

Thursday, May 31.

If you see the papers, you will find that there was a warm debate yesterday on a fresh proposal from Harley for pacification with America; in which the ministers were roundly reproached with their boasts of the returning zeal of the colonies; and which, though it ought by their own accounts to be so much nearer complete, they could not maintain to be at all effectual; though even yesterday a report was revived of a second victory of lord Cornwallis. This debate prevented another on the marriage-bill, which C. F. wants to get repealed, and which he told me he was going to labour. I mention this from the circumstance of the moment when he told me so. I had been to see if lady A—— was come to town: as I came up St. James's-street, I saw a cart and porters at C——'s door; coppers and old chests of drawers loading.—In short, his success at Faro has awakened his host of creditors—but unless his bank had swelled to the size of the bank of England, it could not have yielded a sop apiece for each. Epsom too had been unpropitious—and one creditor has actually seized and carried off his goods, which did not seem worth removing. As I returned full of this scene, whom should I find sauntering by my own door but C.? He came up and talked to me at the coach-window, on the marriage bill, with as much sangfroid as if he knew nothing of what had happened.—I have no admiration for insensibility to one's own faults, especially when committed out of vanity. Perhaps the whole philosophy consisted in the commission. If *you* could have been as much to blame, the last thing you would bear well would be your own reflections. The more marvellous F——'s parts are, the more one is provoked at his follies, which comfort so many rascals and blockheads; and make all that is admirable and amiable in him, only matter of regret to those who like him as I do.

I did intend to settle at Strawberry on Sunday; but must return on Thursday, for a party made at Marlborough-house for princess Amelia. I am continually tempted to retire entirely—and should—if I did not see how very unfit English tempers are for living quite out of the world. We grow abominably peevish and severe on others, if we are not constantly rubbed against and polished by them. I need not name friends and relations of yours and mine as instances. My prophecy on the short reign of Faro is verified already. The bankers find that all the calculated advantages of the
game

game do not balance pinchbeck parolis and debts of honourable women.—The bankers, I think, might have had a previous and more generous reason, the very bad air of holding a bank :—but this country is as hardened against the petite morale, as against the greater.—What should I think of the world if I quitted it entirely?

L E T T E R CXXII.

Strawberry-hill, June 3, 1781.

YOU know I have more philosophy about *you* than courage; yet for once I have been very brave. There was an article in the papers last week that said, a letter from Jersey mentioned apprehensions of being attacked by 4000 French.—Do you know that I treated the paragraph with scorn?—No, no: I am not afraid for your island, when you are at home in it, and have had time to fortify it, and have sufficient force. No, no: it will not be surpris'd when you are there, and when our fleet is returned, and Digby before Brest.—However, with all my valour, I could not help going to your brother to ask a few questions—but he had heard of no such letter. The French would be foolish indeed if they ran their heads a third time against your rocks, when watched by the most vigilant of all governors. Your nephew G—— is arriv'd with the fleet: my door opened t'other morning; I looked towards the common horizon of heads, but was a foot and a half below any face. The handsomest giant in the world made but one step cross my room; and, seizing my hand, gave it such a robust gripe, that I squall'd; for he crush'd my poor chalk-stones to powder. When I had recovered from the pain of his friendly salute, I said, “It must be G—— C——: and yet is it possible?—Why, it is not fifteen months ago since you was but six feet high.”—In a word, he is within an inch of Robert and Edward, with larger limbs, almost as handsome as Hugh, with all the bloom of youth; and—in short, another of those comely sons of Anak, the breed of which your brother and lady Hertford have piously restored for the comfort of the daughters of Sion. He is delighted with having tapp'd his warfare with the siege of Gibraltar, and burns to stride to America. The town, he says, is totally destroy'd; and between two and three hundred persons were killed.—Well! it is pity lady Hertford has done breeding: we shall want such a race to re-people even the ruins we do not lose! The

rising generation does give one some hopes.—I confine myself to some of this year's birds. The young William Pitt has again displayed paternal oratory. The other day, on the commission of accounts, he answered lord North, and tore him limb from limb. If C. F. could feel, one should think such a rival, with an unspotted character, would rouse him—What, if a Pitt and Fox should again be rivals!—A still newer orator has appeared in the India business, a Mr. Banks, and against lord North too—and with a merit, that the very last crop of orators left out of their rubric—modesty. As young Pitt is modest too, one would hope some genuine English may revive!

Tuesday, June 5.

THIS is the season of opening my cake-house. I have chosen a bad spot, if I meant to retire; and calculated ill, when I made it a puppet-show.

Last week we had two or three mastiff-days; for they were fiercer than our common dog-days. It is cooled again; but rain is as great a rarity as in Egypt; and father Thames is so far from being a Nile, that he is dying for thirst himself.—But it would be prudent to reserve paragraphs of weather till people are gone out of town; for then I can have little to send you else from hence.

Berkeley-square, June 6.

As soon as I came to town to-day Le Texier called on me, and told me he has miscarried of Pygmalion. The expence would have mounted to 150*l*. and he could get but 60 subscribers at a guinea apiece. I am glad his experience and success have taught him thrift—I did not expect it. Sheridan had a heavier miscarriage last night. The two Vestris had imagined a fête; and, concluding that whatever they designed would captivate the town and its purses, were at the expence of 1200*l*. and, distributing tickets at two guineas apiece, disposed of not two hundred. It ended in a bad opera, that began three hours later than usual, and at quadruple the price. There were bushels of dead flowers, lamps, country dances—and a cold supper—Yet they are not abused as poor Le Texier was last year.

June 8.

I CONCLUDE my letter, and I hope our present correspondence, very agreeably; for your brother told me last night, that you have written to lord
Hillsborough

Hillsborough for leave to return. If all our governors could leave their dominions in as good plight, it were lucky. Your brother owned, what the gazette with all its circumstances cannot conceal, that lord Cornwallis's triumphs have but increased our losses, without leaving any hopes. I am told that his army, which when he parted from Clinton amounted to 17,000 men, does not now contain above as many hundred, except the detachments. The gazette, to my sorrow and your greater sorrow, speaks of colonel ¹ O'Hara having received two dangerous wounds.

Princess Amelia was at Marlborough-house last night, and played at Faro till twelve o'clock—There ends the winter campaign!—I go to Strawberry-hill to-morrow; and I hope, à l'Irlandoise, that the next letter I write to you—will be not to write to you any more.

LETTER CXXIII.

Strawberry-hill, September 16, 1781.

I AM not surpris'd that such a mind as yours cannot help expressing gratitude: it would not be your mind, if it could command that sensation as triumphantly as it does your passions. Only remember that the expression is unnecessary. I do know that you feel the entire friendship I have for you; nor should I love you so well if I was not persuaded of it. There never was a grain of any thing romantic in my friendship for you. We loved one another from children, and as so near relations; but my friendship grew up with your virtues, which I admired though I did not imitate. We had scarce one in common but disinterestedness. Of the reverse we have both, I may say, been so absolutely clear, that there is nothing so natural and easy as the little moneyed transactions between us; and therefore knowing how perfectly indifferent I am upon that head, and remembering the papers I showed you, and what I said to you when I saw you last, I am sure you will have the complaisance never to mention thanks more.—Now to answer your questions.

As to coming to you, as that feu gregois lord George Gordon has

¹ Now general O'Hara, governor of Gibraltar.

given up the election to my great joy, I can come to you on Sunday next. It is true, I had rather you visited your regiment first, for this reason: I expect summons to Nuneham every day; and besides, having never loved two journeys instead of one, I grow more covetous of my time, as I have little left, and therefore had rather take Park-place, going and coming, on my way to lord Harcourt.

I don't know a word of news public or private. I am deep in my dear old friend's ¹ papers. There are some very delectable; and though I believe, nay know, I have not quite all, there are many which I almost wonder, after the little delicacy they ² have shown, ever arrived to my hands. I dare to say they will not be quite so just to the public; for though I consented that the correspondence with Voltaire should be given to the editors of his works, I am persuaded that there are many passages at least which they will suppress, as very contemptuous to his chief votaries—I mean of the votaries to his sentiments—for, like other heresiarchs, he despised his tools. If I live to see the edition, it will divert me to collate it with what I have in my hands.

You are the person in the world the fittest to encounter the meeting you mention for the choice of a bridge ³. You have temper and patience enough to bear with fools and false taste. I, so unlike you, have learnt some patience with both sorts too, but by a more summary method than by waiting to instill reason into them. Mine is only by leaving them to their own vagaries, and by despairing that sense and taste should ever extend themselves. Adieu!

P. S. In Voltaire's letters are some bitter traits on the king of Prussia, which, as he is defender of their no faith, I conclude will be rayés too.

¹ Madame du Deffand, who died in September 1781, and left all her papers to Mr. Walpole.

² He means the executors of madame du Deffand.

³ The bridge over the Thames at Henley, to whose singular beauty the good taste of Mr. Conway materially contributed.

LETTER CXXIV.

Berkeley-square, Sunday morning, November 18, 1781.

I HAVE been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have any thing more to do with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew fix of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals, behind the scenes, in the green-room, and acquainted with half the company. The Count of Narbonne was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Young has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

LETTER CXXV.

Strawberry-hill, September 17, 1782.

I HAD not time yesterday to say what I had to say about your coming hither. I should certainly be happy to see you and lady Ailesbury at any time; but it would be unconscionable to expect it when you have scarce a whole day in a month to pass at your own house, and to look after your own works. Friends, I know, lay as great stress upon trifles as upon serious points; but as there never was a more sincere attachment than mine, so it is the most reasonable one too, for I always think for you more than myself. Do whatever you have to do, and be assured, That is what I like best that you should do. The present hurry cannot last always. Your present object is to show how much more fit you are for your post¹ than

¹ Mr. Conway was now commander in chief.

any other man, by which you will do infinite service too; and will throw a great many private acts of good-nature and justice into the account. Do you think I would stand in the way of any of these things? and that I am not aware of them? Do not think about me. If it suits you at any moment, come. Except Sunday next, when I am engaged to dine abroad, I have nothing to do till the middle of October, when I shall go to Nuneham; and, going or coming, may possibly catch you at Park-place.

If I am not quite credulous about your turning smoke into gold^{*}, it is perhaps because I am very ignorant. I like Mr. M——— extremely; and though I have lived so long that I have little confidence, I think you could not have chosen one more likely to be faithful. I am sensible that my kind of distrust would prevent all great enterprises—and yet I cannot but fear, that unless one gives one's self up entirely to the pursuit of a new object, the risk must be doubled. But I will say no more; for I do not even wish to dissuade you, as I am sure I understand nothing of the matter, and therefore mean no more than to keep your discretion awake.

The tempest of Monday night alarmed me too for the fleet: and as I have nothing to do but to care, I feel for individuals as well as for the public; and think of all those who may be lost, and of all those who may be made miserable by such loss. Indeed I care most for individuals—for as to the public, it seems to be totally insensible to every thing!

I know nothing worth repeating; and having now answered all your letter, shall bid you good night.

L E T T E R CXXVI.

Strawberry-hill, August 15, 1783.

THE address from the volunteers is curious indeed, and upon the first face a little Irish. What! would they throw off our parliament, and yet

^{*} Alluding to the coke ovens, for which Mr. Conway afterwards obtained a patent.

amend it? It is like correcting a question in the house of commons, and then voting against it. But I suppose they rather mean to increase confusion here, that we may not be at leisure to impede their progress—at least this may be the intention of the leaders. Large bodies are only led by being in earnest themselves, when their leaders are not so:—but my head is not clear enough to apply it to different matters—nor could I do any good if it were. Our whole system is become a disjointed chaos—and time must digest it—or blow it up shortly.—I see no way into it—nor expect any thing favourable but from chance, that often stops confusion on a sudden. To restore us by any system, it would require a single head furnished with wisdom, temper, address, fortitude, full and undivided power, and sincere patriotism divested of all personal views. Where is that prodigy to be found?—and how should it have the power, if it had all the rest? And if it had the power, how could it be divested of that power again? And if it were not, how long would it retain its virtues? Power and wisdom would soon unite, like Antony and Augustus, to annihilate their colleague virtue, for being a poor creature like Lepidus. In short, the mass of matter is too big for me: I am going out of the world, and cannot trouble myself about it. I do think of your part in it, and wish to preserve you where you are, for the benefits that you may contribute. I have a high opinion of Mr. F. and believe that by frankness you may become real friends; which would be greatly advantageous to the country. There is no competition in my mind where you are concerned: but F. is the minister with whom I most wish you united—indeed, to all the rest I am indifferent or adverse—but, besides his superior abilities, he has a liberality of acting that is to my taste. It is like my father's plainness, and has none of the paltry little finesses of a statesman.

