The Burney Journal

Volume 9 (2007) Article 3

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Recommended Citation
Gemmeke, Mascha. "Burney's *Cerbera*: Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg (1728-1797)." *The Burney Journal*, vol. 9, 2007, pp. 20-61, https://www.mcgill.ca/burneycentre/burney-society/burney-journal/vol9/3.

Burney's *Cerbera*: Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg (1728-1797)

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In Burney's *Court Journals*, no one, not even the Queen herself, assumes a more prominent position than Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg. Burney left a scathing record of her many idiosyncrasies, both in manner and speech, as did Mrs. Papendiek, another Court diarist.[1] Besides being vividly recalled in these private memoirs, Mrs. Schwellenberg, or "Madame Schwellenbergen" as her contemporaries often called her, a simple Keeper of the Robes to the Queen, was apparently interesting enough to the public to be ridiculed in numerous pamphlets, newspapers, and caricatures:

> With her corpulent build and outlandish accent (described as half German and half highland) she was a gift to cartoonists and the Press, who delighted in the fiction that she operated a network of corruption, selling places in the court and administration to the highest bidder.[2]

John Walcot, alias Peter Pindar, ridiculed her in an "Ode on Messieurs Pitt and Co.":

> Nor, Swellenberg, shalt thou a shrimp appear,
> Whose palate loves a dainty dish,
> Whose teeth in combat shine with flesh and fish,
> Whose Strelitz stomach holds a butt of beer;
> Who soon shalt keep a saleshop for good places,
> For which so oft the people squabble,
> From gaping cobblers to their gaping graces,
> And thus provide for great and little rabble.[3]

Most of these contemporary sources characterize Mrs. Schwellenberg along the same lines; dominant traits thus might be summarized as miserliness, coarseness, irascibility, and a strong craving for power. Her few friends, on the other hand, describe her as an upright, honourable woman. It is quite likely that both "parties" were partly right, or, as Margaret Anne Doody says, "it is possible to feel sorry for Mrs. Schwellenberg while recognizing that any subordinate would find her detestable" (175-76). While it is not unusual for one's contemporaries to disagree concerning one's "true nature," such a controversial person as Mrs. Schwellenberg seems well worth a little more attention. The aim of this paper will thus be to bring together some of the various accounts of her variable character in the hope of gaining a new perspective on her relations with her younger colleague, Frances Burney.

Unfortunately, the few portraits of Mrs. Schwellenberg that are known to have existed seem not to have survived so that caricatures are now the only pictures left from which to gain an idea of her looks.[4] Considering her prominent position in the Court household, surprisingly little is known about her early life. Most of the evidence concerning her place of birth, youth, and family connections seems to have suffered a fate similar to that of the portraits. Presumably born in 1728, she is first recorded to have stayed with the future Queen's family in the new palace at Mirow, home to the younger branch of the Mecklenburg-Strelitz family until they moved on to the castle of Neustrelitz on the deaths of both Charlotte's father, Prince Charles, and her uncle Adolphus Frederick III, the reigning Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, in 1752.[5] At the age of about thirty-three, in 1761, Mrs. Schwellenberg left Germany in the train of the young bride to stay with her mistress in England as one of her Keepers of the Robes. According to Mrs. Papendiek, she was not married but assumed the title "Mme" on taking up her post at Court (1.14). An Internet exhibition on the life of Queen Charlotte even refers to Mrs. Schwellenberg as "Juliane von Schwellenberg," the "von" implying that she was of noble birth.[6] The *Deutsches Adelsarchiv,* however, has no records of a noble German family bearing that name.[7] In any case, it seems unlikely that those attending on the young Princess of

Mecklenburg-Strelitz belonged to the nobility. Mrs. Hagedorn, the other Keeper of the Robes whose place Burney was to assume in 1786, had a brother in a small town called Güstrow, not far from Strelitz and Mirow, who was a local surgeon, a well-respected man.[8] On the other hand, Mrs. Schwellenberg occasionally entertained the lower German nobles at Court, so there is a possibility that she at least considered herself to be on an equal footing.[9]

Today, 'Schwellenberg' is not a common German surname at all: a telephone directory search has yielded only eighteen entries altogether. The remaining Schwellenbergs live mostly in the regions around Herdecke (North-Rhine Westphalia) and Waldeck (a separate dukedom in the eighteenth century, but now part of Hessia). Assuming that the 'Schwellenbergs' were not particularly numerous, either, I wrote to these possible ancestors; however, the Schwellenbergs still resident in the area who replied to my queries had not heard of a Juliana Elizabeth in their family history.[10] One of them told me that the Schwellenberg family—the only one he knew of—originally came from Fritzlar and separated into two branches in mid-eighteenth century. Some of the members of these families were local worthies: there was an *Obercommissar* Schwellenberg, who seems to have acted as a judge in the late eighteenth-century Waldeck area, but there is nothing besides his name to link him to Juliana Elisabeth except the fact that she had a brother who seems to have occupied a similar position, if perhaps on a lower scale. Two of the letters Mrs. Schwellenberg wrote to him have survived. In an annotation he added to one of them, apparently to elucidate an unknown third party, her brother declares that he hopes to be able to employ a clerk—with her money:

> She does not answer my question with one syllable, but expresses herself as if I had already expected a donation, whereas I only wished to know whether she could settle a certain something per year on me (there is no hurry as to that, by the way). She should only decide so that I could estimate whether it would be possible for me to have an *Adjunctus*.[11]

An *Adjunctus*, in eighteenth-century German terms, was an amanuensis or clerk to a local authority—a fact that would again seem to imply that the Schwellenbergs were members of the educated classes (*Bildungsbürgertum*), the men holding office on a local level, the family not poor but unable or unwilling to provide for unmarried sisters. It seems odd that Mrs. Schwellenberg should not have used her first name in her signature—however, I have not found a single instance in which her first name is used and cannot even say whether she preferred 'Elizabeth' or 'Juliana', or indeed plain 'Schwellenberg'. From her brother's sulky annotations one might guess that their relations were not altogether cordial. Both letters seem to be answers to pleas for pecuniary assistance:

> Dear Brother,
>
> I have received your letter but have been so ill lately that I have had it answered by another hand. . . . Be so good as to send me a little estimate both of your yearly income and of the sum needed for your household, and I recommend you especially to take care of your health. Be assured that as long as I live I shall not abandon you. Write soon and write honestly to your affectionate and faithful sister Schwellenberg.[12]

Almost a year later, in 1784, she complains:

> My dear Brother
>
> Your letter I have received, and I see that your health is better. God save you and your family, with regard to my own health, it is now 11 years that I suffer and travel around in the world to seek my health but I do not find it; however, it is God's will, I have not yet fulfilled my promise this time but be assured that I will as soon as I can. My compliments to your dear wife, I am your faithful sister Schwellenberg.[13]

If Mrs. Schwellenberg did indeed belong to the Waldeck Schwellenbergs, more research needs to be done in order to explain how she came to move to Mirow—a long way off from all these places. If my suppositions about her origins prove to be correct, her family had a crest showing a swallow (German *Schwalbe*) standing on a hill (*Berg*).[14] Whatever its origin, the name seems to fit Mrs. Schwellenberg's office peculiarly well. A *Berg* is a mountain, and *schwellen* means to swell, but a *Schwelle* is also German for a threshold, and Mrs. Schwellenberg seems to have been a formidable threshold for anyone trying to approach the Queen. Was Burney aware of this meaning when she nicknamed her colleague "the Cerbera" after the hellhound guarding the threshold to the underworld?

Mrs. Schwellenberg's character proves to be quite as elusive as the facts about her life. Though I hesitate to make any claims on such scanty evidence, it seems to me that she had few interests beyond her life at Court and few friends either within or without Court circles. Most prominent among these was Anna Maria (or Marian) Hastings, wife of Warren Hastings, the Governor General of India, whose trial in Westminster Burney attended in 1788. Mrs. Hastings considered Mrs. Schwellenberg to be both a friend and a benefactress. When she had first come to England as the wife of an impoverished German count, Graf Christof Adam von Imhoff, she had been materially assisted by Mrs. Schwellenberg. It is not clear whether Mrs. Hastings already knew Mrs. Schwellenberg before she arrived in England, but the latter again seems to have assisted the young family (they had two sons) with linen and other clothing on their subsequent journey to India, where Warren Hastings fell in love with Anna Maria (de la Roche 540–41).[15] She divorced her German husband (or rather, he divorced her on grounds of neglect and desertion) and married Hastings.

