

DODSLEY'S *PRECEPTOR*—
A WINDOW INTO THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY

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IN 1748, the same year that his famous anthology of poetry made its appearance, Robert Dodsley first placed *The Preceptor* on sale in his shop at Tully's Head, Pall Mall. Some twenty-two years later, in the colony of New York, Harman Rutgers signed his name in a copy of a subsequent (1763) edition of the work which is now in the collection of the Rutgers University Library. After that time—1770—*The Preceptor* apparently continued to be used by Rutgers boys for a period of at least thirty-six years. At any rate Anthony Rutgers signed the same text in 1782 and 1783, and Robert on May 1, 1806.¹ Probably without further evidence, therefore, one might guess that *The Preceptor* was useful.

George II officially recognized that Dodsley had "*been at great Expence and Trouble in procuring the several Parts of the said Work, . . . executed by Persons qualified to do them in the best manner. . . .*"² But Dodsley did not merely select the various ingredients which entered into his educational pot-pourri; he also added seasoning of his own manufacture, altering the work of his contributors and apparently furnishing contributions of his own. The resulting two volumes, assembled at least in part for the edification of their dedicatee, H.R.H. Prince George, represented an attempt to provide "A General Course of EDUCATION, WHEREIN THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF POLITE LEARNING ARE LAID DOWN In a Way most suitable for trying the GENIUS,

¹ The two volumes were presented to the Library by Margaret B. and Elizabeth R. Baldwin and George V. N. Baldwin, A.M., class of 1886. The Baldwins were all related to the Rutgers family.

² Vol. I, fourth page preceding title page.

and advancing the Instruction of YOUTH.”³ As the respected essayist Austin Dobson has observed, the work was “an excellent idea well executed.”⁴ Since Pope “had some share in the original proposals,”⁵ since Boswell considered it to be “one of the most valuable books for the improvement of young minds that has appeared in any language,”⁶ since Dr. Johnson believed “the best thing he ever wrote” was published in this work by his friend Doddy,⁷ and since a text attempting to cover everything from lichens to logic may be expected to yield some insight into the age which produced it, perhaps we may examine its contents with some interest. Interest may be heightened, furthermore, by the realization that although the work seems to have lain neglected for about a century and a half, it was once popular enough to run to at least eight editions.⁸ We shall therefore give a hasty glance at Dodsley and the educational milieu of the mid-1700’s, after which we shall consider some particular aspects of *The Preceptor* itself.

Robert Dodsley (1703-1764), the son of a Mansfield schoolmaster, was, in succession, apprentice to a stocking-weaver, footman to the *bon-vivant* Charles Dartiquenave, footman to the Honorable Mrs. Lowther, and, finally, poet, dramatist, and distinguished bookseller. Dodsley’s astonishing rise began with his first publication, “Servitude, a Poem” (verses by a servant on the department of servants), and continued until he numbered among his acquaintances and friends such men as Pope, Akenside, Burke, Gray, Walpole, Johnson, Chesterfield, and the Wartons. A self-made man whose shop became the fashionable rendezvous of persons of literature and rank, he was a bookseller who combined the “strictest integrity [with] . . . the most becoming humility,”⁹ a publisher who intro-

³ This is the descriptive subtitle of the work.

⁴ *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* (London, 1923), II, 37.

⁵ H. R. Tedder, *DNB* (London, 1937-38), V, 1076. He did not, however, live to see the book’s prospectus issued in 1747.

⁶ *Life of Samuel Johnson*, intro. Chauncey Brewster Tinker (New York, 1948), I, 129.

⁷ Boswell, *Life*, I, 129.

⁸ The work appeared in 1748, 1754 (only vol. I of second edition), 1758, 1761-65, 1763 (labeled “FOURTH EDITION”), 1769, 1775, 1783, and 1793. The 1761-65 and 1793 editions are not listed in the *CBEL*, *British Museum Catalogue, Library of Congress Catalogue*, or *Lowndes*. In the University of North Carolina Library, however, there is a Dublin edition dated 1761-65, and in the Duke University Library there is a 1793 copy of vol. I labeled “EIGHTH EDITION.”

