JANE AUSTEN CENTENARY

MEMORIAL TABLET TO JANE AUSTEN

JANE AUSTEN CENTENARY MEMORIAL

A RECORD OF THE CEREMONY OF ITS UNVEILING AT CHAWTON HAMPSHIRE, BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK, BT.

LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMXVII

Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd.
London, Colchester and Eton.

[This edition produced by Brodmax Moore MMXII (mrbroddy@gmail.com) from the souvenir booklet. Gilson M 363.]
Memorial Committee

The Earl of Iddesleigh. Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Pollock, Bt.
Lord Latymer. Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll.
Sir Robert Hudson. Mr. Clarence Graff, U.S.A.
The Dean of Norwich. Mr. W. D. Howells U.S.A.
Mr. W. J. Locke. Mr. C. K. Shorter.
Miss Constance Hill.
Miss E. G. Hill.

Mr. John Lane, Treasurer.

* * *

Contributions for the Steventon Children's library and small Scholarship may still be sent to Miss Constance Hill, Grove Cottage, Frognal, Hampstead, N.W.3, or to Mr. John Lane, The Bodley Head, Vigo Street, W.1, and to Mr. J. Jefferson Jones, 116-120 West Thirty-Second Street, New York.
Jane Austen Memorial

This year, which has brought round the centenary of Jane Austen's death that occurred on the 18th July, 1817, has caused a strong feeling of affection and gratitude to find expression in this country and also in America; and the Tablet now placed on the walls of Chawton Cottage, where she passed the last eight years of her life, is, as it were, the outward and visible sign of this widespread feeling.

The Tablet, designed by Ellen G. Hill, is of carved oak, bearing a bronze plate with the following inscription in sunk gilt lettering:—

```
JANE AUSTEN
lived here from 1809 to 1817
and hence all her works
were sent into the world.
Her admirers in this country
and in America have united
to erect this Tablet.
* * *
"Such art as hers can never grow old."
```

The frame represents the pediments and pilasters of a window in 4 Sydney Place, Bath, where the Austen family lived from 1801 till 1840. The raised pattern on the oak surrounding the bronze plate is copied from embroidery on a muslin scarf worked by Jane Austen.

It was in the Spring of 1809 that Mrs. George Austen and her daughters Cassandra and Jane came to live in the cottage which had been given to them by her second son Edward, who had taken the name of Knight, and who owned the whole of the Chawton property. The rustic surroundings of the dwelling are, to this day, so much what they were when Miss Austen looked upon them more than a hundred years ago that those who cross its threshold seem to be entering into her very life.

There, in the little parlour on the right-hand side of the entrance door where Jane wrote the three novels of "Mansfield Park," "Emma," and "Persuasion," made gay with country flowers to welcome the guests, a company of devoted Austenites met to attend the ceremony of unveiling the memorial tablet. Stepping out on to the village highway they were thus addressed by Sir FREDERICK POLLOCK:—

The lapse of a hundred years from a great author's birth is barely enough for the disturbing influences of personal affection and literary fashion to be spent; the centenary of death brings full and settled assurance. We are here not to judge, but to record the final judgment; not as critics, hardly as admirers, but as intimates. If that seems a bold saying, it justified by the witness of a veteran who speaks with authority for New England. Mr. Howells writes thus from York Harbour, Maine, concerning Jane Austen:
She has always been a family cult with us, with my daughter and wife who are
dead, and with my daughter who is living with me, as well as with my son and his wife.
The other night when we were lonely, before our summer neighbours had come down,
we could think of nothing so heartening as the chapters we read to one another out of
"Pride and Prejudice" and "Emma"; we read them, but we could almost have repeated
them by rote from having read them so often before. We talk of her as if she were our
living friend, and I do not believe her elect and genial spirit resents our freedom; she
must know it is from our grateful love of her.

There Mr. Howells gives us the root of the matter.

Other writers have taken the world into their confidence by disclosing themselves. We
know Montaigne, Lamb and Borrow as they meant us to know them. Jane Austen has
commanded our affection because she could not help it, and we have canonized her in her home,
as it were, by force.

There are those here who have testified. Miss Constance Hill and Miss Ellen G. Hill,
to whose patient devotion it is largely due that we are here to-day, have illustrated Jane Austen's
footsteps in more senses than one. Of my brother, Mr. Walter Pollock, I will not say that his
critical estimate of her work is the best, but I dare to say, doing my best to be impartial, that I
know none better.

