

# *Jane Austen*

DAUGHTER, SISTER, AUNT, AUTHOR

By Margot Morrell



## FOR ELIZABETH

Jane Austen delighted in dedicating  
“scraps” to her loved ones.

In honor of Jane Austen’s memory, this “scrap” is  
dedicated to Elizabeth, with love from her aunt.

Jane Austen  
1775 - 1817

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775, at her father's parsonage in Steventon, a quiet country village in Hampshire, England.

Jane was the seventh of eight children. She had six brothers and one sister.

The author of eight books, Jane never married. She died when she was 41.

The only certain image that exists of Jane is a watercolor by her beloved sister, Cassandra now at the National Portrait Gallery in London.



A vibrant field of yellow and white daisies. In the upper right foreground, a single large yellow flower is in sharp focus, showing its dark brown center and bright yellow petals. The rest of the field is a dense carpet of smaller yellow and white daisies, with some green foliage and a few blue flowers scattered throughout. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the flowers in the foreground.

Fifty years after Jane's death, the youngest person at her funeral, wrote "Aunt Jane' was the delight of all her nephews and nieces. We did not think of her as being clever, still less as being famous; but we valued her as one always kind, sympathising, and amusing."

REV. JAMES AUSTEN LEIGH  
*A MEMOIR OF JANE AUSTEN, 1870*



For an 1870 memoir of his aunt, Rev. James Austen Leigh had Cassandra's watercolor reworked to capture the "sympathising" Aunt Jane he and his sisters remembered.

Rev. Leigh wrote, "...there was scarcely a charm in her most delightful characters that was not a true reflection of her own sweet temper and loving heart."

This *may* be a life image of Jane by James Stanier Clarke, the Prince Regent's librarian and chaplain, drawn at the time of Jane's 1815 visit to the Prince's library at Carlton House.

The Prince Regent was an avid fan of Miss Austen's books.

Jane was in London to arrange the publication of *Emma* with England's leading publisher, John Murray.

Jane was "tall, slender and remarkably graceful." She enjoyed dancing and was good at it.

She had curly brown hair and sparkling hazel eyes. She always wore a head covering.



& all the Performers gave great satisfaction by doing what was  
paid for, & giving themselves no airs. — No Amateur could be  
do anything. The House was not clear till after 12. — If you  
hear more of it, you must put your questions, but I seem  
Laine exhausted than I feared the subject. This said Capt. Sim  
us, on the authority of some other Capt. just arrived from Halifax,  
was bringing the Cleopatra home, & that she was probably by this  
the Channel — but as Capt. J. was certainly in liquor, we must  
not quite depend on it. — It must give one a sort of expectation  
however, & will prevent my writing to him any more. — I won  
he sh<sup>d</sup>. not reach England till Sunday at home, & the Steventon  
My Mother & Martha be satisfaction of Anna's be  
is quite an Anna, we the cannot have reach  
for that is always to g & shewey — she is at  
3<sup>d</sup> or 2<sup>th</sup> which are pretty. — (You Lila  
leaf, ours are in lib<sup>l</sup> mounts are quite out, &  
almost. — I had a pleasant walk in Warrington 9<sup>th</sup> on Sunday  
Mr. Smith & Mr. Wilson — every thing was fresh & beautiful. —  
the play after all on Saturday, we went to the Lyceum, & saw  
an old play taken from Voltaire's Tartuffe, & were well entertained  
Martha were the good actors. Mr. Edwin was the Heroine — & he  
is just what it used to be. — I have no chance of seeing Mr. C  
She did act on Monday, but as Henry was told by the Box Keep  
did not think she would, the places & all thought of it were  
I should particularly have liked seeing her in Constantine, & cor  
at her with little effort for supplanting me. — Henry has  
the Greater Colosse Exhibition, which open'd on Monday, & is to m

In a handful of letters, Jane gives us glimpses into her thoughts on writing...

To encourage a beloved niece who was struggling with composing a book, Jane wrote...

“You are now collecting your people delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life. 3 or 4 families in a country village is the very thing to work on.”

Letter to Anna Austen

September 9, 1814

[www.LeadershipLives.com](http://www.LeadershipLives.com)

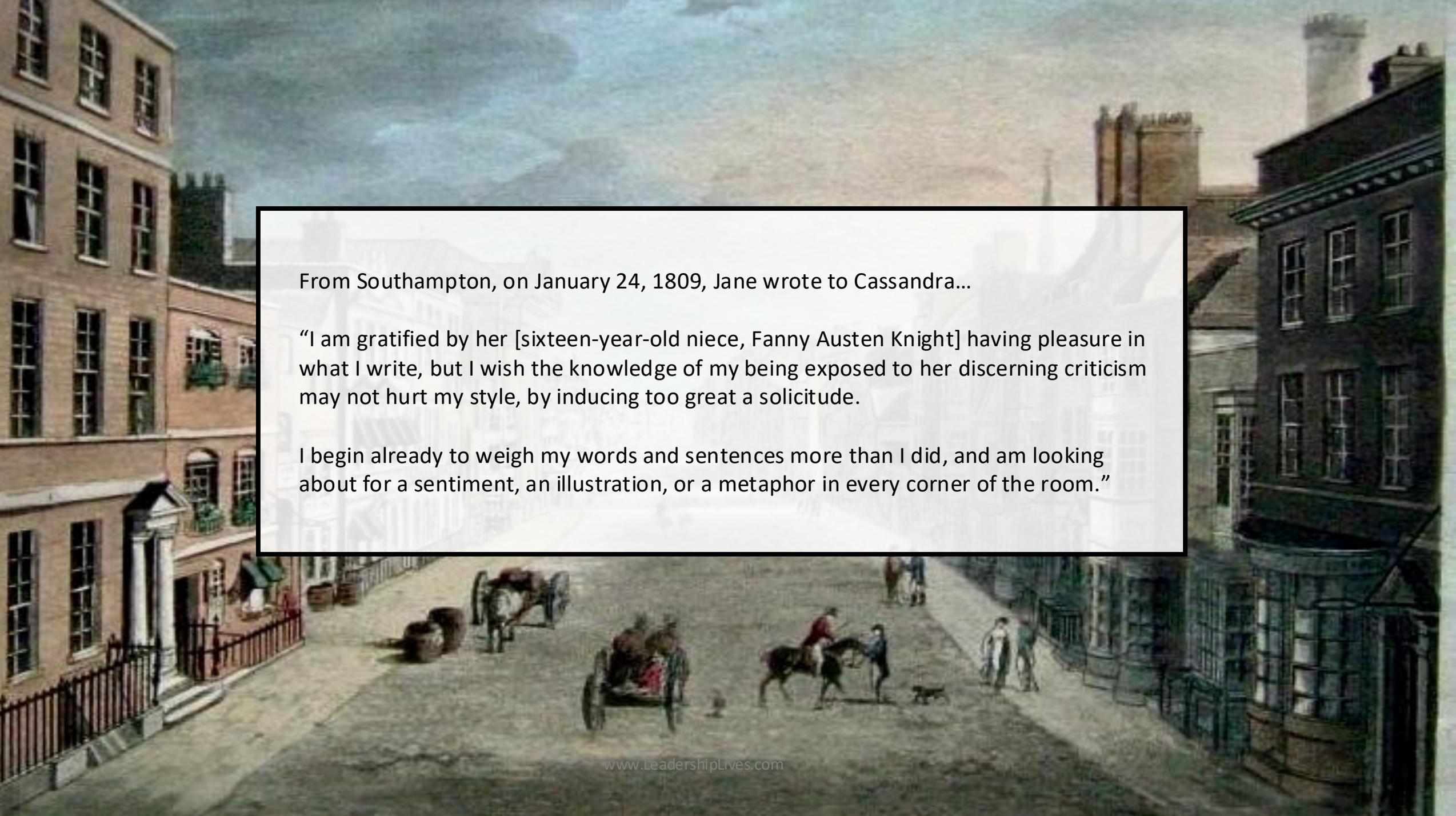


Chawton Cottage

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To a "manly" nephew, Jane described her writing as a...  
"little bit of ivory, two inches wide, on which I work with so fine a brush,  
as produces little effect after much labour."

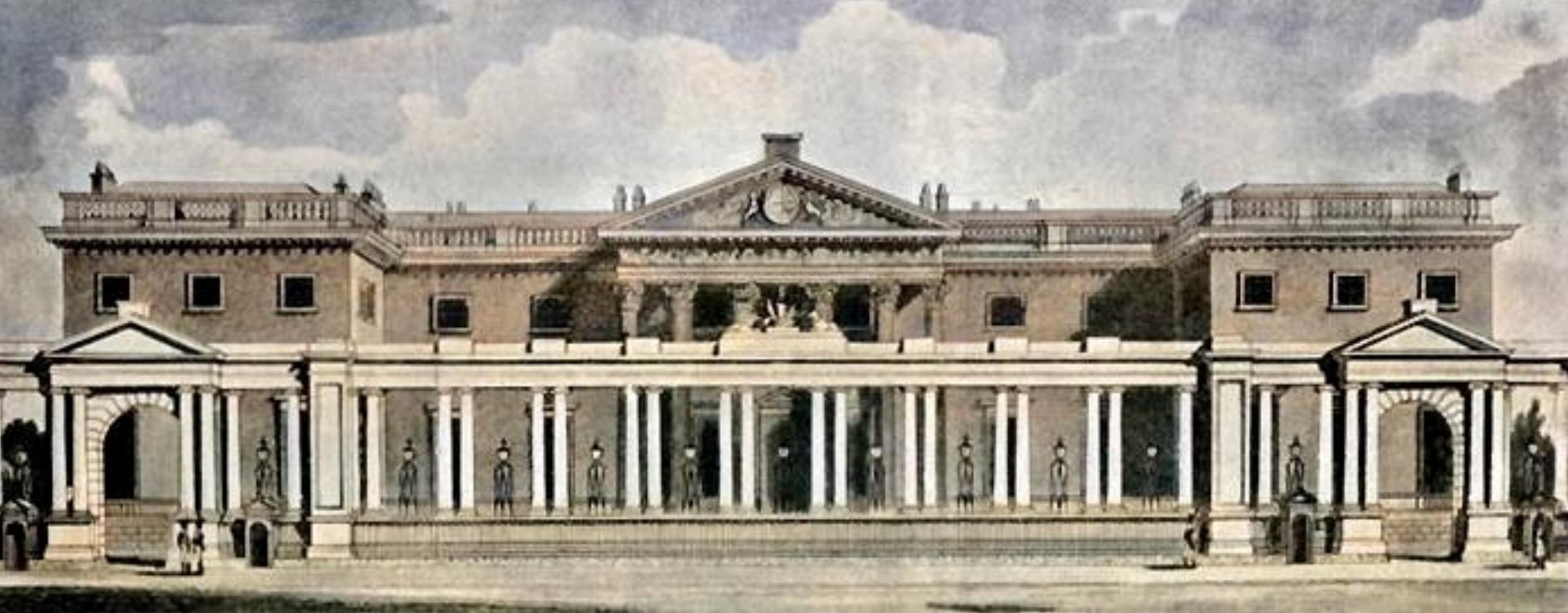
LETTER TO EDWARD AUSTEN KNIGHT  
DECEMBER 16, 1816



From Southampton, on January 24, 1809, Jane wrote to Cassandra...

“I am gratified by her [sixteen-year-old niece, Fanny Austen Knight] having pleasure in what I write, but I wish the knowledge of my being exposed to her discerning criticism may not hurt my style, by inducing too great a solicitude.

I begin already to weigh my words and sentences more than I did, and am looking about for a sentiment, an illustration, or a metaphor in every corner of the room.”



After Jane's visit to Carlton House, James Stanier Clarke wrote to "hint" she write a historical romance based on the Prince Regent's ancestors.

Jane replied...

“You are very, very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than **such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in.** But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; .... **No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way, and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.**”

LETTER TO JAMES STANIER CLARKE  
APRIL 1, 1816



Prince Regent, ca. 1814

Responding to an earlier letter of encouragement from Mr. Clarke, Jane wrote...

"I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress."

LETTER TO JAMES STANIER CLARKE  
DECEMBER 11, 1815



How did this self-effacing woman who refused to be publicly associated with her books but was determined to **“go on in my own way,”** come to be one of the world’s best loved authors?

The answer lies in her heritage.



On her father's side, Jane Austen's ancestors were from Kent.

Historically, the Austens were in the clothing business. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they owned mills.

Jane's grandfather was a surgeon. His brothers were doctors and lawyers.

IMAGE: AUSTEN FAMILY HOME, BROADFORD, HORSMONDEN, KENT.

# JANE AUSTEN'S WORLD

Tonbridge - Rev. Austen born 1731.

Henley-on-Thames - Cassandra Leigh born 1739.

Steventon - Jane Austen born 1775.

Oxford - Jane attends boarding school, 1782.

