The Burney Journal

Volume 3 (2000) Article 2

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Recommended Citation
Cooke, Stewart. "Sweet Cecilia and Brown George: Editing Volume 5 of Burney's *Early Journals and Letters*, 1782-1783." *The Burney Journal*, vol. 3, 2000, pp. 28-48. https://www.mcgill.ca/burneycentre/burney-society/burney-journal/vol3/2.

Sweet Cecilia and Brown George Editing Volume 5 of Burney's *Early Journals and Letters*, 1782-1783[1]

STEWART COOKE

Volume 5 of Burney's *Early Journals and Letters* promises to be a long book. Whereas Austin Dobson's edition of the *Diary and Letters* contains only 295 printed pages for the years 1782 and 1783, this volume consists of approximately 600 typescript pages of unannotated text. Once the notes are completed and added, the book will, like volumes three and four, contain close to 500 printed pages. It thus adds a significant amount of new material to that which can be found in the earlier published editions.

This edition did not emerge easily into the light, however. The journal for 1782 and 1783 was very heavily over scored and destroyed by Madame d'Arblay and cut up and pasted over by her niece Charlotte Barrett. Althea Douglas, working in the bindery of the New York Public Library, floated off these pasteovers in 1979 in order to recover Burney's original letters. Despite Althea's heroic restoration efforts after the float-off operation, these years, especially 1783, remained particularly disorganized because of the many overscorings, fragmented pages, and missing pieces. Returning the pasteovers to their proper spots was not an easy task, especially since Althea could not read many parts of the manuscripts because Madame d'Arblay had scribbled over them in a dark black ink. The photocopies of the journal manuscripts from which we work are full of notations from Althea like the following: "Transcriber—nothing fits together—transcribe each p-over

as a separate bit." What she does not write but implies is "and then let the editor deal with them."[2]

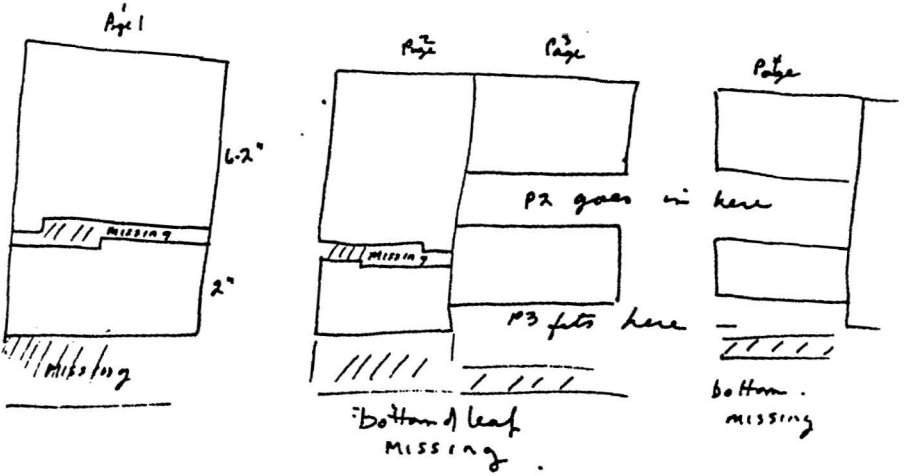
Althea's instructions also include drawings (see illustration 1), which attempt to map out how certain pieces should be placed. Getting the letters back together is, therefore, sometimes a matter of physically matching up fragments much as one would put together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle (especially when a line has been cut through the middle of the words so that the tops of the letters are on the bottom of one fragment and the bottoms of the letters are on the top of another fragment). At other times, it comes about from hearing echoes from one page to another or from recognizing a response to someone else's letters, for instance Susanna Phillips's or Hester Thrale's, and thereby dating Burney's fragments. My late wife, Ruth Neufeld, and I spent more than two months in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library and in the Manuscripts Room of the British Library deciphering the obliterations, and then I spent one entire summer attempting to bring some order to the chaos of these two years. It is in reasonable shape now, but there are still some undated scraps and short notes (which will eventually, one hopes, find their place in later years).

