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Victorian Scholarship and the Addison Manuscript

J.D. Alsop

The Victorians had unprecedented access to a wealth of manuscript sources, which helped them to re-discover and re-interpret their cultural history. Not only were manuscripts more commonly available on the market than they are today, manuscripts were made available through the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the lengthy series of published and unpublished guides and calendars¹ that opened up the unrivalled resources of the British Library and Public Record Office. The quest for manuscript evidence became in good measure the essence of scholarship in historical, biographical, and literary studies. In this period when the professionalization of scholarship was in its infancy, “professionals” and “amateurs” rubbed shoulders and competed for the purchase and study of Britain’s literary manuscripts. Both productive working relationships and rivalries were established, as university-trained scholars sought increasingly to demarcate their territory and define the nature of scholarship within a fluid cultural environment. The study of a single manuscript—the Addison “Spectator” Manuscript now in the Houghton Library—illuminates the tensions, benefits, and charms of a lost age of literary heterogeneity. At stake was the cultural heritage of the nation. Joseph Addison’s cultural legacy for Britain would be profoundly influenced by those who controlled the dissemination and interpretation of his works. Would this be a narrow academic construction and analysis, or was there room for a broader appreciation that assigned less value to erudition and more to veneration?

Harvard MS Eng 772 is a nine by five and one-half inch notebook of 89 folios, partly in the handwriting of Joseph Addison. It contains early versions of the *Spectator* essays “Of Imagination,” “Of Jealousie,” and “Of Fame.” The incomplete “Of Imagination,” heavily revised by Addison, is considered to be critical for an assessment of the development of Addison’s aesthetics. All three essays have been subjected to sustained analysis in the study of his prose style.² They

J.D. ALSOP is Professor of History at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

¹ R. B. Wernham, “The Public Record Office, 1838–1938,” *History* 23 (1938–39): 228–35; *British National Archives* (London, 1983), *passim.*; M. A. E. Nickson, *The British Library: Guide to the Catalogues and Indexes of the Department of Manuscripts* (London, 1978).

² W. H. Youngren, “Addison and the Birth of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics,” *Modern Philology* 79 (1982): 279–82; A. Furtwangler, “Addison’s Editing of the Papers on Imagination,” *Wasana Review* 11 (1976): 3–18; J. Lannering, *Studies in the Prose Style of Joseph*

Addison, Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature vol. 9 (Upsala, 1951), 19–20 and *passim.* Youngren and Furtwangler used the original manuscript; Lannering relied upon the Campbell edition of 1864 (note 9, below). A separate version of “Of Fame,” incorporating the alterations in the Harvard manuscript, is included in the Bodleian manuscript of twenty-four Addison essays: M. C. Crum, “A Manuscript of Essays by Addison,” *Bodleian Library Record* 5 (1954): 98–103.

provide scholars with the opportunity to observe the essayist at work: we have an early fair version of the texts in the handwriting of Addison's anonymous amanuensis, extensive revisions in Addison's own hand, some less substantial alterations by an unknown individual, and one addition by Richard Steele, Addison's collaborator; finally, we, of course, possess the complete, amended versions published in *The Spectator* in 1711. Very little explicit scholarship in the twentieth century has been devoted to the dating of the manuscript, and none at all to its provenance. As we shall see, current belief is that the manuscript was composed at Oxford in the 1690s, as part of Addison's early exercises. This is in good measure conjecture, but it would conform to the essayist's practice of utilizing earlier compositions and fragmentary writings for his contributions to *The Spectator*.³ Although the literary study of the essays has developed over the past century, manuscript analysis has remained stationary. To date, the Victorians have had both the first and the last word.

Autograph literary manuscripts by Addison are uncommon. This one has been important to Addison scholarship since Leslie Stephen assigned to it a prominent place in his masterful biographical account in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. That volume of the DNB, the first, appeared in January 1885, but this biography appears already to have been in wide circulation among scholars, for Stephen used his Addison piece as the model DNB article, and sent it to the many contributors for an appreciation of its style and format.⁴ In Stephen's time the original manuscript—only discovered in 1863—was already lost. It would soon reappear, wholly by chance, later in 1885. Of necessity, Stephen and other scholars depended upon the controversial 1864 edition of these *Spectator* pieces privately printed in Glasgow for the manuscript's discoverer and then owner, James Dykes Campbell.⁵ The combination of Stephen's authority and the rediscovery of the manuscript largely put to rest the Victorian debate over the manuscript's authenticity, although the most significant objection—the volume's totally mysterious provenance—was not overcome until Campbell provided an accepted piece to that puzzle in 1890.

The known story of the Addison manuscript began in 1858 when James Dykes Campbell (1838–1895) purchased it from the secondhand bookseller C. T. J. Skeet, in King William Street, the Strand, London, paying £7.7.0.⁶ Campbell would eventually acquire contemporary fame as the biographer of Samuel Coleridge, but in 1858 he was merely a twenty-year old employee of a Glasgow pottery manufacturer, with literary tastes but restricted opportunities. In 1860 Campbell emigrated to Toronto (where he edited and privately printed an unauthorized volume of Tennyson's poetry), not returning to Glasgow until 1862.⁷ The Addison manuscript remained neglected; this would substantially add to the

³ R. D. Chambers, "Addison at Work on the Spectator," *Modern Philology* 56 (1959): 145–53.