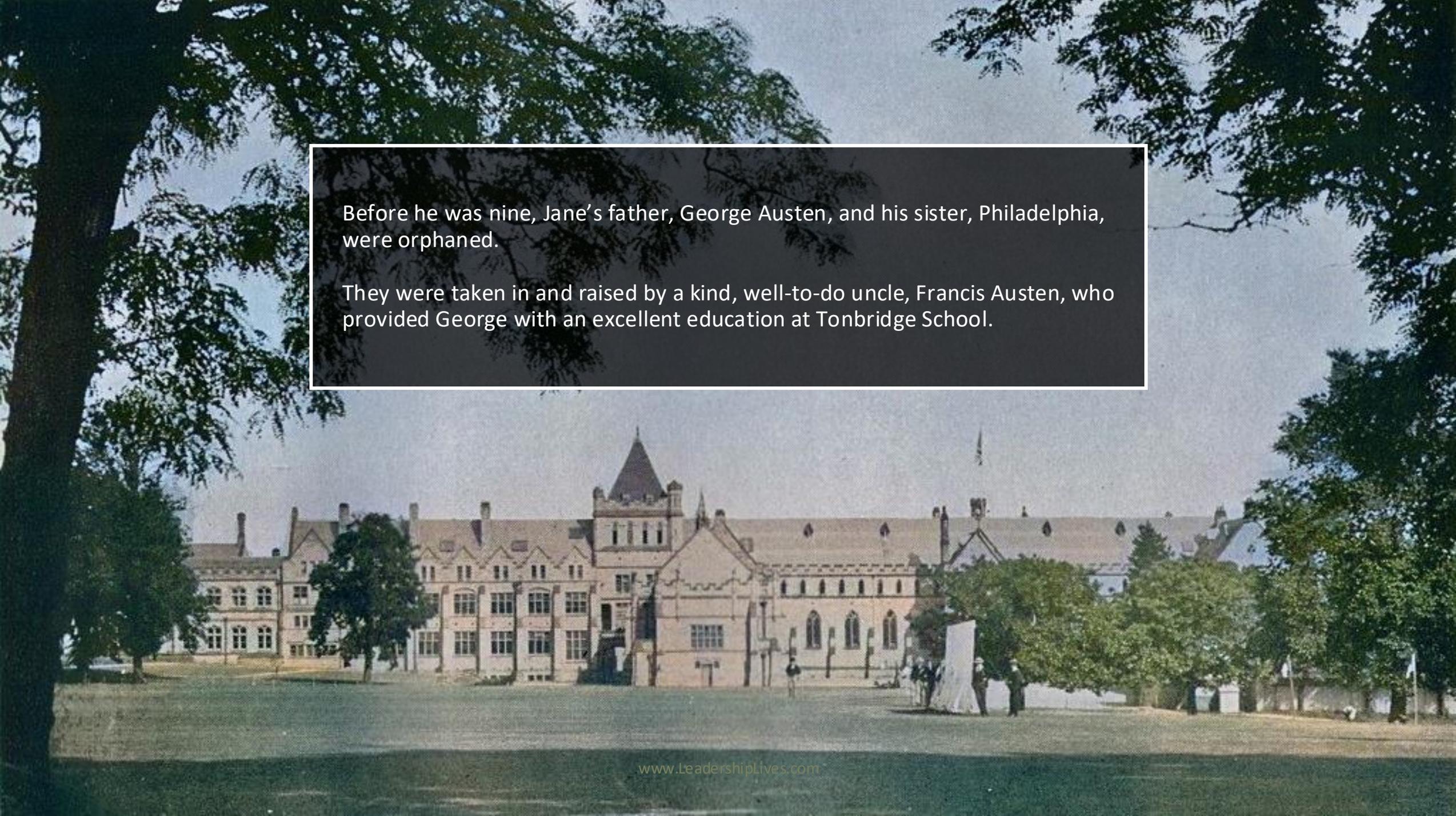
Reading - Jane attends Abbey School, early 1785 - Dec. 1786.

Bath - Jane, her parents, and sister live 1801 - 1805.

Southampton - Jane, her mother and Cassandra live 1806 - 1809.

Chawton Cottage - Mrs. Austen, Cassandra & Jane move in 1809.

Winchester - Jane dies July 18, 1817.

A large, multi-story stone building with a central tower and spire, surrounded by trees and a lawn. The building has a classic architectural style with many windows and a prominent central entrance. The foreground is a green lawn with some trees and a white structure on the right. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Before he was nine, Jane's father, George Austen, and his sister, Philadelphia, were orphaned.

They were taken in and raised by a kind, well-to-do uncle, Francis Austen, who provided George with an excellent education at Tonbridge School.

When George was sixteen, he received a scholarship to study literature at St. John's College, Oxford.



George Austen  
1731 - 1805

During his years at Oxford, George Austen was nicknamed “the handsome Proctor.”

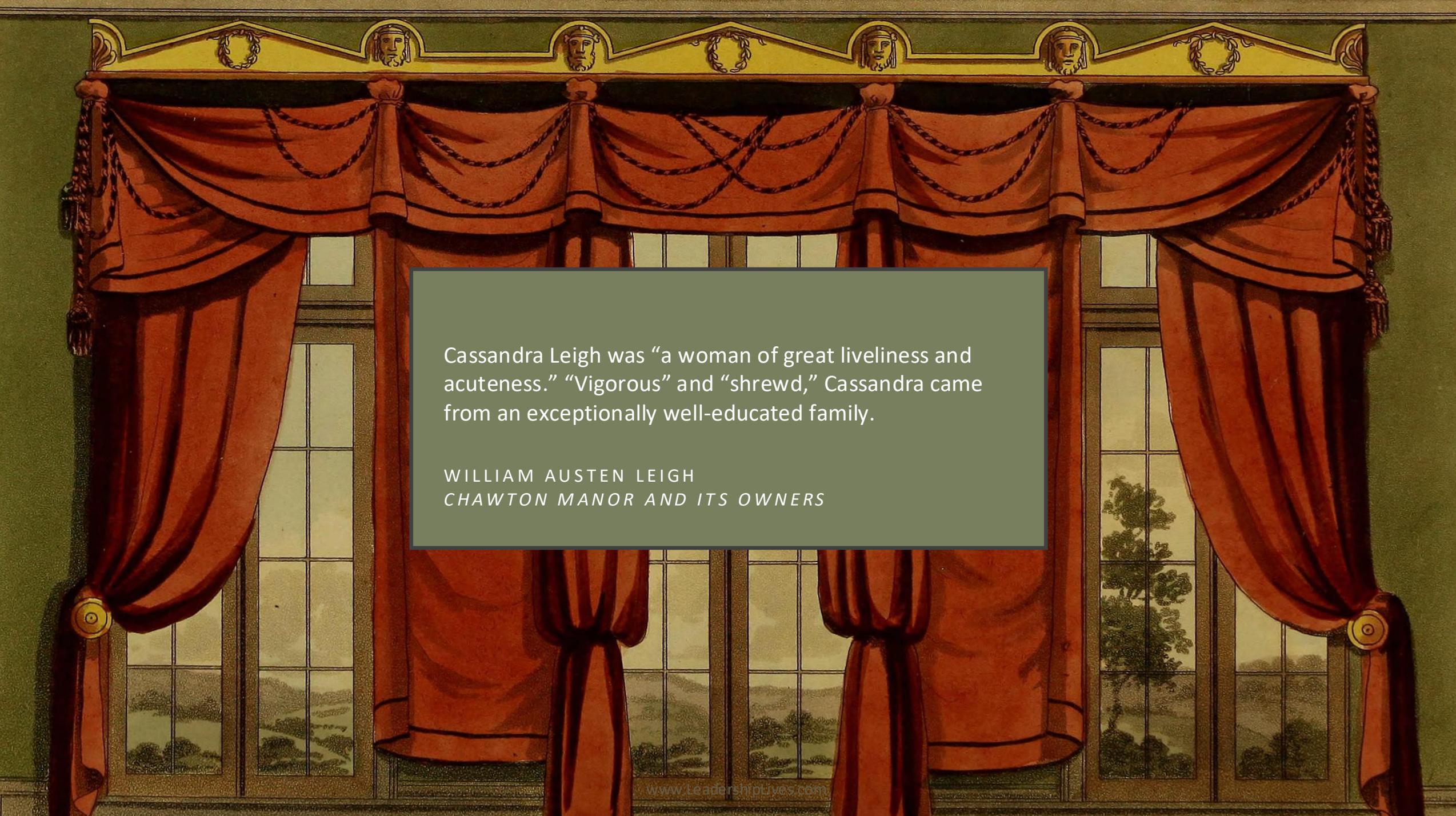
According to a great grandson, he was “striking and refined in appearance, cultured in his tastes, beneficent, and attentive to his clerical duties, he must have attracted regard and affection wherever he was known.”

WILLIAM AUSTEN LEIGH  
*CHAWTON MANOR AND ITS OWNERS*



At Oxford, handsome, erudite George Austen met clever, witty Cassandra Leigh.





Cassandra Leigh was “a woman of great liveliness and acuteness.” “Vigorous” and “shrewd,” Cassandra came from an exceptionally well-educated family.

WILLIAM AUSTEN LEIGH  
*CHAWTON MANOR AND ITS OWNERS*

Cassandra Leigh Austen  
1739 - 1827

Cassandra Leigh “united strong common sense with a lively imagination, and often expressed herself, both in writing and in conversation, with epigrammatic force and point.”

When seven-year-old Jane insisted on going to boarding school with Cassandra, her mother said, “if Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate.”

Mrs. Austen especially enjoyed Jane’s silly characters, like Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins.

*A MEMOIR OF JANE AUSTEN*  
JAMES AUSTEN LEIGH, 1870





Cassandra Leigh's family tree was sprinkled with interesting ancestors. Her great uncle, the Duke of Chandos, was composer George Handel's patron. Another ancestor, Sir Thomas White, founded St. John's College, Oxford. A sixteenth century ancestor, knighted by Queen Elizabeth, was Lord Mayor of London.



The Leigh family had strong and enduring connections to Oxford.

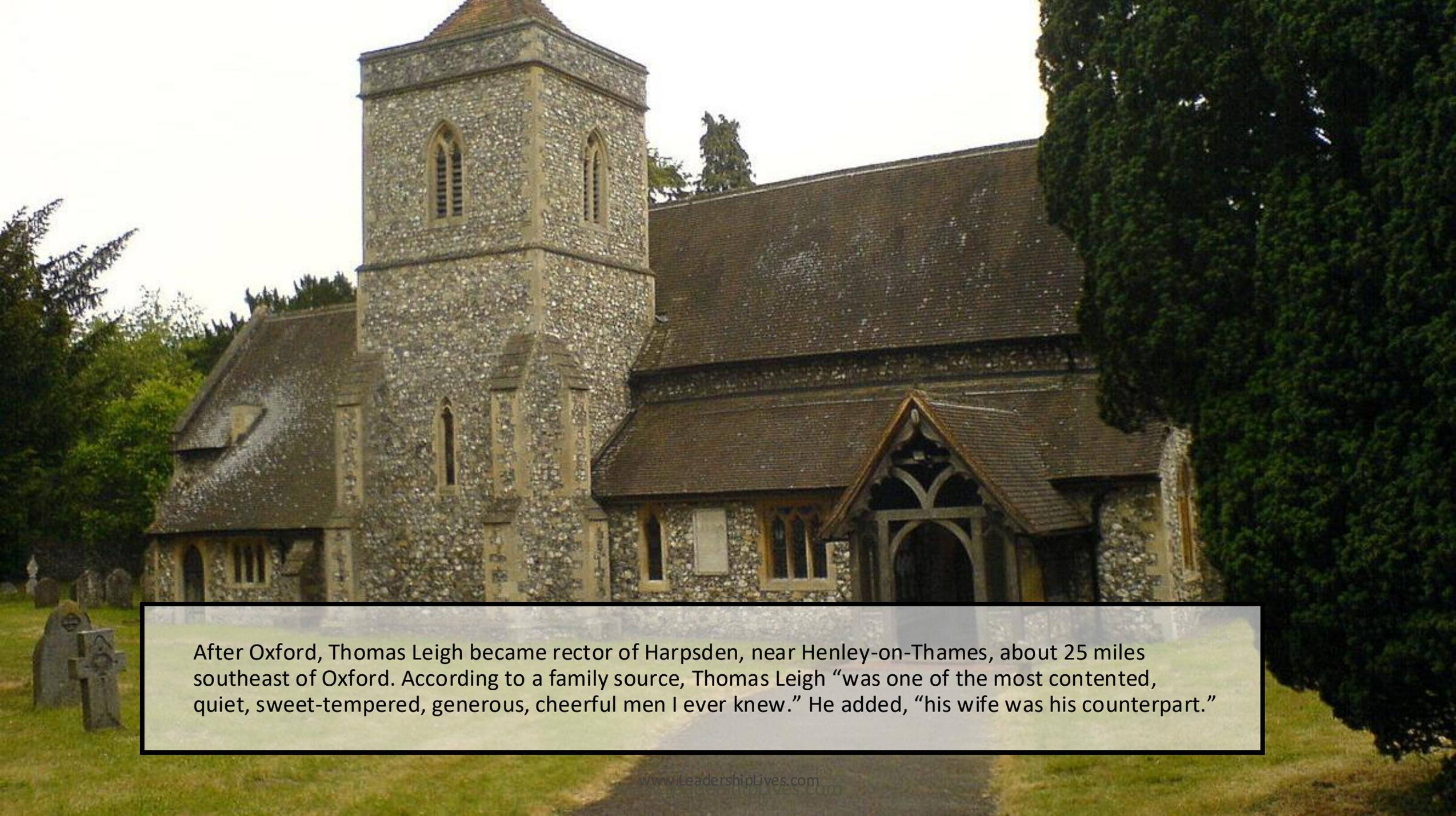
For almost 60 years, Cassandra's uncle, Theophilus Leigh, served as Master of Balliol College. He was famous for his "puns, witticisms and sharp retorts."

When he was 86, he was described as having "youthful vivacity."



Cassandra's father, Thomas Leigh, was so young when he was elected a fellow of Oxford's ultra competitive research College, All Souls, he was nicknamed "Chick Leigh."

Two "fellows" are typically admitted to All Souls each year after taking "the hardest exam in the world."



