



Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney

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At the beginning of 1778, twenty-five-year-old Fanny Burney, second daughter of England's most eminent musicologist, Dr Charles Burney, was an unknown. By the year's end, however, she had emerged from his shadow as the author of *Evelina, or, A Yound Lady's Entrance into the World*, a universally acclaimed novel which admirers ranked with the works of Fielding and Richardson. The present volume - the third of a projected twelve-volume critical edition of Burney's earlier journals and letters - covers the period from January 1778 to December 1779. It reveals her striking transformation into a 'celebrity' as she is welcomed into London's literary society, and her mixed delight and terror at this reception. As Burney becomes a regular at the Streatham Park home of Henry and Hester Thrale, she is befriended by another regular visitor, Samuel Johnson, and given the opportunity to observe and record the playful and affectionate side of Johnson's character, a side largely missed by Boswell. Urged by the Streathamites to write a comedy for the London stage, she responds with 'The Witlings', a satiric portrait of London's bluestockings. Alarmed by the prospect of disapproval from the powerful bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu, Burney's father and her friend Samuel Crisp dissuade her from releasing the piece. Her disappointment is eased by the whirling social life that she enjoys in the company of the Thrales at Streatham and at Brighton, and on which she comments with characteristic perception and humour.



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