⁹ David E. Baker, *Biographia Dramatica* (London, 1812), I, pt. 1, 193.

duced works by Gray, Goldsmith, and Burke, a prose writer whose style was deemed "familiar, yet chaste,"¹⁰ and a poet who could compose the pleasant song "One Kind Kiss before We Part," write blank verse on the subject of pigeon dung,¹¹ and produce a successful play (*Cleone*) which was sufficiently tragic to arouse the scorn of Garrick and the encomium of Johnson.¹²

The Preceptor, less consciously an artistic effort than any of the works just mentioned, is, according to H. R. Tedder, a "specimen of Dodsley's commercial originality."¹³ We may infer its commercial effectiveness from the number of times the work was reprinted.

Although the book was expressly designed for use in schools, *The Preceptor's* nature did not preclude its usefulness in the home. As Tedder notes, and as the title itself might imply, the work was "a kind of self-instructor."¹⁴ At the time the book appeared the role of home and private tutors was more important than was that of any one group of schools, a condition affecting not only the aristocracy and the landed gentry, but the professional classes as well.¹⁵ Many of the peers, gentry, and wealthy merchants were educating their sons at home simply because they had sufficient money to do so, and many of the clergy, oddly enough, were giving *their* children home educations for precisely the opposite reason.¹⁶ Possibly because of this situation *The Preceptor* is ostensibly addressed to lads on every rung of the social ladder. On the other hand, it contains more than one societal implication such as that in the following passage: "The Elegancies of Dress are Pleasures not altogether unworthy the Care and Attention of a wise Man, as they render him agreeable to himself and others; as they are Proofs of his Rank, and a silent Intimation to others of the Respect with which they are to treat him . . ." (II, 544-545). In other words Dodsley was doubtless aware that among the lower classes of his time a home education meant no education at all, except in the cases of a few unusually able boys.¹⁷

¹⁰ Baker, 193.

¹¹ Robert Anderson, *The Works of the British Poets* (London, 1794), XI, 88.

¹² Ralph Straus, *Robert Dodsley* (London, 1910), pp. 200-251, and Boswell, II, 347.

¹³ Tedder, p. 1076.

¹⁴ Tedder, p. 1076.

¹⁵ Nicholas Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1951), p. 23.

¹⁶ Hans, p. 28.

¹⁷ Hans, p. 28.

With regard to educational impetus in the mid-eighteenth century, social motives, of course, must be reckoned with alongside such motives as we might term philosophical and utilitarian. Even before the eighteenth century men had begun to be convinced that it was necessary to study the Creation in order to understand God's Law, and the utilitarian motive had been growing ever since the time of Bacon, taking form and stature in the Royal Society and expressing itself most vividly, perhaps, in the series of patents which were issued during the various decades after 1700.¹⁸ Reflecting these emphases, "Even the classical private schools tried to break away from the rigidity of old foundations and introduced new subjects and new methods,"¹⁹ and the modern private schools which were springing up began to lay increasing stress on technical-vocational subjects. By the middle of the eighteenth century, when Dodsley's *Preceptor* appeared, these new academies, often conducted by laymen without university degrees, had begun to offer subjects as diverse as Latin and ship-building. In view of the fact that many schoolmasters went so far as to state that "their aim was to produce business-men and technicians with a broad culture based on liberal education," it is not surprising that Dodsley devotes but forty-four pages of his *Preceptor* to the time-hallowed subject of rhetoric, while expending no less than eighty-two pages on the more timely topic of commerce.²⁰ The author says significantly, "The Subject of Manufactures is one of the most difficult that can be undertaken, as well as one of the most curious, instructive, and important, if it could be fully and properly handled, which, so far as I know any Thing, has not been hitherto attempted . . ." (II, 426).