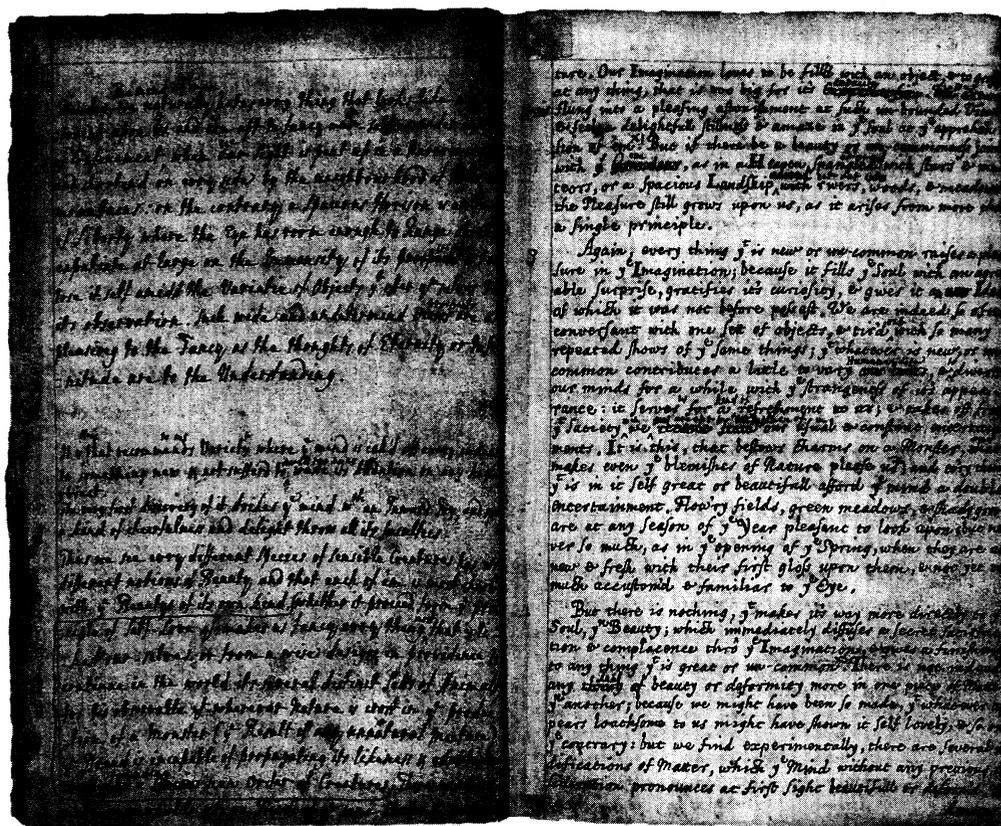
⁴ G. Fenwick, *The Contributors' Index to the Dictionary of National Biography 1885–1901* (Winchester, 1989), xii. Immediately prior to the appearance of the DNB volume, J. Courthope included a brief reference to the manuscript in his "English Men of Letters" *Addison* (London, 1884), 189–90.

⁵ *The Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Addison"; Courthope, *Addison*, 189n.

⁶ Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center [hereafter HRHRC], University of Texas at Austin, Aitken-

Addison MSS., autograph "Addison notes" by George Aitken, n.d. This section of the notes appears to be based upon private conversation with J. Dykes Campbell. The notes were apparently all written in 1885; some certainly date from the March–June period of this year.

⁷ *The Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement* (1917), s.v. "Campbell"; L. Stephen, "James Dykes Campbell," in James Dykes Campbell, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Narrative of the Events of His Life*, 2d ed. (London, 1896), ix–x.



The first opening of MS Eng 752, showing Addison's extensive reworking on the first page. Courtesy of the Houghton Library

eventual controversy. Finally, in August 1863, he announced in *Notes and Queries* that he owned and intended to publish a notebook containing a number of autograph Addison contributions to the *Spectator*.⁸ The volume appeared within twelve months, in a private edition of 250 copies.⁹ In many respects, the volume invited controversy. Campbell's description of the manuscript was cursory, and his comment on provenance mentioned only that he purchased it in 1858 from an unnamed London dealer. Three handwritings were identified in the volume: a "print-like" hand, responsible for the text of most of the three essays; alterations, frequently very extensive, written on the blank left-hand pages in Addison's "ordinary" hand; less substantial contributions in a third hand of unknown origin. Campbell believed (but failed to state clearly) that the first two hands were Addison's, and in consequence submitted only a facsimile of the final handwriting to the Keeper of Manuscripts, British Museum, and to the Librarian of the Bodleian for identification. That effort was unsuccessful.¹⁰

The controversy began on 6 August 1864 with a brief questioning of the manuscript's authenticity in the *London Review*, and it heated up on 13 August when the journal published a lengthy and anonymous vitriolic attack.¹¹ Campbell's motives were questioned: why was the editor six years in possession of the

⁸ J. D. Campbell, "Joseph Addison and the 'Spectator,'" *Notes and Queries* 3d ser., 4 (22 August 1863), 146.

⁹ *Some Portions of Spectator Papers*. Printed from Mr. Addison's MS. (Glasgow: Bell and Bain, 1864); J. D. Campbell to F. Madden, Glasgow, 11 January 1864, Egerton MSS., 2848:39–40, British Library.

¹⁰ *Some Portions of Spectator Papers*, unpaginated introduction.

¹¹ "The Ms. 'Spectators,'" *London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art and Science*, 9, no. 215 (13 August 1864): 188, and no. 214 (6 August 1864): 163. The Aitken archive contains considerable information on this 1864 war of words: HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, "Addison notes."

manuscript before he published it? And how precisely did he acquire the manuscript: "Who was the London dealer who sold the treasure? Did he know the nature of what he was parting with? and if so, how was it that he did not give the world the benefit of so curious an illustration of our classic English literature? Will he come forward (if still living) and tell us what he knows?" Although the author of the article stated he did not wish to suggest fraud, this, of course, was precisely the impression left with readers. As the controversy later drew to a close in December 1864, one commentator observed that the critics had chosen to be "very sceptical and suspicious, and to hint plainly at forgery or fraud."¹² Campbell's immediate response, in the *London Review* of 20 August, stated that "the business of my life is not literature"; he said that he had soon decided upon publication, but had not viewed the subject as one demanding expedition. Although Campbell had attempted to discover the manuscript's provenance in 1863 and was continuing his inquiries, unfortunately he had neglected the task at the time of purchase, and all his efforts were now unavailing: "Its history I fear, in the circumstances, may remain a mystery."¹³ On the same date a lengthy article in *The Reader* by one Professor Masson accepted the genuineness and significance of the manuscript. However, his acceptance was based merely on an assumption, not reasoned argument, and he pointed out that Campbell had neglected to state whether the print-like hand was by Addison or by an amanuensis.¹⁴

The high point of the controversy was reached with a lengthy piece in the *Athenaeum* for 27 August.¹⁵ With its opening comment the critic's position was clear:

It is an odd thing to hear that a manuscript by Addison of portions of three of his essays in the *Spectator* should have been sold by public auction seven or eight years ago, that the manuscript should be catalogued in the ordinary way, and re-sold to a chance purchaser, and that the people interested in such matters, and American and English agents, ever on the watch for such peculiar treasures, should unconsciously have let between two and three dozen pages of the handwriting of Addison pass away, or consciously have allowed them to go "for a song."