Volume 5 is, however, worth the effort. This was an interesting time in Burney's life for many reasons. The first half of 1782 finds her hard at work revising and producing a fair copy of *Cecilia*, which occupies most of her time until its publication on July 12, while the second half sees her busily making the rounds of London society, basking in the renewed glow of her fame and soaking up compliments from every one she meets. I shall not bother to repeat any of the extravagant praise that she endures since she was not shy about repeating it in her journals, even if it caused her considerable embarrassment to be thus "attacked" in public, and one can find the comparisons to Fielding and Richardson in Dobson's edition. It should have been the best of times for the "sweet Cecilia," as Catherine and Elizabeth Bull referred to Burney, but, curiously, it was not. 1783 turned out to be a year blighted by numerous anxieties and uncertainties, most of which are suppressed and only alluded to in her journals. These include her disapproval of Hester Thrale's deepening love for Piozzi and her fear that her close friend is about to ruin her life; her worries about the future of her disgraced brother, Charles Burney, Jr., who, after taking his degree at Aberdeen had disappeared for three months before finally returning to the family fold in July 1782; and, above all, her

Illustration 1

Now the ds - mutilated —
Some of p2, p3.
go to Berg Reel 6 item 171
FB to SBP 5-11 April 1783

1 mutilated ds ?4 to [I bet it is a folio]
& 1 folio.



Note that the bottom part of
each leaf is missing (as of Feb 1980)

confusion over the conduct of George Owen Cambridge with whom she was falling in love. Of these three, the latter had by far the greatest impact on the journals. She keeps Mrs Thrale's secrets even from her sister Susanna, and Charles's misconduct is effortlessly hidden behind some carefully chosen obliterations, but her feelings for George Cambridge are not so easily disguised. 1783 is much more chopped up than previous or subsequent years because Mr G:C. plays such a prominent role in it. Madame d'Arblay was unwilling to reveal not only who was on her mind at that time but also just how much he figured in her thoughts.

When they're not condemning me as a voyeur for invading Burney's posthumous privacy, people often ask me if the recovered obliterations or suppressed letters ever reveal any interesting tidbits about Burney—by which they mean, of course, any skeletons in the Burney closet. The answer is—occasionally—not often, but every once in a while. Happily, because we've recovered so many of the obliterations and restored so many of the fragments to their rightful places, this volume does reveal the answers to some mysteries; unfortunately, because so much of the journal has been destroyed, it creates others in their place. It is these mysteries, which are not found in Dobson's edition, that I want to concentrate on—that is, on what has been revealed and what remains tantalizingly hidden—as a preview to the volume's publication.

Let us start with money. After *Cecilia's* enormous popularity became obvious, rumours that Burney had made a bundle for it quickly spread. In a letter to her father dated July 17, 1782, she writes:

> Miss Palmer tells me it is reported about Town I have had £1000 for the Copy! Mrs Cholmondeley told me she understood I had behaved like a *poor simple thing* again, & had a Father *no wiser than myself*!" (Berg)

Mrs Cholmondeley was right. Burney did not do nearly as well as the town seemed to think. The question is—just how well did she do? Alvaro Ribeiro, the editor of the first volume of Dr Burney's letters, thinks that she made £300 for the first edition. In support of this thesis, he quotes a letter from the Burney family's close friend Samuel Crisp to his sister Sophia Gast, May 23, 1782:

> Mr Payne told me . . . that he and his Partner . . . did not intend to limit their generosity to the bare price stipulated (£250) if the work answer'd . . . but they

> intended (privately) to present her with a handsome pair of Gloves over and above—this he whisper'd to me in Confidence as a secret—this I guess will be t'other £50—a pretty spill (£300) for a young girl in a few months to get by sitting still in her Chamber by a good Fire! (Hutton 81)

While Burney is not crass enough to discuss money matters in the letters she wanted published, she did, in fact, report on them to Susanna, and what the letters reveal is that her publishers, Thomas Payne and Thomas Cadell, were less generous than Mr Crisp seemed to think. They disclose, in fact, that Charlotte Burney is correct when she writes in her own journal for Jan. 15, 1783, that her sister received only £250 from Payne and Cadell for the novel, a figure that is confirmed by a receipt, dated December 7, 1782 and signed by Burney, for "Fifty Pounds which with Two Hundred recd before is full for the Copy right of Cecilia or Memoirs of an Heiress in 5 Vol" (Berg). What Charlotte does not record but Frances does is that both booksellers were very tardy in paying Burney the money they owed her. One finds her writing to Susanna on July 14, 1782 (Berg):

> My necessity of staying in town after finishing Cecilia was . . . to settle with Payne & Cadell, as I must own myself *worse* than portionless, having taken up money of my Father. . . . But this morning Your *incomparable* Captain [Molesworth Phillips, Susanna's husband], with equal spirit & kindness, went himself to Payne, & in consequence of their conversation, Payne has this instant been here, & paid me £100. (Berg)

It is not until August 19, after another visit to Payne, that she finally receives Cadell's £100:

> This was my only Town Interview, except one with Mr Payne, in which I expressed some surprise at the behaviour of Cadell, & in which *he* expressed much contrition in having ever spoke with him, & promised to call upon him immediately, & remonstrate. This expostulation, since my leaving Town, has succeeded, for Payne has himself brought from Cadell a Draught for £100. A thousand thanks, therefore, to my kind & most *brotherly* Brother Molesworth, & tell him this matter is finally arranged. I find they printed 2000 of

> Cecilia, as Payne himself owned. This was not fair, as the £50 was *jockeyed* out of me by surprise, *after* the Bargain had been settled with my Father, & as Evelina had at first, only 500. (Berg)

The £50 that she refers to and which, as we have seen, she finally received on December 7, 1782, two months after the first edition of 2,000 copies had been sold out, is thus part of the £250 she contracted for, not on top of it. It is little wonder that an angry Dr Burney, in a letter of his own dated November 6, 1782, refers to the booksellers as

> mean *Cretters* after such a thumping Edition going off so soon, to take your Copy & new arrangements without paying you the poor £50 ab^{t} w^{ch} they have all along been so shabby. . . . If they keep you 6 months out of it after publication . . . their saving of Interest will not amount to above 12 or 13 shillings. & can they be so miserably poor in purse or spirit as to think *that* an object worth disgusting a successful author for? (Berg)

It does seem that to have accepted Burney's revisions and redistributions for the second volume while having not yet paid her in full for the first edition is, indeed, "shabby" treatment, which falls far short of the respect that such a "successful author" deserved.

My second example illustrates well the disorder of the text that I mentioned earlier. Annie Raine Ellis, in her edition of Burney's *Early Diary*, reports that "Burney Family tradition" ascribes to Edward Francesco Burney, Frances's artist cousin from Worcester,

> an affectionate admiration for the ladies of his own family, which descended for three generations. He is said to have drawn Fanny's likeness as seen with his heart's eye rather than as it "stood confess'd." Next, one of her nieces was the lady of his admiration. She was succeeded in time, in his regard, by her daughter. (293)

Hitherto, there has been no evidence in the journals to confirm any of this family lore, until now that is. I discovered it in an over scored passage found on one of two pages that had been misplaced in the middle of a letter dated August 24, 1782 (see illustrations 2 and 3). As you can see, these pages do not connect with what comes before or after. On the top right of illustration 2, the first line "like a very elegant