What remains to complete our rites? The last thing you would expect of me, even if time
allowed, would be addition to the mass of comment. I will not adventure on the literalist method
and charge Jane Austen with having really believed Barbados to be within six days' sail of
Falmouth,1 or Cassandra with having habitually purchased the county member's frank with a
kiss.2

Nor on the exhaustive, which must needs identify the four noblemen who did not marry
Mr. Payne's daughters,2 and ends in showing the annotator's pedantry, like Mrs. Powlett, at once
expensively and nakedly dressed,2 and leaving on the reader's hands a farrago no less repulsive
than Jane's own imagination of "some fat woman who would make me drunk with small beer."3
Nor yet on the speculative, which would reconstruct Cassandra's letters and give a confident
opinion as to the chances of "Emma" and "Persuasion" having been written if Miss Austen had
become Mrs. Blackall. Commentators, taken all round, are perhaps as useful as the new maid
who "seems to cook very well, is uncommonly stout, and says she can work well at her needle."4
Not that I would deny the occurrence, now and then, of an ideal judicious expounder who, like
Mr. Haden, is "something between a man and an angel, but without the least spice of an
apothecary."5

I will venture, however, on one prediction. If our new world in the making abolishes the
sort of men, more or less furnished with ability and living peaceably in their habitations, whom
it is the fashion to call bourgeois, future historians will yet find them in Jane Austen's pages and
learn that they were really alive and very human.

The last word is of thanks to the promoters of this memorial and the designers and
makers of the tablet I now unveil. Perusing it at leisure, you will find it in all ways a fitting and
worthy record. By this act we commend to our children, as we received it from our fathers, our
inheritance of admiration and love for Jane Austen.

1 Letter 2. 2 Letter 26. 3 Letter 7.
4 Letter 12. 5 Letter 78.
After thanking Sir Frederick Pollock for his most interesting and inspiring address, Miss CONSTANCE HILL said:—

I was reading yesterday some words of Dr. Johnson that seemed to me to be peculiarly appropriate for our gathering of to-day. He says:

"To be able to furnish pleasure, that is harmless pleasure, pure and unalloyed, is as great a power as man can possess."

I have ample proof of this power in Jane Austen's works from the numberless letters I have received, containing subscriptions varying from three guineas to sixpence, which have flowed in from all parts of this country and from far away on the other side of the Atlantic. The writers, whether rich or poor, thank me for giving them an opportunity of joining in this tribute, and their letters breathe the warmest love, gratitude and admiration for an author to whom they owe so much of the pleasure of life. One lady speaks of "the perennial joy" that Jane Austen has ever been to her. An anonymous donor sends me a subscription "In memory of Arthur Morley Francis, a faithful lover for sixty odd years of everything Jane Austen wrote. Her works were his refreshment in the wilds of the Australian Bush; he read and re-read with ever increasing joy one book after another until a few hours of his death. When he re-visited England, after an absence of forty years, he made a pilgrimage to Winchester to see the burial place of Jane Austen."

A sober Scotch lawyer writes to me from his office in Glasgow in glowing terms of his delight in the Austen novels, which he knows nearly by heart, and declares that he could almost write Catherine Morland's Journal of her entertainments in Bath, alluded to in "Northanger Abbey"!

Lady Ritchie quaintly sends her subscription "with her love to Jane Austen," and tells me that the 18th July happens to be her father's (Thackeray) birthday, and that he must have been six years old when Miss Austen died.
It is a great pleasure to me that on this eventful day we are united with our warm-hearted neighbours on the other side of the Atlantic in doing honour to the memory of Jane Austen.

There is one other remark I should like to make before closing—it is to inform our guests that although this tablet is safe on the walls of Chawton Cottage, we do not consider our list of subscriptions as closed. We are anxious to devote whatever surplus funds may be in our hands to the purchase of a good and elevating schoolchildren's library, and possibly to founding a small scholarship, both to bear her name, for the village of Steventon, Jane Austen's birthplace.