The anonymous critic built upon the ambiguity in Campbell's introduction (where he failed to state clearly his attribution of both the main handwritings to Addison), stating that the editor "alleged" only that the second hand belonged to Addison, but it was demonstrably not the essayist's method to have a fair copy created which he then altered before publication. The facsimile of the second hand included in Campbell's publication, it was conceded, "bears a very close resemblance to Addison's, but no safe conclusion can be arrived at till we learn something more of the history of the book."

This objection proved to be insurmountable. By 1864, Skeet had left the trade, being succeeded by Simpson, formerly the shop's manager. Simpson could remember Campbell's purchase, but the shop records contained no clue to the volume's provenance. Skeet's sale catalog of 1858, issued as a supplement to *Notes and Queries*, recorded the manuscript as "probably (?) in Addison's own hand-

¹² Anonymous editorial comment in *The Publishers' Circular* 27 no. 653 (8 December 1864): 684.

¹³ J. D. Campbell, "Correspondence: the Ms. 'Spectators,'" *London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art and Science* 9, no. 216 (20 August 1864): 203-4. The letter

was dated 13 August, at Glasgow.

¹⁴ "Something About Addison," *The Reader: A Review of Literature, Science, and Art* 4 (20 August 1864): 219-20.

¹⁵ Anon., "The New Addison Manuscript," *Athenaeum* no. 1922 (27 August 1864): 274.

writing.”¹⁶ There the trail ended. The story became complicated when contemporaries understandably attempted to link the Campbell notebook to Thomas Tickell, the individual entrusted with Addison’s literary papers in 1719. At least one diligent supporter of Campbell noticed that the *Gentlemen’s Magazine* in 1790 referred to the presence of a *Spectator* manuscript among the Tickell papers. The manuscript was described cursorily by John Nichols as, “the *Spectator*, in the hand-writing of its respective authors.”¹⁷ Meanwhile, William Henry Wills, the noted Victorian editor and the creator of a Victorian edition of Sir Roger de Coverley, contributed the same information to the *Athenaeum* for the 3 September issue.¹⁸

In 1863 and 1864, Campbell was willing to investigate the Tickell lead in order to establish the authenticity of his manuscript, but he noted that the family head, Edward Tickell, Q.C. of Dublin, was deceased: perhaps—grasping in the dark—his executors could shed some light on the matter.¹⁹ The auctioneers Puttick and Sotheby were approached in the ineffectual hope that a sale could be traced in their records.²⁰ These inquiries reveal the emphasis assigned to this apparently unresolvable issue of provenance. Yet, the issue was clouded by misjudgments from the beginning. Campbell’s early failure to identify the 1858 bookseller made his claim appear suspect. The *Athenaeum* critic was all too critical: the damning statement that the bookseller acquired the manuscript at a public auction, which no one noticed, was based upon nothing more than a conversation with a representative of Mr. Simpson’s firm, who “believed the MS. was bought at a book-sale at Messrs. Sotheby’s.”²¹ The critic independently pursued the topic at Sotheby’s, received a negative reply, and yet still purported to believe in a mysterious auction mentioned nowhere else. Moreover, he does not appear to have been aware of the Skeet sale catalog, with its hesitation over the authorship; that hesitation could well account for the earlier lack of attention and the modest sale price. In view of this sale catalog, Campbell must have known in 1858 that, at the very least, his purchase was suspected to be by Addison. Nevertheless, an individual as knowledgeable as Sidney Lee would in 1901 assert that Campbell accidentally acquired the manuscript, not realizing what he had obtained.²² Perhaps even Campbell’s friends and supporters found his neglect of the manuscript between 1858 and 1863 puzzling, and over time came to believe that the purchase was accidental, with the authorship being discovered later.

¹⁶ Campbell, “Correspondence: the Ms. ‘Spectators’,” 203-4; HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, “Addison notes”; J. D. Campbell, “Addison’s ‘Spectator’ MSS.,” *Athenaeum*, no. 3288 (1 November 1890): 586. The reference to the published catalog is taken from Aitken’s notes because this particular supplement has not been unearthed in examined copies of *Notes and Queries* (where it was announced on the final unpaginated page of the 27 November issue) or in the British Library collection of sale catalogs.

¹⁷ Archibald Dykes, writing in the *Glasgow Herald* of 24 September 1864 on “The New Addison Manuscript.” Dykes and Campbell were cousins. *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 60, pt. 2 (1790): 679.

¹⁸ *Athenaeum*, no. 1923 (3 September 1864): 308. This could not have been the first attempt to connect the

Campbell manuscript with Tickell, since (as we will see) Campbell already commented upon the difficulties of such an inquiry on 20 August.

¹⁹ Campbell, “Correspondence: the MS. ‘Spectators’,” 204.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, and Campbell, “Addison’s ‘Spectator’ MSS”: 586.

²¹ “The New Addison Manuscript,” *Athenaeum* (27 August 1864): 274.

²² *DNB, Supplement*, s.v. “Campbell.” Lee was very well acquainted with Campbell. However, in the same sentence of the biography he erroneously states that the manuscript was purchased in 1864. Clearly, no confidence can be placed in the statements.