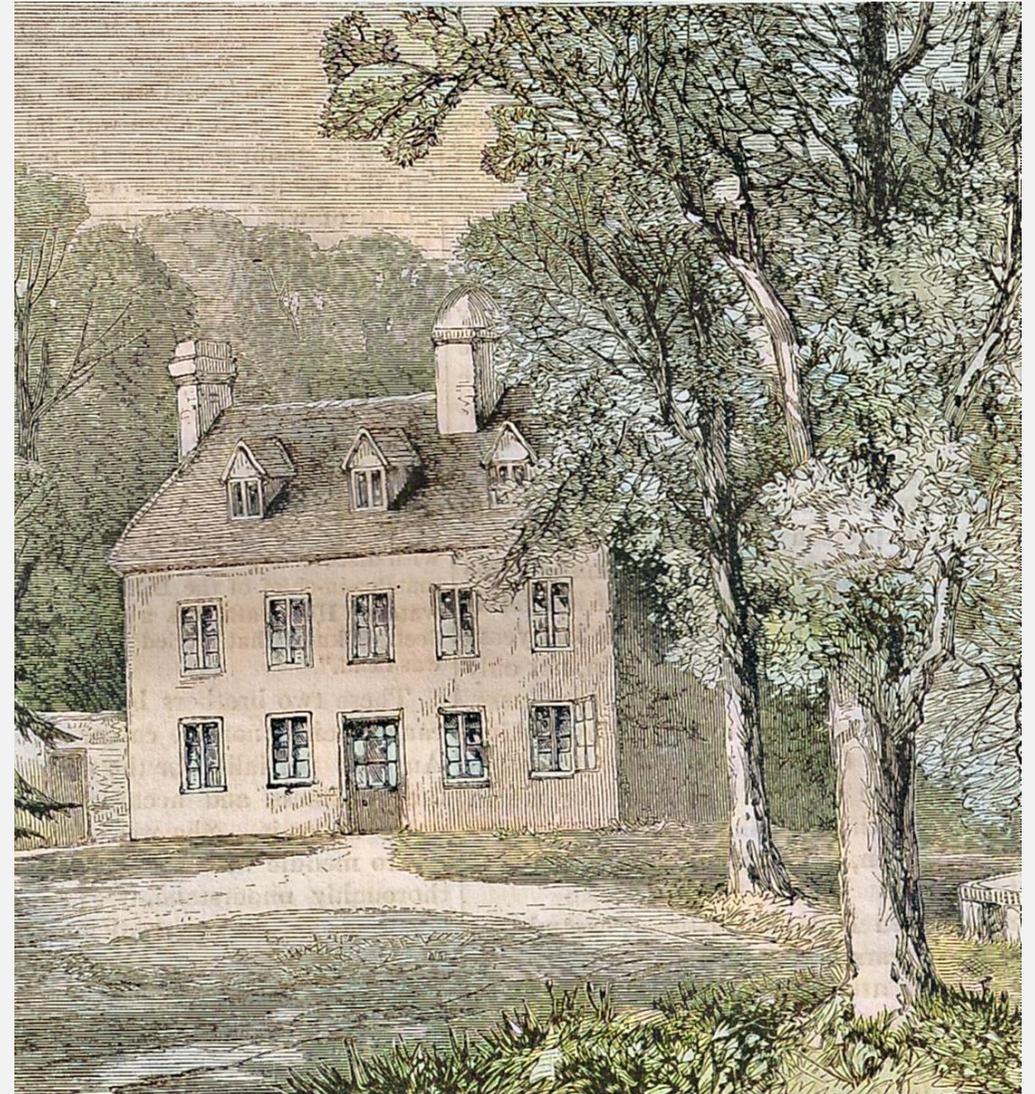
After Oxford, Thomas Leigh became rector of Harpsden, near Henley-on-Thames, about 25 miles southeast of Oxford. According to a family source, Thomas Leigh “was one of the most contented, quiet, sweet-tempered, generous, cheerful men I ever knew.” He added, “his wife was his counterpart.”

George Austen and Cassandra Leigh married on April 26, 1764.

George's generous uncle provided the newly-weds with an income by buying "a living" at the parsonage in Deane.

Seven years later, George's 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin, Thomas Knight, increased their income by giving George "the living" at Steventon about a mile away.

The Austens moved to the Steventon parsonage and lived there for 30 years.



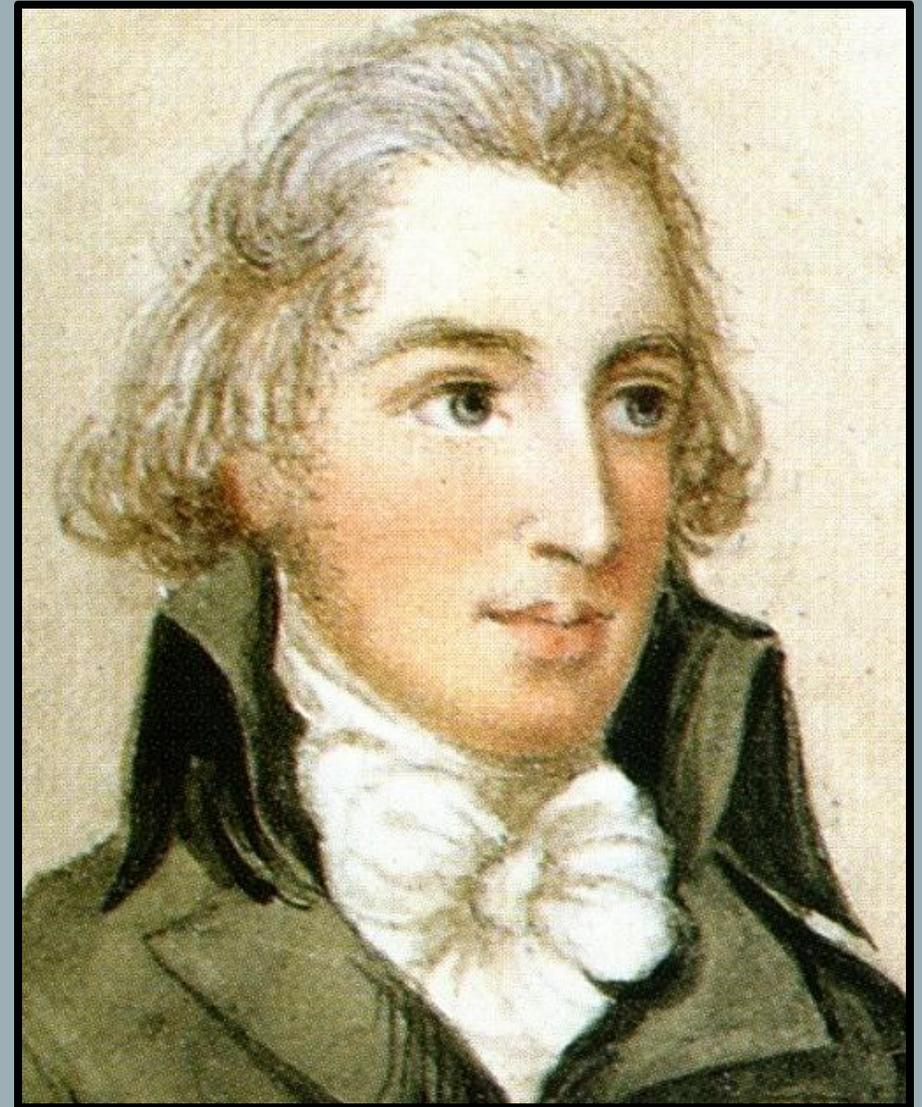
James Austen Leigh  
1765 - 1819

Jane's oldest brother, James, became a parson like their father, and took over the living at Steventon when Rev. Austen retired in 1801. While Rev. Austen was alive, he had a residual income.

Late in life, James inherited property from Leigh family relations and changed his name to James Austen Leigh.

James' children, Anna, James (Jane's first biographer), and Caroline grew up near their Aunt Jane and knew her well.

The Austens second son, George (1766 – 1838), was troubled by seizures and spent his life on a farm near his family.

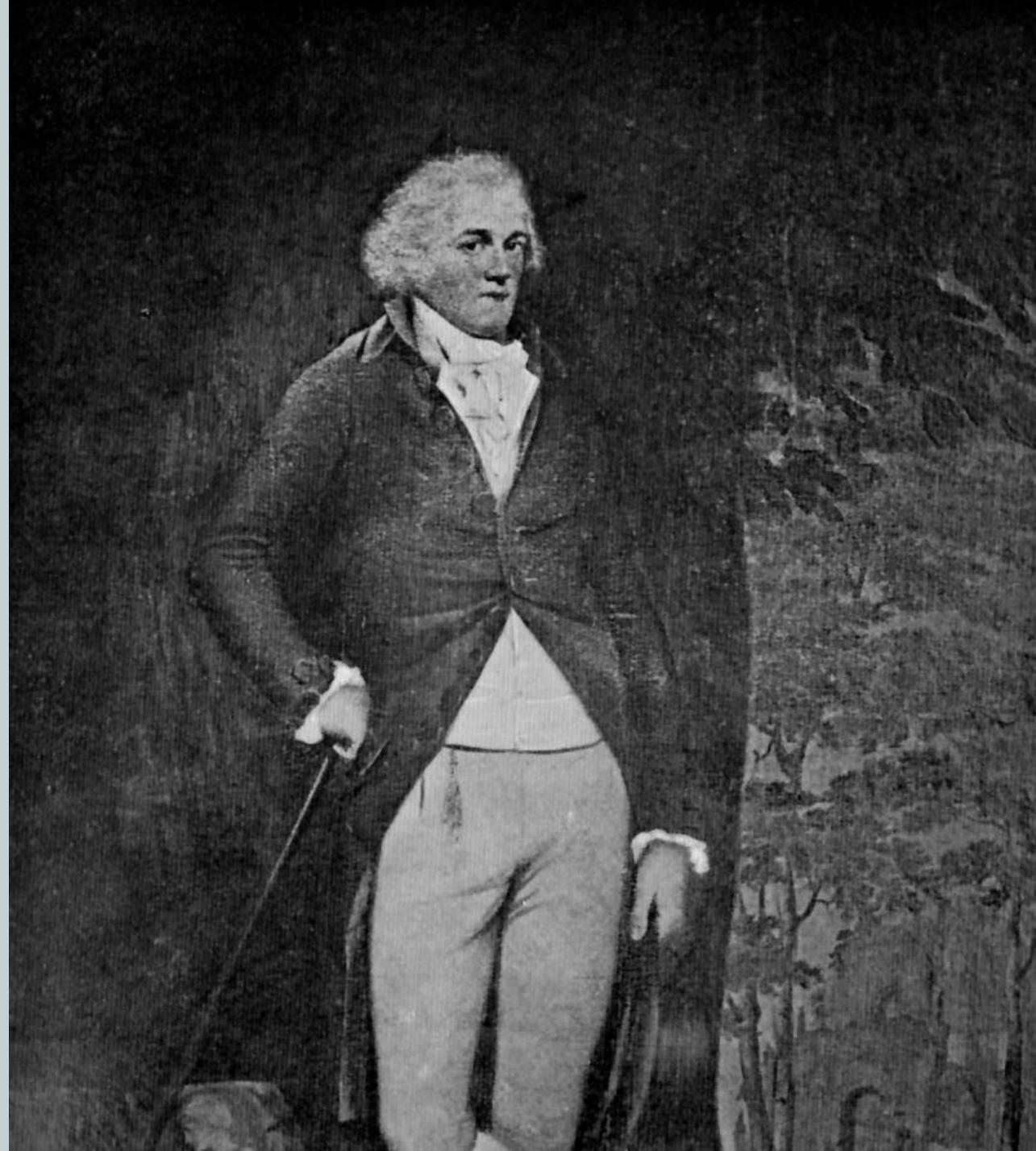


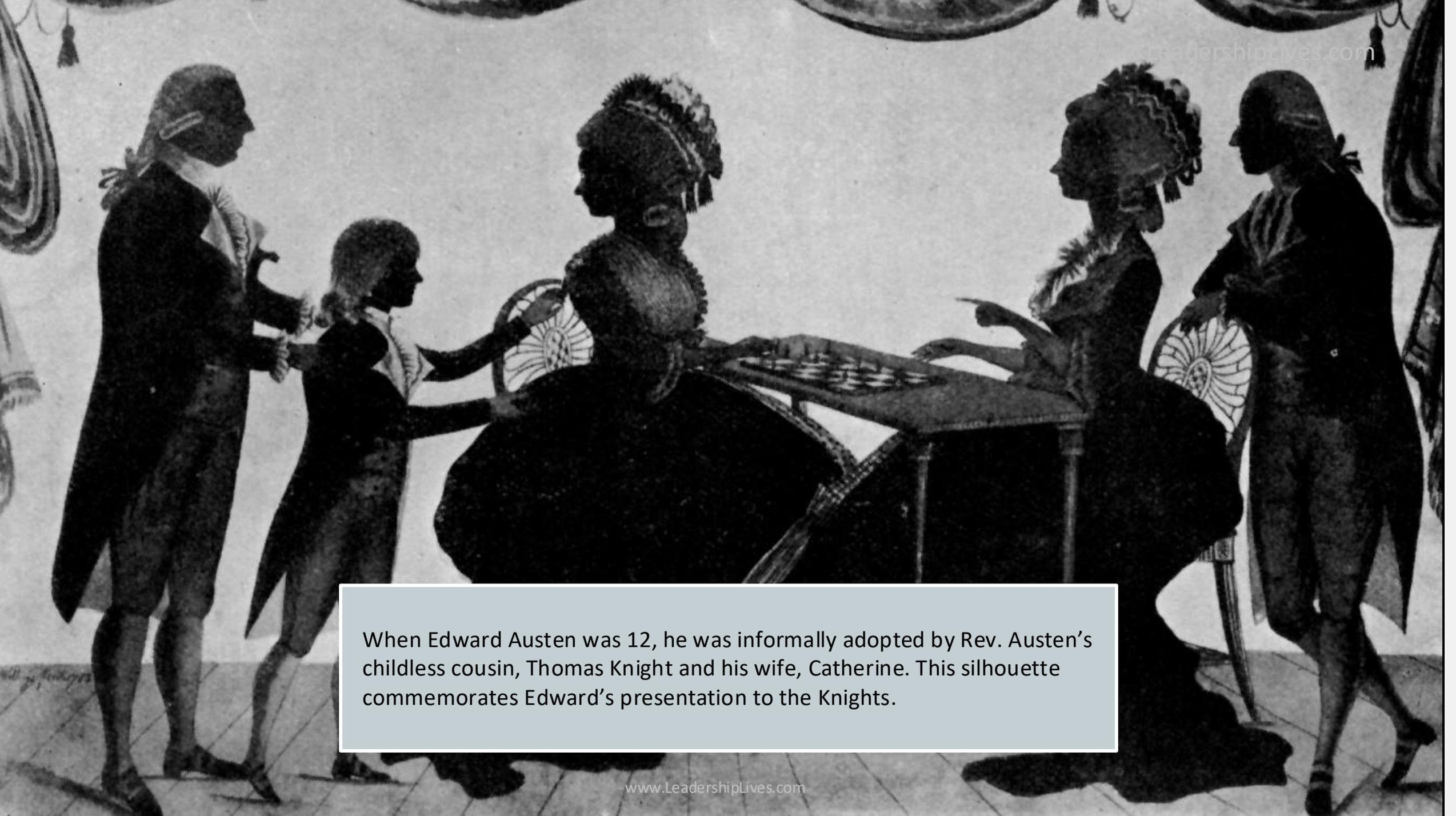
Edward Austen Knight  
1767 – 1852

In an 1820 letter to her sister after James died, Mrs. Austen wrote about her sons...