Your parties do not tempt me, because I am not well enough to join in them: nor yet will they stop me, though I had rather find only you and lady A. and Mrs. D. I am not seriously ill—nay, am better upon the whole than I was last year: but I perceive decays enough in myself to be sensible that the scale may easily be inclined to the worst side. This observation makes me very indifferent to every thing that is not much at my heart. Consequently what concerns you is, as it has always been for above forty years, a principal object. Adieu!

LETTER CXXVII.

Berkeley-square, Wednesday, May 5, 1784.

YOUR cherries, for aught I know, may, like Mr. Pitt, be half ripe before others are in blossom; but at Twickenham, I am sure, I could find dates and pomegranates on the quickset hedges, as soon as a cherry in swaddling-clothes on my walls. The very leaves on the horse-chestnuts are little snotty-nosed things, that cry and are afraid of the north-wind, and cling to the bough as if *old poker* was coming to take them away. For my part, I have seen nothing like spring but a chimney-sweeper's garland; and yet I have been three days in the country—and the consequence was, that I was glad to come back to town. I do not wonder that you feel differently. Any thing is warmth and verdure when compared to poring over memorials. In truth, I think you will be much happier for being out of parliament. You could do no good there; you have no views of ambition to satisfy;—and when neither duty nor ambition calls (I do not condescend to name avarice, which never is to be satisfied, nor deserves to be reasoned with, nor has any place in your breast) I cannot conceive what satisfaction an elderly man can have in listening to the passions or follies of others: nor is eloquence such a banquet, when one knows that, whoever the cooks are, whatever the sauces, one has eaten as good beef or mutton before—and, perhaps, as well dressed. It is surely time to live for one's self, when one has not a vast while to live; and you, I am persuaded, will live the longer for leading a country life. How much better to be planting, nay, making experiments on smoke (if not too dear), than reading applications from officers, a quarter of whom you could not serve, nor content three quarters! You had not time for necessary exercise; and, I believe, would have blinded yourself. In short, if you will live in the air all day, be totally idle, and not read or write a line by candle-light, and retrench your suppers, I shall rejoice in your having nothing to do but that dreadful punishment, pleasing yourself. Nobody has any claims on you; you have satisfied every point of honour; you have no cause for being particularly grateful to the opposition; and you want no excuse for living for yourself. Your resolutions on œconomy are not only prudent, but just—and, to say the truth, I believe that if you had continued at the head of the army you would have ruined yourself. You have too much generosity

refity to have curbed yourself, and would have had too little time to attend to doing so. I know by myself how pleasant it is to have laid up a little for those I love, for those that depend on me, and for old servants. Moderate wishes may be satisfied—and, which is still better, are less liable to disappointment. I am not preaching, nor giving advice—but congratulating you:—and it is certainly not being selfish, when I rejoice at your being thrown by circumstances into a retired life, though it will occasion my seeing less of you. But I have always preferred what was most for your own honour and happiness; and as you taste satisfaction already, it will not diminish, for they are the first moments of passing from a busy life to a quiet one that are the most irksome. You have the felicity of being able to amuse yourself with what the grave world calls trifles—but as gravity does not happen to be wisdom, trifles are full as important as what is respected as serious; and more amiable, as generally more innocent. Most men are bad or ridiculous, sometimes both:—at least my experience tells me, what my reading had told me before, that they are so in a great capital of a sinking country. If immortal fame is his object, a Cato may die—but he will do no good. If only the preservation of his virtue had been his point, he might have lived comfortably at Athens, like Atticus—who, by the way, happens to be as immortal; though I will give him credit for having had no such view. Indeed, I look on this country as so irrecoverably on the verge of ruin, from its enormous debt, from the loss of America, from the almost as certain prospect of losing India, that my pride would dislike to be an actor when the crash may happen.

You seem to think that I might send you more news. So I might, if I would talk of elections: but those, you know, I hate; as, in general, I do all details. How Mr. Fox has recovered such a majority I do not guess; still less do I comprehend how there could be so many that had not voted, after the poll had lasted so long. Indeed, I should be sorry to understand such mysteries.—Of new peers, or new elevations, I hear every day, but am quite ignorant which are to be true. Rumour always creates as many as the king, when he makes several. In fact, I do know nothing.

Adieu!

P. S. The summer is come to town, but I hope is gone into the country too.

LETTER CXXVIII.

Strawberry-hill, May 21, 1784.

I AM perfectly satisfied with your epitaph¹, and would not have a syllable altered. It tells exactly what it means to say, and, that truth being an encomium, wants no addition or amplification. Nor do I love late language for modern facts, nor will European tongues perish since printing has been discovered. I should approve French least of all. It would be a kind of insult to the vanquished: and besides, the example of a hero should be held out to his countrymen rather than to their enemies. You must take care to have the word *caused*, in the last line but one, spelt rightly, and not *caus'd*.

I know nothing of the parliament but what you saw in the papers. I came hither yesterday, and am transported, like you, with the beauty of the country; aye, and with its perfumed air too. The *lilac-tide* scents even the insides of the rooms.

I desired lady A—— to carry you lord Melcombe's Diary. It is curious indeed, not so much from the secrets it blabs, which are rather characteristic than novel, but from the wonderful folly of the author, who was so fond of talking of himself, that he tells all he knew of himself, though scarce an event that does not betray his profligacy; and (which is still more surprising that he should disclose) almost every one exposes the contempt in which he was held, and his consequential disappointments and disgraces!—Was ever any man the better for another's experience?—What a lesson is here against versatility!

I, who have lived through all the scenes unfolded, am entertained—but I should think that to younger readers half the book must be unintelligible. He explains nothing but the circumstances of his own situation; and though he touches on many important periods, he leaves them undeveloped, and often undetermined. It is diverting to hear him rail at lord Halifax and others, for the very kind of double-dealing which he relates coolly of himself in the next page. Had he gone backwards, he might

¹ An epitaph for the monument, erected by the States of Jersey, to the memory of major Pearson, killed in the attack of that island by the French, in January 1781.

have given half-a-dozen volumes of his own life with similar anecdotes and variations.

I am most surpris'd, that when self-love is the whole ground-work of the performance, there should be little or no attempt at shining as an author, though he was one. As he had so much wit too, I am amazed that not a feature of it appears. The discussion in the Appendix, on the late prince's question for increase of allowance, is the only part in which there is sense or honesty.

There is, in the imperfect account of Rochfort, a strong circumstance or two that pleas'd me much. There are many passages that will displease several others throughout.

Mr. Coxe's Travels are very different: plain, clear, sensible, instructive, and entertaining. It is a noble work, and precious to me who delight in quartos: the two volumes contain twelve hundred pages—I have already devour'd a quarter, though I have had them but three days.

[The rest of this letter is lost.]

LETTER CXXIX.

Strawberry-hill, June 25, 1784.

I CAN answer you very readily in your own tone, that is, about weather and country grievances, and without one word of news or politics; for I know neither, nor enquire of them. I am very well content to be a Strulbrug, and to *exist* after I have done *being*: and I am still better pleas'd that you are in the same way of thinking, or of not thinking; for I am sure both your health and your mind will find the benefits of living for yourself and family only. It were not fit that the young should concentrate themselves in so narrow a circle—nor do the young seem to have any such intention. Let them mend or mar the world as they please—the world takes its own way upon the whole; and though there may be an uncommon swarm of animalculæ for a season, things return into their own channel from their own bias, before any effectual nostrum of fumigation is discovered. In the mean time I am for giving all due weight to

to local grievances, though with no natural turn towards attending to them:—but they serve for conversation. We have no newly-invented grubs to eat our fruit—indeed I have no fruit to be eaten—but I should not lament if the worms would eat my gardener, who, you know, is so bad an one, that I never have any thing in my garden. I am now waiting for dry weather to cut my hay—though nature certainly never intended hay should be cut dry, as it always rains all June.—But here is a worse calamity: one is never safe by day or night: Mrs. Wallingham, who has bought your brother's late house at Ditton, was robbed a few days ago in the high road, within a mile of home, at seven in the evening. The *diminorum gentium* pilfer every thing. Last night they stole a couple of yards of lead off the pediment of the door of my cottage. A gentleman at Putney, who has three men servants, had his house broken open last week, and lost some fine miniatures, which he valued so much, that he would not hang them up. You may imagine what a pain this gives me in my bawbles! I have been making the round of my fortifications this morning, and ordering new works.

I am concerned for the account you give me of ———. Life does not appear to be such a jewel as to preserve it carefully for its own sake. I think the same of its *good things*: if they do not procure amusement or comfort, I doubt they only produce the contrary.—Yet it is silly to refine; for, probably, whatever any man does by choice, he knows will please him best, or at least will prevent greater uneasiness. I, therefore, rather retract my concern; for with a vast fortune ——— might certainly do what he would—and if, at his age, he can wish for more than that fortune will obtain, I may pity his taste or temper: but I shall think that you and I are much happier who can find enjoyments in an humbler sphere, nor envy those who have no time for trifling. I, who have never done any thing else, am not at all weary of my occupation. Even three days of continued rain have not put me out of humour or spirits. C'est beaucoup dire for an Anglois. Adieu!

LETTER CXXX.

Strawberry-hill, June 30, 1784.

INSTEAD of coming to you, I am thinking of packing up and going to town for winter, so desperate is the weather! I found a great fire at Mrs. Clive's this evening, and Mr. Rafter hanging over it like a smoked ham. They tell me my hay will be all spoiled for want of cutting; but I had rather it should be destroyed by standing than by being mowed, as the former will cost me nothing but the crop, and 'tis very dear to make nothing but a water fouchy of it.

You know I have lost a niece, and found another nephew: he makes the fifty-fourth, reckoning both sexes. We are certainly an affectionate family, for of late we do nothing but marry one another.

Have not you felt a little twinge in a remote corner of your heart on lady ——'s death? She dreaded death so extremely, that I am glad she had not a moment to be sensible of it. I have a great affection for sudden deaths—They save one's self and every body else a deal of ceremony.

The duke and duchess of M—— breakfasted here on Monday, and seemed much pleased, though it rained the whole time with an Egyptian darkness. I should have thought there had been deluges enough to destroy all Egypt's other plagues; but the newspapers talk of locusts—I suppose, relations of your beetles, though probably not so fond of green fruit; for the scene of their campaign is Queen-square, Westminster, where there certainly has not been an orchard since the reign of Canute.

I have, at last, seen an air balloon—just as I once did see a tiny review, by passing one accidentally on Hounslow-heath. I was going last night to lady Onslow at Richmond; and over Mr. Cambridge's field I saw a bundle in the air not bigger than the moon, and she herself could not have descended with more composure if she had expected to find Endymion fast asleep. It seemed to 'light on Richmond-hill; but Mrs. H—— was going by, and her coiffeure prevented my seeing it alight. The papers say, that a balloon has been made at Paris, representing the castle of Stockholm, in compliment to the king of Sweden, but that they were afraid to
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let it off—So, I suppose, it will be served up to him in a dessert. No great progress surely is made in these airy navigations, if they are still afraid of risking the necks of two or three subjects for the entertainment of a visiting sovereign. There is seldom a feu de joie for the birth of a dauphin that does not cost more lives. I thought royalty and science never haggled about the value of blood when experiments are in question.

I shall wait for summer before I make you a visit. Though I dare to say that you have converted your smoke-kilns into a manufacture of balloons, pray do not erect a Strawberry castle in the air for my reception, if it will cost a pismire a hair of its head. Good-night!—I have ordered my bed to be heated as hot as an oven, and Tonton and I must go into it.

L E T T E R CXXXI.

Strawberry-hill, August 14, 1784.

AS lady C. offers to be postman, I cannot resist writing a line, though I have not a word to say. In good sooth, I know nothing, hear of nothing but robberies and house-breaking; consequently never think of ministers, India directors, and such honest men. Mrs. Clive has been broken open, and Mr. Raftor miscarried and died of the fright. Lady —— has lost all her liveries and her temper, and lady —— has cried her eyes out on losing a lurch and almost her wig.—In short, as I do not love exaggeration, I do not believe there have been above threescore highway robberies within this week, fifty-seven houses that have been broken open, and two hundred and thirty that are to be stripped on the first opportunity. We are in great hopes, however, that the king of Spain, now he has demolished Algiers, the metropolitan see of thieves, will come and bombard Richmond, Twickenham, Hampton-court, and all the suffragan cities that swarm with pirates and banditti, as he has a better knack at destroying vagabonds than at recovering his own.