Another possibility centered around the sale of Addisoniana from Bitton Hall, Warwickshire. It was not until 1890, when the sale catalog of 1799 became generally known among scholars, that this lead could be conclusively ruled out. Item 800 in that catalog was the only volume of possible relevance, and this was clearly not Campbell's manuscript:

800. A Manuscript, supposed to be written either by Mr. Addison or Mr. Tickell, declaring the Authors of the greatest part of the Numbers in the Eighth Volume of the *Spectator* which have never been announced to the Public - A single [8 vol.] half sheet²³

Further confusion resulted from speculation on the circumstances of the manuscript's creation. In 1863 Campbell stated his belief that the volume was initially created as a college exercise at Oxford in the 1690s (Addison's print-like hand), only much later revised by Addison (the ordinary hand), and then finally appeared—in significantly altered forms—in the *Spectator*. Campbell, though, neglected to include this or any other argument in his 1864 edition. As he sadly observed in September 1864—when he first provided a full physical description of the volume and a careful statement of his editorial practice—several reviewers, including the *Athenaeum* critic, assumed the entire manuscript was more or less produced directly for the *Spectator*, and their objections were consequentially ill-founded.²⁴ The topic received a fresh twist in November of 1864 when Sir Frederic Madden of the British Museum stated that the paper in the volume, including the watermark, was identical to “office paper” found in government records of the period; presumably it was acquired by Addison following his entry into government service in 1704.²⁵ Madden, the pre-eminent palaeographer of his age, was held in high regard, and his opinion was frequently repeated by Victorian scholars. He was certainly correct in stating that identical paper was used within the administration in the period 1700–1712, as his examples drawn from British Museum manuscripts demonstrate. However, it can now be proven that the watermarks are different from those on the paper upon which Addison actually wrote while in office as undersecretary of state, 1705–09.²⁶ It is at present

²³ Campbell, “Addison's ‘Spectator’ MSS”: 586. Campbell eventually located the sale catalog in the British Museum. Its obscurity up to this time is suggested by George Aitken's failure to locate a copy in his extensive bibliographical searches and by his immediate request to Campbell for assistance. Campbell's charming reply was: “I cannot give you the reference to the Addison Catalogue because I don't know it. . . . [It is] in the B.M. It was found for me after some search - indeed they have two copies - you may easily get a sight of it by asking the gentleman at the centre of the room whose name has escaped me for the moment.” Campbell to Aitken, London, 3 November 1890: HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Misc.

²⁴ Campbell, “Joseph Addison and the ‘Spectator’”: 146; Campbell, “The New Addison Manuscript,” *Athenaeum* no. 1923 (3 September 1864): 308; this letter is dated 30 August at Glasgow. Campbell attempted to remain detached from the sustained criticism contained in the *Athenaeum*, but a lengthy point-by-point refutation, focused upon the issue of work habits, was provided by Dykes in the *Glasgow Herald* of 24 September 1864.

²⁵ J. D. Campbell, “The New Addison Manuscript,” *Athenaeum* no. 1934 (19 November 1864). Campbell's letter is dated 31 October at Glasgow. He prints in full Sir Frederic Madden's evaluation of the manuscript (n.d.). The evaluation was reprinted verbatim in *The Publishers' Circular* 27, no. 653 (8 December 1864): 684–85. The original corrected draft of Madden's letter to Campbell is dated from the British Museum for 26 October 1864. It contains all the statements printed on 19 November, as well as some additional commentary. Egerton MSS, 2848:100–101, British Library.

²⁶ Letter book of the undersecretaries of state, Add. MSS, 61,653:89–155, British Library. This volume was removed from the public records by Secretary of State Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, when he left office in 1710 and was unavailable for examination in 1864, being at Bleinhem Palace. For the documentation on Addison's work as undersecretary, see J. D. Alsop, “New Light on Joseph Addison,” *Modern Philology* 80 (1982): 13–34.

believed that the manuscript was first written at Oxford in the 1690s.²⁷ This informed guess appears to be based upon our understanding of Addison's interests and creativity during that period, rather than any documentary evidence.

Madden's evaluation of the handwritings contained in the manuscript was also initially decisive, although within a generation opinions would change. The *Athenaeum* of 3 September 1864 had carried Campbell's clarification about the first hand: "I fancy I can detect many traces of Addison's hand in the print like character. To a well-trained eye many more might be evident. . . . I will cheerfully submit my manuscript to any ordeal through which it may be desirable that it should pass."²⁸ He went on to state that the Librarian of the Bodleian, H.O. Coxe, had already verified the genuineness of the manuscript through comparison with Addison's "Letter to Lord Halifax." It is surprising that Campbell failed here to specify which of the handwritings had been submitted to Coxe for comparison. More, though, was to follow: "Another very eminent gentleman—the Keeper of the MSS. of the British Museum—has very obligingly offered to examine my manuscript on his return to London." Sir Frederic Madden's considered assessment would eventually be printed in full in the *Athenaeum* of 19 November.

Prior to Madden's evidence appearing in print, however, controversy about the manuscript continued apace. The *Athenaeum* renewed the attack on 3 September (in a postscript to Campbell's contribution) and dismissed the likelihood of an absolute determination from handwriting analysis alone in the absence of a reasonable provenance, and a still suspicious 1858 purchase. Another examination of the facsimile for the second hand produced the suggestion that it was too regular and too much like Addison's known writing, as if someone deliberately reproduced his writing.²⁹ A contribution in the *Publishers' Circular* of 1 September introduced the notion that the first handwriting was beyond doubt that of Pope, while the third handwriting—hitherto neglected—was likely by Steele. The second hand appeared to be genuine, a product of Addison's pen. Nonetheless, it was once again thought odd that the bookseller could not account for his acquisition of the volume.³⁰ Campbell was stung by the "reckless" impugning of his manuscript's authenticity. His numerous friends invariably spoke of him as being modest and unassuming, with scrupulous integrity in his scholarly work.³¹ Nevertheless, he took seriously the attributions to Pope and to Steele, and he requested that Madden devote particular attention to these suggestions in his evaluation. Prior to depositing the manuscript with Madden in October, he lent it to the scholar Frederick Furnivall.³² The results of that examination are unknown.

