

英国作家生平丛书

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Jane Austen

简·奥斯丁

DEIRDRE LE FAYE

To Miss Austen

Madam

Encouraged by your warm patronage of *The beautiful Cassandra, and The History of England*, which through your generous support, have obtained a place in every library in the Kingdom, and run through successive Editions, I take the liberty of begging the same Exertions in favour of the following Novel, which I humbly flatter myself, possesses Merit beyond any already published, or any that will ever in future years of your most grateful Humble Servant

The Author

Sturton August 1792



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总序

普通中国读者，包括英语专业的学生，对于英国文学的了解一般只限于个别经典作品，而对作家其人其事及其整个文学创作情况所知甚少。其中部分的原因是文学史家们编写的英国文学史往往注重介绍作品的情节内容，对作家的生活经历、作品的具体创作过程着墨不多。上海外语教育出版社从英国大英图书馆出版社(The British Library)引进出版“英国作家生平丛书”，弥补了这方面的缺憾。该丛书以图文并茂的形式讲述莎士比亚等14位英国著名作家的生平故事，同时穿插介绍他们的作品，有助于充实读者对英国文学的认识。

英国文学源远流长，经历了长期复杂的发展演变过程。在这个过程中，文学本体以外的各种现实的、历史的、政治的、文化的力量对文学发生着影响，而作家个体的独特生活遭遇也是造就文学杰作的一个重要因素。“英国作家生平丛书”对14位名家的传记式介绍，充分展示了这一点。戏剧方面，莎士比亚是英国文艺复兴时期最杰出的剧作家，他当过演员，其作品思想内容深刻、艺术表现手法精湛，历经几个世纪长演不衰。诗歌方面，浪漫主义诗人华兹华斯、柯勒律治、拜伦、济慈的不同身世对他们的诗歌创作及艺术风格产生深刻影响；维多利亚时代诗人伊丽莎白·巴雷特和罗伯特·布朗宁的爱情故事是英国文坛的一段佳话。小说方面，狄更斯是19世纪英国最伟大的小说家，他的许多小说以孤儿为主人公，这与作家童年时代的一段不幸经历有关；康拉德来自波兰，将自己奇特的身世背景和航海经历交融在字里行间；女作家奥斯丁、玛丽·雪莱、勃朗特姐妹、伍尔夫以女性特有的视角和敏锐的观察描摹人性与社会，思考妇女的生存状况，她们的小说无论在思想主题、题材表现方面，还是在叙述手法上，都有创新，对推动英国文学的发展作出了突出贡献。

“英国作家生平丛书”原版由大英图书馆出版社出版，体现出图书馆出版物的特点。书中配有大量的插图，有些是珍贵的手稿，有些是罕见的照片，有些是博物馆或美术馆珍藏的油画和素描，让读者有幸一睹作家的风采，产生直观的感觉。这些插图带有不同时代的印记，营造出浓厚的历史感。丛书的作者均为专业领域里有着较深造诣的学者，对史料的掌握系统全面，他们用生动的语言娓娓讲述作家生平事迹，点评具体文学作品，书末还附有供读者进一步阅读的书单，推荐了有代表性的文献，对英语专业学生撰写课程论文或毕业论文很有帮助。

“英国作家生平丛书”内容有趣，插图精美，文字简洁，兼顾普及性和专业性，是学习和了解英国文学的良师益友。

王守仁
南京大学

导 读



简·奥斯丁 (Jane Austen, 1775-1817) 是 19 世纪英国小说家, 1775 年 12 月 16 日出生于东北汉普郡的一个牧师家庭。她是家中的第七个孩子, 第二个女孩。奥斯丁的父亲乔治·奥斯丁原来生活在肯特郡, 祖上是以放牧和耕种为主的自耕农, 后来因积累了不少财富而进入士绅阶层。不幸的是, 父亲乔治很小就成为孤儿, 由殷实富裕的叔父抚养成人。从牛津大学圣约翰学院毕业后, 乔治得到了牧师的圣职, 并依靠自己的勤奋和努力, 让家人过上虽不很富裕却充满温馨的温饱生活。简·奥斯丁从小就目睹了父亲为了养活全家, 不仅要做好牧师的本职工作, 还要到自己的田地里帮助耕作, 并在闲暇时辅导邻居的孩子学习, 以赚取一些零钱补贴家用。