“Edward has a most active mind, a clear head, and a sound judgement; he is a man of business. That my dear James was not. Classical knowledge, literary taste, and the power of elegant composition he possessed in the highest degree; to these [Edward] makes no pretensions. Both equally good, amiable and sweet-tempered.”

*CHAWTON MANOR AND ITS OWNERS*





When Edward Austen was 12, he was informally adopted by Rev. Austen's childless cousin, Thomas Knight and his wife, Catherine. This silhouette commemorates Edward's presentation to the Knights.

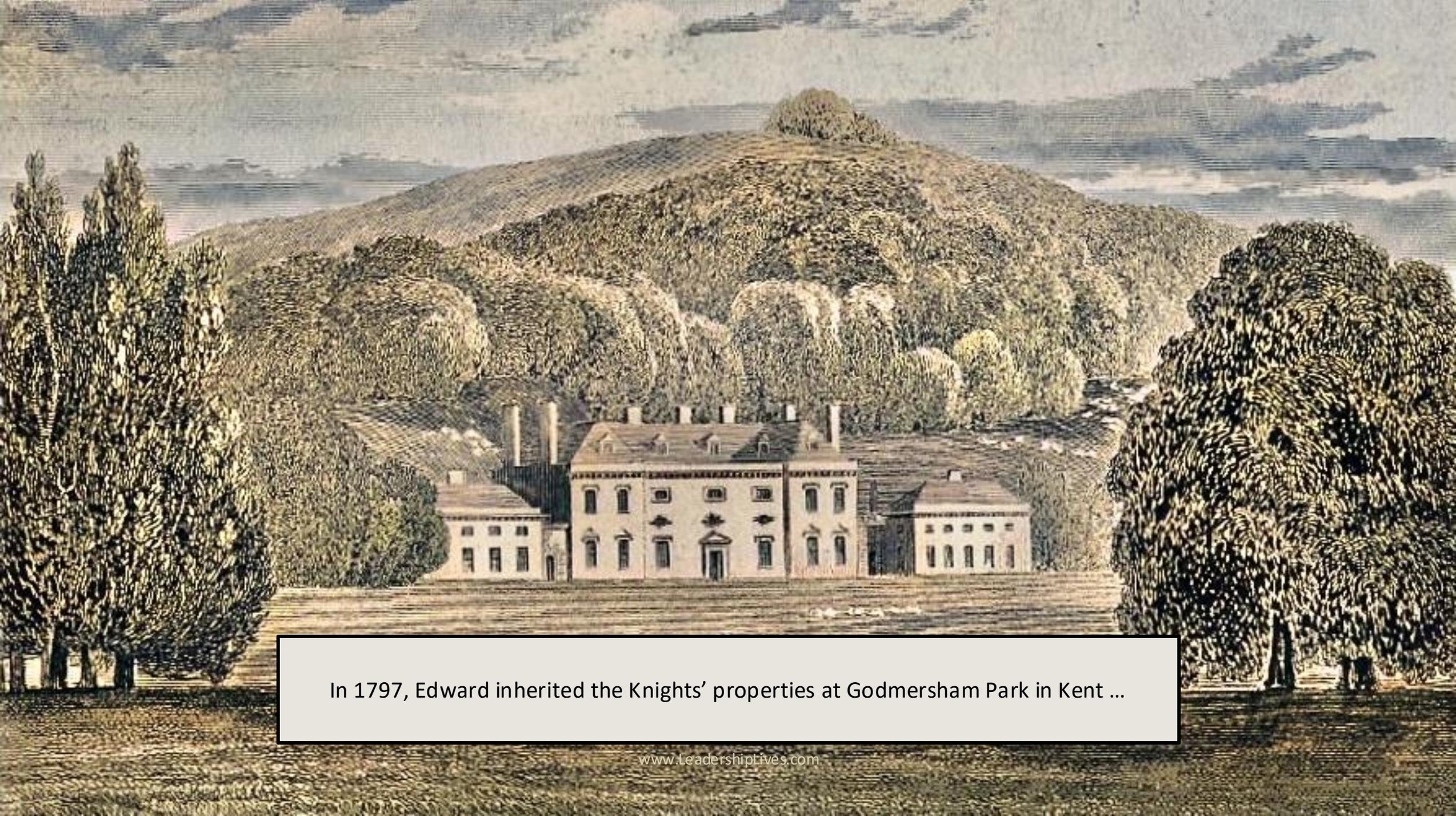
Edward's adoption was a gradual process. Thomas and Catherine Knight first met Edward when they visited Steventon on their 1779 wedding trip.

The three got on so well, the Knights later invited Edward to join them for the summer at their home, Godmersham Park, in Kent.

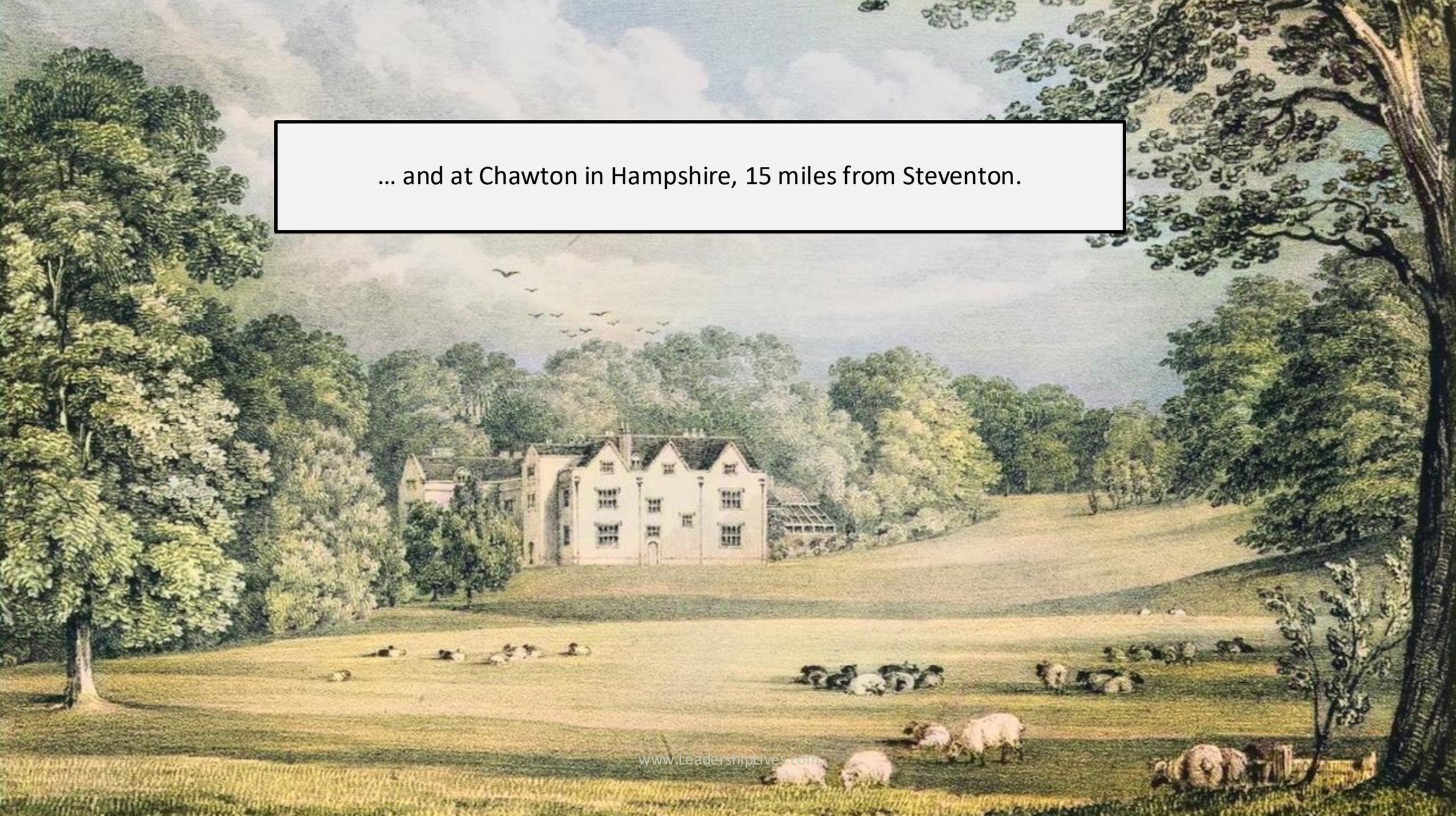
Rev. Austen hesitated, concerned that Edward would fall behind in his lessons, but Mrs. Austen said, "I think, my dear, you had better oblige your cousins, and let the child go."

When, the Knights did not have children of their own, Edward was the obvious heir.





In 1797, Edward inherited the Knights' properties at Godmersham Park in Kent ...



... and at Chawton in Hampshire, 15 miles from Steventon.

Cassandra Austen  
1773 - 1845

In *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, nephew James Austen Leigh wrote, “dearest of all to the heart of Jane was her sister Cassandra, about three years her senior. Their sisterly affection for each other could scarcely be exceeded.”

He noted the character of Elinor Dashwood might resemble “prudent” Cassandra, but Marianne Dashwood had little in common with Jane.

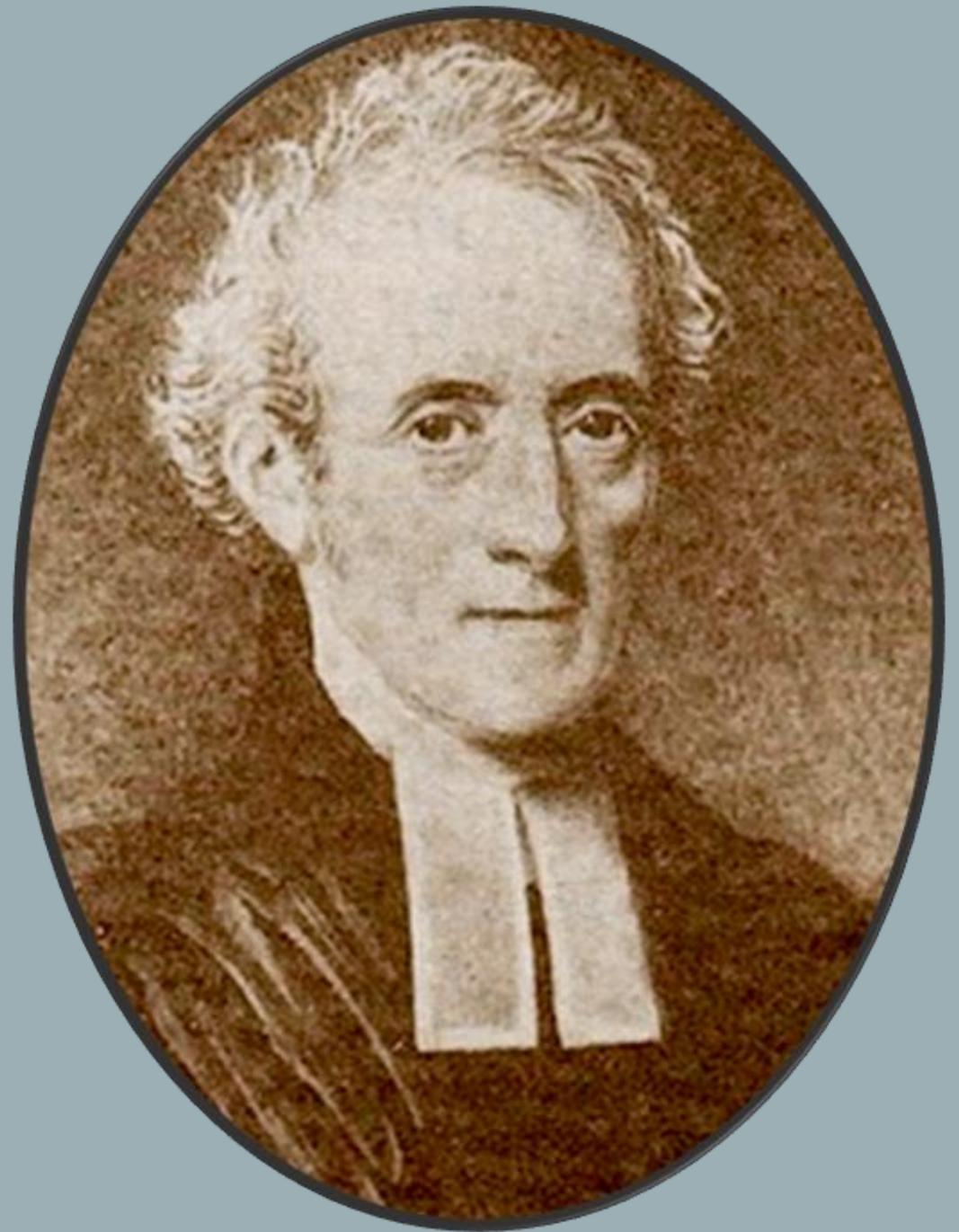
Jane admired the stoicism with which Cassandra absorbed the death of her fiancé in the West Indies in 1797.



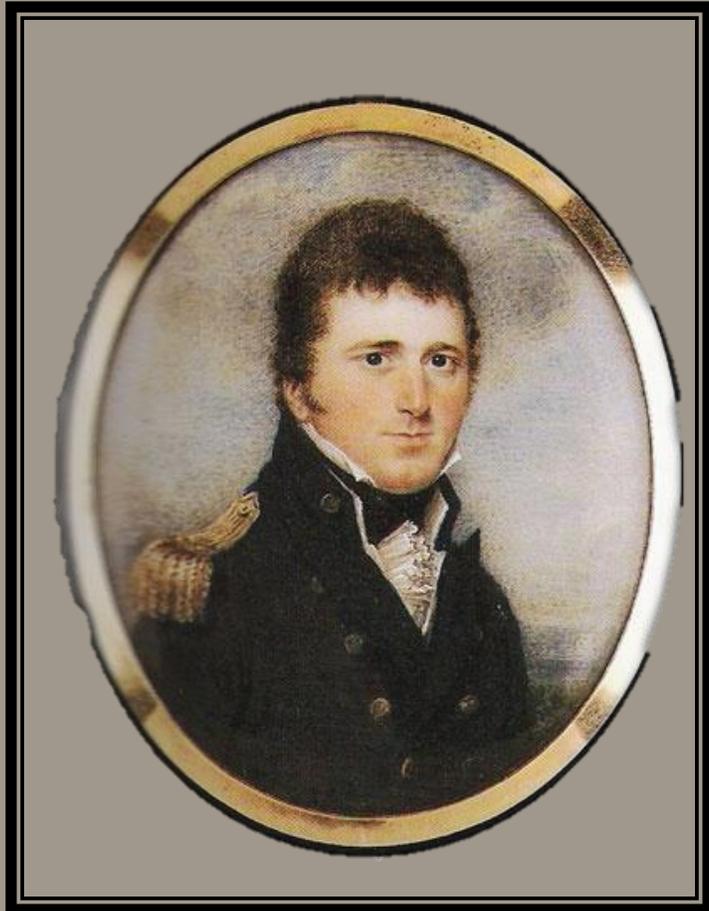
Henry Austen  
1771 - 1850

Henry Austen was the brother closest to Jane. As she put it, “He knew how to tease.” Like his father and older brother James, Henry went to Oxford. Also, like his father, Henry actively promoted Jane’s literary career.