This introduction of recently ungentle subjects into the parlor of polite learning is a matter to which Dodsley probably devoted serious thought. In his dedication to Prince George he assures the Prince that the acquisition of the "most comprehensive Views of Men and Things, is of much more Importance, than if you were placed in any less exalted Rank of Life." Because the ten-year-old will one day wield a scepter, Dodsley asks, "How important therefore is your Obligation to acquire and cultivate all useful Knowl-

¹⁸ Hans, p. 13, citing Witt Bowden, *Industrial Society in England: 1700-1709*, 22; 1710-1719, 38; 1720-1729, 89; 1730-1739, 56; 1740-1749, 82; 1750-1759, 92; 1760-1769, 205; 1770-1779, 294; 1780-1789, 477.

¹⁹ Hans, p. 63.

²⁰ Hans, p. 66.

edge . . . in order to maintain your high Station with Dignity and Honor?" And he answers, "By these Means you will . . . promote the Happiness of a mighty Kingdom . . ." (I, iv).

In the preface which he wrote for his friend's schoolbook, Dr. Johnson, in his usual cerebral style (his second sentence has one hundred seventeen words), likewise acknowledges the interest of his time in new and varied types of learning. "At a time when so many Schemes of Education have been projected, so many Proposals offered to the Public, so many Schools opened for general Knowledge," he begins, "our Schools seem yet to want some Book, which may excite Curiosity by its Variety, encourage Diligence by its Facility, and reward Application by its Usefulness" (I, ix-x). He declares existing textbooks to be unsatisfactory, at least in part, because they are "crowded with Learning very rarely applicable to the Purposes of common Life" (I, x). Observing, doubtless from his own experience at Edial, that young boys tend to be afflicted with a "roving Curiosity," Johnson hints that Dodsley's *Preceptor* offers a partial cure because it seeks to scatter in the student's path a variety of allurements which "may suit every Inclination, and fit every Capacity . . ." (I, xii). Then, before proceeding to a brief section-by-section preview of the entire project, Johnson outlines the boundaries within which Dodsley has determined to work: "It was intended by the Means of these Precepts, not to deck the Mind with Ornaments, but to protect it from Nakedness; not to enrich it with Affluence, but to supply it with Necessaries. The *Enquiry* therefore was not what Degrees of Knowledge are desirable, but what are in most Stations of Life indispensably required . . ." (I, xv-xvi).

In his preface Johnson also tells us, among other things, that the search for the treatises most readily adaptable to the design of *The Preceptor* resulted in the discovery of only two works which might be included with little alteration. As a consequence, "neither Care nor Expenche has been spared to obtain new Lights, and procure to this Book the Merit of an Original" (I, xiv). At once we are confronted with the challenge of determining the identity of the anonymous authorities who assisted Dodsley, as well as with the task of ascertaining the extent of his own authorship. Then, too, we should at least acknowledge the problem raised by the variations in the several editions of the work. For instance, the edition of 1763, un-

like the first, has prefixed to its opening section, "ON READING, SPEAKING, and WRITING LETTERS," a lengthy essay on elocution, written by the Reverend Mr. Mason of Cheshunt in Hertfordshire.

Following Johnson's introduction to the entire work and Mason's introduction to section one, the actual text of the first volume of *The Preceptor* begins with a series of lessons for reading, starting with "On the Duty of Children to Parents" and "The Folly of PRIDE." Lesson three, "On CONVERSATION," advises politeness, conformity to the taste, character, and humor of the persons with whom one converses, and an avoidance of disputes in order to appear easy and well-bred in conversation, all of which, of course, is in perfect harmony with the advice of Chesterfield to his natural son. The section also includes an interestingly unromantic definition of poetry. Born the naked child of invention, poetry must be "cloathed with Exactness and Elegance, educated with Industry, instructed with Art, improved by Application, corrected with Severity, and accomplished with Labour and with Time . . ." (I, 14). After five reading assignments in verse, Dodsley next presents a series of exercises for practice in speaking. The first thirteen of these, all drawn from Roman history, echo that old reverence for ancient times which the work as a whole seems to minimize, and the last ten, all from Shakespeare, demonstrate the eighteenth century's willingness "to make him fit and proper for my Purposes" (I, 62). The third and final subdivision of this opening section of *The Preceptor* is devoted to the art of letter-writing, the means by which one may give "Grace and Elegance to familiar Occurrences." Of greatest significance here is the statement, made in what is perhaps the greatest age of English letter-writing, that "It is to be wonder'd we have so few [letter] Writers in our own Language, who deserve to be pointed out as Models. . . . After having nam'd Sir *William Temple*, it would be difficult perhaps to add a Second" (I, 84).