Illustration 2

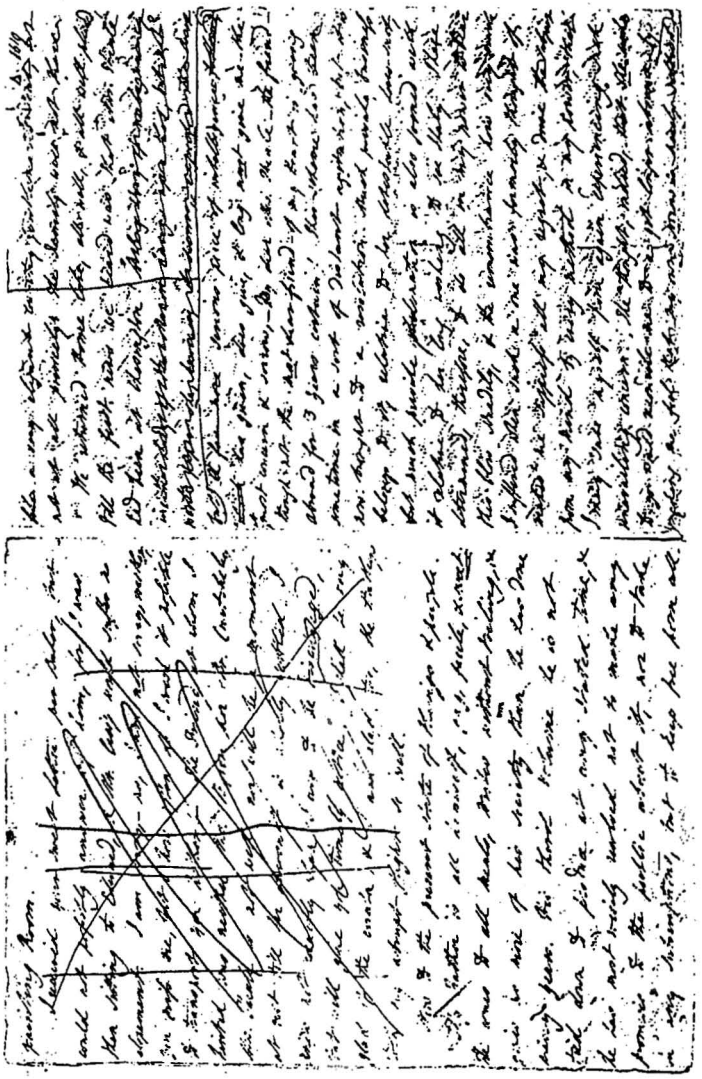


Illustration 3

country gentleman's seat, but not at all princely" does not follow from the last line on the bottom left, "nor to take in any subscriptions, but to keep free from all." Similarly, on the top right of illustration 3, the first words "engagements, write at his leisure" do not complete "though I saw it not ever myself," which is what the last line on the previous page says. Once I deciphered the obliteration though, I was able to place these two pages in what had been mistaken for two separate letters: one dated September 14, 1782, which begins "till about a Week before my departure" and one dated September 19, 1782, which starts "Don't be angry, my dearest Susy." Joyce Hemlow's cards for these two letters describe the former as "incomplete, beginning missing" and the latter as "incomplete, end missing." In actuality, they are parts of one letter, begun on September 14, 1782, with these two pages missing from the middle of the letter. It was written at Chessington Hall upon the occasion of Edward's painting Burney's portrait (the one in her "Vandyke Gown"). The revelation about Edward comes in the obliteration. Speaking of Mrs Thrale, Burney writes:

> {I was now in all haste to get hither [i.e., to Streatham], that I might talk over this affair, & spend this month with her. I stayed therefore, but two Days longer at Chesington: & all did not go well once there. You will be sorry, I am sure, at what I must hint to You of sweet Edward—You know, very well, his former & early partiality—& I have told you how absolutely I saw it was lately conquered: nothing, however, could be more apparent than its revival during this sojourn at Chesington: where it has been remarked by Kitty Cooke, Mrs Gast, & Ham. [Mrs Hamilton] to me, though I saw it not ever myself:}[3] till about a Week before my departure: when, one Evening, I purposely avoided him, after having almost constantly taken a stroll with him, merely from thinking he wanted more exercise than walking with *me* could give him. Kitty, however, then came to me, & said "Is your Cousin well? he's leaning his Head against the Chimney, & doing nothing."
>
> I then went & inquired if he was ill, he only laughed, but was much embarrassed: I advised him to take a long run, & he instantly went out: but at supper, when I asked how many miles he had strolled, he told me he had only been sitting in the mount. All this

> *might* be accident, though it was not very like it: however, the next Night I gave him the same advice, with the same effect, for he stirred not from the short Gravel Walk before the House, & was so dejected & so apparently miserable, that every body in the House noticed it. I then walked with him again, the 3^{d} Night,—& then again he was in excellent spirits & seemed very happy. The Day, however, before I left Chesington, he seemed in a state of wretchedness that it was hardly possible to see without participating: I knew not what to make of it, nor *know*, indeed, can I,—but Kitty, who had long given me hints upon the subject, took me aside at Night, & said "Why your poor Cousin's quite over head & Ears! he's a very pretty young fellow,—I'm sure I don't think the age so much signifies,—it's quite a *slap bangum* to him your going away—if you'll believe me, the Tears are in his Eyes,—" I have no room for further particulars, but I am sorry at my Heart for the sweet Lad, who is more amiable, & worthy, & ingenious than almost any body. The next morning I had settled to go to Kingston with William; but Kitty, eager to give pleasure to every body, proposed to Edward that he also should accompany me, & Charlotte desired to be of the party: this was agreed to, & so revived him, that all the way he was even *jovial* in his spirits. But Charlotte writes me word it was not the same upon their return, & that he had been utterly dejected from that moment of my departure to his own. I am sure you will be sorry, but such is the World. (Berg)

Before I turn to the subject of George Owen Cambridge, I would like to clear up a small mystery concerning the composition of the Cambridge family. In his doctoral dissertation, entitled "Richard Owen Cambridge: Belated Augustan" (1941), Richard Altick suggests that, in addition to the two daughters, Charlotte and Kitty, who are frequently mentioned in Dobson's edition of Burney's journals, there was a third daughter, who is not mentioned. He bases his speculation on one of Richard Owen Cambridge's letters in which Cambridge refers to his having had "three daughters at three balls in Salisbury" (36) and

on Cambridge's will in which he provides for his "daughter Mary Cambridge" (36). If Altick had had access to Charles Burney, Jr.'s letters or to Frances's unabridged journal, he would not have had to speculate. After visiting Cambridge's estate at Twickenham Meadows on January 6, 1783, at the invitation of George Cambridge, Charles writes to his sister on January 9:

> The third Girl, Miss Molly, whom you did not see, seldom I imagine appears to strangers, as she is troubled with S^{t} Vitus's dance, or some disorder, that approaches nearly to it. (Berg)