18 世纪末, 英国士绅阶层习惯把家中的男孩送到寄宿学校上学, 而让女孩留在家里接受父母的教育。奥斯丁家里却恰恰相反, 这主要是因为父亲无法承担五个儿子的上学费用。在简·奥斯丁 8 岁时, 父亲将她和姐姐一起送到牛津, 跟随考雷夫人学习, 后来她们因染上斑疹伤寒, 辍学回家。两年后, 父亲再次将她们姐妹送去外地学习。在母亲和姐姐的相伴下, 简·奥斯丁生活得波澜不惊, 岁月也就这样缓缓地流逝。1805 年 1 月 21 日, 父亲去世。翌年秋天, 简·奥斯丁随着母亲和姐姐迁至南安普敦。三年后, 她们又返回汉普郡, 住在简·奥斯丁的三哥爱德华提供的房屋里。简·奥斯丁的最后一次迁居是前往温斯特求医, 当时她已病重, 不久便去世。简·奥斯丁终身未嫁, 也从未离开过家庭独自生活。

简·奥斯丁的文学创作道路起始于她哥哥组织的业余演出。在 1782 年至 1788 年期间, 简·奥斯丁的大哥詹姆士组织家中和邻里的孩子在圣诞

节期间演出。那时，简·奥斯丁虽然幼小，还不能在剧中担任什么重要角色，但是，这段经历对她产生了很大的影响。她的《曼斯菲尔德庄园》(*Mansfield Park*, 1814)里部分主要事件即源于此。

除《曼斯菲尔德庄园》外，简·奥斯丁的主要作品还有《理智与情感》(*Sense and Sensibility*, 1811)、《傲慢与偏见》(*Pride and Prejudice*, 初稿名为《初次印象》，*First Impression*, 1813)、《爱玛》(*Emma*, 1815)、《诺桑觉寺》(*Northanger Abbey*, 初稿名为《苏珊》，*Susan*, 1817)。其中，《傲慢与偏见》是我国读者最为熟知的一部小说。

在简·奥斯丁的小说中，经常出现的人物是军官和牧师。这一方面主要因为简·奥斯丁生活在一个动荡不安的时代：她出生那年，北美13州向母国英国发起独立战争；她去世那年，滑铁卢战役已经过去五年，她的家中也有两个男孩参加英国军队，在对法作战中出生入死；她的一个亲戚的丈夫死于法国大革命的断头台上。总之，战争与动乱伴随着她的一生。另一方面，简·奥斯丁出生于牧师家庭，一生都在父母的影响下生活。除父亲外，她的大哥和四哥也都先后供职于教会。生活在这样的时代和氛围里，也就难怪简·奥斯丁在每部小说中都会安排军官和牧师这样的人物出场了。

有评论认为，“在所有伟大的作家中，简·奥斯丁是最难在伟大的那一瞬间捉住的。”^①换句话说，在简·奥斯丁笔下的那些形形色色人物形象的喜剧性笑谈的背后，暗示了各种微妙的社会关系、人情世故以及道德价值取向。这部介绍简·奥斯丁的传记按照时间顺序，较为详细地介绍了简·奥斯丁的生平和创作。除此之外，该书的编者还在书中配有许多具有史料价值的图片，为我们深入研究简·奥斯丁的个人生活、作品手稿、出版情况、风土人情、社会风貌等提供了宝贵的视觉资料。