Section two, on arithmetic, geometry, and architecture, opens with an explanation of the processes of numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and continues with a brief history of geometry, definitions, axioms, construction of plane figures, "inscription" of figures, and construction of proportional lines. Here the author seems to be on solid ground. When it comes to the

passages on architecture, however, he requires much buttressing from Sir Henry Wotton. Fortunately this deficiency is cancelled for the modern reader by such tidbits as the writer's warning against erecting a civil building in the shape of a pentagon, because of the "prodigious Difficulties to grapple with, in disposing the Lights, and saving the Vacuities" (I, 179).

Section three presents the subjects of geography and astronomy. Consisting of one hundred twenty-five pages, plus folded maps and diagrams, the discussion of geography, far from revealing insularity, reflects not only a concern for the more technical matters of meridians and tropics, but a lively interest in the more specifically human matters of foreign custom and diet. The section does not lend itself to ready summarization, but the flavor of its presentation may be suggested by the following random selections: Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, is estimated to be some 3,040 miles west of London (I, 204); Eriel Lake, in New France, is placed in approximately the same position as our own Lake Erie (I, plate facing 281); and in France the people are said to "hang up their Meat . . . before it is dress'd, till it is so very tender, that an *Englishman* would think it fit for the Dunghil" (I, 209-210). This third section is concluded with a short discussion "*Of the SOLAR SYSTEM according to COPERNICUS,*" itself concluded with a paragraph reminiscent not only of our previous comment on educational motivation, but of Johnson's observation that natural history should be studied "To excite a Curiosity after the Works of God" (I, xxvi). "But these grand Objects!" exclaims the writer; "these amazing Systems! their Numbers, Motions, Magnitudes! are much too vast and too sublime for the Capacity of the human Mind to form an adequate Conception of them. Yet let me hope that you will so contemplate them, as to raise and kindle in your Heart, Love, Praise, and Adoration to the supreme Creator" (I, 318).

Part four of volume one concerns itself with chronology and history. Written as it is in dialogue form, the two conversants being governor and pupil, this section has an even more pronounced aura of the antique than the preceding section. "May I flatter myself with the same ready Attention here," asks the governor, "the same Desire to learn and improve, as I have all along experienced in the Course of the Lessons already given you?" To which the impossible

child replies brightly, "Doubtless you may; for in our several Conversations together, you have frequently intimated, that the Subjects then handled, though useful in themselves, yet chiefly merited Attention, as preparatory to other Things of greater Moment and Consequence" (I, 319). Then the governor proceeds to persuade his pupil that a study of chronology must logically precede a consideration of history. A discussion of days, weeks, months, and years is succeeded by an explanation of the superiority of the Gregorian to the Julian calendar, and this in turn is followed by an extended explanation of eras, epochs, and cycles. All of this is actually prefatory to the subject of history, which itself is studied not so much to gain facts as to furnish the youth with "Maxims of Prudence and Wisdom for the Conduct of Life, [which] supply Motives to Virtue, and beget a Detestation of Vice" (I, 321). In the pages which follow, the author presents a history of the world from the time of the creation (4004 B.C. [I, 361]) to the birth of Christ, a performance which is necessarily somewhat abbreviated by its confinement within the limits of forty-three pages.