It is quite surprising, considering that the Queen did not usually tolerate divorcees at Court, that Mrs. Schwellenberg kept in touch with Mrs. Hastings when the latter returned to England. Yet the Queen herself as well as Burney, whose notions of respectability were quite as nice as those of her mistress, received Mrs. Hastings (Dobson 3: 30). On one memorable occasion, Burney even joined her older

colleague in an angry defence of Mrs. Hastings's character and conduct against "Colonel Fairly" (the Honourable Stephen Digby):

> As the mode of a second marriage from a divorce was precisely the contrary here of what it was in Germany, since here it could only take place upon misconduct, and there, I had been told, a divorce from misconduct prohibited a second marriage, which would only be permitted where the divorce was the mere effect of disagreement from dissimilar tempers. (Dobson 3: 30, 59-60)

In the case of proven adultery, German divorce laws did indeed prohibit ensuing marriages between the guilty wives or husbands and their lovers, yet a divorce on the grounds of desertion ("bösliches Verlassen") was not difficult to obtain and did allow both parties to remarry.[16]

Mrs. Hastings herself had a warm friend in the person of Sophie de la Roche, a German writer of sentimental novels, who travelled to England and recorded her impressions in a diary, translated into English as *Sophie in London*.[17] La Roche visited the Hastings and mentions a portrait of "Mademoiselle Schwellenberg" kept by Mrs. Hastings. She admires the magnificent frame, decorated with costly pearls, but does not describe the sitter. Besides keeping her benefactress's picture, Anna Maria actively courted Mrs. Schwellenberg's friendship, and the two of them travelled to Weymouth together in 1788. Their friendship seems to have been based on a common taste for the sentimental. In the one letter by Mrs. Hastings to Mrs. Schwellenberg that I have been able to locate, surprisingly written in English, Mrs. Hastings portrays herself in the role of a romantic heroine:

> My dearest Madam,
>
> I arrived yesterday noon in town, the Moment I alighted my servant delivered to me a Number of letters; my Eyes ran over them with an Anxiety of

> a lover in Search for one of yours: I had the good fortune to find one—I broke the seal with fear and trembling, for my mind had a foreboding that you were not so well as my Heart would wish you: the reading of it Alas! confirmed me that those gloomy thoughts did not arrise [sic] chiefly from the Affection to the object.

Her fears proved only too true, Mrs. Schwellenberg was ill (she was probably suffering from her old complaint, asthma). Mrs. Hastings commiserates with her "Dearest friend," going so far as to exclaim: "why will you not order me . . . to come to you?" Immediately, however, she seems to fear that she has gone too far, and hastens to add:

> No! do not—I am selfish, it is only for my own ease that I wish to be near your Person. though I should feel every time you coughed as much Pain as you—yet I should have the melancholy satisfaction in seeing and hearing you some time say "I am better Mrs. Hastings."

In the postscript she reveals why an "order" to come to her dear friend's bedside would not have been convenient at that time: she was about to set off for the livelier pleasures of Brighton.[18]

Did Mrs. Schwellenberg pick up German objects of charity on a regular basis? In a rather cruel article called "Old Schwelly," Mrs. Schwellenberg is reported to have assisted a female German cross-dresser, Theodora Grahn, who lived in London under the name of Dr. John de Verdion.[19] Burney also mentions a Miss Mawr (could she have been a German Fräulein Mauer?), an old maid who seems to have visited Mrs. Schwellenberg on a regular basis. However, behind Schwelly's formidable back, Miss Mawr tried to ingratiate herself with Miss Burney, by telling her that she did not enjoy these visits at all and would refuse them if she dared.[20] At least Mrs. Schwellenberg's

famous pet frogs seem to have been content in her care, "croak[ing] obligingly when she rapped her snuff-box" (Hedley 135). Apart from these, Lady Charlotte Finch, governess to the royal children, was also quite "fond of" Mrs. Schwellenberg, and even Burney herself maintains that her old colleague was a most faithful servant to the Queen (Hedley 95).

Among her "foes," on the other hand, Mrs. Papendiek has to be numbered as one of the most inveterate. While ostensibly writing a recollection of the Court of George III in her own old age, Mrs. Papendiek devoted the first ten pages of her work to the life and death of "Madame Schwellenberg." Indeed, even decades later she seems hardly able to forgive a woman she regarded as responsible for most of her family's failures to court favour with the Queen. In Mrs. Papendiek's records, Mrs. Schwellenberg emerges as "a shrewd, ambitious woman" who "assumed a powerful ascendancy over the mind of the Queen" (14, 36). As a daughter of the Queen's page, Mrs. Papendiek may have resented the fact that Charlotte favoured Mrs. Schwellenberg over her father. Thus, she writes that early on in his marriage the King himself desired that Madame Schwellenberg should be sent back home, but apparently the Queen pleaded for her German attendant, and she was suffered to remain at Court (14–17).[21] However, Mrs. Papendiek's records can by no means be regarded as objective evidence. She blamed Mrs. Schwellenberg for the fact that the Queen denied some favours asked of her, but there is no reason to suppose that it was Mrs. Schwellenberg whose opinions were decisive in these matters or even that she did not wish Mrs. Papendiek's various relatives to be promoted. Moreover, Mrs. Papendiek often mixed up facts and gossip: she reports that Burney was dismissed because she had dared to write a novel under Queen Charlotte's roof! "Poor thing," Mrs. Papendiek wrote, "she bowed out; and not being in good circumstances as to pecuniary matters in her home with her father, Dr Burney, it was a severe blow" (259-60).

Burney's recollections of Mrs. Schwellenberg are as damning as those of Mrs. Papendiek, perhaps even more so because Burney is less obviously biased against her on grounds of family disputes. Burney's indignation rings true when she reports that she was totally

confounded at finding herself not her colleague's equal, as she officially was, but "her dependent Deputy! . . . her Companion, her Humble Companion, at her own command!" (*Journals* 248). Burney had not wanted to be appointed Keeper of the Robes in the first place; she had "always and uniformly had a horrour of a life of attendance and dependence" (*Journals* 233). Now she was in attendance not only on the Queen but also on Mrs. Schwellenberg, even though the latter was not officially Burney's superior at Court; they were equals, at least in theory. At £200 a year, Burney's salary was even higher than that of her colleague, since Mrs. Schwellenberg apparently refused to have hers raised, anxious not to be a burden to the Queen, who was constantly in financial difficulties.[22]

I do not think that Burney ever fictionalized her experiences on purpose, but her diaries naturally reflect her personal experiences, not a universal truth, and were written to entertain her sister and friends, as well as to let off steam. It is generally interesting to compare Burney's accounts with those of other diarists. Sophie de la Roche's visit, for instance, is recorded by both Frances and Sophie, who published hers for the edification of her daughters. Their accounts differ strikingly: each of them seems to have come out of the encounter with her prejudices confirmed. While Burney did not enjoy Sophie's gushing sentimentalism and avoided the lady whenever she could, Sophie's impressions were all in Burney's favour. One can assume that Mrs. Schwellenberg's version would have been surprisingly different from those of her several colleagues, but as yet, no letter or diary that records her view of life at court has come to light. Moreover, one has to keep in mind that in Burney's accounts of her life with Mrs. Schwellenberg, a novelist was at work. More often than not "la Présidente," as Burney also liked to call her, might have been at home in the company of Mme. Duval and Captain Mirvan. Indeed, Mrs. Schwellenberg may be said to be one of her most successful creations. She has great entertainment value, not the least because she is a foreigner. Her mistaken view of her own importance, moreover, leads to the most absurd situations in which the heroine, Evelina-Frances, triumphs by the sheer force of contrast. The language Burney uses when describing her colleague's idiosyncrasies or quoting her

"*verbatim*" is remarkably consistent; the phrases and accent she attributes to Mrs. Schwellenberg rarely vary and are thus reminiscent of the comically brutal, "flat" characters Burney so successfully created in her novels. In the Court journals, written to be perused by Susan and Frederica Locke, Mrs. Schwellenberg's English is faulty but by no means as bad as that of some other German visitors. Her conversation is spiked with funny phrases such as "what you call," sayings which Burney seems to have remembered vividly long after she had left the Queen's service.[23]

To Susan, Frances also admitted that she thought—or perhaps felt—Mrs. Schwellenberg to be the "exactest fellow" of their stepmother, Elizabeth Allen Burney, "gloomy, dark, suspicious, rude, reproachful."[24] While the two sisters marvelled at the apparent fact that two such persons could exist, it is easy to see how the psychological situation of Frances' youth repeated itself at Court with Mrs. Schwellenberg taking the role of the second Mrs. Burney, the Queen representing Dr. Burney, who for unknown reasons had to be kept from being disillusioned at all costs, and the various other attendants turning into Burney's siblings. Susan seems to have served as an incredibly loyal safety valve, who paradoxically reinforced Frances's dilemma by her staunch support of the Burney point of view — after all, Frances was no longer a dependent, helpless daughter, and Mrs. Schwellenberg could never have the authority of a parent. Mrs. Delany, I think, though perhaps sounding rather harsh, was actually trying to help Frances see her own power by refusing to spend her evenings with the two Keepers of the Robes at Court unless her younger friend asserted herself more.[25] Pity would only have reinforced Frances's sense of outraged innocence. Though it may be impossible to understand eighteenth-century psychology from a modern point of view, I do think that both "tyrants," whatever they had done to deserve these labels, must have been alarmed by the mutual support of their "victims"—and the vague knowledge that they were being ridiculed behind their backs. Mrs. Schwellenberg made various unsuccesful attempts to "bond" with her colleague—as when Mr Digby treacherously married Miss Gunning instead of Miss