Mr. JOHN LANE said:—Before we part I think, as Treasurer, I must tell you that the thanks for the initiation of this interesting ceremony are due almost entirely to Miss Constance Hill and Miss Ellen G. Hill, for without their aid I do not believe that the idea of a tablet would have been conceived and carried out in this year of War. No one can know so well as the Treasurer of this fund the great services of the Misses Hill. They have not only taken endless trouble, but they have been most generous. There was a time at the beginning of the movement this year when some of us thought that it would be difficult to collect sufficient money to carry out the object in a manner worthy of the great reputation of Jane Austen, but they were not to be daunted; indeed, they were quite prepared to take responsibility themselves.

You all know the charming book, "Jane Austen, Her Homes and Her Friends," these ladies wrote and illustrated some years ago, and you will quite understand, to adopt the titles of some of Jane Austen's famous books, that I have not had to use "Peruasion," for they have worked with "Sense and Sensibility" and with "Pride and Prejudice" on behalf of the immortal memory of Jane Austen.

If there is a spot in the whole of England which one can truthfully describe as "classic ground," it is this region, for at the same time that Jane Austen was here and hereabouts, Gilbert White was living two or three miles off at Selborne, and Miss Mitford only a few more miles away was immortalising her village. Jane Austen was eighteen years old when Gilbert White died, and possibly they had met. Although Miss Mitford was aged thirty when our Jane passed away, there is no evidence that they were ever acquainted, but it is known that some of their relatives were friends, and Miss Constance Hill has told us in her book of Miss Mitford's great admiration for Jane Austen's work. It would be difficult to find in the whole of England three writers who loved rural life and sympathised with country people more than these famous persons, and it is a remarkable coincidence that all should be natives of Hampshire.

It may interest you to know that the appeal has been most generously responded to by some of the most distinguished men and women of our time.
Mr. CLARENCE GRAFF said:—I am very glad to be able, on behalf of the American subscribers to this tablet, to join in offering our tribute to the memory of this great woman. I can only attribute the honour which has been conferred upon me in being permitted to say a word on this interesting and historic occasion to the fact that I chance to be the only American member of the Committee who has the good fortune to be present. It is, I feel, a great honour to express, on behalf of her American admirers, the pleasure that they have always derived from Jane Austen's works, and it is a great privilege to be permitted to join in the erection of this tablet to her memory. Miss Austen has always appealed to the hearts of Americans, and if one characteristic of her writing more than another were responsible for the place that she holds in their affections, I should say that it was the great naturalness which has characterised all her work, and it is the easier to understand this as one stands before this cottage to-day and realises in this delightful countryside the source of her inspiration. It is perhaps a remarkable thing that, in these days of war, we can turn aside, even for a day, from the sterner demands of the moment to come together to pay this homage to the genius of Jane Austen, and may we not take from this thought a new hope of the civilisation that we are fighting together to save?
In addition to the speakers who took part in the celebration the company present included Major Lionel and Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Montagu Knight, Mr. William Austen Leigh, Mrs. Herbert Hardy and Miss Hardy, Captain and Mrs. Brook Knight, Miss Jessie Lefroy, Lady Bradford, Miss Bradford, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Pollock, Major Butterworth, Mrs. Clarence Graff, Mrs. John Lane, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gould, Miss McMaster, Miss Pechell, Mrs. Hunt, Mr. Pritchard, Miss A. F. Sumner, Miss L. F. Sumner.