Ireland is in a blessed way; and as if the climate infected every body that sets foot there, the viceroy's aides de camp have *blundered* into a riot, that will set all the humours afloat.

I wish

I wish you joy of the summer being come now it is gone, which is better than not coming at all. I hope lady C. will return with an account of your all being perfectly well. Adieu!

L E T T E R CXXXII.

Strawberry-hill, October 15, 1784.

AS I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself lady A. mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon—I suppose Blanchard's, that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts*: only t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the gentleman that used to write political ship-news, in that style, which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next, I discovered an alliance between bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of an universal language, the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our sea-

ports to become *deserted villages*, and Salisbury-plain, Newmarket-heath, (another canvas for alteration of ideas), and all downs (but *the Downs*) arising into dock-yards for aerial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations—But to come to my ship-news.

The good balloon Dædalus, capt. Wing-ate, will fly in a few days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

Arrived on Brand-sands, the Vulture, capt. Nabob; the Tortoise snow, from Lapland; the Pet-en-l'air, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from mount Etna, fir W. Hamilton commander; the Tympany, Mongelfier; and the Mine-A-in-a-bandbox, from the cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from mount Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon, took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phoenix is to be cut down to a second rate.—In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless.—But enough of my fooleries, for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Sunday night, Nov. 28, 1784.

I HAVE received the parcel of papers you sent me¹, which I conclude come from lord Strafford, and will apply them as well as I possibly can, you may be sure—but with little of doing any good: humanity is no match for cruelty. There are now and then such angelic beings as Mr. Hanway and Mr. Howard; but our race in general is pestilently bad and malevolent. I have been these two years wishing to promote my excellent Mr. Porter's plan for alleviating the woes of chimney-sweepers, but never could make impression on three people; on the contrary, have generally caused a smile.

G—C—'s intelligence of hostilities commenced between the Dutch

¹ Against cruelty to dogs.

and Imperialists makes me suppose that France will support the former—or could they resist? Yet I had heard that France would not. Some have thought, as I have done, that a combination of partition would happen between Austria, France, and Prussia, the modern law of nations for avoiding wars. I know nothing: so my conjectures may all be erroneous; especially as one argues from reason; a very inadequate judge, as it leaves passions, caprices, and accidents, out of its calculation. It does not seem the interest of France, that the emperor's power should increase in their neighbourhood and extend to the sea. Consequently it is France's interest to protect Holland in concert with Prussia. This last is a transient power, and may determine on the death of the present king; but the Imperial is a permanent force, and must be the enemy of France, however present connections may incline the scale.

In any case, I hope we shall no way be hooked into the quarrel; not only from the impotence of our circumstances, but as I think it would decide the loss of Ireland, which seems tranquillizing: but should we have any bickering with France, she would renew the manœuvres she practised so fatally in America. These are my politics; I do not know with whose they coincide or disagree, nor does it signify a straw. Nothing will depend on my opinion; nor have I any opinion about them, but when I have nothing at all to do that amuses me more, or nothing else to fill a letter.

I can give you a sample of my idleness, which may divert lady A—and your academy of arts and sciences for a minute in the evening. It came into my head yesterday to send a card to lady Lyttelton, to ask when she would be in town—here it is in an heroic epistle:

From a castle as vast—as the castles on signs;
 From a hill that all Africa's—mole-hills outshines,
 This epistle is sent to a cottage so small,
 That the door cannot open, if you stand in the hall,
 To a lady, who would be fifteen, if her knight
 And old swain were as young as Methusalem quite:
 It comes to inquire—not whether her eyes
 Are as radiant as ever—but how many sighs
 He must vent to the rocks and the echos around,
 (Though nor echo nor rock in the parish is found)

H h 2

Before

Before she obdurate his passion will meet—
His passion to see her in Portugal-street.

As the sixth line goes rather too near the core, do not give a copy of it: however, I should be sorry if it displeased; though I do not believe it will, but be taken with good-humour as it was meant¹.

L E T T E R CXXXIV.

Strawberry-hill, October 6, 1785.

I WONDERED I did not hear from you, as I concluded you returned. You have made me good amends by the entertaining story of your travels. If I were not too disjointed for long journeys, I should like to see much of what you have seen; but if I had the agility of Vestrois, I would not purchase all that pleasure for my eyes at the expence of my unsociability, which could not have borne the hospitality you experienced. It was always death to me, when I did travel England, to have lords and ladies receive me and shew me their castles, instead of turning me over to their house-keeper: it hindered my seeing any thing, and I was the whole time meditating my escape: but lady A. and you are not such sensitive plants, nor shrink and close up if a stranger holds out a hand.

I don't wonder you was disappointed with Jarvis's windows at New College: I had foretold their miscarriage: the old and the new are as mismatched as an orange and a lemon, and destroy each other; nor is there room enough to retire back and see half of the new; and sir Joshua's wafhy Virtues make the Nativity a dark spot from the darkness of the Shepherds, which happened, as I knew it would, from most of Jarvis's colours not being transparent.

¹ It was taken in perfect good humour; and she returned the following answer, which Mr. Walpole owned was better than his address: E.

Remember'd (tho' old) by a wit and a beau!
I shall fancy, ere long, I'm a Ninon l'Enclos.
I must feel impatient such kindness to meet,
And shall hasten my flight into Portugal-street.

Ripley cottage, 28th Nov.

I

I have

I have not seen the improvements at Blenheim. I used to think it one of the ugliest places in England; a giant's castle who had laid waste all the country round him. Every body now allows the merit of Brown's achievements there.

Of all your survey I wish most to see Beau Desert. Warwick-castle, and Stowe, I know by heart:—the first I had rather possess than any seat upon earth—not that I think it the most beautiful of all, though charming, because I am so intimate with all its proprietors for the last thousand years.

I have often and often studied the new plan of Stowe: it is pompous; but though the wings are altered, they are not lengthened. Though three parts of the edifices in the garden are bad, they enrich that insipid country, and the vastness pleases me more than I can defend.

I rejoice that your jaunt has been serviceable to lady A. The *charming-man** is actually with me; but neither he nor I can keep our promise incessantly. He expects two sons of his brother sir William, whom he is to pack up and send to the Peres de l'Oratoire at Paris. I expect lord and lady W. to-morrow, who are to pass a few days with me: but both the *charming-man* and I will be with you soon. I have no objection to a wintry visit: as I can neither ride nor walk, it is more comfortable when most of my time is passed within doors. If I continue perfectly well, as I am, I shall not settle in town till after Christmas: there will not be half a dozen persons there for whom I care a straw.

I know nothing at all. The peace between the Austrian harpy and the frogs is made. They were stout, and preferred being gobbled to parting with their money. At last, France offered to pay the money for them. The harpy blushed—for the first time—and would not take it, but signed the peace—and will plunder somebody else.

Have you got Boswell's most absurd enormous book?—The best thing in it is a bon mot of lord Pembroke. The more one learns of Johnson, the more preposterous assemblage he appears of strong sense, of the lowest

* Edward Jerningham, esq.

bigotry,

bigotry and prejudices, of pride, brutality, fretfulness, and vanity—and Boswell is the ape of most of his faults, without a grain of his sense. It is the story of a mountebank and his zany.

I forgot to say, that I wonder how, with your turn and knowledge and enterprize in scientific exploits, you came not to visit the duke of Bridgewater's operations—or did you omit them, because I should not have understood a word you told me? Adieu!

L E T T E R CXXXV.

Sunday night, June 18, 1786.

I SUPPOSE you have been swearing at the east wind for parching your verdure, and are now weeping for the rain that drowns your hay. I have these calamities in common, and my constant and particular one, people that come to see my house, which unfortunately is more in request than ever. Already I have had twenty-eight sets, have five more tickets given out, and yesterday before I had dined three German barons came. My house is a torment, not a comfort!

I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury on Friday, and was forced to send to town for a dress-coat and a sword. There were the prince of Wales, the prince of Mecklenburg, the duke of Portland, lord Clanbrassil, lord and lady Clermont, lord and lady Southampton, lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The prince of Mecklenburg went back to Windsor after coffee; and the prince and lord and lady Clermont to town after tea to hear some new French players at lady William Gordon's. The princess, lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at commerce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy, the princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated. She would not excuse me. I promised she should have an ode on her next birth-day; which diverted the prince—but all would not do—So, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning:

L. In

I.

In deathless odes for ever green
Augustus' laurels blow ;
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen
In warmer strains to flow.

II.

Oh ! why is Flaccus not alive
Your fav'rite scene to sing ?
To Gunnersbury's charms could give
His lyre immortal spring.

III.

As warm as his my zeal for you,
Great princess, could I show it :
But though you have a Horace too—
Ah, madam, he's no poet.

If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command ! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer :

“ I wish I had a name that could answer your pretty verses. Your yawning yesterday opened your vein for pleasing me ; and I return you my thanks, my good Mr. Walpole, and remain sincerely your friend,

AMELIA.”

I think this is very genteel at seventy-five.

Do you know that I have bought the Jupiter Serapis as well as the Julio Clodio ! Mr. ——— assures me he has seen six of the hand, and not one of them so fine or so well preserved. I am glad sir Joshua Reynolds saw no more excellence in the Jupiter than in the Clodio ; or the duke of Portland, I suppose, would have purchased it, as he has the vase for a thousand pounds. I would not change. I told sir W. Hamilton and the late duchess, when I never thought it would be mine, that I had rather have the head than the vase. I shall long for Mrs. D—— to make a bust to it,

* At the sale of the duchess dowager of Portland.

and then it will be still more valuable. I have deposited both the Illumination and the Jupiter in lady Di's cabinet¹, which is worthy of them—And here my collection winds up—I will not purchase trumpery after such jewels. Besides, every thing is much dearer in old age, as one has less time to enjoy. Good-night!

L E T T E R C X X X V I.

Strawberry-hill, October 29, 1786.

I WAS sorry not to be apprised of your intention of going to town, where I would have met you; but I knew it too late, both as I was engaged, and as you was to return so soon. I mean to come to Park-place in a week or fortnight: but I should like to know what company you expect, or do not expect; for I had rather fill up your vacancies, than be a supernumerary.

Lady O—— has sent me two charades made by col. F——: the first she says is very easy, the second very difficult. I have not come within sight of the easy one; and though I have a guess at the other, I do not believe I am right; and so I send them to you, who are master-general of the *Œdipuses*.

The first, that is so easy:

In concert, song, or serenade,
My first requires my second's aid.
To those residing near the pole
I would not recommend my whole.

The two last lines, I conclude, neither connect with the two first, nor will help one to decyphering them.

The difficult one:

Charades of all things are the worst,
But yet my best have been my first.
Who with my second are concern'd
Will to despise my whole, have learn'd.

¹ A cabinet at Strawberry-hill, ornamented with drawings by lady Diana Beauclerc.

This

This sounds like a good one, and therefore I will not tell you my solution; for, if it is wrong, it might lead you astray; and if it is right, it would prove the charade is not a good one.

Had I any thing better, I would not send you charades, unless for the name of the author.

I have had a letter from your brother, who tells me that he has his grandson S—— with him, who is a prodigy.—I say to myself,

—Prodigies are grown so frequent,
That they have lost their name——

I have seen prodigies in plenty of late—aye, and formerly too—but, divine as they have all been, each has had a mortal heel, and has trodden back a vast deal of their celestial path! I beg to be excused from any more credulity.

I am sorry you have lost your fac-totum——. I suppose he had discovered that he was too necessary to you. Every day cures one of reliance on others; and we acquire a prodigious stock of experience by the time that we shall cease to have occasion for any. Well! I am not clear, but making or solving charades is as wise as any thing we can do. I should pardon professed philosophers, if they would allow that their wisdom is only trifling, instead of calling their trifling, wisdom. Adieu! *

L E T T E R CXXXVII.

Strawberry-hill, June 17, 1787.

I HAVE very little to tell you since we met but disappointments, and those of no great consequence.