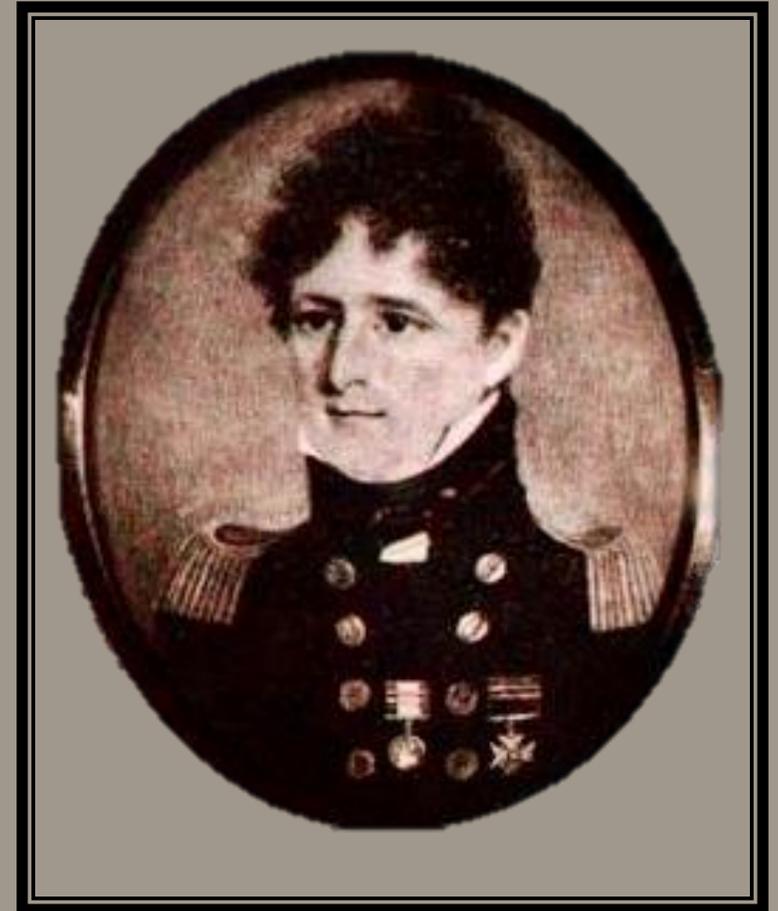
Jane’s early dedications to Henry and his wife, Eliza, indicate they took a great interest in Jane’s writing and were, along with her father and Cassandra, her most enthusiastic encouragers.



Francis and Charles Austen were Jane's "sailor brothers." They provided Jane with colorful details of military life for *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. Army officers might toy with young ladies in Jane's stories, but naval officers were always honorable.



FRANCIS AUSTEN  
1774 – 1865



Charles Austen  
1779 – 1852



Sir Francis Austen, Admiral of the Fleet  
1774 – 1865

Frank's childhood nickname was "Fly" because he moved so fast. He was closest in age to Jane.

According to his family, he was "self-contained, self-respecting, dignified, and devout."

Promoted to admiral in 1830, he was knighted in 1837.

A few days after his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1863, Frank Austen was named Admiral of the Fleet.

*CHAWTON MANOR AND ITS OWNERS*

Charles Austen  
1779 – 1852

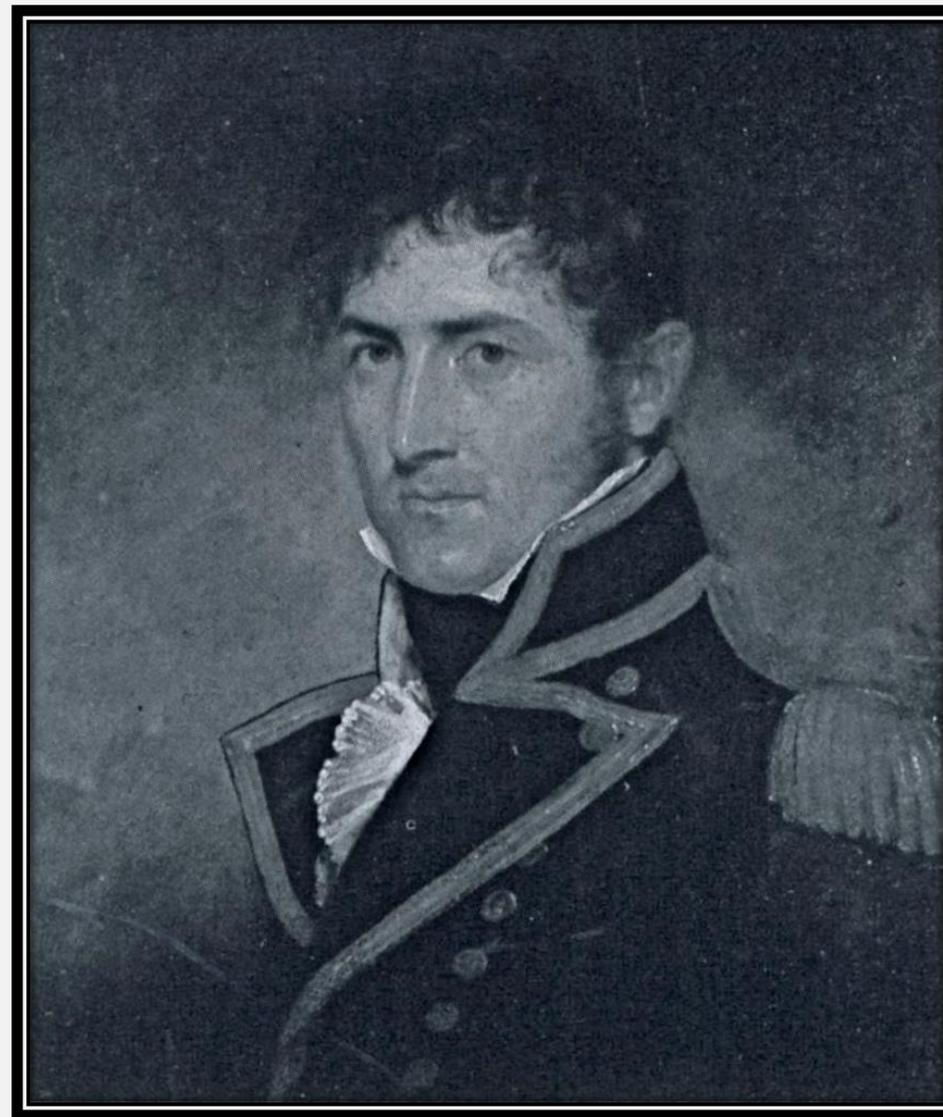
Charles was “expansive, affectionate, and eminently loveable.” The youngest Austen, Jane endearingly called him, “our own particular little brother.”

On June 10, 1816, Charles recorded in his diary “... after dinner, finished the three volumes of *Emma* being the 3rd time of reading it –.”

When Cassandra died in 1845, she left three treasured notebooks filled with Jane’s early writings to Charles with a brief note,

“For my brother Charles  
I think I recollect that a few of the trifles in this book  
were written especially for his amusement.”

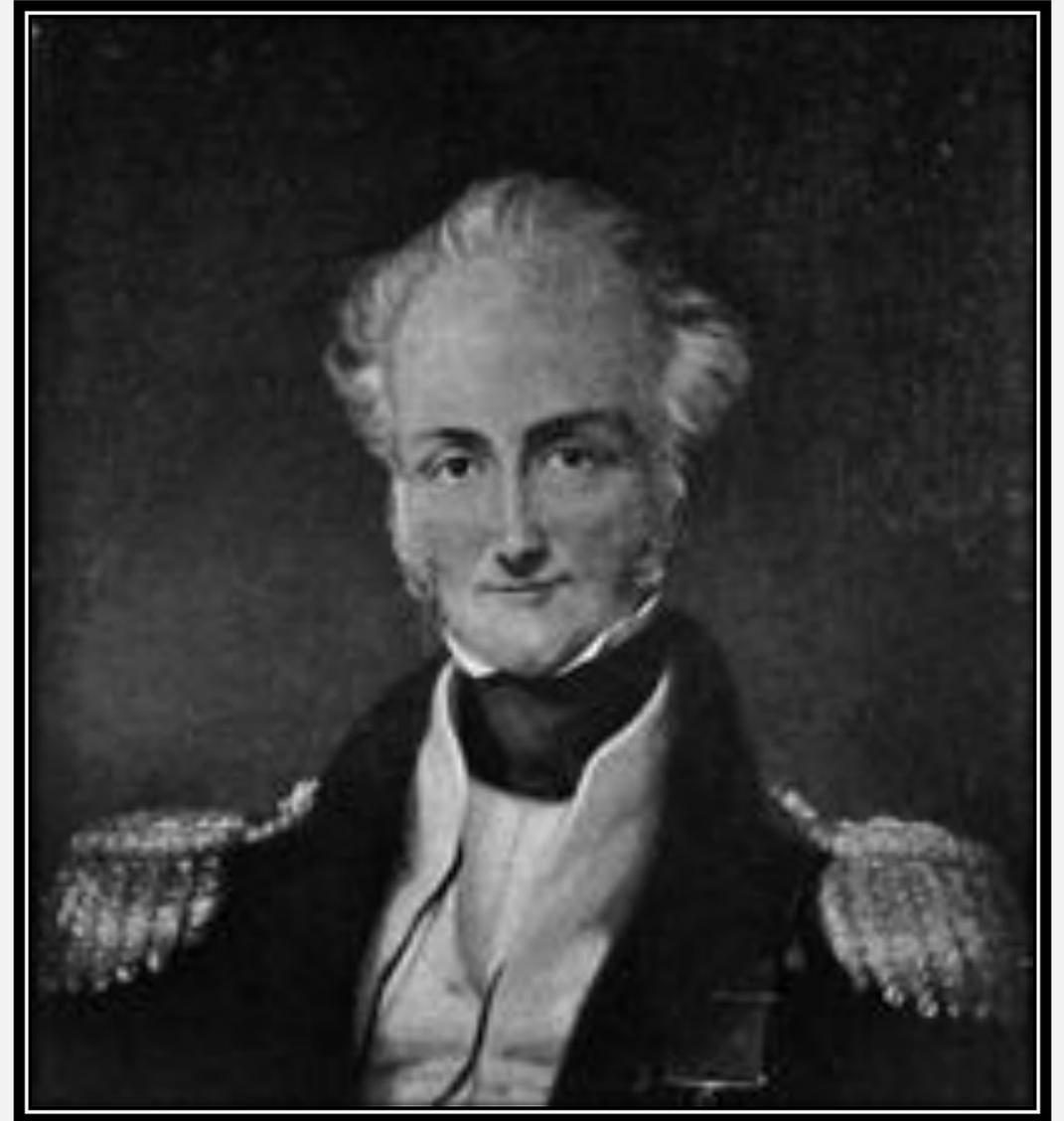
C.E.A.

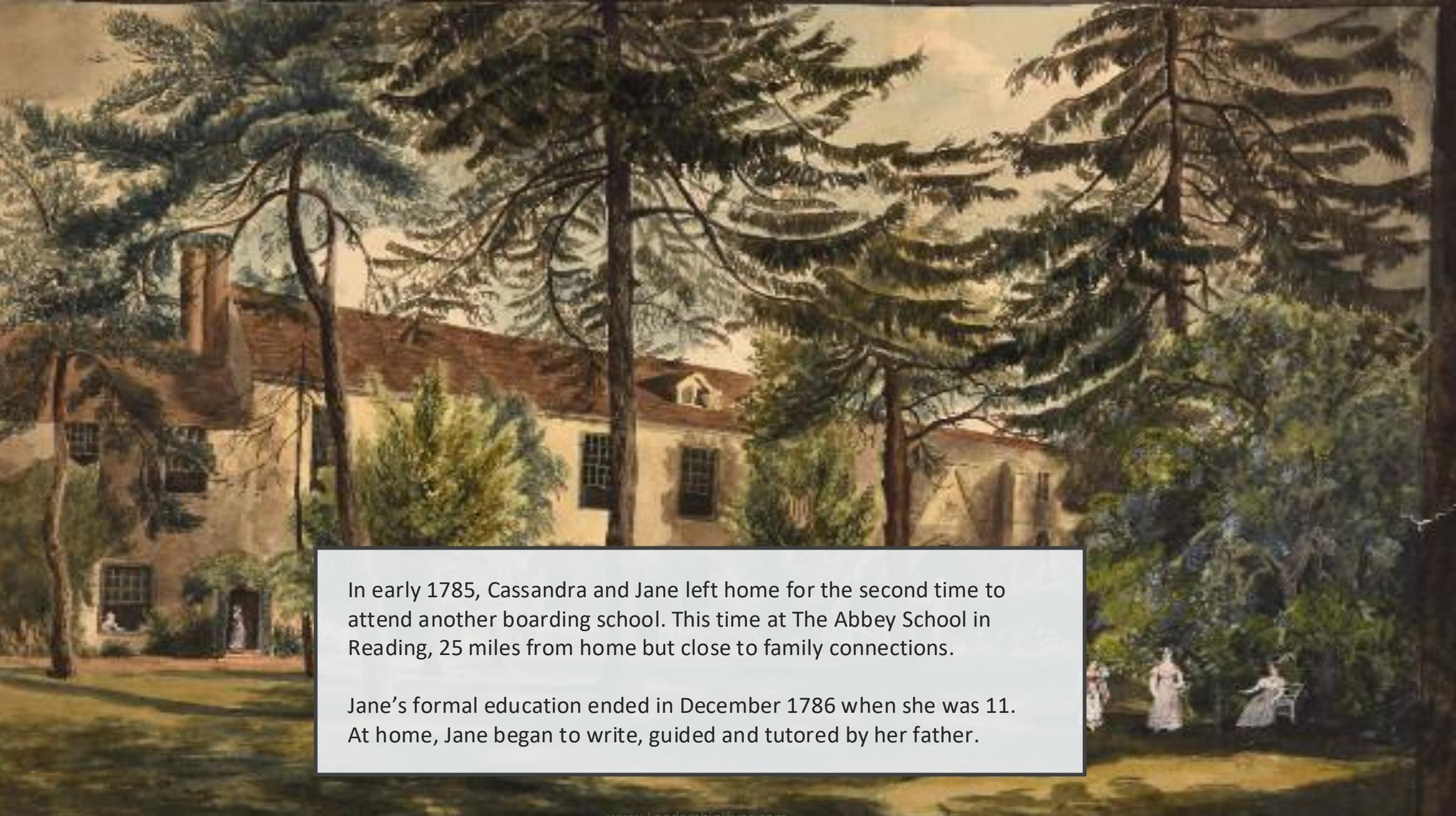


Charles died in Burma of cholera in his early 70s. “His sweet temper and affectionate disposition, in which he resembled his sister Jane, had secured to him an unusual portion of attachment, not only from his own family, but from all the officers and common sailors who served under him.”