乔国强

上海外国语大学

^① 转引自朱虹：《奥斯丁》，见吴富恒主编：《外国著名文学家评传》（第2卷），济南：山东教育出版社，1990年版，第118页。

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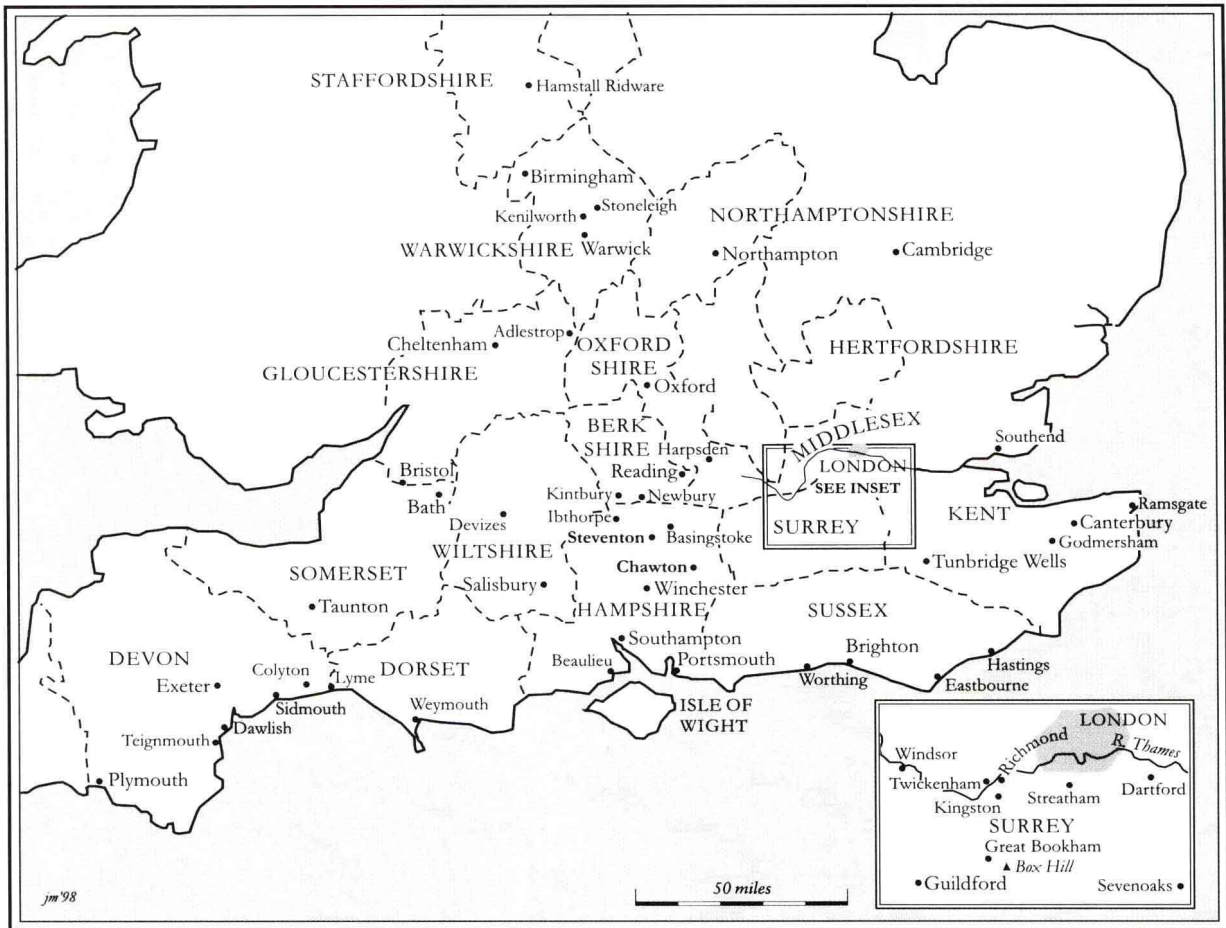
This unsigned painting of Steventon Parsonage was taken from a scrap book which was made by James Edward Austen-Leigh for the amusement of his children. It is now in the possession of Joan Austen-Leigh by whose permission it is used.



Introduction

On Monday 21 July 1817 *The Hampshire Chronicle and Courier*, published in Winchester and circulating in a wide radius throughout the south of England, offered its readers the usual compilation of the past week's events. Since the ending of the war with France in 1815, there was nowadays very little foreign news, as the editor admitted – the Duchesse de Berri had given birth to a daughter who had died two days later, and there were still difficulties in reducing the size of the Army of Occupation. Information reprinted from the London papers included the enviable statement that Earl Grosvenor was likely to obtain an addition of at least £20,000 a year to his already large income, by the recent discovery of a fine lead mine on his estates in North Wales; the export trade from Newcastle on Tyne was flourishing; and William Cobbett, the Radical journalist, had published an article on the subject of emigration to America, warning English farmworkers that although they might eventually succeed in making a very prosperous living for themselves, they must bear in mind the cost of the voyage out and the risks of homesickness and unemployment.

Nearer home, in the neighbouring county of Wiltshire several marriages and deaths were recorded, the latter including those of Miss Whittaker, at an advanced age after a short illness, and Miss Edgell of Trowbridge, aged 18. In Hampshire, HMS *Larkins* was lying in Portsmouth harbour with 250 convicts on board, and would soon set sail for a fast non-stop three-month voyage transporting them to the penal settlement in New South Wales, Australia. Troopships had returned from the West Indies with many soldiers sick, and so were now anchored under quarantine outside the harbour. The officers of HMS *Queen Charlotte* had 'handsomely entertained a numerous circle of friends. The play of *A Cure for the Heart-ache*, and the afterpiece of *The Mock Doctor*, were got up with great effect and elegance, and the characters throughout were supported in a spirited manner. A Ball succeeded, which was continued till daylight'. There was very little news from Winchester itself – prices for grain were steady or declining, several members of the gentry had sent subscriptions for the benefit of the Female Asylum, a concert held at St John's House had been honoured with the presence of a numerous and genteel



assemblage'; and: 'Died, yesterday, in College-street, Miss Jane Austen, youngest daughter of the late Revd George Austen, formerly Rector of Steventon, in this county'.