On Friday night lady P—— wrote to me that princess Lubomirski was to dine with her the next day, and desired to come in the morning to see Strawberry.—Well, my castle put on its robes, breakfast was prepared, and I shoved another company out of the house, who had a ticket for seeing it. The fun shone, my hay was cocked, we looked divinely—and at half an hour after two nobody came but a servant from lady P——, to say her

Polish altitude had sent her word she had another engagement in town that would keep her too late :—so lady P——'s dinner was addled ; and we had nothing to do, but, like good christians, if we chose it, to compel every body on the road, whether they chose it or not, to come in and eat our soup and biscuits. Methinks this *liberum veto* was rather impertinent, and I begin to think that the partition of Poland was very right.

Your brother has sent me a card for a ball on Monday, but I have excused myself. I have not yet compassed the whole circuit of my own garden, and I have had an inflammation in one of my eyes, and don't think I look as well as my house and my verdure ; and had rather see my hay-cocks, than the duchess of Polignac and madame Lubomirski. *The way to keep him*^{*} had the way to get me, and I could crawl to it, because I had an inclination ; but I have a great command of myself when I have no mind to do any thing. Lady Constant was worth an hundred *acs* and *ir/kis*.

Let me hear of you when you have nothing else to do ; though I suppose you have as little to tell as you see I had.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 11, 1787.

FROM violent contrary winds¹, and by your letter going to Strawberry-hill, whence I was come, I have but just received it, and perhaps shall only be able to answer it by snatches, being up to the chin in nephews and nieces.
* * * *

I find you knew nothing of the pacification when you wrote. When I saw your letter, I hoped it would tell me you was coming back, as your island is as safe as if it was situated in the Pacific Ocean, or at least as islands there used to be, till sir Joseph Banks chose to *put them up*. I sent you the good news on the very day before you wrote, though I imagined you would learn it by earlier intelligence. Well, I enjoy both your safety and your great success, which is enhanced by its being owing to your character and

¹ The first comedy represented at the theatre in Richmond-house.

² Mr. Conway was now in Jersey.

abilities. I hope the latter will be allowed to operate by those who have not quite so much of either.

I shall be wonderful glad to see little master Stonehenge¹ at Park-place: it will look in character there; but your own bridge is so stupendous in comparison, that hereafter the latter will be thought to have been a work of the Romans. Dr. Stukeley will burst his cerements to offer mistletoe in your temple—and Mason, on the contrary, will die of vexation and spite that he cannot have Caractacus acted on the spot—Peace to all such!—

—— but were there one whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,

he would immortalize you, for all you have been carrying on in Jersey, and for all you shall carry off. Inigo Jones, or Charlton, or somebody, I forget who, called Stonehenge chorea gigantum—this will be the chorea of the pigmies—and as I forget too what is Latin for Lilliputians, I will make a bad pun, and say,

—— portantur avari
Pigmalionis opes——

Pygmalion is as well-founding² a name for such a monarch as Oberon.—Pray do not disappoint me, but transport the cathedral³ of your island to your domain on our continent. I figure unborn antiquaries making pilgrimages to visit your bridge, your daughter's bridge⁴, and the druidic temple; and if I were not too old to have any imagination left, I would add a sequel to *Mi Li*⁵. Adieu!

¹ Mr. Walpole thus calls the small druidic temple discovered in Jersey, which the states of that island had presented to their governor general Conway to be transported to and erected at Park-place, with the following inscription: E

Pour des siècles caché aux regards des mortels,
Cet ancien monument, ces pierres, ces autels,
Où le sang des humains offert en sacrifice
Ruissela pour des dieux qu'enfanta le caprice;
Ce monument sans prix par son antiquité
Temoignera pour nous à la postérité,
Que dans tous les dangers Césaire eût un père
Attentif et vaillant, généreux et prospère,

Et redira CONWAY, aux siècles à venir,
Qu'en vertu du respect dû à ce souvenir,
Elle te fit ce don acquis à ta vaillance
Comme un juste tribut de sa reconnaissance.

² The druidic temple.

³ The key stones of the centre arch of the bridge at Henley are ornamented with heads of the Thames and Isis, designed by the hon. Mrs. Damer, and executed by her in Portland stone. E.

⁴ One of the Hieroglyphic Tales, containing a description of Park-place.

LETTER CXXXIX.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night.

I WRITE a few lines only to confirm the truth of much of what you will read in the papers from Paris. Worfe may already be come, or is expected every hour.

Mr. ——— and lady ——— called on me before dinner, after the post was gone out; and he showed me a letter from D——, who said two couriers arrived yesterday from the duke of Dorset and the duchess of Devonshire, the latter of whom was leaving Paris directly. Necker had been dismissed, and was thought to be set out for Geneva. Breteuil, who was at his country-house, had been sent for to succeed him. Paris was in an uproar; and, after the couriers had left it, firing of cannon was heard for four hours together. That must have been from the Bastile, as probably the tiers état were not so provided. It is shocking to imagine what may have happened in such a thronged city!

One of the couriers was stopped twice or thrice, as supposed to pass from the king; but redeemed himself by pretending to be dispatched by the tiers état. Madame de Calonne told D—— that the newly encamped troops desert by hundreds.

Here seems the egg to be hatched, and imagination runs away with the idea. I may fancy I shall hear of the king and queen leaving Versailles, like Charles I.—and then skips imagination six-and-forty years lower, and figures their fugitive majesties taking refuge in this country.

I have besides another idea. If the Bastile conquers, still is it impossible, considering the general spirit in the country, and the numerous fortified places in France, but some may be seized by the *diffidants*, and whole provinces be torn from the crown?—On the other hand, if the king prevails, what heavy despotism will the états, by their want of temper and moderation, have drawn on their country! They might have obtained many capital points, and removed great oppression—No French monarch will ever summon états again, if this moment has been thrown away.

Though I have stocked myself with such a set of visions for the event either way, I do not pretend to foresee what will happen. Penetration argues from reasonable probabilities; but chance and folly are apt to contradict calculation, and hitherto they seem to have full scope for action. One hears of no genius on either side, nor do symptoms of any appear. There will perhaps: such times and tempests bring forth, at least bring out, great men. I do not take the duke of Orleans or Mirabeau to be built du bois dont on les fait—no; nor monsieur Necker. He may be a great traitor, if he made the confusion designedly:—but it is a woful evasion, if the promised financier slips into a black politician. I adore liberty, but I would bestow it as honestly as I could; and a civil war, besides being a game of chance, is paying a very dear price for it.

For us, we are in most danger of a deluge; though I wonder we so frequently complain of long rains. The saying about St. Swithin is a proof of how often they recur; for proverbial sentences are the children of experience, not of prophecy. Good-night!—In a few days I shall send you a beautiful little poem¹ from the Strawberry press.

L E T T E R CXL.

Strawberry-hill, September 5, 1789.

YOU speak so unperemptorily of your motions, that I must direct to you at random: the most probable place where to hit you, I think, will be Goodwood; and I do address this thither, because I am impatient to thank you for your tale, which is very pretty and easy and genteel. It has made me make a reflection, and that reflection made six lines; which I send you, not as good, but as expressing my thoughts on your writing so well in various ways which you never practised when you was much younger.—Here they are:

The muse most wont to fire a youthful heart,
To gild *your* setting sun reserv'd her art;

¹ This was Bonner's Ghost.

To crown a life in virtuous labours past,
 Bestow'd her numbers, and her wit at last;
 And when your strength and eloquence retire,
 Your voice in notes harmonious shall expire.

The *swan* was too common a thought to be directly specified—and, perhaps, even to be alluded to—No matter—such a trifle is below criticism.

I am still here, in no uncertainty, God knows, about poor lady Dyfart, of whom there are not the smallest hopes. She grows weaker every day, and does actually still go out for the air, and may languish many days, though most probably will go off in a moment, as the water rises. She retains her senses perfectly, and as perfectly her unalterable calmness and patience, though fully sensible of her situation. At your return from Goodwood, I shall like to come to you, if you are unengaged, and ready to receive me. For the beauties of Park-place, I am too well acquainted with them, not, like all old persons about their cotemporaries, to think it preserves them long after they are faded; and I am so *unwalking*, that prospects are more agreeable to me when framed and glazed, and I look at them through a window. It is yourselves I want to visit, not your verdure. Indeed, except a parenthesis of scarce all August, there has been no temptation to walk abroad; and the tempter himself would not have persuaded me, if I could, to have climbed that long-lost mountain whence he could show one even the antipodes. It rained incessantly all June and all July; and now again we have torrents every day.

J——'s brother, the chevalier, is arrived from Paris, and does not diminish the horrors one hears every day. They are now in the capital dreading the sixteen thousand deserters who hover about them. I conclude, that when in the character of banditti the whole disbanded army have plundered and destroyed what they can, they will congregate into separate armies under different leaders, who will hang out different principles, and the kingdom will be a théâtre of civil wars; and, instead of liberty, the nation will get petty tyrants—perhaps petty kingdoms:—and when millions have suffered, or been sacrificed, the government will be no better than it was—all owing to the intemperance of the états, who might have obtained a good constitution, or at least one much meliorated, if they had set out with discretion

cretion and moderation. They have left too a sad lesson to despotic princes, who will quote this precedent of frantic états against assembling any more, and against all the examples of senates and parliaments that have preserved rational freedom.

Let me know when it will be convenient to you to receive me. Adieu!

L E T T E R C X L I.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night, July 1790.

IT is certainly not from having any thing to tell you, that I reply so soon, but as the most agreeable thing I can do in my confinement. The gout came into my heel the night before last, perhaps from the deluge and damp. I increased it yesterday by limping about the house with a party I had to breakfast. To-day I am lying on the settee, unable to walk alone, or even to put on a slipper. However, as I am much easier this evening, I trust it will go off.

I do not love disputes, and shall not argue with you about Bruce; but if you like him, you shall not choose an author for me. It is the most absurd, obscure, and tiresome book I know. I shall admire if you have a clear conception about most of the persons and matters in his work—but, in fact, I do not believe you have. Pray, can you distinguish between his *cock* and *hen* Heghes, and between all Yafouses and Ozoros?—and do you firmly believe that an old man and his son were sent for and put to death, because the king had run into a thorn-bush, and was forced to leave his clothes behind him? Is it your faith, that one of their Abyssinian majesties pleaded not being able to contribute towards sending for a new Abuna, because he had spent all his money at Venice in looking-glasses? And do you really think that Peter Paez was a Jack-of-all-trades, and built palaces and convents without assistance, and furnished them with his own hands? You, who are a little apt to contest most assertions, must have strangely let out your credulity! I could put forty questions to you as wonderful, and, for my part, could as soon credit

I am tired of railing at French barbarity and folly. They are more puerile
now

now serious, than when in the long paroxysm of gay levity. Legislators, a senate, to neglect laws, in order to annihilate coats of arms and liveries ! to pull down a king, and set up an emperor ! They are hastening to establish the tribunal of the prætorian guards ; for the sovereignty, it seems, is not to be hereditary. One view of their fête of the 14th I suppose is to draw money to Paris—and the consequence will be, that the deputies will return to the provinces drunk with independence and self-importance, and will commit fifty times more excesses, massacres, and devastations, than last year. George Selwyn says, that *monseigneur*, the king's brother, is the only man of rank from whom they cannot take a title.

How frantically have the French acted, and how rationally the Americans !—But Franklin and Washington were great men. None have appeared yet in France ; and Necker has only returned to make a wretched figure ! He is become as insignificant as his king ; his name is never mentioned, but now and then as disapproving something that is done. Why then does he stay ? Does he wait to strike some great stroke, when every thing is demolished ? His glory, which consisted in being minister though a protestant, is vanished by the destruction of popery ; the honour of which, I suppose, he will scarce assume to himself.

I have vented my budget, and now good night ! I feel almost as if I could walk up to bed.

L E T T E R CXLII.

Strawberry-hill, August 9, at night.

MR. N—— has offered to be postman to you ; *whereof*, though I have nothing, or as little as nothing, to say, I thought *as how* it would look kinder to send nothing in writing than by word of mouth.

Nothing the first. So the peace is made, and the stocks drank its health in a bumper ; but when they waked the next morning, they found they had reckoned without their host, and that their majesties the king of big Britain and the king of little Spain have agreed to make peace some time or other, if they can agree upon it ; and so the stocks drew in their horns : but having
great

great trust in some time or other, they only fell two pegs lower. I, who never believed there would be war, keep my prophetic stocks up to par, and my consolation still higher; for when Spanish pride truckles, and English pride has had the honour of bullying, I dare to say we shall be content with the ostensible triumph, as Spain will be with some secret article that will leave her much where she was before.—Vide Falkland's island.