Molly Cambridge's existence is confirmed in subsequent letters of Burney's. The first, a letter of thanks addressed to Mrs Cambridge in February 1783 after Frances and Susanna had spent a week at Twickenham, includes a hope that "Miss Cambridge will not suffer from favouring me with her Company to Town, nor Miss Kitty from her ride; that Miss Molly will soon recover" (Berg). The second, a journal entry for December 23, 1783, describes how Richard Owen Cambridge

> talked to me again of Mrs C., with the utmost openness. And he talked too, of poor Miss Molly, & told me many anecdotes about her, which I heard with true pity for them all. (Berg)

This is a rather oblique way of introducing the topic of George Cambridge, but I thought I would solve a rather straightforward problem about the Cambridges before dealing with the more frustrating one of George. It is possible to track the progression in Burney's feelings about him throughout 1783, but his feelings for her remain as opaque to us as they apparently were to her. Let us start at the beginning. The two Cambridge men, father and son, make their first appearance in Burney's journals on December 16, 1782, when they attend "a full assembly at Mrs Thrale's" establishment on Argyll Street (Berg). This is the first time she describes them, but it is not the first time she has met them. Those of you who were really attentive when I quoted from Charles Burney, Jr.'s letter will have noticed that he says "Molly Cambridge, whom you did not see," as if Frances had herself already been to Twickenham Meadows, the Cambridge estate. And, indeed, it turns out that she had. She admits to Edward Poore, after spending a week at Twickenham with Susanna in February, that she had been there once before—exactly when remains a mystery, however. Since her brother-in-law, Molesworth Phillips, was well acquainted with the

Cambridge family, I suspect that she might have accompanied him there sometime in 1782, but I have no proof. In any event, she tells us that what gave her "the most pleasure" on the evening of December 16 at Mrs Thrale's

> was the discourse of the 2 Mr Cambridges, Father & son, who both, though at different times, sung to me the praises of Capt. Phillips with so much energy & heartiness, that I was ready to shake Hands with them, & Cry "Gentlemen, agreed!" (Berg)

Although she finds his manner "a little pedantic" at first, George Cambridge quickly dispels this initial impression. He seems to have realized from the outset that the way to Burney's heart was twofold: praise her friends and relatives but do not praise her novels. Two weeks later, he comes to an evening gathering at the Burneys' house in St. Martin's Street after having paid a visit to Chessington Hall where he had gone not only to visit his friend Captain Phillips but also to meet Samuel Crisp. Frances had sung the praises of her "dearest & oldest & best friend" to him on December 27 at Mrs Ord's to which he replied "I can never rest . . . till I see such a man" (Berg). Four days later he was at Chessington from which he returned full of admiration for her friends. The journey reveals a side of George Cambridge that one does not see much in the published journals: his dry sense of humour. This being January and the roads, one assumes, being full of mud, the first question Burney asks upon hearing that he had made the trip is "How did you find the Roads?" "O, pretty well," he replies, "never above the Horses legs. I came here the same Boots I rode in, in order to shew you them" (Berg). Now this is a man after her own heart. Her comments to Susanna suggest that he had found just the right approach:

> The Evening, all together, was something *more* than pleasant. . . . You will, however, agree to what I told you once before, that *Young* Mr Cambridge need not complain of my *taciturnity*, whatever his Father may do.—Who, indeed, of all my new Acquaintances, has so well understood me?—the *rest* all talk of *Evelina & Cecilia*, & turn every other word into some Compliment, while He talks of *Chesington*, or *Captain Phillips*, & pays me, not even by implication, any Compliments at all. He neither looks at me with any

> *curiosity*, nor speaks to me with any air of *expectation*; two most insufferable *honours* which I am now continually receiving. He is very properly conscious he has at least as much to say as to hear, & he is above affecting a ridiculous deference to which he feels I have no claim. If I met with more folks who would talk to me upon such rational terms, considering, like him, their own dignity of full as much value as my ladyship's vanity, with how infinitely more ease & pleasure should I make one in these *Conversationes*!— (Berg)

On top of all this, George can be gallant as well. On January 11, after attending the opera, Burney finds herself in difficulty. A not so gentle gentleman tries to appropriate the chair that Mrs Thrale had reserved for Burney by offering the chairmen a double fare. The chairmen refuse to carry her until the intervention of George Cambridge, Burney's own white knight. A comic scene develops in which George, calmly ignoring the protestations of the ungentlemanly interloper, intimidates the chairmen into taking Frances home:

> When we had stayed as long as Mrs Thrale liked, Mr Cambridge went & saw after Chairs for us, as Mrs Thrale for some reason about the Horses, could not have her Coach. And I had very nearly been in a bad scrape here, for when Mrs & Miss Thrale were both, & with much fright as well as difficulty, from the Crowd, Handed into their Chairs, I was just getting, as I thought, into mine, when the men refused to carry me, & a Gentleman began a violent remonstrance with Mr Cambridge that the Chair belonged to *him*. He made him, however, no manner of answer, but in a loud & commanding Voice ordered the Chairmen to take me instantly.—They resisted some Time, & said they were engaged; which could not be true, as Mrs Thrale's man had already bespoke all the 3 Chairs: Mr Cambridge, however, assumed so authoritative a voice & manner, that he fairly intimidated them, & triumphantly Handed me into the Chair. (Berg)

When they discuss the incident at their next meeting, George reveals his understated sense of humour once again:

> "Do you know," he said, "how that man bullyed me?—he pretended the chair was his. . . . I could not think, for some Time, what he wanted, for he kept teizing me all the while I was disputing with the chairman,—however, I did not listen to him then, but when I had put you in, I asked him what he wanted." . . .
>
> "Why, my point, cried he, was to speed you into the Chair, & when that was gained, *I* was satisfied, & willing to attend to *him*."
>
> "I am sorry, though, to have occasioned you so much trouble. I hope you soon got rid of him?"
>
> "O yes, I was pretty well off, for I escaped with no other loss than having my Pocket picked, in the debate, of a Cambrick Handkerchief." (Berg)

This is a very good start, and George, who knows how to deal with parents as well, makes quick inroads. He has the good sense to appear to be calling upon Mrs Burney rather than Frances, and when he brings her a print of Mrs Siddons, Burney writes of her stepmother that his "civility to her has won her Heart" (Berg). Dr Burney, too, is quickly won over. Frances writes that her father "is excessively *fond* of Mr G: C. & has declared he likes him better than any young man he ever met with" (Berg). She, herself, becomes increasingly comfortable in his presence, and as they meet more and more at evening gatherings, some of which she knows he attends because he has heard she will be there, their lively conversations or "flash," as she calls them, are recorded in some detail in the journals. By April, the woman who had written in 1775 that "without *particular inducements*," she could not "bear the thought of uniting [her]self for life with one who must have full power to make [her] miserable" (*EJL*, ii, 164) was admitting to Susanna that for the first time in her life, she felt "real *hesitation* whether the married or single life would make [her] happiest" (Berg).

George Cambridge's attentions to the most talked about and sought after writer in the country do not go unmarked. It is not long before people start speculating. At St. Martin's Street, we see Mrs Burney slyly alluding to Frances's feelings for "brown George":

> Mrs Thrale called upon me, & while she was talking of Bath, to my mother, & mentioning the things to be had there, such as potted lampreys, sully hens, Laver,

> &c,—my mother, turning suddenly to me, with a most significant *smile*, added "Ay, & *brown Georges*!—they are very good, too. . . . Well, & what have you to say to the *brown Georges*?—"[4] (Berg)

Mrs Thrale is more direct, asking "point blank . . . '*Is* George Cambridge in love with You?'" Similar assumptions and questions are made or posed by numerous others including her friends Mr and Mrs Pepys; Mrs Ord; Mr Seward; Mrs Chapone; the castrato soprano, Gasparo Pacchierotti; and her cousin Bessy Burney. The more the rumour spreads, the more self-conscious and anxious Burney becomes. A newspaper report linking her with George in April fills her with dread lest the Cambridge family hears of it and thinks that George is being "drawn in." Constant fretting at the way the two of them are so closely observed begins to poison her enjoyment of his company, causing her to be silent and reserved in public—"a strange situation," she calls it. The "inward gaiety" that Mr G:C.'s company gives her at first gives way to confusion and insomnia.

It is at this point that I wish I could say I know exactly what was going on in George Cambridge's head. I found it in an obliterated passage, and here it is. Unfortunately, I did not, and I cannot. Burney is puzzled by his behaviour, and so are we. As Margaret Doody succinctly puts it, "Mr George Cambridge would not speak, nor would he go away" (154). In late March or early April, Burney writes to Susanna that she is "in the dark" about George and congratulates herself that she has not been "active" in this relationship:

> I thank Heaven with my whole Heart that this is an affair in which I have been merely passive, however deeply concerned. What abundant reproach should I make myself for my own folly, & might the World make me for my own vanity, had I brought it on myself! (Berg)