Burney—but she did not have a chance. Frances would never disappoint her "siblings" by siding with the detested "stepmother."[26]

It is one of life's little ironies that Mrs. Schwellenberg seems to have been quite fond of Frances's company. Indeed, it is possible that she never had the least inkling of what the younger woman really thought of her. Burney's good manners would not allow her to be openly rude to anyone, and her respect and liking for the Queen prevented her from complaining to the only person who could have made a change. To her friends, she justified her silence saying that her colleague "though to me noxious and persecuting, is to Her a faithful and devoted servant"—and who else but the Queen would have dared to remonstrate with the formidable Schwelly? (Burney, *Journals* 248). Instead, the Queen mistakenly turned on poor Burney, who occasionally tried to evade Mrs. Schwellenberg's company, and remonstrated with her for her apparent neglect of the poor invalid. Even then Frances did not dare defend herself by telling the truth about her miserable evenings (Burney, *Diaries* 4: 236-37).[27] Yet Mrs. Schwellenberg's apparent delight in Burney's society did not imply that she treated her colleague with kindness. The memorable record of her insistence on an open window during all coach journeys, even in mid-winter, even when Burney's eyes where red and sore from an inflammation caused by the draughts, seems to imply that "the Cerbera" was fond of company merely in order to tyrannize over her unfortunate subjects. And yet, why would Mrs. Schwellenberg insist on an open window? She suffered severely from asthma, and the most likely explanation seems to be that she dreaded an attack brought on by the stuffy air inside the coach.[28] She even invited Burney to sit opposite her, where the draughts were less noticeable, but Frances huffily replied that she felt sick when travelling backwards. Still, Mrs. Schwellenberg would not have dreamt of offering her younger colleague her own seat, even though her old companion Mrs. Hagedorn had had to resign because the frequent inflammations of her eyes had led to near-blindness. Herself an invalid, Mrs. Schwellenberg did not regard her own sufferings as sufficient reason to desert her post and presumably did not think that a paltry inflammation of the eyes was an excuse to leave the Queen's service or that her status, of

which she really does seem to have been jealous, might have benefited from rather than have been infringed upon by an occasional relaxation of Court etiquette.

Some of the things Burney mentions about her daily routine at Court also throw a light on Mrs. Schwellenberg's activities (*Journals* 240-43). In the mornings, only Frances attended the Queen's dressing. About one o'clock in the afternoon, the Queen had to change into the formal robes demanded "for the Day." Here, Mrs. Schwellenberg joined her colleague; it commonly took two hours to dress the Queen, who read the papers while her hair was being powdered and occasionally entertained the company by reading out aloud. At five, Burney had dinner, and from then on she was expected to keep Mrs. Schwellenberg company for most of the evening, every evening—tête à tête, too, only daring to steal away for five minutes every once in a while when her colleague had other company. Burney was not particularly fond of card-games but was expected to play piqué or backgammon most of the time. Mrs. Schwellenberg even invited Frances to "sit with her" of a morning occasionally—an invitation timid "Miss Berner" had the courage to decline (*Journals* 242-43).

Mrs. Schwellenberg certainly enjoyed a special position at Court. Her apartments at Kew were the only tolerable ones apart from those of the King and Queen, Burney asserts, and Mrs. Papendiek declares, that Madame Schwellenberg had six servants. Burney mentions only four, but that would still have been two more than she had.[29] This may have been because Mrs. Schwellenberg was really an invalid and had to call her servants several times during the night. It is indeed striking how often she was unable to attend the Queen, or stayed behind when the Court changed places in order to consult her doctors, according to Burney's testimony. Mrs. Schwellenberg would not have considered retiring; she did not regard herself as a common attendant, let alone a common servant. She only reluctantly allowed a young niece of Mlle. Jacobi, Burney's successor, to dine at her table, and when that young lady queued with the other servants to receive her monthly allowance of candles, tea, sugar and wine, her patience ran out: "She would not suffer Miss Winckelmann any more to enter her rooms, for by taking the allowances in common with the other ladies'

maids, she had proved that she attended her aunt (Miss Jacobi) in that capacity."[30] It should be added that this is again a story told by the unreliable Mrs. Papendiek, yet Burney's accounts of who was and who was not allowed at Mrs. Schwellenberg's table seem to confirm such tales. Burney did not dare talk during these formidable teas and dinners, declaring that her old colleague seemed to think it a presumption in her if she did. On the other hand, Mrs. Schwellenberg was enraged that Burney did not claim the rights due to her position and refused to have a hot supper in her room. She even went so far as to order one to be brought to Burney's room though she must have known that Frances did not eat more than a little fruit of an evening. She declared that a hot supper belonged to Burney's establishment and that after all she herself might choose to partake of her colleague's supper occasionally. On the one occasion that Mrs. Schwellenberg did choose to do so, however, the pervading smell of meat in the room made her queasy, and she left immediately (Dobson 48).

Mrs. Papendiek, too, reports instances of "old Schwelly's" defective temper (2: 268) so that it seems likely that the Queen's old servant was highly irascible and, by implication, rather unmanageable at times. Burney seems to have suffered most from Mrs. Schwellenberg's bad moods. It is tempting to think that she reproduced some of her own experiences as a "humble companion" years later when she wrote her last novel, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814). Juliet, the heroine, tries—and fails—to please her mistress, the intolerable Mrs. Ireton, most of whose commands are given merely to annoy her attendants.[31] In the novel, however, Juliet realizes that the only way to appease or even to manage such a tyrant is not to give in. She finally refuses to be bullied any longer—perhaps Frances, too, would have suffered less if she had dared defend her rights against her formidable colleague. She was too apt to give in, trying to avoid open quarrels only to be left seething inside while Mrs. Schwellenberg remained unaware that she had offended. This is not to say that Burney might have turned her colleague into a delightful companion, but it does seem possible that a little more opposition might have made her lot more tolerable. On the other hand, this may be easier said than done. Mrs. Schwellenberg seems to have gone into

dreadful sulks whenever she was offended, and Burney could not stand it:

> Such open and horrible ill-will from one daily in my sight even affrighted me: it pursued me in shocking visions even when I avoided her presence; and therefore I was content to put upon myself the great and cruel force of seeking to conciliate a person who had no complaint against me, but that she had given me an inflammation of the eyes. (Dobson 3: 369)

In order to inure herself to her new lot in life, and her constant companion, Frances famously told Susan that she saw only one remedy: to consider herself as married to Mrs. Schwellenberg (Dobson 3: 374).[32] Presumably, though, this was not a good idea at all. If she had been able to consider their ties in a purely official light, she might have been able to bear her companion's bad moods and establish some kind of working relationship. As it was, however, the idea of being married must have served only to remind Burney of what she had hoped and dreamt of, and where life had landed her instead—even if its immediate benefit was to make Frances realize that she was "a greater favourite than I had ever presumed to think myself till that time" with Mrs. Schwellenberg (Dobson 3: 376).

With hindsight, one can say that Burney suffered from mild depressions at Court, as did the Queen, and occasionally Mrs. Schwellenberg herself.[33] In the latter's case, depression seems to have taken the form of self-pity and fear of death. Burney reports an instance when she was summoned to her colleague,

> who was very ill; so ill as to fill me with compassion. She was extremely low-spirited, and spoke to me with quite unwonted kindness of manner, and desired me to accept a sedan-chair, which had been Mrs. Haggerdorn's, and now devolved to her, saying, I might as well have it while she lived as when she was dead, which would soon happen. (*Diary* 4: 38)

In her diary, Burney dryly added: "I thanked her, and wished her, I am sure very sincerely, better. Nor do I doubt her again recovering, as I have frequently seen her much worse" (4: 39). Ironically, Burney's company softened Mrs. Schwellenberg's depressions, while Mrs. Schwellenberg's made Burney's worse:

> Mrs. Schwellenberg is softened into nothing but civility and courtesy to me. To what the change is owing I cannot conjecture, but I do all that in me lies to support it, preferring the entire sacrifice of every moment, from our dinner to twelve at night, to her harshness and horrors. Nevertheless, a lassitude of existence creeps sensibly upon me. (*Diary* 14-15)

Mrs. Schwellenberg was unable to understand why Burney was not happy. In one telling little episode, she chides her younger colleague for failing to raise her spirits:

> "You tired!—what have you done? when I used to do so much more—you tired! what have you to do but be happy? . . . Vell, what will become next, when you have every happiness!—you might not be tired. No, I can't bear it."
>
> Every happiness mine!—O gracious heaven! thought I, and is this the companion of my leisure— the associate of my life! Oh, my dear friends, I will not now go on—I turn sick again. (*Diary* 4: 212)

Mrs. Schwellenberg did not understand Burney, but she was kindly disposed towards her. She kept lauding her to the Queen, went out of her way to procure Mrs. Piozzi's edition of Dr. Johnson's letters for her, and even tried to warn the Queen not to hurt "Miss Berner's" feelings by alluding to them (*Diary* 4: 12; 16-17). Of course, she had got it all wrong again. Burney did not mind talking about Mrs. Piozzi and Dr. Johnson; she minded talking about them to Mrs.