Nothing the second. Miss ——'s match with lord ——. You asserted it so peremptorily, that, though I doubted it, I quoted you. Lo! it took its rise solely in poor old ——'s dotage, that still harps on conjunctions copulative—but now disavows it, as they say, on a remonstrance from her daughter.

Nothing the third. Nothing will come of nothing, says king Lear, and

Your humble servant

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER CXLIII.

Strawberry-hill, September 27, 1791.

YOUR letter was most welcome, as yours always are, and I answer it immediately, though our post comes in so late that this will not go away till to-morrow.—Nay, I write, though I shall see you on Sunday, and have not a tittle to tell you. I lead so insipid a life, that, though I am content with it, it can furnish me with nothing but repetitions. I scarce ever stir from home in a morning, and most evenings go and play at loto with the French at Richmond, where I am heartily tired of hearing of nothing but their absurd countrymen, absurd both democrates and aristocrates. Calonne sends them gross lies, that raise their hopes to the skies: and in two days they hear of nothing but new horrors and disappointments; and then, poor souls! they are in despair. I can say nothing to comfort them, but what I firmly believe, which is, that total anarchy must come on rapidly.—Nobody pays the taxes that are laid, and which, intended to produce eighty millions a month, do not bring in six. The new assembly

assembly will fall on the old, probably plunder the richest, and certainly disapprove of much they have done; for can eight hundred new ignorants approve of what has been done by twelve hundred almost as ignorant, and who were far from half agreeing?—And then their immortal constitution (which, besides, is to be mightily mended nine years hence) will die before it has cut any of its teeth but its grinders. The exiles are enraged at their poor king for saving his own life by a forced acceptance; and yet I know no obligation he has to his noblesse, who all ran away to save their own lives; not a gentleman, but the two poor gendarmes at Versailles, having lost their lives in his defence. I suppose La Fayette, Barnave, the Lameths, &c. will run away too, when the new tinkers and cobblers, of whom the present elect are and will be composed, proceed on the levelling system taught them by their predecessors, who, like other levellers, have taken good care of themselves. Good Dr. Priestley's friend, good monsieur Condorcet, has got a place in the treasury of 1000*l.* a year:—*ex uno disce omnes!*—And thus a set of rascals, who might, with temper and discretion, have obtained a very wholesome constitution, witness Poland! have committed infinite mischief, infinite cruelty, infinite injustice, and left a shocking precedent against liberty, unless the Poles are as much admired and imitated as the French ought to be detested.

I do not believe the emperor will stir—yet. He, or his ministers, must see that it is the interest of Germany to let France destroy itself. His interference yet might unite and consolidate—at least check farther confusion:—and though I rather think that twenty thousand men might march from one end of France to the other, as, though the officers often rallied, French soldiers never were stout; yet having no officers, no discipline, no subordination, little resistance might be expected. Yet the enthusiasm that has been spread might turn into courage. Still it were better for Cæsar to wait. Quarrels amongst themselves will dissipate enthusiasm; and if they have no foreign enemy, they will soon have spirit enough to turn their swords against one another, and what enthusiasm remains will soon be converted into the inveteracy of faction. This is speculation, not prophecy:—I do not pretend to guess what will happen:—I do think I know what will not: I mean, the system of experiments that they call a constitution, cannot last. Marvellous indeed would it be, if a set of military noble lads, pedantic academicians, curates of villages, and country advocates, could in two years, amidst the utmost confusion and altercation
amongst

amongst themselves, dictated to or thwarted by obstinate clubs of various factions, have achieved what the wisdom of all ages and all nations has never been able to compose—a system of government that would set four-and-twenty millions of people free, and contain them within any bounds! This too without one great man amongst them.—If they had had, as Mirabeau seemed to promise to be—but as we know that he was too—a consummate villain, there would soon have been an end of their vision of liberty. And so there will be still, unless, after a civil war, they split into small kingdoms or commonwealths.—A little nation may be free; for it can be upon its guard. Millions cannot be so; because, the greater the number of men that are one people, the more vices, the more abuses there are, that will either require or furnish pretexts for restraints; and if vices are the mother of laws, the execution of laws is the father of power:—and of such parents one knows the progeny.

I did not think of writing such a rhapsody when I began—it shows how idle I am—I hope you will be so when you receive it. Adieu! I have tired my hand.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. The king of the French has written to the king of France and Great Britain, to notify his accession to the throne of Fontainebleau, where he is determined to reign as long as he is permitted, and obey all the laws that have been made to dethrone him.

N. B. The cardinal de Lomenie, whom they call the cardinal de *l'Ignominie* with much reason, is the only gentleman elected for the new chaos, and he has declined.

LETTER CXLIV.

Strawberry-hill, August 31, 1792.

YOUR long letter and my short one crossed one another upon the road. I knew I was in your debt: but I had nothing to say but what

K k 2

you

you know better than I; for you read all the French papers, and I read none, as they have long put me out of all patience: and besides, I hear so much of their horrific proceedings, that they quite disturb me, and have given me what I call *the French disease*; that is, a barbarity that I abhor, for I cannot help wishing destruction to thousands of human creatures whom I never saw.—But when men have worked themselves up into tigers and hyænas, and labour to communicate their appetite for blood, what signifies whether they walk on two legs or four, or whether they dwell in cities, or in forests and dens?—Nay, the latter are the more harmless wild beasts; for they only cranch a poor traveller now and then, and when they are famished with hunger:—the others, though they have dined, cut the throats of some hundreds of poor Swiss for an afternoon's luncheon. Oh! the execrable nation!

I cannot tell you any new particulars, for mesdames de Cambis and d'Hennin, my chief informers, are gone to Goodwood to the poor duchesse de Biron, of whose recovery I am impatient to hear—and so I am of the cause of her very precipitate flight and panic. She must, I think, have had strong motives; for two years ago I feared she was much too courageous, and displayed her intrepidity too publicly. If I did not always condemn the calling bad people mad people, I should say all Paris is gone distracted: they furnish provocation to every species of retaliation, by publishing rewards for assassination of kings and generals, and cannot rest without incensing all Europe against them.

The duchess of York gave a great entertainment at Oatlands on her duke's birth-day, sent to his tradesmen in town to come to it, and allowed two guineas apiece to each for their carriage—gave them a dance, and opened the ball herself with the prince of Wales. A company of strollers came to Weybridge to act in a barn: she was solicited to go to it, and did out of charity, and carried all her servants. Next day a methodist teacher came to preach a charity sermon in the same theatre, and she consented to hear it on the same motive—but her servants desired to be excused, on not understanding English.—“Oh!” said the duchess, “but you went to the comedy, which you understood less, and you shall go to the sermon;” to which she gave handsomely, and for them. I like this.

Tack

Tack this to my other fragment, and then, I trust, I shall not be a defaulter in correspondence. I own I am become an indolent poor creature:—but is that strange? With seventy-five years over my head, or on the point of being so; with a chalk-stone in every finger; with feet so limping, that I have been but twice this whole summer round my own small garden, and so much weaker than I was, can I be very comfortable, but when sitting quiet and doing nothing? All my strength consists in my sleep, which is as vigorous as at twenty:—but with regard to letter-writing, I have so many to write on business which I do not understand, since the unfortunate death of my nephew, that, though I make them as brief as possible, half-a-dozen short ones tire me as much as a long one to an old friend; and as the busy ones must be executed, I trespass on the others, and remit them to another day. Norfolk has come very mal-à-propos into the end of my life, and certainly never entered into my views and plans; and I, who could never learn the multiplication table, was not intended to transact leases, direct repairs of farm-houses, settle fines for church lands, negotiate for lowering interest on mortgages, &c. In short, as I was told formerly, though I know several things, I never understood any thing useful. A-propos, the letter of which lady C—— told you is not at all worth your seeing. It was an angry one to a parson who oppresses my tenants, and will go to law with them about tythes. She came in as I was writing it; and as I took up the character of parson myself, and preached to him as pastor of a flock, which it did not become him to lead into the paths of law, instead of those of peace, I thought it would divert, and showed it to her.

Adieu! I have been writing to you till midnight, and my poor fingers ache.

Yours ever,

ORFORD.

LETTER CXLV.

Strawberry-hill, June 13, 1793.

I THANK you much for all your information—some parts made me smile:—yet, if what you heard of ——— proves true, I rather think it deplorable!

deplorable ! How can love of money, or the still vainer of all vanities, ambition of wearing a high but most insignificant office, which even poor lord ——— could execute, tempt a very old man, who loves his ease and his own way, to stoop to wait like a footman behind a chair, for hours, and in a court whence he had been cast ignominiously ? I believe I have more pride than most men alive : I could be flattered by honours acquired by merit, or by some singular action of eclat—but for titles, ribbands, offices of no business, which any body can fill, and must be given to many, I should just as soon be proud of being the top 'squire in a country village. It is only worse to have waded to distinction through dirt, like lord ———.

All this shifting of scenes may, as you say, be food to the Fronde——Sed defendit numerus. It is perfectly ridiculous to use any distinction of parties but the *ins* and the *outs*. Many years ago I thought that the wisest appellations for contending factions ever assumed, were those in the Roman empire, who called themselves *the greens and the blues* : it was so easy, when they changed sides, to slide from one colour to the other—and then a blue might plead that he had never been *true blue*, but always a *greenish blue* ; and vice versa.

I allow that the steadiest party man may be staggered by novel and unforeseen circumstances. The outrageous proceedings of the French republicans have wounded the cause of liberty, and will, I fear, have shaken it for centuries ; for Condorcet and such fiends are worse than the imperial and royal dividers of Poland.—But I do not see why detestation of anarchy and assassination must immediately make one fall in love with garters and seals.

I am sitting by the fire, as I have done ever since I came hither ; and since I do not expect warm weather in June, I am wishing for rain, or I shall not have a mouthful of hay, nor a noseful of roses.—Indeed, as I have seen several fields of hay cut, I wonder it has not brought rain, as usual. My creed is, that rain is good for hay, as I conclude every climate and its productions are suited to each other. Providence did not trouble itself about its being more expensive to us to make our hay over and over ; it only took care it should not want water enough. Adieu !

LETTER

LETTER CXLVI.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night, late, July 17, 1793.

I AM just come from dining with the bishop of London at Fulham, where I found lord and lady F. C. who told me of the alarm you had from hearing some screams that you thought lady A.'s, and the disorder brought upon you by flying to assist her. I do not at all wonder at your panic; and rejoice it was not founded, and that you recovered so soon. I am not going to preach against your acting so naturally:—but as you have some complaint on your breast, I must hope you will remember this accident, and be upon your guard against both sudden and rapid exertions, when you have not a tantamount call. I conclude the excessive heat we have had for twelve complete days contributed to overpower you.

It is much cooler to-day, yet still delicious; for be it known to you that I have enjoyed weather worthy of Africa, and yet without swallowing mouthfuls of musketos, nor expecting to hear hyænas howl in the village, nor to find scorpions in my bed. Indeed, all the way I came home, I could but gaze at the felicity of my countrymen. The road was one string of stage-coaches loaded within and without with noisy jolly folks, and chaises and gigs that had been pleasuring in clouds of dust; every door and every window of every house was open, lights in every shop, every door with women sitting in the street, every inn crowded with jaded horses, and every ale-house full of drunken toppers; for you know the English always announce their sense of heat or cold by drinking.—Well! it was impossible not to enjoy such a scene of happiness and affluence in every village, and amongst the lowest of the people—and who are told by villainous scribblers that they are oppressed and miserable.—New streets, new towns are rising every day and every where; the earth is covered with gardens and crops of grain.

How bitter to turn from this Elysium to the Temple at Paris! The fiends there have now torn her son from the queen! Can one believe that they are human beings, who 'midst all their confusions sit coolly meditating new tortures,

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tortures, new anguish for that poor, helpless, miserable woman, after four years of unexampled sufferings? Oh! if such crimes are not made a dreadful lesson, this world might become a theatre of canibals!

I hope the checks in Bretagne are legends coined by miscreants at Paris. What can one believe? Well, I will go to bed, and try to dream of peace and plenty; and though my lawn is burnt, and my peas and beans, and roses and strawberries parched, I will bear it with patience till the harvest is got in. Saint Swithin can never hold his water for forty days, though he can do the contrary. Good-night!