Madden—remembered for his assistance in detecting the 1859 Shakespearean forgeries—succeeded in silencing virtually all the critics. All the doubts expressed about the genuineness of the manuscript were said to be groundless. Addison was beyond all doubt responsible for the alterations to the manuscript (the second

²⁷ *Index of English Literary Manuscripts. Vol. 3. 1700–1800*, ed. M. M. Smith (London, 1986), 4.

²⁸ *Athenaeum* 1923 (3 September 1864): 308.

²⁹ *Athenaeum* 1923 (3 September 1864): 308.

³⁰ *The Publishers' Circular* 27, no. 647 (1 September 1864): 471–72.

³¹ Stephen, "James Dykes Campbell," xiv, xxi, xxix,

xxxv; E. H. Coleridge, "J.D.C.," unpublished memoir (1896) in, HRHRC, Earnest H. Coleridge, MSS., Works.

³² Campbell to Madden, Glasgow, 14 October 1864: Egerton MSS, 2848:98–99, British Library. Campbell's friendship with Furnivall was noted by Coleridge, "J.D.C.," p. 5.

hand). For the third hand he ruled out Steele, Thomas Tickell, and Charles Montague. A determination on the first, print-like hand, was more difficult. Pope appeared to be a likely candidate, but after a careful comparison of his printing hand, "I feel obliged to decide in the negative." At first glance the handwriting was far removed from Addison's, "but in spite of this it is impossible to deny that a soupçon" is there, and upon close scrutiny of individual letters Madden found a very remarkable correspondence in four cases. "On the whole, without hazarding any positive assertion, I am inclined to think there are reasonable grounds for believing the original writing in the MS. to have been penned by Addison himself."³³ This hesitant yes was sufficient for Madden's contemporaries, although the writer in the *Publishers' Circular* (for 8 December) continued to advocate Pope, who was known to ask friends for official paper and whose print-like hand was variously formed.³⁴ Campbell, though, acquired a determination from Whitwell Elwin, the leading scholar of Pope, to support his own position.³⁵ No one appeared interested in continuing the contest further. This was unfortunate, not least in respect to the authorship of the main portion of the manuscript. The writer in the *Publishers' Circular* (with a clear preference for Pope) appears to have been the only contemporary willing to contest Madden's speculative assessment for the print-like hand: "The suggestion [of Addison] appears to us to be founded upon no authority, and to be even unsupported by anything like probability." Indeed, Madden in private expressed greater reservation than was apparent to the interested public. The original version of the evaluation eventually published on 19 November contains a deleted section where he noted as many differences in the handwriting, compared to Addison's hand, as the similarities. Only the latter reached the public eye.³⁶ In his later life Campbell would relish his total vindication with the words: "I floored the enemy completely by the aid of Sir F. Madden and H. O. Coxe, both of them kind old friends".³⁷

The first phase of Victorian involvement with the Addison manuscript therefore concluded in 1864. Interest appears to have dissipated as speedily as it had formed. In part, though, this was a direct consequence of Campbell's actions. In 1866 he began a lengthy business career at Mauritius. Campbell did not establish a residence in Britain again until 1882, when he settled in scholarly retirement from business in Kensington. Shortly before his departure from the country he disposed of the Addison manuscript, giving it to the bookseller John Hotten to pay an outstanding debt of £20 for book purchases.³⁸ In 1885 Campbell noted that he could not otherwise have afforded the books, indispensable companions during his isolation on Mauritius, but he never ceased to regret the bargain.³⁹ Thereupon the manuscript disappeared without trace. In the mid 1870s and again in the early 1880s Campbell attempted to reacquire the volume, or at least to

³³ *Athenaeum* no. 1934 (19 November 1864): 674. Madden's general affirmation appears to have been known prior to the publication of his letter; see "Addison's Essays," *Notes and Queries* 3d ser., 6 (5 November 1864): 363.

³⁴ *The Publishers' Circular* 27, no. 653 (8 December 1864): 684-85. At the same time, the writer admitted that the third handwriting was probably not by Steele.

³⁵ Campbell, "Addison's 'Spectator' MSS.": 586.

³⁶ *The Publishers' Circular* 27, no. 653: 684-85; Madden to

Campbell (corrected draft), 26 October 1864: Egerton MSS, 2848:101, British Library. As noted above, it was Madden who removed the statements, not Campbell.

³⁷ Quoted in Stephen, "James Dykes Campbell," xi.

³⁸ HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, "Addison notes."

³⁹ J. D. Campbell to D. Y. Bruton, London, 30 March 1885, attached to Houghton Library MS Eng 772; Stephen, "James Dykes Campbell," xiv-vi.

establish its whereabouts. He drew a complete blank.⁴⁰ Copies of the 1864 edition became scarce. Carlisle passed his copy to John Foster. Campbell finally presented one to the British Museum in 1883, after locating several copies at a bookseller's stall. He sent another to Courthope, but it appears to have arrived just as the author was concluding his Addison study of 1884 and little use was made of the evidence. Leslie Stephen had to make do with a library copy until presented with a copy by Campbell shortly before his DNB biography of Addison appeared. In 1885, George Aitken, busily preparing a biography of Steele and an edition of his works, searched in vain for a copy among the London second-hand dealers before acquiring the copy previously owned by Samuel Shaw. By this time some believed that only one hundred copies had been printed, so scarce had copies become.⁴¹ In these circumstances scholarly work was difficult, and without the manuscript further analysis of the handwriting and composition was impossible. It was wholly a coincidence that the renewal of scholarly interest, as shown by Stephen's DNB biography, immediately preceded the chance rediscovery of the manuscript by George Aitken.