Schwellenberg. Truth to say, Burney minded many things that ordinary mortals would have taken in their stride. She had a horror of being considered an object of charity, which made her refuse the Queen's gift of a robe in rather uncivil terms, shocking Mrs. Schwellenberg into one of her bad humours (*Diary* 3: 56–56). There were some petty jealousies on both sides, too. Burney seems to have resented Mrs. Schwellenberg's talking German to the Queen when she was present, and Mrs. Schwellenberg resented the fact that her younger colleague was far more popular with the gentlemen.[34] When the ailing old attendant had to take her tea in her own room, she questioned Burney, who took her tea with the equerries, about her success as a hostess:

> "Colonel Goldsworthy always sleeps with me! sleeps he with you the same?"
>
> In the midst of all my irksome discomfort, it was with difficulty I could keep my countenance at this question, which I was forced to negative.
>
> The next evening she repeated it. "Vell, sleeps he yet with you—Colonel Goldsworthy?"
>
> "Not yet, ma'am," I hesitatingly answered.
>
> "O! ver vell! he will sleep with nobody but me! O, I von't come down!"
>
> And a little after she added, "I believe he vill marry you!"
>
> "I believe not, ma'am," I answered. . . .
>
> She is now in the utmost haste to dispose of me! . . . She is an amazing woman! Alas, I might have told her I knew too well what it was to be tied to a companion ill-assorted and unbeloved, where I could not help myself, to make any such experiment as a volunteer!
>
> If she asks me any more about Colonel Goldsworthy and his sleeping, I think I will answer I am too near-sighted to be sure if he is awake or not! (*Diary* 4: 218)

A partial reader cannot help thinking that she might have thought of that earlier on, but, then, only a reader partial to poor Mrs. Schwellenberg would wish Burney to spare her feelings. "The gentlemen," in any case, continued to cause some friction between them but also provided a little fun now and then: even Mrs. Schwellenberg "*te-he'd*," in Burney's words, when "the most gallant canon" Dr. Shepherd began to be rather too officious in his visits to Burney (Diary 4: 202.). In a recently published, scandal-mongering book, some old newspaper accounts are repeated which suspected Mrs. Schwellenberg to have been by no means above husband-hunting herself.[35] However, considering her loyalty to the Queen, the allegation that she sought to promote the career of a Dr. John Eliot in order to be provided for as his wife, seems, at best, far-fetched.

Even if to Burney "[h]arshness, tyranny, dissension, and even insult, seemed personified" in Mrs. Schwellenberg, Burney scholars owe her thanks: her company was one of the main reasons why Burney finally found the courage to leave the Court, to stand up to the Queen's displeasure and her father's disappointment in order to regain happiness—and her career as a writer (*Diary* 4: 293 and 5: 53).[36] If Mrs. Schwellenberg saved her from a life of attendance, however, it was against her own will. On being told by Dr. Burney that Frances would not accept the generous offer of six weeks' leave, she would "gladly have confined us both [Frances and her father] in the Bastille, had England such a misery, as a fit place to bring us to ourselves, from a daring so outrageous against imperial wishes" (*Diary* 5: 149). To Mrs. Schwellenberg, the Queen's service was an honor for which she herself had, after all, moved to a foreign country, presumably leaving friends and family behind.[37] She could not afford to question the worthiness of her post. Perhaps "the Cerbera" came in for more than her share of abuse in Burney's diaries because Frances, too, needed to hold on to the belief that the Queen was worth the sacrifice of a writer's career. Like Mrs. Papendiek, Burney may have blamed Mrs. Schwellenberg for some of the unhappiness she could not allow herself to lay at Queen Charlotte's door. Towards the end of her Court years, Burney revealingly began to criticize the Queen, too, however indirectly.[38] In any case, the relations between Mrs. Schwellenberg

and Burney mended dramatically once Burney had left. Frances even began to enjoy her occasional visits with "the set" at Windsor.[39] "Poor Woman!" she comments in 1791, "if her Temper were not so irascible, I really believe her Heart would be by no means wanting in kindness" (Sabor & Troide, *Journals* 329). Mrs. Schwellenberg was among the subscribers to *Camilla*, and heartily congratulated Burney on the birth of her child: "Happey to hear you was so well with your dear Littel Babe—who with your self most sincerely wish every happeyness this World can afford."[40]

Did Queen Charlotte turn a blind eye to Mrs. Schwellenberg's tyrannical behaviour towards her inferiors?[41] And if so, why? Some answers to these questions may be found in the history of their association. When on 1 July 1761, King George III formally decided to marry Charlotte Sophie of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, her mother had just died—on 29 June, to be precise. Not quite two months later, the young princess set out for England to be married to King George on 8 September 1761. She was allowed to bring no more than two German "femme de chambres" with her and timidly asked to be allowed to bring a page (Frederick Albert, the father of Mrs. Papendiek), too, a wish that was somewhat grudgingly granted (Hedley 36). Limiting the number of attendants was a common practice, however. George III's mother, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, had been allowed to bring with her only one German attendant (Bullion 213). Thus, Charlotte left her old home for good when she was just seventeen years old to marry a man she had never seen in her life, to live in a country she had never been to and whose language she did not know, and to become Queen within a month of her arrival—a post, by the way, for which the remote Court of Mecklenburg Strelitz could not have prepared her. The only familiar faces left to her were her Keepers of the Robes and her page.

At least one memoir of Queen Charlotte maintains that Mrs. Schwellenberg was in attendance on the future Queen already at Mirow, that is, when Charlotte was less than eight years old (Watkins 11-14). She would thus have been familiar to Queen Charlotte from a very early age, and if that is true, it would not be surprising if Mrs. Schwellenberg never quite forgot the child she had known at Mirow

in her attendance on the Queen of England. Neither is it surprising that the Queen should have relied on her: Charlotte remained a little homesick all her life, as her letters to her brother Charles prove.[42] Mrs. Schwellenberg, too, corresponded with the Queen's brother, who was to become Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz on the death of his elder brother in 1794.[43] It seems likely that she was in charge of the "minor" family events since Charlotte very rarely mentions anything except Court gossip likely to be of interest to Prince Charles.[44] Mrs. Schwellenberg may have exercised some control over access to the Queen in return: apparently, she liked to know who was permitted to speak to the Queen and who was not. On the other hand, it is quite possible that Charlotte shrewdly made use of the person she trusted most to keep off unwanted visitors. To those who were kept aloof, however, it must have seemed as if "the Cerbera" was herself responsible for keeping people out of the Queen's reach.