Yours ever,

O.

LETTER CXLVII.

Berkeley-square, January 10, 1794.

I CERTAINLY sympathize with you on the reversed and gloomy prospect of affairs, too extensive to detail in a letter; nor indeed do I know any thing more than I collect from newspapers and public reports; and those are so overcharged with falsehoods on all sides, that, if one waits for truth to emerge, one finds new subjects to draw one's attention before firm belief can settle its trust on any. That the mass and result are bad, is certain; and though I have great alacrity in searching for comforts and grounds of new hopes, I am puzzled as much in seeking resources, as in giving present credit. Reasoning is out of the question: all calculation is baffled: nothing happens that sense or experience said was probable. I wait to see what will happen, without a guess at what is to be expected. A storm, when the parliament meets, will no doubt be attempted. How the ministers are prepared to combat it, I don't know—but I hope sufficiently—if it spreads no farther:—at least I think they have no cause to fear the new leader who is to make the attack. * * * *

I have neither seen Mr. Wilson's book nor his answerers. So far from reading political pamphlets, I hunt for any books, except modern novels, that will not bring France to my mind, or that at least will put it out for a time.

time. But every fresh person one sees, revives the conversation: and excepting a long succession of fogs, nobody talks of any thing else; nor of private news do I know a tittle. Adieu!

Yours ever,

O.

LETTER CXLVIII.

Strawb. July 2, 1795.

I *WILL* write a word to you, though scarce time to write one, to thank you for your great kindness about the soldier, who shall get a substitute if he can.

As you are, or have been in town, your daughter will have told you in what a bustle I am, preparing—not to resist, but to receive an invasion of royalties to-morrow—and cannot even escape them like admiral Cornwallis, though seeming to make a semblance; for I am to wear a sword, and have appointed two aides de camp, my nephews, George and Horace C——. If I *fall*, as ten to one but I do, to be sure it will be a superb tumble, at the feet of a queen and eight daughters of kings; for, besides the six princesses, I am to have the duchess of York and the princess of Orange! Woe is me, at 78, and with scarce a hand and foot to my back! Adieu!

Yours, &c.

A POOR OLD REMNANT.

LETTER CXLIX.

Strawberry-hill, July 7, 1795.

I AM not dead of fatigue with my royal visitors, as I expected to be, though I was on my poor lame feet three whole hours. Your daughter, who kindly assisted me in doing the honours, will tell you the particulars, and how prosperously I succeeded. The queen was uncommonly condescending and gracious, and deigned to drink my health when I presented her with the last glass, and to thank me for all my attentions.—Indeed my

memory de vieille cour was but once in default. As I had been assured that her majesty would be attended by her chamberlain, yet was not, I had no glove ready when I received her at the step of her coach: yet she honoured me with her hand to lead her up stairs; nor did I recollect my omission when I led her down again. Still, though gloveless, I did not squeeze the royal hand, as vice-chamberlain Smith did to queen Mary¹.

You will have stared, as I did, at the elector of Hanover deserting his ally the king of Great Britain, and making peace with the monsters. But Mr. F——, whom I saw at my sister's on Sunday, laughs at the article in the newspapers, and says it is not an unknown practice for stock-jobbers to hire an emissary at the rate of five hundred pounds, and dispatch to Franckfort, whence he brings forged attestations of some marvellous political event, and spreads it on 'Change; which produces such a fluctuation in the stocks, as amply overpays the expence of his mission.

This was all I learnt in the single night I was in town. I have not redde the new French constitution, which seems longer than probably its reign will be. The five sovereigns will, I suppose, be the first guillotined. Adieu!

Yours ever,

O.

¹ It is said that queen Mary asked some of her attendant ladies, what a squeeze of the hand was supposed to intimate?—They said, "Love." —"Then," said the queen, "my vice-chamberlain must be violently in love with me, for he always squeezes my hand."

[Marshal Conway died three days after the date of this letter.]

L · E T · T E R S

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

RICHARD BENTLEY, ESQ.

From the Year 1752 to the Year 1756.



Ecce de pinet

Heath Sculp.

Richard Bentley.

Published as the Act directs May 1st 1708 by G.G. & J. Robinson Paternoster Row London.

LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

RICHARD BENTLEY, ESQ.

From the Year 1752 to the Year 1756.

LETTER I.

TO RICHARD BENTLEY, ESQ.

Battel, Wednesday, August 5, 1752.

HERE we are; my dear sir, in the middle of our pilgrimage; and lest we should never return from this holy land of abbeys and Gothic castles, I begin a letter to you, that I hope some charitable monk, when he has buried our bones, will deliver to you. We have had piteous distresses, but then we have seen glorious fights! You shall hear of each in their order.

Monday, Wind S. E.—at least that was our direction.—While they were changing our horses at Bromley, we went to see the bishop of Rochester's palace; not for the sake of any thing there was to be seen, but because there was a chimney, in which had stood a flower-pot, in which was put the counterfeit plot against bishop Sprat. 'Tis a paltry parsonage, with nothing of antiquity but two panes of glass, purloined from Illip's chapel in Westminster-abbey,

² Only son of doctor Bentley, the celebrated commentator.

at the distance of three miles, up and down impracticable hills, in a most retired vale, such as Pope describes in the last Dunciad,

Where slumber abbots, purple as their vines,

we found the ruins of Bayham abbey, which the Barrets and Hardings bid us visit. There are small but pretty remains, and a neat little Gothic house built near them by their nephew Pratt. They have found a tomb of an abbot, with a crozier, at length on the stone.

Here our woes increase. The roads grew bad beyond all badness, the night dark beyond all darkness, our guide frightened beyond all frightfulness. However, without being at all killed, we got up, or down, I forget which, it was so dark, a famous precipice called Silver-hill, and about ten at night arrived at a wretched village called Rotherbridge. We had still six miles hither, but determined to stop, as it would be a pity to break our necks before we had seen all we intended. But, alas! there was only one bed to be had: all the rest were inhabited by smugglers, whom the people of the house called mountebanks; and with one of whom the lady of the den told Mr. Chute he might lie. We did not at all take to this society, but, armed with links and lanthorns, set out again upon this impracticable journey. At two o'clock in the morning we got hither to a still worse inn, and that crammed with excise officers, one of whom had just shot a smuggler. However, as we were neutral powers, we have passed safely through both armies hitherto, and can give you a little farther history of our wandering through these mountains, where the young gentlemen are forced to drive their curricles with a pair of oxen. The only morsel of good road we have found, was what even the natives had assured us was totally impracticable; these were eight miles to Hurst Monceaux. It is seated at the end of a large vale, five miles in a direct line to the sea, with wings of blue hills covered with wood, one of which falls down to the house in a sweep of 100 acres. The building for the convenience of water to the moat fees nothing at all; indeed it is entirely imagined on a plan of defence, with draw-bridges actually in being, round towers, watch-towers mounted on them, and battlements pierced for the passage of arrows from long bows. It was built in the time of Henry VI. and is as perfect as the first day. It does

does not seem to have been ever quite finished, or at least that age was not arrived at the luxury of white-wash; for almost all the walls, except in the principal chambers, are in their native *brickhood*. It is a square building, each side about two hundred feet in length; a porch and cloister, very like Eton-college; and the whole is much in the same taste, the kitchen extremely so, with three vast funnels to the chimneys going up on the inside. There are two or three little courts for offices, but no magnificence of apartments. It is scarcely furnished with a few necessary beds and chairs: one side has been slated, and a drawing-room and dining-room and two or three rooms wainscoted by the earl of Suffex, who married a natural daughter of Charles II. Their arms with delightful carvings by Gibbons, particularly two pheasants, hang over the chimneys. Over the great drawing-room chimney is the coat armour of the first Leonard lord Dacre, with all his alliances. Mr. Chute was transported, and called cousin with ten thousand quarterings. The chapel is small, and mean: the Virgin and seven long lean saints, ill done, remain in the windows. There have been four more, but seem to have been removed for light; and we actually found St. Catherine, and another gentlewoman with a church in her hand, exiled into the buttery. There remain two odd cavities, with very small wooden screens on each side the altar, which seem to have been confessionals. The outside is a mixture of grey brick and stone, that has a very venerable appearance. The drawbridges are romantic to a degree; and there is a dungeon, that gives one a delightful idea of living in the days of fockage and under such goodly tenures. They showed us a dismal chamber which they called *Drummer's-hall*, and suppose that Mr. Addison's comedy is descended from it. In the windows of the gallery over the cloisters, which leads all round to the apartments, is the device of the Fiennesses, a wolf holding a baton with a scroll, *Le roy le veut*—an unlucky motto, as I shall tell you presently, to the last peer of that line. The estate is two thousand a year, and so compact as to have but seventeen houses upon it. We walked up a brave old avenue to the church, with ships sailing on our left hand the whole way. Before the altar lies a lank brass knight, hight William Fienis, chevalier, who obiit c.c.c.v. that is in 1405. By the altar is a beautiful tomb, all in our trefoil taste, varied into a thousand little canopies and patterns, and two knights repoling on their backs. These were Thomas lord Dacre, and his only son Gregory, who died sans issue. An old grey-headed beardsman of the family talked to us of a blot in the

scutcheon; and we had observed that the field of the arms was green instead of blue, and the lions ramping to the right, contrary to order. This and the man's imperfect narrative let us into the circumstances of the personage before us; for there is no inscription. He went in a Chevy-chace style to hunt in a *Mr. Pelham's*¹ park at Lawton: the keepers opposed, a fray ensued, a man was killed. The haughty baron took the death upon himself, as most secure of pardon: but however, though there was no chancellor of the exchequer in the question, he was condemned to be hanged: *Le roy le vouloit*.

Now you are fully master of Hurst Monceaux, I shall carry you on to Battel—By the way, we bring you a thousand sketches, that you may show us what we have seen. Battel-abbey stands at the end of the town exactly as Warwick-castle does of Warwick; but the house of Webster have taken due care that it should not resemble it in any thing else. A vast building, which they call the old refectory, but which I believe was the original church, is now barn, coach-house, &c. The situation is noble, above the level of abbeys: what does remain of gateways and towers is beautiful, particularly the flat side of a cloister, which is now the front of the mansion-house. A miss of the family has clothed a fragment of a portico with cockle-shells! The grounds, and what has been a park, lie in a vile condition. In the church is the tomb of sir Antony Browne, master of the horse for life to Harry VIII. from whose descendants the estate was purchased². The head of John Hammond, the last abbot, is still perfect in one of the windows. Mr. Chute says, What charming things we should have done if Battel-abbey had been to be sold at Mrs. Chenevix's, as Strawberry was! Good-night!

Tunbridge, Friday.

WE are returned hither, where we have established our head quarters. On our way, we had an opportunity of surveying that formidable mountain, Silver-hill, which we had floundered down in the dark: it commands a whole horizon of the richest blue prospect you ever saw. I take it to be the individual spot to which the duke of Newcastle carries the smugglers,

¹ At the date of this letter Mr. Pelham was prime minister. E.

² It is said on the tomb of the first lord Montacute, at Coudray in Sussex, that he built

the magnificent house at Battel, of which I suppose the ruinous apartment still remaining was part.

and,

and, showing them Suffex and Kent, says, All this will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me. Indeed one of them, who exceeded the tempter's warrant, hangs in chains on the very spot where they finished the life of that wretched custom-house officer whom they were two days in murdering.

This morning we have been to Penshurst—but, oh! how fallen!—The park seems to have never answered its character: at present it is forlorn; and instead of Sacharissa's cypher carved on the beeches, I should sooner have expected to have found the milk-woman's score. Over the gate is an inscription, purporting the manor to have been a boon from Edward VI. to sir William Sydney. The apartments are the grandest I have seen in any of these old palaces, but furnished in a tawdry modern taste. There are loads of portraits; but most of them seem christened by chance, like children at a foundling-hospital. There is a portrait of Languet, the friend of sir Philip Sydney; and divers of himself and all his great kindred, particularly his sister-in-law with a vast lute, and Sacharissa, charmingly handsome. But there are really four very great curiosities, I believe as old portraits as any extant in England: they are, Fitzallen archbishop of Canterbury, Humphry Stafford the first duke of Buckingham, T. Wentworth, and John Foxle; all four with the dates of their commissions as constables of Queenborough-castle, from whence I suppose they were brought. The last is actually receiving his investiture from Edward the third, as Wentworth is in the dress of Richard the third's time. They are really not very ill done. There are six more, only heads; and we have found since we came home, that Penshurst belonged for a time to that duke of Buckingham. There are some good tombs in the church, and a very Vandal one, called *sir Stephen of Penchefer*. When we had seen Penshurst, we borrowed saddles, and, bestriding the horses of our post-chaise, set out for Hever to visit a tomb of sir Thomas Bullen earl of Wiltshire, partly with a view to talk of it in Anna Bullen's walk at Strawberry-hill. But the measure of our woes was not full; we could not find our way, and were forced to return; and again lost ourselves in coming

* In Harris's History of Kent, he gives from sir Edward Hobby, is said to have collected all Philpot a list of the constables of Queenborough castle, p. 376; the last but one of whom, their portraits, of which number most probably were these ten.

from Penhurst, having been directed to what they called a better road than the execrable one we had gone.