The fifth section, "RHETORIC AND POETRY," is apparently one of the two treatises mentioned by Johnson in the preface. As Dodsley says, "I found this Subject so concisely and sensibly handled by Mr. *Blackwel*, in the second Part of his Introduction to the Classics; that, despairing to get any thing better, or more to my Purpose, I prevailed with the Proprietor of the Book, to give me Leave to make such use of it as should be thought proper" (I, 405).

The sixth and final section of the first volume is devoted to drawing. Like most writing on drawing, unfortunately, this profusely illustrated essay was probably of little aid to the boy who could not already draw, superfluous to one with natural ability.

Volume two of Dodsley's *Preceptor* opens with a lengthy, four-book treatise on the subject of logic. Although it is unsigned, the work is known to have been written expressly for *The Preceptor* by one William Duncan, professor of philosophy at Aberdeen.²¹ It is manifestly impossible in our present study to examine this section with the thoroughness it deserves, but we should pause long enough to indicate that Duncan shows how the "Method of Science," previously "observed strictly, only among Mathematicians," may be "ap-

²¹ J. Westby-Gibson, *DNB* (London, 1937-38), VI, 173.

plied in all such other Parts of Knowledge, as regard the abstract Ideas of the Mind, and the Relations subsisting between them" (II, 193-194). Working from experience, definitions, general principles, and demonstrations, a reasoning man may discover new truths because he has employed a method which, "wherever it is applied, . . . necessarily begets *Science* and *Certainty* . . ." (II, 194). Concerned centrally with such accoutrements of all dissertations on logic as syllogisms and subtleties of definition, the work also refers casually to "*the great Mr. Locke*" (II, 121) and takes especial pains to indicate that God is not merely the creator of the universe nor a master mechanic who keeps His creation in smooth working order, but a "*moral Governor*, to whom we are accountable for our Actions . . ." (II, 45).

Section eight, on natural history, begins (but does not long continue) as a dialogue between master and scholar. Strongly contrasting with the disciplined, formal treatment of the preceding section, this part of *The Preceptor* contains such items as a study of crocodiles under the heading "*Of FISH.*" Crocodiles are declared to be wily, cunning creatures which, upon sight of a "single Man, whom they are desirous of drawing into their Clutches, . . . will weep and sigh, and make most lamentable Moan, as if in the utmost Distress. . . ." An entire stanza from Spenser is quoted to describe the tears of a crocodile. The "common Proverb" concerning crocodile tears is mentioned. And finally an anecdote is related because one of its characters happens to be a crocodile and the writer wishes to refer to Mr. Chambers's dictionary on the subject of the "specious Sophism in Rhetoric, called a Crocodile"—all of which, quite clearly, is not very pertinent to the subject of reptilia (II, 216-217).

If an intellectual chasm gapes between the judicious section on logic and this section on natural history, certainly more than an intellectual ha-ha separates the latter from the cognitive section which follows. This division, which Dodsley labels "ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY," consists of a highly systematized disquisition written (but unsigned) by David Fordyce and entitled "THE ELEMENTS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY."²² Fordyce discusses human nature and its moral powers and connections, and deduces laws of

²² S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors* (Philadelphia, 1891), I, 615.

action. Moral philosophy, he tells us, is the "*Knowledge of our DUTY and FELICITY, or the Art of being virtuous and happy*" (II, 242). Man's duty is to himself, to his society, and to his God, a threefold obligation which, properly fulfilled, leads ultimately toward virtue, which is identical with perfection and happiness. Rather than examine the section with thoroughness, a task beyond our present purpose, we may instead glance at a passage which will illustrate the fact that it seems to be, if not peculiar to, at least typical of the period. In the second section of the second book Fordyce makes these statements:

Knowledge and a right Taste in the Arts of *Imitation* and *Design* . . . afford not only an innocent, but a most sensible and sublime Entertainment. [The man with taste,] . . . being daily conversant with *Beauty, Order, and Design*, in inferior Subjects, . . . bids fair for growing in due Time an Admirer of what is fair and well-proportioned in the Conduct of Life, and the Order of Society, which is only *Order and Design* exerted in their highest Subject. He will learn to transfer the Numbers of Poetry to the Harmony of Mind, and of well-governed Passions. . . . Therefore to cultivate a *true and correct Taste*, must be both our *Interest* and our *Duty* . . . [II, 298-299].