She has, unfortunately, destroyed much of the journal from May to October 1783, but there remain some suggestive, if somewhat vague, sections, that you will not find in Dobson and that throw some light on her turmoil. The first takes place in April and is linked, I believe, with the "fatal paragraph" about her and George that I mentioned earlier. On December 13, she's still brooding about it. After a particularly odd conversation with Richard Owen Cambridge in which he warns her to beware of young men other than his sons, she wonders:

> Can he know of the Paragraph, & say that?—*Can* he be ignorant of it, & act with the strangeness & alteration which last April I saw in him! (Berg)

Clearly, April marked a turning point in her relationship with both father and son. The journal for April is very slight, but she first mentions the newspaper item on either March 28 or April 4, and she concludes that they must not have heard of it:

> they could not behave as they do if they had: for, after all, can *any* reasoning, any supposition, make their behaviour *other* than extraordinary, & that alike if they have *any*, or if they have *no* meaning. (Berg)

It is unlikely that they would *not* have read or, at least, have heard of the report, however, and it seems to have affected their behaviour toward her. On June 29, discussing a large party, which was to be a leave-taking concert with Pacchierotti, Burney writes in an obliterated passage:

> {Some mention had been made by the lady of asking Mr George Cambridge to this party, as Mrs Ord & Mr Pepys were his friends: but thank Heaven it was not put in practice. I would not for the universe have had him again *invited* to this House,—whatever was his plan in staying away that Friday, nothing that *I* can possibly help shall interfere in opposing it. & I don't know *any* mortification that will be so severe, as seeing him again by any means but his own seeking. If he *wishes* to shun me, he surely knows *why*, & *I* am the last person in the world to willingly defeat his purpose.} (Berg)

The exact date of "that Friday" is unclear, but it might well have been in April. It appears that he failed to turn up for a particularly significant event at St. Martin's Street and that Burney interprets his absence as a personal affront. Whatever the date of George's transgression, he must have been avoiding her since on July 11, discussing yet another party, she returns to the same topic:

> {In talking over this Party,} my mother *proposed* inviting Mr G: C:—I have been frightened!—to have him *called* back to our Family, by our Family itself!—it is not to be expressed the sickness of Heart I felt at the thought. He could never know it was not by my

> connivance,—I took, however, so much pains to mention that I *knew* all the Cambridges were not of Town, & *never* came from Twickenham at this Time of the year, that the idea was dropt. (Berg)

What concerns her the most, she writes, is "{the utter impropriety in seeing him, while he seems, thus, determined to Fly."}

There are no meetings between Burney and George recorded in the journal from May to October except for a visit to Twickenham Meadows in July during the course of which Richard Owen, not George Owen, contrives to monopolize her time. They do meet occasionally, but apparently not in public. On November 21, she mentions that she has never seen George "since the beginning of April, any where but in *his* House, or [*hers*]," and on December 18, she mentions that George had come to the Burney's house with his father for the first time since April and concludes that apparently "Mr G. C. is not bent upon a *total retreat*" (Berg).

There appears, however, to have been some sort of reconciliation between them or some modification in George's behaviour that revives her sagging spirits momentarily in the beginning of December: In an undated fragment, which belongs somewhere in December, she writes:

> {Three meetings in Four days,—not one of which he might not have avoided with ease,—*as* well as the Friday shirk.}—His spirits, too, once more restored,—his looks recovered,—& his embarrassment conquered! For this Day there was none,—he had the highest Colour all the Time in his Cheeks, but it seemed the glow of pleasure & gaiety. He has not spoken to me so entirely without confusion *once* before since my fatal Journey to Chesington. From that Time, indeed, to this morning, he has been grave, absent, embarrassed, or distant, *commonly*; &, when by losing his caution, or his dejection, he has been chatty & communicative, it has, still, never been without some apparent restraint, or uncomfortable consciousness, till now; for even when *animated*, he has not been *gay*, nor when spirited, looked *happy*. That, however, was the true epithet for his Countenance this morning,—

> *Countenance*, *voice*, and *manner*—all spoke glee, good humour, & vivacity.
>
> {Account to me, if possible, for this change not only in *him*, but his *conduct*. This sudden readiness to come to the House, after an apparently voluntary estrangement,—whence can it proceed? This *determination* to promote my intercourse with Miss Baker, what is that for?
>
> Does he mean, now, to be once more upon that *footing in the family* he mentioned to Mrs Thrale & does he intend to visit once more in the House as if nothing has happened?}
>
> Yet, if once he thought it proper to fly, what has past lately to alter that opinion? (Berg)

Her confusion at the inconsistency of George's behaviour and perplexity over his motives are readily apparent as she begs for Susanna's opinion and advice. Her anguish is obvious in the following entry. On Christmas day, after meeting him in the evening at the Pepys's, she writes that she came home