Since dinner we have been to lord Westmorland's at Mereworth, which is so perfect in a Palladian taste, that I must own it has recovered me a little from Gothic. It is better situated than I had expected from the bad reputation it bears, and has some prospect, though it is in a moat, and mightily besprinkled with small ponds. The design, you know, is taken from the Villa del Capra by Vicenza, but on a larger scale; yet, though it has cost an hundred thousand pounds, it is still only a fine villa: the finishing of in and outside has been exceedingly expensive. A wood that runs up a hill behind the house is broke like an Albano landscape with an octagon temple and a triumphal arch; but then there are some dismal clipt hedges, and a pyramid, which by a most unnatural copulation is at once a grotto and a greenhouse. Does it not put you in mind of the proposal for your drawing a garden-seat, Chinese on one side and Gothic on the other? The chimneys, which are collected to a centre, spoil the dome of the house, and the hall is a dark well. The gallery is eighty-two feet long, hung with green velvet and pictures, among which is a fine Rembrandt, and a pretty La Hire. The ceilings are painted, and there is a fine bed of silk and gold tapestry. The attic is good, and the wings extremely pretty, with porticos formed on the style of the house. The earl has built a new church, with a steeple which seems designed for the latitude of Cheapside, and is so tall, that the poor church curtsies under it, like Mary Rich^{*} in a vast high-crown hat: it has a round portico like St. Clement's, with vast Doric pillars supporting a thin shelf. The inside is the most abominable piece of tawdriness that ever was seen, stuffed with pillars painted in imitation of verd antique, as all the sides are like Siena marble: but the greatest absurdity is a Doric frieze, between the triglyphs of which is the Jehovah, the I. H. S. and the dove. There is a little chapel with Nevil tombs, particularly of the first Fane earl of Westmorland, and of the founder of the old church, and the heart of a knight who was killed *in the wars*. On the Fane tomb is a pedigree of brass in relief, and a genealogy of virtues to answer it. There is an entire window of painted-glass arms, chiefly modern, in the chapel, and another over the high altar. The hos-

^{*} Daughter of sir Robert Rich, and elder sister of Elizabeth Rich lady Lyttelton. E.

pitality of the house was truly Gothic ; for they made our postillion drunk, and he overturned us close to a water, and the bank did but just save us from being in the middle of it. Pray, whenever you travel in Kentish roads, take care of keeping your driver sober.

Rochester, Sunday.

WE have finished our progress sadly ! Yesterday, after twenty mishaps, we got to Sissinghurst to dinner. There is a park in ruins, and a house in ten times greater ruins, built by sir John Baker, chancellor of the exchequer to queen Mary. You go through an arch of the stables to the house, the court of which is perfect and very beautiful. The duke of Bedford has a house at Cheney's in Buckinghamshire, which seems to have been very like it, but is more ruined. This has a good apartment, and a fine gallery a hundred and twenty feet by eighteen, which takes up one side : the wainscot is pretty and entire ; the ceiling vaulted, and painted in a light genteel grotesque. The whole is built for show ; for the back of the house is nothing but lath and plaster. From thence we went to Boston-Malherbe, where are remains of a house of the Wottons, and their tombs in the church : but the roads were so exceedingly bad, that it was dark before we got thither—and still darker before we got to Maidstone. From thence we passed this morning to Leeds castle. Never was such disappointment ! There are small remains : the moat is the only handsome object, and is quite a lake, supplied by a cascade which tumbles through a bit of a romantic grove. The Fairfaxes have fitted up a pert bad apartment in the fore-part of the castle, and have left the only tolerable rooms for offices. They had a gleam of Gothic in their eyes ; but it soon passed off into some modern windows, and some that never were ancient. The only thing that at all recompensed the fatigues we have undergone, was a picture of the duchess of Buckingham, *la Ragotte*, who is mentioned in Grammont—I say us ; for I trust that Mr. Chute is as true a bigot to Grammont as I am. Adieu ! I hope you will be as weary with reading our history, as we have been in travelling it.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER

LETTER II.

Wentworth-castle, August.

I ALWAYS dedicate my travels to you. My present expedition has been very amusing : fights are thick sown in the counties of York and Nottingham : the former is more historic, and the great lords live at a prouder distance : in Nottinghamshire there is a very heptarchy of little kingdoms elbowing one another, and the barons of them want nothing but small armies to make inroads into one another's parks, murder deer, and massacre park-keepers.—But to come to particulars : The great road as far as Stamford is superb : in any other country it would furnish medals, and immortalize any drowsy monarch in whose reign it was executed. It is continued much farther, but is more rumbling. I did not stop at Hatfield and Burleigh to see the palaces of my great-uncle-ministers, having seen them before. Bugden-palace surprises one prettily in a little village ; and the remains of Newark-castle, seated pleasantly, began to open a vein of historic memory. I had only transient and distant views of lord Tyrconnel's at Belton, and of Belvoir. The borders of Huntingdonshire have churches instead of mile-stones—but the richness and extent of Yorkshire quite charmed me.—Oh ! what quarries for working in Gothic ! This place is one of the very few that I really like : the situation, woods, views, and the improvements are perfect in their kinds : nobody has a truer taste than lord Strafford. The house is a pompous front screening an old house : it was built by the last lord on a design of the Prussian architect Bott, who is mentioned in the King's Memoires de Brandenburg, and is not ugly : the one pair of stairs is entirely engrossed by a gallery of 180 feet, on the plan of that in the Colonna-palace at Rome : it has nothing but four modern statues, and some bad portraits ; but, on my proposal, is going to have books at each end. The hall is pretty, but low ; the drawing-room handsome : there wants a good eating-room, and staircase ; but I have formed a design for both, and I believe they will be executed.—That my plans should be obeyed when yours are not ! I shall bring you a ground plot for a Gothic building, which I have proposed that you should draw for a little wood, but in the manner of an ancient market-cross. Without doors all is pleasing : there is a beautiful (artificial) river with a fine semicircular wood overlooking it, and the temple of Tivoli placed happily on a rising towards the end. There are obelisks.

obelisks, columns, and other buildings, and above all, a handsome castle, in the true style, on a rude mountain, with a court and towers : in the castle-yard, a statue of the late lord who built it. Without the park is a lake on each side, buried in noble woods.—Now contrast all this, and you may have some idea of lord Rockingham's. Imagine a most extensive, and most beautiful modern front erected before the great lord Strafford's old house, and this front almost blocked up with hills, and every thing unfinished round it, nay within it. The great apartment, which is magnificent, is untouched : the chimney-pieces lie in boxes unopened. The park is traversed by a common road between two high hedges—not from necessity—Oh ! no ; this lord loves nothing but horses, and the inclosures for them take place of every thing. The bowling-green behind the house contains no less than four obelisks, and looks like a Brobdignag nine-pin-alley : on a hill near, you would think you saw the York-buildings water-works invited into the country. There are temples in corn-fields ; and in the little wood, a window-frame mounted on a bunch of laurel, and intended for an hermitage. In the inhabited part of the house, the chimney-pieces are like tombs ; and on that in the library is the figure of this lord's grandfather in a night-gown of plaster and gold. Amidst all this litter and bad taste, I adored the fine Vandyck of lord Strafford and his secretary, and could not help reverencing his bed-chamber. With all his faults and arbitrary behaviour one must worship his spirit and eloquence : where one esteems but a single royalist, one need not fear being too partial. When I visited his tomb in the church (which is remarkably neat and pretty, and enriched with monuments) I was provoked to find a little mural cabinet, with his figure three feet high kneeling. Instead of a stern bust (and his head would furnish a nobler than Bernini's Brutus) one is peevish to see a plaything that might have been bought at Chenevix's. There is a tender inscription to the second lord Strafford's wife, written by himself—but his genius was sifter to coo over his wife's memory, than to sacrifice to his father's.

Well ! you have had enough of magnificence ; you shall repose in a desert.—Old Wortley Montague lives on the very spot where the dragon of Wantley did—only I believe the latter was much better lodged.—You never saw such a wretched hovel, lean, unpainted, and half its nakedness barely shaded with harateen stretched till it cracks.—Here the miser hoards health and money, his only two objects : he has chronicles in behalf of the air,
and

and battens on Tokay, his single indulgence, as he has heard it is particularly salutary. But the savageness of the scene would charm your Alpine taste: it is tumbled with fragments of mountains, that look ready laid for building the world. One scrambles over a huge terrass, on which mountain ashes and various trees spring out of the very rocks; and at the brow is the den, but not spacious enough for such an inmate. However, I am persuaded it furnished Pope with this line, so exactly it answers to the picture:

On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes.

I wanted to ask if Pope had not visited lady Mary Wortley here during their intimacy—but could one put that question to *Avidien* himself? There remains an ancient odd inscription here, which has such a whimsical mixture of devotion and romanticness that I must transcribe it:

Preye for the soul of sir Thomas Wortley, knight of the body to the kings Edward IV. Richard III. Henry VII. Henry VIII. whose faults God pardon. He caused a lodge to be built on this crag in the midst of Wharn-cliff (the old orthography) to hear the harts bell, in the year of our Lord 1510.—It was a chafe, and what he meant to hear was the noise of the flags.

During my residence here I have made two little excursions; and I assure you it requires resolution: the roads are insufferable: they mend them—I should call it spoil them—with large pieces of stone. At Pomfret I saw the remains of that memorable castle “where Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey lay shorter by the head;” and on which Gray says,

And thou, proud boy, from Pomfret's walls shalt send
A groan, and envy oft thy happy grandfire's end!

The ruins are vanishing, but well situated; there is a large demolished church, and a pretty market-house. We crossed a Gothic bridge of eight arches at Ferrybridge, where there is a pretty view, and went to a large old house of lord Huntingdon's at Ledstone, which has nothing remarkable but a lofty terrace, a whole-length portrait of his grandfather in tapestry, and the having belonged to the great lord Strafford. We saw

that monument of part of poor fir John —'s extravagance, his house and garden, which he left orders to make without once looking at either plan. The house is a bastard Gothio, but of not near the extent I had heard. We lay at Leeds, a dingey large town; and through very bad black roads, for the whole country is a colliery, or a quarry, we went to Kirkstall-abbey, where are vast Saxon ruins, in a most picturesque situation, on the banks of a river that falls in a cascade among rich meadows, hills and woods: it belongs to lord Cardigan: his father pulled down a large house here, lest it should interfere with the family seat, Deane. We returned through Wakefield, where is a pretty Gothic chapel on a bridge, erected by Edward IV. in memory of his father, who lived at Sandal-castle just by, and perished in the battle here. There is scarce any thing of the castle extant, but it commanded a rich prospect.

By permission from their graces of Norfolk, who are at Tunbridge, lord Strafford carried us to Worktop, where we passed two days. The house is huge, and one of the magnificent works of old Bess of Hardwicke, who guarded the queen of Scots here for some time in a wretched little bed-chamber within her own lofty one: there is a tolerable little picture of Mary's needle-work. The great apartment is vast and trist, the whole leanly furnished: the great gallery, of above two hundred feet, at the top of the house, is divided into a library, and into nothing. The chapel is decent. There is no prospect, and the barren face of the country is richly furred with evergreen plantations, under the direction of the late lord Petre.