Part ten, on trade and commerce, explains that trade is the basis of civil society, the support of art and science, the foundation of liberty, and the parent of industry and elegance. Contrary to what some other authors in the book might believe, the writer of this section proclaims that the newcomer trade "is the only effectual Means of banishing Idleness, Indigence, and ill Humours" (II, 440), and he hails trade's Siamese twin by mentioning "the prodigious Benefits resulting from every Kind of Manufacture" (II, 438). Like Defoe, the writer seems especially to relish the subject of England's commerce with her possessions abroad. He calculates the approximate monetary value to Britain of each white colonist in Virginia (II, 447), and he declares that "the People in the Colonies, and their Slaves . . . undergo all the Drudgery and Labour, while we subsist our own People by the Manufacture of their Commodities, and draw from thence annually immense Profits, in which the People of the Plantations have no Share whatsoever" (II, 450). In the light of these views, it is tempting to postulate precisely how *The Preceptor* was received by colonial preceptors, pupils, and (if any read so far) parents.

Part eleven is called "ON Laws and Government." Divided into five chapters, this book discusses with intelligence the principles of society, liberty, various forms of government, Britain's early government, Britain's Constitution and citizens, and Europe's principal states.

Section twelve brings Dodsley's work to a close with a discussion "ON HUMAN LIFE AND MANNERS." This last subject is presented by means of "*The Vision of THEODORE*," an unsigned, "beautiful and instructive Fable" by Samuel Johnson (II, 520); "The CHOICE of *Hercules*," composed by Prodicus and Englished in twenty-seven stanzas "by a very eminent Hand" (II, 544); and "The Picture of HUMAN LIFE," a celebrated dialogue translated from the Greek of Cebes "by a Person considerably distinguished in the Republic of Letters" (II, 545). All of these are joined by end-links apparently composed by Dodsley himself. The section then closes, as does *The Preceptor*, with an injunction to "Get a Habit of doing right, whatever Pain it costs you; let no Difficulties deter you, in the Way to VIRTUE: And account every Thing else despicable, in Comparison of this. Then will the Lesson that I have taught you, prove to yourselves a Lesson of HAPPINESS" (II, 560).

Since *The Preceptor* is the product of not one but several authors, it is difficult, if not impossible, to state what views the entire work seems to express and imply. Perhaps, acknowledging that it embraces parts of several systems of thought which were current in the eighteenth century, we can come nearest to calling it a product of Deism. With its emphasis on reason, its recognition of a single divine Patron, its neglect of sacrament, ritual, and prayer, and its avoidance of miracle and revelation, it might seem to fall into this category. *The Preceptor's* disregard for the figure of Christ, rather than any direct denial of Christianity, might also be interpreted as a sign that the work is Deistic. We should not, however, label carelessly. It is safest to say simply that *The Preceptor* deals principally with matters beyond the sphere of religion, and that, while it is entirely consistent in its high moral tone—a point deserving emphasis—its central concern, after all, is with types of learning which may be regarded as supplementary to that presumably offered by the church. The only way to make religion of great importance in Dodsley's work

is to equate it with ethics, and, while this is not an impossible sleight-of-hand, it scarcely seems advisable or necessary.

Among *The Preceptor's* other characteristics, one might observe that it conspicuously overlooks or intentionally minimizes the lure of humor. It has surprisingly little or no social protest or appeal to ancient authority. It has extremely little satire, contrary to what one might expect from a century notable for works such as *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Beggar's Opera*. Written at the time of Bach, Scarlatti, and Handel (to say nothing of Arne and Pepusch), it totally neglects the subject of music. And it clearly and unmistakably ignores the possible existence of a female reader.