Hotten had disposed of the manuscript by public auction, where it fetched (around 1866) 25 guineas. The purchaser was an unlikely connoisseur of Addison. His name was D. Yeo Bruton, and in 1866 he was by trade a publican.⁴² He was, in fact, the last private owner of the Trumpet Tavern in Shire Lane before it was demolished to make way for the erection of the Law Courts. Bruton possessed an earnest conviction that the original meeting place of the Kit-Cats—before they assembled at Christopher Cat's establishment in Shire Lane and thus acquired their name—was at the Trumpet, and he assiduously engaged in amateur study of the club and its members. Eventually he acquired a sizable collection of early eighteenth-century publications, some by Steele so rare that even Aitken in his exhaustive searches had not been able to trace them. Bruton was well aware of the controversy surrounding the Addison manuscript, and he clipped out of the newspapers the main entries in the 1864 war-of-words. At an uncertain time he suffered a financial reversal necessitating his entry into domestic service, as a butler. The 1880s found him in this employment at Bedfords, Havering-atte-Bower, Essex (apparently in service with James Theobald, M.P.),⁴³ with all his carefully preserved literary works packed away in storage. There Bruton—and the Addison manuscript—might have remained in total

⁴⁰ J. D. Campbell to G. A. Aitken, London, 21 March 1885, and D. Y. Bruton to G. A. Aitken, Havering-atte-Bower, Essex, 2 April 1885: HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS. Misc.

⁴¹ Campbell to Aitken, 21 March 1885, and Bruton to Aitken, 10 March and 24 March 1885: *ibid.*; Courthope, *Addison*, 189n.; Stephen, "James Dykes Campbell," xxiii. Aitken's copy is now HRHRC, A k. 25, 864s. Campbell in 1864 had intended to distribute his publication within his own circle, and it was only when the controversy became heated that he provided copies for sale, through a Glasgow bookseller: Campbell, "Correspondence: the Ms. 'Spectators'": 204.

⁴² This paragraph and the one following are based upon information provided in Bruton's side of his correspondence with Aitken between 1885 and 1889 (14 letters), and relevant comments contained in the letters of J. Dykes Campbell to Aitken of 21 March and 11 April

1885, and 3 November 1890: HRHRC, Aitken MSS., Misc, Aitken-Addison MSS., Misc., and Aitken-Steele MSS., Misc. (These three collections are individually arranged, but Campbell's letter of 3 November 1890 is filed with the Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, "Addison notes," and is omitted from the HRHRC card catalog). Aitken acknowledged Bruton's assistance and his ownership of the Addison manuscript in *Life of Richard Steele* (London, 1889) 1:xiv.

⁴³ Bedfords, owned by Henry Stone, was apparently leased to James Theobald, M.P. for Romford, from 1882 up to 1894: *Victoria Country History of Essex. Vol. VII*, ed. W. R. Powell (Oxford, 1978), 15; information kindly provided by J. Smith of the Essex Record Office, citing *Kelly's Directories of Essex* and the 1882 electoral register.

obscurity had he not chanced upon a published reference of early 1885 to Aitken's intended edition of Steele's works. Bruton, who had earlier attempted to contact Campbell without success, now wrote to introduce himself to Aitken. He was fortunate in his choice of a correspondent, for Aitken never let slip an opportunity to advance his research. William Prideaux Courtney, the bibliographer and writer, subsequently observed that, "his capacity for taking pains knows no limits; and if he is once supplied with a clue which may unravel a vexed question of history, his energy does not slacken until it has been followed to the extremist points of enquiry."⁴⁴ For Aitken's definitive study of Steele, no lead was too trivial, and all warranted investigation.⁴⁵ Bruton's long introductory letter presented unappealing, and seemingly unprofitable, material, for his motivation in writing was to ensure a place in any forthcoming publication for the Kit-Cat Club, and in particular the Trumpet Tavern. Bruton's rudimentary and amateurish recital of the Club's history probably did not provide Aitken with any great interest in the former's offer to share his unpublished history of the Kit-Cats.⁴⁶ However, the letter concluded with startling information: "And I am the possessor of the Addison MS. which formerly belonged to James Dykes Campbell Esq. of Glasgow and which the late John Hotten of Piccadilly published an account of. I shall be pleased to send that too. . . ."

Aitken borrowed the Addison manuscript from Bruton in March 1885, returning it on the following 20 June. The owner permitted Aitken to lend the volume briefly to Campbell, who wanted to collate it afresh with his 1864 publication, "to see" wrote Campbell "if the latter is as faultless as I fondly believe it to be."⁴⁷ As soon as he had possession of the manuscript, Aitken had alerted Campbell to its rediscovery and provided him with information on its owner. He apparently notified others, for on 9 September 1886 his old teacher and friend Henry Morley, professor of English Language and Literature at University College, London, related how Aitken "gets MSS of Steele and Addison from all sorts of places."⁴⁸ Since Aitken actually held very little Addison material, Morley was very likely referring to the Bruton manuscript. Aitken made an exact copy of its contents.⁴⁹ He initially intended to use the evidence contained in the manuscript in his forthcoming *Life of Steele* but reconsidered the decision, inserting only a single brief reference.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *The Academy* 1043 (30 April 1892): 415.

⁴⁵ Aitken, *Life of Steele*, 1:x; A. M. Ogelvie, *Blackfriars Magazine* 10 (February 1890): 64-69.

⁴⁶ Aitken did accept the offer. Although he acknowledged Bruton's assistance (*Life of Steele*, 1:97), he chose not to make any use of the material. Aitken's copy of Bruton's Kit-Cat manuscript is HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS., Misc. (Aitken's notes for his Steele biography, folder 3). This first letter from Bruton is undated. It immediately precedes the communication of 10 March 1885.

⁴⁷ Bruton to Campbell, 30 March 1885; Houghton Library MS Eng 772; Bruton to Aitken, 30 March 1885: HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS., Misc.

⁴⁸ H. Morley to Mrs. W. H. Wills, Carisbrooke, 9 September 1886: HRHRC, Aitken MSS., Misc.

