XVIII, 10.
51. Ibid., VI, 233-236.
52. Ibid., XVIII, 20.
53. Ibid., XVIII, 48.
54. Ibid., XVIII, 52.
55. Ibid., XVIII, 79, 88.
56. Ibid., XVIII, 94.
57. Osborn, p. 15.
58. Johnsonian Miscellanies, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (London, 1966), p. 27, 29.
59. Letters., p. 426.
60. Osborn, p. 16.
61. Boswell's Life of Johnson, Together with Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales, ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), I, 7-8; hereafter cited as Hill-Powell.
62. B. R. McElderly Jr., "Boswell in 1790-91: Two Unpublished Comments," N & Q, IX, (1962), p. 268.
63. Boswell Papers, XVIII, 122.

64. The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Cronicle, LXII, part I (January-June, 1792), 41-43.
65. The Correspondence of Thomas Percy and Edmond Malone, ed. Arthur Tillotson (New Haven, 1944), pp. 56-57.
66. Boswell Papers, XVIII, 185.
67. Ibid., XVIII, 192, 184, 188.
68. Osborn, p. 18, 17, 18.
69. Boswell Papers, XVIII, 206, 297.
70. Ibid., XVIII, 278.
71. The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Cronicle, LXV, part I (January-June, 1795), 471-472.
72. Boswell Papers, I, 3.
73. Ibid., I, 5-8.
74. Prior, p. 327.
75. Osborn, p. 19.
76. Hill-Powell, p. 15.
77. Prior, p. 309.
78. Hill-Powell, p. 15.

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by

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MASTER OF ARTS

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1970

EDMOND MALONE AND JAMES BOSWELL

Edmond Malone and James Boswell had a unique friendship. Although they were nearly the same age and affable social companions, their personal relationship manifested a paternal quality; Malone served as the last in a series of substitute father figures for the emotionally unstable biographer. During the last ten years of the Scotsman's life, 1785-1795, he received advice and assistance from his scholarly friend concerning his personal, political and literary affairs.

Malone left the Irish Bar in 1777 and moved to London to pursue a career as a literary scholar and critic. In 1785, Boswell arrived in London to publish his Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and to launch a career at the English Bar. Malone assisted him with both projects. Busily engaged in Shakespearean and other antiquarian research, Malone recognized the undisciplined nature of Boswell's genius, and without any desire for acclamation, he unselfishly offered his time and counsel.

A careful examination of their ten years of close association in London reveals the erratic nature of Boswell's mental condition and the uncommon capacity for human understanding displayed by the Irishman. Without his guidance, it is doubtful that Boswell could ever have sustained his efforts to complete The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.