How much the Queen trusted her old ally can be seen by the letters she wrote to Mrs. Schwellenberg when the latter was abroad trying to find a cure for her many ailments. The nine letters that survive are a remarkable testimony to the intimacy between mistress and servant.[45] The Queen writes in the beautifully illegible German Gothic script, invariably calling her attendant "Meine gute Schwellenberg" ("my good Schwellenberg") and addressing her in the third person throughout, which was the usual mode of address of those superior in status towards their dependants in Germany at the time. The tenor of these letters is to exhort Mrs. Schwellenberg to follow the advice of her doctors, keep up her spirits, and trust in God's benevolence. The Queen expresses great hopes for her speedy recovery and goes to some length to reassure her old companion, who seems to have suffered from low spirits, that "it avails nothing to lose one's courage at every minor setback."[46] She familiarly mentions her brothers by their first names (Carl and Ernst), but her tone is patronizing throughout, sounding as if she was the one Mrs. Schwellenberg relied on, and not vice versa. Charlotte urges the invalid to pay visits to various "worthy" people to enliven her spirits, and gossips about people she met as well as their mutual acquaintances, pregnancies, births, deaths, ailments and cures.[47] Later

letters also mention occasional feelings of depression ("When I feel like that I don't allow myself to think"), perhaps explaining why the Queen sounds rather harsh when exhorting her servant to keep up her spirits. Moreover, Charlotte thanks her Keeper of the Robes for various presents, such as flowers and lace, praises the beauty of her youngest child Adolphus, not yet a year old, describes the inoculation of Elizabeth, Ernest and Augustus, which went well, and mentions household problems such as the impertinent demands of a Miss Chetwyn,[48] who seems to have asked for a pay rise ("um Zulage angehalten"), adding that this was a secret between them and that Mrs. Schwellenberg should therefore not reply to this little piece of information. She also discusses Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* and Lavater's theories on physiognomy, implying that Mrs. Schwellenberg at least knew of them, if she had not read these works herself.[49]

Among these letters is also one in which the Queen seems to have unburdened her heart: "I play cards every evening. Sing and play in concert, go to the Opera and Comedies. Am not pregnant, read and write a lot, see the same faces every day, which is cruelly ennuyant, don't like it but do it all the same, and with this my whole history is told."[50] This letter shows how open she felt she could be with Mrs. Schwellenberg—not even her letters to her brothers are as crudely, as bleakly, honest as this. The Queen suffered from the restrictions of Court life as much as her attendants did—and her daughters. Perhaps these letters serve to explain why the Queen should have been so blind to her old companion's faults; she dearly needed someone she could confide in. Indeed, Mrs. Schwellenberg's devotion cannot be doubted. Queen Charlotte's biographer, Olwen Hedley, stresses the unselfish nature of Mrs. Schwellenberg's loyalty to her young mistress:

> Viewed in [the] jealous and uneasy context [of the attendants on the Queen], Miss Schwellenberg's part in the support of her young Queen's prestige is the more commendable. Miss Schwellenberg was no self-seeker. She never sought the limelight. . . . Devotion was the substance of Miss Schwellenberg's service. (65)

Hedley quotes from the Queen's letters to her brother, adding that Charlotte missed her faithful attendant when Mrs. Schwellenberg was abroad to recruit her health. While that may be true, such a sentiment is not expressed in any of the letters. Instead, the Queen tells her brother that she gives her permission for her sick attendant to travel to Pyrmont, adding an interesting comment on Mrs. Schwellenberg's aspirations:

> Je ne prevoit aucun desagrement qui peut arriver a la Malade pourvue quelle sy tient dans sa propre sphère & quelle ny veut point joué la grande Dame, cest entre Nous soit dit cher Amie par de pretentions mal placée que la S. sest fait des Enemies & quelle s'en fera toujours. cest cela ce qui augmente son Mal & lui devient Nuisible car voyant quelle est trompée dans ses attente Elle devient d'une mauvaise humeur, voi son erreur, & est au dessus de l'avouer.... (30 May 1777)

A few weeks later, there is one, however, in which Queen Charlotte seems rather annoyed that her Keeper of the Robes at Hanover has asked for the society of the Queen's French reader, M. de Luc, whom Charlotte is unwilling to spare.[51] It seems extraordinary that Mrs. Schwellenberg could command the presence of M. de Luc, but according to Charlotte's subsequent letter to her brother, he duly parted for Hanover. However, he seems to have done so voluntarily. Indeed, he accompanied Mrs. Schwellenberg whenever she travelled to the continent in search of relief; he even took her on a tour of his native Switzerland in 1774. On these journeys, M. de Luc wrote letters to the Queen, which were eventually published as *Lettres physiques et morales sur l'histoire de la terre et de l'homme*.[52] Besides containing the travel histories and reflections of an enlightened man of letters, the first volume turns out to be a character study of Mrs. Schwellenberg. He invariably refers to her as "Mademoiselle S." introducing her as a person in the Queen's favor whose health was to be restored abroad (de Luc 1: xv, L 1: 2)[53] He claims that Mrs. Schwellenberg had expressed the wish to travel to Switzerland and

that they had set off together assuming that they would stay somewhere close to Lausanne rather than go on to explore the mountains. However, de Luc loved the Alps and could not resist trying to persuade Mrs. Schwellenberg to venture a little closer to these sublime heights. His methods were spectacularly successful and need to be explored in a little more detail to show how he succeeded where Burney failed.

During one of their rambles around their first residence, *Mon Repos,* Mrs. Schwellenberg spotted a dip or hollow and asked her companion about it. "It is the path to the land of wonders," de Luc grandly replied, and his companion 's curiosity was excited enough to agree to a tour to this magic place (de Luc 1, L 1: 7-11). Somewhere close to Villeneuve they left the coach to walk around a little lake and were so agreeably occupied that de Luc suggested having lunch in a nearby cottage rather than returning to their inn, but Mrs. Schwellenberg would have none of it. De Luc pointed to a native woman close to the cottage saying, "cannot you see that this is a good, honest woman?" With more truth than gallantry Mrs. Schwellenberg replied, "I cannot discern that from here!" Wisely, de Luc did not press her but agreed to return, merely asserting that she had not yet had an opportunity to get to know the natives. Fortunately for him, Mrs. Schwellenberg had started to admire the scenery by the time they reached Ber. Indeed, she was so adventurous by then that the two of them started to explore the local salt mines "in the clothes of the miners." De Luc wryly commented that he saw from this first experiment "that difficulties would not stop Mademoiselle S." However, he had rejoiced too soon. When they met some apparently imbecile natives ("cretins") at Sion, Mrs. Schwellenberg was all for turning back again. De Luc persuaded her to go for a short walk first to take in the fresh morning air.

> The sudden change of the machines on a stage could not make as much of an impression on a spectator as the arrival on the height of the hill made on Mademoiselle S. She had only been willing to stay a few minutes, and even these were granted as a favour. She started by taking a

> seat to rest, but then she began to admire (de Luc 1, L 1: 14–17)

De Luc drew her attention to a glacier visible in the distance, and when she failed to respond with adequate interest, he began to tell her of an earlier adventurous trip to that very glacier he had taken in the company of his brother. (Indeed, he seems to have been mildly offended that she had not already read all about it in one of his books. Her ignorance, however, served as a useful pretext to tell the story all over again.) Mrs. Schwellenberg caught some of his thirst for adventure and even agreed to visit a local hermit. This humble person seemed wonderfully happy to them both, but regrettably such happiness was considered to be the result of his "temperament" and thus not universally attainable (de Luc 1, L 1: 23–38).

They continued their journey, and de Luc occasionally had to stop his companion from overexerting herself. He even managed to procure an easy chair for her and four strong men to carry her uphill in it.[54] Amazingly, Mrs. Schwellenberg's enthusiasm carried her right into the Alps. She was undaunted by the fatigues and dangers of travelling over mountain paths:

> The sudden appearance of a little dog or a cow shakes her nerves, but the height of a rock or a precipice next to her leaves her quite calm. In a word, in this she is like a child who knows no fear as long as no one frightens it [with scary tales]. Mademoiselle S. never, even in the worst of places, caused me any dismay by an unreasonable fear; and I have noticed not for the first time that a woman, once she decides to undertake a journey, finds courage and powers in herself she was not aware of possessing before. (de Luc 1, L 5: 98–99)[55]

De Luc marvels at the strength that the beauty of the scenery seems to have called forth in Mrs. Schwellenberg. Even allowing for the fact that these letters were written to Queen Charlotte, de Luc seems to have been wonderfully comfortable with his companion. According to

him, they enjoyed long walks and picturesque scenery, as well as sunrises and full moons together, and he felt rewarded by her frank appraisal of the beauties of his native country (de Luc 1, L 11: 237).