When he died, a man aboard the ship wrote, “Our good Admiral won the hearts of all by his gentleness and kindness while he was struggling with disease and endeavouring to do his duty as Commander-in-chief of the British naval forces in these waters. His death was a great grief to the whole fleet. I know that I cried bitterly when I found he was dead.”

*A MEMOIR OF JANE AUSTEN*  
REV. JAMES AUSTEN LEIGH





In early 1785, Cassandra and Jane left home for the second time to attend another boarding school. This time at The Abbey School in Reading, 25 miles from home but close to family connections.

Jane's formal education ended in December 1786 when she was 11. At home, Jane began to write, guided and tutored by her father.

In Henry Austen's preface to the first edition of *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, published a few months after Jane's death, he wrote of their father's influence on Jane's writing...

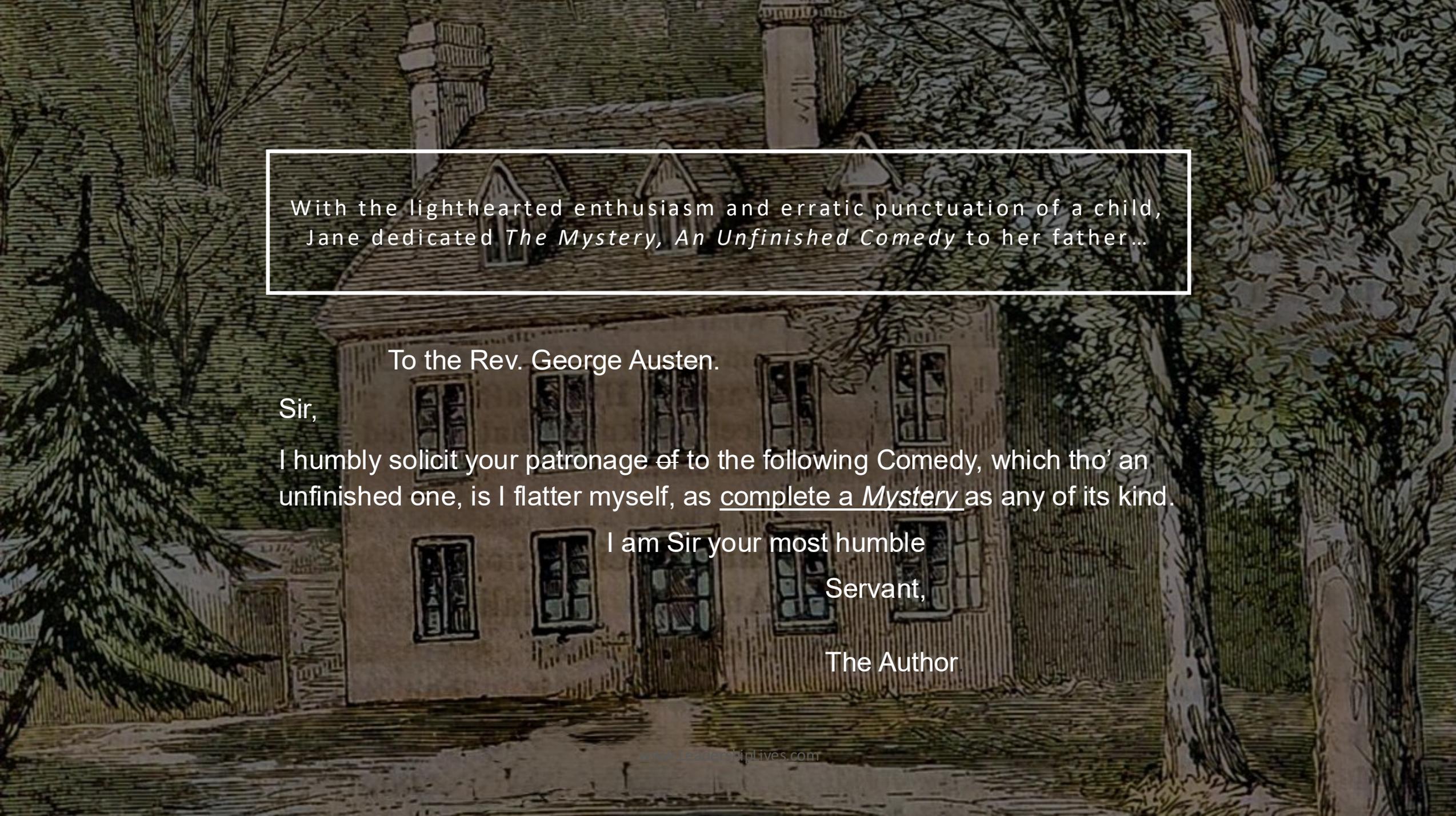
“Being not only a profound scholar but possessing a most exquisite taste in every species of literature, it is not wonderful that his daughter **Jane should, at a very early age, have become sensible to the charms of style, and enthusiastic in the cultivation of her own language.**”



Rev. George Austen

Encouraged by Rev. Austen, Henry, Cassandra and others, Jane began to write poems, plays, mysteries, a history, “Novels” and “scraps” which she dedicated to loved ones.





With the lighthearted enthusiasm and erratic punctuation of a child,  
Jane dedicated *The Mystery, An Unfinished Comedy* to her father...

To the Rev. George Austen.

Sir,

I humbly solicit your patronage of to the following Comedy, which tho' an unfinished one, is I flatter myself, as complete a *Mystery* as any of its kind.

I am Sir your most humble

Servant,

The Author.



In 1790, Jane wrote a “satirical novel in letters,” *Love and Freindship* [sic] and dedicated it to her glamorous cousin, Eliza, Madame La Comtesse De Feuillide.

*TO MADAME LA COMTESSE DE FEUILLIDE THIS  
NOVEL*

*IS INSCRIBED BY HER*

*OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT*

*THE AUTHOR.*

*“Deceived in Freindship and Betrayed in  
Love.”*

The History of England  
from the reign of  
Henry the 4<sup>th</sup>  
to the death of  
Charles the 1<sup>st</sup>.

By a partial, prejudiced, & ignorant Historian.

To Miss Austen eldest daughter of the Rev.  
George Austen, this work is inscribed with  
all due respect by  
The Author

N.B. There will be very few Dates in  
this History.

In 1791, Jane dedicated  
*The History of England* to the  
book's illustrator, Cassandra. The  
author described herself as "a  
partial, prejudiced & ignorant  
historian."

To Miss Austen, eldest daughter of the Rev.  
George Austen, this work is inscribed with all  
due respect by

The Author

N.B. There will be very few Dates in this History.

The 1792 dedication of *Lesley Castle*, provides a glimpse of Jane's "teasing" relationship with Henry...

To HENRY THOMAS AUSTEN Esqre.

Sir

I am now availing myself of the Liberty you have frequently honoured me with of dedicating one of my Novels to you. That it is unfinished, I greive [sic]; yet fear that from me, it will always remain so; that as far as it is carried, it should be so trifling and so unworthy of you, is another concern to your obliged humble Servant

The Author

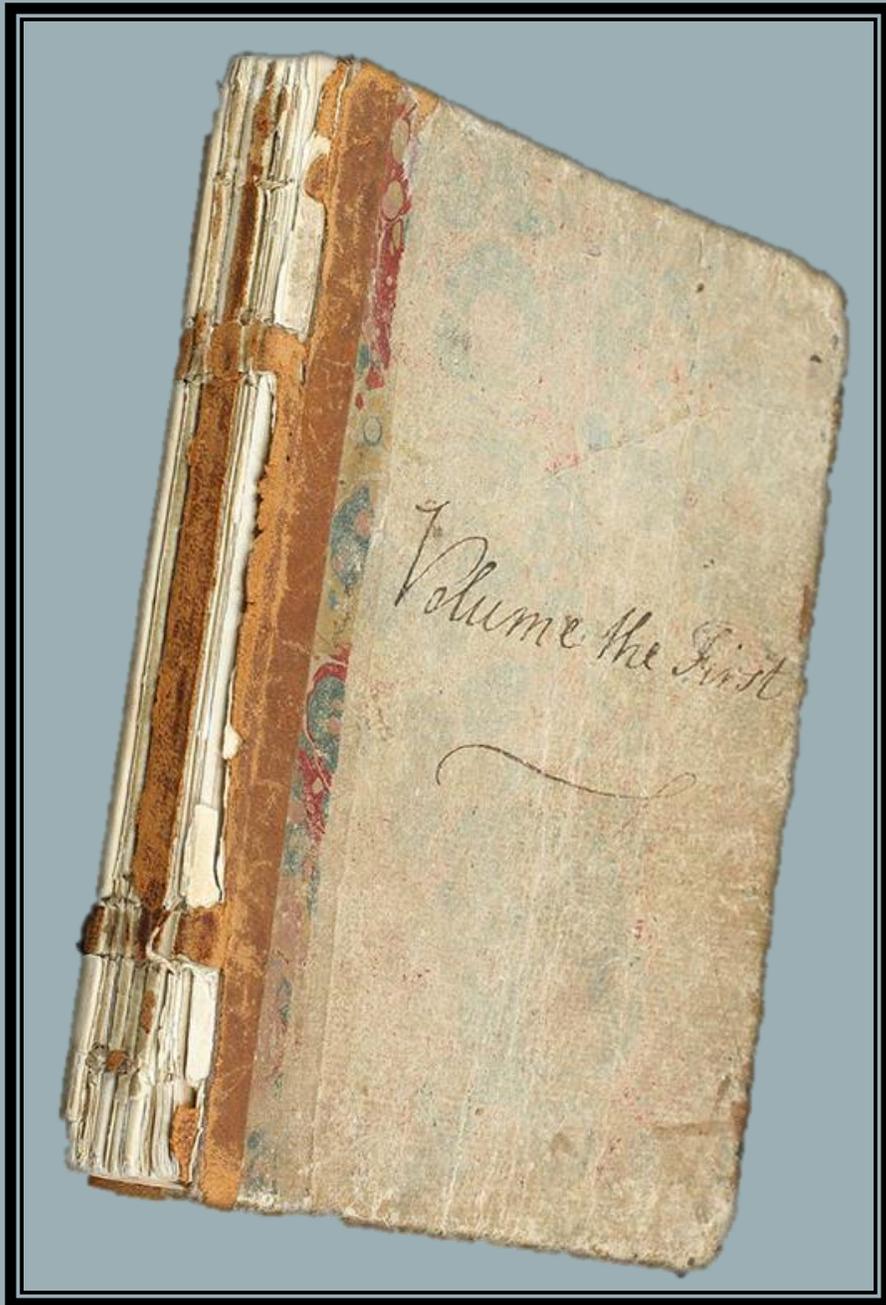
*Messrs Demand and Co—please to pay Jane Austen Spinster the sum of one hundred guineas on account of your Humble Servant.*

*H. T. Austen*

To her cousin and schoolmate, Miss Jane Cooper,  
Jane dedicated a *COLLECTION OF LETTERS*.

COUSIN Conscious of the Charming Character which in every  
Country, and every Clime in Christendom is Cried,  
Concerning you, with Caution and Care I Commend to your  
Charitable Criticism this Clever Collection of Curious  
Comments, which have been Carefully Culled, Collected and  
Classed by your Comical Cousin

The Author.



In 1793, when her first nieces, Edward's daughter, Fanny, and James' daughter, Anna, were born, Jane sent them "scraps."

