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17TH TO 18TH CENTURIES

John Smith publishes *A Description of New England*, an account of his exploration of the region in 1614

William Shakespeare dies at New Place, his home in Stratford-upon-Avon, and is buried in Holy Trinity Church

1621

John Donne, England's leading Metaphysical poet, becomes dean of St Paul's

1623

John Heminge and Henry Condell publish thirty-six Shakespeare plays in the First Folio

1633

George Herbert's only volume of poems, *The Temple*, is published posthumously

1637

John Milton's *Lycidas* is published in memory of a Cambridge friend, Edward King

1667

Paradise Lost is published, earning its author John Milton just £10

1669

Samuel Pepys ends his diary, after only writing it for nine years

1678

Part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, written during John Bunyan's two spells in Bedford Gaol, is published and is immediately popular

1688

Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko* makes an early protest against the inhumanity of the African slave trade

1690

John Locke publishes his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, arguing that all knowledge is based on experience

1702

The Augustan Age begins in English literature, claiming comparison with the equivalent flowering under Augustus Caesar

1709

The *Tatler* launches a new style of journalism in Britain's coffee houses, followed two years later by the *Spectator*

1710

25-year-old George Berkeley attacks Locke in his *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*

1712

Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* introduces a delicate vein of mock-heroic in English poetry

1719

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, with its detailed realism, can be seen as the first English novel

1726

Jonathan Swift sends his hero on a series of bitterly satirical travels in *Gulliver's Travels*

1739

David Hume publishes his *Treatise of Human Nature*, in which he applies to the human mind the principles of experimental science

1747

Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* begins the correspondence that grows into the longest novel in the English language

1749

Henry Fielding introduces a character of lasting appeal in the lusty but good-hearted Tom Jones

1751

English poet Thomas Gray publishes his *Elegy written in a Country Church Yard*

1755

Samuel Johnson publishes his magisterial *Dictionary of the English Language*

1758

James Woodforde, an English country parson with a love of food and wine, begins a detailed diary of everyday life

1759

Laurence Sterne publishes the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, beginning with the scene at the hero's conception

1762

Fingal, supposedly by the medieval poet Ossian, is a forgery in the spirit of the times by James MacPherson

1763

James Boswell meets Samuel Johnson for the first time, in the London bookshop of Thomas Davies

1764

English historian Edward Gibbon, sitting among ruins in Rome, conceives the idea of *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

English author Horace Walpole provides an early taste of Gothic thrills in his novel *Castle of Otranto*

1768

A Society of Gentlemen in Scotland begins publication of the immensely successful *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

1770

17-year-old Thomas Chatterton, later hailed as a significant poet, commits suicide in a London garret

1773

Oliver Goldsmith's play *She Stoops to Conquer* is produced in London's Covent Garden theatre

Samuel Johnson and James Boswell undertake a journey together to the western islands of Scotland

1774

Encouraged by Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine emigrates to America and settles in Philadelphia

1776

English historian Edward Gibbon publishes the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

Scottish economist Adam Smith analyzes the nature and causes of the *Wealth of Nations*

1777

Richard Brinsley Sheridan's second play, *The School for Scandal*, is an immediate success in London's Drury Lane theatre

1789

William Blake publishes *Songs of Innocence*, a volume of his poems with every page etched and illustrated by himself

In his *Principles* Jeremy Bentham defines 'utility' as that which enhances pleasure and reduces pain

1790

Anglo-Irish politician Edmund Burke publishes *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, a blistering attack on recent events across the Channel

1791

Scottish poet Robert Burns publishes *Tam o' Shanter*, in which a drunken farmer has an alarming encounter with witches

Thomas Paine publishes the first part of *The Rights of Man*, his reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

1792

English author Mary Wollstonecraft publishes a passionately feminist work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Thomas Paine moves hurriedly to France, to escape a charge of treason in England for opinions expressed in his *Rights of Man*

1794

William Blake's volume *Songs of Innocence and Experience* includes his poem 'Tyger! Tyger! burning bright'

1795

Thomas Paine publishes his completed *Age of Reason*, an attack on conventional Christianity

1797

Samuel Taylor Coleridge says that while writing *Kubla Khan* he is interrupted by 'a person on business from Porlock'

1798

English poets Wordsworth and Coleridge jointly publish *Lyrical Ballads*, a milestone in the Romantic movement

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' is published in *Lyrical Ballads*