On our way we saw Kiveton, an ugly neglected seat of the duke of Leeds, with noble apartments and several good portraits—Oh! portraits!—I went to Welbeck—It is impossible to describe the bales of Cavendishes, Harleys, Holleses, Veres, and Ogles: every chamber is tapestried with them; nay, and with ten thousand other fat morsels; all their histories inscribed; all their arms, crests, devices, sculptured on chimneys of various English marbles in ancient forms (and, to say truth, most of them ugly). Then such a Gothic hall, with pendent fret-work in imitation of the old, and with a chimney-piece extremely like mine in the library! such water-colour pictures! such historic fragments! In short, such and so much of every thing I like, that my party thought they should never get me away again.

There is Prior's portrait, and the column and Varelst's flower on which he wrote; and the authorefs duchess of Newcastle in a theatric habit, which she generally wore, and, consequently, looking as mad as the present duchess; and dukes of the same name, looking as foolish as the present duke; and lady Mary Wortley, drawn as an authorefs, with rather better pretensions; and cabinets and glassess wainscoted with the Greendale oak, which was so large, that an old steward wisely cut a way through it to make a triumphal passage for his lord and lady on their wedding, and only killed it!—But it is impossible to tell you half what there is. The poor woman who is just dead^r, passed her whole widowhood, except in doing ten thousand right and just things, in collecting and monumenting the portraits and reliques of all the great families from which she descended, and which centred in her. The duke and duchess of Portland are expected there to-morrow, and we saw dozens of cabinets and coffers with the seals not yet taken off. What treasures to revel over! The horseman duke's manege is converted into a lofty stable, and there is still a grove or two of magnificent oaks that have escaped all these great families, though the last lord Oxford cut down above an hundred thousand pounds worth. The place has little pretty, distinct from all these reverend circumstances.

L E T T E R I I I .

Arlington-street, September 1753.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AM going to send you another volume of my travels; I don't know whether I shall not, at last, write a new *Camden's Britannia*; but lest you should be afraid of my itinerary, I will at least promise you that it shall not be quite so dry as most surveys, which contain nothing but lists of impropriations and glebes, and carucates, and transcripts out of Domesday, and tell one nothing that is entertaining, describe no houses nor parks, mention no curious pictures, but are fully satisfied if they inform you, that they believe that some nameless old tomb belonged to a knight-templar, or one of the crusado, because he lies cross-legged. Another promise I will make you is, that my love of abbeys shall not make me hate the Reformation till that makes me grow a Jacobite like the rest of my antiquarian predecessors; of whom, Dart in particular wrote billingsgate against Cromwell

^r Lady Oxford, widow of the second earl of Oxford, and mother to the duchess of Portland.

and

and the regicides; and sir Robert Atkins concludes his summary of the Stuarts with saying, *that it is no reason, because they have been so, that this family should always continue unfortunate.*

I have made my visit at Hagley as I intended. On my way I dined at Park-place, and lay at Oxford. As I was quite alone, I did not care to see any thing; but as soon as it was dark I ventured out, and the moon rose as I was wandering among the colleges, and gave me a charming venerable Gothic scene, which was not lessened by the monkish appearance of the old fellows stealing to their pleasures. Birmingham is large, and swarms with people and trade, but did not answer my expectation from any beauty in it: yet new as it is, I perceived how far I was got back from the London hegira; for every ale-house is here written *mug-house*, a name one has not heard of since the riots in the late king's time.

As I got into Worcestershire, I opened upon a landscape of country which I prefer even to Kent, which I had reckoned the most beautiful county in England: but this, with all the richness of Kent, is bounded with mountains. Sir George Lyttelton's house is immeasurably bad and old: one room at the top of the house, which was reckoned a *conceit* in those days, projects a vast way into the air. There are two or three curious pictures, and some of them extremely agreeable to me for their relation to Grammont: there is *le sérieux Lyttelton*, but too old for the date of that book; mademoiselle Stuart, lord Brounker, and lady Southesk; besides, a portrait of lord Clifford the treasurer, with his staff, but drawn in armour (though no soldier) out of flattery to Charles the second, as he said the most glorious part of his life was attending the king at the battle of Worcester. He might have said that it was as *glorious* as any part of his majesty's life. You might draw, but I can't describe the enchanting scenes of the park: it is a hill of three miles, but broke into all manner of beauty; such lawns, such wood, rills, cascades, and a thickness of verdure quite to the summit of the hill, and commanding such a vale of towns and meadows, and woods extending quite to the Black mountain in Wales, that I quite forgot my favourite Thames!—Indeed, I prefer nothing to Hagley but mount Edgecumbe. There is extreme taste in the park: the seats are not the best, but there is not one absurdity. There is a ruined castle, built by Miller, that would get him his freedom even of Strawberry: it has the true rust

of the barons' wars. Then there is a scene of a small lake with cascades falling down such a Parnassus! with a circular temple on the distant eminence; and there is such a fairy dale, with more cascades gushing out of rocks! and there is a hermitage, so exactly like those in Sadeler's prints, on the brow of a shady mountain, stealing peeps into the glorious world below! and there is such a pretty well under a wood, like the Samaritan woman's in a picture of Nicolò Poussin! and there is such a wood without the park, enjoying such a prospect! and there is such a mountain on t'other side of the park commanding all prospects, that I wore out my eyes with gazing, my feet with climbing, and my tongue and my vocabulary with commending! The best notion I can give you of the satisfaction I showed, was, that sir George proposed to carry me to dine with my lord Foley; and when I showed reluctance, he said, *Why, I thought you did not mind any strangers, if you were to see any thing!* Think of my not minding strangers! I mind them so much, that I missed seeing Hartlebury-castle, and the bishop of Worcester's chapel of painted glass there, because it was his public day when I passed by his park.—Miller has built a Gothic house in the village at Hagley for a relation of sir George: but there he is not more than Miller; in his castle he is almost Bentley. There is a genteel tomb in the church to sir George's first wife, with a Cupid and a pretty urn in the Roman style.

You will be diverted with my distresses at Worcester. I set out boldly to walk down the high-street to the cathedral: I found it much more peopled than I intended, and, when I was quite embarked, discovered myself up to the ears in a contested election. A new candidate had arrived the night before, and turned all their heads. Nothing comforted me, but that the opposition is to Mr. T——; and I purchased my passage very willingly with crying *No T——! No Jews!* However, the inn where I lay was Jerusalem itself, the very head-quarters, where T—— the pharisee was expected; and I had scarce got into my room, before the victorious mob of his enemy, who had routed his advanced guard, broke open the gates of our inn, and almost murdered the ostler—and then carried him off to prison for being murdered.

The cathedral is pretty, and has several tombs, and clusters of light pillars of Derbyshire marble, lately cleaned. Gothicism and the restoration of that architecture, and not of the bastard breed, spreads extremely in this
part

part of the world. Prince Arthur's tomb, from whence we took the paper for the hall and stair-case, to my great surprise, is on a less scale than the paper, and is not of brass but stone, and that wretchedly white-washed. The niches are very small, and the long flaps in the middle are divided every now and then with the trefoil. There is a fine tomb for bishop Hough, in the Westminster-abbey style; but the obelisk at the back is not loaded with a globe and a human figure, like Mr. Kent's design for sir Isaac Newton: an absurdity which nothing but himself could surpass, when he placed three busts at the foot of an altar—and, not content with that, placed them at the very angles—where they have as little to do as they have with Shakespeare.

From Worcester I went to see Malvern-abbey. It is situated half way up an immense mountain of that name: the mountain is very long, in shape like the prints of a whale's back: towards the larger end lies the town. Nothing remains but a beautiful gateway and the church, which is very large: every window has been glutted with painted glass, of which much remains, but it did not answer: blue and red there is in abundance, and good faces; but the portraits are so high, I could not distinguish them. Besides, the woman who showed me the church would pester me with Christ and king David, when I was hunting for John of Gaunt and king Edward. The greatest curiosity, at least what I had never seen before, was, the whole floor and far up the sides of the church has been, if I may call it so, wainscoted with red and yellow tiles, extremely polished, and diversified with coats of arms, and inscriptions, and mosaic. I have since found the same at Gloucester, and have even been so fortunate, as to purchase from the sexton about a dozen, which think what an acquisition for Strawberry! They are made of the natural earth of the country, which is a rich red clay, that produces every thing. All the lanes are full of all kind of trees, and enriched with large old apple-trees, that hang over from one hedge to another. Worcester city is large and pretty. Gloucester city is still better situated, but worse built, and not near so large. About a mile from Worcester you break upon a sweet view of the Severn. A little farther on the banks is Mr. Lechmere's house; but he has given strict charge to a troop of willows never to let him see the river: to his right hand extends the fairest meadow covered with cattle that ever you saw: at the end of it is the town of Upton,

ton, with a church half ruined, and a bridge of six arches, which I believe with little trouble he might see from his garden.

The vale increases in riches to Gloucester. I staid two days at George Selwyn's house called Matson, which lies on Robin Hood's-hill: it is lofty enough for an alp, yet is a mountain of turf to the very top, has wood scattered all over it, springs that long to be cascades in twenty places of it; and from the summit it beats even sir G. Lyttelton's views, by having the city of Gloucester at its foot, and the Severn widening to the horizon. His house is small, but neat. King Charles lay here at the siege; and the duke of York, with typical fury, hacked and hewed the window-shutters of his chamber, as a memorandum of his being there. Here is a good picture of Dudley earl of Leicester in his later age, which he gave to sir Francis Walsingham, at whose house in Kent it remained till removed hither; and what makes it very curious, is, his age marked on it, 54 in 1572. I had never been able to discover before in what year he was born. And here is the very flower-pot and counterfeit association, for which bishop Sprat was taken up, and the duke of Marlborough sent to the Tower. The reservoirs on the hill supply the city. The late Mr. Selwyn governed the borough by them—and I believe by some wine too. The bishop's house is pretty, and restored to the Gothic by the last bishop. Price has painted a large chapel-window for him, which is scarce inferior for colours, and is a much better picture than any of the old glafs. The eating-room is handsome. As I am a protestant Goth, I was glad to worship bishop Hooper's room, from whence he was led to the stake: but I could almost have been a Hun, and set fire to the front of the house, which is a small pert portico, like the conveniencies at the end of a London garden. The outside of the cathedral is beautifully light; the pillars in the nave outrageously plump and heavy. There is a tomb of one Abraham Blackleach, a great curiosity; for, though the figures of him and his wife are cumbent, they are very graceful, designed by Vanduyck, and well executed. Kent designed the screen; but knew no more there than he did any where else how to enter into the true Gothic taste. Sir Christopher Wren, who built the tower of the great gate-way at Christchurch, has catched the graces of it as happily as you could do: there is particularly a niche between two compartments of a window, that is a masterpiece.

But

But here is a *modernity*, which beats all antiquities for curiosity : Just by the high altar is a small pew hung with green damask, with curtains of the same ; a small corner-cupboard, painted, carved and gilt, for books, in one corner, and two troughs of a bird-cage, with seeds and water. If any mayorefs on earth was small enough to inclose herself in this tabernacle, or abstemious enough to feed on rape and canary, I should have sworn that it was the shrine of the queen of the aldermen. It belongs to a Mrs. Cotton, who, having lost a favourite daughter, is convinced her soul is transmigrated into a robin-red-breast ; for which reason she passes her life in making an aviary of the cathedral of Gloucester. The chapter indulge this whim, as she contributes abundantly to glaze, whitewash and ornament the church.

King Edward the second's tomb is very light and in good repair. The old wooden figure of Robert, the conqueror's unfortunate eldest son, is extremely genteel, and, though it may not be so ancient as his death, is in a taste very superior to any thing of much later ages. Our Lady's chapel has a bold kind of portal, and several ceilings of chapels, and tribunes in a beautiful taste : but of all delight, is what they call the abbot's cloister. It is the very thing that you would build, when you had extracted all the quintessence of trefoils, arches, and lightness. In the church is a star-window of eight points, that is prettier than our rose-windows.

A little way from the town are the ruins of Lantony Priory : there remains a pretty old gate-way, which G. Selwyn has begged, to erect on the top of his mountain, and it will have a charming effect.

At Burford I saw the house of Mr. Lenthal, the descendant of the Speaker. The front is good ; and a chapel connected by two or three arches, which let the garden appear through, has a pretty effect ; but the inside of the mansion is bad and ill-furnished. Except a famous picture of sir Thomas More's family, the portraits are rubbish, though celebrated. I am told that the Speaker, who really had a fine collection, made his peace by presenting them to Cornbury, where they were, well known, till the duke of Marlborough bought that seat.

I can't go and describe so known a place as Oxford, which I saw pretty well on my return. The whole air of the town charms me ; and what re-

maines