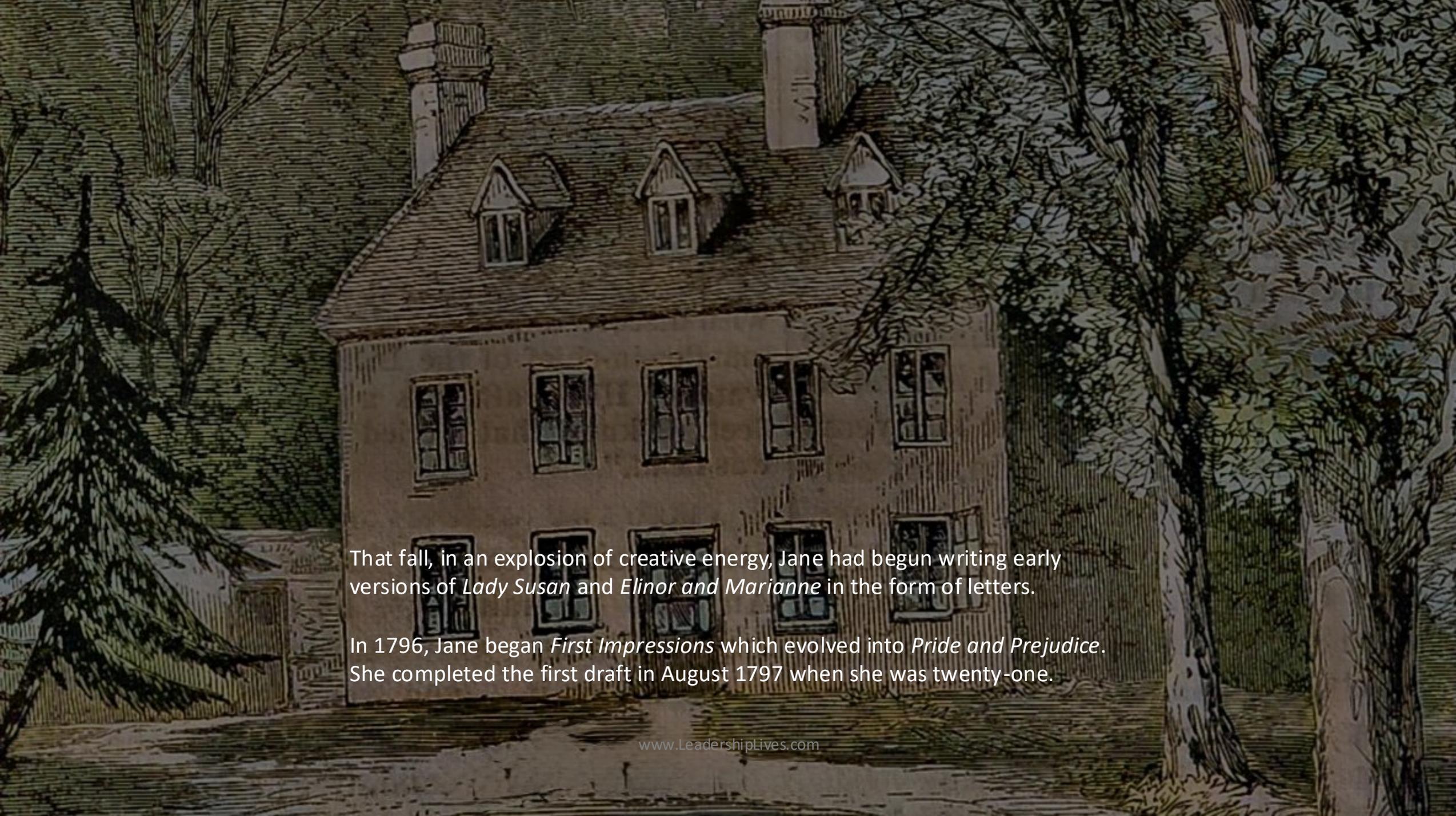
Around this time, Jane began to use three notebooks to collect and preserve her early works written from 1787 - 1793.

These notebooks, which Cassandra passed on to Charles, are now at Oxford University's Bodleian Library.

In December 1794, for Jane's nineteenth birthday, Rev. George Austen purchased this portable mahogany writing desk at Ring Bros. in Basingstoke.

Today Jane's writing desk is in the Treasures Room at the British Library.





That fall, in an explosion of creative energy, Jane had begun writing early versions of *Lady Susan* and *Elinor and Marianne* in the form of letters.

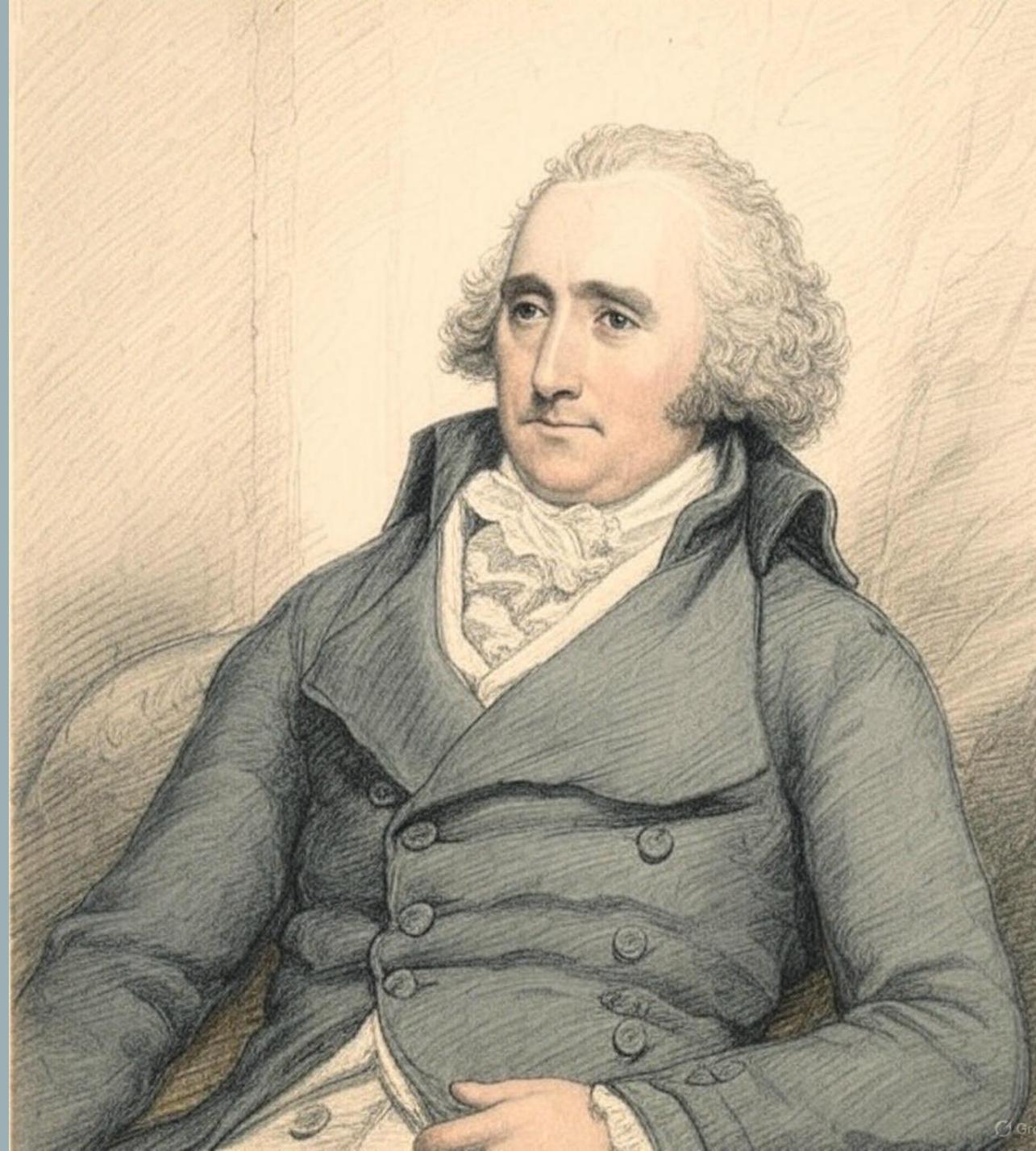
In 1796, Jane began *First Impressions* which evolved into *Pride and Prejudice*. She completed the first draft in August 1797 when she was twenty-one.

A few months later, Rev. Austen sent an inquiry regarding *First Impressions* to London publisher, Thomas Cadell.

By return post, Cadell responded he was not interested.

In 1813, Jane's masterpiece was finally published with the title, *Pride and Prejudice*.

Thomas Cadell



Sir,—I have in my possession a manuscript novel, comprising 3 vols., about the length of Miss Burney's *Evelina*. As I am well aware of what consequence it is that a work of this sort shd. make its first appearance under a respectable name, I apply to you. I shall be much obliged, therefore, if you will inform me whether you choose to be concerned in it, what will be the expense of publishing it at the author's risk, and what you will venture to advance for the property of it, if on perusal it is approved of. Should you give any encouragement, I will send you the work.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,  
George Austen.

Steventon, near Overton, Hants.:  
November 1, 1797.

This letter was purchased  
at an 1836 auction of  
Thomas Cadell's effects.

That same month, Jane began to rework and revise *Elinor and Marianne* into *Sense and Sensibility*.

The following August, she started writing *Susan* which evolved into *Northanger Abbey*. She completed the manuscript at the end of June 1799.

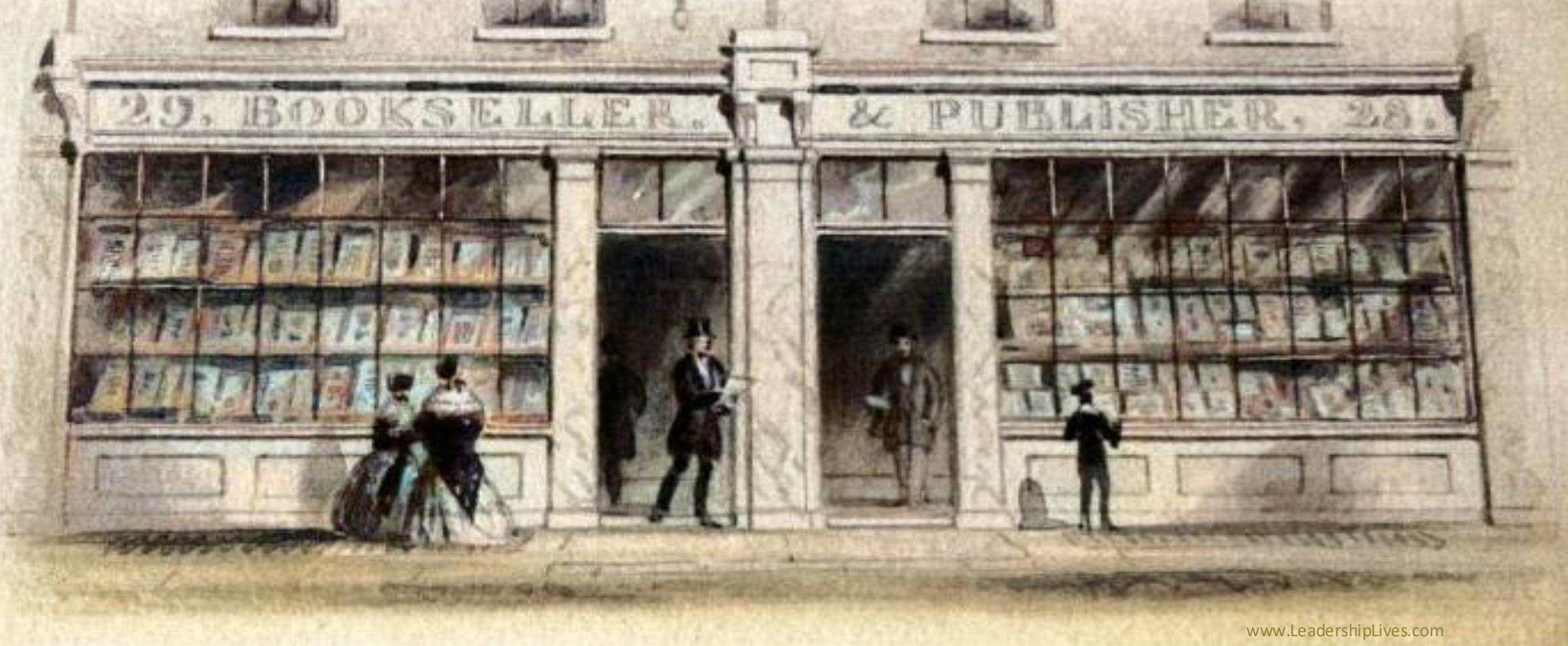
"The gentleman offered his services, took her up in his arms, and carried her down the hill."  
*Sense & Sensibility*, 1906 Stoneleigh edition



In December 1800, Rev. Austen abruptly announced he had decided to retire.

A few months later, Rev. and Mrs. Austen, Cassandra and Jane moved to Four Sydney Place, Bath. For the next few years, Jane stopped writing.





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In 1803, with Jane's permission, Henry sold *Susan*, an early version of *Northanger Abbey*, to London publisher Crosby & Co. for ten pounds. (About \$1200 in 2020.) Crosby & Co. never published the book.

When Jane was 27, for a few hours, she was engaged to Harris Bigg-Withers, the brother of dear friends and heir to an ancient property called Manydown, a few miles from Steventon.

Early the following morning, Jane changed her mind. Cutting their visit to Manydown short, Jane and Cassandra headed home to Bath.

Harris Bigg-Withers



Years later, Jane counselled her cherished niece, Fanny Knight, who was wrestling with a marriage proposal, “Nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound without Love.”



On January 21, 1805, Rev. Austen suddenly died. His death triggered four and a half years of turmoil and upheaval for Mrs. Austen, Cassandra and Jane.

In October 1808, Edward offered his mother and sisters a cottage on his Chawton property.