⁴⁹ His transcripts "Of Fame" and "Of Jealousie" are in HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Misc. (by title under Addison). The loose pages have become disorganized: the final sheet in the "Of Jealousie" file is actually the

opening one for "Of Fame," while the motto from Ovid for "Of Jealousie" is filed with the Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, "Addison notes." This last file also contains Aitken's description of his system of underlining, used to distinguish between the four handwritings. Aitken's transcript for "Of Imagination" has not been located.

⁵⁰ Aitken's holograph manuscript for his Steele biography reveals that the footnote reference to Bruton (now *Life of Steele* 1:97) originally included a second sentence: "Mr. Bruton is the owner of the Addison Note Book which was privately printed in 1864 by Mr. J. D. Campbell and to which further reference will be made." Aitken first struck out the final eight words and then, after the manuscript went to the printers, removed the entire sentence. HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS., Aitken, Works, "The Life of Richard Steele," fol. 137v. The surviving reference is, *Life of Steele* 1:321.

On 2 April 1885, Aitken acquired permission from Bruton to issue a reprint of the Addison manuscript, to appear either on its own or as part of a larger work. The three essays were used extensively in his 1898 edition of *The Spectator*.⁵¹ Aitken was the first Victorian scholar to study the manuscript since Madden, and he made a number of important advances. Most noteworthy of all, he found something every previous examiner had overlooked: an annotation in a fourth hand. Moreover, he readily identified the writer: Richard Steele. The original 1864 suggestion that the third handwriting was Steele's had led Aitken to place an exclamation mark in his 1885 notes.⁵² Upon examination of the manuscript he immediately agreed with the earlier rejection of that claim. Steele in fact added only fifteen words to the manuscript—the entry of the motto from Horace for “Of Fame”—but it was a notable discovery which aided Aitken in his efforts to reconstruct the circumstances of the manuscript's creation.⁵³ When Aitken initially copied the manuscript in 1885, he permitted himself only an excited but cautious “a *fourth hand*, very like Steele's best writing.” He soon became more confident, and his determination has been accepted by twentieth-century scholarship.⁵⁴ Aitken was also the first late-Victorian scholar to question the attribution of the print-like hand to Addison. As late as 1885, Leslie Stephen demonstrated complete faith in Addison's authorship of the main text.⁵⁵ In 1889, Aitken commented, “it is not clear by whom the bulk of the book was written”; a decade later he considered Madden's judgment “probably” erroneous.⁵⁶ This assessment has also been confirmed by modern scholarship.⁵⁷ The first and third hands remain unidentified.

Aitken's projected biography of Addison never materialized,⁵⁸ so his involvement with the Addison manuscript came to an end with the edition of the *Spectator*. The opportunities for the scholarly study of the manuscript during the 1890s remain unclear. Although Aitken identified the owner by name in both the *Life of Steele* and the *Spectator*, Bruton remained in relative seclusion. By 1898, when corresponding with William Carew Hazlitt, he was resident at Stone House, Heathfield, Sussex, but he remained unassuming and unappreciated.⁵⁹ Aitken may have encouraged this obscurity. Or, at least J. Dykes Campbell held this belief. When Campbell's final contribution on the subject of the manuscript

⁵¹ Bruton to Aitken, Bedfords, 2 April 1885: HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS., Misc.; *The Spectator*, ed. G. A. Aitken, 8 vols. (London, 1898), 3:1–15; 4:16–32; 6:72–127.

⁵² HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, “Addison notes.”

⁵³ Houghton Library MS Eng 772, fol. 24v; Aitken, *Life of Steele*, 1:321; *Spectator*, ed. Aitken, 3:3n.; 4:16n. There appears to be no logical reason why Steele would rewrite the words of a motto already in the manuscript, and the location of the annotation, on the leaf facing the first page of the essay originally titled “The Folly of Seeking after Fame,” suggests that Steele selected the quotation from Horace, which was then copied, in Addison's handwriting, at its appropriate location.

⁵⁴ HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Misc. (Addison, “Of Jealousie”); *The Spectator*, ed. D. F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1965), 2:490n.

⁵⁵ DNB, s. v. “Addison.”

⁵⁶ Aitken, *Life of Steele*, 1:321; *Spectator*, ed. Aitken, 3:2. Aitken apparently reached this conclusion in 1885 upon his first examination of the manuscript. His surviving notes include a comment on the “peculiar” nature of the first handwriting, and when referring to the second hand he used the comment “[ie] Addison's”: HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, “Addison notes.”

⁵⁷ *Spectator*, ed. Bond, 2:168–78, 490–502; 3:532–82.

⁵⁸ The proposal was rejected by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press in 1894. The argument offered was that this would be a project too substantial and financially risky for the Press to undertake at the time, particularly in view of the disappointing sales of Aitken's 1892 biography of John Arbuthnot. Charles Doble to Aitken, Oxford, 23 January and 4 February 1894: HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Misc.

⁵⁹ Additional MSS. 38,908, fol. 23, British Library.

appeared in the *Athenaeum* in 1890, he studiously avoided all reference to the current location and ownership of the volume. In sending a copy of the publication to Aitken he explained why:

I did not mention the name of the present owner of the MS. because I fancied I remembered your asking me not to do so—It is really funny that a publican turned butler should have such tastes and interests. I suspect he *kept* a butler at some time or other—and I am very sorry he doesn't now. I shall keep his secret—but (if you think I might) I'd like to send him a copy of the *Athenaeum*.⁶⁰