The Hampshire Chronicle had nothing further to say on the subject, and for the editor this Miss Austen was no doubt as obscure and unremarkable as Miss Whittaker or Miss Edgell, her name and death as likely to be instantly forgotten by his readers. It was left to a later obituary, in the *New Monthly Magazine* for September 1817, to add an explanatory note: 'She was the ingenious authoress of the novels entitled *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Sense and Sensibility*'.

Jane Austen is now one of the most popular novelists in the English language, and yet on the face of it one of the most unlikely candidates for such a title.

Map of Southern England, showing places known to Jane Austen or mentioned in her writings.

Jane Austen

Watercolour sketch of Jane Austen by her sister Cassandra, probably made c.1810.

This is the only authentic representation of Jane's features, and shows a strong family resemblance to her father and brothers.

*National Portrait Gallery,
London.*



Steel engraving after the sketch, used as frontispiece to the Memoir of Jane Austen in 1870.

Those of Jane's older nieces who were still alive considered it gave a reasonable representation of her features as they remembered her.



She was the younger daughter of a not-very-well off country clergyman, never married, never lived outside her own family circle, did not travel abroad – indeed, did not move beyond the southern half of England – and died at the age of 41, leaving behind only six completed novels. Yet her works have never been out of print, and in this century, within the last three decades in particular, never a year passes without some fresh adaptation of her stories for stage, screen, or television. Numerous modern biographies have been and still are being written, despite the fact that her quiet and uneventful short life is seriously lacking in firm documentary evidence. She did not write any autobiographical memoirs or reminiscences, did not keep a journal, and had no Boswell to record her actions and conversations; and as she did not move in the highest social circles her name does not appear in the correspondence or memoirs of the nobility of the period. She published her novels anonymously – the first, *Sense and Sensibility*, was ‘By A Lady’, and the later ones were ‘By the Author of [one of her previous novels]’ – and although as a result of their growing popularity her identity did eventually become known and a little curiosity was aroused amongst some of her readers, no contemporary biography was ever

called for or written. When her brother Henry undertook the posthumous publication of her last two novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, in 1818, he prefaced them with only the briefest of biographical comments, and for many years thereafter this limited information had to suffice.

There is likewise a sad lack of visual evidence available; no professional portrait was ever painted of Jane, and the only authentic representation of her is the watercolour sketch drawn by her sister Cassandra, probably about 1810, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery, London. This is accurate in so far as it shows a strong family likeness to her father and brothers, of whom professional portraits were painted at various dates, but is otherwise admittedly amateurish. An engraved version of Cassandra's sketch was made in 1869, and this is the one usually reproduced in biographies, sometimes with unwarranted additions of furniture and clothing to turn it into a half-length instead of a bust portrait. During one of their summer holidays in 1804, Cassandra also drew a watercolour sketch of Jane 'sitting down out of doors, on a hot day, with her bonnet-strings untied', as their niece Anna afterwards described it – but this is only a back view and does not show Jane's face. The National Portrait Gallery has in addition a silhouette which may quite possibly show Jane in her younger days, but it seems unlikely that complete proof of this will ever be forthcoming.

The story of Jane's life must therefore be reconstructed from elements of her personal knowledge which can be identified through close study of her novels, and from some surviving letters from her (about 160, most of which are to her sister Cassandra), miscellaneous references to her in other family correspondence and diaries, and oral tradition passed down from the nephews and nieces who knew her



Watercolour sketch of Jane, made by Cassandra in the summer of 1804.

Private collection.



Laimable Jane:
a silhouette found in
1944, pasted into Vol. II
of the second edition
(1816) of *Mansfield Park*,
and so presumed to be of
Jane Austen.
It seems to show a young
woman, and so may have
been made in Bath by
Mrs Collins around
1795.

National Portrait Gallery,
London.

Opening page of the
Memoir of Jane Austen
by Jane's nephew, Revd
James Edward Austen-
Leigh, 1869-1870; this
was her first biography,
with information
provided by those who
knew her.



A MEMOIR
OF
JANE AUSTEN.

CHAPTER I.