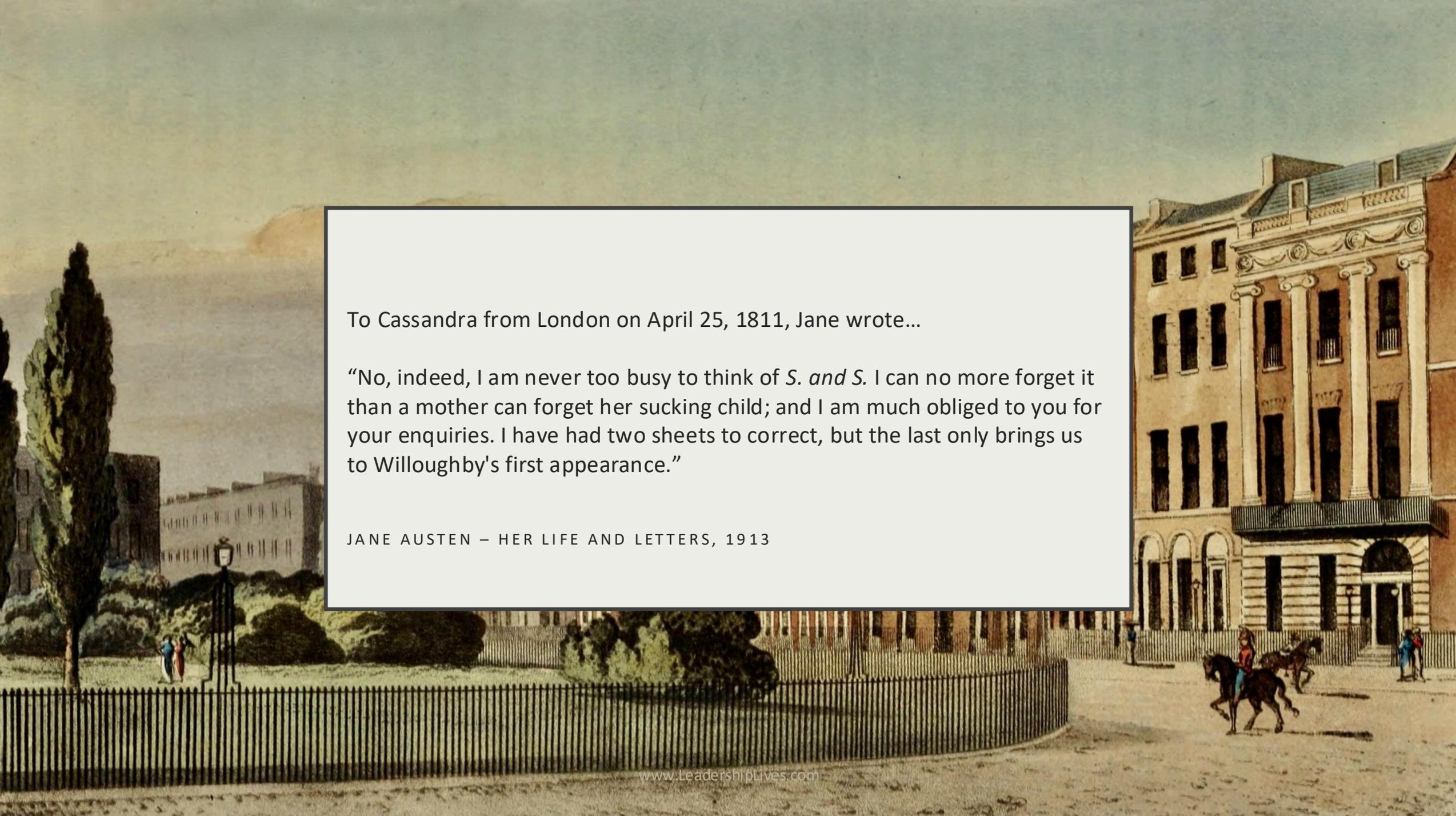
After extensive renovations, the Austen ladies moved into the cottage in July 1809. They lived there for the rest of their lives.

Comfortably settled once more, Jane set to work polishing *Sense and Sensibility* for publication.





In 1810, with Henry again acting as Jane's literary agent, London bookseller and publisher Thomas Egerton agreed to publish *Sense and Sensibility*.



To Cassandra from London on April 25, 1811, Jane wrote...

“No, indeed, I am never too busy to think of *S. and S.* I can no more forget it than a mother can forget her sucking child; and I am much obliged to you for your enquiries. I have had two sheets to correct, but the last only brings us to Willoughby's first appearance.”

JANE AUSTEN – HER LIFE AND LETTERS, 1913

## JANE AUSTEN'S LITERARY CAREER

1810 - 1817

- 1810, T. Egerton agrees to publish *Sense and Sensibility*.
- Feb. 1811, Jane works on *Mansfield Park*.
- Oct. 30, 1811, *Sense and Sensibility* published with positive reviews.
- Late 1811, Jane polishes *Pride and Prejudice*.
- Early 1812, Jane sells the rights to *Pride and Prejudice* to T. Egerton for 110 pounds (about \$13,000 in 2020).
- Mid-1812, the first printing of *Sense and Sensibility* sells out. Jane earns the equivalent of \$17,000 in 2020 dollars.
- Jan. 1813, T. Egerton publishes *Pride and Prejudice* and promotes it with newspaper ads.
- June 1813, Jane completes *Mansfield Park*.
- Oct. 1813, Second printing of *Pride and Prejudice* issued.
- Late 1813, Jane delivers manuscript for *Mansfield Park* to T. Egerton.
- Jan. 1814, Jane begins work on *Emma*.
- May 1814, T. Egerton publishes *Mansfield Park*. Ignored by reviewers but popular with readers.

"I know you have something on your mind.  
I know what you are thinking of...  
*Mansfield Park*, Stoneleigh Edition, 1906.



- Oct. 1814, the first printing of *Mansfield Park* sells out. The most successful of Jane Austen's books during her lifetime.
- March 29, 1815, Jane completes *Emma*.
- Mid-1815, Jane travels to London to meet with top London publisher John Murray to negotiate the publication of *Emma*.
- August 8, 1815, Jane begins work on *Persuasion*.
- Dec. 1815, John Murray publishes *Emma*.
- Jan. 1816, Henry Austen buys back *Susan* from Benjamin Crosby who is unaware of Jane's literary success. Jane changes the title to *Catherine*.
- Feb. 1816, John Murray publishes a new edition of *Mansfield Park*. The book doesn't sell well. The costs offset the proceeds from *Emma*.
- March 1816, Henry's bank fails. Henry loses everything. Edward's, James' and Frank's finances are hit hard.
- Spring, 1816, Jane's health begins to fail.
- August 1816, Jane completes *Persuasion*.
- January 1817, Jane starts writing *Sanditon*.
- March 18, 1817, Jane stops working on *Sanditon*.

From Chawton on January 29, 1813, to Cassandra who was visiting Edward and his family at Godmersham, Jane wrote...

"I want to tell you that I have got my own darling child from London. On Wednesday I received one copy sent down by Falkener, with three lines from Henry to say that he had given another to Charles and sent a third by the coach to Godmersham."



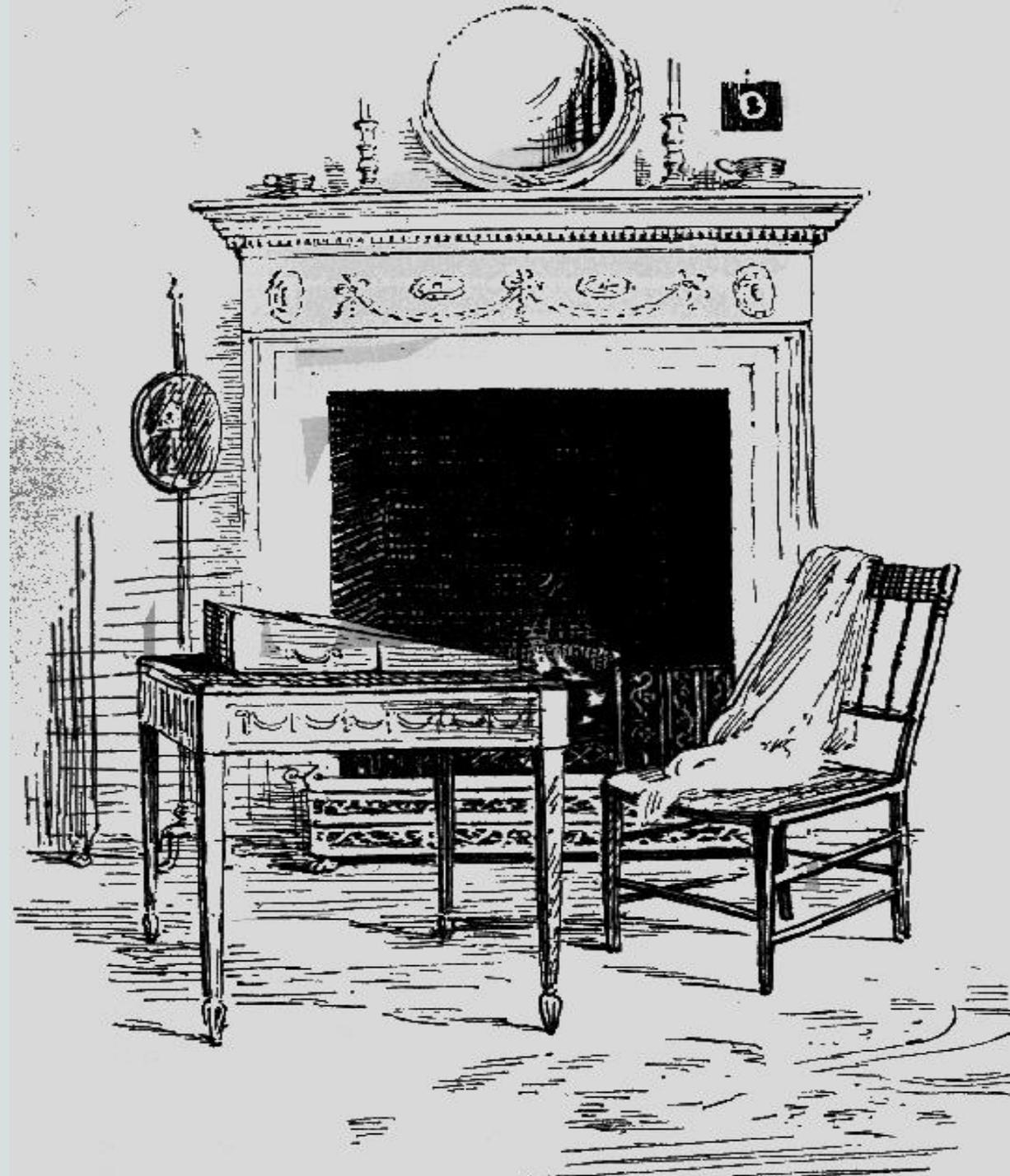
From Chawton to “My dear Cassandra,” Jane wrote about *Pride & Prejudice*...

Your letter was truly welcome, and I am much obliged to you for all your praise; it came at a right time, for I had had some fits of disgust. ...

Upon the whole, however, I am quite vain enough and well satisfied enough. The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense... [to] bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style...”

February 4, 1813

Parlor at Chawton Cottage; note the portable desk on the table.  
Illustration by Ellen Hill for *Jane Austen; Her Homes & Her Friends*, 1902





In another letter to Cassandra that month, Jane wrote...

“I am exceedingly pleased that you can say what you do, after having gone through the whole work, and Fanny’s praise is very gratifying. My hopes were tolerably strong of *her*, but nothing like a certainty. Her liking Darcy and Elizabeth is enough.”

February 1813

*Darcy Declares Himself.*  
*Pride and Prejudice*, Gresham Publishing, 1900.

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INTERESTING NOVELS  
The Morning Chronicle, London, March 17, 1813

INTERESTING NOVELS.—In 3 vols. price 18s. in bds.  
**P**RIDE and PREJUDICE: a Novel. By a  
LADY.—Also, by the same Author,<sup>N</sup>  
SENSE and SENSIBILITY! a Novel, in 3 vols. 12mo. price  
15s. in bds.  
Printed for T. Egerton, Whitehall, and may be had of all  
Booksellers.-

Godmersham Park, September 25, 1813

In a chatty letter to, “My Dearest Frank,” Jane wrote about the prices of beef and bread, family news and “evenings in town.”

She tacked on a postscript...

“There is to be a second edition of S. and S. Egerton advises it.”





In his memoir, Jane's nephew noted, "She certainly took a kind of parental interest in the beings whom she had created..."

She once sent a copy of *Emma* to a friend who had recently had a baby with a note saying, "I trust you will be as glad to see my *Emma*, as I shall be to see your Jemima."

*A MEMOIR OF JANE AUSTEN*

"Most beloved Emma – tell me at once."  
*Emma*, Stoneleigh Edition, 1906.

In early 1816, Henry bought back *Susan* from Crosby & Co. who were unaware of the identity of the book's author. After Jane's death, *Susan* was published as *Northanger Abbey*.

Jane's health was noticeably failing but she managed to complete *Persuasion* that summer and began work on a new book, *Sanditon*, that would remain forever unfinished.



C25 N

I Jane Austen of the Parish of Chawton do  
by this my last will & Testament give and  
bequeath to my dearest Sister Cassandra. I give to  
every thing of which I may die possessed,  
or which may be hereafter due to me,  
subject to the payment of my Funeral  
Expences, & to a Legacy of £ 50. to  
my Brother Henry, & £ 50. to M<sup>rs</sup> de  
Bijou - which I request may be paid  
as soon as convenient. And I appoint  
my said dear Sister the Executrix of  
this my last will & Testament:

Jane Austen

April 27. 1817

On April 27, 1817, in a firm hand, Jane wrote a will leaving 50 pounds to Henry and 50 pounds to Henry's maid who cared for Jane during her final illness.

Everything else, Jane left to her "dearest sister," Cassandra.

A few days later, Cassandra and Henry arranged to take Jane to Winchester for better medical care.

“The day preceding her death she composed some stanzas replete with fancy and vigour. Her last voluntary speech conveyed thanks to her medical attendant; and to the final question asked of her, purporting to know her wants, she replied, ‘I want nothing but death.’”

HENRY AUSTEN, PREFACE, *PERSUASION* AND  
*NORTHANGER ABBEY*, 1817



A three-story yellow building with white window frames and a green door. The building has a decorative cornice at the top. A circular plaque is visible on the wall above the door. To the left, a stone building is partially visible. The scene is outdoors with trees and a sidewalk.

As Cassandra cradled her beloved sister in her arms, Jane Austen died on July 18, 1817, at Eight College Street, Winchester.

JANE AUSTEN'S GRAVE  
AT WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

Over the years, memorials have been added at the site of Jane's grave but the first one, written by Henry, did not mention Jane's books.

He wrote, "The benevolence of her heart, the sweetness of her temper, and the extraordinary endowments of her mind obtained the regard of all who knew her; and the warmest love of her intimate companions."





Six months after Jane's death, *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were published for the first time with a preface by Henry.

The books did not sell well. In 1820, publisher John Murray pulped the remaining copies.

Then, in 1832, London's leading printer, Richard Bentley, bought all the copyrights to Jane Austen's works.

Jane's books were never out of print again.

When Jane's last living brother, 91-year-old Francis Austen died in 1865, nephew James Austen Leigh, at the urging of his sisters and cousins, wrote a book about his increasingly famous aunt noting that, "however little I may have to tell, no one else is left who could tell so much of her."

In 1870, Richard Bentley published Rev. Austen's *A Memoir of Jane Austen*. The book's popularity astonished the author and publisher.

In the preface to the second edition a year later, Rev. Austen wrote, "The Memoir of my Aunt, Jane Austen, has been received with more favour than I had ventured to expect."





JANE AUSTEN  
1775 – 1817

“The person, be it gentleman or lady,  
who has not pleasure in a good novel  
must be intolerably stupid.”

*Northanger Abbey, 1817*

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