> full of new opinions & conjectures,—*Flight*, I saw, was no longer what I had to expect,—at least not at present,—my alarm was great for the sweet suffering Miss Kitty, my whole Heart was sad for all her affectionate Family.—was sorry, you will say, for myself?—it is long—long since I have been that,—one wholly tranquil, singularly felicitous 12 days excepted, which included the 2 Sunday evenings here; the meeting at Mrs Ord's & Mrs Vesey's, & which finished on the Day we received the Duke de Chaulne [sic]—for that was the Day which broke the spell, which destroyed the illusion that flattered me with the pure & permanent Friendship of the Person upon Earth I would most gladly have received—into the first rank—of my best chosen Friends.—But there he was safe lodged neither more nor less,—& forever to remain! —You will think, perhaps, I do not write in spirits, & in Truth I think so too. (Berg)

According to the *Memoirs of Dr Burney*, the meeting with the Duke de Chaulnes took place on December 11 so that the "felicitous 12

days" must have begun on November 30. The two Sunday meetings at St. Martin's Street would thus have taken place on November 30 and December 7. She saw George at Mrs Vesey's on December 9, but there is no record of a meeting at Mrs Ord's. It must have occurred sometime between November 30 and December 7, but those pages of the journal are missing. The journal for December begins "*Monday, Dec^r 8^th^ continued*," and it mentions "how pleased [she is] that Mr G. C.'s visits are so public." Amidst quite a bit of over scoring, she refers to the "second Sunday," and she "hope[s] to Heaven Mrs Ord made none of her impertinent sallies as they Walked Home together" (Berg). Apparently, Mrs Ord must have dropped in at St. Martin's Street and found George Cambridge there. When she left he must have accompanied her on foot to her home and then returned to the Burneys'. If Mrs Ord did make any remarks, George must have taken them in his stride, for when he comes back it is "with perfect gaiety & good humour," and Burney remarks how "when he has [her] to himself, he is always happy to engage & talk" (Berg). There are, unfortunately, no extant journal entries between December 8 and December 12 (unless the fragment quoted above is one), and the description in the *Memoirs of Dr Burney* of the meeting with the Duke de Chaulnes on December 11 is unhelpful. The Duke came to St. Martin's Street specifically to meet Frances, but she writes that "an introduction took place" . . . which "produced nothing" . . . "brilliant to satisfy his expectations" because of "that uncouth malady of which her country stands arraigned, bashful shyness" (340). She mentions only that the Duke had a "little general talk with Mr Hoole and his son, who were of the evening party" (340). She does not tell us who else was there, nor does she mention anything that could be construed as destroying her illusions. Something significant must have happened, however, because on Christmas Day she writes how they "had parted at Mrs Vesey's better friends than ever [i.e., on December 9];—{& as such we should again have met, but for that Duke de Chaulne [sic] business."} Probably, as in April, George once again stayed away when most expected.

Whatever his motives, his actions seriously damage Burney's enjoyment of her success. Uncomfortable at parties, brooding over what the Cambridge family may or may not have heard, analysing with Susanna the hidden meaning behind his every action, Burney consoles herself by again protesting her essential passivity:

> Perplexed I am eternally—but not *more* than perplexed, I thank Heaven!—if my Heart were seriously touched,—my dear Susan, these inconsistencies & uncertainties would tear it to pieces. I am truly happy in being of a Nature so little inflammable for Love, though so ardent in Friendship. To be *passive* is, as yet at least, as far as I have felt — & even that only to Mr G. C. (Berg)

It is clear that she doth protest too much. Isolated like this and despite its many gaps, her account of the ebbs and flows of her relationship with George Cambridge is both sad and frustrating—sad because the failure of "brown George" to speak darkens the life of "sweet Cecilia" more than she can admit to herself and frustrating because, like her, we cannot truly understand his behaviour. In her last entry for 1783, she keeps her hopes in check by recalling his inconsistencies. To protect her feelings she refuses to make too much of their good times together, bringing to mind instead "recollections to make [her] always ready to attribute to mere imagination, or reshape those visits, suggestive of partiality, which they always contradict" (Berg). As 1783 comes to a close, George Owen Cambridge is a mystery that neither she nor her editor can plumb the depths of.

Notes

[1] This paper is a slightly emended version of a talk delivered to the Burney Society annual meeting at Colorado Springs, Oct. 8, 1999.

[2] All quotations from the Berg Collection manuscripts by permission of Lars E. Troide

[3] Recovered obliterations are enclosed within curly brackets.

[4] A "brown George" is a loaf of coarse brown bread or a hard, coarse biscuit.

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