If the preceding qualities are for the most part merely suggestive of *The Preceptor's* overall flavor, perhaps there are still others which might be singled out as shortcomings. For example the text evinces no interest in the construction, care, or training of the human body, though Juvenal provided ancient and Locke furnished modern precedent for treatment of the topic. With its futile attempts to simulate conversations between master and scholar, its needlessly small and eye-straining type, its unevenness of thoroughness, approach, and comprehensibility, and its implicit assumption that boys are merely unfinished, miniature adults, *The Preceptor*, as a schoolbook, surely leaves something to be desired. Bearing in mind its weaknesses, however, we may still admit that it evidently represents a sincere attempt to educate.

Granted that statistics are not as dependable as we might wish, they are not without value if approached with caution, and, extracted from *The Preceptor*, they may conceivably further an understanding of the work. Of particular significance, perhaps, are the four subjects occupying the largest number of pages: commerce, 82; geography, 125; ethics, 140; and logic, 195.²⁸ Since the age of *The Preceptor* is the Age of Reason, it is not astonishing that the biggest single portion of the textbook is given over to logic; and in an age which, possibly above all others, is noted for its emphasis on correctness and appropriateness in all phases of life, it is not astonishing that ethics occupies so important a position. The two subjects in the list, however, which are apt to take a casual reader by surprise are geography and com-

²⁸ The subjects given least attention by Dodsley on the basis of the number of pages he awards them are as follows: mechanics, 3; astronomy, 7; architecture, 12; arithmetic, 15; and drawing, 18.

merce. Why does trade appear so prominently in an age of gracious living? And why geography? We can answer, in part, that the colonies were a major stimulus to the study of geography and that they were also of importance in bringing about the emphasis on trade. No sudden development, this emphasis, as we have previously indicated, sinks its roots at least as far into the past as the time of Bacon. The Royal Society and the great increase in number of patents are but other points on the same line. As more things were discovered and invented, more things were manufactured, more things were sold, more people were employed, larger markets were reached, and, eventually, the Industrial Revolution could come to pass. The problem is immense, but its complete solution is not necessary to indicate briefly why commerce and geography were important to a young Englishman of Dodsley's day.

Aside from its purpose as a textbook, *The Preceptor*, we ought to remember, was also the experiment of an intelligent businessman, a venture which we may assume helped to augment his "very handsome fortune."²⁴ At the time of Dodsley's death in 1764 *The Preceptor* was apparently still selling very well, a fact of importance both to literary and social historians. Perhaps the ultimate indication of Dodsley's success in life, however—an ironic indication conceived by fortune in a moment of whimsy—was the manner of his death. It was not the ordinary footman of his time, after all, who had the dubious privilege of falling martyr to an affliction so aristocratic as the gout.²⁵ At any rate the highest of Dodsley's compliments was awarded posthumously. In 1761 there appeared *Youth's Moral Preceptor*, in 1774 *The Polite Preceptor*, in 1777 *The Poetical Preceptor*, in 1780 *The Preceptor's Assistant*, in 1789 *The Historical Preceptor*, in 1801 *The Juvenile Preceptor*, and in 1814 *The Arithmetical Preceptor*.²⁶ How closely each of these works is connected with its prototype is beyond our purpose here. It is enough that together they provide a basis for the guess that the tribute of imitation is the strongest evidence we shall ever have of the success of the original *Preceptor* and of the redoubtable educator Robert Dodsley.

²⁴ Anderson, p. 80.

²⁵ Anderson, p. 80. Dodsley himself refers to gout as an affliction of the great. See "Criticism as a Species of Disease," in *The British Essayists*, ed. A. Chalmers (Boston, 1856), XXII, 256.

²⁶ This list may easily be expanded.