*Introductory Remarks—Birth of Jane Austen—Her Family
Connations—Their Influence on her Writings.*

MORE than half a century has passed away since I, the youngest of the mourners,* attended the funeral of my dear aunt Jane in Winchester Cathedral; and now, in my old age, I am asked whether my memory will serve to rescue from oblivion any events of her life or any traits of her character to satisfy the enquiries of a generation of readers who have been born since she died. Of events her life was singularly barren: few changes and no great crisis ever broke the smooth current of its course. Even her fame may be said to have been posthumous: it did

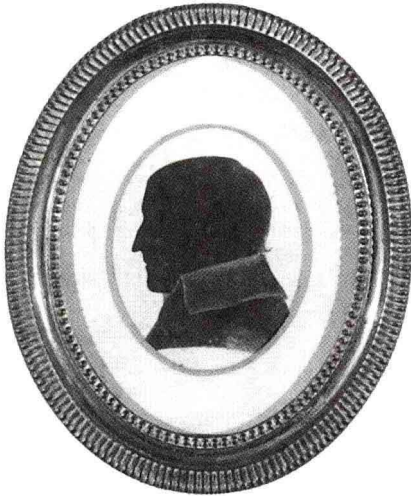
* I went to represent my father, who was too unwell to attend himself, and thus I was the only one of my generation present.

B

best. It may be that in the future further letters will come to light, or full diaries kept by someone who knew her well, but for the present all biographers have nothing but these sources to study and interpret. Luckily, it was part of Jane Austen's deliberate technique to create utterly accurate contemporary settings for her novels, so that although she herself may remain a tantalisingly elusive personality, always a little bit beyond camera range, as it were – and not unlike Shakespeare, too, in this respect – we can at least get a clear picture from her writings of the world with which she was familiar, and this bright background then assists in defining her shadowy image when the latter is superimposed upon it.

Steventon

Family and Birth



The Revd George Austen (1731-1805) and his wife Cassandra Leigh (1739-1827). These silhouettes were probably made after their retirement to Bath in 1801.

Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

When Jane Austen was born at Steventon rectory, on the frosty night of Saturday 16 December 1775, she entered the world as the seventh child and second daughter of the Revd George Austen, rector of the two little adjoining rural parishes of Steventon and Deane in north-east Hampshire. Mr Austen sent the news to his sister-in-law Mrs Walter the next morning: ‘... last night the time came, and without a great deal of warning, everything was soon happily over. We have now another girl, a present plaything for her sister Cassy and a future companion. She is to be Jenny, and seems to me as if she would be as like Henry, as Cassy is to Neddy. Your sister thank God is pure well after it, and sends her love to you and my brother ...’ Mr Austen’s very first comment on his new daughter, linking her already to her fourth brother in looks and to her only sister in affection, proved a most accurate prediction. Jane’s resemblance to Henry persisted in later life, and her sisterly companionship with Cassandra was so close that even years after Jane’s death Cassandra still spoke of her with ‘an accent of *living* love in her voice’.

Jane’s immediate ancestry was not, however, rooted in Hampshire, as her parents came from Kent and Oxfordshire respectively. The Revd George Austen was a member of the long-established and widespread family of Austens, sheep-

farming yeomen in Kent who were rising into gentility by reason of the wealth gained from the local woollen industry. George himself had been orphaned early in life, but thanks to the support of his rich uncle Francis Austen, an eminently successful solicitor in Sevenoaks, Kent, he had been able to study at St John's College, Oxford, and go on to take Holy Orders. Another Kentish connection, his cousin-by-marriage Mr Thomas Broadnax May Knight, had appointed him as rector of Steventon parish; a few years later Mr Francis Austen had bought for him the adjacent living of Deane. On the combined income of these two little parishes, plus some fees gained by tutoring boys for university entrance, and the produce of his rectory farm, Mr Austen and his wife were able to rear their eight children in reasonable comfort though never in luxury.

Mrs Austen, formerly Cassandra Leigh, was the daughter of the rector of Harpsden, near Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Her father, Revd Thomas Leigh, like Revd George Austen, stemmed from a junior branch of a large family, but the Leighs were of rather higher social standing than the Austens, having been landed gentry in Gloucestershire since the sixteenth century, while another branch in Warwickshire had gained a peerage for their loyalty to Charles I. They were also of a more intellectual bent than the Austens, and Mrs Austen's uncle Revd Dr Theophilus Leigh was the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, for more than fifty years. It seems probable that Cassandra Leigh met her future husband in Oxford, perhaps through the good offices of her uncle.