List of Subscribers to the Jane Austen Memorial Tablet and Steventon Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscriber Name</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. George H. Locke, on behalf of the Toronto Public Library</td>
<td>Mr. Arthur Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. (Janet) Aldis</td>
<td>Lady Florence Cecil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Miss Alison</td>
<td>Miss Ellen Chase, U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. J. W. Arbles</td>
<td>Miss Ursula Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. J. Archer</td>
<td>Misses Howard Clark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S.</td>
<td>Mrs. Clover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Lilian A. P. Austen</td>
<td>Mr. J. J. Cooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Anonymous Donors</td>
<td>Mr. S. A. Courtauld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Baker</td>
<td>Mrs. R. Cowper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Agnes Barbour</td>
<td>Rev. H. A. Cumberlege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Minnie L. Barnett, U.S.A.</td>
<td>Mrs. Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. W. F. Barrett</td>
<td>Mr. M. G. Davidson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Rowland Bateman</td>
<td>Ven. Brook Deedes, Archdeacon of Hampstead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Sydney Bates</td>
<td>Miss Mary Dinsmoor, U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Battersea</td>
<td>Mr. Austin Dobson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Emma Bell</td>
<td>Miss M. Hope Dodds and Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Richard Bentley</td>
<td>Mrs. Drewett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. M. S. Bernheimer, U.S.A.</td>
<td>Mrs. Cary Druse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Duncan N. Bethune</td>
<td>Miss A. Edington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Bird</td>
<td>Mr. William Elam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ernest Bird</td>
<td>Miss Winifred Ellerman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. W. B. M. Bird</td>
<td>Miss M. A. Ellis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Louise Blakey, U.S.A.</td>
<td>Mr. John W. Ewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Edward Bond</td>
<td>Mrs. Eyres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor T. G. Bonney</td>
<td>Ven. W. A. Fearon, D.D., Archdeacon of Winchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Boyd</td>
<td>Mr. Rowland Hill Fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Boyd</td>
<td>Mrs. C. J. Fisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. D. Brindley</td>
<td>In Memory of Arthur Morley Francis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Ledley Brown</td>
<td>Miss E. B. Fry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Mrs. Prideaux-Brune</td>
<td>Mr. Francis N. A. Garry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Claude S. Buckingham</td>
<td>Mr. Edmund Geld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Buckingham</td>
<td>The late Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Arthur F. Busch, U.S.A.</td>
<td>Mr. Clarence Graff, U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Butterworth</td>
<td>Rev. Frank G. Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Richard T. Cadbury, U.S.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Muriel Caine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mrs. William Page [U.S.A.]
Mr. William Lyon Phelps
Mrs. Wilton Phipps
"The Players," New York, U.S.A.
Mrs. Ernest Playfair
Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Pollock, Bt.
Lady Pollock
Mr. Walter H. Pollock
Sir William Portal, Bt.
Mrs. Henry Preddcott, U.S.A.
Miss Phyllis R. Prescott.
Mr. F. R. Pryor
J. G. Pyle, U.S.A.
Mr. George M. Pynchon, U.S.A.
Mrs. Ramsden
Mrs. M. A. Rawstorne
Mrs. Reaney
Mrs. H. Rees-Mogg
Lady Ritchie
Miss Robinson
Platt Rogers, U.S.A.
Mr. John Rooth
Miss Mabel Rooth
Miss Elizabeth Mary Roscoe
Lord Rosebery
Mrs. Herbert Ryle (Westminster)
The late Mrs. Scott
Lady Scott
Mrs. Scott (Rotherfield)
Mrs. Secretan
Mr. H. Gordon Selfridge
Augusta Senter, U.S.A.
Miss M. N. McSharpley
H. S. and F. H. S.
Mr. Joseph Shaylor
Mr. C. K. Shorter
Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn Simmons
Mrs. James G. Slack, U.S.A.
Mrs. Alice Durant Smith, U.S.A.
Mr. J. E. Smith
Mr. John A. Spens
Mr. Arthur Spurgeon.
Mr. William Stebbing
Mrs. Steele
Mr. A. Francis Steuart
Miss Steuart
Lady Struther
Mrs. Swift, U.S.A.
Mrs. Tabor
Miss Tate
Miss A. E. Taylor
Miss Edith Thompson
Miss Margaret Thompson
Miss Perronet Thompson
Mr. C. F. Todd
Mrs. Spencer Trask, U.S.A.
Rev. Francis Underhill
Mr. and Mrs. S. Wadsworth
Mr. Stephen Wadsworth
Miss Ada M. Walkden
Miss Walker
Miss Beatrice Mary Walker
Miss Warbury
Commander and Mrs. Ward
Mrs. Margaret Wate
Lady Wedmore
Miss Millicent Wedmore
A. L. Williams, U.S.A.
Miss Willoughby
Mrs. Nesbitt Wilson
Mrs. T. R. Wilson
Mr. John Winterbothana
Mr. Wise
Mrs. Harcourt Wood
Mr. Edmund Yeld.
Subscribers who contribute specially to the Fund for providing a Schoolchildren's Library and a small Scholarship for Steventon

Mr. W. Austen Leigh
Miss M. A. Austen Leigh
Mrs. Augustus Austen Leigh
Mrs. G. Bowyear
Miss Lindsay. [U.S.A.
Miss Leila Randolph Martin,

Mr. Robert F. Riddick
Mrs. Riddick
Miss J. D. Rinnel
Miss E. J. Simon
Colonel Terry.