Campbell's contribution of 1890 was important because it finally provided a likely provenance for the manuscript. In May 1887, he observed in *Walford's Antiquarian* a paper on Bilton Hall, Addison's former residence. The author, M. H. Bloxam, recounted a conversation with J. H. C. Moor (d. 1853), long-time assistant master of nearby Rugby School. Moor had once seen at Bilton "the original drafts of two of Addison's papers in the *Spectator*, the one on 'fame' and the other on 'ambition'." Campbell observed in 1890 that his *Spectator* essays did not carry titles and ambition figured prominently in his manuscript: "I did not attach much importance to the discrepancy . . . for Mr. Bloxam was recalling, by an effort of memory alone, a conversation which must have taken place more than thirty-four years before." When the Bilton Hall library was sold in 1799, the only relevant manuscript included was one by Addison or Tickell for the *Spectator* (mentioned above); the description did not fit the manuscript acquired in 1858. Moor had been a student at Rugby, but he departed for Oxford in 1796 at the age of sixteen and did not return until 1800. He then resided in the area until his death in 1853. It is probable, Campbell argued, that Moor saw a manuscript not included in the sale—and hence not hitherto recorded—which remained at Bilton Hall into the nineteenth century before being privately sold.⁶¹ In 1898 Aitken accepted this explanation as a likely one.⁶² Campbell intended to pursue the topic as to how and when the manuscript left Bilton, but his work on Coleridge and the need to write for payment dominated his final years.⁶³ No additional information on the provenance has been forthcoming.⁶⁴

Harvard University acquired the Addison manuscript in 1950 from the London dealer Martin Breslauer, paying the sum of £400.⁶⁵ In view of the transatlantic movement of the manuscript to its present location, it is fitting to conclude the present account with the words of the enigmatic D. Yeo Bruton. Aitken had been rather dismissive of this man's knowledge and abilities. Certainly, his study of the Kit-Cat Club offered little to the world of scholarship. Nonetheless, he possessed a phenomenal memory, and he put Aitken on the trail of several publications and people the scholar wished to pursue, however much the information was initially dismissed as worthless in Aitken's marginalia. Bruton also possessed a number of rare Steele publications, which with his customary generosity he lent to Aitken for six months in 1889 (declining Aitken's

⁶⁰ Campbell to Aitken, 3 November 1890: HRHRC, Aitken-Addison MSS., Aitken, "Addison notes." The copy of Campbell's publication sent to Bruton is now pasted into MS Eng 772, alongside the accompanying letter of 8 November 1890.

⁶¹ Campbell, "Addison's 'Spectator' MSS," 586.

⁶² *Spectator*, ed. Aitken, 3:2n.

⁶³ Campbell to Bruton, 8 November 1890: MS Eng 772; Stephen, "James Dykes Campbell," xxxii; Coleridge, "J.D.C."; Campbell to E. H. Coleridge, 290 communications, 1885-95: HRHRC, E. H. Coleridge, Recip.

⁶⁴ *Spectator*, ed. Bond, 1:lxviii; Furtwangler, "Addison's Editing," 4.

⁶⁵ Information provided by the Houghton Library.

offer of purchase).⁶⁶ Early in his correspondence he apologized for not being able to do more, adding that the relatively inexpensive purchases he had indulged in during the 1850s and 1860s were no longer possible:

Late Mr. Lacy, bookseller, had a fine collection of old plays, etc. but most everything this way has passed into the hands of collectors or foreign dealers. The flourishing English speaking people of America have more than any other drained this country of its old literature. The old book sellers shops, when they still exist, are depleted of the last centurys prolific literature to the very dregs, and barring a few high class luxuriant houses . . . the rank and file of the book sellers shops have little in them.⁶⁷

He was not to know that his treasured manuscript and all the working papers and correspondence of the scholar to whom he wrote these words would independently follow the path he described.

George Aitken would eventually be honored for his contributions to scholarship and government administration through the award of a Member of the Royal Victorian Order. His work would long remain definitive. As late as 1952, an academic writer praised Aitken's scholarship with the words: "The decisive question about any subsequent book on any aspect of Steele's biography is inevitably, 'What does it add to Aitken?'"⁶⁸ Almost all of Aitken's scholarly contemporaries agreed, although at least one of the untrained "amateurs" who sought him out and provided him with frequently all-important information, was more sceptical. Nicholas Darnell Davis, of Georgetown, British Guiana, and Barbados, was first an eager collaborator with Aitken on the study of Steele, and then a disenchanted critic, who provided veiled criticism of Aitken's opinionated assertions and quest for glory.⁶⁹

Campbell, Bruton and Davis were representative of the rich Victorian tradition of amateur scholarship. Aitken, on the other hand, although he did not hold a university appointment, consciously distanced himself from that tradition. And it is Aitken who has been recognized in the twentieth century by academics as one of their own; the others have been neglected and forgotten. Ironically, the ability of professional scholars in the twentieth century to control the cultural history of Britain has led to a narrowing of both interest and participation by the general public, leading to a marginalization of what had once been a vibrant side to popular culture. A tangible remnant of this culture are two envelopes pasted onto the last folio of the Houghton Library manuscript. They are both addressed to D. Bruton by J. Dykes Campbell, and the enclosed letters each speak warmly of "your (once, my) Addison MS." The Houghton Library is also now the depository for another of Campbell's volumes. His "Tennysoniania" is a typical work of Victorian amateur scholarship and vocation, consisting of a scrapbook of Tennyson's published occasional poetry, letters to the editor, reviews of plays, and the like, 1830-94.⁷⁰ It is a typical product, as well, of Campbell's modesty and self-effacing erudition. Therein, in a later comment (by John H. Ingram, 1842-

⁶⁶ Bruton to Aitken, 10 January, 3 February, 13 February, 17 July and 20 July 1889: HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS., Misc.

⁶⁷ Bruton to Aitken, 10 March 1885: HRHRC, Aitken-Steele MSS., Misc.

⁶⁸ John Loftis, *Steele at Drury Lane* (Berkeley, 1952) preface.

⁶⁹ Davis to Aitken, 2 June 1887, and 18 April 1900: HRHRC., Aitken-Defoe MSS., Misc.

⁷⁰ Houghton Library, fEC85.T2586.Zzx.

1916, the literary author) Campbell is described in terms which characterize his version of the Victorian scholar:

a bibliophile of that olden type which is now becoming so rare; a man of consummate literary taste and of ample means to gratify a devouring hunger and an unquenchable thirst for every thing worthy of being called literature.