George Austen and Cassandra Leigh were married at Walcot church in Bath on 26 April 1764, and set off for Hampshire immediately after the wedding ceremony. For the first four years of their married life they rented Deane rectory, because Steventon rectory was dilapidated and needed repairing before it could be occupied. Mrs Austen's widowed mother came from Bath to join them for the last few years of her life, accompanied by her ward, George Hastings, who might perhaps be considered as Mr Austen's first pupil. This little boy, born in India in 1757, was the only surviving child of Warren Hastings, the future Governor General of Bengal, and, as was then the custom, had been sent back to England for education. Warren Hastings had known the Leigh family since his own childhood in England, and evidently felt they were the best friends to whom he could entrust the care of his son.



Unfortunately poor little George Hastings did not live long, even under the care of Mrs Leigh and the Austens, but died of diphtheria ('putrid sore throat') in the autumn of 1764, much to the grief of Mrs Austen. However, George Hastings's place in the household was soon filled by the births of the Austens' own three eldest sons, James, George, and Edward, before the young family moved to Steventon rectory in the summer of 1768. Here the rest of their children were born – Henry, Cassandra, Francis, Jane, and finally Charles, 'our own particular little brother', as Cassandra and Jane referred to him in later years.

Other members of Jane's family group were her uncles and aunts and their families – Mr and Mrs William Hampson Walter (her father's elder half-brother, whose daughter Philadelphia's letters provide some of the earliest references to Jane's childhood); the widowed Mrs Hancock (her father's sister, whose pretty, flirtatious daughter Eliza had an unexpectedly exciting life and brought the effects of the French Revolution straight into the quiet Steventon parsonage); Revd Dr and Mrs

Warren Hastings
(1732-1818),
by Sir Joshua Reynolds,
1766-1768

*National Portrait Gallery,
London.*

*Above left:
Francis Austen*
(1774-1865),
*miniature 1796, in the
uniform of a Lieutenant.*

Private collection.

Opposite: Edward Cooper (her mother's sister, and their two children Edward and Jane); and Mr and Mrs James Leigh-Perrot (her mother's brother, rich but childless). The Walters had only a modest income and in consequence lived quietly in Kent, and the Austens saw them only occasionally; Mrs Hancock and the Cooper parents all died during Jane's girlhood; but Mr and Mrs Leigh-Perrot kept in close touch with the Austens and are frequently mentioned in Jane's letters in her later life, always being referred to simply as 'my Uncle' and 'my Aunt'. They lived in a small manor-house called Scarlets, near Wargrave in Berkshire, but usually spent several months of each year on holiday in Bath.

top left:
Charles Austen
(1779-1852),
portrait c.1809,
in Captain's uniform.

Jane Austen Memorial
Trust.

top right:
Henry Austen
(1771-1850),
miniature c.1820,
after he became a
clergyman.

Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

bottom left:
James Austen
(1765-1819),
miniature c.1790.

Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

bottom right:
Cassandra Austen
(1773-1845),
silhouette taken in later
life, undated.

Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

Mr Austen was a tall, thin, handsome man, with peculiarly bright hazel eyes and chestnut brown hair which turned milky white in later life, gentle and scholarly and devoted to his family and his parishioners. Mrs Austen was small and thin, with dark hair, grey eyes and a beakily aristocratic nose; she was brisk, active and quick-witted, with plenty of sparkle and spirit in her talk. Jane and her siblings were lucky to inherit these parental characteristics, as they were all thin, healthy and active, and highly intelligent. Henry and Charles were both remarkably tall and good-looking, with their father's colouring, Edward and Frank were small like their mother, James and Cassandra seem to have been medium in height and with their mother's colouring, and Jane herself was tall and slender with her father's hazel eyes and chestnut brown hair. The only unlucky child in the family was George junior, the second son; there are references in early family letters to the epileptic fits he suffered, and it seems possible he was also deaf and dumb. Mrs Austen tried to rear him at home, but with seven other children as well as her husband's pupils to look after, she evidently found the task impossible. In accordance with the custom of the period, therefore, George was boarded out locally at the little village of Monk Sherborne with a respectable cottager family as his foster-parents, and his father and later his brothers paid for his upkeep and maintained contact with him until his peaceful death many years later.

The present-day village of Steventon has changed considerably over the last two centuries, and probably the only building surviving from Jane's day is the ancient little church of St Nicholas. In the eighteenth century the medieval and Tudor buildings of Steventon manor-house and its home farm were opposite the church,