Finally, towards the end of their time in Switzerland, Mrs. Schwellenberg was dramatically—if not lastingly—transformed while on a magic mountain near Chaumont:

> We admired this and that for a while, but gradually something manifested itself in Mrs. Schwellenberg which I had come to expect from her sensibility, and it even surpassed my expectations: she was almost besides herself, and saw nothing else; she drew breath from time to time with the craving of a very thirsty person quenching her thirst; then she closed her eyes and was quiet. I observed her and remained silent. . . . In this soft reverie tears broke through her half-closed eyelids, and a smile immediately appeared on her lips to justify them. "What is this?" she said with some astonishment, "surely these are tears of well-being. Have I returned to earlier times of my life? Never have I felt without visible cause something like this, except in the happiest days of my first youth." (de Luc 1, L 11: 217-18)

They remained silent for another two hours, until the chill air forced them "to leave paradise." De Luc assumed the perfect silence to have been responsible for Mrs. Schwellenberg's happiness and the fact that "the air had not flown through her lungs with such ease for a long time" (1, L 11: 235). Did Mrs. Schwellenberg ever read this account of herself? If so, she may have objected to some of his remarks. De Luc's later letters, written on different journeys, hardly mention her, though some of them were taken in her company again (de Luc [1781-82] 1: 378). However, when he does mention her, it is to stress the fact that they had common interests. They read Petrarch on a trip to Pyrmont (which de Luc declares to have been Germany's most effective Spa at the time) in 1777, and on their return, which for some reason led them south to Heidelberg, they again enjoyed some beautiful walks together

and climbed the ruins of the castle, finding specimens of botanical interest everywhere (de Luc [1781-82] 1, L 2: 378, L 81: 568).[56] Back in London, the Queen merely wrote to tell her peregrinating attendant to assure M. de Luc that his letters met her approval.[57] On Mrs. Schwellenberg's return, Charlotte enjoyed gaining first-hand information concerning her brother's family, even if she was envious of the privilege: "Elle se loue beaucoup de Vos Bontés & de celles de la chere Princesse me parle beaucoup de Vos Enfants & me fait venir l'Eau a la bouche avec envie de Vous voir avec tous ce qui Vous est cher."[58]

Olwen Hedley fondly imagined Mrs. Schwellenberg discussing her travels surrounded by the younger Royal Princes and Princesses. Among the younger members of the Royal family, Mrs. Schwellenberg is said to have been generally liked. Anne Somerset claims that even the King "became genuinely fond of her, displaying great eagerness to see her when he was ill in 1789, and as Madame Schwellenberg was a regular visitor to the royal nursery his children shared his sentiments" (230). However, Burney's account of the King's feelings towards Mrs. Schwellenberg during his illness is a flat contradiction of this claim. (Is it possible that Somerset here confuses the two attendants?)[59] Be that as it may, the Keepers of the Robe indeed used to share the "attic quarters" at St. James's Palace with "the royal children and their attendants" in the 1770s, yet the evidence concerning the Royal family's regard for Mrs. Schwellenberg is difficult to assess.[60] In 1791, Burney recorded a visit made by William, Duke of Clarence (later William IV) to the attendants' dinner table right before a ball celebrating the King's birthday. He was already in good spirits when he entered and kept them up by heavy drinking. On Mrs. Schwellenberg's daring to remonstrate with him, he shouted: "'Hold your potato-jaw, my dear', . . . patting her; but, recollecting himself, he took her hand and pretty abruptly kissed it, and then, flinging it hastily away, laughed aloud, and called out, 'There! That will make amends for anything . . .'"[61] His reaction seems neither friendly nor hostile, but merely childish. A surviving letter from the Prince of Wales to the then elderly attendant indicates that he may

have been truly fond of her, but the Prince's letters tend to be either commendations or condemnations:

> My dearest Swelley,
>
> I write these few Lines to apologize to You for not having called at the Queen's House last night as I had appointed to do, but on my return to town I found so much business, & it was so late before I had concluded all I had to do, that I despair'd of finding You out of your Bed. I shall return again to London the end of the coming Week, then I hope to make up for my disappointment in not seeing You last night. I have much to say to You & shall be but too happy I assure You to have a little friendly conversation with You. for You have every reason to know how truly I love You, & that no circumstance of life ever has or ever will change the affection I have ever felt for You from the earliest period of my Infancy.
>
> Carlton House. Your sincerely affectionate
> July 29th. George P.
> 1796[62]

This seems to be the only surviving letter addressed by a member of the Royal family to Mrs. Schwellenberg (other than those by Queen Charlotte herself). "Swelley" is rarely mentioned in the Royal family's published correspondence. Only after her death is she occasionally remembered. Thus, Princess Elisabeth takes comfort in the fact that a new attendant on the Queen, a Mrs. Bremeyer, "is a Person poor Swelley liked," and Princess Augusta somewhat indiscreetly mentions the fact that "dear Amelia is much better for her *laxativum, as old Schwellenberg used to say.* I hope your *blessing* will be better than hers tho" (Aspinall 3, No. 1275 and No. 1415).[63]

A contemporary biographer of the Queen tried to vindicate Mrs. Schwellenberg though it is unlikely that he ever met her. In the

Memoirs of her Most Excellent Majesty Sophia-Charlotte by John Watkins, printed in 1819 (a year after the Queen's death), one reads that

> Madame Schwellenbergen was a well-educated and highly accomplished woman, extremely courteous in her manner, much respected by all the domestics of the royal household, and devotedly attached to the illustrious family with whom she lived, who, in their turn, entertained for her the sincerest affection. . . .. [S]he was ever ready to oblige all who applied to her for assistance, and though, like her royal mistress, she chose to do good by stealth, her charities were very extensive. She had several pensioners who subsisted almost entirely upon her bounty, and all her interest with the Queen was exerted on the purest principle of disinterested benevolence. (432-33)[64]

Watkins may not have been quite objective in his account: it is naturally important to the Memoirs of a "Most Excellent Majesty" that she should not have indulged in a strange liking for obstinate, power-hungry attendants. On the other hand, Hedley also states that on her arrival in England, Mrs. Schwellenberg immediately encountered some rather envious new ladies of the bedchamber with whom the Queen apparently did not choose to make friends. This need not have been "Old Schwelley's" fault at all; the King himself did not encourage his young wife to confide in her ladies (Hedley 62-65). However, Watkins's next assertion that "Madame Schwellenbergen was of a most cheerful temper" sounds rather strange and seems to have been inserted as an explanation of Mrs. Schwellenberg's unaccountable and no longer quite respectable "fondness for the sociable amusement of the card table."

While Mrs. Schwellenberg may not have had the most cheerful temper, she certainly did love her card table, as Burney complains throughout her Court diary. On 7 March 1797, just when she was settling down to her favourite amusement, Mrs. Schwellenberg suffered a stroke and died without regaining consciousness. According

to Hedley, she was "buried in the vault of the German Lutheran Church of St. Mary in the Precinct of the Savoy, demolished in 1888 (when all the human remains were re-interred in a new burial ground at Colney Hatch in north London)" (Hedley 196, 350 n. 39).[65] There is a gap in the letters of Queen Charlotte to her brother from January to June 1797, which may account for her not mentioning the death of her old attendant. However, in a letter dated 12 June 1797, she apologizes to her brother for a long silence on her part and announces: "se qui s'est passé jaime mieux oublié que de le renouveller a ma memoire, il suffit de Vous dire que mon Esprit n'a jamais eté assez Libre pour Ecrire avec plaisir & que je rend Grace a Dieu qu'un Triste Hiver est passée dont je ne souhaite pas de revoir une Seconde Edition."[66] (The Queen had not only lost a faithful servant during this dismal winter, but also a daughter in marriage, a "loss" she seems to have resented bitterly.) Shortly after Mrs. Schwellenberg's death, Burney received a letter from Miss Planta, which she interpreted as a summons to Court to supply the vacancy (Hemlow 3: 314 n. 1). She, therefore, delayed visiting the Queen, even though a second letter arrived in May which "quite melted" her (Hemlow 3: 314, 333 n. 9). Hester Davenport assumes that Burney had not forgiven her old Nemesis yet, but I do not think Burney's journal letters of 1797 warrant such a conclusion.[67] On finally meeting the Queen again in November 1797, Burney found her looking "ill,—pale & harassed" (Hemlow 4: 12). The Queen seemed to regret having parted with her, and Burney almost asked her pardon for having been "displeased" with her for delaying her resignation. Burney no longer blamed Schwellenberg for her unhappiness at Court. "I suffered so much from a situation so ill adapted to my choice & disposition to do justice to [the Queen]," she explains to Susan, and a little later she adds: "We spoke of poor Schwelly" (Hemlow 4: 13).

NOTES

[1] For Mrs. Papendiek, see *Court and Private Life in the Time of Queen Charlotte: Being the Journals of Mrs. Papendiek, Assistant Keeper of the Wardrobe and Reader to Her Majesty*, ed. Mrs. Vernon Delves Broughton, 2 vols. (London, 1887).

[2] Somerset 321. Even Horace Walpole noted the attacks made on her "as a powerful favourite" (Somerset 231). Mrs. Schwellenberg thus appeared regularly in the newspapers, such as the *Morning Post* in 1776 and *The Times* in 1786. The caricatures in which she appears include Thomas Rowlandson's "The Prospect Before Us" (1788) and James Gillray's "An Angel gliding on a Sun-beam into Paradise" (1791). There are several more, some of which are discussed by Margaret Anne Doody in *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* 175.

[3] The link from which Pindar is here quoted unfortunately seems to have been taken off the Internet: www.lib.utexas.edu/epoetry/wolcotjo.q2d/wolcotjo.q2d-99.html. Somerset also quotes Pindar and adds another quotation from *The Times* in June 1786 claiming that "Madame Schwelinbellyburghenhausen," whom the paper styled "the greatest monied woman in England," would give a loan of £100,000 to the Prince of Wales (*Ladies in Waiting* 232). Pindar included Mrs. Schwellenberg in yet another satire, called "The Lousiad" (see Hester Davenport, *Faithful Handmaid* 61).

[4] The websites of the National Portrait Gallery list an engraved portrait under her name and mention three more known to have existed, but none of these could be traced when I corresponded with them (e-mail from Paul Cox, 3 June 2005). Besides, Cox told me that in one of the caricatures that appear on the NPG website, "Ancient Music," the person supposed to be Madame Schwellenberg is identified as Elizabeth Jeffries by the British Museum's cataloguing of this print. The figure indeed seems much thinner than the Mrs. Schwellenberg appearing in other caricatures. Most of the caricatures make Mrs. Schwellenberg look "fat and frumpish, with heavy eyebrows and large jaw" (Davenport 64).

[5] See Olwen Hedley, *Queen Charlotte* 27-28; Rajko Lippert, *Das Großherzogliche Haus Mecklenburg-Strelitz* (Reutlingen: Suum Cuique,

1994) 40, 42, 81; and John Watkins, *Memoirs of her Most Excellent Majesty Sophia-Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain, From Authentic Documents*, vol. 2 (London, 1819) 432. In 1736, Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia (later to be called Frederick the Great) made fun of the deplorable condition of the streets and decrepit palace of Mirow to his father, Frederick William I of Prussia (see *Briefe Friedrichs des Großen*, ed. Max Hein, 2 vols [Berlin: Reimar Habering, 1914], esp. no. 70, p. 87). He had just moved to the newly renovated castle of Rheinsberg, about three miles from Mirow. Later local historians suggest that the young Crown Prince was merely trying to amuse his father by exaggerated accounts of the provincial nature of his neighbours (see Ludwig Giesebrecht, "Der Fürstenhof in Mirow während der Jahre 1708-1761," *Schulschriften aus der Provinz Pommern*, vol. 12 [(Stettin, 1863] 3-4).

[6] For this otherwise excellent bilingual exhibition, organised by Jean L. Cooper and Angelika S. Powell, see: www.lib.virginia.edu/small/exhibits/charlotte.

[7] So I was told by Christoph Franke from the *Adelsarchiv* (via e-mail, 12 Oct. 2006).

[8] They had moved to Güstrow from Mühlhausen in Thuringia. See Jost Klammer, *Queen Charlotte aus Mirow*, privately printed in 2003, p. 24. Thomas Nugent met the doctor and his family on his travels through Mecklenburg (Thomas Nugent, *Reisen durch Deutschland und vorzüglich durch Mecklenburg* [1766/67, dt. 1781/82], rpt. Schwerin, 1998). Burney's spelling, Haggerdorn, is incorrect.

[9] It seems likely to me that the "von Schwellenberg" is a mistake that originates in a confusion of names; there is a German noble family called "von der Schulenburg," a name that sounds similar, especially to English ears.

[10] I am grateful to all the Schwellenbergs who answered, especially to Herrn Volker Schwellenberg of Waldeck and Herrn Herbert Schwellenberg of Herdecke for providing me with some information about the Schwellenbergs. The latter kindly sent me some photocopies of the church registers concerning the family; unfortunately, he does not remember exactly where these registers

come from, and the museum in Bad Arolsen he contacted in his own search some years ago does not remember helping him in the first place. There is no Elizabeth Juliana listed in these Church registers, but they cite one Johanne Elisabeth, who was born or baptised around 1727, and was said to have been alive in 1750. This Johanne Elisabeth had several brothers, one of whom was an equerry (*Hofstallmeister*) in Arolsen and another a captain in the Hanoverian Service. The archives in Marburg confirm that there were Schwellenbergs in the Waldeck area in the eighteenth century and that some of them were local worthies, but have no information concerning an Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg.

[11] Hausarchiv des Mecklenburg-Strel. Fürstenhauses mit Briefsammlung 4.3-2 in the Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin [in the following LHAS Briefsammlung], 7793 Litt. B. , 109 — S/15, Nachlass Richard Schröder, 14: 6 February 1784.

[12] LHAS Briefsammlung, 7793 Litt. A., 109—S/15, Nachlass Richard Schröder, 14: 13 June 1783. The original letters are in German but may even be copies of the letter Mrs. Schwellenberg dictated. Unfortunately, there is no hint as to an address, let alone a name, for the recipient.

[13] This is the letter accompanied by the annotation given above.

[14] A copy of the crest has kindly been given to me by Mr Herbert Schwellenberg (see note 11).

[15] Cf. Davenport, *Faithful Handmaid* 62.

[16] Divorce was of course tolerated only in the Protestant German states (Blesius 26-29). Until the early eighteenth century, a divorce was granted merely in serious cases of "matrimonial misdemeanour," such as adultery, malicious desertion, and "unnatural fornication"; only the non-guilty party was allowed to remarry. However, states such as Prussia favoured lenient divorce laws for political reasons: Frederick the Great declared that for the sake of population growth, divorce and remarriage should not be made too difficult. In the later eighteenth century, even the guilty parties were thus frequently granted their respective sovereigns' dispensations to remarry. This

may not have been necessary in the case of Mrs. Hastings since she presumably married Warren Hastings according to English law.

[17] See Sophie von la Roche 540-41. la Roche and Burney met at Court, and it is quite interesting to compare the accounts they separately recorded of their meetings.

[18] British Library Manuscripts Add. 454/8, Anna Maria Hastings to Mrs. Schwellenberg, 29 Sept. 1784.

[19] T. H. White, "Old Schwelly," *The Scandalmonger* (Oxford, 1952), 52. He is quoting from the *Eccentric Mirror*, but does not mention a date. A Miss Theodora de Verdion (1744-1802), also known as Chevalier John Theodora de Verdion, did indeed live in London at the time disguised as a man. S/he worked as a teacher and bookseller. She appears in a book called *Portraits Of Curious Characters in London, &c. &c. With Descriptive & Entertaining Anecdotes* (London: 1809).

[20] Dobson 3: 48 and 4: 216. Burney quotes Miss Mawr verbatim: "I must beg you never so much as to say I ever called upon you, for she can't bear it! she's so jealous. And now I must go, for if she should hear me here she'll never forgive it, and she's always listening what voices she can hear in your room."

[21] See also Hedley 62, 94-95.

[22] At £127 a year, Mrs. Schwellenberg's salary was considerably lower than Burney's (see Davenport 62 and Somerset 232). Could this be the reason for the added comforts she enjoyed at Court?

[23] See Sabor and Troide 370.

[24] See Hemlow 36 and Doody 177.

[25] Dobson 3: 102-103. The episode is discussed by Margaret Doody, who takes Burney's point of view and blames Mrs. Delany's conventionality (176). I do not wish to suggest that Burney's problems were self-inflicted, and I'm convinced she truly did suffer, but I also think that it would be unfair to Mrs. Schwellenberg not to point out

that Frances may have been projecting some childish resentments onto her.

[26] For the Digby affair, see Hemlow 209.

[27] See also Davenport 116.

[28] This is also Hester Davenport's explanation (75).

[29] See Dobson 3: 25 and 4: 219; Papendiek 2: 6.

[30] For the servant's perquisites, see also Hibbert 205.

[31] See also Hemlow 341 and Doody 356-57.

[32] Cf. Davenport 62.

[33] Burney was thirty-four when she entered the Queen's service. She was a successful novelist by then, but it seems likely that she had hoped to marry and have children and had been bitterly disappointed in George Owen Cambridge, who flirted with her whenever they met but never quite came around to declare himself her suitor. If she had hoped to have children, her post at court must have seemed like a life-sentence to her: condemned to perpetual maidenhood. At first, she was unable to write, and both these reasons would sufficiently explain why she felt depressed. However, in the eyes of her contemporaries—and certainly in those of her older colleague—she was very lucky indeed: a post at court meant financial safety, honour, connections. For the Queen's depressions, see her letters to her brother Charles (for instance, LHAS Briefsammlung, 29 May 1773 and 17 Dec. 1784) and Hedley 114, 124 ff.

[34] Concerning Burney's possible jealousy, see also Davenport 62.

[35] See Manning 103-08. She is quoting from *The Morning Post* of 13 March and 1 June 1776. I am grateful to Hester Davenport for pointing out this book to me.

[36] On Burney's return to Windsor after the Weymouth tour in September 1789, she drastically compares her situation with that of

the Queen: "The Royals hastened to the younger Princesses, and I . . . to Mrs. Schwellenberg. I was civilly received, however. But deadly dead sunk my heart as I entered her apartment" (Berg).

[37] Queen Charlotte mentions the fact that Mrs. Schwellenberg received letters from Neustrelitz to her brother (LHAS Briefsammlung, 9 July 1767).

[38] See also Dobson 5: 170. Burney complains that the Queen was not quite as gracious as she had been during Burney's last week at Court, her displeasure "arising from an opinion I ought rather to have struggled on, live or die, than to quit her." She did truly revere the Queen—but there would have been a lot less honour involved if the Queen had been merely a tyrannical elderly woman, like Mrs. Ireton in *The Wanderer*—or like Mrs. Schwellenberg, the Queen's trusted friend and attendant. Hester Davenport suggests that Burney's attitude towards the Queen was "always a little equivocal" (*Faithful Handmaid* 139).

[39] See Hemlow, *Journals* 1: 179: "I Dined, as usual, with Mrs.. Schwellenberg & M[lle] Jacobi [her successor] & Mr. De Luc. With what spirit & pleasure I *visit* that Set with which I so mournfully resided."

[40] Quoted in Hedley 194.

[41] After her release, however, Burney vehemently denied that the Queen knew of Mrs. Schwellenberg's abuse of her power: "If ever I see Mr. Burke, where he speaks to me upon the subject [Mrs. S.] I will openly state to him how improbable it was that the Queen should conceive the subserviency expected so unjustly and unwarrantably; by Mrs. S.; to whom I should only have belonged officially, at official hours. . . . The Queen had imagined that a younger and more lively colleague would have made her faithful old servant happier; and that idea was merely amiable in Her Majesty" (Dobson 5: 219).

[42] See, for instance, LHAS Briefsammlung, 29 May 1773, 5 March 1776, and 5 February 1781.

[43] LHAS Briefsammlung, 867, 30 May 1766. In another letter, the Queen assumes her brother's interest in the fate of her old companion: "il faut pourtant que je Vous dise que j'ai risqué de perdre la Schwellenberg par une maladie de Poitrine dont elle ne se <remets> que fort lentement je suis sure que Vous en ete<s> faché & c'est ce qui l'empeche d'Ecrire dont elle est bien faché mais la raison l'excuse" (LHAS Briefsammlung, 868, 3 October 1771). She keeps him informed of the state of her health (870, 19 May 1775) and even asks him to visit Mrs. Schwellenberg when the invalid took a "cure" at Hanover: "j'ose bien Vous la recommander non pas pour Vous etre a charge en auqune manière, mais seulement de Vous informer de sa Santé de temps en temps pour m'en instruire" (871, 4 September 1776). In this letter, the Queen also hopes that "son Air natale" might be beneficial: it is possible that Mrs. Schwellenberg was born at Hanover, though it seems equally plausible that the Queen merely referred to Germany as her native country. The Hanoverian Archives do not have any letters written by or addressed to a Juliana Elizabeth Schwellenberg.

[44] King George himself informed both the reigning Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Prince Charles whenever a new child was born. See LHAS Briefsammlung, 5 [3.] (King George to Duke Adolphus Frederick IV) and 769 (to Prince Charles).

[45] LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 1-9. These letters were written between 1773 and 1778. Mrs. Schwellenberg's answers have not survived.

[46] LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 3, 5 February 1774.

[47] In an undated fragment of a letter, possibly written in 1774, the Queen exhorts Mrs. Schwellenberg to go out more in Hanover: "I do blame her if she does not live a little with the inhabitants. . . . Were she here, she would not see much of me as I spend my mornings reading and in the evenings, she knows, I am with the king" (LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 9).

[48] Perhaps the Honourable Deborah Chetwynd, Mistress Laundress and Seamstress to the Queen (see Hedley 15, 59). If so, she was not dismissed but remained in the household until her death in 1788.

[49] LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 7, 20 May 1777.

[50] LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 4, 31 January 1775: "Wir sind Gottlob allerseits recht wohl. Wir auch mein Bruder, ich spiele Karten alle Abend. Singe und spiele mit im Concert. Geh nach Opera und Comedies. Bin nicht schwanger, lese und schreibe viel, sehe alle Tage dieselbẽn Gesichter welches grausam ennuyant ist, lieb es nicht, tu es doch, und damit ist meine ganze Historie verzählt." The letter goes on to mention Mrs. Schwellenberg's colleague, Louise Hagedorn, about whom so little is known: "The Hagedorn, too, is well. She has such an urge to read that she has finished almost 11 volumes of comedies and letters in one and a half months. Il vaut mieux tard que jamais. She is collecting for her ["Ihre", might also be translated as "your"] future conversations." Mrs. Hagedorn is also mentioned in another, historically interesting passage: "Yesterday at 8 o'clock the Hagedorn woke us up with the most looked-for tidings from America. God be thanked that victory is ours. In two weeks we hope and flatter ourselves with the sweet hope that we may be in possession of New York" (LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 6, 2 <7t>br. 1776).

[51] The Queen agrees to Mrs. Schwellenberg's command provided that her "cure sera finie" (LHAS Briefsammlung, 872, 16 [15 July 1777]. See also letters No 17 [26 July 1777] and 20 [undated but written some time after No. 17]. M. de Luc seems to have accompanied Mrs. Schwellenberg in 1774 (see 993, 1). On M. de Luc, see also Clarissa Campbell Orr, "Queen Charlotte and her Circle," *The Wisdom of George the Third*, ed. Jonathan Marsden (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2005), 162-78.

[52] These letters were published in several parts, eventually collected in five volumes, between 1776 and 1779 (Paris). They were immediately translated into German, and it is on these German translations that I had to rely.

[53] All translations into English are my own.

[54] They must have been strong indeed: according to de Luc, the trip took more than five hours (1, L 2: 54).

[55] This passage has assured Mrs. Schwellenberg a place in the works of the great philosopher Immanuel Kant, who, pondering the nature of fear, refers to the letters André de Luc wrote to his Queen: "In the descriptions of his travels, de Luc tells us that Fräulein von Schwellenberg, lady in waiting to the Queen of England, did not express any fears on their journeys over the highest mountains and was quite hearty where a man's heart would have sunk. But her courage was gone when she [met] an animal since she believed it would eat her up" (25: 1345, my translation). The editors assume that Kant knew Mademoiselle S. to be "Fräulein von Schwellenberg" because of a work by Johann Reinhold Forster, *Das Gemälde von England* (Dessau, 1783).

[56] See also 1, L 83: 580). While Mrs. Schwellenberg stayed at Pyrmont, de Luc went back to England for a few months and then returned to Germany to take her back.

[57] LHAS Briefsammlung, 993, 8, 30 January 1778. The Queen continues (in German): "If I were not pregnant, I would write to him myself, but now I have to admit I find this rather troublesome."

[58] LHAS Briefsammlung, 872, L 24 (42), 19 October 1777: "The Schwellenberg sings your praises and those of the princess, and tells me of your children until my mouth waters with envy to see you and all that you hold dear."

[59] For Burney's account of the mad King's diatribes against Mrs. Schwellenberg, see Sabor and Troide 282-85.

[60] On the shared attic quarters, see Fraser 9. Fraser characterizes Mrs. Schwellenberg along the old lines: "Swollen with self-importance, she was heard to say that what was good enough for the Queen was not good enough for her." Fraser does not name her source, and considering Mrs. Schwellenberg's devotion to the Queen, I dare say she is unlikely to have said just that, except perhaps in anger.

[61] Dobson 4: 473. For a more detailed account, see Davenport 144-45.

[62] RA GEO / 42190. Rpt. Aspinall 3: No. 1177. Scandal raged even around Mrs. Schwellenberg's relations with the Royal princes. In 1830, a book appeared with the scurrilous title *Memoirs and amorous adventures by sea and land of King William IV, interspersed with upwards of one hundred curious anecdotes including his intrigues with Madame Schwellenberg* [. . .], 1830. I came across the full title searching the Internet for references to Mrs. Schwellenberg (on www.immortalia.com/html/bibliography/1936-rose-registry-of-erotic-books/part-01.htm); unfortunately, the URL is no longer available. I have been unable to locate a library owning it, but the title is mentioned again, albeit in an abridged version, in connection with the Duke and Dorothy Jordan on other internet sites. Considering the many caricatures by Gillray and Rowlandson concerning the Princes' love affairs, the existence of such a book need not be doubted.

[63] See also No. 1054. According to Somerset, Burney's successor, Mlle. Jacobi, soon quarrelled with Mrs. Schwellenberg and left the Queen's service (241). Burney merely mentions her having been "ill, & dissatisfied with every thing in England" (Hemlow 4: 12).

[64] It has to be kept in mind that the memoir was published some twenty-two years after Mrs. Schwellenberg's demise.

[65] See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, 67[1] (1797), 261-62 and 348. Watkins's favourable account of Mrs. Schwellenberg's character is obviously based on this obituary.

[66] LHAS Briefsammlung, 5, 8.I.4.10, 12 June 1797.

[67] See Davenport 172: "in 1797 not even death could alter her resentment of the five years of misery Mrs. Schwellenberg had inflicted on her."

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